

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 19 JANUARY 2020



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### WINDOWS



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RH: 73%  
Rainfall: 10%

Forecast: Sunny

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## J&K: After 24 weeks, buzz of prepaid phones returns

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, JAN. 18

After a record 24-week-long ban, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Saturday ordered the restoration of prepaid mobile phone services in Kashmir Valley as well as 2G mobile data services on post-paid mobiles for accessing “white-listed” sites in two districts of Kashmir region, and all 10 districts of Jammu region.

While 2G mobile Internet is being restored in two revenue districts of Kupwara and Bandipore, the service remains suspended in the remaining eight districts of the Valley — Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama.

The government’s move to partially lift the restrictions imposed on mobile and Internet services comes eight days after the Supreme Court said that access to Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution of India. The websites that have been included the “white list” fall under 10 categories: mail (Gmail,



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Yahoo), e-banking (most prominent banks), education, employment, entertainment, services, travel, utilities, weather, web services and automobiles.

The ban on social media access on mobile phones continues in Jammu’s 10 districts and the Valley’s frontier districts of Kupwara and Bandipore. “Voice and SMS facility on all local pre-paid SIM cards across the Union Territory of J&K shall be

restored today (Saturday),” the government spokesman Rohit Kansal said at a press conference in the winter capital, Jammu.

He said that companies engaged in software services are being provided fixed line Internet connectivity by the service providers, but they must exercise caution that these don’t get used to access social media and other sites not falling in

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On January 15, the government had announced the restoration of 2G mobile connectivity on post-paid mobiles in Jammu region’s five districts — Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Reasi — only for accessing “white listed” websites.

Mr Kansal reiterated on Saturday that the restriction on social media will continue in Jammu’s 10 districts and the Valley’s frontier districts of Kupwara and Bandipore.

“The 2G mobile Internet shall be restored also in the revenue districts of Kupwara and Bandipore of Kashmir. The service will, however, remain suspended in eight remaining districts of the Valley — Srinagar, Budgam, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama,” he said.

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BJP leader and former Union minister Yashwant Sinha (centre) with former Gujarat CM Suresh Mehta (left) and others leaders at a sit-in protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens (NRC) during his ‘Gandhi Shanti Yatra’ in Ahmedabad on Saturday. — PTI

## 38th day: Anti-CAA protests continue, grip Indian cities

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
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In Delhi’s Shaheen Bagh,

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In Kolkata’s Park Circus Maidan, about 60 Muslim

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Various personalities such as singer Kabir Suman, social activists

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Khamenei’s blistering speech, in which he attacked the “vicious” United States and

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## Stalin, Alagiri meet, DMK & Cong bury the hatchet

DMK had skipped Cong-led Opp. meeting on Jan. 13

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CHENNAI, JAN. 18

Differences between the DMK and the Congress in Tamil Nadu that threatened to break the alliance blew over on Saturday with the state Congress chief K.S. Alagiri calling on DMK president M.K. Stalin at Anna Arivalayam, and both the leaders issuing statements that said the relationship between the two parties was strong, and that they stand united in their fight against communal forces.

While Mr Alagiri jokingly told journalists after the meeting that the two leaders had met to discuss Darbar, the latest Rajinikant-starrer, he later said, “We are aware of the threat to the nation from fascist forces and their plant rulers in the state. The Congress is steadfast in its resolve to be with the DMK in defeating them. The alliance will continue for the 2021 Assembly elections.”

A post-meeting statement by Mr Stalin urged



functionaries of both the parties to refrain from expressing their views on the alliance in public.

By continuing to air their misgivings over minor incidents, both the parties will only provide grist to the “packs of jackals” out to find a hole in the DMK-led alliance and some media outlets to chew the cud, Mr Stalin said, adding that he did not want that to happen.

“There have been a few unwanted happenings in the alliance after the rural civic polls, though our alliance has received the people’s mandate.

