



CITES ORIGINAL AND EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION OF TOP COURT

CAA violates basic structure: Kerala is first state to move SC against new law

It's a colourable legislation... in violation of the secular nature of Constitution: Plea

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

CHALLENGING THE Citizenship (Amendment) Act and calling it "discriminatory" and a "colourable legislation", the Kerala government became the first state to move the Supreme Court Tuesday, urging it to declare the law enacted by Parliament violative of the Constitution, its basic structure rule and secular principles.

The petition was filed two weeks after the Kerala Assembly passed a resolution demanding that the new citizenship law be scrapped.

Citing the original and exclusive jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, the plea filed under Article 131 of the Constitution said that "in accordance with the mandate of Article 256 of the Constitution, the Plaintiff State will be compelled to ensure compliance of Impugned Amendment Act and the Rules and Orders, which are manifestly arbitrary, unreasonable, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



EXPLAINED
E.

Importance of Article 131

ART 32 on enforcement of rights has been cited in other CAA petitions. Only Art 131 gives SC original and exclusive jurisdiction to resolve disputes between the Centre and one or more States; between Centre and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; between two or more States.

You behaving as if Jama Masjid is Pak: Court slams Delhi Police on Azad plea

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

COMING DOWN heavily on the prosecution during the bail hearing of Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad, arrested last month for his protest against the new citizenship law, a Delhi court Tuesday said "it is one's Constitutional right to protest" and Delhi Police is "behaving as if Jama Masjid is Pakistan".

Azad was arrested in the early hours of December 21 after he emerged from the Jama Masjid



Arrested on Dec 21, Bhim Army chief has sought bail

and surrendered to police. When his bail plea came up at the Tis Hazari courts,

Cases start falling in Muzaffarnagar: 19 of 107 freed after police say no evidence

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
MUZAFFARNAGAR, JAN 14

LESS THAN a month after police in UP's Muzaffarnagar accused 107 people of rioting and attempt to murder in connection with the anti-CAA protests, they are struggling to make the charges stick.

So far, 19 people have been released on bail, either by police



Muzaffarnagar witnessed violence last month. File



Will be lenient if students join proctor inquiry: JNU V-C

RAVISH TIWARI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

REJECTING THE demands for his resignation, Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar, at the centre of the unrest at JNU, indicated that he was ready to take a "lenient" view on disciplinary proceedings against students if they participated in the pending proctorial inquiries.

In an interview to *The Indian Express*, Kumar said: "The V-C has the discretionary power to waive any punishment or reduce the punishment... We will be flexible, if you come and explain **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**



IF YOUR PROTEST IS GENUINE, WHY HIDE FACES?

M JAGADESH KUMAR
VICE-CHANCELLOR, JNU

POLICE NAME MASKED WOMAN, ABVP ADMITS SHE'S A MEMBER P 10

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

U.S.-IRAN CRISIS A TEST FOR INDIA

BY CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT & VIHANG JUMLE
PAGE 14

Six sets of dates, Feb to Sept, on table for Trump's visit to India

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

NEW DELHI and Washington are looking at six blocks of dates for US President Donald Trump's likely visit to India this year, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The dates on the table are February 18-26, March 16-20, April 6-17, May 26-29, July 5-17 and August 10-September 7, sources said. The government is "extremely keen" to host the President before the US elections in November, and is waiting for the White House to revert on the dates, they said.

However, unlike last time, when India had invited the President to attend the Republic Day celebrations as the chief



Govt hopes to host Trump before US elections this year

guest, Delhi has not taken the risk of tying the visit to an event. "We would like the US President to visit India this year... but we have kept it open-ended and flexible as per the schedule of the two leaders," sources said.

Some officials suggested that the dates in February are under **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

Broadband back in J&K institutions, call on lifting curbs for public after Jan 26

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration Tuesday decided to restore broadband services in all government offices, institutions offering essential services such as hospitals and banks, and tourism-linked establishments, amid indications that the facility may be extended to the "general

public" after the Republic Day celebrations on January 26.

"Broadband facility is being restored to get essential services functioning properly and tourism restarted. There will be a total ban on social media, though. A call on extending the facility to the general public will be taken after January 26, depending on the security situation," top government sources said.

An order signed by J&K

Principal Secretary (Home) Shaleen Kabra states that the administration is taking this decision despite Intelligence inputs of terrorist activities and threats of attacks in Kashmir, since it believes that the services have become essential.

It acknowledges the Supreme Court ruling last week asking the administration to review all decisions related to **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

Dec 16 Delhi gangrape: Curative pleas rejected, one convict files mercy plea

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

WITH BARELY a week left for January 22, the date stipulated by a Delhi court to hang four convicts in the December 16, 2012 Delhi gangrape case, the Supreme Court Tuesday dismissed curative petitions filed by two of the four on death row. A five-judge bench headed

by Justice N V Ramana, which took up in-chamber the review petitions of Vinay Kumar Sharma and Mukesh Kumar, said it had "gone through the curative petitions, and the relevant documents" and concluded that "no case is made out". "Hence, the curative petitions are dismissed," the bench said.

The bench, also comprising Justices Arun Mishra, R F Nariman, R Banumathi and

Ashok Bhushan, rejected the plea to stay the death sentence and hear the petitions in open court. Mukesh Kumar, meanwhile, filed a mercy petition Tuesday and also approached the Delhi High Court seeking to set aside the death warrant. The appeal is listed for hearing Wednesday before a bench of Justices Manmohan and Sangita Dhingra Sehgal. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

President Kovind will present RNG Awards on Jan 20

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

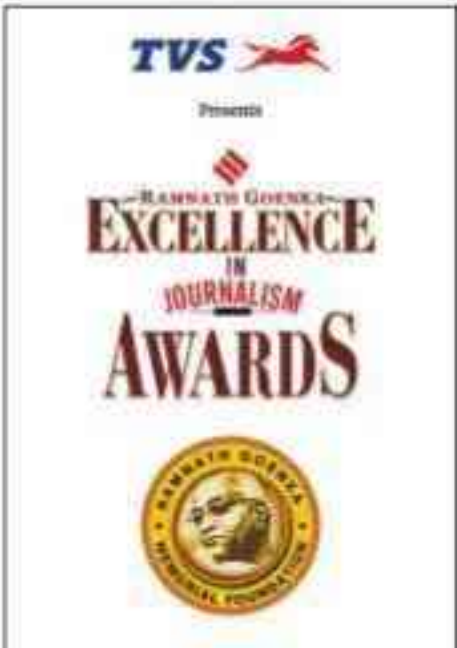
FROM CONFLICT zones to corporate boardrooms, spanning print, broadcast and digital, journalists who have upheld the highest standards of their profession in 2018 will receive the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards from President Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi Monday.

Administered by the Ramnath Goenka Memorial Foundation, and instituted as part of the centenary year celebrations of the founder of *The Indian Express* to celebrate outstanding contributions to Indian journalism, the awards are now in their fourteenth year.

This time, the awards have 11 categories covering critical areas in print, digital and electronic media, including business and economics, political reportage, civic journalism, environment, science and technology, journalism in conflict areas, and re-




President Ram Nath Kovind




gional-language reporting.

The winners were chosen by an eminent jury that included Tom Goldstein, Professor and Dean, Jindal School of Journalism & Communication, O P Jindal Global University; S Y Quraishi, former Chief Election **CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**




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WEB EXCLUSIVE



BANKER-TURNED-ENTREPRENEUR CHANGING PERCEPTION OF INDIAN FOOD ABROAD

Hong Kong-based Tiena Sekhara wants the world to know that there is more to Indian food than just curry and naan.


VIDEO OF THE DAY



VOLCANO TAAL

Lava gushes from volcano Taal in Philippines, thousands evacuated

WHAT'S TRENDING



ARVIND KEJRIWAL

This photo of Arvind Kerjiwal interacting with his batchmates from IIT is now a meme

EXPRESS AUDIO

The curious case of Davinder Singh

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Reporters explain who the J&K Deputy Superintendent caught ferrying militants, Davinder Singh is, his link to the Afzal Guru case, and the questions that remain about his involvement with insurgents.

FROM PAGE ONE

Azad plea

FIRs lodged against Azad in Saharanpur. The hearing will resume Wednesday.

Azad had filed the bail application through his counsel Mehmood Pracha, claiming that Delhi Police invoked “boilerplate” charges against him and arrested him “mechanically” without following the due process of law.

Pracha started by telling the court that the FIR registered by Delhi Police in the Jama Masjid incident mentioned the charges against Azad in UP.

The ASJ went through the FIR and asked Bhatia to explain why certain sections of the FIR were invoked. When he said “I will find out”, the ASJ said “you are opposing his bail and yet you do not know?”. The prosecutor then referred to “thousand of social media posts” and argued that there was an attempt to incite violence.

When Pracha asked for a copy of the posts, the prosecutor refused. “What privilege are you claiming,” the ASJ asked Bhatia, following which he agreed to hand over a copy.

The prosecutor then read out a post by Azad asking people to gather at Jama Masjid. The ASJ asked Bhatia, “What is wrong with dharna? What is wrong with protesting? It is one’s Constitutional right to protest. Where is the violence? What is wrong with any of these posts? Who says you cannot protest... have you read the Constitution?... None of these posts are unconstitutional.”

When the ASJ reiterated it was the right of citizens to protest peacefully, the prosecutor replied, “permissions need to be taken for that”. At this, judge Lau said: “What permissions? The Supreme Court has said that repeated use of Section 144 is abuse.”

“I have seen many people, many such cases, where protests happened even outside Parliament... many of them are Chief Ministers now. Azad is a budding politician... I want you to show me under which law is it prohibited for someone to protest outside religious places?”

The ASJ then asked Delhi Police what evidence they had

against Azad. The prosecutor said “we have drone images. So far, we don’t have audio-video recording.”

“Our Delhi Police is so backward that we do not have recordings?” the ASJ asked, leading to much merriment in the court room. Pracha told the court that Azad was only reading the Constitution. The ASJ said there was nothing wrong in that.

She then asked Pracha about Azad’s professional background. “How does he earn his income?”. Pracha said: “He is a lawyer and double MA.” The ASJ asked, “Is he a practising advocate or a demonstrating advocate?”. Pracha said: “He is a social worker.” At this, she said: “All lawyers are social workers.”

Pracha told the judge, “We have learned from our forefathers... during the British time, that you have to go out of the courts and fight for our rights.”

The ASJ said: “But that was during British time. These are our courts. We talk about social engineering that can happen only if we adopt the law. This is a time of political engineering... because things that should have been said in Parliament have not been said, which is why people are out on the streets... We all have full right to protest our views. We will not destroy our country. We will not disintegrate it.”

Before posting the matter for Wednesday, ASJ Lau had a word of advice for Azad. “He is in the grassroots. Tell him to do some reading. There must be empirical research. He is an Ambedkarite. Ambedkar was also close to Sikhs, Muslims and the deprived classes. He has a vague idea, he is not exactly able to formulate it,” she said.

Pracha asked the ASJ whether Azad could be produced before her so that he may exhibit his intellectual prowess. This was denied by the court.

Muzaffarnagar

violated prohibitory orders, and were not involved in rioting or attempt to murder.

These facts find mention in a bail order passed Monday by Sessions Judge Sanjay Kumar Pachauri who ordered the release

of an accused, Shaliheen, a hotel management student of Jamia Milia Islamia University. Shaliheen’s father Mohammed Farooque, who was also named as an accused, was released earlier by police under section 169 of the CrPC.

On Tuesday, the court ordered the release on bail of four more accused — Ummaid, Shaukeen, Salman and Israr.

While ordering Shaliheen’s release, Judge Pachauri observed: “The counsel for the accused has argued that, according to the FIR, with respect to accused Jabad Ali, Mohammed Ali, Abbas Raja, Milhal and Mohammed Farooque — the police has filed a report under section 169 CrPC before the competent authority. They were earlier taken under judicial custody on December 21, 2019.”

The judge further observed: “Also, accused persons — Roj Mehendi, Rahbar Ali, Hussain Ali, Mahmood Hasan, Kumail Abbas, Shakeel, Aadil, Shameem Abbas, Adnan and Syed Kambar Abbas — the police, have only been able to prove only violation of prohibitory orders under section 144 CrPC. All the fifteen have now been ordered to be released by the courts.”

Records show that all the 15 listed by the judge are students of a local madrasa. In the second case of the 10 accused, the police had dropped all charges except the one on violation of prohibitory orders linked to section 188 (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the IPC.

“The defence counsel has also argued that CCTV footage of the incident have not been provided to ascertain the identity of the accused...the police has also seized the weapons 24 hours after the incident...the police has named 3000 unknown persons, who are still not identified...I have heard both the parties, the bail accordingly granted to the accused,” the court observed.

These release orders stand in stark contrast to the FIR lodged by police on December 21, a day after protests in the district, in which they identified 107 persons and named 3,000 other unknown persons while listing charges under 17 sections of the IPC.

The FIR claimed: “The accused person, present at the Madina Chowk...indulged in rioting...created an atmosphere of terror forcing everyone to shut their shops. They also destroyed public property and indulged in arson. The police officials were also injured and taken for medical examination. The accused also was involved in stone pelting with an intention to harm the police deployed at the spot.”

Incidentally, Shaliheen’s father Mohammed Farooque was released under section 169 CrPC by police after they found that he was present at his office premises, where he works as district employment officer, during the protests.

“The accused (Shaliheen) father was found to be present in his office from 10 am till 5 pm in the government office. On the basis of which, the police has released him under 169 CrPC,” the court noted Monday based on findings in a report submitted by the district magistrate.

Trump’s visit

“active consideration”, but others said the government is aware of the complex political jousting that is currently taking place in Washington DC over the impeachment process and that block may not work out.

“The situation in DC is quite unpredictable, so we are not tying ourselves with any set of dates. Let’s see what dates suit both sides,” sources said.

India had invited Trump for

Kerala is first state to move Supreme Court against new citizenship law

irrational and violative of fundamental rights. Thus, there exists a dispute, involving questions of law and fact, between the Plaintiff State of Kerala and the defendant Union of India, regarding the enforcement of legal rights as a State and as well for the enforcement of the fundamental, statutory constitutional and other legal rights of the inhabitants of the State of Kerala.”

Article 131 states that “subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Supreme Court shall, to the exclusion of any other court, have original jurisdiction in any dispute (1) between the Government of India and one or more States; or (2) between the Government of India and any State or States on one side and one or more other States on the other; or (3) between two or more States, if and in so far as the dispute involves any question (whether of law or fact) on which the existence or extent of a legal right depends: Provided that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to a dispute arising out of any treaty, agreement, covenant, engagements, and or other similar instrument which, having been entered into or executed before the commencement of this Constitution, continues in operation after such commencement, or which provides that the said jurisdiction shall not extend to such a dispute”.

The plea said a suit in terms of Article 131 “impugning the vires of a Central Legislation at the instance of a constituent State of the Union is maintainable in view of the law laid down by” the Supreme Court in State of Jharkhand vs State of

Bihar and Another in 2015.

Kerala has also challenged the Passport (Entry to India) Amendment Rules, 2015; Foreigners (Amendment) Order, 2015; Passport (Entry to India) Amendment Rules, 2016; and, Foreigners (Amendment) Order, 2016.

The plea said the CAA and amendments to the Passport Rules and Foreigners Order are “class legislations harping, in-teralia, on the religious identity of an individual, thereby contravening the principles of secularism, which has been recognised repeatedly by this Honourable Court as a basic structure of the Constitution”.

“The same make religion and the country of origin of the person criteria for grant of citizenship and result in classifications based on religion and based on country, both classifications being apparently and manifestly discriminatory, arbitrary, unreasonable and have no rational nexus with the object sought to be achieved”.

Legislation discriminating on the basis of an intrinsic and core trait of an individual cannot form a reasonable classification based on an intelligible differentialia, the state said, adding that the “religious classification brought forth violates the twin test of classification under Article 14, the protection of which is not limited or restricted to Citizens alone and extends to all persons”.

The plea contended that the CAA, Passport Rules and Foreigners Order “is a colourable legislation; in as much as there is a Constitutional prohibition to makes the said legislation in vi-

olation of the secular nature of the Constitution; but despite the same, the Legislature has enacted it”.

It said there is no rationale in grouping together, for the purposes of the amendments, the three countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. “Such grouping is not founded on any rationale principle justifying a separate special treatment for the irrationally chosen class of religious minorities facing persecution on the basis of religion therein.”

“There is no rationale in not extending the rights conferred to a class of minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh to religious minorities belonging to the said countries of Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan” and this, it said, was violative of Article 14.

The provisions were “discriminatory in so far as it covers only a class of minorities from a class of countries sharing borders with India and to which and from there have been trans-border migration”. They “overlook other reportedly persecuted religious minorities/minority sects therein such as Ahmaddiyas, Shias and Hazaras”.

They also overlook the issues of the Rohingya in Myanmar and Muslims in Sri Lanka who, it said, are also minuscule minorities in the two countries.

The Kerala government said “all persecutions are not solely based on religious grounds alone and are for varied reasons like ethnicity, linguistics etc” but the amendments “do not cover the persecutions on the grounds of ethnicity, linguistics

President Kovind will present RNG Awards on Jan 20

Commissioner; Pamela Philipose, journalist and Senior Fellow at the Indian Council of Social Science Research; and, former Supreme Court judge, Justice BN Srikrishna.

“Like every year, judging the winners turned out to be a difficult job. The standard of entries is very high, and the documentation is really good. It was an interesting and educative experience,” said Quraishi.

Goldstein, who has previously served as dean of journalism schools at Columbia and Berkeley, said, “The best entries were on a par with the quality



of those in the contests I have judged in the United States.”

Philipose said that “Express has been at the forefront of news reporting, and through these awards, what they are able to do is to actually further this process by highlighting the

best”.

What was interesting about this year’s entries, said Philipose, was that “new themes and trends were explored in the stories — how do we look at our world in a more granular way”.

In 2006, the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presided over the first edition of the awards. Last year, Union Minister Rajnath Singh was the chief guest, and handed over awards to 29 winners in 18 categories.

Delhi gangrape

The petition, filed through advocate Vrinda Grover, seeks the setting aside of the trial court’s order issuing warrant of execution and direction to authorities to “scrupulously follow timeframes as prescribed by law, rules, and the Supreme Court”.

The plea also states that the convict cannot be executed during pendency of his mercy petitions before the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi and the

President.

Referring to Mukesh Kumar’s mercy plea, DG Delhi Prisons Sandeep Goel said: “We will send it to the Delhi government, which will send it to the Home Ministry to be forwarded to the President.”

On January 7, a Delhi court had issued death warrants against Sharma and Kumar and the two other co-convicts, Akshay Kumar Singh and Pawan Gupta. They are set to be hanged till death in Tihar jail, where they are lodged, at 7 am on January 22. Singh and Gupta have not filed any curative petition yet.

In Tihar jail, preparations are underway for the execution. “We have requested Pawan, the hangman from Meerut, to reach Delhi by January 20 for the execution scheduled on January 22,” said Goel.

On Sunday, jail authorities conducted a weight test for the ropes using sand bags. On Tuesday afternoon, Vinay Kumar Sharma’s father visited him in jail, said sources.

There were a total of six accused in the gangrape and brutal assault of a 23-year-old paramedic student, on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012 in a moving bus in south Delhi. She died on December 29, 2012, at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

One of the accused, Ram Singh, allegedly committed suicide in Tihar jail while another was convicted by a juvenile justice board and released after serving a three-year term in a reformation centre.

The other four were convicted and sentenced to death in September 2013. The conviction and sentencing were upheld by the High Court and Supreme Court. The top court had also dismissed their pleas seeking review of the confirmation order.

JNU V-C

to the chief proctor’s office. If an offence is established, if a punishment is given by the chief proctor,

we will definitely look at it, possibly in a lenient way.”

He, however, indicated that he was not going to suspend the proctorial inquiries against around 300 students, on various issues.

“The inquiry process is the process of the university. That process has to go on... As per our ordinances and regulations, inquiry has to be conducted, and only when the punishment is given, as an appellate authority, I can take a lenient view,” he said.

With the university seeing protests since November, when the administration announced its decision to hike the hostel fees, the issue of academic suspension has emerged as a fresh sticking point between students and the administration.

While the HRD ministry has stepped in to broker a peace deal, the students, led by JNUSU representatives, signalled last week that they were willing to end their call for boycott of registration for the winter semester, but few irri-

itants remain. These include around 300 students being barred from registering, ostensibly on the ground of disciplinary inquiries pending against them in the proctor’s office.

According to JNUSU leaders, this violated the understanding reached with the ministry, which reportedly asked the JNU administration to take a “lenient view”.

“We have done whatever maximum is possible. It is now time for the agitating students to abandon their rigid stand and appreciate the efforts made by the JNU administration, let the thousands of students study and let them also come and become part of the forward march of this university,” said Kumar.

Rejecting the demands for his resignation, the V-C said: “But, for what? What sin did I commit? This is what I would like to ask. Why are you trying to vilify me? Why are you trying to demonise me so much? All that we did during the last four years is keep the future of this university on our mind”.

He said he was always ready to meet the JNUSU elected representatives, even as he cited legal irritants to notifying the elections.

Internet in J&K

curbs on Internet.

The order states that the measure would come into effect Wednesday for a week unless modified. “Internet service providers (ISP/BSNL/private service providers) to provide broadband facility... to all the Institutions dealing with essential services, hospitals, banks, etc., as also Government offices, and in order to facilitate tourism, to hotels and tour and travel establishments,” it states.

However, it asks all ISPs to install firewalls to block access to social media sites. “Prior to giving such facility, the ISPs shall install necessary firewalls and carry out ‘white-listing’ of sites that would enable access to Government websites and websites dealing with essential services, e-banking, etc. excluding, however, all social media sites,” it says.

“To amplify, there shall be complete restriction on social media applications allowing peer to peer communication and virtual private network applications for the time being,” it says.

The order also puts the onus on government institutions and offices to ensure that Internet is not misused. It asks them to appoint nodal officers for managing and monitoring Internet use, keep a record of users, and change accessibility credentials every day.

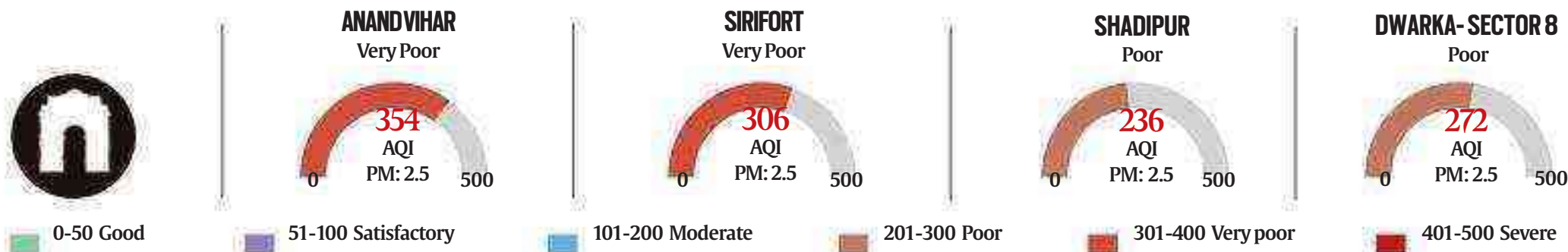
“2G mobile connectivity on post-paid mobiles for accessing white-listed sites, including for e-banking, shall be allowed, to begin with, in the districts of Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Reading,” the order states.

However, mobile Internet will remain suspended in other districts of the Union Territory.

The latest move comes days after the Supreme Court directed the J&K administration to “review all orders suspending Internet services forthwith” since “an order suspending Internet services indefinitely is impermissible”.

On Friday, the Supreme Court ruled that “freedom of speech and expression and the freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of Internet enjoys constitutional protection under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 19(1)(g)”.

The court was hearing petitions by *Kashmir Times* Executive Editor Anuradha Bhasin and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad who challenged curbs imposed in J&K following the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5 last year. SMS services were restored on mobile phones in J&K on January 1, 2020.



3 LOK SABHA CANDIDATES AMONG THOSE SELECTED

23 new names on AAP poll candidate list, 14 sitting legislators replaced



MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ON THE Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) list of candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls are 23 new names, many who shifted from other parties to AAP recently, a few sitting municipal councillors, and three of its seven 2019 Lok Sabha candidates who lost. The party has replaced 14 sitting MLAs and brought in new people to contest nine seats where the MLAs had been disqualified, and the four seats it lost in the 2015 polls and the 2017 bypoll.

Atishi, who contested the Lok Sabha polls from the East Delhi Lok

Sabha constituency, will contest from Kalkaji; Raghav Chadha, who contested from the South Delhi seat, will contest from Rajinder Nagar; and Dilip Pandey, who contested from the North East Delhi seat, will contest from Timarpur constituency.

The party, like in previous years, has been first off the block among its two main competitors — BJP and Congress — when it comes to declaring the names of candidates. Names for all 70 seats were declared Tuesday. The decision was taken in the Political Affairs Committee meeting on Tuesday evening.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who will contest from New Delhi, advised candidates to not be complacent. According to party sources, recent surveys have shown that AAP stands a good chance to win 59 seats. "Best wishes to all. Don't be complacent. Work very hard. People have lot of faith in AAP and you. God bless," he tweeted.

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia will



Atishi at Kalkaji Mandir Tuesday. She is set to contest the Assembly polls from Kalkaji

contest from Patparganj and all ministers will contest from the seats they were elected from in 2015. AAP had fielded six women candidates in 2015. This time, the number is eight. Among those that were excluded from the list were Dwarka MLA Adarsh Shastri and Delhi Cantonment MLA Surender Singh. Shastri, grandson of former Prime

Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, who quit his jobs as sales head for Apple in western India and joined the party in 2013, has been replaced by Vinay Kumar Mishra, son of senior Delhi Congress leader Mahabal Mishra, who joined the party on Monday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* before the list was out, Shastri had said: "I will contest for sure if the party wants me to. As for Mahabal Mishra and his son, both lost their deposits in the elections they contested between 2013 (Assembly) and 2019 (Lok Sabha)," he said. He did not respond to calls after the final list was released.

Surender Singh, a former NSG Commando who was injured during the 26/11 operation at the Taj Hotel in Mumbai, has been replaced by his lawyer and former campaign manager Virender Singh Kadian.

Timarpur MLA Pankaj Pushkar has been replaced by senior AAP leader Dilip Pandey. Pushkar had fallen out with party leaders after former members Prashant Bhushan

and Yogendra Yadav were expelled, but had started attending meetings and party events over the last year.

According to sources, the final list was prepared after a series of feedback exercises undertaken over the past few months — including those done by Prashant Kishor's I-PAC, which has come on board recently.

"In the various surveys that were done, people who have been denied a ticket this time around had performed poorly. People said these MLAs have not done much for the constituency and that they do not meet them regularly. In a survey done a few months ago, many other names were highlighted but they managed to improve their performance. In our ticket selection, winnability has been key," said a senior AAP leader.

Abdul Rahman, who replaced Haji Ishraque as the party's face from Seelampur, was named in an FIR filed by police in connection with the violence in the area during anti-CAA protests.

BJP raises issues to trigger anxiety, hide failures: Dy CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE BJP raises issues that trigger "anxiety" among people before every election to conceal its failures, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said Tuesday, attacking the Centre over the nearly six-year high in retail inflation on account of rising vegetable and food prices.

Sisodia also sought to corner the BJP over remarks made by its leaders that the AAP government's subsidy schemes in areas of power and water will be streamlined. He requested people to keep in mind that every vote for the BJP will be against the policy of subsidies. "The government must come up with policies to make life easier for people. But before every polls, they bring to the fore issues that trigger anxiety. They should rather debate education, price rise. They should take steps to boost demand," Sisodia told reporters.

According to figures released by the NSO Monday, retail inflation rose to a five-

and-a-half-year high of 7.35% in December 2019. A report by the SBI said there is likely to be 15 lakh less fresh jobs in 2020.

"The figures are worrying not just from the perspective of economic slowdown or unemployment, but because it has become difficult for the common man to sustain even basic household expenses. This is BJP's gift to people in the last six years," said Sisodia.

He said the Delhi government's policies of subsidising electricity, public transport, school fees and health services are making lives easier for people. Slamming BJP MP Parvesh Verma, who on Monday had said the party will levy a token charge of Re 1 for water and power supply to poor people if voted to power, Sisodia said: "Why does the BJP have a problem with the Kejriwal government's free welfare schemes? Every vote that goes to BJP will be a vote towards making necessities expensive."

Last week, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari said the BJP was ready to provide five times the subsidy as compared to AAP if voted into power.

CAA, Ram Mandir find place in BJP pamphlet



We first talk about running one's household: Tiwari

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE BJP would be fighting the upcoming Delhi Assembly polls on both local and the national issues, as per a pamphlet being distributed by the party.

The pamphlet mentions the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019, Ram Mandir, removal of Article 370 and Triple Talaq as historical decisions taken by the party. It also lists several achievements of the Modi government like GST, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, RERA, and Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act being strengthened by adding new clauses. It also mentions the government's decision to give 10% reservation in jobs and higher education for "economically backward" sections in the general category.

BJP Delhi in-charge Shyam Jaju said the party is focussing on both local and national issues. He said local issues include regularisation of unauthorised colonies; 'jaha jhuggi wahi makaan' scheme; Ayushman Bharat for medical assistance; and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana "through which one can get a home if the BJP comes to power".

BJP Delhi general secretary Kuljeet Chahal said thousands of such pamphlets are being distributed by the party across the city.

In an interview to *The Indian Express*, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari had said: "Our first aim is to ensure people run their household smoothly, which is why we give houses, toilets, gas connections and Ayushman Bharat, so that if someone gets sick, they get medical assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh. But AAP did not implement it. We started Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana to give houses to the poor, but Delhi government did not implement it. We first talk about running one's household and then about issues that are associated with the country's pride."

Head of the BJP's jhuggi jhopri cell, Umesh Verma, said the Delhi Development Authority has completed the demand survey of several JJ clusters and has now started a survey of slums on its land. Another pamphlet with details of the Pradhan Mantri Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana (PM-UDAY) scheme and 'jaha jhuggi wahi makaan' scheme has been distributed too, said a senior leader.

On list, former Congress, BSP MLAs and councillors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE AAP list of candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls include seven switchovers from the Congress, and one each from the BJP and the BSP. Incidentally, among the nine, five had joined AAP barely two days ago.

Those who switched over from Congress to AAP and secured tickets are Ram Singh 'Netaji', Parlad Singh Sawhney, Shoaib Iqbal, Dhanwanti Chandela, Vinay Mishra, Rajkumari Dhillon and Deepu Chaudhary.

The remaining two are Jai Bhagwan Upkar, who was a BSP councillor before he shifted loyalties, and Surendra Kumar, a former BSP MLA, who also spent around three months in the BJP in 2019. Singh, Dhillon, Chaudhary and Mishra, who is the son of former Congress MP Mahabal Mishra, had joined the AAP Monday in the presence of top AAP leadership, including



Shoaib Iqbal (left), contesting from Matia Mahal, joined AAP last week

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. While Iqbal, a five-time MLA, switched over last week, Sawhney had joined in October. Chandela, from a prominent Congress family in Rajouri Garden, joined AAP last August.

Singh's induction has already created a discord within the party, with sitting Badarpur MLA N D Sharma going on the offensive against the AAP leadership, accusing them of "sell-

ing the ticket". On Tuesday, he quit the AAP. Asked if Sharma is likely to join the BJP, party leader Kapil Mishra said no such decision has been taken yet.

Iqbal, who has been with the Congress and Janata Dal (United) in the past, will be contesting from Matia Mahal, replacing former Delhi government minister Asim Ahmed Khan, who was sacked from the Cabinet over an alleged bribery scandal. However, over the last few months, Khan had once again warmed up to the AAP leadership.

Sawhney, who has been fielded from Chandni Chowk which had fallen vacant after the disqualification of Alka Lamba on grounds of defection, held the seat four times between 1998-2013 as a Congress MLA. He was defeated by Lamba in 2015.

Mishra has been fielded from Dwarka, which was being represented by former Apple executive Adarsh Shastri, grandson of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, since 2015.

Like Shaheen Bagh, East Delhi women sit-in against CAA

SHIVNARAYAN RAJPUROHIT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

AT 3.40 AM Tuesday, the temperature in East Delhi's Khureji Khas read 9°C. A Tricolour fluttered. A 'work in progress' barricade on Patparganj Marg is sprayed over with a 'No Fascist Government' slogan. A 'Save Constitution, Save Democracy' banner draped over a police barricade welcomes visitors.

The calm is shattered by slogans: *Hain Haq Hamara, Azadi; Hum Leke Rahenge, Azadi; Inquilab, Zindabad*. Underneath a tarpaulin and a flimsy plastic sheet, a group of women sit huddled together for warmth as some children covered in blankets doze off.

Emulating Shaheen Bagh's month-long protest, the women Monday started their indefinite sit-in to oppose the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and alleged police excesses on students. Just like Shaheen Bagh, men are also on the periphery, women and students lead the sit-in.

The indefinite sit-in is borne out of spontaneity, said Ishrat Jahan (30), one of the organisers and a former councillor.

"We started a peaceful can-



Women protesting at Khureji Khas, Tuesday

dleight march against CAA and NRC in the afternoon, and later a protest at this site. We had police permission till 5 pm. When they came to remove some men, women formed a human chain to rescue them. Inspired by Shaheen Bagh, women decided to sit on dharna until the government rolls back the CAA," said Jahan.

Among the crowd of 100-odd protesters is Nikhat Parveen (40), a homemaker.

"This is the fight to assert I belong here. The new law and NRC pose a threat to Muslims. I don't want to be in the dock when the future generation asks, 'Where were you when the law was implemented?'," she said.

Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav also visited the site in the evening to express his solidarity.

GURGAON'S SECTOR 40

5 men gatecrash Lohri party, open fire; 1 held

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, JANUARY 14

A LOHRI celebration in Sector 40 took a dramatic turn Monday night, when five men gate-crashed the event and allegedly opened fire at the crowd on being confronted. Three people were injured in the incident.

Police Tuesday arrested one of the men, Jainarayan (28) from Sector 22. "The accused is a history sheeter and was involved in several cases of loot. He was arrested on four occasions earlier," said Gurgaon Police PRO Subhash Boken.

Police said the incident took place around 11 pm, when Ajay Vats and his family were hosting a party, attended by "80-85 friends and neighbours". In his complaint, Vats said the accused



The accused arrived at the party in a white Scorpio

arrived in a white Scorpio and entered the tent set up for the party.

As the group gathered for a photo, Vats spotted the men and did not recognise them. He asked the photographer if he knew them, who said he didn't. Vats then went up to one of the men and confronted him. "When I asked him his name and who had called him, he pushed me. My brother, who was nearby, caught him. Seeing that their friend was

caught, one of the men pulled out a pistol and shot my brother with the intention of killing him," alleged Vats. The attackers then shot Vats' brother's in the right shoulder. When other guests tried to nab him, the accused allegedly opened fire blindly, injuring two others in the legs and fled.

Vats said the men drove in the direction of another Lohri function in the area. On finding their way blocked, they reversed and rammed into a reversing car, in which Vats was taking his brother to the hospital, before fleeing.

The accused told police he was drinking with four other men when they spotted a tent in Sector 40 and went in to eat. When people there recognised them as outsiders, they opened fire and fled. "The other accused will be nabbed soon," said Boken.

Can't preserve data: WhatsApp to HC on plea for info on JNU violence

PRITAMPAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

MESSAGING SERVICE provider WhatsApp told the Delhi High Court Tuesday that it cannot preserve data because of end-to-end encryption. Its response followed the court's direction to preserve and provide information sought by Delhi Police in connection with the January 5 violence on the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) campus.

The court also issued directions to Google to preserve data as per law from Google Drive as early as possible. To which it said if the law enforcement agency provides it with user information, it can find out if the chat histories are backed up on Google Drive. If so, the same can be preserved and provided to the investigating agency, Google said.

The order was issued on a plea by three JNU professors Ameet Parameswaran, Atul Sood, and Shukla Vinayak Sawant, seeking to preserve



Protests have gripped the JNU campus since the Jan 5 violence. Tashi Tobgyal

CCTV footage, WhatsApp conversations and other evidence related to the January 5 violence in which over over 30 students and teachers were injured.

Justice Brijesh Sethi asked police to seize the phones of members of two WhatsApp groups — Unity Against Left and Friends of RSS — on which the incident was allegedly plotted, besides summoning witnesses to the incident "at the earliest".

It also directed JNU's Chief Security Officer and Registrar to provide CCTV footage, between

January 3 to January 5, of all cameras on campus to Delhi Police at the earliest. The State Bank of India was also asked to preserve and provide CCTV footage of their cameras on the campus.

Standing Counsel (criminal) Rahul Mehra, appearing for Delhi Police, apprised the court it has already sent requests, including e-mails to WhatsApp, asking the company to follow the emergency route to provide data on users of the two groups.

"Police was yet to receive a reply," Mehra said, adding the police has identified 37 persons who were part of the two groups, and notices have been sent to them to appear before it.

Mehra also handed over the status report to the court, detailing the steps taken with regard to the investigation into the violence. Police named nine students, including JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, with regard to violence at Periyar and Sabarmati hostels. Crime Branch officers questioned three students, including Ghosh, on Monday.

MCG seals 9 properties in Gurgaon

Gurgaon: The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) Tuesday sealed nine properties in Gurgaon, whose owners had defaulted on payment of property tax, amounting to more than Rs 20 lakh each. The action comes a day after MCG Commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh directed zonal taxation officers to take action against "big property tax defaulters". He directed them to prepare lists of defaulters owing Rs 20 lakh and above, and those owing between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 20 lakh and begin the work.

At the meeting, officers revealed that while Zone 1 has 27 properties owing Rs 20 lakh and above — of which owners of three submitted their property tax after a notice — Zone 2 has 87 properties. In Zone 3, officers said there are 66 such properties, of which owners of 10 paid the tax. Zone 4 has 73 such properties. "Property tax is applicable on all types of buildings and vacant plots within MCG limits under the Haryana Municipal Corporation Act 1994. It's mandatory to pay property tax annually," said Singh, and added that those who do not pay will be charged at an annual rate of 18%, with action also being taken to seal the properties. **ENS**

‘VIOLENCE ON CAMPUS A LAW AND ORDER ISSUE’

Jamia request for probe against police sent to MHA: HRD Ministry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE MINISTRY of Human Resource Development (MHRD) Tuesday referred Jamia Millia Islamia's (JMI) request for a high-level inquiry into the police crackdown on students last month to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for "appropriate action".

The development came after JMI Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar met Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare Tuesday morning to reiterate the university's request for a probe. According to MHRD officers, the

request was forwarded to MHA as the matter "pertains to law and order".

"Unlike the violence on the JNU campus, which stemmed from an academic issue, the violence witnessed on JMI campus is a law and order issue. It is for the MHA to take a call on the university's request," said an officer on condition of anonymity.

Akhtar is learned to have also briefed Khare about the circumstances under which she decided to postpone the examinations on Monday.

On Monday, hundreds of students gheraoed Akhtar's office, demanding an FIR against the police in connection with the vi-



Students had gheraoed V-C Najma Akhtar's office Monday, seeking an FIR against police in connection with the violence unleashed on campus last month. *Praveen Khanna*

olence unleashed on campus last month.

The protesting students also demanded that the university reschedule examinations and ensure the safety of its students.

Apart from its request to the MHRD for a high-level inquiry, JMI has also filed a police complaint against "brutal action" of "unruly policemen" who beat students and damaged university property. Police are yet to register an FIR in the matter.

On December 15, police had lobbed teargas shells on campus and assaulted students inside the library, causing property damage worth Rs 2.5 crore.

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU University Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar speaks to Ravish Tiwari on the deadlock between students and the administration, violence on campus and whether he will take a lenient view on students who have been barred from registering for the new session.

Going by your profile that we published recently, there appears to be two kinds of Prof Kumars — Prof IIT Kumar and Prof JNU Kumar. There appears to be a difference between the teacher and the administrator.

In both positions, I am very compassionate towards my students and I do everything possible so my students grow professionally. So there is no difference between both Kumars.

JNU has a tradition of long discussions and debates, but it appears that Prof Kumar stands against a chunk of students who are anti-establishment?

Certainly not. When you say a big chunk of students, I think about the big chunk of more than 8,000 students who are struggling to write their end-semester examinations, who are struggling to register for the winter semester examinations because they are prevented by a small cross-section of students who have been agitating in spite of the fact that the JNU administration has remained very flexible and considered every suggestion and feedback.

What about the impression that the JNU V-C acts differently to different student groups?

For me, all students are equal. All faculty members are equal. As an administrator, I do not differentiate students and teachers into camps. Yes, I will definitely stand with students who want to contribute to the academic growth of the University. And I would definitely not welcome if any student wants to indulge in any activity which will affect the academic activity.

You are framing the issue between those who want to participate in academic activity and those disrupting it. But, in a social science campus, issues will also be framed along the Left and Right. There you appear to be coming out against the Left groups.

I always believed that agitating or going on a dharna on some issue is a fundamental right of any of our students. In fact, we have assigned a specific spot in the university where any such dharnas or protests can be held. All the time I have been telling that you cannot trample on the fundamental right of other students. And other students would like to continue their academic studies. How can you close down the schools, how can you stop your own teachers from entering schools and labs and lecture halls? I think, that is going beyond the civilised way of protesting. And that is what I have been telling my students — that I will defend your right to protest but I cannot defend your action of disrupting the life of other students.

One charge has been that the V-C hasn't gone to meet injured students.

You see, when students are injured, the first task is to make sure help is provided to students. We immediately shifted them to AIIMS and then when they came back to hostels, our senior wardens, the dean of students ensured medical help is provided from our medical centre. Whatever is the first task required, we have performed. And we are open to meeting the students. We will definitely meet them.

On the recent violence, you have been found wanting on the issue of providing safety and security. Don't you think



For me, all students are equal: V-C Jagadesh Kumar. *Prem Nath Pandey*

that the responsibility falls on you if masked outsiders beat up your students?

The first time any protesting students coming with masks for protests was on January 3 when a group of students came completely masked to attack the data centre of the University. And when we revived the data centre, again on January 4, another set of students came and tried to gain entry and make it dysfunctional. And on January 5, we have a scene. That is why I was telling, if your protest is genuine and if it is for a just cause, what is the reason you want to hide your faces? From whom are you trying to escape?

This is the question I have put to the protesting students. And also, you see, we are struggling to collect CCTV data now for the January 5 incident because for several hours our data centre was dysfunctional because of the agitating students who tried to damage it. Now, why did they do it on 3rd and 4th? Why did they try to bring down the servers? And then on 5th this incident happens, was there something that they were aware was going to happen? These are matters before the inquiry committee formed by the police. It has to look into and establish the facts.

But the charge that we have not provided enough security is completely wrong. I was here in office on January 5 right from 9.30 am. Around 4.30 pm, we finished the faculty selection committee meeting. That is when I was told by the security that a group of students — maybe around 100 or 120 — were violently moving from the school area towards the Hostel sector. We immediately sent our security guards there. Please understand that our security guards are ex-service-men, they are highly trained and committed people. And when they assessed the situation, around 5 pm they realised that the students were becoming aggressive and the number of students were growing. That is when we decided to call the police. I myself called the Police Commissioner, called the DCP and ACP and the police station to bring the police and control the situation. So, if anybody says we did not act on time or we delayed the action, I think that is completely wrong.

But you asked them to be on standby outside the campus while the violence continued here.... they were let in only when the violence was over.

Typically, what happens is that the University is a free place. We don't want police to be seen all around here. So, our practice has always been to ask the police to stay at the north gate and then tell them because there are civil dressed policemen also here, and in their assessment if they feel the situa-

tion is going out of control, we always tell the police to please come inside quickly and control the situation. That is what we told on that day.

You have barred 300-400 students from registering on the ground of disciplinary action notices. As the guardian, you can give a one-time confidence building measure and defuse the situation.

We don't automatically debar students. We have a chief proctor's office. And if any student has been found violating university rules, a first notice goes to the student to come and explain and defend themselves. If they don't turn up, a second notice goes. If they do not turn up a second time also, a third notice goes.

And as per the University's chief proctor's office rules, if they don't turn up even after the third call that is when they are academically suspended... And it is because of the refusal of these students, who are not co-operating with the chief proctor's office, temporarily they are academically suspended.

You can always exercise your discretionary powers and waive that and start from a clean slate this semester. But you are not exercising that option.

The Vice-Chancellor has the discretionary power to waive any punishment or reduce the punishment... But, in the first place itself, if you are not coming and telling your own side, what are you afraid of?

I think, on one side, the students are so rigid but on the other side they say JNU administration is rigid. We will be flexible. If you come and explain to the chief proctor's office. If an offence is established, if a punishment is given by the chief proctor, we will definitely look at it possibly in a lenient way. But, in the first place, they have to come and cooperate.

You are saying that you are open to waive off penal actions from proctor's office?

Yes. I can waive that off. I can reduce the punishment. There are several ways...

The MHRD stepping in to resolve a campus issue could suggest you have not been up to the mark. Don't you think you should resign?

You see, the demand for my resignation has come not only now but since 2016 when I was new. The first time a small cross-section of students and faculty confronted the JNU administration was when we said we have to adopt the UGC gazette to decide how many research scholars a professor can guide in the university. This was issued by UGC in 2009, but in this university they never bothered to adopt that. But, only in 2017 we adopted. Can you believe that in our university, professors used to take 30-40 PhD students under one professor, while across the best universities in the world, the average number of PhD students is only 3.5-4. When we adopted that, there was a shutdown of the university, the admin building was occupied and they dismissed me from the university. You can see the kind of freedom of expression available on the campus.

So, since then they have been saying that this V-C should resign and quit from his position. But, for what? What sin did I commit? This is what I would like to ask. Why are you trying to vilify me? Why are you trying to demonise me so much? All that we did during the last four years is keeping the future of this university in our mind.

How do you look at the campus protests in Jamia? And the police action there?

This is always my stand that violence should not happen inside the campuses. If there is a law and order situation, we definitely need to provide safety and security. Police can only handle if there is a law and order situation. That has been my stand. But, at the drop of our hat, we would not like to call the police into our campus.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

BRIEFLY

4 injured in Janakpuri fire

New Delhi: Four people, including a 14-year-old girl, were injured in a fire in West Delhi's Janakpuri area at 12.30 am Tuesday. Delhi Fire Services chief Atul Garg said, "The fire was caused by an LPG cylinder and the injured were sent to DDU Hospital." On Tuesday morning, another fire incident took place in a footwear manufacturing unit in Keshav Puram's Lawrence Road. "No causality was reported," said Garg.

Gurgaon contractor blacklisted

Gurgaon: The Municipal Corporation of Gurgaon blacklisted a contractor hired to undertake work on a stretch of green belt in the city, after discovering that he was allegedly charging money for the task without completing it. Officials said the contractor was to work on the green belt from Bristol Chowk to Khushboo Chowk in MCG's ward 34, along the Gurgaon- Faridabad Road. "Action will be taken with zero tolerance," said MCG commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh. **ENS**

Man dies as truck hits bike

New Delhi: A 27-year-old man was killed when a speeding truck hit his motorcycle in East Delhi's Patparganj Monday, police said Tuesday.

Man held with pistol, bullet

New Delhi: A 20-year-old man was apprehended at Shahdara Metro station Tuesday for allegedly carrying a pistol and a live bullet in his baggage, police said. **PTI**

JNU violence: Police name masked woman in video, ABVP admits she is their member

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

DELHI POLICE say they have identified the masked woman seen in videos of the January 5 violence at JNU as Delhi University student Komal Sharma. A student of Daulat Ram College and a member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Sharma allegedly is seen wearing a check shirt, a light blue scarf and carrying a stick in the video. She is also allegedly seen threatening students along with two other men inside Sabarmati hostel.

According to police, they have served a notice to her and two others, Akshat Awasthi and Rohit Shah, under IPC Section 160. Police said all three are yet to be traced and their phones are switched off.

When contacted, ABVP Delhi



She has been identified as DU student Komal Sharma

state secretary Sidharth Yadav acknowledged that Sharma is an activist from the outfit: "Since the social media trolling against her began, we have been unable to reach out to her. The last information I received was that she is with her family. I have not been able to contact her to ask if she has received summons from police."

"More investigation needs to be done into the allegations; it needs to be done as soon as pos-

sible so that the blot against her name can be removed. If she has indeed done something, that can be addressed. In the meantime, ABVP as an organisation is itself investigating what happened on the 5th, and has found that many of our people were beaten in the university," he added.

However, the student organisation continues to maintain that Shah is not affiliated to it. It had earlier said Awasthi is not a member of the ABVP either. Awasthi and Shah, first-year students of JNU, had featured in a sting operation by *India Today*.

Meanwhile, two more JNU students were questioned by the special investigation team (SIT) of the Delhi Police Crime Branch Tuesday in connection with violence. Experts of the FSL (cyber) team also managed to retrieve data from the server department.

Additional PRO (Delhi Police) Anil Mittal said the two students,

‘No one visited us after court directions’

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

"I NEVER stepped out of my house, not even to buy vegetables. Now that I have, I have no plans of retreating," said Noor-un-Nisa (75), with a toothless smile.

At Shaheen Bagh Tuesday, rumours about eviction of anti-CAA protesters by police were adrift — countered by volunteers who reassured protesters that the sit-in will enter its 32nd day. Rumours started after the Delhi High Court directed Delhi Police to look into restrictions on the usage of Kalindi Kunj-Shaheen Bagh stretch as per "ground reality" and their "wisdom".

A young volunteer said, "A senior police officer visited on Monday and spoke about wanting to open the other road as schools have opened up. The protesters don't want that right now as there has been no dialogue with the government. No one has visited us after the court direction Tuesday."

DCP (South East) Chinmoy Biswal said conversations with the elderly, market union heads, organisers and religious heads



The road has been shut since last month. *Gajendra Yadav*

will be done to convince the protesters to peacefully withdraw from the stretch. A police officer said, "Protesters should understand that this is an inconvenience and it's best not to create a law and order situation. No force has been used on the Shaheen Bagh protesters and no force will be used either."

A volunteer at the protest said that "so far, no one from the volunteering team has been approached by the police Tuesday."

A mobile shop owner in a lane close to the protest site said, "The protest is an inconvenience for the shopkeepers but implementation of CAA, NRC and NPR is a greater inconvenience."

Act as per law: HC to police on plea to open Shaheen Bagh road

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE DELHI High Court Tuesday directed Delhi Police to look into restrictions on the usage of the Kalindi Kunj-Shaheen Bagh road stretch, closed since December 15 due to protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, as per the "ground reality" and their "wisdom".

The petition, filed by social activist-advocate Amit Sahni, sought directions to the Delhi Police chief and area DCPs to withdraw the closure of the stretch and the Okhla underpass.

Refusing to pass any specific direction, a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar asked police to "react, in accordance with law, rules and government policies applicable to the facts of the present case".

"The concerned respondent (police) authorities shall also keep in mind the larger public interest as well as maintenance of law and order," it said, adding that "it ought to be kept in mind that whenever any agitation or protest is going on,

situation is like fluid — keeps on changing looking to the temperament of the protesters and resistance by other people".

"Simultaneously, police has to maintain law and order. Hence, respondents (police and others) have all power, jurisdiction... to control the traffic, wherever protests or agitations are going on, in the larger public interest.

"In such a situation, no specific writ, order or direction can be issued by this court as to how to handle the agitation or protest or the place of protest and the traffic. It all depends on ground reality and the wisdom of police, where situations may keep changing every 10 minutes," it added.

The stretch was closed on December 15, 2019, after hundreds of women staged a sit-in at Shaheen Bagh to protest against the Citizenship Act and National Register of Citizens. The diversion has thrown traffic out of gear in South East Delhi and on the stretch leading to Noida.

The PIL, disposed of with the direction, said the closure was causing "inconvenience" to lakhs of commuters every day.

PROTEST ENTERS 32ND DAY

At Shaheen Bagh protest, roza, with Gandhi

SABA RAHMAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ARFA WOKE up around 4 last Thursday on one of the coldest mornings this winter in Delhi. The rest of her family — husband, two sons and daughter — were sleeping as she had a cup of milk and some biscuits. That was her *sehri* (pre-dawn meal) ahead of the *roza* she would keep that day. After her morning prayers, she caught a couple of hours of sleep. These days Arfa's daily routine includes not just chores at home. As the protest in South East Delhi's Shaheen Bagh against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens enters its second month, she is among the hundreds of women gathering there to lend support.

The *roza* is part of a "collective" fast. Arfa is using a practice

associated with Islam's holiest days to register her protest against the "*kala qanoon* (black law)".

The organisers of the protest at Jamia Millia Islamia nearby, where participants have been keeping *roza* too, say there is another reason they chose fasting to make their voice heard. "January is the month when, in 1948, Gandhi (days before he was killed) fasted for the security of Muslims (in the aftermath of Partition)," says Nizam Pasha, an SC lawyer. "The importance of *roza* in Islam cannot be overemphasised. It is true for other religions as well. It is a protest, prayer, to reclaim our secular India."

Pasha adds that within days of a call being made for 'collective' *roza*, word spread through social media. A volunteer at Shaheen Bagh, Saima Khan, says 100-odd women fast on any given day.

Arfa, who has kept 10 *roz*as so



Iftaar organised on the lawns of the Jamia mosque

far, joins the protest at 2 pm. Avoiding conversation and praying silently, she says it is her religion that gives her resilience in her "battle for a secular India". "*Jab pareshaaniyaan aati hain, tab hum roze rakhte hain. Iss baar qaum ke liye, mulk ke liye, hum roze rakh rahe hain. Hum sab Hindu-Muslim barabari se rahein, saath rahein, yahi dua karti hoon* (Whenever there are difficulties, we fast. This

time I am fasting for the community, for the country. I pray we live together and live as equals)."

Historian Rana Safvi says the choice of fasting as a protest tool is significant: "*Roza* is about controlling your base desires, a protest that doesn't allow you anger. This control is akin to Gandhi and his satyagraha."

Arfa's daughter is an undergraduate student at Jamia. She wasn't in college the day police entered campus and beat up students, but the incident has left her worried. "That's why we have stepped out," she says.

Shabnam Jahan (55), who has kept five *roz*as so far, adds, "I fast for the future generation... so that the government takes back the NRC and CAA. *Allah hi mu-raad puri karega* (Allah is the one who will fulfill our wishes)."

At the sit-in organised by Jamia students, a relay hunger

strike has been on for 10 days. Towards evening, *samosas* are distributed for the *rozedaars*.

On the pavement is a makeshift library, a reminder of police violence at the Jamia library. Sahil, an organiser, says, "On December 25, we read chapters on Hindu-Muslim unity and satyagraha from Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. We have also read *Jamia and Gandhi* by Afroz Alam Sahil."

Ramchandra Guha, a Gandhi historian who was roughed up at an anti-CAA protest in Bengaluru, says, "Invoking Gandhi's name for protection of rights of minorities and Hindu-Muslim unity is admirable. Gandhi would have approved of the spontaneous outpouring of people of all faiths across the country." At Jamia, Pasha is planning the biggest fast yet, most likely on January 18, to mark the end of Gandhi's six-day fast — days later, he was killed.

Govt & Politics

Report: 1 in 4 kids entering Class 1 before they are ready for school

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ONE IN four children in India is entering the formal school system earlier than they should be — most of them in government schools — while evidence points to how older children learn better than younger children in the same class.

This is among the key findings of the Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2019, which focussed on the 'Early Years' — reporting on schooling status as well as a range of developmental indicators for children aged 4 to 8.

The study, which surveyed 36,930 children in this age group across 26 districts in 24 states, found that well over 90% of them are enrolled in some kind of educational institution (anganwadis, pre-primary classes in government schools, private pre-schools or formal schools, both government and private).

But 26.1% of the surveyed 5-year-olds were already in Class 1 or above, and 8.1% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in Class 1 or above, setting the stage for them to fall behind academically throughout their school years. This, when the Right to Education Act, 2009, mandates that children enter Class 1 at the age of 6.

The consequence of entering school before they are age-ready is that children are met with the curriculum expectations of formal schooling before their cog-

CHILDREN AGED 4-6: WHERE THEY ARE			
AGE	NOT ENROLLED	PRE-PRIMARY	CLASS 1 AND ABOVE
4	8.4%	83.5%	6.1%
5	3.9%	70%	26.1%
6	2.1%	32.8%	65.1%*

*46.4 per cent of 6-yr-olds in Class 1, as mandated by RTE

nitive skills are developed enough.

This is borne out in the findings of the report which suggest that at this early stage, older children learn better than younger children who are in the same class. For instance, in Class 1, only 6.3% 4- and 5-year-olds could read words, while that goes up to 14.9% among the 6-year olds and 20.7% among 7- and 8-year-olds.

Speaking at the release of the report, Director of ASER Centre Dr Wilima Wadhwa said these years "are known to be the most important stage of cognitive, motor, social and emotional development in the human life cycle".

Pratham CEO Rukmini Banerji said: "It is very clear that older children can do more than younger children even in the same grade and type of school. Children being enrolled into formal schooling when they are too young is a big reason for their falling behind others throughout their school life."

The report also shows that among those who enter formal school before they turn 6, mostly do so in government schools. Among the 5-year-olds surveyed, while 7.2% are in Class 1

or above in private schools, the figure stands at 16.7% in the case of government schools.

Banerji called this a consequence of the "over universalization" of elementary education.

"At this point of time, the understanding that schooling is important is widespread among parents. There is also the belief that more years of schooling is better and the earlier children enter schools, the readier they will be for future learning. Aspirational parents want to give their children a headstart into formal school but parental demand is not met with affordable facilities. Those who can afford it, send their children to LKG and UKG in private schools. In states where the education component in anganwadi centres is not seen as strong enough, poorer parents will then choose to enrol their children in the nearest government school, where the earliest class is Class 1," she said.

The relationship between the availability of affordable pre-primary options and the age of entry into formal school is reflected in numbers from different states.

At 33.6%, Rajasthan has one of the highest percentage among

states of 5-year-olds enrolled in government schools, while 16.2% of them were enrolled in private schools and a mere 9.3% of them were in anganwadi centres. In comparison, 36.4% of them were enrolled in private pre-primary institutions. The numbers suggest that government facilities in the state for pre-school children were either not readily accessible or weren't sought after.

On the other hand, Karnataka has the highest number of 5-year-olds enrolled in government pre-primary institutions. Here, 44.6% of 5-year-olds are enrolled in anganwadi centres and only 5.1% are enrolled in Class 1 or beyond in formal school. Here too, a large number of children — 49.8% — are enrolled in private pre-primary institutions.

The report also shows that gender discrimination begins early in life, with a 4- to 5-year-old girl more likely to be in a government school than a boy that age. These gaps, says the report, widen as the children get older.

For instance, among 4- and 5-year-olds, 56.8% girls and 50.4% boys were enrolled in government pre-schools or schools while 43.2% girls and 49.6% boys are enrolled in private pre-schools or schools. For 6- to 8-year-olds, 61.1% of all girls versus 52.1% of all boys went to a government institution.

THE IDEAS PAGE, EXPLAINED P15, 16

At govt hospital, Akhilesh tells doc to 'get out', calls him 'RSS man'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

SAMAJWADI PARTY chief Akhilesh Yadav was criticised by the BJP after a video emerged showing him purportedly telling a doctor to "get out" for interrupting his conversation with patients. The alleged snub took place at the emergency ward of a 100-bed hospital in Uttar Pradesh's Kannauj district on Monday.

Akhilesh had visited the hospital where victims of a bus accident on Friday night were being treated. In the video, Akhilesh is purportedly heard telling the doctor in Hindi, "You should not speak because you are the government's person... You may be from the BJP or RSS, but you can't talk about what he is saying. Go away from here. Run from here."

The doctor, Devi Shankar Mishra (61) who is a senior consultant at the hospital, said the issue was related to distribution of cheques to those who were injured in the accident.

State Health Minister and BJP leader Jai Pratap Singh condemned the incident. "It is very shameful that a person, who has been the chief minister of the state, without any reason, humiliated a senior person... who is an emergency doctor. It is beyond understanding that Akhilesh Yadav can stoop so low and will use such language..." Singh said.

INFIGHTING IN PUNJAB CONGRESS

Punjab ministers call for action against Bajwa for remarks against Amarinder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 14

A DAY after former Punjab PCC president Partap Singh Bajwa called for a "Captain-mukt Congress", referring to Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, state ministers on Tuesday called for the party leadership to take disciplinary action against him.

Bajwa, a Rajya Sabha MP, had made his comments against the CM during an interview with a TV channel on Monday. He had earlier said he would not support Singh's leadership for a second term unless action is taken on the desecration of religious texts.

An informal discussion between ministers before a state Cabinet meeting on Tuesday saw a demand for disciplinary action against Bajwa by the Congress leadership.

Sources said the issue was broached before the formal start of the meeting by Sports Minister Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi, an aide of the Chief Minister. He is learnt to have stated that Bajwa's rebellion will weaken the party.

A statement by the Chief Minister's Office said, "Punjab Ministers on Tuesday demanded, in one voice, disciplinary action by the Congress leadership against Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa for raising a banner of revolt against Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on public platforms."

They pointed out that despite repeated pleas asking him to express his opinions within the party forum, Bajwa continued to criticise Captain Amarinder Singh and his government in media and other places. The MP had gone so far as to seek a change at the helm of the government, they noted with consternation, terming it an act of sheer indiscipline and urging the party leadership to take immediate action against the former Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee chief," the statement added.

Pariksha Pe Charcha: HRD receives 2.63 lakh entries

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE MINISTRY of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has received 2.63 lakh entries from students to participate in this year's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha', an annual interaction with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on coping with exam stress. Last year, the government had received about one lakh entries.

The ministry has selected about 1,050 students from government and private schools in 28 countries to attend the third edition of the event at Talkatora stadium. The students will only ask the questions this year, said an officer. Last year, teachers and parents had also interacted with the PM. Modi took 10 questions in the 2018 edition and 16 in last

year's session.

To select students this year, the government invited students to suggest questions they would like to ask the Prime Minister and also write an essay on five themes — "Gratitude is Great", "Your Future Depends on Your Aspirations", "Examining Exams", "Our Duties, Your Take" and "Balance is Beneficial". Modi took 10 questions in the 2018 edition and 16 in last year's session.

The questions and essays were invited through the mygov.in website. That apart CBSE, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas were asked to hold contests to select the best questions and essays and share with the ministry.

Earlier, the interaction was to be held on January 16 but was rescheduled for January 20 due to festivals across the country.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



CONSENSUS CANDIDATE?

AFTER A brief lull, factional feuds seem to be back in the Congress, especially in Karnataka and Punjab. While the Amarinder Singh-Partap Singh Bajwa tug of war is getting serious in Punjab, the tussle in Karnataka Congress is over appointment of a new state Congress president. Former chief minister Siddaramaiah is in Delhi and had a meeting with party chief Sonia Gandhi. He is seen as desperate to scuttle moves to appoint D K Shivakumar as the state unit chief and is learnt to be pitching for senior leader M B Patil. A section of the high command wants to give the reins of the state unit to Shivakumar. Some leaders say there could be a twist in the form of a third name. And they believe the affable Krishna Byre Gowda could emerge as a consensus choice in the Siddaramaiah-Shivakumar war.

VOTING ON DUTY

THE ELECTION Commission introduced a new facility during Jharkhand Assembly polls, allowing people above the age of 80 years to vote through postal ballots. For the Delhi Assembly elections, the poll panel has added more categories of voters who can avail the "absentee voter" facility. This category is made up of voters who cannot cast their vote because they are on official duty on the polling day. For Delhi elections, people employed with Delhi Metro, Northern Railway Transportation and mediapersons covering elections can cast their votes through postal ballots on February 8.

LOOKING FOR LUCK

AFTER BJP general secretary Arun Singh changed his seating arrangements in his office in the party headquarters, party colleague Anil Jain has now followed suit. Jain has also rearranged his table to face the window, so that he can be seated with the wall to his back. The doctor-turned-politician says according to vaastu, one should be seated facing the north, east or north-east direction, as that is considered auspicious. In the usual arrangement in office rooms on the third floor of BJP headquarters, where party general secretaries are seated, the chairs faced south. Whispers in the corridors of the party office are about how Singh got nominated for Rajya Sabha seat after the changes, and Jain is now looking forward to some good news on his position in the organisation.

Railway officers write to PMO secy against proposed cadre merger

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

IN A letter to P K Mishra, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Railway civil servants have demanded that the Cabinet decision to merge all eight Railway cadres into one be not effected as it was taken without the "credible process of obtaining consensus", contrary to what is being officially called a unanimous decision.

The letter, jointly written by the service associations of Indian Railway Traffic Service, Indian Railway Personnel Service and Indian Railway Accounts Service officers, says that the move to make an Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS) by the cadre-merger move will "create situations of conflicts of

interest", kill specialisation in Railways, and adversely affect safety of train operations.

The letter was sent on a day that Railway Board chairman V K Yadav had an hours-long meeting with various service associations, especially the three services who have been protesting the cadre-merger move.

As per officers who attended those meetings, Yadav assured them that the modalities of the merger have not yet been finalised. He has apparently also assured the representatives of the associations that details of the cadre-merger proposal would be shared with the associations for wider consultations and inputs.