Both the sides should not have discussed these things in the public. Let’s put a full stop and move ahead. Cunning and hungry foxes are waiting for an opportunity to disband the alliance. I urge functionaries of both the parties to refrain from discussing these issues in the public,” he said.

Mr Alagiri made it very clear that the two leaders have decided that no one other than the DMK president and the TNCC chief will express their views on the alliance when he was asked if he had

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## Chidambaram woos Mamata via CAA plank

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, JAN. 18

Congress veteran P. Chidambaram on Saturday tried to reach out to Trinamul Congress chief Mamata Banerjee by announcing in Kolkata that all political parties against communalism are united in the fight against the CAA, NRC and the National People’s Register (NPR).

The Trinamul Congress and some other Opposition parties had skipped the January 13 meet called by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi to thrash out a strategy to oppose the CAA. “It does not imply that some parties, which did not attend the meet, support the CAA. They are also fighting against the CAA and NRC like us. I want all Opposition parties to realise the gravity of the issue at stake and come together on one platform. We are all fighting the same, sometimes together and sometimes differently.

“The important thing is that we all are fighting,” he said.

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## Raut’s Savarkar remark his own opinion: Sena

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
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Shiv Sena spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut on Saturday said that those who oppose Bharat Ratna — the highest civilian honour in India — for Veer Savarkar should be sent for two days to Andaman’s cellular jail, where Savarkar was lodged, to realise the Hindutva ideologue’s sacrifice and contribution.

“Savarkar’s opponents should spend two days in the (erstwhile) Andaman Cellular Jail to understand the hardships he was put through by the British,” Mr Raut said.

The comments, however, did not go down well with the Congress, an alliance partner of the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. And the Shiv Sena immediately went into damage control mode, with Cabinet minister Aaditya Thackeray saying that Mr Raut’s remarks are his personal opinion and not the party’s stand.

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## VHP to reach out to kar sevaks to begin temple work

YOJNA GUSAI  
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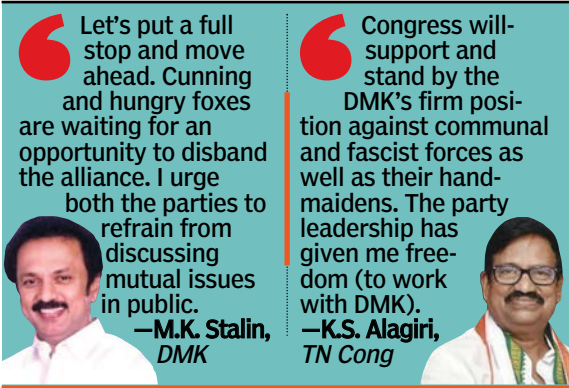
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## Mission possible

Union minister Nitin Gadkari says the goal of making India a US\$5 trillion economy by 2024 was 'difficult but not impossible'

### SHORT TAKES

## OSMANIA PROF HELD FOR LINKS WITH MAOISTS

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana police on Saturday arrested C. Kasim, an associate professor working in Telugu Department of Osmania University for his alleged links with Maoists, Siddipet police Commissioner D. Joel Davis said. According to Davis, Kasim was allegedly involved in a case registered under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act among other sections in Mulugu Police station in 2016. "That case is under investigation and we also got material evidence. Recently we also received some inputs. We obtained a search warrant and searched his residence early this morning and seized certain documents and some electronic evidence," the police official told PTI. He claimed the police have incriminating information that the professor was in continuous contact with Maoists party leaders. Kasim is allegedly working as an organiser of "united front vertical" of Maoists for Telangana state. "He is coordinator for the funding and other things," the police official said adding Kasim will be produced in a local court in Gajwel. Kasim recently took over as secretary of Virasam (revolutionary writers association). Alleging the police resorted to high-handedness, Kasim's wife Snehalatha said the case filed against the OU teacher was baseless. She said about 50 policemen came to their house in the morning and broke open the front door as the inmates did not open it. — PTI