Yadav is scheduled to meet other service-specific associations on Wednesday on the same issue.

Maya changes BSP's LS leader for fourth time in eight months

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 14

MAKING THE fourth change in eight months in the post of BSP leader in Lok Sabha, party chief Mayawati has removed Amroha MP Danish Ali from the post for a second time and replaced him with Ritesh Pandey — a Brahmin — the Lok Sabha member from Ambedkar Nagar in UP.

In a tweet, the BSP chief justified it as a move to maintain "social cohesion" in the party.

In successive tweets on Monday, Mayawati said in Hindi: "Considering that party leader in Lok Sabha and party's Uttar Pradesh unit president are from the same community, some changes have been made to maintain social cohesion in the party. Now Ritesh Pandey has been nominated as leader in Lok Sabha and Bijnor MP Malook Nagar as (Lok Sabha) deputy leader. UP state president Munquad Ali will continue on his post."

Incidentally, as a BSP leader pointed out, the party's leaders in both Lok Sabha (Ritsh Pandey) and Rajya Sabha (SC Mishra) are now Brahmins.

Mayawati also stated that Lalji Verma (an OBC) will continue as party leader in UP Vidhan Sabha and Dinesh Chandra (a Dalit) will continue as BSP leader in Vidhan Parishad.

Mayawati made the changes a day before her 64th birthday on Wednesday, to be marked by

Why Maya is making so many changes

BSP CHIEF Mayawati's move to make so many changes to the position of party leader in Lok Sabha seems to be an attempt to explore the best possible combination to draw "non-Dalit" voters and find a suitable social equation in combination with the party's core vote base of Dalits before 2022 UP Assembly polls. While Shyam Singh Yadav's appointment as LS leader, Ritesh Pandey as LS deputy leader and Munquad Ali as UP unit president in August 2019 was expected to translate into a Muslim-OBC-upper caste combination, and add to the party's sizeable Dalit vote-bank, BSP failed to win a single seat in bypolls to 11 Assembly seats in UP in October 2019.

party workers as "Jankalyankari Diwas". She is scheduled to address the media and release the 15th volume of BSP's 'blue book' — *A Travelogue of My Struggle-Ridden Life and BSP Movement* — in Lucknow on the occasion.

After 2019 Lok Sabha polls, BSP had appointed party's MP from Nagina, Girish Chandra (a Dalit), to lead its 10-member team in the newly elected House.

The BSP had then voiced for a "Dalit-Yadav-Muslim" social equation while nominating Jaunpur MP Shyam Singh Yadav as LS deputy leader and Danish Ali as chief whip in the House.

But just before the opening session of 17th Lok Sabha, Chandra was replaced with Ali as the floor leader. On August 7, Ali was replaced with Shyam

Singh Yadav — Mayawati had then called it a step to make balance in "sarvasamaj", or an outreach to all communities. Ritesh Pandey was then appointed BSP deputy leader of Lok Sabha, and former Rajya Sabha MP Munquad Ali made UP BSP president.

On November 6, days before the winter session of Parliament got under way, Mayawati reappointed Danish as BSP Lok Sabha leader — his predecessor, Shyam Yadav, was given organisational responsibility in BSP's UP unit.

Party sources said Danish has left for London to avoid the party's celebration of Mayawati's birth anniversary. Danish is said to have opposed such celebrations at a time when there is a nationwide uproar on issues such as citizenship law and NRC.



Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and other dignitaries at the launch of the Rojgaar Sangi app.

ing on this app through which jobs and trained candidates could be connected," Meena said.

The app will benefit 7 lakh

students who were trained under the 705 courses offered by CSSDA. "We have one of the best training procedures and courses in the country. Availability of jobs

was our major issue, and this is a positive step in that direction," Meena said.

The skill development courses have had close to 50,000 candidates from Bastar region, and 65 transgender candidates. The maximum number of students is from Rajnandgaon district — accounting for over 33,000 applicants. "With the courses not converting directly into jobs, the number of takers might have taken a small hit, but mostly the few months of training is appealing to candidates," an officer said.

The courses offered by the CSSDA have incorporated additions. "Our students now have an option to train in GST computing too," the officer said.

Students can also take part in any number of courses at a time.

Deepak Meshram from Dhamtari said he learned driving, cleaning and then basic tally and computer operation one after the other. "While doing the courses, I realised what is needed to work in an office. So I took up relevant courses," he said. Meshram, who worked for a start-up for three months in Raipur, now manages a shop in Raipur.

The app can also be used to register online for the unemployment index. "Under any employment generation scheme, the users will be notified," Kumari said.

The app makes it easier for start-up companies to hire office staff. "If you are a small firm, you can't pay hiring agencies. So, you use the app to insert your requirement, without any cost,

and get the applications for as many posts as you have vacant," Meena said.

The app currently has no way to regulate the earning. "In the app, the customer can put the salary they can pay and registered workers can then show interest accordingly. As of now, we don't have any way to regulate or ensure a minimum salary," said an officer working on the app development.

According to Meena, the app, like all technology, will be a work in progress. "It is a first-of-its-kind app and we will keep adding and refining it. But the initiative is for information about our trained students and services they provide to be made accessible in every part of the state, which in turn will help increase job opportunities," he said.

PROTEST WATCH

GUJARAT



Kites at the Gujarat Vidyapith campus in Ahmedabad. Javed Raja

Police enter varsity during kite-flying protest

Ahmedabad: Police entered the Gujarat Vidyapith campus in Ahmedabad where students had organised an event to fly kites bearing anti-CAA messages. While students claimed that police disrupted the event, a senior officer said they entered the campus as part of "routine patrolling" on inputs that some members of rival student outfits, NSUI and ABVP, might confront each other over flying of anti-CAA kites. Some students of the varsity said a group of police personnel entered the campus, located on Ashram Road in the city, while they were

preparing to celebrate the Uttarayan Festival by flying kites with messages like "India Against CAA", "No NPR, No NCR". They claimed that police also demanded their identity cards. "When confronted by us, the police personnel told us they had the right to enter the campus without taking anyone's permission," claimed some students in video clips. DCP P L Mal said the police entered the campus over a possible law and order issue after receiving inputs that NSUI and ABVP may enter into a confrontation. **PTI**

MAHARASHTRA



A protest against CAA, NRC and NPR, in Malegaon. Express

KARNATAKA

Institute agrees to repaint walls after anti-CAA graffiti

Bengaluru: Graffiti with messages related to CAA and NRC on walls outside the Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology here led to a stand-off between the institute and local BJP leaders, including the party's Yelahanka MLA S R Vishwanath. A local resident filed an online complaint with the city corporation, alleging that students had defaced public property. After the complaint, Vishwanath arrived at the institute with his supporters and questioned faculty

members and students, objecting to a graffiti on the Prime Minister. BJP workers and local residents insisted that the institute must wipe off the graffiti, and complained that students were seen smoking and wore skimpy clothes, students said. "The locals felt the graffiti was in bad taste and that it is wrong to deface public property... The institute officials themselves have got the walls repainted," DCP (north east) Bheemshankar Guled said. **ENS**

RAJASTHAN



A protest against the CAA, NRC and NPR outside Jaipur's Albert Hall Museum on Tuesday. Rohit Jain Paras

TRIPURA

IPFT dharna enters Day 9, CPM outfit announces stir

Agartala: The Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT), an ally of the ruling BJP, has continued their indefinite sit-in demonstration against the CAA in Tripura. The protest began on January 6 and entered its ninth day on Tuesday. IPFT spokesperson Mangal Debbarma said a delegation of the party will visit Shillong on January 19 to meet MHA officials and the party also wants to meet

Home Minister Amit Shah. Meanwhile, the Tripura Rajya Gana Mukti Parishad, the tribal wing of opposition CPI(M), has announced a nine-day mass sit-in demonstration across the state beginning on January 17. Calling CAA a "black Act", GMP president and former MP Jitendra Chaudhury said it is an attempt by radical groups to divide people on religious lines. **ENS**

Muslim population up as they got special rights: Adityanath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, JANUARY 14

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday that the Muslim population in India increased manifold since Partition because they were given special rights and facilities, unlike in Pakistan.

He also said that the protests against the new citizenship law were a conspiracy aided by a "crooked" Opposition, and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah should be feted and not attacked for bringing the CAA.

Addressing a rally in Gaya organised by the BJP in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Adityanath said, "The Muslim population in India has increased manifold since 1947, it has gone up by seven to eight times. No one has any objection. If they, as citizens of the country, work for development, they are welcome. Their population has increased because they have been given special rights and facilities. All possible steps were taken to ensure their growth. But what happened in Pakistan?"

He asked why the Hindu population in Pakistan had decreased since 1947 and there was no clue as to where they had gone.

The CM said that those opposing the CAA were committing the sin of working against national interests. He pointed out that Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi and state BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal have articulated how the CAA is about granting citizenship to persecuted refugees and not about taking it away from anybody. "For taking such a step, PM Narendra Modi



UP CM Yogi Adityanath with other BJP leaders at a rally in Gaya. Rakesh Praveer

and Home Minister Amit Shah deserve acclaim. Instead they are being attacked," he said.

"Protests are taking place across the country and a crooked Opposition is adding fuel to the fire. But the people of the country need to understand that it is a conspiracy hatched from afar. The strings are being pulled by those who are resentful of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat' (united India, grand India), which is becoming a reality under Modi," he claimed.

Emphasising that the Modi government did not discriminate against people on the basis of religion, he said that many people had benefited from welfare schemes like Ujjwala Yojana and Ayushman Bharat. "Was anybody asked, before being included as a beneficiary, about his or her religion or caste?" he said. "This new India does not

cower, like the Congress did, before Pakistan's atomic power. The neighbouring country is today fearful that it may end up losing even PoK after Article 370, which Jawaharlal Nehru wrongly introduced, was abrogated," the UP CM said to loud applause.

Invoking B R Ambedkar, he said, "The revolutionary-turned-freedom fighter Sri Aurobindo had said that the biggest virtue in current times is to work for national interest and the biggest sin is to work against it. The Opposition is committing the sin. To understand this you should take the contrasting examples of Ambedkar and Jogendra Nath Mandal. Ambedkar remained loyal to his country while Mandal fell for Jinnah's designs, helped the creation of Pakistan and became a minister in that country."

He added, "While Ambedkar

is a revered figure, Mandal felt so stifled in Pakistan that within a decade he resigned and came to Kolkata where he spent his last years living a life of anonymity. Let it be known to all, whoever works against national interests shall be condemned to a similar fate."

Referring to anti-CAA posters put up by the Congress-RJD on the way to the venue, he said, "A party that had strangled the Constitution by imposing Emergency has the audacity to do so."

"The Congress played scare-monger on the Ram temple issue, claiming blood would be spilled on the streets if the matter was taken to its logical conclusion. Now it has been settled once and for all, and on the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti I declare that Ayodhya in my state will soon be ready with a Ram Mandir," he said.

Raut: Sena out of NDA, with UPA on key national issues

MANOJ MORE
PUNE, JANUARY 14

ONE OF the oldest members of the NDA since it was formed in 1998, the Shiv Sena is officially out of the BJP-led alliance, and although "not yet" part of the opposition UPA, the party will be with the Congress-led alliance "on key national issues", senior Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said on Tuesday.

Considered close to Maharashtra Chief Minister and party chief Uddhav Thackeray, Raut on Tuesday said the party did not attend Monday's Opposition meeting, convened by Congress president Sonia Gandhi to form a strategy against the citizenship law (CAA), NRC and NPR,



Sanjay Raut

due to "miscommunication".

Asked whether the Sena will be part of such meetings in future, he said, "Yes, we will attend all meetings of opposition parties."

Raut told *The Indian Express*, "We would have attended the (anti-CAA) meeting, but there was some miscommunication. First we thought the Chief

Minister had been invited. But later it became known that any top leader could attend the meeting. In this confusion, we could not make it to the meeting."

Asked whether this means the Sena is ready to join UPA, Raut said, "Not as of now. If there is an offer to join UPA, we will discuss it in the party and take a decision."

But, he added, the party is not with the NDA any longer. "We are out of NDA and are not attached to any group (at present)," he maintained.

Raut said if the UPA takes a stand on any national issue or issues of national security, the Sena will take the decision to join the Opposition ranks. "On key national issues, we will be with the UPA," he said.

NRC would've been correct if Assam govt did it: Sonowal

As per Assam Accord, cut-off should have been 1967: Sarma

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, JANUARY 14

ASSAM CHIEF Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has said that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise would have been "correct" if the state government had got complete responsibility for its preparation.

Senior BJP leader and state Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma claimed that according to the Assam Accord, 1967 should have been the cut-off year for the NRC instead of 1971.

The NRC preparation in Assam started following a December 2014 order by the Supreme Court, and continued thereafter under its direct monitoring. The final NRC, published in August 2019, excluded over 19 lakh applicants.

However, the Assam government has said that it will not accept the NRC in its current form. A government plea seeking the re-verification of NRC data is pending in the apex court.

Late on Monday night, Sonowal, speaking at a one-day special session of the state Assembly, said, "The BJP-led government wanted that the NRC be



Sarbananda Sonowal, Himanta Biswa Sarma



updated correctly... Had we got the responsibility single-handedly, if the state government was told that the entire responsibility for the preparation of the NRC is with the Assam government, then let me tell you, a correct NRC would have been presented to the people of Assam, people of India."

Sonowal said that soon after taking oath as the CM in 2016, he visited the NRC directorate and discussed the progress in work with officials. He said 55,000 state government employees worked for the NRC, and the state police fully cooperated to maintain law and order during the exercise even as the Centre extended all the necessary funds for the exercise.

The CM also said that misinformation regarding the number of persons estimated to be bene-

ficiaries of the CAA in Assam was "floating around", and stressed that implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord will ensure protection of rights and constitutional safeguards for the indigenous people of Assam.

Speaking in the Assembly earlier in the evening, Sarma said that the preparation of the NRC in Assam was not mentioned in the Assam Accord, which was signed in 1985 after a six-year mass agitation against "foreigners". He said that according to the Accord, 1967 should have been the cut-off year for the NRC and not 1971.

The Assam Accord led to the insertion of Section 6A in the Citizenship Act. As per Section 6A, people who entered Assam between January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971 need to register at a Foreigners Regional Registration Office. They would have all the rights of a citizen except the right to vote, which would be granted after 10 years.

In the NRC note, those who entered Assam during this 1966-71 window but did not register themselves are also liable to be excluded. The NRC was prepared with the cut-off of mid-night of March 24, 1971.

BJP condemns provocative remarks but says: Protesters trigger such reactions

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE BJP on Tuesday distanced itself from controversial remarks by some party leaders over protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, but took exception to "provocative slogans and placards" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath by protesters.

"I would have condemned (controversial statements of BJP leaders) more strongly if it had not been started by them (protesters)," party general-secretary Anil Jain said on Tuesday. "But if things boil one's blood, how can they not say such things? Have intellectuals protested the comments made against the PM?"

Meanwhile, continuing with his campaign in support of CAA, which is facing people's protests in many parts of the country, BJP president and Home Minister Amit Shah will address a rally in Vaishali, Bihar, on Thursday.

The rally takes place two days after Bihar Chief Minister and NDA ally Nitish Kumar declared in Assembly that he is open to a debate on CAA, which political observers see as a signal of Nitish's reservation on the new law, even though his party, JD(U), voted in favour of the citizenship Bill in Parliament.

"The rally will also be an opportunity to send clear signals to the confused ally," a BJP leader said.

With the party leadership going aggressive about its arguments in support of CAA, Lok Sabha MP and West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh had on Monday praised the BJP govern-

ments in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka for killing protesters "like dogs".

Another party leader from Uttar Pradesh, Raghuraj Singh, said people shouting slogans against Modi and Adityanath will be "buried alive".

"The BJP does not support these statements... The party does not agree with them," Anil Jain said. However, he argued, BJP leaders make such statements because there have been "objectionable slogans and posters" against Modi and Adityanath in the protests. "You cannot even read them (they are so offensive). What kind of posters were taken out by so-called intellectuals in Mumbai against Modi-ji and Hindus? How can you do this while living in this country? Can you do it in a Muslim country? Can you do it in any Christian country? But we are tolerating it."

That, Jain said, triggered "such reactions" from BJP leaders.

He also justified party MP Meenakshi Lekhi's jibe at Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, who voiced concern over the fallout of the amended citizenship law in India. Lekhi tweeted that Nadella's comments showed "how the literate need to be educated".

Jain said: "The statement is fine. He (Nadella) is not illiterate, but not educated about this. I would say all those fighting are not properly educated about the law — CAA is not something that is to be opposed by anyone, because it is not against any citizen of this country. It is meant to give some sort of relief to those who are persecuted in neighbouring countries."

DMK: Skipped anti-CAA meet over TN Cong chief's remarks



T R Baalu

Stating that Alagiri's criticism had upset the entire party, Baalu said, "It was a statement in bad taste. We consider it as a statement against our party chief (M K Stalin), so we did not attend their (Congress's) meeting."

Asked whether negotiations were on at the top level to resolve the crisis, he said Alagiri's remarks were "wrong" and the reaction from his party has come. "There is nothing (to it) more than that," he added.

Besides the DMK, opposition

parties such as the Trinamool Congress, BSP and AAP, among others, had boycotted Monday's meeting.

On January 10, Alagiri had said the Congress was not allotted a fair number of posts of local bodies chiefs by the DMK, and that this went against the "coalition dharma". Sources in DMK said Alagiri is seen as a leader close to Congress veteran P Chidambaram, and often voicing the former Union minister's opinion. Chidambaram subsequently seemed to justify Alagiri's statement, stating that it was the feeling of party cadres, and was not against the DMK.

A DMK MP said, "It was the arrogance of Alagiri and people who mentor him from Delhi that irked Stalin..."

Gave complaint for FIR against cops: AMU V-C; police deny receiving it

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

ALICARH MUSLIM University (AMU) Vice Chancellor Tariq Mansoor said the varsity had given a written complaint against the police Tuesday, demanding an FIR against police personnel for entering a university hostel on December 15 last year.

In a statement by the university, Mansoor claimed that the university administration had only given the police permission to bring "the situation to normalcy and restore public order and to clear the main road and that they were not supposed to enter any residential hostel".

The hostel in question was the Morrison Court of Aftab Hall, the university statement said. Mansoor said that evidence brought to the knowledge of the university administration "suggests that the police personnel might have crossed the mandate by entering the Morrison Court Hostel premises".

Students had alleged that the police used excessive force on the campus and beat up students for holding a protest against alleged police excesses at Jamia Millia Islamia on December 15. Several



Tariq Mansoor

students were injured.

The AMU administration said a written complaint was sent to the Civil Lines police station on behalf of the varsity's administration regarding the "entry of police personnel inside the hostel" on December 15. The university said that the complaint was sent through the AMU's security in-charge. "The station in charge, however, informed the AMU official that the matter is subjudice in the High Court. Hence, the complaint was brought back by the security in-charge," said a statement by the university.

Civil Lines SHO Amit Kumar denied receiving any such complaint on Tuesday. "We did not receive any such complaint from AMU," Kumar said.

Dantewada: Maoists kill brother of rebel who became cop

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, JANUARY 14

A 26-YEAR-OLD man was allegedly killed by Maoists in Dantewada district on Monday night. The deceased is the younger brother of a former Maoist, who had surrendered and joined the state police last year, and police suspect it to be a case of revenge killing. Lakshman's body was found by the police in Duvalikarka area on Tuesday. According to police, Lakshman was called to the forest by some people on Monday night. "He was stabbed and his neck was slit with a sharp weapon. When he didn't return, his family alerted the local police," Dantewada SP Abhishek Pallav said. "Lakshman's older brother Baman had surrendered last year in September," Pallav said. "In April 2019, a senior Naxal Varghese was killed in the same village in a police encounter. They seem to think that Mandavi had a role to play in it. So they killed his younger brother," Pallav said. The Dantewada SP said, "The Naxals are changing their pattern. Earlier, they would hold a jan sunavani, a public court. But now they are beginning to kill in secret." Police said that Lakshman had no relations with Varghese who lived with his wife and two children at the village. The body has been handed over to the family after post-mortem, police said. "We are examining the papers left around his body by the Naxals. They claim that they are taking revenge for the deaths of their men Varghese and Linga," a senior officer privy to the case said. Meanwhile, a CRPF personnel was injured in an IED blast Bijapur district on Tuesday, the police said. He was taken to a local hospital and would be airlifted to Raipur, an official said.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

DySP didn't get gallantry medal from MHA: police

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

JAMMU AND Kashmir Police on Tuesday said that reports claiming that suspended police officer Davinder Singh, who was arrested along with two Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, was awarded a gallantry medal by the Union Home Ministry are not true. The recipient of the medal was another officer with the same name, it said. Deputy Superintendent of Police Singh, who was posted with Srinagar airport's anti-hijacking unit, was arrested in Kulgam district's Mir Bazar on Saturday. "It is to clarify that Dysp Davinder Singh is not awarded any Gallantry or Meritorious Medal by MHA as has been reported by some media outlets/ persons. Only gallantry medal awarded to him during his service is by the erstwhile J&K State on Independence Day 2018 for his participation in countering a Fidayeen Attack by Terrorists at District Police Lines Pulwama on 25/26 Aug 2017 when he was posted there as DySP District Police Lines Pulwama. Media persons are advised to avoid speculative stories not based on facts," J&K Police



Davinder Singh's under-construction house in Srinagar's Indira Nagar locality. Shuaib Masoodi

tweeted. The police said that an SIT was handling Singh's interrogation. "Jammu Kashmir Police is known for its professionalism & doesn't spare anyone including its own cadres if found involved in any unlawful act or unbecoming conduct," they tweeted. "We have done it in the past in many cases and now in this particular case where it has caught its own officer on its own input and action and would continue to abide by our code of conduct and the Law of the Land which is same for everyone." On Saturday, a large number of security personnel arrived in the highly fortified Indira Nagar locality of Srinagar's Badami Bagh Cantonment area and searched Singh's residence. "We didn't suspect such a thing would happen. A large number of security forces arrived. Later we saw in the news that the officer has been arrested," said a local resident. Singh is building a new house in Indira Nagar, which shares walls with Army's 15 corps headquarters at Badami Bagh. Locals said the family has been living at his brother-in-law's house as his house is under construction. The family was tightlipped on the matter. "We are shocked by the developments," said a family friend.

Congress, BJP trade barbs over Davinder, Pulwama

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE CONGRESS on Tuesday was at the centre of a row after its leader in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, suggested that there was no outrage over J&K Deputy Superintendent of Police Davinder Singh's arrest since he is not a Muslim. Singh was arrested on Saturday after he was caught with two militants. He claimed he was given money for this. On Tuesday, Chowdhury said, "Had Davindar Singh by default been Davindar Khan, the reaction of the troll regiment of RSS would have been more strident and vociferous. Enemies of our country ought to be condemned irrespective of colour, creed and religion." "The chink in the armour is exposed in the Valley...we cannot afford to be penny wise and pound foolish. Now question will certainly arise as to who were the real culprits behind the gruesome Pulwama incident. (We) need a fresh look on it," he said, referring to the February 2019 Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF men were killed in a terror attack. Reacting to the remarks, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra told the media: "I want to ask the Congress party, Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi... do you have any doubt as to who were the perpe-

trators of the Pulwama attack? I challenge the Congress and its president today.. If she has doubts as far as the perpetrators of the Pulwama attack are concerned... she should come on camera and she declare so. If you believe Pakistan did not have a role in Pulwama attack and did not carry out the attack, then come on camera and say so...why do you want to give a clean chit to Pakistan?" By evening, Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar triggered another controversy. Addressing anti-CAA and NRC protesters in New Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, Aiyar said, "I am ready to do whatever I can for you. Whatever support you want from me, I am ready to give that. Whatever sacrifices are needed I am ready to be part of it... aur dekhe kiske haath majboot hain... hamara ya uss qaatil ka (let's see who emerges stronger... we or that murderer)." While the Congress did not immediately react to Aiyar's remarks, it played down Chowdhury's comments. Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala told the media, "Davinder Singh admittedly was bringing two terrorists and one conduit in his car to Delhi, which police and government now says was in lieu of Rs 12 lakh. I find the story preposterous and I find this explanation hogwash. There is a larger conspiracy. At whose instance was Singh acting and bring-

ing terrorists to Delhi, as has been reported in many newspapers? Are there people in echelons of power who are involved with him? Is there a larger conspiracy? Is he only a small pawn or a carrier in the larger conspiracy that is (being) unleashed?" "These are all questions that the Home Minister and the Prime Minister need to answer, for Singh cannot be a standalone carrier carrying terrorists to Delhi for a possible attack," Surjewala said. Asked about Chowdhury's remarks, he said the question is not about caste or religion. Surjewala said: "The question is who is Davinder Singh? What is the conspiracy? Who is the mastermind of this conspiracy? Is there a person occupying a position, who has access to information about country's security...(who has) links with Davinder Singh.... If that is so, there could a danger to the country's security...The Home Minister should probe, give a statement." He said the Congress had raised certain questions in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack. "We had asked where the RDX had come from, who had brought it, and how it could be brought in despite such high security...We had also asked how the car (used in the attack) reached the Army convoy...but there were no answers from Modi, Amit Shah or Rajnath Singh.... There is need for a thorough probe..."

COMMISSIONERATE
New police system in Ghaziabad, Varanasi, Kanpur likely

AMIL BHATNAGAR
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 14

AFTER LUCKNOW and Gautam Buddh Nagar, the police commissionerate system will be implemented in three other cities of Uttar Pradesh, police officials said. The state government is looking to introduce the police commissioner system in Varanasi, Kanpur and Ghaziabad in a phased manner. DGP Om Prakash Singh told *The Indian Express* that further implementation will not be done in a hasty manner, adding that the earlier decision was taken after a thorough series of meetings. "It was proactive decision of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath after studying all pros and cons. In the three proposed districts, the population exceeds 10 lakh, which is an important parameter for implementation. The move will be carried out phase-wise," he said. The three proposed cities have been identified to have high population density and visible crime situation, police said. "The major decision to have police commissionerate in Lucknow and Gautam Buddh Nagar is part of the police reform in the state with an eye towards dispensation of speedy justice and ensuring more safety and security for the people. The experiment will be taken further in the state," said Singh. Sources said the proposal for commissionerates was in the pipeline for six months, and several meetings took place in the run-up to the Cabinet decision. Regarding the resistance within the IAS lobby in the light of the decision, the police chief said, "In fact, the IAS bureaucracy was very positive during the whole process and always thought it would be good for the people." The police are currently evaluating demographic, geographic and criminal statistics of the other three districts and are yet to come up with a timeline for execution.

At Raisina Dialogue, world leaders discuss climate change, tech

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

AS FORMER Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay said the UN Security Council has failed the world on climate change, four out of seven former heads of state at the Raisina Dialogue spelt out "climate change" as the one challenge they would like to solve in future. At the inaugural session on Tuesday, Tobgay said, "Till now the UNSC has adopted only one resolution on climate. This has to change. Climate remains the biggest concern."

Besides Tobgay, former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt, former New Zealand PM Helen Clark and South Korea's former PM Han Seung-Soo also underlined "climate change" as the challenge they would like to see resolved in the coming years. While former Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai sought a more "humane world order" on the basis of Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts, Stephen Harper and Andreas Fogh Rasmussen, former PMs of Canada and Denmark, respectively, said "technology" is one challenge they would like to resolve in future. Sweden's for-



Iran Foreign Minister Javad Zarif arrives in India. He will meet PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday. ANI

mer PM Carl Bildt underlined climate change, tech, cyber and space among the challenges. This was the highlight of the panel discussion, moderated by Observer Research Foundation president Samir Saran, who asked the visiting dignitaries about that one challenge they would like to see resolved in the coming years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, among others, were in audience during the discussion. Raisina Dialogue, India's flagship global conference on geopolitics organised jointly by the Ministry of External Affairs and

ORF, began with Rasmussen, also NATO's former Secretary General, saying that he would like to see a global alliance of democracies to stand up to oppressive rulers and regimes, and India could play an important role in such a coalition. "I am an admirer of Prime Minister Modi and India's participation in this alliance is important," he said. Harper said, "Climate change cannot be tackled through targets. We need zero-emission technology and development." He hailed Modi's leadership and said India will be self-defined. Australian PM Scott Morrison,

who was scheduled to deliver the inaugural address but had to call off his four-day visit due to the devastating bushfire in several parts of his country, sent a video message, stating that India is and will remain the "strategic lynchpin" in the Indo-Pacific. Speaking at the event, Jaishankar said India's foreign policy seeks to achieve a broad engagement with many parties and "managing if not leveraging global contradictions, advancing our interests in a multi-polar world and contributing to global good".

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

A ROUGH PATCH

High inflation reduces room for rate cuts. With limited fiscal space, FM must spell out plans to revive growth

LATEST INFLATION DATA seems to corroborate fears articulated by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its December meeting when it refrained from cutting the benchmark repo rate. Retail inflation, as measured by the consumer price index (CPI), has surged to 7.35 per cent in December 2019, up from 5.54 per cent in November, according to data from the National Statistical Office. With headline inflation well above the RBI's upper bound target of 6 per cent — it is expected to remain elevated in the coming months, may well surpass the RBI's estimate for the second half of this fiscal year — it reduces the space for further easing of policy rates, even after clarity over the extent of the Centre's fiscal slippage emerges. The 10-year G-securities have reacted sharply to these developments, rising to 6.67 on Tuesday, partially offsetting the impact of the RBI's recent open market operations. This combination of weak economic activity and higher than expected supply-side inflationary pressures has put the inflation-targeting regime under test.

Much of the rise in the headline inflation number can be traced to higher food prices. Food inflation has risen to a near six-year high of 14.12 per cent in December 2019, up from 10.01 per cent in the previous month. Much of this spurt is due to vegetable prices, which have surged to 60.5 per cent in December, contributing nearly 3.7 percentage points to the headline numbers. Prior to this data, there was an argument for overlooking this spurt in food prices, and easing rates further, as this spike in inflation is likely to be transitory. But the price rise has been much more pronounced. And while vegetable crop cycles tend to be short, and supply-side pressures may ease in the coming months, the stickiness in prices of protein items is likely to provide a floor for food inflation. Put differently, food inflation is unlikely to revert to previous levels in the short term. And as household inflation expectations, a key metric in the MPC's assessment, are more responsive to food inflation, this uptick will further exert upward pressure on them. Add to that the uncertainty over oil prices on account of hostilities in the Middle East, and the outlook for inflation looks muddled.

It was expected that the MPC would lower rates further once clarity over the Centre's fiscal position emerges after the Union budget. But the current trends in inflation suggest that those expectations are likely to be belied. Space for further easing may now open up only towards the second half of the next fiscal year. Soon, attention will turn to the Union budget. With limited fiscal space for a meaningful stimulus, the finance minister should spell out how the government intends to support the economy during this rough patch, and return growth to a higher trajectory.

BEFORE SCHOOL

ASER report, which links learning crisis to pre-school education, calls for a revamp of the anganwadi system

SINCE 2005, THE NGO Pratham's Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER) have shone a light on a critical failure of India's education system: A large number of school-going children across the country are short on basic learning skills. These reports have led to debates on seminal policy interventions such as the Right to Education Act and have been catalysts for meaningful conversations on the pedagogical deficiencies of the formal school system. The latest edition of ASER, released on Tuesday, directs attention to children between four and eight years of age, and suggests that India's learning crisis could be linked to the weakness of the country's pre-primary system.

More than 20 per cent of students in Standard I are less than six, ASER 2019 reveals — they should ideally be in pre-school. At the same time, 36 per cent students in Standard I are older than the RTE-mandated age of six. "Even within Standard I, children's performance on cognitive, early language, early numeracy, and social and emotional learning tasks is strongly related to their age. Older children do better on all tasks," the report says. This is a significant finding and should be the starting point for a substantive debate on the ideal entry-level age to primary school. In this context, policymakers would also do well to go back to the pedagogical axiom which underlines that children between four and eight are best taught cognitive skills through play-based activities. The emphasis, as ASER 2019 emphasises, should be on "developing problem-solving faculties and building memory of children, and not content knowledge".

ASER 2019 talks about leveraging the existing network of anganwadi centres to implement school readiness. The core structure of the anganwadis was developed more than 40 years ago as part of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). Pre-school education is part of their mandate. But at the best of times, these centres do no more than implement the government's child nutrition schemes. A number of health crises — including last year's AES outbreak in Bihar — have bared the inadequacies of the system. A growing body of scholarly work has also shown that the anganwadi worker is poorly-paid, demoralised and lacks the autonomy to be an effective nurturer. The ASER report is alive to such shortcomings. "There is a need to expand and upgrade anganwadis to ensure that children get adequate and correct educational inputs of the kind that are not modeled after the formal school," it notes. The government would do well to act on this recommendation — especially since the Draft Education Policy that was put up for public discussion last year, also stresses on the pre-school system.

HOPE AND DESPAIR

New York Public library reveals 10 most-read books in its 125-year history. Its message: Childhood endures

THE JOYS OF childhood and fantasy, the faultlines of bigotry and the contours of totalitarianism — these are the themes of the 10 most issued books in the 125-year history of the New York Public library. Among the 10 titles, the greatest number are children's books. The most borrowed book of all — *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack — is an illustrated account of a black child's encounter with snow. The list also features *Cat in the Hat*, *Charlotte's Web* and *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. Among more recent publications, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (*The Philosopher's Stone* outside the US) has made the list. Outside children's literature, though, the titles are less full of hope and joy: Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and George Orwell's *1984* are both dystopian tragedies, where knowledge, individuality and curiosity carry a heavy price.

Why do people return, generation after generation, to the stories of their childhood? The life-cycle of the New York Public Library can easily be superimposed on the era of modernity — of a steady deracination of the individual from society. Each generation feels just a little more lonely, more cut-off from those that came before. The stories that have made the list, then, are the ones that have been passed on in the hope that in the absence of a collective culture that stays in families, the books can make children just a little bit like ourselves. *Charlotte's Web* is about friendship and loyalty, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* about the complexity of hatred and the ways to rise above it.

Childhood, then, has endured. But so has despair — the fear of uniformity, of the state and its instruments becoming a leviathan that cannot be resisted. Given the domestic and global political climate, it is easy to believe that Orwell and Bradbury have a particular resonance in our time. But, as the list shows, that is not the case.



CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT AND VIHANG JUMLE

US-Iran crisis is pushing India to clarify its stand. But ambiguity may be a more comfortable position

LAST WEEK, THE Iraqi Prime Minister asked US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to send a delegation to discuss ways to pull back approximately 5,200 US troops in the aftermath of the unilateral US airstrikes that the Iraqis said violated Iraq's sovereignty. A US letter was soon out in the public domain that said the US troops were, in fact, being repositioned in Iraq after Iraq "ordered" the US to do so. US Army personnel soon clarified that the letter was released by mistake, poorly drafted and did not convey the exact position of the US. The US now says that "troop withdrawal" will not even be discussed with Iraq.

For Iraq, this action may invite severe economic sanctions from the US and forceable boycott of trade from another country that may align with the US. The US has warned Iraq that it may lose access to key bank accounts in the US if US troops are forced to leave Iraq. The US also said sanctions may be imposed on Iraq and US troops will not exit Iraq until Iraq pays back the construction costs of the US-built airbases.

Exiting US troops may quash America's efforts to fight the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Diminished US presence in Iraq will also weaken its hold in the politics of the Middle East. The US has already identified it as a problem and has resumed training Pakistan's military after it had stopped in 2018. Despite the resurgence of anti-Americanism that followed the assassination of General Qassim Soleimani in Pakistan, the US may turn more to Pakistan to maintain its presence in the region.

This US-Pakistan rapprochement is not the only bad consequence that this new crisis in the Middle East may have for India. Economic sanctions on Iraq will have a major impact on the Indian economy. Iraq continues to be India's top crude oil supplier and any US-led economic sanctions will force India to look for alternative oil suppliers, as in the case of Iran in June 2019. This will substantially increase the costs associated with purchase of crude oil for India and the country's dependence vis-à-vis the UAE, Saudi Arabia and the US, to which New Delhi has already turned, to

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make up for the anti-Iran sanctions.

After India stopped importing oil from Iran, it started to buy it from the US. India bought about 1,84,000 bpd oil from the US from November 2018 to May 2019, compared with about 40,000 bpd in the same period a year earlier; a surge of nearly a 100 million barrels. India can leverage this increase in oil trade to push for a restriction on its military involvement in the US-Iran conflict. India can also demand a waiver against the sanctions, pointing out that discontinuing trade with Iran could cause a void which will be filled by China and hence create more issues for the US within the region.

Indeed, India's dependence vis-à-vis the US is more and more obvious in many different domains. Though India has been trying to play it from all sides, several defence pacts that it has signed with the US (to name a few, General Security of Military Information Agreement, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, COMCASA, Industrial Security Annex) may restrict India from saying "no" to the US should it ask for military assistance in the Middle East. India has already made an unscheduled deployment of INS Vikramaditya to the North Arabian Sea on-board Light Combat Aircrafts. Though the deployment may be for evacuating Indians in distress in Iran, it may also indicate India's intent to respond to the US call. The US defence secretary also recently spoke with Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Though India has not participated in any military operations, other than UN peacekeeping, after the conflict in Sri Lanka in 1987, it has participated in numerous joint exercises with the US around "interoperability" of Indian and American troops.

This new crisis may seal the fate of India-Iran relations. Though Iran has relied on India in times of sanctions, India's increasing tendency to accommodate American requests has put a dent in India-Iran relations. Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif recently voiced this disillusionment when he said that, "India has certainly taken a stance against the sanctions, so that's

been encouraging, (but) of course, we expected our friends to be more resilient vis-à-vis US pressure".

The US recently exempted the Chabahar port from sanctions stating that the port has been crucial for India to provide humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. India's foreign minister also recently visited the Chabahar port and it is likely that funds allocated for its development may be increased. Such exemptions may be US tricks to lure and keep India on its side. Though exempting the Chabahar port from sanctions is a good move, it was not a crucial move that would have changed India's dynamics in the Middle East — India was anyway putting Chabahar on the back seat, after realising that American sanctions had completely transformed the regional landscape, geopolitically as well as economically (especially in terms of trade).

It is very likely that India is now taking the side of the US against Iran, with the blessings of Israel and Saudi Arabia which is becoming an important partner and investor along with the UAE. In this context, Iran may turn to China more actively. Beijing has already committed over USD400 billion in Iran's energy-related manufacturing sector over the next 25 years. While India has stopped the purchase of Iranian crude completely since May 2019 when it was announced that Significant Reduction Exception (SRE) would not be extended, China continues to buy an average of 1,61,000 bpd, as of October 2019 from Iran. Albeit this has come down from 8,28,000 bpd in October 2018, China remains Iran's largest single buyer.

In many ways, the present crisis is an acid test for India's doctrine of strategic autonomy or multi-alignment — new variants of the non-alignment of yesterday. It clarifies where India stands in international relations, but ambiguity was probably a more comfortable position.

Jaffrelot is senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris and professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute and Jumle is an associate at Ikigai Law, New Delhi



N R MOHANTY

THE ARTICLE, 'A history of violence' (IE, January 9), presents a false narrative spun by Srinivas, national joint organising secretary of the ABVP. It refers to a "history of violence" by the Left in JNU and, to corroborate the argument, it cites the example of the May 1983 students agitation.

First, during that 1983 struggle, I was the JNU Students' Union president and I did not belong to the traditional Left. In fact, I had won by defeating the potent combination of SFI+AISF, the established Left group on campus. For the first time in history that year, a medley of campus-based organisations — SDS+FT+DSF — had decisively defeated the dominant Left forces in JNU.

Second, the agitation was a battle for upholding a democratic principle: That each section of the JNU family with a stake in building the JNU culture — students, staff and teachers — must have a say in the decision-making process.

Srinivas's fabricated charge of violence in that agitation is pure propaganda. Abhijit Banerjee, the Nobel laureate, was a student of JNU then. After winning the Nobel, he spoke fondly about the 1983 agitation that landed him, along with almost a thousand of us from JNU, in Tihar jail. He repeatedly told the media how proud he was of his jail stint, for defending the democratic rights of the students.

LIES AND LOATHING IN JNU

The 1983 students' agitation on campus was democratic and disciplined

It is true that the entire JNU student community had gheraoed the VC, demanding the revocation of the expulsion order of the JNUSU president and general secretary. The gherao happened at the residence of the VC as he, despite our repeated demands, refused to come to the office. But the gherao was completely non-violent. Most other students, myself included, generally held Srinivastava in great esteem — he was a gentleman to the core. An unfortunate sequence of events pitted us, the students, against a VC we truly admired: We could not think of turning violent or showing any disrespect to him during the agitation. During the gherao, some flower pots placed outside the VC's house broke, inadvertently. I immediately promised in writing that we would replace them with our own contribution. That was the spirit of our movement. That is why when the administration called the police on May 11, 1983, we de-

Srinivas writes: "The then vice chancellor, P N Srivastava, told the media that rowdy elements had forcefully entered his house, destroyed his property and looted his 35-year deposits." Unfortunately, Srivastava is not alive to set the record straight. But this charge is a manufactured lie of such proportions that even Joseph Goebbels would envy it.

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That is why when the administration called the police on May 11, 1983, we de-

cided to amicably court arrest. Anticipating violence, police vehicles had come in — there were at least two dozen mounted police ready to charge. But not a single stone was pelted by any student. In typical JNU tradition, boys and girls filed past in a queue to court arrest. The commanding officer of the force was taken aback by such conduct. He told me that he had not seen such a disciplined student body in his lifetime.

Things changed with the emergence of the ABVP as a major student group on campus, in tandem with the rise of the BJP as the pre-eminent political force in the country. In our times, too, the ABVP existed, but it had a marginal presence. In fact, the ABVP then contested JNUSU elections, but never resorted to violence: The democratic tradition of JNU kept its members in check.

But now, with support from the Centre and a partisan VC, the ABVP has no qualms in trying to destroy JNU's democratic ethos. The assault on JNU students by masked goons on January 5 was the darkest day in JNU's history. Srinivas's article trying to justify that attack using false accusations of "Leftist violence" appears to be part of that sinister design.

The writer was president of JNUSU in 1983; he currently teaches journalism to students of media studies

JANUARY 15, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIRA TAKES OVER

INDIRA GANDHI RETURNED to the prime minister's office at South Block after a break of 33 months and 23 days. One of Mrs Gandhi's first tasks was to preside over a 40-minute informal meeting of her new cabinet. Besides a general discussion on the political and economic situation, the cabinet discussed the immediate tasks before the government. The only decision taken by the was to confirm the first session of the newly elected Lok Sabha from January 21.

SOVIET BLOCK FOR US

THE SOVIET UNION vetoed a US-sponsored resolution in the Security Council that would

have imposed economic sanctions against Iran for the holding of American hostages in Teheran since November 4. It was the Soviet Union's second Security Council veto in a week. Last week it killed a resolution that had asked that all foreign troops be withdrawn from Afghanistan. The vote on the Iran sanctions resolution was 10 in favour, two against, two abstaining and one not taking part in the balloting.

\$400 MILLION TO PAK

THE UNITED STATES has offered Pakistan a tentative two-year economic and military aid package worth about \$400 million to help meet the threat perceived to its security by

the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan, US officials said. US defence secretary, Harold Brown, has already discussed parallel action by China to give economic-military aid to Pakistan.

GABBAR SINGH DEAD

HARIDAS, A DREADED desperado who had taken the name of Gabbar Singh from the film *Sholay*, and spoke film dialogues while committing dacoities, hold-ups and murders, was shot dead by police along with his accomplice Jagat Chamar in Paren village jungles. Haridas was a terror in the Bundelkhand districts of Jalaun, Hamirpur and Jhansi.



Not ready for school

A reworking of curriculum and activities is urgently needed for the age band from four to eight. ASER 2019 report underlines this



RUKMINI BANERJI

WHILE THE IMPORTANCE of good early childhood education has been known for a long time, the draft New Education Policy (released in June 2019) links the “severe learning crisis” to what goes on with young children in India. The voluminous policy document points out that close to five crore children currently in elementary school do not have foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

The draft NEP points out that the major part of this crisis may well be happening before children even enter Std I. The document cites several possible reasons for this. First, many children enter school before age six. This is partly due to the lack of affordable and accessible options for pre-schooling. Therefore, too many children go to Std I with limited exposure to early childhood education. Like with everything else, children from poor families have a double disadvantage — lack of healthcare and nutrition on one side and the absence of a supportive learning environment on the other. Although the anganwadi network across India is huge, by and large, school readiness or early childhood development and education activities have not had high priority in the ICDS system. Private preschools that are mushrooming in urban and rural communities have increased access to preschool but are often designed to be a downward extension of schooling. Thus, they bring in school-like features into the pre-school classroom, rather than developmentally appropriate activities by age and phase.

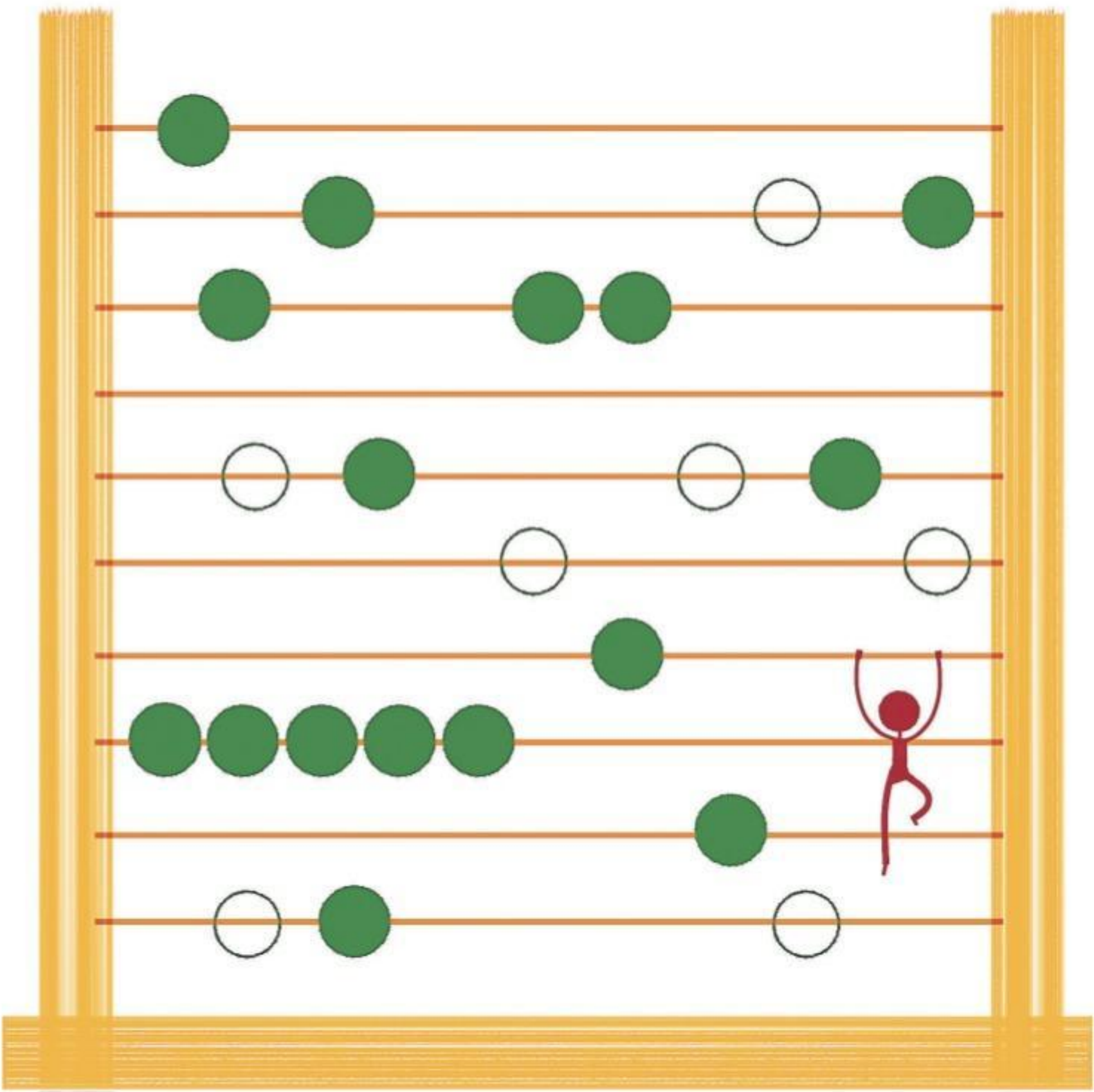
Over the last 15 years, the ASER reports are well known for data on basic reading and arithmetic levels for children in the elementary school age group. What is less known is that in ASER there is rich data over time about the educational status of children below the age of six. While the nation-wide ASER 2018 report has data on enrollment patterns in age group four to eight, the recently released ASER 2019 report is completely focussed on exploring more deeply where young children are and what they can do.

Looking at these data, three clear trends are visible.

First, there is considerable scope for expanding anganwadi outreach for three and four-year-old children. All-India data from 2018 shows that slightly less than 30 per cent children at age three and 15.6 per cent of children at age four are not enrolled anywhere. But these figures are much higher in states like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Expanding access to anganwadis is an important incremental step. Strengthening the early childhood components in the ICDS system would help greatly in raising school readiness among young children.

Second, it is commonly assumed that children enter Standard I at age six and that they proceed year by year from Std I to Std VIII, reaching the end of elementary school by age 14. The Right to Education Act also refers to free and compulsory education for the age group six to 14. However, the practice on the ground is quite different. ASER 2018 data show that 27.6 per cent of all children in Std I are under age six.

Third, there are important age implications for children’s learning. Data from ASER 2019 (26 rural districts) indicate that in Std I, the ability to do cognitive activities among seven-eight-year olds can be 20 percentage points higher than their friends who are five years old but in the same class. In terms of reading levels in Std I, 37.1 per cent children who are under six can recognise letters



CR Sasikumar

whereas 76 per cent of those who are seven or eight can do the same. Interestingly, age distribution in Std I varies considerably between government and private schools, with private schools in many states having a relatively older age distribution. A big part of the differences in learning levels between government and private school children may be due to these differences in age composition right from the beginning of formal schooling.

After several decades of efforts to universalise elementary education, there is widespread understanding of the importance of schooling. In fact, parents who have not had much education themselves have high educational aspirations for their children. Children as young as three or even less are enrolled into preschools and play schools, especially in urban areas and in middle income and high-income families. Many believe that more years of schooling is better than less and that the sooner the child enters “school” the faster she or he will learn and be ready for future learning. In many private schools, parents are encouraged to bring their children at age four or five into kindergarten (LKG or UKG) and not directly into Std I. Poorer parents, who cannot find accessible or affordable preschool alternatives and who do not see anganwadis as an option for education, will often enroll their children in Std I in the nearest government school. These patterns lead to very different age distributions in Std I in government school and private school.

Available data and evidence strongly reinforce the recommendations suggested by the June 2019 draft New Education Policy. Understanding challenges that children face when they are young is critical if we want to solve these problems early in children’s lives rather than waiting till much later to attempt the much harder to do remedial action.

Large number of young children are enrolled in anganwadis. But within the anganwadi system, early childhood education is not given the priority it needs. Although children are in anganwadis, they are not benefitting to the extent that is possible in terms of getting children ready for school. At the same time, increasing numbers of children are entering private preschools and pre-primary grades. But even as the name suggests, the activities at this stage are very much like a downward extension of schooling.

The gap between policy and practice is also very visible in what happens inside preschools and pre-primary grades. In fact, the early years’ space (age four to eight) in India can be seen like a “see-saw”. Large numbers of young children are enrolled in anganwadis. But within the anganwadi system, early childhood education is not given the priority it needs. Although children are in anganwadis, they are not benefitting to the extent that is possible in terms of getting children ready for school. At the same time, increasing numbers of children are entering private preschools and pre-primary grades. But even as the name suggests, the activities at this stage are very much like a downward extension of schooling. Therefore, for different reasons, neither the government provision nor the private delivery can adequately provide exposure to developmentally appropriate “breadth of skills” that children need at this age.

On the pedagogy side, a reworking of curriculum and activities is urgently needed for the entire age band from four to eight, cutting across all types of preschools and early grades regardless of whether the provision is by government institutions or by private agencies. Anyone looking closely at the status of young children in India will agree with the draft NEP statement that early childhood education has the potential to be the “greatest and most powerful equaliser”. The year 2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the RTE Act. This is the best moment to focus on the youngest cohorts before and during their entry to formal schooling and ensure that 10 years later they complete secondary school as well-equipped and well-rounded citizens of India.

The writer is CEO of Pratham Education Foundation

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

China is not the most powerful country. But it is strong enough to defend its philosophy of seeking truth from facts. Sometimes, justice and correctness need to be proven through games and tested by time. China has the ability to create conditions for that.

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

There’s a hole in the GST

It may not have been revenue neutral. Along with rampant evasion and a slowing economy, this has led to expected gains not materialising



ISHAN BAKSHI

IN THEORY, THE shift to GST made eminent sense. It would bring about uniformity in tax rates across the country, integrate the country into a common market, end the cascading of taxes, widen the tax base, and raise government revenues. Yet, in practice, some of these expectations have been belied. While the tax base has widened, revenues have fallen well short of expectations. The compliance burden has risen, and a fake invoice industry has mushroomed. At the current juncture, with sluggish growth, and with various stakeholders looking to extract further concessions, it is difficult to see how this system can be turned around to deliver its original promise.

Why have GST collections not measured up to expectations? The first possible explanation is that during the shift to GST, several entities simply opted out of the system. But this explanation does not hold up to scrutiny. The total number of tax payers in the pre-GST regime were around 93 lakh (63 lakh VAT dealers, 26 lakh service tax payers, and 4 lakh central excise payers). Of these, 54 lakh (36 lakh VAT dealers, 17 lakh service tax payers, and 1 lakh central excise payers) were automatically excluded from its ambit as they fell below the initial threshold limit of Rs 20 lakh. At the end of February 2019, total registrations stood at 1.2 crore. Of these, 59.74 lakh had migrated from the pre-GST regime, while the rest were new registrations. This implies a significant expansion in the tax base on two counts: First, even those excluded from GST opted to stay inside the system, and second, there has been a significant increase in new registrations.

But even with this expansion, collections have not matched budgeted expectations. This could be due to a combination of three factors: First, the tax rates under GST are lower than in the earlier regime — GST was not revenue neutral to begin with. Second, there has been massive tax evasion due to under-reporting, input credit scams and fake invoices. And third, a slowing economy has impacted firm revenues, and thus tax collections.

Theoretically, GST should have been revenue neutral. The fitment exercise should have been undertaken in a manner so as to ensure that collections pre and post GST are the same, not taking into account efficiency gains. But, in the course of the GST Council’s deliberations, it seems that this fundamental principle was not adhered to, and other considerations dominated.

The council began its deliberations not with the single objective of revenue neutrality, but with multiple objectives in mind. It wanted to ensure that rates were close to the existing tax incidence (accounting for cascading); to ensure minimal impact on inflation; that the proposed rate structure was not regressive in nature and that items of mass consumption were not

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CLEAR THE AIR

THIS REFERS TO the article ‘CAA, myth and reality’ (IE, January 14). The BJP does not care to educate the citizens, but intimidates peaceful protesters by throwing indiscriminate labels such as “tukde tukde Gang” and “Urban Naxals” and “Pro Pakistani”. It seems that the writer’s compassion does not extend to persecuted minorities in our country.

Nalin Thakar, Vadodara

THIS REFERS TO the article ‘CAA, myth and reality’ (IE, January 14). There seems to be no hope of an immediate let-up in the war of words between the BJP and the Opposition parties over the CAA and the NRC. The BJP says that by abolishing the triple talaq it has empowered Muslim women. The hard question is: What will be its stand if some of these empowered women lose out under the CAA and the NRC?

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

EACH GRAIN MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘The cost of subsidy’ (IE, January 14). It is an irony that despite overflowing granaries, and food going waste, close to 22 per cent of the population is below the poverty line. The foodgrains supplied through fair price shops are of poor quality and many times are not available. The PDS should be disbanded. Government should devise a mechanism for issuing food coupons to the poorest of the poor

Compiled by Deeptiman Tiwary



VIEW FROM THE RIGHT

SPIRITUAL, NOT RADICAL

THE LATEST issue of RSS mouthpiece Organiser is dedicated to the JNU violence and Swami Vivekanand with its cover carrying pictures of the Hindu spiritual leader and Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara. The headline reads: Spiritualise, Not Radicalise.

In an editorial encapsulating the contents of the issue, the *Organiser* has criticised the JNU violence, blaming it on the influence of Marxism in the campus, and not focusing on “life building and man-making” as Vivekanand believed.

“The ideas of Marx, Mao or Che Guevara, may be worth studying, at least to analyse their failures, but imposing and implanting them on Bharat would be disastrous. Even by conservative estimates, Mao killed around three crore in his great leap forward; Che-Guevara, the original master of extra-judicial killings, was directly involved in around a hundred killings and responsible for thou-

sands more... Sadly, Maoism and his cultural revolution is an inspiration for some youth...”

It further suggested, “the warrior monk, Swamiji” was a better example to follow. “Spiritual Communism” was his Mantra.

STATUS QUO VIOLENCE

THE ORGANISER’S cover story on the JNU violence has called the January 5 incident as “retaliatory” violence perpetrated by Left students on ABVP.

“According to sources, the Left-wing goons entered hostels, mainly Periyar, on January 5 to attack ABVP activists without any provocation. It was a planned attack by Left goons with the help of outsiders. After the masked goons were chased away from Periyar hostel by guards, they attacked the hostel building and started pelting stones and breaking windows. This must have been resisted by other students and ended up in retaliatory violence,” the article has said.

Suggesting a deeper objective behind the agitations in the university, the article has alleged that the protests against fee hike are actually to oppose the government and the Citizenship Amendment Act.

“Insiders in JNU say that protests in the name of fee hike and registration is only a small part of Left organisation agenda, the real reason is to create an anarchy-like situ-

ation across the country in the name of students movement and opposing the government decision on Citizenship Amendment Act and Article 370, and even the Supreme Court order on Ayodhya,” the article said.

In its introduction, it has called JNU a communist bastion where anybody trying to disturb the status quo has faced strong, violent reactions. Claiming that the foundation for the January 5 violence was laid by Left students on January 3 while resisting the registration process, it said, “Unless we don’t get into the detailed dimensions of the story, the real faces behind the violence will not be exposed.”

ANTI-BHARAT LIBRARIES

IN AN article calling for youngsters aligned with Sangh ideology to write more and more books so that the idea of “real” India can be articulated, the *Organiser* has alleged that Congress had banished India’s indigenous narratives from universities as part of a conspiracy.

“In the late 1960s, Congress and Left had an arrangement and division of power. Congress captured power of the government. Left captured power of academia. Since then, Bharat’s indigenous narrative vanished from the text books to the popular trade books. Guided and forced by left intellectuals, many

of us started calling our history as mythology, our sciences as superstition and our all-inclusive culture as orthodox. In the process, the youth of this nation started getting distanced from the idea of Bharat, envisaged by Swami Vivekananda,” the article written by Shantanu Gupta has said.

Suggesting that the intellectual space had been taken over by the Left, Gupta asked the youth to write books and use social media to break this hegemony. “Currently, libraries are flooded with books having anti-Bharat narrative. To undo this, the youth have to come forward... If they call your Ramayana a myth, become a Nilesch Oak, to scientifically date the Ramayana. If they give credit of India’s Independence movements to a party or a small set of individuals, become a Sanjiv Sanyal to de-construct that. Become a Hindol Sen Gupta, to coin a missing term—Pateliani thought, to counter the Nehruvian thought. Become a Vikram Sampath to bring the story of the extraordinary life of Savarkar to millennials. Become Uday Mahurkar to objectively assess a government, which is marching with a billion people. Become a Ratan Sharda or Sunil Ambekar to de-mystify RSS, one of the most misunderstood social movements of this country,” the article said.

which entitles them to purchase food-grains from any authorised shop..

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

FOUL TALK

THIS REFERS TO the reports, “Our govts shot protesters like dogs: Bengal BJP chief” (IE, January 14). West Bengal BJP chief, Dilip Ghosh ought to remember that it was the shooting down of protesters at Singur and Nandigram that brought down the CPM in West Bengal. Is this the way BJP plans to restore democracy? Ghosh’s statement seems a manifestation of pathological hatred.

LR Murmu, Delhi

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

WHY ERUPTION OF A TINY, ‘COMPLEX’ VOLCANO IS CAUSING CONCERN



The Taal volcano spews ash in Philippines on Tuesday. Reuters

IN THE Philippines, a volcano called Taal on the island of Luzon, 50 km from Manila, erupted on Sunday, spewing lava on the ground, and ash and smoke into the sky. Although Taal is a tiny volcano, the eruption has caused concerns in the Philippines. There are several reasons:

IT’S A COMPLEX VOLCANO: Taal is classified as a “complex” volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology. A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that consists of a complex of two or more vents, or a volcano that has an associated volcanic dome, either in its crater or on its flanks. Examples include Vesuvius, besides Taal. The Taal volcano does not rise from the ground as a distinct, singular dome but consists of multiple stratovolcanoes (volcanoes susceptible to explosive eruptions), conical hills and craters of all shapes and sizes, as per NASA’s Earth Observatory. Taal has 47 craters and four maars (a broad shallow crater).

UNPREDICTABILITY: Taal has erupted more than 30 times in the last few centuries. Its last eruption was on October 3, 1977. An eruption in 1965 was considered particularly catastrophic, marked by the falling of rock fragments and ashfall. Before that, there was a “very violent”

eruption in 1911 from the main crater. The 1911 eruption lasted for three days, while one in 1754 had lasted for seven months. Because it is a complex volcano with various features, the kinds of eruption too have been varied. An eruption can send lava flowing through the ground, or cause a threat through ash in the air.

LOCATION: Taal Volcano’s closeness to Manila puts many lives at potential risk. The BBC quoted James White, head of geology at the University of Otago, as saying: “Metro Manila is a few tens of kilometres away with a population of over 10 million, and there are multiple cities within 30 km that have more than 100,000 people in each, not counting the smaller towns in between.” Since the events of Sunday, thousands living on the island have been fleeing their homes.

The volcano is currently at alert Level-4, which means that a “hazardous eruption” could be imminent within a few hours to a few days. Hazardous eruptions are characterised by intense unrest, continuing seismic swarms and low-frequency earthquakes. Because the country is situated at the boundaries of two tectonic plates—the Philippines Sea Plate and the Eurasian plate—it is particularly susceptible to earthquakes and volcanism.

TIP FOR READING LIST

HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH ALIENS

IN AN age when more and more attention is being given to the search for alien life, the obvious next question is: if we do come across aliens, how do we communicate with them? This is the subject Daniel Oberhaus explores in *Extraterrestrial Languages*.

“If we send a message into space, will extraterrestrial beings receive it? Will they understand? What languages will they (and we) speak? Is there not only a universal grammar (as Noam Chomsky has posited), but also a grammar of the universe?” publisher Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press writes in its description of the book.

Indeed, over the centuries, humans have made various attempts to reach out to aliens. Oberhaus describes a late-nineteenth-century idea to communicate with Martians via Morse code and mirrors. In the 20th century emerged SETI (the search for extraterrestrial intelligence), CETI (communication with extra-

terrestrial intelligence), and METI (messaging extraterrestrial intelligence). Oberhaus describes various media used in attempts at extraterrestrial communication, from microwave systems to plaques on spacecrafts to formal logic, and discusses attempts to formulate a language for Earthlings’ message.

Along the way, the book underlines something humans take for granted. Our communication with one another takes place in real time. On the other hand, messages sent out to space may take centuries to reach aliens, if at all. The messages, therefore, should be clear about that aspect too.

“Oberhaus delivers an engaging read, striking a good balance between ‘hard’ and ‘popular’ science. He reviews centuries of initiatives, combining science with anecdotes, and using linguistics, mathematics, astrophysics, cognition, and art as feedstock,” *Science* magazine writes in its review of the book.



NUSHAIBA IQBAL
& HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ON MONDAY, the National Statistical Office released data that showed annual consumer price index (CPI) inflation for December at 7.35%, which was the highest since the 7.39% of July 2014, and also more than the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) upper target limit of 6%.

But the real shocker was retail food inflation, which soared to a more than six-year high of 14.12%. Given that food items have a 45.86% weight in the overall CPI, this raises the question whether the current surge is merely transitory, or there are other factors that may come in the way of prices falling in the near future.

How serious is the spike in food inflation? Is it more than what was expected?