## I-T ISSUES SUMMONS TO RASHMIKA

M.K. ASHOKA  
BENGALURU, JAN. 18

The income-tax department issued a notice to South India's multilingual actress Rashmika Mandanna and her family after raids on their properties in Virajpet of Kodagu district for the last two days. Rashmika and her father have been told to appear before its office in Mysuru on Monday. I-T officials seized '25 lakh unaccounted cash and documents related to illegal properties worth several crores. They also unearthed undeclared assets of '3.94 crore. It was found during the raids that the actress had not paid taxes for '1.5 crore, sources said. The officials found two PAN cards in the name of Rashmika and for one of the cards, taxes have been paid only till 2016-17. Officials collected details and verified property documents related to a bungalow belonging to Rashmika's father, Serenity Community Hall, a coffee estate, a newly acquired land for building an international school and land for petrol bunk, sources said.

## IT'S A TWIN DELIGHT FOR JEE TOPPER

**New Delhi:** Delhi boy Nishant Agarwal who scored a perfect 100 in Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Mains shared his success with his twin brother Pranav who bagged a score of 99.93 in the examination. The 17-year-old duo studies in New Sainikpuri Public School and aims to pursue engineering at Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay or Delhi. "It's great to get the perfect score, it's even more great when you can share the same happiness and goals," Nishant said. His twin brother Pranav said, "Wish to get the same in the advanced exam and the board exams. Yesterday night, we just congratulated each other and got back to studying." The results for the examination were announced by the human resource development ministry's National Testing Agency on Friday night. Nine candidates bagged the perfect score. Other toppers for the engineering entrance exam include Nisarg Chadha from Gujarat, Haryana's Divyanshu Agarwal, Landa Jitendra and Thadavarthi Vishnu Sri Sai Sankar from Andhra Pradesh.



Protesters display placards during an all-women demonstration against CAA, NRC, NRP in Bengaluru on Saturday.

— PTI

# Can't deny CAA, says Sibal

Cong leader says states can't deny implementing law passed by Parl

GILVESTER ASSARY  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
JAN. 18

In a statement which could cause huge embarrassment to the ruling CPM-led Left Democratic Front government in Kerala and the state unit of Congress which are leading a major agitation against Citizenship Amendment Act, former Union minister Kapil Sibal on Saturday said that no state can deny implementation of an Act passed by the Parliament.

Sibal, who was delivering a lecture at Kerala Literature Festival in Kozhikode, said no state can say that it cannot implement CAA. Such a stand would be "unconstitutional." "You can pass a resolution in the Assembly, ask the Centre to withdraw it. But to say constitutionally that it won't implement it is problematic and going to create further difficulties," he said.

The senior Congress leader said that the NRC is based on NPR which has to be implemented by the local registrar. Local registrars will be appointed at the level of community in which enumerations are to take place. These enumerators have to be officers working under the state government. So when state says that it will not implement NPR, it means that the officers will be asked not to cooperate with the Centre.

"I am not sure if this is practically possible or not. Constitutionally, it would be difficult for the state governments to say that they will not follow a law passed by Parliament," he said.

He hailed the nation-

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI JAN. 18

Historian Ramchandra Guha on Saturday clarified that his comments on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi were 'cherry picked' and 'distorted'. He wrote on Twitter, "My talk was a defence of constitutional patriotism against Hindutva jingoism. I am sorry that a reporter has cherry picked two sentences out of a one hour talk to distort its meaning (sic)."

Addressing the crowd at the Kerala Literature Festival he had said, "Kerala, you have done many wonderful things for India, but one of the disastrous things you did was to elect Rahul Gandhi to the Parliament."