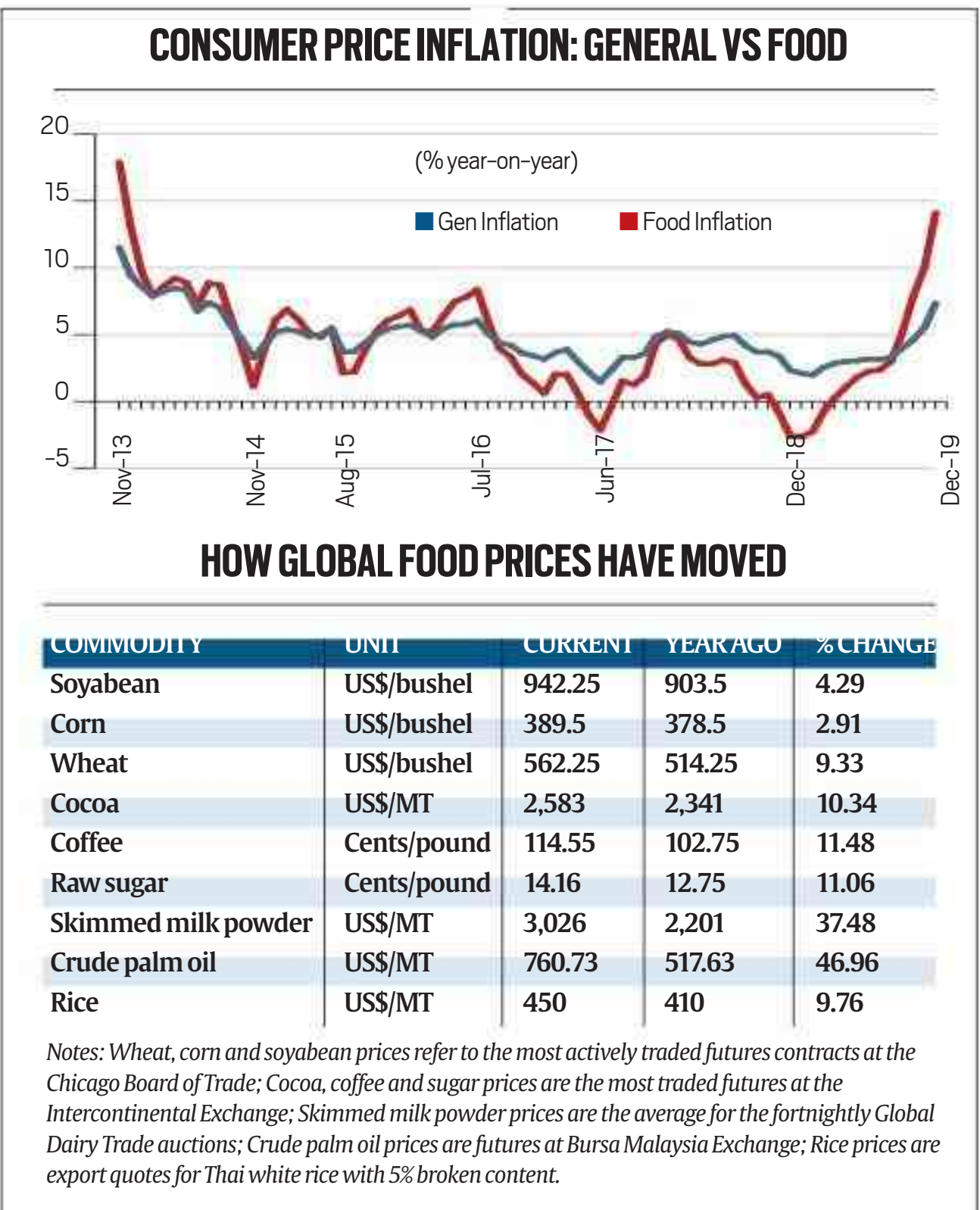
The sudden and sharp increase in the consumer food price index (CPFI) inflation has caught everyone by surprise. For an extended period from September 2016 to August 2019, the year-on-year CPFI inflation consistently remained below the overall CPI inflation. But CPFI inflation went up from 2.99% in August to 5.11% in September to 7.88% in October, then to 10.01% in November and 14.12% in December. This last figure was the highest since the 17.89% for November 2013. The extent of both the earlier decline and now the rise, is much more pronounced in the case of food than general consumer inflation (see chart).

So what accounts for this sudden spike?

The main reason seems to be the uneven rains. The southwest monsoon season (June-September) this year brought little rain almost until the last week of July. The late onset of the monsoon resulted in lower and delayed sowing of the *kharif* crop. However, September, October, and even the first half of November saw heavy rain, which caused damage to the standing crop that was in the late maturity stage, or due for harvesting. The production disruptions during *kharif*, ironically from more and not less rain, are the main reason for prices rising, especially from September onward.

Is this then temporary and once-for-all?

The same heavy and unseasonal rain that wreaked havoc on the *kharif* (monsoon) crop has helped recharge groundwater aquifers, and filled the major irrigation reservoirs to near full



capacity. This is proving beneficial to the *rabi* (winter-spring) crop. Government data show farmers have sown 8% more area during the current *rabi* season. That, together with vastly improved soil moisture conditions and a normal winter, should hopefully translate into a bumper harvest, offsetting any *kharif* losses.

An illustrative example could be onions. The Agriculture Ministry has estimated the total production in 2019-20 for *kharif*/late-*kharif* at 54.73 lakh tonnes (lt), which is nearly 22% below the corresponding level of 54.73 lt last year. However, transplanting during the *rabi* season—which accounts for over two-thirds of India’s onion production—has been about

19.5% more than in 2018-19 due to a combination of better water availability and higher prices received by farmers. This crop will start hitting the market towards March-end, which should go some way in easing prices.

The same would apply to many other vegetables, which incidentally have reported the highest year-on-year CPI inflation of 60.5% for December.

Will prices of all foods fall similarly in the next couple of months?

The likelihood is more for vegetables, which are mostly seasonal and short-duration crops. Farmers generally respond to the

high prices in one season by expanding production in the following one. The situation could, however, be trickier in crops where supply cannot be ramped up in the immediate run. The best example here is milk, where farmers experienced low price realisations for much of 2015 to 2018. Many of them gradually reduced herd sizes or diverted more fodder and feed to animals yielding milk. The undernourished calves have grown to be less productive milkers, just as the pregnant females that have undergone delayed calvings. Better prices now—dairies in Maharashtra are now procuring cow milk at Rs 31-32 per litre, compared to Rs 21-22 a year ago—may make farmers invest in more animals and also feed them better. But the results will take time to show. It is not unlikely that the prices of milk will go up further in the next few months, particularly in the “lean” summer months, when production by buffaloes and cows falls in the natural course.

Is there anything else that could keep food prices high even after March?

The thing to watch is global prices. The 2000s were a decade of high agri-commodity prices. Between 2003 and 2011, the world food price index (base year: 2002-04 = 100) of the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) soared from an annual average of 97.7 to 229.9. It then crashed to 161.5 by 2016. That major reason for benign food prices, including in India, has started showing signs of reversal. The FAO’s benchmark index in 2019 was 12.5% higher than in the previous year. This is also reflected in a hardening trend in the international prices of individual food commodities (see table).

What can the government do?

Food inflation is not bad news for farmers who have suffered from low crop prices and the end of the global commodity boom after 2014. A price recovery would give a boost to rural incomes, which is beneficial for consumption and overall economic growth in the current circumstances. But neither the government nor the RBI can afford to ignore food inflation that will hurt consumers and make further cuts in interest rate impossible.

There is pressure now to open up—or allow more imports of—commodities such as pulses, milk powder, and edible oils. The government will ultimately have to take a considered decision that balances the interests of both producers and consumers.

What is a police commissionerate system?

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

ON MONDAY, the UP government announced that Lucknow and Noida were being converted into police commissionerates with an Additional Director General-level officer heading each force. This is the first time this is being introduced in any city in UP.

What is a commissionerate?

A commissionerate is a region administered for policing by a Commissioner of Police and not by an SP. Generally, rural areas are administered district-wise by SPs while some cities police commissionerates.

The state government can notify a city as a police commissionerate in two ways: through a notification or a Bill. Executive orders in the form of notifications need to be later ratified by the Assembly. UP has taken the route of notifications. Several states, such as Rajasthan, passed Bills in their Assemblies.

The government takes this decision if it feels population density, law and order situations, and crime patterns are complex enough

to call for such a structure, which varies from city to city. Mumbai and Delhi’s commissionerates are headed by a DG-ranked officer. In several other cities, they are headed by ADG-ranked officer. In smaller cities, they may be headed by an IG or even a DIG-ranked officer.

This also decides the number of officers in supervisory roles. Mumbai and Delhi have close to 20 SP rank officers administering various areas. In a commissionerate where a DG-ranked officer is Commissioner, the nomenclature of officers also changes. An SP is known as Deputy Police Commissioner, a DIG is known as Additional Police Commissioner, and an IG is called Joint Commissioner of Police.

What is different under the system?

Policing is based on the Police Act of 1861. Under the colonial system, the overall in-charge of a district or region was the district collector; the SP reported to him. The powers of the executive magistrate, such as issuing orders for preventive arrests or imposition of Section 144 CrPc, were vested in the district collector. This was called the dual system of police administration.

“The primary objective of the British was

revenue collection in rural India. They needed a force that could support this objective and unleash tyranny and oppression when needed to suit the objective. The worst of officers from the British police were sent to India. So there was need to put them under the District Collector. That system continued post-Independence,” former UP DG Prakash Singh said.

Under the commissionerate system, the commissioner does not report to the DM. In Mumbai and Delhi, he reports directly to the government. “It gives an integrated command structure. It helps fix responsibility with the Commissioner and eliminates blame game between civil administration and police when something goes wrong,” Singh said.

How many states have it?

Almost all states barring Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, UT of J&K, and some Northeastern states have a commissionerate system. The British brought the system first in Kolkata and followed it in Mumbai and Chennai presidencies. Delhi turned into a commissionerate during the Morarji Desai regime. In 1978, an initiative to introduce the system in UP, beginning with Kanpur, never materialised.

Prakash Singh says the delay in UP was due to resistance from the IAS lobby. “Bureaucracy in India has resisted it (commissionerate system) tooth and nail. Even in 1978, it was resisted by Delhi bureaucracy,” Singh said. He added that even now in UP, the bureaucracy has wrenched some powers off the commissionerate. “Only 15 Acts have been kept under police commissionerates. Bureaucracy has kept with itself issues of licensing, the Arms Act, Excise laws etc with themselves,” Singh said.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that as per the Police Act, the system is to be implemented in cities with more than 10 lakh population and added, “But because of lack of political will it could not be implemented. For years, there was a demand in Uttar Pradesh but it was neglected.”

How well policing improves depends on the leadership the government gives to a commissionerate. “Commissionerate system only gives police an enabling environment to delivering policing in a complex region. Ultimately, the officer in charge and the culture he ushers will matter. What will matter the most is how the government deals with him,” said Singh.

How mother’s education correlates with child’s school and ability

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

AT THE release of the latest Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2019 on Tuesday, Madhav Chavan, president of the Pratham Education Foundation, spoke about the NGO’s early work in its *balwadis* or pre-school education centres in the slums of Mumbai. Around 25 years ago, when the project began, it took off quickly because “parents, especially mothers, wanted their children to go to pre-schools just like the children of the middle-class families in the apartments where they worked”. But the NGO soon found that after a year at the *balwadi*, parents started moving their children to nearby private schools: “The parents who had seen how their children were learning in our *balwadis* were eager to give their children ‘English’ education,” Chavan said, while talking of how “parents’ aspiration”, especially that of mothers, determines the kind of pre-schooling that children are exposed to.

Among the key findings of ASER 2019 is that the mother’s education often determines the kind of pre-schooling or schooling that the child gets. The report says that among children in the early years (ages 0-8), those with mothers who had completed eight or fewer years of schooling are more likely to be attending *anganwadis* or government pre-primary classes, whereas their peers whose mothers had studied beyond the elementary stage are more likely to be enrolled in private LKG/UKG classes.

With a little less than half (46.9%) the mothers surveyed having studied up to Class 9 or more, the child of a mother whose educational qualification is Class 11 or more is more likely to be in a private LKG/UKG class (37.8%) or a private school (35.3%) than in an *anganwadi* or government pre-primary class (11.1%) or government school (37.8%).

ASER 2019 also shows how, among 4- and 5-year-olds who were administered a four-piece puzzle and 6- to 8-year-olds who were asked to solve a 6-piece puzzle, those whose mothers had completed Class 11 or

CHILDREN AGE 4-8 ENROLLED IN SCHOOL/PRE-SCHOOL BY MOTHERS' EDUCATION, 2019						CHILDREN WHO CAN CORRECTLY DO ALL 3 COGNITIVE TASKS BY AGE AND MOTHERS' EDUCATION, 2019					
Mothers' education	Pre-school Govt	Pvt	School Govt	Pvt	Not enrolled	Mothers' education	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	Age 7	Age 8
No schooling	18.7	11.2	53.2	11.8	5.1	No schooling	7.9	12.6	17.5	27.5	38.5
Std I-V	20.8	12.3	48.7	14.4	3.7	Std I-V	7.3	11.7	24.9	32.2	48.4
Std VI-VIII	19.8	17.9	40.9	18.1	3.3	Std VI-VIII	11.8	15.5	24.6	39.7	52.3
Std IX-X	18.6	22.9	31.4	25.5	1.6	Std IX-X	16.0	20.2	33.5	51.5	64.1
Std XI or more	11.1	37.8	14.3	35.3	1.5	Std XI or more	18.9	29.7	41.3	57.1	70.3

* Includes anganwadi & govt pre-primary

Source: ASER 2019 'Early Years'

more had a higher chance of solving these cognitive tasks. For example, 7.9% of all 4-year-olds whose mothers never went to school could do all three cognitive tasks given to them as compared to 16% of all children in the same age group whose mothers had completed Class 11 or higher.

This correlation between mothers’ education and children’s learning levels has

been stressed in several studies, including previous ASER reports. Between 2011 and 2012, researchers at MIT’s Poverty Action Lab worked with Pratham to study whether literacy classes and other interventions for mothers could improve children’s learning outcomes. They found that their interventions have “had small positive impacts on mothers’ math and literacy skills, the home

learning environment, some forms of school attendance, and ultimately children’s learning levels”.

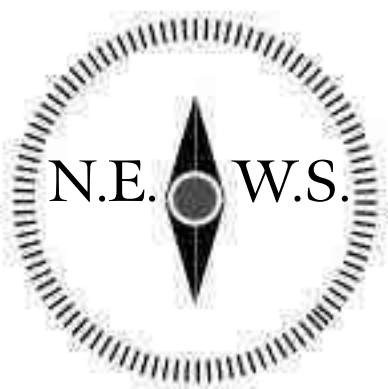
While stressing the role of Early Childhood Education (ECE), the report and its authors take pains to point out that the idea is not to get younger children into formal schooling systems, but to ensure that they have the required cognitive skills be-

fore they enter Class 1.

Chavan said that with 75% women in the productive age group not in the workforce, they can be better engaged in their children’s development, learning and school readiness. In an article accompanying the ASER report, Chavan writes: “Most of the young mothers in the next decade will not be very young as median age of marriage has increased from 18.2 years in 2001 to 19.2 in 2011 to nearly 21.7 in rural India and 23.4 in urban India by 2016. Further, most of these young mothers will have had at least five years of schooling. These changes in the young Indian mother’s profile need to be taken into account when thinking of the education inputs to be designed for the Indian child of the next decade.”

Suman Bhattacharjee, Director, ASER Centre, Delhi, said, “There is a lot families and communities can do. The idea behind early childhood education is not more institutionalisation in the form of private pre-schools or play schools but to involve children through cognitive tasks that mainly involve play”.





NORTH
CISF man opens fire at colleagues, kills self

Jammu: A CISF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district opened fire from his service rifle on Tuesday, killing his colleague and injuring another. He later turned the gun on himself, sources said. Udhampur SSP Rajiv Pandey said Constable B N Murti, posted at the CISF camp at Sui village near

Udhampur town, reportedly had a tiff with Constable Mohammad Tasleem and Constable Sanjay. Murti opened fire at them, killing Tasleem and injuring Sanjay. Later, he shot himself with the same weapon. All three were rushed to hospital, where Murti and Tasleem were declared brought dead. **ENS**



Villagers take part in community fishing at Goroimari lake as part of Magh Bihu (also called Bhogali Bihu) celebrations, in Guwahati on Tuesday. **PTI**

EAST
CRPF man injured in IED blast in Chhattisgarh

Bijapur: A CRPF man was injured after an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), planted by Maoists in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Bijapur district, exploded on Tuesday, police said. The incident took place near Chinnakodepal village when a Road Opening Party of the 85th battalion of the CRPF was cordoning off an area of

the forest, said a police official. CRPF constable Ramanuj Yadav stepped on a pressure-activated IED, triggering the blast that left him injured in the legs, he said. He was taken to a local hospital and would be airlifted to Raipur, the official said, adding that a combing operation was underway in the area. **PTI**

WEST
Goa CM calls for compulsory military training in schools

Panaji: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said military training should be made compulsory in schools. Speaking at an awareness camp organised by the Army, Sawant said, "At times one feels that military training should be compulsory." He later added, "If it is made compulsory... then such patriotism (like that in the armed forces)

will be inculcated in all Indians. There is a need for this today." Sawant also claimed that former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not care for Goa's liberation. "Because of him, we got freed 14 years later... If he had political will, if he really cared about Goans and he would have wanted Goa to be free of Portuguese rule," he said. **ENS**

SOUTH
'Drunk' car driver mows down 4 pedestrians in Kerala

Thrissur: Four people including a woman were mowed down by a speeding car, allegedly driven by a drunk man, in Thrissur on Tuesday, police said. The four, all residents of Kottanellur, were returning from a temple festival at nearby Thumbar early in the morning when the accident occurred, they said. **PTI**

The car driver lost control of the vehicle and hit the them. There were five passengers in the car while one injured has been admitted to the hospital. "We have taken into custody four people including the driver of the vehicle," police told PTI. Investigation is going on.

5 Armymen, BSF constable among 12 killed in multiple avalanches in J&K

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

AT LEAST 12 people, including five Army personnel and one BSF constable, died in the Valley after multiple avalanches in the last 24 hours following heavy snowfall.

Officials said that an avalanche hit an Army post in Machil sector in Kupwara district on Monday. "Five people were affected. While four were evacuated, one is missing. Out of four, three succumbed. Another Armyman is stable," an Army officer said. The body of the missing Armyman was later recovered.

In Kupwara's Tangdhar sector, officials said an Army post near the LoC was hit by an avalanche on Tuesday and six Army personnel came under it. "Five were rescued and one jawan died," said a senior police officer.

A Border Security Officer posted in Srinagar said that one of their personnel was killed in Nowgam sector of Kupwara district Monday due to avalanche.

There has been heavy snowfall in the Valley in the last three days and border towns have witnessed several avalanches. Kupwara Deputy Commissioner Anshul Garg said said three avalanches have been reported in the district in last 24 hours.

In Ganderbal, DC Hashmat Ali Khan said, "A group of people were walking, when they came under an avalanche. Unfortunately, five civilians died. We have rescued four people and rescue operation is over."

In north Kashmir's border town of Gurez, five people were trapped under an avalanche in Purana area of Tulail. "We rescued four people but one man died," a police officer said.

Another Armyman, who is suspected to have reached Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after slipping down a cliff along the LoC in Gulmarg sector following an avalanche last week, remains missing.



An Army chopper rescues tourists stranded during the annual 'Chadar trek' on the frozen Zaskar river in Ladakh. **ANI**

Snowfall brings Valley to halt: highways blocked, power, water supply affected

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 14

AS SNOW lashed the Kashmir Valley, especially north Kashmir, the state administration seemed unprepared, with even the national highways remaining un-cleared for two days, bringing most parts of the Valley to a standstill.

It started snowing in the Valley Sunday evening and continued through Monday. Srinagar itself accumulated 10-12 inches of snow, while most other parts of north Kashmir comprising Baramulla, Kupwara and Baniptore districts witnessed 3-4 feet of snow. The region witnessed such snowfall after more than a decade.

"The main road to our area has still not been cleared of snow.

There is no electricity for three days and no drinking water," said Mudasar Ahmad, a resident of Qalamabad in Handwara. "This morning, a pregnant woman had to be shifted to Handwara hospital, just 10 km away. She had to be taken in a JCB (excavator)," he said.

While the Srinagar-Baramulla national highway was cleared on Tuesday morning, most other roads in north Kashmir continued to remain blocked for the second consecutive day. Despite the clearance of the snow on the highway, it took four hours to travel a certain distance on Tuesday, which otherwise would normally take just an hour.

When contacted, Fareed Chowdhary, Chief Engineering, Mechanical Engineering Department, said: "This is the

first time so much snow has lashed north Kashmir. Our snow plowers are effective only when the depth of snow is less. But for the current depth of snow, we need snow cutters. We have only 10 snow cutters in the Valley, of which seven are in north Kashmir — three on Tangmarg-Gulmarg road (a stretch of less than 15 km), three in Baramulla and one in Gurez."

Sources said the three snow cutters in Baramulla could not be used since the operators were untraceable. Snow clearance on the main roads is the responsibility of the MED and that on other roads, of the Roads and Buildings (R&B) Department.

While the roads leading to villages continue to remain clogged, the interior lanes and bylanes of the towns too have

not been been cleared. Though electricity in the towns was restored after 24 hours, villages in north Kashmir continue to be in darkness since Sunday evening. In several parts of the Valley, drinking water supply has been snapped.

"I think we have worked very efficiently," said Chief Engineer Chowdhary. "When there is a snowstorm, what can human beings do? If you want no snow on the roads, we need to allocate one machine for every one-two kilometers. We don't have that infrastructure," he said.

An official of the department, however, said they didn't expect such heavy snowfall. When they took out the machines out in the morning, they broke down. New machines had to be called from Srinagar and south Kashmir where there was less snow.

Accused in TN cop's murder case arrested in Karnataka

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, JANUARY 14

TWO PERSONS accused of Special Sub-Inspector Y Wilson's murder were arrested by the Karnataka Police in Udipi on Tuesday morning after a chase by the Mumbai Anti-Terrorism Squad.

A senior officer, privy to the series of events leading to the arrests, said the two were held at 5.30 am. "They were travelling from Maharashtra border to a location in Karnataka. Mumbai ATS was chasing them while Udipi police managed to arrest them..." the officer said. A team of TN Police, including Q-branch officials, travelled to Karnataka to take the accused in custody.

Wilson was allegedly shot by Abdul Shamim (25) and Thowfic (27) last Wednesday at a check-post near Kaliyakkavilai. Wilson's body also bore marks of stab injuries and the accused were identified through CCTV footage. A senior officer awaiting the custody of the arrested suspects claimed that the accused are part of a larger radicalised group which works with support from gangs based in Mumbai.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Delhi HC dismisses ED plea against bail to Ratul Puri

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed the Enforcement Directorate's plea to cancel the trial court's order granting bail to Ratul Puri in a money laundering case related to the Agusta Westland chopper scam.

Declining to interfere with the trial court's December 2019 order, Justice Suresh Kumar Kait said, "It is settled that once bail granted should not be cancelled in a mechanical manner without considering any supervening circumstances which is not conducive to fair trial. It cannot be

canceled on a request from the side of the complainant/ investigating agency unless and until it is established that the same is being misused and it is no longer conducive in the interest of justice to allow the accused any further to remain on bail.

"No doubt, the bail can be cancelled only in those discerning few cases where it is established that a person to whom the concession of bail has been granted is misusing the same. However, all those facts are missing in the present case," the court said. **ENS**

RBI CURBS ON BENGALURU CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Bank officials, politicians reassure worried depositors

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 14

LOCAL POLITICIANS in the Bengaluru South region and officials of a small co-operative bank — on which curbs in withdrawals have been placed by the RBI for six months on account of a steep climb in non-performing assets — have assured the bank's nearly 9,000 customers that their deposits will be protected and returned by end of the 2019-20 fiscal year.

Over the last couple of days, panic has gripped depositors in the Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank, most of whom are senior citizens, following a January 2 order of the RBI restricting withdrawals from the bank to Rs 35,000 for six months from January 10. The bank has also been barred from granting or re-



Depositors stand in queue to withdraw money from Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank in Bengaluru on Tuesday. **PTI**

newing loans, making investments, borrowing funds, accepting fresh deposits or selling assets without clearances.

The restrictions led to a large number of depositors gathering for meetings with bank officials in the last two days to obtain clarity on the situation.

"My livelihood depends on the interest from the bank. They said that from next month the interest will not be available. How can I manage as a senior citizen? Why did he RBI not act on time?" an elderly citizen said at the bank.

Some depositors said they were reassured by statements of

bank officials and local politicians regarding protection of their deposits.

The RBI has imposed curbs because the bank has seen some Rs 350 crore in NPAs accruing from 62 borrowers over the current financial year, Chief Advisor of the bank M V Maiya said on Tuesday.

"Last 20 years there has been no black mark on the bank. There is a conspiracy against us. We have clarified matters to (Finance Minister) Nirmala Sitharaman and Tejasvi Surya (local BJP MP). We would have run away if we could not face the situation," the former CEO said.

"I assure you that by 31/3/2020 all dues will be cleared and every paisa returned. We have loans of Rs 1,700 crore and assets of Rs 2,200 crore. We have deposits in other banks also. During the course of inspection, the RBI appreciated the fact that

we have collected security of Rs 1,020 crore. All 62 borrowers have given acknowledgements of their debt, fresh documents and fresh security. There is nothing to worry," the chief advisor said.

"The financial health of co-operative banks in Karnataka are sound. The RBI has issued some directions to reduce the NPA and efforts will be made to restore normal functioning at the bank at the earliest officials have said," the JDS leader Ramesh Babu said in a statement.

"The honourable FM after speaking to the RBI governor and other authorities concerned assured Mr Surya (the BJP MP) that the government will do everything in its capacity to protect the interest of the depositors and the long term interests of the bank," a statement from Tejasvi Surya said.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

MP Police probe Urdu letter, ‘powder’ sent to Pragya Thakur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL, JANUARY 14

A PROBE has begun into a “mystery envelope” sent to BJP leader and Bhopal MP Pragya Singh Thakur, which contains a two-page letter written in Urdu, some documents and a kind of “powder”.

Thakur, an accused in the Malegaon blast case who is often in the news for her controversial statements, had on Monday night approached police claiming the envelope contained a “poisonous chemical” meant to harm her. The letter was received in October 2019 but opened only on Monday in her presence, the



Policemen check documents in Bhopal as Pragya Thakur looks on. *PTI*

MP had told police.

“The powder is being sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory in Sagar. The two-page letter written in Urdu is being translated,” TT Nagar City Superintendent of

Police Umesh Tiwari told PTI.

The envelope has three Rs 5 stamps featuring former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Tiwari added. Police sources said the inland post contained some documents which have a Karnataka connection.

MP Education Minister Jitu Patwari said police have been told to carry out a thorough probe into the matter, though he wondered why the Bhopal MP opened the envelope three months later.

Thakur could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

Police have registered a case against an unidentified person for criminal intimidation and voluntarily causing grievous hurt, an official informed.

MUZAFFARPUR SHELTER HOME CASE Accused claims witnesses unreliable, misled court

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE JUDGMENT in the Muzaffarpur shelter home case was deferred for the third time on Tuesday after the counsel for the main accused, Brajesh Thakur, moved an application claiming that the witnesses were unreliable and had misled the investigation agency as well as the court.

This development came after the CBI on January 9 submitted a status report before the Supreme Court that there was no evidence that any inmate had been murdered, as was alleged earlier. The agency said that all 35 girls had been traced and found to be alive.

The CBI had investigated cases of 17 shelter homes in Bihar and chargesheets had been filed in 13 of them. Four cases were closed as no evidence of wrongdoing was found after preliminary enquiry.

Additional Sessions Judge Saurabh Kulshreshtha issued notice to the CBI to file a reply to the application within two days and set the date of judgment to January 20.

The application stated that the “witnesses are both unreliable and untrustworthy and they have misled not only the investigation agency but also this court”.

Thakur told the court that the “case set up by the prosecution witnesses is false, fabricated and concocted” and the new facts were not available with him during the trial and therefore could not have been placed before the court. He told the court that “grave prejudice and irreparable loss will be caused to him if the final judgment is passed without taking into the account the aforementioned facts”.

The Supreme Court had ordered transfer of the case from Bihar to a POCSO court in Saket District Court complex in Delhi.

WHO nod for indigenous TB diagnostic tool

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) has given its approval to TrueNat, an indigenous molecular diagnostic tool to help detect tuberculosis (TB). The TB test, developed by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics, was found to be comparable in accuracy to similar tests currently in use and has been recommended as a replacement for sputum microscopy tests.

TrueNat is a polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based test that, by assaying the genes present in the TB bacteria, can not only detect the presence of the bacteria but can also detect drug resistance with the use of chips. The DNA of the TB bacteria is extracted from sputum samples collected from the patient and the test can easily and cost-effectively be done in the primary health care setup. The approval by WHO is important for India

because it has the most number of TB patients in the world. According to the Global TB report 2019, India had 26.9 lakh TB patients in 2018. According to the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination 2017-25, “TB kills an estimated 4,80,000 Indians every year and over 1,400 every day. India also has over a million ‘missing’ cases every year that are not notified and most remain either undiagnosed or unaccountably and inadequately diagnosed and treated in the private sector.”

TOPOF THE WORLD



Anwar Ibrahim

ASIA

Malaysia drops sex assault probe of PM-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's leader-in-waiting Anwar Ibrahim will not face charges over claims he sexually assaulted a male former aide, prosecutors said Tuesday, the latest such scandal to tarnish the veteran politician's career. Muhammad Yusoff Rawther last month accused Anwar of trying to force him to have sex and filed a police complaint, but officials said there was not enough evidence to make a criminal case. Anwar, seen as the likely successor to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, spent almost a decade in jail after being convicted of sodomising a young male aide, allegations that supporters say were aimed at ruining his political career.

UK

Boris rejects Scotland call for new referendum

London: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday rejected a request by Scotland's devolved government for powers to hold another referendum on independence. In a letter to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, the leader of the Scottish National Party, Johnson noted that a previous referendum held in 2014 had been billed as a "once in a generation" vote. Scots voted then by 55% to 45% against breaking away from the rest of the United Kingdom.

VATICAN

Benedict wants name removed from book

Vatican City: Former Pope Benedict wants his name removed as co-author of a controversial book on the issue of priestly celibacy, his personal secretary said on Tuesday. Archbishop Georg Ganswein told Reuters that, at the former pope's behest, he had asked the principal author of the book, Cardinal Robert Sarah, to ask the publishers to remove Benedict's name from the cover, the introduction and the conclusion. Some Roman Catholic scholars had rebuked the former pope for his comments in the book, saying his words risked destabilising the reigning Pope Francis.

CHINA

Bus falls into sinkhole, 10 dead or missing

Beijing: A bus plunged into a sinkhole on a city street in northwestern China, killing at least six people and leaving four missing, authorities said. Some 1,000 emergency workers and 30 vehicles were sent to the site, the emergency management bureau in the city of Xining said. A crane was called in to lift the bus above the sinkhole so rescue workers could look for victims. Video apparently shot by security cameras just after the accident showed the bus gradually settling into the hole while people nearby scrambled for safety.

Iran makes arrests over plane disaster as protests continue

30 protesters also held on 4th day of demonstrations

PARISA HAFEZI & BABAK DEGHANPISHEH DUBAI, JANUARY 14

IRAN SAID on Tuesday it had arrested people accused of a role in shooting down a Ukrainian airliner and had also detained 30 people involved in protests that have swept the nation for four days since the military belatedly admitted its error.

Wednesday's shooting down of Ukraine International Airlines flight 752, killing all 176 people aboard, has led to one of the biggest public challenges to the Islamic Republic's clerical rulers since they took power four decades ago.

President Hassan Rouhani promised a thorough investigation into the "unforgivable error" of shooting down the plane, in an address on Tuesday. It was the latest in a series of apologies by the leadership that has done little to quell public anger.

Tehran has faced an escalating confrontation with the West and a wave of unrest since the United States killed Iran's most powerful military commander in a drone strike on January 3.

Iran shot down the plane on Wednesday when its military was on high alert, hours after firing missiles at US targets in Iraq. It admitted the mistake on Saturday after days of denials.

Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said some



As anger rises against Iran's leaders, students walk around, instead of across, US and Israeli flags at the Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran. Reuters

IMMINENT THREAT FROM SOLEIMANI? DOESN'T REALLY MATTER, SAYS TRUMP

Washington: US President Donald Trump fuelled controversy on Monday over his decision to kill Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani by saying "it doesn't really matter" whether Soleimani posed an imminent threat to the United States.

"The Fake News Media and their Democrat Partners are working hard to determine

whether or not the future attack by terrorist Soleimani was 'imminent' or not, & was my team in agreement," Trump wrote on Twitter. "The answer to both is a strong YES, but it doesn't really matter because of his horrible past!"

Democrats are trying to pass a Bill to rein in Trump's ability to wage war on Iran. REUTERS

of those accused of having a role in the plane disaster had been arrested, although he did not say how many or identify them.

Since the official admission, protesters, many of them stu-

dents, have held daily demonstrations, chanting "Clerics get lost!" and calling for the removal of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in power for more than 30 years. REUTERS

Trump retweets image of Dems in 'Muslim garb'

ANNIE KARNI WASHINGTON, JANUARY 14

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Monday morning promoted a manipulated image of Democratic Congressional leaders Senator Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi wearing a turban and a headscarf in front of an Iranian flag, claiming it showed "the corrupted Dems trying their best to come to the Ayatollah's rescue #NancyPelosiFakeNews."

The retweeted image was the most extreme version of a sentiment that Trump spent the morning advancing by retweeting criticism of Pelosi, and suggesting she was a supporter of the Iranian government.

Dana Shell Smith, a former US envoy to Qatar, said Trump was engaging in "hate speech against an entire religion". NYT

NATASHA CHAKU MELBOURNE, JANUARY 14

THE AIR quality in Melbourne deteriorated to the "worst in the world" on Tuesday as smoke from massive bushfires engulfed Australia's second biggest city with authorities issuing health warnings advising people to stay indoors and take precautionary measures.

The raging Australian bushfires, one of the worst in its history, has killed at least 26 people,

France, Germany, UK trigger Iran n-deal dispute mechanism

STEVEN ERLANGER BRUSSELS, JANUARY 14

BRITAIN, FRANCE and Germany triggered the dispute resolution mechanism in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal on Tuesday, a tough warning to Tehran and the first step toward reimposing further United Nations sanctions on Iran.

The move, which had been expected for more than a week, was delayed when the US killed Iran's General Qassem Soleimani.

Triggering the dispute resolution mechanism will set the clock running on what could be some 60 days of negotiations with Iran about coming back into full compliance with the deal, and could end up with a "snapback" of United Nations sanctions on Iran, including an arms embargo.

US President Donald Trump withdrew from the deal in 2018 and has imposed several rounds of US sanctions on Iran. In response, Tehran has repeatedly moved beyond the limits that the agreement had placed on its nuclear program, raising fears that it could be close to building an atomic bomb.

The Europeans want to save the deal and persuade both

EXPLAINED Europe, Iran still look to save deal

DESPITE THE European signatories of the nuclear deal triggering the dispute mechanism, they have made clear that their attempt will be to come to an agreement with Iran to save the deal, rather than reimpose UN sanctions. The dispute mechanism gives all parties a flexible amount of time to negotiate before sanctions on Iran kick in. Iran has also said it was open to "constructive efforts" towards saving the 2015 deal. Iran claims that its steps in violation of the deal can easily be reversed and Europe is eager to convince Tehran to do so.

Washington and Tehran to begin a new set of negotiations about missile development and Iran's regional activities, a senior European official said. NYT

WHO says China coronavirus may spread, warns hospitals worldwide

STEPHANIE NEBEHAY GENEVA, JANUARY 14

THERE MAY have been limited human-to-human transmission of a new coronavirus in China within families, and it is possible there could be a wider outbreak, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Tuesday.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can cause infections ranging from the common cold to SARS. A Chinese woman has been quarantined in Thailand with a mystery strain of coronavirus, Thai authorities said on Monday, the first time the virus has been detected outside China.

In all, 41 cases of pneumonia have been reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, which preliminary lab tests



There is no specific treatment for the new virus, but anti-virals are being considered and could be "re-purposed", WHO said

cited by state media showed could be from a new type of coronavirus. One of the patients has died.

"From the information that we have it is possible that there is limited human-to-human

Hafiz Saeed pleads not guilty in terror financing cases

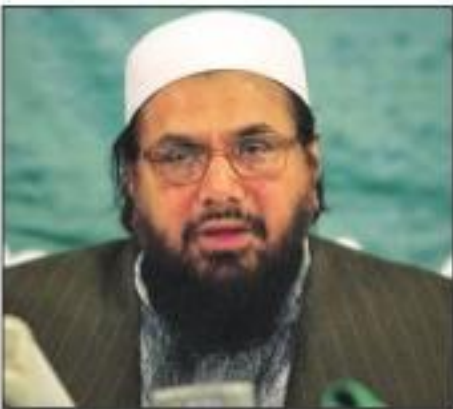
M ZULQERNAIN LAHORE, JANUARY 14

MUMBAI ATTACK mastermind Hafiz Saeed on Tuesday pleaded "not guilty" in two terror financing cases against him, as the Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) chief recorded his statement in a Pakistani anti-terrorism court here, amidst mounting international pressure on Islamabad to rein in militant groups.

The Counter Terrorism Department had registered 23 FIRs against Saeed and his accomplices on charges of terror financing in different cities of Punjab province and arrested him on July 17. He is held at the Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore.

The Saeed-led JuD is believed to be the front organisation for the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) which was responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people.

"In response to a questionnaire handed over to him by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore regarding terror financ-



The JuD chief was arrested on July 17, last year

ing charges against him, Saeed on Tuesday submitted his reply in which he dismissed all charges against him. He pleaded not guilty," a court official told PTI after the in-camera hearing.

The official said the ATC adjourned the hearing till Wednesday for final arguments.

The cases of terror financing have been registered against Saeed in Lahore and Gujranwala cities in Punjab province on the application of the Counter Terrorism Department of Punjab Police. PTI

Heavy snowfall, rain in Pak: Death toll rises to 84

Islamabad: Avalanches and landslides triggered by heavy snowfall and incessant rain across Pakistan have left over 80 people, including women and children, dead, and destroyed many houses, officials said on Tuesday.

Harsh weather conditions continue across Pakistan over

the last three days, bringing normal life to a halt as road transport and communication remain severely affected.

At least 84 people have died across the country after a severe cold wave brought life to a standstill in numerous areas, officials said on Tuesday. PTI



Nawaz sharif, with brother Shahbaz and other family members at a restaurant in London. Twitter (@fawadchaudhry)

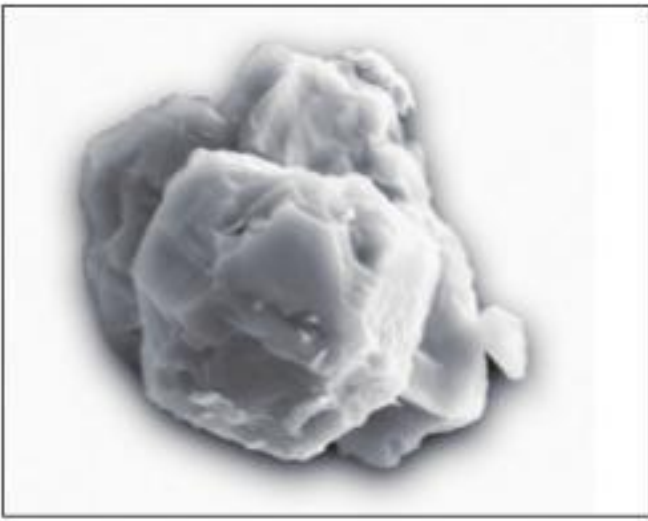
Sharif's London restaurant photo goes viral, draws criticism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 14

A PHOTOGRAPH of ailing former Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif at a London restaurant along with some family members has gone viral on social media, leading to speculation over the "serious nature" of his health. Sharif, 69, left for London on November 19 in an air ambulance to seek medical treatment, a month after he was released on bail from a seven-year prison sentence for corruption.

In the photo leaked Monday, Sharif appeared to be sitting in a restaurant with his son Hasan, PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif, his son Salman and former finance minister Ishaq Dar.

Pakistani minister Fawad Chaudhry uploaded the photograph on his Twitter account. "In London's intensive care unit, the treatment against plundering is underway and all patients present (there) are feeling better," he said.



A scanning electron micrograph of a silicon carbide grain, about 8 micrometres in its longest dimension, from a meteorite that crashed into Australia in 1969

the researchers said, hinting at bursts of stellar births rather than a constant rate.

"I find this extremely exciting," said Philipp Heck, an asso-

ciate curator at the Field Museum in Chicago who led the research published in the scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"Despite having worked on the Murchison meteorite and presolar grains for almost 20 years, I still am fascinated that we can study the history of our galaxy with a rock," Heck added.

The grains are small, measuring from 2 to 30 micrometres in size. A micrometer is a one-thousandth of a millimeter or about 0.000039 of an inch.

Stardust forms in the material ejected from stars and carried by stellar winds, getting blown into interstellar space. During the solar system's birth, this dust was incorporated into everything that formed including the planets and the sun but

survived intact until now only in asteroids and comets.

The researchers detected the tiny grains inside the meteorite by crushing fragments of the rock and then segregating the component parts in a paste they described as smelling like rotten peanut butter.

Scientists have developed a method to determine stardust's age. Dust grains floating through space get bombarded by high-energy particles called cosmic rays. These rays break down atoms in the grain into fragments, such as carbon into helium.

These fragments accumulate over time and their production

rate is rather constant. The longer the exposure time to cosmic rays, the more fragments accumulate. The researchers counted these fragments in the laboratory, enabling them to calculate the stardust's age.

Scientists previously had found a presolar grain in the Murchison meteorite that was about 5.5 billion years old, until now the oldest-known solid material on Earth. The oldest-known minerals that formed on Earth are found in rock from Australia's Jack Hills that formed 4.4 billion years ago, 100 million years after the planet formed. REUTERS



GOLD

₹40,422



RUPEE

₹70.87



OIL

\$65.33



SILVER

₹47,083

**Indian basket as on January 13, 2020

**International market data till 1900 IST

POLICY WATCH

ELECTRICITY

‘Must run’ status, no power curtailment for renewable energy plants: Expert panel

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

AN EXPERT group reviewing the Indian Electricity Grid Code (IEGC) has asserted that renewable energy power plants shall be treated as “must run” and electricity from these plants shall not be curtailed for any commercial reasons. Part of the latest draft IEGC prepared by the group, the provision comes at a time when a number of states have repeatedly resorted to not scheduling power from renewable sources, citing high costs.

A ‘must run’ status means that the concerned power plant has to supply electricity to the grid under all conditions.

The group has added new codes in the latest IEGC draft — the Protection and Commissioning code, which entails a centralised database containing details of relay setting for grid elements, and the Cyber Security code, which provides for identification of critical information infrastructure.

The IEGC lays down regulations for various persons and participants in the country’s power ecosystem to plan, develop, maintain and operate power system in the country “in a secure, economic, reliable, resilient and efficient manner”, states the draft.

“Wind, solar, wind-solar hybrid and hydro plants (in case of excess water leading to spillage) shall be treated as MUST RUN power plants and shall not be subjected to curtailment on account of merit order despatch or any other commercial consideration,” stated the group, headed by former Central Electricity Authority (CEA) chairman Rakesh Nath and having former CEA chairman Ravinder and Director POSOCO, SR Narasimhan among its members, in its January 2020 report.

Renewable players have raised concerns in recent months about rising instances of state power distribution companies unplugging their generating capacity from the grid and delaying payments. The unplugging, also called backing-down, stems from the poor financial status of discoms, because of which a number of them have started going back on their PPA commitments with solar and wind power producers.

In the event of transmission or system security constraint, the renewable generation may be curtailed after harnessing “available flexible resources including energy storage systems”, as per the report. The group added that, in case of “extreme circumstances” that leads to the curtailment of a must run plant, details of the renewable energy generation plant being curtailed, the duration of curtailment and reasons for doing

The Indian Electricity Grid Code lays down rules for participants in the power ecosystem to plan, develop, maintain and operate power system, states the draft

so must be given.

“In the event of constraints in the transmission system, the renewable generation may be curtailed if it is the only source which relieves the constraint,” stated the report. Curtailment could be required in case “all” flexible resources are harnessed by the appropriate load despatch centre (LDC) but frequency remains above 50.05 Hz and the Area Control Error (ACE) remains high. It could also be required if any further reduction in conventional generation would necessitate de-commitment of units leading to “shortage conditions and possible load shedding during the peak hours”, said the group.

“Accommodating a larger percentage share of renewable energy in the system can lead to a few hours of over-supply in a year necessitating curtailment of renewable energy as an economic option,” it added.

“Various measures proposed to be enforced for grid security, reliability and renewable integration are technically feasible, in compliance with CEA standards and established in renewable rich countries,” stated the group.

The renewable sector was previously accorded a ‘must run’ status in the 2010 IEGC, despite which states like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have curtailed electricity from such sources. The Andhra Pradesh government, which has received flak over the last year for renegotiating and revising renewable power purchase agreements, had curtailed electricity supply from such sources, reportedly without citing any valid reasons.

In March 2019, the Tamil Nadu Electricity Regulatory Commission (TNERC), in a case against TANGEDCO, TNSLDC, TANTRANSOCO and MNRE, had observed that Tamil Nadu had “failed” to provide data showing that its decision to back down or issue curtailment instructions to solar projects was due to grid security or safety of equipment or personnel.

“It is submitted that the backing down was carried out due to surplus generation and without following the merit order despatch and only by considering the commercial implication of backing down of low cost conventional generation as well as wind generation to avoid procurement of higher cost solar power generation,” TNERC had stated.

AT 2.59%, AS AGAINST 0.58% IN NOV

Vegetable prices push wholesale inflation to 7-month high in Dec

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

WHOLESALE PRICE index (WPI)-based inflation surged to a seven-month high of 2.59 per cent in December 2019, as against 0.58 per cent in November, due to a sharp rise in prices of food articles like onions and potatoes, according to the data released by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry on Tuesday. WPI was at 3.46 per cent in December 2018.

The inflation for food articles rose to 13.24 per cent in December, as against 11.08 per cent a month earlier, while for non-food articles it rose nearly fourfold to 7.72 per cent from 1.93 per cent in November. Analysts note that the tight fiscal position of the central government, along with rising retail inflation, means the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will have limited room to cut policy rates next month.

Among food articles, vegetable prices surged 69.69 per cent on account of onion prices, which witnessed a 455.83 per cent jump, followed by potatoes

Explained Limited room for Reserve Bank to cut rates

EVEN AS retail inflation has surged to a five-and-a-half-year high of 7.35 per cent in December, wholesale inflation, while rising to a seven-month high of 2.59 per cent in December, still continues to remain moderate.

Rising vegetable and food prices are driving retail and wholesale inflation higher. Amid the Central government facing fiscal pressures and inflation on the rise, analysts note that the Reserve Bank of India has limited room to cut rates next month despite growth slowdown.

at 44.97 per cent. Onion prices ruled above Rs 100 per kg in various markets till recently because of crop damage by excessive rains. WPI data came just a day after Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation data showed retail inflation rising to about five-and-half-year high of 7.35 per cent in December 2019, surpassing the RBI’s comfort level.

Vegetable inflation jumping to an over six-year high and pulses inflation rising to a more than 3-year high were the key

reasons driving retail inflation. The overall retail inflation-based on CPI was 2.11 per cent in December 2018 and 5.54 per cent in November 2019.

“The continuance of wholesale inflation in the moderate range despite higher food inflation is mainly due to subdued manufacturing and fuel inflation — both of which were negative in December. Slowdown in the economy has left the manufacturing sector with very little pricing power,” said Sunil

‘High retail inflation rate may force RBI to hold rates’

Retail inflation, which rose to 7.35 per cent in December and could breach 8 per cent in January, may force the Reserve Bank of India to hold rates in the monetary policy review next month, said SBI Research report-Ecowrap

135-BP CUT
After cutting repo rates for five consecutive times by 135 basis points between February-October 2019, the RBI left the repo rate unchanged at 5.15 per cent in the fifth bi-monthly monetary policy announced in December

TECH PUSH
The report also emphasised on relooking of the CSO data methodology for estimating the CPI

GDP ESTIMATE
According to the advanced estimates released by CSO, the country’s GDP is likely to grow at 5 per cent in FY20

Wipro Q3 net profit dips 2.17% to ₹2,456 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

WIPRO ON Tuesday posted a 2.17 per cent dip in consolidated net profit to Rs 2,455.9 crore for the December 2019 quarter, and estimated up to 2 per cent revenue growth for the fourth quarter.

Wipro's net profit, attributable to shareholders, in the year-ago period was Rs 2,510.4 crore. Its revenue from operations grew 2.7 per cent to Rs 15,470.5 crore during the period under review from Rs 15,059.5 crore in the same quarter last year (as per Ind-AS). Earnings per share (EPS) for the quarter was Rs 4.3 per share and grew 3.2 per cent year-on-year.

The Bengaluru-based company's numbers came days after larger rival Infosys announced an almost 24 per cent jump in net profit, and 7.9 per cent rise in revenue. Infosys had exuded confidence in the demand environment and raised its revenue outlook for 2019-20 in constant currency to 10-10.5 per cent.

IndusInd Bank Q3 net rises 33%; asset quality worsens

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

INDUSIND BANK on Tuesday reported a 33 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 1,309 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2019, due to a healthy growth in retail and treasury income. However, worsening asset quality and a 72 per cent spike in provisioning are a matter of concern.

Sequentially, the net profit dropped 6 per cent from Rs 1,383.37 crore reported in

Q2FY20. The bank's net interest income (NII) for the quarter jumped to Rs 3,074 crore against Rs 2,288 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous year, registering a growth of 34 per cent compared to the corresponding quarter last year. The bank's net interest margin for the quarter was at 4.15 per cent compared with 3.89 per cent in the comparable period last year.

The revenue from retail business rose 31.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 5,026 crore from Rs 3,819 crore. **FE**

Bandhan Bank profit zooms 121% on Gruh merger impact

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

BANDHAN BANK Tuesday reported a net profit of Rs 731 crore for the quarter ended December 31, 2019, up 121 per cent from the year-ago period.

The jump comes on the back of a 62 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) rise in total income to Rs 3,075 crore as the benefits of the bank's acquisition of Gruh Finance came into play. The lender also

benefited from a 61.5 per cent drop in provisions to Rs 295 crore.

The bank's net interest income rose 36 per cent y-o-y to Rs 1,541 crore. Net interest margin fell 29 bps to 7.91 per cent from 10.45 per cent at the end of June as the presence of secured and low-margin housing loans in the book played out. The bank said it has made additional provisions of Rs 200 crore on standard advances in its micro-finance portfolio after evaluating risks observed in certain areas of a Northeastern state. **FE**

Centre cancels 5,000 MT order as states shun imported onions

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

CONCERNED ABOUT the disposal of imported onions, the Union government has cancelled a shipment of over 5,000 metric tonnes of onions as States have not shown the willingness to take the supply of the kitchen staple.

"So far, we have contracted 36,000 metric tonnes of onions, of which 18,300 metric tonnes have reached and after much persuasion, states have taken only 2,000 metric tonnes of onions. We are worried about disposal of imported onions because it's a perishable commodity", said Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan on Tuesday.

"Tomorrow, if a person goes to court and says that imported onion is rotting, who will be responsible", Paswan asked.

Paswan added a group of ministers, chaired by the Home Minister, had asked States to take the imported onions, but the States are not showing willingness to take them.

NOTIFICATION TO BE ISSUED: CONSUMER AFFAIRS MINISTER 'Only 14, 18, 22 carat hallmarked gold jewellery from Jan 2021'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

JEWELLERS CAN sell only hall-marked jewellery and artefacts made of 14, 18 and 22 carat gold from January 15, 2021 and violation of this will attract penalty, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Tuesday.

The hallmarking of gold jewellery being sold in the country will become mandatory from Wednesday but the jewellers will be given a year time to comply with the order, said Paswan.

Briefing reporters about the mandatory hall-marking of gold jewellery and artefacts in India, Paswan said a notification in this regard will be issued by the Department of Consumer Affairs on January 15, 2020. However, the jewellers will be given one year for implementation — till January, 2021.

He said once the notification comes in to force, gold and gold jewellery will be sold in only 3 categories — 14 carat, 18 carat and 22 carat. Earlier, jew-

Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said a Rs 1 lakh fine or five-times of the price of the gold article will be imposed on the jeweller who fails to comply with the hall-marking standard

ellery was being sold in the 9-carat category, too.

The purpose of making hall-marking mandatory for gold jewellery and artefacts is to ensure that consumers are not cheated while buying gold ornaments, said Paswan.

Explaining the reasons for the one-year implementation period, Paswan said it will ensure that jewellers' registration process can be completed and jewellers/retailers get time for clearing their old/existing stock and also so that assaying and hall-marking centres can be set

up by private entrepreneurs at various locations where demand arises.

Priority shall be given to districts where such centres are not present.

According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, as on December 31, 2019, there are 892 assaying and hall-marking centres in 234 district locations and, so far, 28,849 jewellers have been registered by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

"The caratage is marked on jewellery in addition to fineness for convenience of consumers, e.g. for 22 carat jewellery, 22K will be marked in addition to 916, for 18 carat jewelry, 18K will be marked in addition to 750 and for 14 carat jewelry, 14K will be marked in addition to 585", said a statement issued by the Ministry.

Paswan said a fine of Rs 1 lakh or five-times of the price of the gold article will be imposed on the jeweller who fails to comply with the hall-marking standard.

BRIEFLY

SAT upholds Sebi fine on PACL directors

New Delhi: The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Tuesday upheld the fine of over Rs 2,432 crore levied by markets regulator Sebi on four directors of PACL Ltd for illegal fund mobilisation through various schemes from public. The order comes following appeals filed by the company and its directors against an order passed by Sebi in September 2017, which imposed a penalty of Rs 2,423.16 crore on them.

Canara Bank calls off stake sale in arm

New Delhi: State-owned Canara Bank has called off the divestment of its stake in housing finance subsidiary Can Fin Homes, the lender announced on Tuesday. In 2018 too, the bank had forgone the stake sale after receiving lower than expected price quotation.

Sebi cancels registration of stock broker

New Delhi: Sebi has cancelled the registration of Click2Trade Capital as it "grossly" failed in performing its duties as a stock broker and made serious lapses in maintaining infrastructure and did not redress investor grievances. The regulator found that the entity failed to segregate its own transactions from that of its clients, reported incorrect margin and used client bank accounts for other than specified purposes.

Yes Bank buys 30% stake in RPower arm

New Delhi: Yes Bank on Tuesday said it has acquired around 30 per cent stake in a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Power pursuant to invocation of pledged shares.

Ficci: Govt has to pump economy

New Delhi: Ficci president Sangita Reddy on Tuesday urged the government not to worry too much about the fiscal deficit and try to pump the economy by increasing investments to arrest slowdown and accelerate growth. **PTI**

Boeing orders slump to lowest in decades

Paris/Bengaluru: Boeing reported its worst annual net orders in decades Tuesday, along with its lowest numbers for plane deliveries in 11 years, as the grounding of its 737 MAX jet saw it fall far behind main competitor Airbus. Boeing said it had received just 54 new orders for planes in 2019 and delivered less than half as many as a year earlier. **REUTERS**



CHETAK ELECTRIC LAUNCHED; PRICE STARTS AT ₹1.1 lakh

Bajaj Auto ED Rakesh Sharma (left) and firm's MD Rajiv Bajaj at the launch of Chetak electric scooter in Mumbai on Tuesday. *Ganesh Shirsekar*

■ The scooter, which comes at a starting price of Rs 1 lakh, will initially be open for bookings in Pune and Bengaluru from January 15.

■ The company had unveiled Chetak last October. The scooter will be available in two variants, Urbane and Premium.

■ Chetak Urbane edition with Drum Brakes will be priced at Rs 1 lakh, while the Chetak Premium with disc brakes will be priced at Rs 1.15 lakh. *PTI*

SBI cuts rates on some retail term deposits by 15 bps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

STATE BANK of India (SBI) has reduced interest rates on retail term deposits by 15 basis points on certain tenures, effective January 10.

The reduction in interest rates are for long-term fixed deposits below Rs 2 crore.

The lender has slashed interest rates on fixed deposits maturing in one-year to 10 year to 6.10 per cent from 6.25 per cent, as per the information on bank's website. For fixed deposits maturing in seven days to 45 days and 46 days to 179 days, the bank is offering an interest rate of 4.50 per cent and 5.50 per cent, respectively.

The term deposits maturing in 180 days to less than one-year are fetching an interest rate of 5.80 per cent.

Sebi bars former Diageo official in United Spirits insider trading case

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has barred Nishat Shailesh Gupte, a former official of Diageo Plc, from the capital markets for seven years for indulging in insider trading activity in United Spirits Ltd.

The regulator has also directed three persons related to Gupte — Poonam Haresh Jashnani, Haresh Parmanand Jashnani and Varun Haresh Jashnani — to disgorge unlawful gains totalling over Rs 1 crore made by them, along with interest, in the insider trading case.

According to a Sebi order, Gupte, who was the Global Business Development Manager (M&A) of Diageo, was in possession of unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI) relating to

Nishat Shailesh Gupte has been barred from the capital markets for seven years

the open offer for acquisition of shares of United Spirits Ltd (USL) by Relay BV together with Diageo Plc as the person acting in concert (PAC). Gupte was part of the core team which represented Diageo in the transaction to consolidate shareholding of the acquirer in USL and was guiding the team since the beginning of the transaction lifecycle. Further, the regulator said Poonam, Haresh and Varun also indulged in insider trading activity in USL based on the information passed by Gupte.

Gupte is the son-in-law of Poonam and Haresh, and brother-in-law of Varun.

'Global PC shipments grew 2.3% in Q42019'

The global PC market grew 2.3 per cent year-on-year in October-December 2019 with shipment totalling 70.6 million units, data from research firm Gartner showed



ONGOING INTEL CPU SHORTAGE, which began mid-last year, became a major issue again on PC delivery to enterprise customers by the top three vendors. Without this shortage,

shipments would have grown faster than the reported results
WORLDWIDE PC SHIPMENTS totalled 261.2 million units in 2019, a marginal 0.6 per cent increase from 2018

STRONG DEMAND FOR BUSINESS PCs

Contrasted against the ongoing weakness in consumer personal computers (PC) demand, business PC demand has led to unit growth in five of the last seven quarters

NO. 1
Lenovo maintained its number one position in the worldwide PC market and widened its share over HP Inc. With the exception of the Asia/Pacific, Lenovo recorded year-over-year growth in all regions. In the US alone, Lenovo's desktop PC shipments rose more than 30 per cent compared to the year-ago period

Source: Gartner/PTI

SHARES OF TESLA NEED TO RISE 6% TO PUT THE FIRM'S MARKET VALUE AT \$100 BILLION

Musk nears \$346 million payday as Tesla market value soars

REUTERS
SAN FRANCISCO, JANUARY 14

TESLA INC chief executive Elon Musk is coming close to earning the first \$346 million tranche of options in a record-breaking pay package, after the electric vehicle maker's stock more than doubled in the last three months.

Shares of Tesla surged 9 per cent to a record high on Monday. They need to rise another 6 per cent to put Tesla's stock market value at \$100 billion and then be sustained at that level for both a one-month and six-month average in order to trigger the vesting of the first of 12 tranches of options granted to Musk to buy Tesla



Tesla Inc CEO Elon Musk dances onstage during a delivery event for Tesla China-made Model 3 cars in Shanghai, China on January 7, 2020. Reuters File Photo

stock. Musk has already hit an operational target that is also neces-

sary for the options to vest. For Musk's subsequent

tranches to vest under the terms of the 2018 package, the company's market cap would have to continue to sustainably rise by \$50 billion increments over the agreement's 10-year period, with the billionaire earning the full package if Tesla's market capitalization reaches \$650 billion and the electric car maker achieves several revenue and profit targets.

A full payoff for Musk, who is also the majority owner and CEO of the SpaceX rocket maker, would surpass anything previously granted to U.S. executives, according Institutional Shareholder Services, a proxy advisor that recommended investors reject the pay package deal at the time.

Musk receives no salary or cash bonus, only options that vest based on Tesla's market cap and milestones for growth.

"This is the very definition of pay for performance," said Ian Keas, senior director at Longnecker & Associates, an executive compensation consulting firm. "But is he the only individual that could serve in that seat as CEO and deliver that value to shareholders? That's the billion dollar question."

Musk's potential payout compares to the \$638 million received by Snap Inc founder Evan Spiegel in 2017 after the social network company's initial public offering. In 2018, Walt Disney CEO Robert Iger earned stock

grants worth as much as \$149.6 million, including awards related to Disney's purchase of film and television assets from Twenty-First Century Fox.

Musk has transformed Tesla from a niche car maker with production problems into the global leader in electric vehicles, with U.S. and Chinese factories. So far it has stayed ahead of more established rivals including BMW and Volkswagen. Last week, Tesla's stock market value hit nearly \$89 billion, eclipsing the sum of General Motors' and Ford's for the first time, fueled by a surprise third-quarter profit, progress at a new factory in China and better-than-expected car deliveries in the fourth quarter.

US, EU, Japan agree to new subsidy rules with China trade in focus

REUTERS
BRUSSELS, JANUARY 14

THE UNITED States, the European Union and Japan proposed new global trade rules on Tuesday to curb subsidies they say are distorting the worldwide economy, with China their clear target.

A day before Chinese officials are due to sign the first phase of a trade deal with the United States in Washington, Beijing is again the focus of criticism from its main trading partners.

The Phase 1 US-China deal will lead to China buying more US products, but not tackle hard issues such as subsidies. After meet-

ing in Washington, Japanese Economy Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and EU trade commissioner Phil Hogan said in a joint statement that existing World Trade Organization (WTO) rules were insufficient to tackle market distortions from subsidies.

The proposed rules are the outcome of two years of trilateral discussions, but are only a precursor to the hard work of convincing other WTO members, including China. They also mark a note of harmony in US-EU relations, strained by US tariffs and disputes over aircraft subsidies and EU auto exports.

A MODEST MAKEOVER

Justin Trudeau’s less ambitious second term as Canada’s prime minister

Chastened and cash-strapped, but still in power

JUSTIN TRUDEAU RETURNED from his Christmas break in Costa Rica with a new look. Canada’s prime minister has sprouted a salt-and-pepper stubble, making him look slightly less youthful. His makeover hints that he intends to govern differently in his second term, which began late last year. He has plenty of reasons to change his approach. The election on October 21st was a close shave. Mr Trudeau’s Liberal Party won 1m fewer votes than it had four years before and lost its majority in Parliament. He now leads a minority government dependent for support on other parties, especially the left-wing New Democrats (NDP) and the Bloc Québécois, which advocates independence for Quebec. The Liberals won no seats in the western prairie provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Mr Trudeau interprets this setback as a rebuff to his governing style rather than to his policies. He was a global cheerleader for every progressive cause, from welcoming refugees to expanding transgender rights. This grated on some voters. Ethical lapses, especially demoting the justice minister after she refused to help a big engineering firm avoid prosecution for bribery, compounded the damage.

Mr Trudeau’s first-term policies are easier to defend. They included legalising cannabis; a new child benefit, which cut poverty and lifted middle-class incomes; a national price on carbon; and a renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Mexico. In a recent interview with the Canadian Press, a news agency, Mr Trudeau asserted that voters “agree with the general direction” of his government but acknowledged that they want a change of tone.

Building trust in Justin

Change in his second term is likely to go beyond that. Mr Trudeau will need policies to placate those he has angered. He faces new constraints. Money will be a bigger one than his lack of a parliamentary majority. Although public finances are healthy, Mr Trudeau cannot spend as freely as he did in his first term.

The newly modest prime minister is consulting Liberal eminences whom he had formerly ignored. They have advised him to be more of a team player and to give ministers more autonomy. That “should result in better outcomes”, says John Manley, who was a deputy prime minister in the Liberal government led by Jean Chrétien in 1993-2003. Mr Trudeau now has a deputy prime minister of his own (a job invented by his father, Pierre Trudeau, a Canadian prime minister of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s). He gave the post to Chrystia Freeland, who as foreign minister in his first term led the renegotiation of NAFTA.

Mr Trudeau’s biggest second-term priority is the same as it was in his first: boosting the middle class. His new cabinet includes Canada’s first “minister of middle-class prosperity”, Mona Fortier, who has a mandate to incorporate quality-of-life measurements into the government’s decision-making. The new



Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attends a candlelight vigil for the victims of Ukraine International Airlines flight PS-752 on Parliament Hill in Ontario, Canada, on January 9. The PM has sprouted a salt-and-pepper stubble, making him look slightly less youthful. His makeover hints that he intends to govern differently in his second term, which began late last year. *Reuters*

Parliament has already enacted a tax cut for the middle class. That accounts for nearly a third of the C\$57bn (\$44bn) of extra spending and revenue cuts that Mr Trudeau plans over the next four years. Other expensive promises are to extend subsidised child-care to 250,000 more children and to increase grants for university students. Mr Trudeau wants to introduce “pharmacare”, an extension of publicly financed health care to prescription drugs.

Placating alienated westerners, one of Ms Freeland’s main jobs, will also cost money. Alberta and Saskatchewan are suffering from lower global oil prices that have prevailed since 2014. Although the national unemployment rate of 5.9% is low by historical standards, in Alberta nearly a fifth of men younger than 25 are jobless. The two provinces oppose Mr Trudeau’s carbon price (as does Ontario, the most populous province) and the environmental regulations

that he brought in.