In an hour-long talk on Patriotism vs Jingoism he had said, "I have nothing against Rahul Gandhi personally. He is a decent fellow, very well-mannered. But young India does not want a fifth-generation dynasty. If you Malayalis make the mistake of re-electing Rahul Gandhi in 2024 too, you are merely handing over an advantage to Narendra Modi."

In his clarification Guha

said agitation against the CAA as a battle between "leader" and the "people of India". "Thank god it was the 'students, poor, and middle-class' of the country that are leading the movement and not any political party, he added.

The veteran Congress leader said that the agita-

**Kerala, you have done many wonderful things for India, but one of the disastrous things you did was to elect Rahul Gandhi to the Parliament**

RAMCHANDRA GUHA  
Noted Historian



also tweeted, "That said, I do believe that the country-wide movement against Hindutva is handicapped by the fact that the party of the freedom movement is so closely controlled by a single family," he also tweeted.

"I ended my KLF talk by saying that even if the Congress may not be up to the task, ordinary citizens will carry on the struggle in defence of constitutional values. As they have done so admirably in the protests against the CAA."

Many on the social media criticised Guha for taking on Gandhi while praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In his talk Guha further said, "Narendra Modi's great

Supreme Court against the CAA, seeking to declare the Act "violative of the principles of equality, freedom and secularism enshrined in the Constitution."

Kerala government was the first to challenge the Act in the apex court and also first in passing a reso-

lution in the Assembly against the Act. Punjab passed a similar resolution on Friday.

Besides Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra have also raised their voices against implementation of CAA, NRC and NPR.

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## CAA MAKES IT TO A WEDDING CARD IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, JAN. 18

The pro-and anti-Citizenship Amendment Act campaigns which hitherto were confined to the streets and social media have now broken out in wedding events. A groom in a Madhya Pradesh town has turned his marriage a platform to canvass for the legislation.

Prabhat Garwal, resident of Kareli in Narasinghpur district, has used his marriage invitation card as mode of campaign for the legislation by printing a slogan "I support CAA" on it.

"The groom has sought to generate awareness on CAA among people to dispel wrong notions about the law. We should respect the law passed by the Parliament. This was the objective behind running the campaign through the wedding card," kin of the groom said.

lution in the Assembly against the Act. Punjab passed a similar resolution on Friday.

Besides Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Maharashtra have also raised their voices against implementation of CAA, NRC and NPR.

# PC woos Mamata to join Opp. front against CAA, NPR

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, JAN. 18

Congress veteran P. Chidambaram on Saturday compared the powers to the Delhi police commissioner Amulya Patnaik to detain people under the National Security Act with the Rowlatt Act enforced by the British during its rule in India. He also termed the National Population Register (NPR) "NRC in disguise".

"It is a retrograde provision. It is like the British promulgating the Rowlatt Act. What is the need for this act to notify in Delhi now? So that the people can be thrown into prison without charges! Everyday the BJP government at the Centre resorts to such repressive measures. It is driving a wedge between the government and the people," Mr Chidambaram said at the Bidhan Bhavan in the city.

"It is also striking at democracy. This is completely unacceptable, unnecessary. The lieutenant-governor who promulgated this order presumably at the instance of the ministry of home affairs is completely wrong. It is an anti-people and anti-democratic measure. On the NPR, our position is that it is nothing but NRC. It is a disguised NRC," he noted.

"There is no real difference between the NPR and the NRC because there was an widespread opposition to the NRC,"



P. Chidambaram

the Congress Rajya Sabha MP added after addressing a leadership training camp on CAA-NPR-NRC for the West Bengal Congress workers. Mr Chidambaram also reached out to West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for her support to a united fight against the CAA.

Desperate to bring the Trinamul Congress supreme into the Congress-led Opposition fold for the anti-CAA movement, he not only tried to keep her in good humour but also pinned hope on her to join the camp in future.