The government will not retreat from its plan to raise the floor for the price of carbon from C\$30 per tonne of CO2-equivalent emissions to C\$50 by 2022. Indeed, it is likely to keep rising. It will have to be C\$100 if Canada is to meet its goal of reducing emissions from 2005 levels by 30% by 2030, according to the Parliamentary Budget Office. But the government may find other ways to mollify energy-producing

provinces. Bill Morneau, the finance minister, touts as a model a “clean resource innovation network” of companies, NGOs and academic institutions that seeks to reduce environmental damage caused by the oil and gas industry. There is talk of giving direct relief to jobless westerners.

Money will be tight. While campaigning in 2015 Mr Trudeau said he would end the austerity policies of his Conservative predecessor, Stephen Harper, but promised to en-

Justin Trudeau’s biggest second-term priority is the same as it was in his first: boosting the middle class. His new cabinet includes Canada’s first “minister of middle-class prosperity”, Mona Fortier, who has a mandate to incorporate quality-of-life measurements into the government’s decision-making

sure that debt did not rise as a share of GDP and to balance the budget by 2019. Mr Trudeau kept the first promise but broke the second. The deficit this fiscal year is expected to be C\$27bn, 1.2% of GDP.

Now the debt cap is at risk. The finance ministry predicts that the ratio of debt to GDP will rise from 30.8% to 31.0% this fiscal year and expects the same ratio next year. That does not take into account the cost of promises beyond the tax cut. If the economy weakens, the debt burden could increase sharply from that modest level. Perhaps for that reason Mr Trudeau is leaning against a proposal by an advisory panel for a universal, single-payer pharmacare plan, which would cost C\$15bn a year. He has allocated just C\$6bn over the next four years for a “down-payment” on pharmacare. Pre-makeover, he might have chosen the more expensive option.

Though more sober, Mr Trudeau has no

reason to be despondent. The finance ministry expects economic growth to remain modest, a little below 2%, but not to stall over the next two years. Business investment, which dropped by 10% during Mr Trudeau’s first term, will recover because the United States has agreed to a revision of NAFTA, Mr Morneau believes.

Mr Trudeau has political breathing room. The opposition Conservative Party has dropped its leader, Andrew Scheer, and will not replace him until June. The NDP is unlikely to challenge the government strongly; it will not want to provoke a new election while its coffers are empty. The Bloc Québécois downplayed its separatism during the election and is expected to support the government on most votes. If Mr Trudeau celebrates, he will do it quietly.

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APARTHEID, CHINESE STYLE

Dismantling China’s Muslim gulag in Xinjiang is not enough

The Communist Party must undo decades of sowing ethnic division



A security officer holds out a detector on a street in Urumqi, the capital of Xinjiang in 2013. *Reuters*

IMAGINE A place with nearly seven times more land than Britain, oil reserves as big as Iraq’s and more coal than Germany. It produces one-fifth of the world’s cotton. Yet this place is poor. Its income per person is about the same as Botswana’s. And it is a time bomb. Its people mostly belong to two ethnic groups of similar size. One group has all the power and most of the wealth. Many of the other rot in a gulag, enduring compulsory “re-education” in how to think and speak like the richer lot.

Such is the far-western region of Xinjiang. The dominant ethnic group are the Han Chinese, who are more than 90% of China’s population and about 40% of Xinjiang’s. The Communist Party has never trusted a Uighur to run Xinjiang. Han people dominate its economy, too, through massive state-owned industrial and agricultural firms which answer to the government in Beijing, 2,000km (1,200 miles) to the east.

Many of the 10m Uighurs in Xinjiang object to this state of affairs. Some have been so bold as to say so publicly. A tiny minority have made their displeasure known violently. China has reacted by building a vast network of prison camps and tossing perhaps 1m Uighurs into it for “vocational training” (ie, indoctrination). All it takes to get hauled away is to show too much interest in Islam or Uighur traditions.

To understand Xinjiang’s tragedy, look at



how the Chinese government has aggravated its ethnic divide. China says it wants to curb the “three evils” of separatism, terrorism and religious extremism. It exaggerates the scale of these problems and obfuscates their cause. Uighurs are restive largely because their Han neighbours often treat them with contempt.

Xinjiang’s original sin

Many Han people behave like colonial overlords. Few bother to learn the local language, even if their families settled in Xinjiang in the 1950s, shortly after the Communists seized power and snuffed out a brief period of independence for part of the region. Many have almost no interaction with Uighurs. About one in six people in Xinjiang, most of them Han Chinese, live in separate communities run by a colossal state-owned-enterprise-cum-paramilitary-outfit. It is called the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps, or bingtuan (Chinese for a military regiment). It has its own police, hospitals, newspapers and television stations. It dominates Xinjiang’s agriculture. This includes the production of tomatoes and cotton, for the harvesting of which the bingtuan uses casual Han labour brought in from other parts of China. The (Han) party chief of the corps wields power in the region second only to that of the leader of Xinjiang itself.

Such a system is bound to foster resentment. Geography compounds the problem. The bingtuan’s biggest settlements are in

the north. An immense desert separates them from the oasis towns of the south, where the Uighurs, mostly poor farmers who struggle to compete with the bingtuan’s huge agricultural schemes, are mainly concentrated.

The Chinese government insists it is not oppressing anyone. Uighurs learn useful skills in the camps, officials say, spuriously claiming that all volunteer for the strictly disciplined factory jobs that — according to leaked papers — are later assigned to many. They say the camps are needed because of Xinjiang’s record, unmatched elsewhere in China, of terrorist attacks. They say there were thousands of such attacks in the decade and a half before the camps were built, and that these resulted in a large number of people being killed, including hundreds of security personnel. Since then, they claim, there have been no terrorist incidents at all in Xinjiang.

It is hard to assess such claims in a region where foreign reporters are kept under surveillance and ordinary people are afraid to talk to strangers. But there are reasons to be sceptical. Xinjiang is not awash with guns or extremists. It is a place where members of an ethnic and religious minority have been made to feel like third-class citizens in their ancestral homeland. By locking up so many innocents for growing beards or praying too loudly, China is stoking anger among Uighurs that could indeed lead to violence. Their Han neighbours will no doubt become even more suspicious and frightened of them. Xinjiang will become more divided, and in the long run less stable.

The camps must be dismantled. So, too, must Xinjiang’s apartheid-like system, epitomised by the bingtuan and its mainly Han enclaves. Alas, those who suggest this are brutally silenced. In time, the Chinese government may discover what a terrible mistake it is making.

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ON THE LOOSE



LEHER KALA

Heroine to Hero
Padukone stayed
silent, and conquered

REACTIONS TO Deepika Padukone's surprise visit to JNU were depressingly predictable; a BJP leader urged people to boycott her film *Chhapaak* while baiters relentlessly taunted her on Twitter. Union Minister Smriti Irani was especially contemptuous, not just of the actor but also of the students. "It's her right to stand next to people who say *Bharat tere tukde honge*," said Irani. It's unlikely any of this fazes Padukone, who has enough experience dealing with whacky fringe elements.

I feel like taking umbrage with Deepika too, for making me feel like a fraud. If she could take time off her busy schedule to express solidarity with bleeding students who were attacked with iron rods and I haven't, it makes me wonder if the righteous anger against people born with ingrained liberal privilege, isn't a bit justified. By the mere act of showing up when the stakes are high (Padukone is also the producer of *Chhapaak*) she has quietly raised tough questions, besides lending huge credence to an alternate point of view. And shamed us ordinary folk, who feel for the students but don't get around to doing anything about it. It is an important acknowledgement that life cannot go on elsewhere, whilst so many young countrymen feel threatened and unheard, their voices drowned in the din of anti-national rhetoric.

The violence in JNU is best understood by putting oneself in the shoes of those present there on that awfully cold January day. It bears repeating because clever spin doctoring has baffled even those who keep up to date with the news. Imagine that your child is a student at a university, staying in a hostel. She's immersed in the wondrous process of young adulthood, figuring out via books, the coursework and her environment, what, and who, she's eventually going to become. The university, like the rest of the nation is tense, because for the last few years there has been an inexplicable suspicion, even repugnance for scholarship. As a parent, you dismiss perpetual worry about safety as one of the lesser perils of being Indian. Then you hear that masked men and women have unleashed havoc inside the college, injuring two dozen people, while people on the outside could not, or did nothing, to help. That parent could be you, it could be me.

Dissent or questioning the status quo is the whole point of student life and they don't deserve to be vilified for it. One would have to be uniquely disengaged and apathetic not to be moved by visuals of injured students and teachers running for their lives in the Capital, a sight that should violate any human being's sensibilities. Caught up in our own lives, indifference is the bane of modern living. Most of us don't know whether we make good or bad citizens and by and large, we're never sufficiently tested to find out. Right now, hiding behind the cynicism that protest is futile, is the cowardly way out.

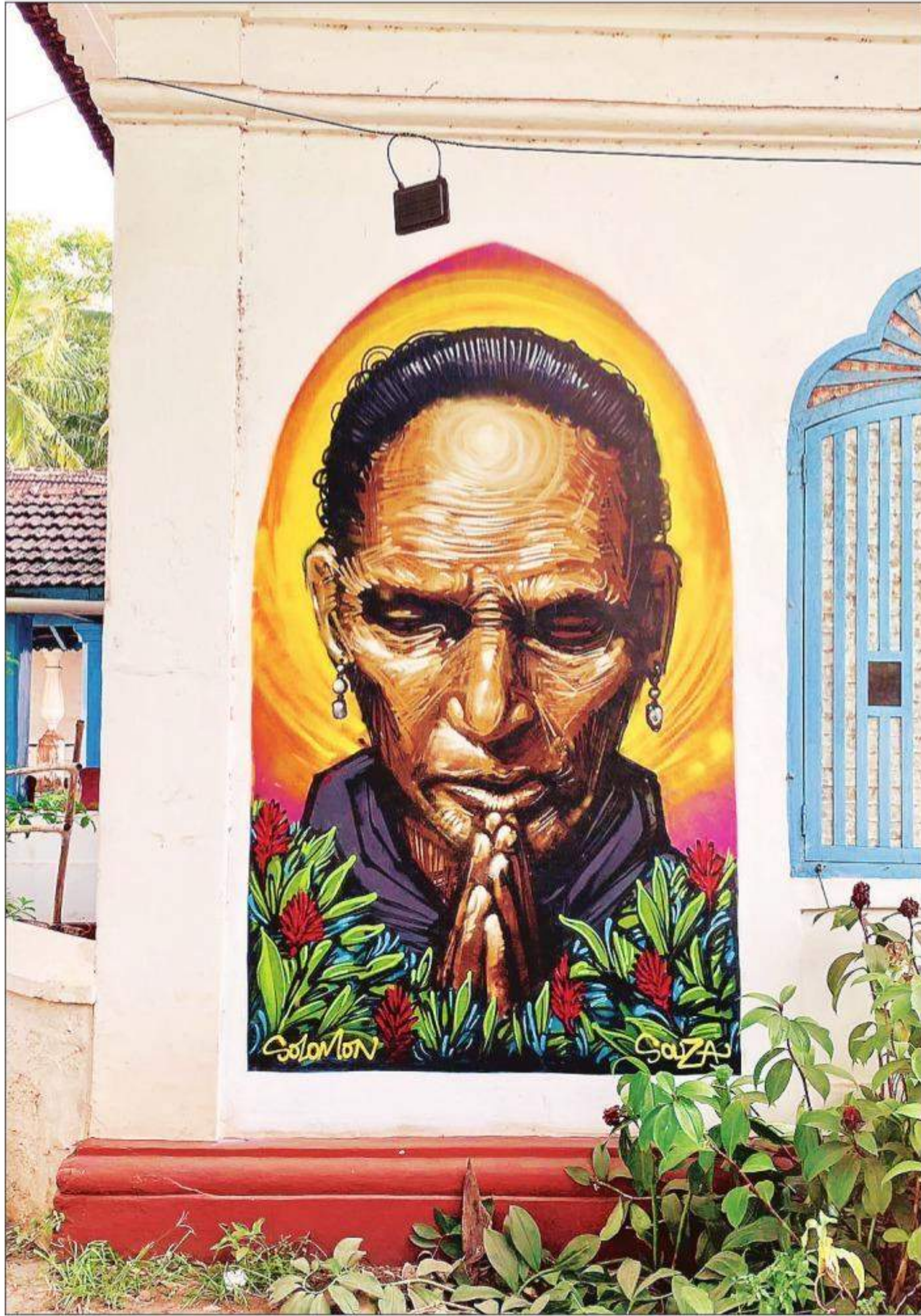
With students from DU supporting JNU, there is hope that things can be different, even if an alternative is nowhere in sight. Padukone took an encouraging step forward that will, hopefully, urge the rest of us to resist looking away.

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Ways of Seeing

Solomon Souza on his first visit to the ancestral village of his grandfather, FN Souza, whose ambitious mural he could not finish



(Clockwise from above) Solomon Souza has created murals of Sacula; Lata Mangeskar and Anthony Gonsalves; and Maestro António Fortunato de Figueiredo



PAINT ONE MORE TIME

Pop star Britney Spears' first public art exhibition titled "Sometimes You Just Gotta Play!!!!!!" will open at Galerie Sympa in the village of Figeac, France, this week. Her last artwork, a painting of flowers, was auctioned for \$10,000. The money went to the victims of the Las Vegas mass shooting in 2017.

DIPANITA NATH

AS WINTER festive season was starting in Goa last year, a 26-year-old man came out of the airport and thought he had landed in Namia. "It was as if I had stepped through a cupboard into this magical world full of wild beauty. In the weeks that followed, I lost myself here and made a little life in Goa. I had always wanted to come to Goa as I knew I had Goan heritage and roots here. Now, it was as if I had never left here and never lived anywhere else," he says.

Graffiti artist Solomon Souza was visiting the place his grandfather, Francis Newton Souza, better known as FN Souza, had belonged. FN was one of India's pioneering modern artists, founder of the Progressive Artists' Movement and creator of works of great power and strength. Solomon's visit was a part of the Serendipity Arts Festival that was held in Goa in December.

Tel Aviv-based Solomon is the son of artist Keren Souza Kohn, the eldest of the three daughters of FN and Liselotte Kohn. "I had an amazingly talented and celebrated artist for a grandfather. He was a fundamental aspect of my life when he was alive and has become more so when he passed away. I was 10 when he passed away but his work is always there. I am understanding more and more about the impact he has had on the art world and people's ways of thinking," he says.

It was Keren who surrounded Solomon with art. "My mother made sure I became an artist. She was always painting and teaching. She had an amazing studio and I was always going in there. I was painting on the wall as a child and she would tape a paper on it and let me draw. She never stopped me, instead she encouraged me," he says. Spray cans and bigger walls were a natural progression for Solomon. "I like to do graffiti and spray cans are a perfect tool, as these are versatile and have strong colour. It is a responsibility when you paint the streets. You could choose to beautify or destroy. If you have a message to spread, you can spread it," he says.

He moved countries and cities a lot as a child, and changed 15 schools. "It made me, in a way, very social, because I make friends very easily. I had a very crazy childhood. I was a very troublesome child and did stupid stuff. But, I would not have been the same person if I had not done those things," he says.

A few years ago, Solomon came into the limelight for painting local and global heroes — Jewish World War II soldier Hannah Szenes, American rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel and the leader of the non-violent movement, Mahatma Gandhi — in a congested marketplace of Jerusalem. "That project got me thinking a lot about the content of my work and how you can portray a message and tell a story when you paint a picture," he says. Back in London, now, he has commemorated the 30th death anniversary of his maternal grandmother, Liselotte, by painting her face on a giant shutter. She had fled her home in Prague in 1939 after Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Nazis and made her way to the UK. In London, she met FN, newly arrived from India.

In FN's ancestral village of Saligaon, Solomon found the crumbling house where the legendary artist had lived as well as a community of hundreds of uncles and aunts. "I was eating *mirchi* and *puri bhaji* all day. It was exciting for me to wander the streets that my grandfather would have wandered as a child. I saw little children running around in the open and I thought, 'this would have been my grandfather 70,80 or 90 years ago'," he says.

Solomon created life-size murals of Saligaon legends in the village, such as women freedom fighters, many of whom were imprisoned and tortured, and Eunice D'Souza, a poet. "I did one of Sacula, who was an interesting man. People thought he was a bit crazy but he was just very different. He would dress as a priest, though he wasn't one, in long robes and bless people on the streets. He was blessing the world," he says. The work is on the wall of an old Portuguese home on a tight bend on a busy road. "I almost got run over a few times painting it," he says.

On another wall is Anthony de Mello, one





(From top) The incomplete mural by Solomon Souza in Panjim in which he painted FN Souza as a child; a mural showcasing Brahmanand Sankhwalkar; Solomon

of the founders of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. "He is this guy from a little village in Goa who went and exploded on the world, just like my grandfather did. Goans are very smart and international. They love to spread out and explore. I am sure that the Portuguese played a role in creating this culture by coming on boats and, when they left, opened up Goa," says Solomon.

The artist made more than 20 murals as part of Serendipity Arts Festivals and intended to finish with a giant work on FN. "We found the perfect wall and was set to paint the great pioneer of the progressive arts... however, the universe had different plans," he writes on his Instagram account, @solomonsouza. The lift he needed fell short of the height he needed to paint. "The police also decided to call me repeatedly, requesting my presence at the local station for questioning concerning my visa to which I eventually obliged," he adds.

By the time Solomon returned to the wall, he was told by the driver of the lift that he had only 30 minutes. "So, picking up my paint, alighting the work platform and extending a token of gratitude to the man who had tied me to this life and legacy, I painted Souza as a child, the age he would be whilst in Goa, a young thing with the world stretched out and open before him like a huge blank wall," he writes. The reason the senior Souza looks a trifle annoyed is possibly because Solomon was "quite frustrated and rushed... perhaps that shows in his features".

The incomplete work is a reason for Solomon to return. Before that, he is finishing a large mural on Stamford Bridge, which is in Chelsea FC's stadium in London, in commemoration of the 75th liberation of Auschwitz.

SNAPSHOTS



History in the Making

OSCAR-WINNING American film director Spike Lee (pictured) has become the first African-American filmmaker to head the jury at the 73rd edition of Cannes Film Festival scheduled from May 12-23 this year. Lee, director of *Malcolm X* and *Do the Right Thing*, said that he was delighted to be honoured as the "first person of African diaspora" for the important role. Seven of Lee's films have premiered at the prestigious film extravaganza and include *Jungle Fever* (1991), *Ten Minutes Older* (2002), and *BlackKkLansman* (2018). Festival organiser Thierry Fremaux said that the announcement of the first black president was not due to political reasons but aimed at sending out a message of universality.



Odia Filmmaker Passes Away

VETERAN ODIA filmmaker Manmohan Mohapatra passed away at a hospital in Bhubaneswar on Monday at the age of 69. Mohapatra ushered in a new wave in Odia cinema and won eight national film awards for films like *Seeta Raati*, *Nishita Swapna* and *Tired Afternoon*, among others. He passed out from Pune's Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in 1975. Mohapatra had also tried his hand at Hindi films such as *Bits and Pieces*, which starred Nandita Das, Rahul Bose and Dia Mirza among others. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled his death and said in a statement, "His contributions towards the film industry will always be remembered."

Found in Translation

Two poems written in two different times and contexts are engaging with new rhythms through creative transpositions

SUANSHU KHURANA

BANGALORE-BASED poet, translator and activist Mamta Sagar's decision to pen *Naavu nodona* (We'll see) — the Kannada translation of Faiz Ahmed Faiz's iconic vow of defiance, *Hum dekhenge*, a piece of poetry that found significance in Iqbal Bano's oeuvre and its epicentre in raag Bihag — was entirely need-based. It was also to do with semantics. Not everyone understood what it meant exactly. "People don't know the poem. One needs more translations to tell them what it means," says Sagar, curator of the community poetry event Kaavya Sanje. Her writings focus on identity and issues around linguistic and cultural diversities.

The poem was sung outside Bangalore's Town Hall by playback singer MD Pallavi and composer Bindhu Malini along with Sagar. "Art is a very powerful tool at any point of time for answers during socio-political movements and poems that sustain and live are always written at socio-political junctures of history. They energise a movement," says Sagar, for whom Faiz's poetry was hard to translate because translations in general are difficult to ex-

ecute and because of one particular paragraph that talks of Allah and Kaba. "If I had done it literally, people would have said that it is anti-Hindutva. The 12th century Kannada tradition of *vachanas* came to my rescue. So I wrote according to that and I said 'let the gods walk out of the sanctum sanctorum and once they do, they will walk with the marginalised'. I took the so-called non-Muslim tradition and it helped me translate," says Sagar.

Faiz's poem, recently, also found a Bhojpuri version. It was the setting up of a committee by IIT Kanpur to launch a probe into the poem that led poet and writer Digambar to write *Humhu dekhhab, hum dekhbe karab*. He was disturbed when he heard that the poem's imagery was being called anti-Hindu. "I felt it was wrong. I have read and enjoyed this poem for years now. There is nothing religious about it. This poem considers the masses as the creator. There was a need to explain," says Digambar, Head of the publishing house, Gargi Prakashan.

There is also a contemporary poem — writer and lyricist Varun Grover's *Hum kaagaz nahi dikhayenge* (We will not show the papers) which is finding much resonance among many. It is also getting translated and is being



(From left to right) MD Pallavi, Mamta Sagar and Bindhu Malini; Konkana Sensharma in a still from *Kaagoj amra dikhabo na*



sung to various tunes at the CAA protests. While 13 directors, writers and members of the Bangla film fraternity have come together with the Bengali version of the poem — *Kaagoj amra dikhabo na*, the song has also found a soft rock version by Rahul Ram, a melodious acoustic interpretation by the band Maram, IPTA's school assembly song style composition by composer Sitaram Singh and a folksy tune by composer duo Mayukh-Mainak. The Bengali video, which features well-known actors like Sabyasachi Chakrabarty, Konkana Sensharma, Nandana Sen, Dhritiman Chatterjee, Chitrangada Satarupa, and Tillotama Shome, apart from filmmaker and theatre director Suman Mukhopadhyay among others, has been created pro bono by a few like-minded people and put together by

Ronny Sen, who shot the artistes in Mumbai and Kolkata. "You see Feluda (Chakrabarty) say, *Kaagoj amra dikhabo na*, and that's significant," says Sen. Grover says, "They have given it more context and energy by adding some new lines. As for the songs, I didn't think that this poetry could be interpreted in so many ways."

According to Mukhopadhyay, he is willing to be a part of any artistic endeavour that will spread awareness and that it is significant for the artistes to engage. "There are certain moments in history when one has to be more proactive. There are a lot of misconceptions about the issue and artistes need to play an important role in this," says Mukhopadhyay.

Next in line — a Tamil version of *Hum dekhenge*, which is being translated by writer and professor A Mangai.

Flying start

Australia expose failings in Indian batting before Warner & Finch make mockery of chase with 10-wicket win

SIRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

RIGHT THROUGH last year's World Cup in England, where they eventually lost in the semifinals, India escaped the shellacking that possibly awaited them had they lost Rohit Sharma early in the piece. He pulled them through to the last four where he fell cheaply and India suffered.

That scenario resurfaced in Mumbai as the imperious Australians stomped away first with the ball and then with the bat to expose India with a 10-wicket win with 12.2 overs to spare. Australia's bowling oozed class — method and venom — and their openers ran away to Australia's highest-ever opening partnership against India. In some ways, for the Australians, it was the reverse of what happened to them in their last ODI at the hands of England when they were humbled in the World Cup semifinal in a similar fashion.

The Indian problem was the brittleness of the middle order against quality opposition, and even the top order when Sharma departs early. The match gave enough problems to ponder — it isn't a crisis but would need clarity of thought and intent to solve them. When Virat Kohli said he would drop himself down the order to accommodate Shikhar Dhawan and KL Rahul, it was couched in the context of the need to include all three in-form batsmen. The harsher truth probably is that the lower-middle order isn't yet solid enough to soak up the pressure of early wickets against good bowling attacks.

Australia's was a top-gun attack. Mitchell Starc, with his new modelled action where the arms are kept close to the body with the whole package a lot tighter, is now able to hit the good length and back of length with the new ball with greater confidence. Pat Cummins is a class apart and with Kane Richardson holding himself pretty well, it came down to the spinners. Just like old times. But Adam Zampa has already shown that he doesn't back away from a contest and Ashton Agar whipped up memories of Daniel Vettori with his accuracy and the penchant to not allow batsmen any balls to cut. Shreyas Iyer was targeted by a series of bouncers by the seamers before falling for the old play — a full-length one angling away, a hesitant prod away from the body, and caught by the 'keeper.

Iyer needs a fair run to make or break his career. He has the urges of a batsman who likes to feel the ball and the mind goes back to a similar dismissal against Dale Steyn a couple of years back in a tour game when the South Africans were here. Same stuff really — couple of shorts ones, lovely curlers outside off with Iyer constantly fishing, before he fell edging. He is at a crucial stage in his career, and some guidance and nurturing would perhaps go a long way. When the ball isn't doing much, he won't have any problems — and that is the bane of modern-day ODI cricket usually played on flat beauties. The pitch at Wankhede wasn't a seamer-friendly track but had bounce and the Australians were getting the ball to rush.

And then India's box of problems opened up. Once Iyer went, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja rallied for a while but it was clear that their runs were going to come against the spinners.

As it has happened in the past, even in domestic cricket. Pant's pull can be a bit iffy against quick bouncers. The head yanks back, the eyes retreat somewhere deep inside the skull, and the bat flays around. This time, Cummins' bouncer not only clipped the bat-edge but ricocheted off the helmet — and Pant suffered a concussion and couldn't take



The first ODI between India and Australia was briefly interrupted when a kite landed on the field. Pradip Das

the field, leaving KL Rahul to don the 'keeping gloves. Some bat-waving from Kuldeep Yadav took India past 250 but Aaron Finch and David Warner shot off the blocks with such furious intent that the match petered away rather quickly.

Dhawan drags on

The Indian problem was also evident during the 121-run partnership between Dhawan and Rahul in nearly 23 overs. One point is getting increasingly clear: India need to drop Dhawan in T20s — in this T20 World Cup year — as he is at a stage in his career when run rate is an issue.

The performance of the lower order can make it seem as if he played a responsible hand at the start but in the recent past, even on docile tracks, he has tended to drag a bit in the shortest format. India would do well to open with Rahul and Rohit and focus on sorting the middle order.

In his pomp, Dhawan had quite a few break-free shots, especially on Indian tracks. He would walk down the track or loft inside-out on the up over cover or shovel past square-leg, but now, his get-out-of-jail shot is the upper-cut or the open-faced dab to third man. Once bowlers deny him width,

Shreyas Iyer needs a fair run to make or break his career. He has the urges of a batsman who likes to feel the ball and the mind goes back to a similar dismissal against Dale Steyn a couple of years back in a tour game when the South Africans were here. Same stuff really — couple of shorts ones, lovely curlers outside off with Iyer constantly fishing, before he fell edging.

he sort of meanders on. Dhawan is still fine in ODIs but India would do well to take a call on his T20 career. Also, his ability to rotate strike has gone down — 51 dot balls offer enough proof. It also puts pressure on Rohit to accelerate at the top, and for someone who likes to take a bit of time, he is forced into taking a few risks.

When Dhawan was batting, it seemed he

had settled on a score in the range of 250-265. But one has to take into account the state of the middle order for some of that circumspection, which only makes the task of sorting it a high-priority one.

Should one also be a bit worried about India's bowling? West Indies too had shown that this ODI attack can not only be tamed but runs can be plundered — and it came down to whether Indian batsmen scored one run more than the opposition.

Another way to look at it is what would have happened if Indian bowlers had gone against the Indian batsmen. If Rohit had fallen early, the script could well have been similar to an extent. Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami did start off well against the Australians and Warner, in fact, had a couple of iffy moments. But Finch changed the complexion with a fine counter-attack. When the seamers hurled it fuller — Finch's old problem used to be the full-length ball angling in — he creamed them through the offside. When Bumrah tried to extract bounce from back of a length, he stood on his toes to punch through point.

Soon, Warner also picked up and though there were some early flutters against Kuldeep Yadav, it was more because Finch

was trying to slog him away. Once they re-focused, the right-hander unfurled a couple of gorgeous lofted sixes off Kuldeep and the runs kept coming in a flood. Without the cushion of a big score to defend, the Indians folded.

Even though one can hope that the bowlers ramp up their performances, it isn't the case of poor planning or wrong personnel. The case is different with the batting — if the management shows more intent and plans out the line-up, it can start to click. They can't afford to go against classy attacks with a hole in the middle and too much dependence on Rohit. What's more annoying is that the middle- and lower-order problem hasn't been fixed yet. And this isn't a recent issue. India went into the World Cup after a two-year-preparation phase but without finding solidity in the middle. That hit them hard in the semifinal. Now, they have another World Cup near the end of the year and need to scramble hard to find the right personnel and give them enough matches.

If Rajkot on Friday proves to be a batting beauty without any bounce, some of the problems might be hidden, but considering they have been bit on the backside in the past, India would do well to put the house in order.

Protest at Wankhede despite extra cover

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

NO BANNERS with messages and an intense scrutiny of those in black - this was the brief to those manning the gates at the Wankhede Stadium that hosted Tuesday's India-Australia ODI. This new security diktat was put in place after police shared inputs with the Mumbai Cricket Association about possible protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) during the game.

It is also learnt that the Indian cricket board had instructed its production crew to be judicious in this regard during the telecast.

"Mumbai Police has received intelligence that few groups are planning to have anti-CAA protests during the game. We were apprised of the situation and that's why police decided that no placards, colours, banners will be allowed during the game. As far as removing black clothing is concerned, it applied only to those wearing two layers of clothing," informed an MCA official.

These unusual instructions resulted in several turnstiles arguments during the first half of the game. With India batting first, there was a rush at the gates to get in. However, fans wearing India blues over their black clothes were escorted to restrooms by



Protesters at Wankhede Stadium. Twitter

private guards. However, despite the tight surveillance a section of the crowd in the lower stand did manage to display 'NO CAA, NO NRC, NO NPR' message on their T-shirts. Anticipating that those wearing black will be denied entry in the Wankhede stadium on Tuesday, a group of 25 students decided to wear white t-shirts with just a single alphabet — N, R, C, A, O, P — printed on it.

Once inside, they arranged themselves in order so that the message read as 'NO NRC', 'NO NPR' and 'NO CAA'.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

VIRAT KOHLI'S decision to drop himself down to the number four position backfired in the series opener on Tuesday, prompting the Indian skipper to say that he might have to "rethink" his plans going into the second ODI in Rajkot. India made some unmissable changes in their batting combination with Kohli pushing himself down the order to accommodate specialist openers Shikhar Dhawan (74 off 91) and K.L. Rahul (47 off 61) in the playing eleven.

Dhawan opened alongside Rohit Sharma while Rahul batted at three, disturbing the combination that India employed successfully after the World Cup in July, leading to a crushing 10-wicket loss at the hands of Australia.

"(On batting at 4) We've had this discussion many times in the past as well. Because of the way KL (Rahul) has been batting, we have tried to fit him in the batting line-up. But I don't think it's gone quite our way whenever I batted at four so probably will have to rethink about that one," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"It's about giving some guys opportunities. Every now and then, it's about putting people up there and testing them. People need to relax and not panic with one game. I am allowed to experiment a little bit and fail at times. Today was one of the days it did



Virat Kohli was dismissed for 16 against Australia batting at No.4. PTI

n't come off," he added. Australia gave India a harsh reality check, exposing the home team's middle-order frailty and putting to sword its bowling.

Anticipating dew in the evening session, Aaron Finch opted to field. India ended up

PANT SUFFERS CONCUSSION

Rishabh Pant suffered a concussion, forcing K.L. Rahul to take his position behind the stumps during the first ODI against Australia. "Rishabh Pant has got a concussion after being hit on his helmet while batting. K.L. Rahul is keeping wickets in his absence. Pant is under observation," BCCI statement said.

SCORECARD >> India vs Australia

1st ODI | Mumbai | Toss: Australia

INDIA 255 ALL OUT IN 49.1 OVS

R Sharma c Warner b Starc **10** (15b, 2x4)
S Dhawan c Agar b Cummins **74** (91b, 9x4, 1x6)
KL Rahul c Smith b Agar **47** (61b, 4x4)
V Kohli c & b Zampa **16** (14b, 1x6)
S Iyer c Carey b Starc **4** (9b)
R Pant c Turner b Cummins **28** (33b, 2x4, 1x6)
R Jadeja c Carey b Richardson **25** (32b, 2x4, 1x6)
S Thakur b Starc **13** (10b, 2x4)
M Shami c Carey b Richardson **10** (15b, 1x4)

K Yadav run out **17** (15b, 2x4)
J Bumrah not out **0** (0b)
Extras: (lb 3, w 8) **11**
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Sharma, 4.3 ov), 2-134 (Rahul, 27.1 ov), 3-140 (Dhawan, 28.5 ov), 4-156 (Kohli, 31.2 ov), 5-164 (Iyer, 32.5 ov), 6-213 (Jadeja, 42.1 ov), 7-217 (Pant, 43.2 ov), 8-229 (Thakur, 44.5 ov), 9-255 (Yadav, 48.6 ov), 10-255 (Shami, 49.1 ov)

Bowling:
M Starc 10-0-56-3
P Cummins 10-1-44-2
K Richardson 9.1-0-43-2
A Zampa 10-0-53-1
A Agar 10-1-56-1

AUSTRALIA 258/0 IN 37.4 OVS

D Warner not out **128** (112b, 17x4, 3x6)
A Finch not out **110** (114b, 13x4, 2x6)

Extras: (b 4, lb 7, w9) **20**

Bowling:
M Shami **7-4-0-58-0**
J Bumrah **7-0-50-0**
S Thakur **5-0-43-0**
K Yadav **10-0-55-0**
R Jadeja **8-0-41-0**

Aus won by 10 wickets
(with 74 balls remaining)

NUMBER PLATE

05 Number of 10-wicket defeats India have suffered in ODIs. Tuesday was their second such defeat at home, after a loss to South Africa at Eden Gardens in 2005. Australia have recorded five such wins, last instance being against Bangladesh in the 2007 World Cup.

106 Finch and Warner have opened 10 times against India, scoring 954 runs at an average of 106. The haul comprises three century and four fifty-run partnerships.

258 David Warner and Aaron Finch put together the highest-ever partnership against India, eclipsing George Bailey and Steven Smith's 246-run stand at Perth in 2016.

Will have to rethink batting at No.4, says Kohli

with a below-par 255 on a decent batting surface after a middle-order failure.

Australia made short work of the target, racing to a resounding victory in 37.4 overs with David Warner (128 not out off 112) and Finch (110 not out off 114) smashing unbeaten centuries.

"We were totally outplayed in all three departments. It's a very strong Australian team and if you don't play well enough they will hurt you and we saw that. With bat in hand I don't think we had enough intent to go out there and takes risks, get those extra runs and put the bowlers under pressure.

"I think in phases we were too respectful of the bowlers. We didn't take the game by the scruff of its neck. Having said that it's another challenge for us to bounce back from here but today total credit has to go to Australia for the way they played," said Kohli. India skipper said that the ongoing three-match ODI series is an opportunity for youngsters to make a mark ahead of the ICC T20 World Cup later this year.

"International cricket is always priceless. Experience in any format helps you in other formats. You perform in any format you gain confidence for the other one. So it's an opportunity for the younger lot in the middle-order to step up against world-class bowlers and make a mark. They have got two more opportunities so hopefully someone stands up and plays a blinder," he said.

Australia skipper Aaron Finch beating India in India is always a special feeling.

"I thought the way we fought back in the middle overs with the ball had a huge part today. The way KL and Shikhar were batting, they could have gone to a much bigger score. Proud of how we fought back. Any time you beat India in India is a special feeling," said Finch. Man-of-the-match Warner said his hunger for runs is increasing by the day.

"I think I've always had the hunger and desire for runs. It's just a great effort from our fast bowlers to knock India over for 255. We wanted to just protect the Powerplay. We got off to a flier, and we were very clinical in the end," said Warner.

'Wickets in middle overs hurt us'

Shikhar Dhawan said the loss of four quick wickets in the middle overs was the main reason behind India's crushing 10-wicket loss to Australia in the first ODI here. "We handled those first 10-15 overs very nicely. As I said that where we lost four wickets in a go, that is where the game changed for us, then we were behind the game and then we were trying to cover it, so that is where we went wrong," said Dhawan, who made a dogged 74 off 91 balls at the Wankhede Stadium.

"KL (Rahul) got out. That time we planned to accelerate and those four wickets we lost, that's where we lost the momentum. We were targeting 300 runs but we ended up scoring less runs. In bowling, we could not take early wickets. They outplayed us," admitted Dhawan.

GLOBAL WARNING: Smog threatens Australian Open | Weather patterns impact cricket | Qatar World Cup adds to the heat



Melbourne Park, which hosts the Australian Open, is seen in the foreground as bushfire smoke shrouds Melbourne's skyline on Tuesday. AAP Image/via Reuters

‘I was scared I would collapse’

A Slovenian player suffers a coughing fit as smoke, poor air quality blight Aus Open qualifying event

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 14

ON HIS Twitter account, Sumit Nagal put up photographs of his last practice session ahead of the Australian Open. He's been in Melbourne for a few days now, training for the qualifying round of the year's first Grand Slam, but there's something different in the air this time.

"It's not the same Melbourne it used to be. The smoke, I've never seen anything like this in the four times I've been here," Nagal told The Indian Express. This 'Melbourne' reminds him more of the Delhi that he's based in, and that helped him breathe through the smoky clouds raging over Australia from the bushfires.

"We come from India which is (one of the) most polluted countries, if I am not wrong, so this is not bad compared to it," he adds.

But it wasn't as easy for the other players trying for a spot in the Australian Open main draw. Women's world no 180 Dalila Jakupovic of Slovenia sunk to the surface of Court 3 during her first-round qualifying match in a coughing fit, unable to take in the hazardous smoke-filled air.

"I was really scared that I would collapse. That's why I went onto the floor because I couldn't walk anymore," she said to The Guardian after being forced to retire from the

match against Swiss player Stefanie Vogele. "I don't have asthma and never had breathing problems. I actually like heat. The physio came again and I thought it would be better. But the points were a bit longer and I just couldn't breathe anymore and I just fell on the floor."

Canadian player Eugenie Bouchard too struggled in her three-set win.

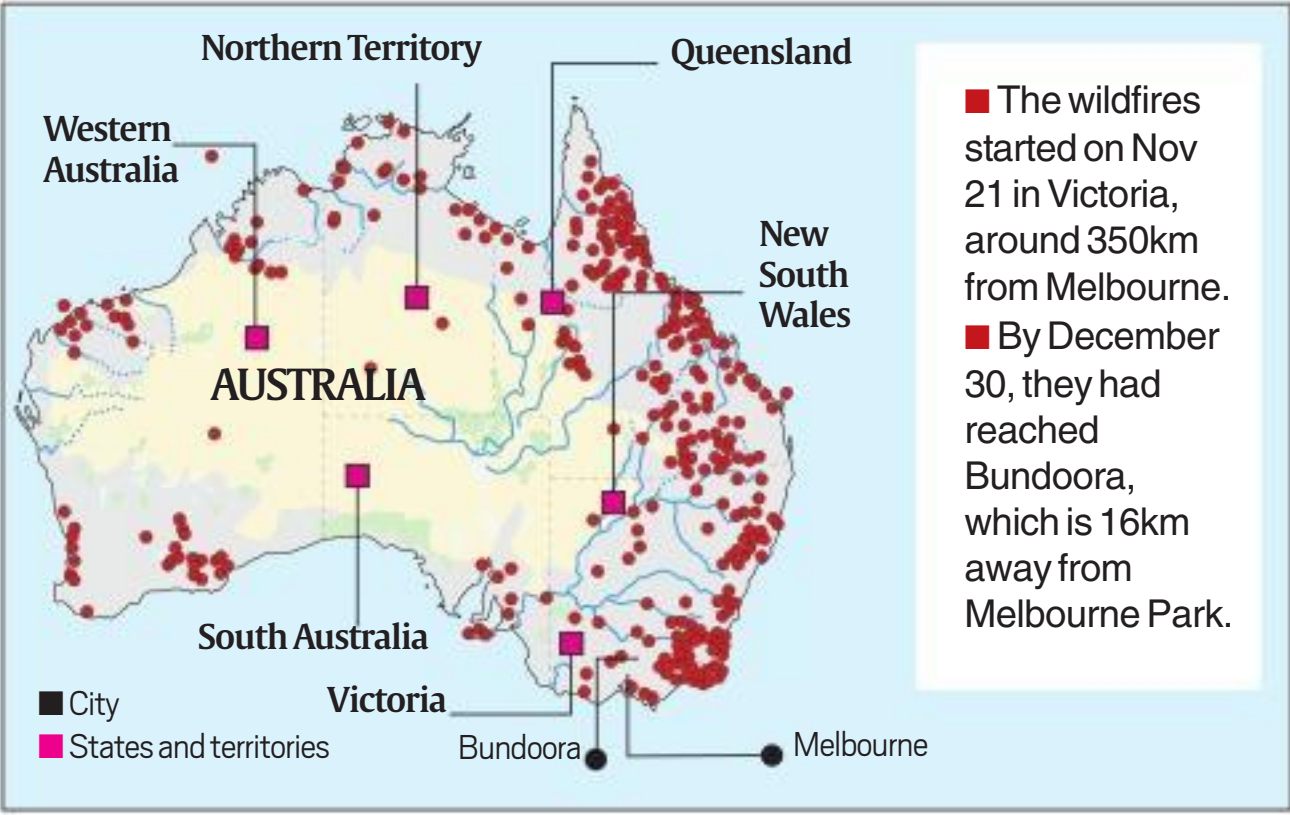
"I felt like it was tough to breathe and a bit nauseous. I felt like the conditions got worse as the match went on... but I was out there for a long time. It's not ideal to play in these conditions. Just like the heat rule, there should be an air-quality rule," she told The Guardian.

At nearby Kooyong, a suburb roughly nine kilometres away from Melbourne Park, five-time Grand Slam champion Maria Sharapova had her exhibition match against Germany's Laura Siegemund cut short because of poor air quality.

Tuesday was just the first day of the qualifying round, the Australian Open proper is still six days away. And the bushfires that have singed the country, and have claimed 27 lives, are still raging.

The wildfires started in the state of Victoria on November 21 last year in East Gippsland, around 350 km from Melbourne.

By December 30, it was reported that the fires had reached the outer suburbs of Australia's second largest city – including Bundoora which is 16km away from



Melbourne Park. It's been just over a fortnight since then, and the smoke from the fires, along with the smoke from the New South Wales bushfires that have wafted over the venue for the year's first Grand Slam, has raised major health concerns in the city.

‘Air quality worst in the world’

"Overnight for Melbourne (air quality) did reach the worst in the world," Brett Sutton, Victoria's chief health officer, told the Australian Associated Press on Tuesday. "Those conditions overnight are obviously when there are cooler temperatures and the particulate matter can settle very low to the ground. It will improve through the course of today, I'm told by the chief environmental scientist, so with warmer temperatures that particulate matter will lift."

Accordingly, officials at Tennis Australia decided to delay practice sessions on the courts and start of play by an hour.

"This morning the smoke haze was significant," tournament director Craig Tiley

was quoted by The Guardian. "And based on advice, we made the decision to suspend practice and, as a result, to start the qualifying matches an hour later than originally scheduled. At any time, we're not going to put them [players and staff] in harm's way or make any decision that's going to negatively impact their health and well-being."

The 'advice' though can be subjective. And former world no. 6 Gilles Simon took to Twitter to mock that decision.

"When we find doctors who say that playing at 45 degrees is not dangerous at the AO and referees who say that the wet grass is not slippery at Wimbledon, we must be able to find an expert who certifies that the air quality is sufficient right?" read the translation of his tweet in French.

Conditions remained 'unhealthy', according to the air quality index (AQI) reading in the Melbourne city centre and the suburbs around 2200 hrs local time on Tuesday. The city centre area, which includes Melbourne Park, was rated with an AQI of 190 – un-

healthy. But the suburbs nearby had a worse rating of 'very unhealthy'. Brighton, 11 km to the south-east was 218; Box Hill, 14 km east was 208; Brooklyn, 10km west of Melbourne Park was 212.

In comparison, the area near Connaught Place in New Delhi was 168 at 1800 local time.

The Victorian government has issued health advisories on its website. "If you're in an area with poor (unhealthy) or very poor (very unhealthy) air quality... the advice is to stay indoors, close doors and windows and keep activity levels low," stated one directive. Another simply said "avoid all outdoor physical activity."

These instructions though don't apply to the tennis players, hoping to start the season on a high.

Tournament officials have asserted their own preparedness for the smoke while the competition is on. They posted a statement on its social media account: "We have three roofed stadiums and eight indoor courts (which are usually used only for practice) at Melbourne Park. In the unlikely case of extreme smoke conditions, the roofs will be closed on the three stadium courts and play will continue in their air-conditioned and air-filtered environment. If smoke infiltrates the three stadium courts, the air conditioning system will filter it out."

In addition to this, the Australian Open is the only Grand Slam that has an extreme heat policy that allows a 10-minute break after the third set of a men's singles match and the second set of a women's singles match. In some cases, play can even be suspended.

There appears to be no such smoke index set for the tournament, and it will all come down to the arbitrary "advice" that will affect each player differently, to determine if a match should continue.

But the Australian Open is set to go on, with the devastating bushfires blazing through the periphery of Melbourne Park.

DEEP IMPACT

WINTER SPORTS
Mercury rises, snow melts

THE LUGE World Cup at Winterleiten, Austria, last week was rescheduled. Cancellations have become worryingly regular, as snow reliant winter sports venues look on helplessly as the white cover goes missing. India's multiple time Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan says, "For centuries, winter sports has used stable weather patterns to create reliable conditions for outdoor training and competition. With so many extreme weather events recently there have been huge disruptions for all of us whose livelihood is directly linked to climate. We had negligible snowfall in the last 2 Winter Olympics and many traditional winter sports venues are decommissioned." Research suggests by 2030 half the Alpine glaciers could be under threat and ski resorts could be down by 30 percent. Costs of artificial snowmaking have gone up by 70 percent in the last decade. "It is our job to give testimony that climate change is real. The world we all took for granted is fast disappearing," Keshavan says.

MARATHON
Timings suffer in heat

CLIMATE CHANGE and resultant heightened temperatures are dragging down timings of most amateur runners, with even elite runners pushed towards racing in lower mercury are restricted to target the winter / fall races for better times. An increase of 1 degree celcius above optimal temperature leads to a speed loss of 0.03%, points research. So, even as bespoke events like the Nike sub-2 hour attempt aim at dropping below the barrier, rise in temperatures can reduce occurrences of course records being broken. Logistically, the peaking temperatures have meant increased water points, a change in fluids permitted to restore electrolytes, change in clothing and training patterns. Concerns about the heat have reluctantly forced a shift of venue at the 2020 Olympics from Tokyo to Sapporo, 500 miles north and six degrees cooler.

FOOTBALL
Climate changes calendar

SINCE 1962, temperatures in 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar have gone up by five degrees. Last year, the mercury soared to an all-time high 50.3 degree Celsius. It prompted Fifa to push the tournament from the summer to November and December. However, the world track and field championships, held last September-October, should set off alarms. In Doha, first-aid responders outnumbered competitors. To combat the heat, Qatar plans to air-condition the outdoors. The playing fields will be forced cooled, and under each stadium seat will be a vent to comfort fans. Such measures could compound the damage, seeing how Qatar's carbon emissions per capita are the highest in the world. Football in Britain is facing its own challenges. A Climate Coalition report in 2018 estimated that grassroots clubs lose five weeks per season to bad weather and more than a third lose two to three months.

How climate change is shrinking cricket season

NIHAL KOSHIE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

POLLUTION IN New Delhi, drought in Maharashtra and unseasonal rains across the country. Cricket, a day-long outdoor sport, is increasingly finds itself at the mercy of the elements. Climate change has proved to be a headache for the BCCI officials as they try to schedule games – both domestic and international – in a window that is increasingly shrinking.

The latest casualty was the T20 game between India and Sri Lanka, which was abandoned without a ball being bowled because of rains in Guwahati in the first week of January. Between January 2 and January 8, the rainfall in Assam was 172 per cent more than normal. Plus there was a cyclone threat to a T20 International between India and Bangladesh in Rajkot in November. Domestic games too bore the brunt of the vagaries of changing weather patterns.

Heavy rainfall in September-October affected the Vijay Hazare Trophy – domestic ODI tournament – with wash-outs in Dehradun in Uttarakhand, Baroda in Gujarat. Alur in Karnataka, Jaipur in Rajasthan and Bangalore. Two quarterfinals and the final were truncated affairs and teams called for reserve days to be introduced henceforth. Lack of rains is also a problem for cricket. Over the years, IPL matches have been moved out of states because of a drought in the summer.

Besides, pollution, not for the first time, has forced cricketers to wear masks in New Delhi



Cricketers with masks is a common sight during early winter in Delhi.

in November, a poor advertisement for the air quality in the capital.

Bala Govindasamy, a global climate change researcher, says last year's monsoon cycle was erratic. "Whatever we saw last year, the unusual rain during the end of September and into October, we may not see that in the next few years because it was a chaotic pattern. I wouldn't rule out the possibility of climate change affecting the monsoon but we can't conclusively say so because there is no consensus. That said, it is true that the window is really narrowing for sports like cricket. In May-June it is terribly hot in North India. The number of warmer days are increasing and that is because of climate change. In June, July, August and September it

is going to rain. October is good but last year it rained in October. Of course November, December and January is not a good period in North India because of smog and pollution. So the window of opportunity is shrinking for a sport like cricket," Govindasamy, a professor at the Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, said.

No permanent solution

There is no permanent solution to the pollution catastrophe yet and if the phenomenon witnessed last year reoccurs in the near future – of the southwest withdrawing slowly and late and on the same day as the onset of the

northeast monsoon – it could lead to an increasing number of truncated matches.

The impact was felt during the Vijay Hazare Trophy which ran from September 24 to October 25.

Eighteen matches in the first three days of the tournament were hit by rain or a wet outfield and half a dozen matches had to be abandoned without a ball being bowled. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had re-worked the schedule for the 2019-2020 domestic season by moving the one-day tournament to the start. Yet the BCCI will likely have less elbow room when the next season's fixtures are finalised.

Saba Karim, the BCCI's general manager (cricket operations) said the one-day tournament and the T20 tournament, the Syed Mushtaq, were moved up for a reason. "We have the Vijay Hazare and the Mushtaq Ali at the beginning of this season, so that even if they are affected by rains at least the Ranji Trophy is not. There is nothing much we can do about the weather because it is beyond our control," Karim said.

He added that it was challenging to ensure matches which are abandoned because of the weather are rescheduled. "The monsoon arrived late this season and it stretched till October. So we remained very flexible and fluid. The idea is to provide as many matches as possible to our domestic cricketers. So wherever there's a possibility of rescheduling due to weather, we try and accommodate that, by being fair to everybody. Smog is an issue in northern India, especially Delhi, post-Diwali. We try to keep that in mind, but it's

not so easy. But you know, eventually, by the end of domestic calendar, things balanced out," the BCCI GM said.

The Indian Meteorological Department has recorded more than 560 extreme rainfall events this year. This is much more than what has been observed recently. Last year had just 321 extreme rainfall events, and the years prior to that much less.

A total of 2,600 very heavy rainfall events were also recorded till the first week of October, a much higher number than in the past. Another aspect of this year's monsoon was the unusually high rainfall in September. This year the figure was 259.3 mm rain though it was predicted to be about 170 mm.

When the rain abates, pollution plays havoc in the north, especially New Delhi.

The air quality was in the 'hazardous' category when India hosted Bangladesh in a T20 International on November 3. In 2017, Lankan players wore masks and their fast bowlers struggled to breathe during a Test match at the Feroz Shah Kotla. A couple of them also threw up during the course of the game.

Last season, at least three Mumbai Ranji Trophy players wore masks during a game against Railways at the Karnail Singh Stadium. The previous season too, in November 2017, smog in the capital affected cricket and prevented two Ranji Trophy matches from starting as per schedule as visibility was an issue at both Feroz Shah Kotla, where Bengal were to face Gujarat, and at Karnail Singh Stadium, where Tripura faced Hyderabad.

Players wearing masks because of pollution is now an annual sight in the capital.

Railways slightly late

Chasing 211, the home side get stuck at 205/5 before umpires call off match due to poor light

VISHAL MENON
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 14

IT WAS close to 5.30 pm at the Karnail Singh Stadium. This is usually the time when the stream of casual joggers from the adjoining Railway colony begins to trickle in. On Tuesday, they waited patiently just beyond the boundary rope. The final few overs of the thrilling Railways vs Madhya Pradesh Ranji Trophy encounter was in progress. Out in the middle, Dinesh Mor and Harsh Tyagi, two ticket examiners, were trying their best to get the Railways past the finish line. In pursuit of 211 on the final day, the home team were 205/5, when the umpires — Khalidhussen A Saiyed and Rajeev Godara — fished out the light meter and declared that the game was over. The match ended in a stalemate and the Railways walked away with three points, courtesy their 120-run first-innings lead.

Despite their best efforts, Railways would feel extremely aggrieved for not being able to knock off those remaining six runs and pocket those three extra points that were on offer. They had five wickets in hand with two relatively in-form unbeaten batsmen at the crease. In the end, it was the age-old time-wasting tactics employed by Madhya Pradesh fielders — they bowled just 8 overs in the final hour's play — that played a part. Railways, on the other hand, also paid dearly for their diffident batting approach.

Madhya Pradesh clearly held the edge, coming into the final day's play, having garnered a comfortable 188-run lead. Once Amit Mishra got rid of overnight batsman Yash Dubey for 83, the rest of the batting just folded up without an ounce of fight. From 306/5, the visitors slumped to 330/9 when captain Naman Ojha declared after having earned a 210-run lead. In reply, Railways had a shade over two sessions to knock of that target, and despite the early loss of opener Pratham Singh, they were off to a promising start, thanks to Mrunal Devdhar and Vikrant Singh. The 103-run second-wicket alliance gave them hope. Even the twin dismissals of Singh and captain Arindam Ghosh still kept them in the hunt.

At the tea interval, the talk in the Railways dressing room was about conserving wickets. They banked on Devdhar to get them closer to the target. That was not to be. Once



Despite their best efforts, Dinesh Mor and Harsh Tyagi (in whites) could not help Railways past the finish line.

the opener was dismissed for 93, Railways were still 64 runs adrift. Debutant Saurabh Singh failed to provide an impetus, consuming 63 deliveries for his 15 runs. This left Mor and Tyagi with a lot on their plate. They ran hard between the wickets, struck a couple of neatly struck boundaries, and added 29 runs in the last 23 deliveries.

"If we had got just another over, we would have won this match," Railways coach Harvinder Singh said after the match, before adding: "The score was not difficult to chase down. If we had a more experienced batting line-up, we would have won pretty convincingly. But you also have to understand that this team is still fairly young. Our immediate task was to keep wickets in hand. Because you never know, you lose a couple of wickets and suddenly, you are down to the tail," he explained.

Perhaps, the Railways missed the trick

by not promoting Mor, their in-form batsman up the order. In the process, Singh's lacklustre knock only negated their chances of a win. "I will not blame him (Saurabh Singh). He is playing his first match and we thought that if we keep wickets in hand and even if we have around 40 runs to win from six overs, we would have a dash at the target. But that would not be the case, as Madhya Pradesh scuttled our plans by their tactics. We are not complaining...even we would have done the same if we were in their place," Singh opined.

Batting an issue

Batting has been an issue for the Railways in this season so far. Their pace trio comprising Amit Mishra, Pradeep Poojar and Himanshu Sangwan together have accounted for 67 of the 82 scalps in the five matches, giving them a sniff at victory on

several occasions. It was the match against Mumbai at the Wankhede Stadium more than a fortnight ago when their batting and bowling were in sync. In the previous game, their pacers had shot out Baroda for 99 in the second innings. Requiring 200 for a win, their batsmen imploded for just 101.

"We have got three points, but I think this draw is going to hurt us with regard to the knockouts qualification. From these two consecutive games, we could have got 12 points, instead, we have managed just three," Singh quipped. They have an arduous road ahead. Up next, they face Tamil Nadu away, following which they play Karnataka at home later this month.

BRIEF SCORES: Madhya Pradesh 124 and 330/9 declared a draw with Railways 244 and 205/5 (Mrunal Devdhar 93, Avesh Khan 3/49). Points: Railways 3; Madhya Pradesh 1.

RANJI WRAP

Saurashtra run out of time vs Karnataka

In hindsight, Saurashtra had stretched their innings far too long. They skittled out Karnataka for 171 in their first innings and enforced the follow-on, but the hosts eventually ran out of time. Karnataka showed grit in their second innings and earned a draw, with R Samarth and Devdutt Padikkal scoring half-centuries. Cheteshwar Pujara was adjudged the Man of the Match for his double hundred. But at the end, Saurashtra didn't have enough overs to capitalise on a mini slump, when Karnataka lost three quick wickets.

BRIEF SCORES: Saurashtra 581/7 decl. drew with Karnataka 171 and 220/4 (R Samarth 74, Devdutt Padikkal 53 not out) **Points:** Saurashtra 3, Karnataka 1



Parvez Rasool took 3/23 as Services were bowled out for 146.

UP surrender initiative, settle for draw

Just 62 overs of play had been possible on the final day and it somewhat worked to Baroda's advantage. Their tail wagged and after following on, Baroda's top-order stood firm. Both Kedar Devdhar and Vishnu Solanki scored unbeaten half-centuries in the second innings to eke out a draw. From Uttar Pradesh's point of view, left-arm spinner Saurabh Kumar barely had support from the other end.

BRIEF SCORES: Uttar Pradesh 431 drew with Baroda 230 (Saurabh Kumar 4/60) and 113/1 (Vishnu Solanki 58 not out, Kedar Devdhar 51 not out) **Points:** Uttar Pradesh 3, Baroda 1

Ashwin thwarts Mumbai

From Mumbai's perspective, it was a must-win game after back-to-back losses. They had a sniff, but Ravi Ashwin refused to budge. The last three Tamil Nadu wickets accounted for 129 runs, ending Mumbai's hopes of an outright win. Ashwin scored 79 off 206 balls, eating up time and securing a draw for Tamil Nadu. He was the last man out, as the hosts finished on 324 in their first innings. That Mumbai enforced the follow-on was purely academic.

BRIEF SCORES: Mumbai 488 drew with Tamil Nadu 324 (R Ashwin 79; Shams Mulani 4/72) and 48/1 **Points:** Mumbai 3, Tamil Nadu 1

Rasool, Pundir star in J&K's win over Services

Jammu and Kashmir now have four outright wins in five matches. In the time of political uncertainty, their cricket is thriving. If Parvez Rasool and Shubham Pundir had set up their win against Services with centuries in the first innings and second innings respectively, the J&K seamers led by Mohammed Mudhasir were right on the money, as Services folded for 146 in their second innings, chasing a victory target of 320. All the while, though, it was Rasool's match. The J&K captain bagged three wickets in the second innings on top of his scintillating 182 during his team's first dig.

BRIEF SCORES: Jammu and Kashmir 360 and 201/5 decl. (Shubham Pundir 102 not out) beat Services 242 and 146 (Arjun Sharma 54; Parvez Rasool 3/23, Mohammed Mudhasir 3/45) by 173 runs **Points:** Jammu and Kashmir 6, Services 0

Chahal's seven-for in vain as Odisha win

Seamer Ajit Chahal's seven-for went in vain, as Odisha won a thriller against Haryana. Odisha's lower-middle-order helped the side escape to a one-wicket victory.

BRIEF SCORES: Haryana 90 and 248 lost to Odisha 160 and 182/9 (Rajesh Dhuper 32; Ajit Chahal 7/80) by 1 wicket **Points:** Odisha 6, Haryana 0

BRIEFLY

Anand draws with Giri at Tata Masters

Wijk Aan Zee: Viswanathan Anand played out his second draw in three games, signing peace with Anish Giri of Holland in the third round of the Tata Steel Masters, here on Tuesday. It was a surprising decision by Anand to agree to a draw proposal by Giri in a rather better position with white pieces. With ten rounds still to come, world champion Magnus Carlsen is sharing the sixth spot on 1.5 points while Anand is sharing the 11th spot with just one point from three games.

Neroca edge out Real Kashmir 1-0

Imphal: Malian forward Boubacar Diarra scored the match-winner as NEROCA FC beat Real Kashmir 1-0 to snap their four-match winless streak in the I-League here on Tuesday. Diarra headed home in the 62nd minute to give Neroca their second win of the season at the Khuman Lampak stadium. Neroca also jumped to the seventh spot with eight points from seven matches. Real Kashmir slipped one spot to 10th, just above bottom-placed Indian Arrows, with six points from six matches.

Rani to lead India in New Zealand tour

New Delhi: Striker Rani Rampal will lead a 20-member Indian women's hockey team for the tour of New Zealand, beginning on January 25 in Auckland. **Squad:** Rani (captain), Savita (vice-captain), Rajini Etimarpu, Deep Grace Ekka, Gurjit Kaur, Reena Khokhar, Salima Tete, Sushila Chanu, Nisha, Namita Toppo, Udita, Monika, Lilima Minz, Neha, Sonika, Sharmila Devi, Navneet Kaur, Lalremisiami, Vandana Katariya, Navjot Kaur.

Khelo India: Maha regain top spot

Guwahati: Maharashtra's athletes went home with wide smiles after enjoying a productive day at the Khelo India Youth Games 2020 here on Tuesday, entrenching themselves at the top of the charts with a total of 26 gold. Maharashtra's total number of medals stood at 107, leaving Haryana trailing with 21 gold medal and a total of 67. Maharashtra owed it to their gymnasts and cyclists who contributed three gold medals each.

—PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Quique's journey from cow fields to Camp Nou

REUTERS
BARCELONA, JANUARY 14

QUIQUE SETIEN is more used to navigating his way through a field of cows rather than taking centre stage on one of the world's most famous pitches but the new Barcelona coach has pledged to bring an uncompromising attacking style of play to the Catalans. Since he has spent most of his coaching career in Spain's lower leagues, no one would blame Setien if he felt rather nervous at the prospect of taking charge of a team overflowing with some of the world's most expensive footballing talent.

But Setien is eager to prove that his modest coaching past will not stop him from making his mark with the Spanish champions and at Camp Nou. "Yesterday I was walking next to cows in my village and today I was at Barcelona's training ground coaching the best players in the world," said the 61-year-old, who takes over from Ernesto Vavlerde and has signed a contract until June 2022.

"This is an enormous club and it'll never get better than this. I would never have imagined being here even in my wildest dreams so I want to show my gratitude for being given this chance and convey my excitement for taking on this challenge."

Barca have won the last two editions of La Liga and currently lead the standings but decided to sack Valverde on Monday after growing tired with the team's recent uninspiring performances. Setien was a surprise choice to take the vacant role due to his low profile outside of Spain, although his reputation as an attacking ideologue has excited fans who feel their team have lost their swagger.

"My objective is to win everything there is to win and for me there is no better way to do that by improving each year. The surest path to victory is by playing well, it's important to remember that," Setien added. "I have very clear ideas, I listen to everyone but it's difficult to convince me to change my ways. I am my team's biggest defender and I'll die with my ideas." Setien got his first top-flight job with Las Palmas in 2015 but rose to prominence in a two-year spell with Real Betis which included masterminding a 4-3 victory away to Barca. The coach also said he would take a keen interest in the club's famed academy, which has produced the likes of Lionel Messi, Sergio Busquets and Gerard Pique although few youngsters have managed to break into the first team of late.

"I have a passion for bringing in young players," he added. "When a young lad comes into the team he brings with him a new energy and the top players know they cannot afford to relax."

'Right time'

At the presentation of Setien, Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu said



Quique Setien's best La Liga finish was guiding Real Betis to sixth in 2018. Reuters

Valverde was sacked as coach even though Barcelona are on top of La Liga because the team needed an injection of momentum. "We made a change now because we are halfway through the season and we needed some new momentum to face the final stretch of the season as we always have very big objectives," Bartomeu said. "Even though the results were very good we knew that there was room for improvement in the team's play and we spoke to Valverde about this and in the last few days we had told him that the team needed to improve."

Barcelona romped to the league title in Valverde's first two seasons, finishing way ahead of nearest challengers Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid. But the coach's reputation was severely damaged by twin shock eliminations from the Champions League to AS Roma and Liverpool.

The team's performances have declined this season and even though the Catalans are top of the table on goal difference, the board lost faith in Valverde after last week's defeat to Atletico Madrid in the Spanish Super Cup. Bartomeu dismissed suggestions that the decision to sack Valverde was made hastily and with no clear successor.

Barca confirmed they tried to hire club great Xavi Hernandez, while Spanish media reports said they also approached Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman and former Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino. "I want to say that in the last few weeks and months we've been speaking to other coaches about the future, that's our obligation," Bartomeu said. "The work had been done and so this was the right time to make a change."

Barca sporting director Eric Abidal said new coach Setien fit with the club's ideas on attacking football. "We're very happy to present Quique, he has shown he has a clear football philosophy and is focused on the small details which reminds me of when I played for this club," said the former Barca defender, a two-time Champions League winner. "We know he can achieve great things here."