"It does not imply that some parties, which did not attend the meet, support the CAA. They are also fighting against the CAA and NRC like us. I want all Opposition parties to realise the gravity of the issue at stake and come together on one platform. We are all fighting the same, sometimes together and sometimes differently. The important thing is that we all are fighting. All parties fighting against CAA, NRC and NPR must come together. I am confident they will," he observed.

## MOLESTATION VICTIM'S MOTHER LYNCHED

**Kanpur, Jan. 18:** A 36-year-old woman was beaten to death by men who were accused of molesting her minor daughter and were out on bail, a senior police official said on Saturday.

The women and her sister, who were witness in the 2018 molestation case, were assaulted by the men and admitted to hospitals here.

The woman succumbed to her injuries at Lala Lajpat Rai Hospital on Friday while her 26-year-old sister is battling for life at a private hospital in C h a k e r i .

Superintendent of Police (Kanpur East) Raj Kumar Agarwal said, "Three persons have been arrested and raids are being conducted for the arrest of another elusive accused, Chand Babu. Two other accused persons were arrested on Saturday following a police encounter."

The police had arrested all the accused after registering a case under IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences, but the accused had got bail from the court. — PTI

## ASSAM CM REALLOCATES PORTFOLIOS

**Guwahati, Jan. 18:** Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal Saturday expanded his ministry and allocated portfolios giving the charge of education to powerful minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in addition to the existing departments of finance, health, family welfare and PWD, a CMO spokesperson said. Mr Sonowal expanded his Cabinet increasing its strength to 18, including the chief minister. Twelve of the ministers are from the BJP and three each from alliance partners Asom Gana Parishad and Bodo People's Front.

Jogen Mohan who was sworn in as minister of state with independent charge was given the portfolios of revenue and disaster management, PWD (assisting the cabinet minister), the spokesman said.

The chief minister retained home, political, personnel, general administration, secretariat administration, implementation of Assam Accord, administrative reform and training, election, information and public relation, among others. — PTI

### FAITH | MATTERS

## Devotees not ready to accept Pathri as Sai Baba's birthplace

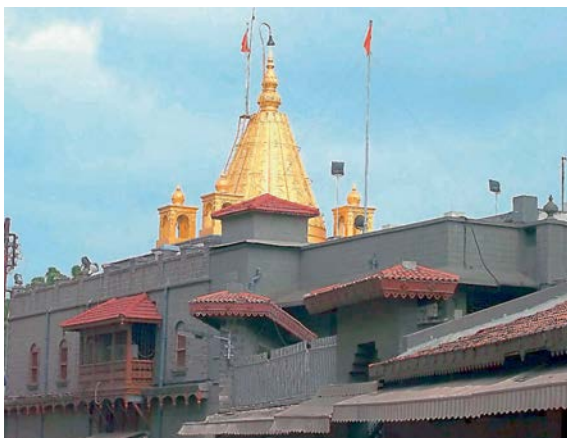
# Shirdi bandh, but temple to remain open

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, JAN. 18

While locals of the temple town of Shirdi called for a bandh on Sunday following a controversy over the birthplace of Sai Baba, the trustee of the temple there said that the shrine would remain open despite the shutdown.

Controversy erupted after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced a grant of ₹100 crore for development of facilities at the Sai Janmasthan (birthplace) at Pathri in Parbhani district. While Pathri is considered to be Sai Baba's birthplace by some devotees, residents of Shirdi claim that the exact birthplace of the much revered saint is not known.

"The temple will remain open despite the bandh call," Deepak Mugalikar, chief executive officer of the Shree Sai Baba Sansthan Trust at Shirdi said. Meanwhile, local BJP MLA Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil supported the



The Shirdi Saibaba temple attracts thousands of devotees

shutdown called for by the residents. "The Chief Minister should withdraw his statement that Pathri is Sai Baba's birthplace. Pathri only has one of the several

Sai temples in the country. All Sai devotees are feeling hurt, so this controversy should be ended," the former state minister said.

BJP MP and Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil's son, Sujay Vikhe-Patil, too reprimanded the state government for the dispute over the birthplace of Sai Baba. "There was no such dispute until now. Why have claims that

■ **THE CONTROVERSY** began after Thackeray announced a grant of ₹100 crore for development of facilities at "Sai janmasthan" at Pathri.

■ **Local residents and leaders in Shirdi took exception to the CM's announcement, saying the birthplace of the saint was not known.**

Sai temples in the country. All Sai devotees are feeling hurt, so this controversy should be ended," the former state minister said.

BJP MP and Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil's son, Sujay Vikhe-Patil, too reprimanded the state government for the dispute over the birthplace of Sai Baba. "There was no such dispute until now. Why have claims that

Pathri is Sai Baba's birthplace come up only after the new government has taken over? The people of Shirdi may resort to legal action," he said.

Amidst the call for bandh, Congress leader and former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan urged locals that the creation of facilities for devotees at Pathri should not be opposed owing to the controversy over the birthplace.

The Sai Baba temple in Shirdi draws lakhs of devotees from across India every year.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will hold talks to resolve the controversy over the birthplace of Saibaba, the 19th century spiritual figure, an official statement said here on Saturday evening.





RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Saturday said his organisation has no connection with politics

IN BRIEF

ED attaches ₹5cr assets of ex-UP min

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹5 crore of former Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Rangnath Mishra in connection with a money laundering case, the agency said on Saturday. Mishra was the minister for secondary education and home in the 2007-11 Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) government headed by the then Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) said it has issued an order under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to provisionally attach a residential plot at George Town Extension, Tagore Town in Allahabad. The market value of the asset is ₹5 crore. The agency's probe is related to an alleged disproportionate assets case against the former minister, it said. "These properties were acquired by Rangnath Mishra in his name and in the name of his family during the year 2010," the ED said in a statement.

Odisha groom-to-be attacked with razor

Balasore: A youth was allegedly attacked with razors by miscreants just two days before his wedding in Odisha. The incident was reported from Nilagiri town area in Balasore district on Saturday. According to reports, the groom-to-be Manoj Behera (28), whose father runs a sweet stall at Nilagiri locality, on Friday evening visited Kalijhati area to distribute his invitation cards for his marriage scheduled on January 19. On his way back home at around 11.00 pm, three miscreants suddenly appeared in and obstructed his way. They threatened him not to marry the girl with whom he has been engaged to tie the knot. The goons attacked him with razors and fled from the area.

2 VSSUT students drowned in waterfall

Bhubaneswar: In a tragic incident, two students of the Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) met watery grave while picnicking at Debjharan waterfall, located about 30 km away from Sambalpur city in Odisha. The deceased students were identified as Abhijeet Samal and Soumya Ranjan Behuria, both 3rd year students of Computer Science Department of VSSUT, Burla. According to reports, as many as 40 students of the department had been to Debjharan, the beautiful waterfall destination, for picnic during the chilling winter today. While they were taking bath in the waterfall, Abhijeet and Soumya Ranjan drowned in the water. Later, the bodies of were fished out.

MISSING MP BJP LEADER HELD AFTER 10 MNTHS

Barwani (MP): A local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, who is an accused in 47 criminal cases, was arrested on Saturday, ten months after he went absconding following the seizure of firearms and explosives from his premises, police said. The accused, Sanjay Yadav (51), who was earlier a Congress corporator, had joined the BJP in February 2017. "Yadav, who is an accused in 47 criminal cases, including murder and looting, was arrested after police found him during vehicle checking in Rajpur area here on Saturday," Barwani superintendent of police (SP) D.R. Teniwar said. "In March last year, the police had seized huge cache of firearms and explosives from Yadav's premises," he said. After the seizure, cases had been registered against him under the Arms Act and the Explosives Act. The district administration had also invoked the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against Yadav. "However, Yadav had gone absconding after the seizure. He was carrying a reward of ₹10,000 on his head," Teniwar said. The accused leader's mother, Basanti Yadav, is currently the president of Sendhwa municipality. Meanwhile, Barwani district BJP chief Om Soni confirmed that Yadav is still a BJP member and the party was yet to take any action against him. —PTI

NIA may bring Singh to Delhi for further probe

NIA takes over case involving DSP Davinder

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

The National Investigation Agency has booked the suspended Deputy Superintendent of Police, Davinder Singh, of the Jammu and Kashmir Police under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and Arms Act after he was arrested along with two militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen.

The premiere anti-terror investigating agency registered a fresh case after if took over the probe into the case following directions from the Union Home Ministry.

Singh was arrested last week after he was caught by a special team of the state police while ferrying Naveed Babu, a district commander of terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen along with another associate, Atif. An advocate Irfan Mir was also arrested along with them.

All four were caught when a police team intercepted their car near Qazigund last week along with arms and ammunitions. There was specific intelligence available with the state police that Singh was trying to take two militants out of the Valley, probably to either Chandigarh or Delhi.

After receiving orders from the Union home ministry, the NIA has re-registered this case and started the investigation, the spokesman said. Sources said NIA has now registered a fresh case under sections 18, 19, 20

■ Sources said NIA has now registered a fresh case under Sections 18, 19, 20 and 38, 39 of the UAPA against the suspended police officer and others.

■ The weapons recovered from Singh and other accused includes AK-47, hand grenades, pistol and mobile phones.

and 38, 39 of the UAPA against the suspended police officer and others.

Initial investigations, sources added, had revealed that this was not the first time Singh was involved in facilitating movement of militants in or out of the Valley. It is possible that an NIA team may bring Singh to Delhi on Monday for further custodial interrogation and investigations into the case for which a team is likely to go to the Valley on Sunday.

The weapons recovered from Singh and other accused includes AK-47, hand grenades, pistol, and mobile phone.

"This is a very sensitive case with larger national ramifications due to which it was decided by the home ministry that investigations should be handed over to the NIA. It involves the security apparatus in a very troubled area and we need to ascertain a lot of facts in the matter," a senior intelligence official said.

Davinder knew Naveed for 7 years

As SPO, Naveed used to visit Davinder's home on quite a few occasions

VIKRAM SHARMA HYDERABAD, JAN. 18

It was about seven years ago that Naveed Ahmed Shah alias Babu, then a newly recruited special police officer (SPO), first came in contact with deputy superintendent of police (DSP) Davinder Singh. Since they belonged to south Kashmir, Naveed, in the course of his duties, would meet his superior regularly, particularly to share information about the terror network in his home town.

Over the years, Naveed was absorbed into the police department as a constable. By then, he had a fair idea of Davinder's reputation when it came to making money. Both are then believed to have joined hands as Naveed became a conduit for Davinder to extort money

from terror suspects. Their friendship continued till the police arrested them in each other's company at Qazigund on January 11.

In a disclosure that has left all agencies working in Jammu and Kashmir red-faced, Davinder revealed to his interrogators that his "association" with Naveed began seven years ago and remained that way even after the latter joined the ranks of the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Highly placed sources associated with the investigation told *The Asian Age* that Davinder, who is presently in the custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), first met Naveed in his office sometime in early 2013. Since Naveed belonged to south Kashmir, he just wanted to call on Davinder and introduce himself. Since Naveed was well-connect-



Davinder Singh

ed with the local populace not only in Shopian but also in Pulwama, he would regularly get information about the movement and designs of terrorists, which he would share with Davinder, who worked in different posts in that period.

Over a period of time, Naveed, a resident of Nazneenpora in Shopian, started working as a conduit for Davinder. As SPO, Naveed used to visit Davinder's home on quite

■ There were several underground cadres (working for terror groups) who were in touch with both of them; something that is common in anti-terror operations.

to ideological differences or tussles between local and foreign militants. "Both Davinder and Naveed made the most of this information, making huge money in the process," sources said, adding that Davinder even had a share in the cash rewards on the heads of various terrorists who surrendered.

By the end of 2016 however, Naveed, who had a close association with militants and their handlers across the border, made up his mind to join the ranks of the Hizbul Mujahideen. In 2017, while he was posted at the Food Corporation of India's premises in Badgam's Chandpora, he decamped with four rifles from the guard room and joined the Hizbul Mujahideen. In 2018, he was involved in snatching a weapon from a legislator's house.

Maha doc held for sending suspicious letter to Pragya

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JAN. 18

A doctor from Maharashtra was arrested by Madhya Pradesh anti-terrorist squad (ATS) on charges of posting envelopes allegedly containing poisonous chemicals to BJP MP from Bhopal Pragya Singh Thakur, police said on Saturday.

The MP ATS arrested Sayyed Abdul Rehman Khan (35) at Dhangaon in Nanded district on Thursday night, a senior police officer on the condition of anonymity.

The accused would be brought to Bhopal after completion of necessary



Pragya Singh Thakur

legal formalities there, for interrogation, he added.

Preliminary investigation by police has suggested that the accused had sent a bundle of envelopes containing 'harmful' chemicals and letters in which pictures

national security advisor Ajit Doval and Pragya were printed.

Police had seized the envelopes from Pragya's house on January 13 after the staff of the MP reported the matter.

The Maharashtra police was keeping a tab on the doctor for the last three months following complaints that he was sending such envelopes to local government officials, by putting his mobile phone under surveillance.

The accused however used to leave his cell phone in his house before leaving for Nagpur, Aurangabad and other cities of Maharashtra to post the envelopes.

HAWALA CASE: COPS QUESTION MUKUL ROY

AGE CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, JAN. 18

Senior BJP leader Mukul Roy was questioned by the cops at the Kalighat police station nearly for two hours in connection with a Hawala case against him. He was served the summons by the police on January 12 to face questioning. On Saturday afternoon, Mr. Roy appeared at the police station.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS Sapru House, New Delhi

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Applications are invited from Delhi / NCR based reputed and experienced Caterers for providing food catering service at Indian Council of world Affairs. The last date of submitting the application is 10.02.2020 upto 03.00 PM. For details and terms and conditions, log on to "TENDERS & NOTICES" column on Homepage of http://icwa.in.

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Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren listens to the problems of physically challenged persons during a public meeting session at his residence in Ranchi. —PTI

Send Savarkar's opponents to Cellular Jail, says Raut

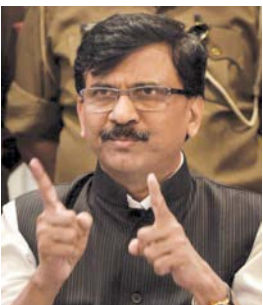
AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, JAN. 18

Shiv Sena spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut on Saturday said that those who oppose Bharat Ratna — the highest civilian honour in India — for Veer Savarkar should be sent for two days to Andaman's cellular jail, where Savarkar was lodged, to realise the Hindutva ideology's sacrifice and contribution.

"Savarkar's opponents should spend two days in the (erstwhile) Andaman Cellular Jail to understand the hardships he was put through by the British," Mr Raut said.

The comments, however, did not go down well with the Congress party, an alliance partner of the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena immediately went into damage control mode. The Shiv Sena leader and Cabinet minister Aadiya Thackeray said that Mr Raut's remark was his personal opinion and not his party's stand.

Within hours of the statement, Congress' state



Sachin Sawant tweeted, "Savarkar was different before 1911. The Congress is against his post-1923 ideology".

Reacting to Raut's comments, Mr Thackeray said there was no need to dig into the past. He said he was not aware in which capacity Raut made the statement.

"The Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) speaks for the aspirations of the people. Despite having different ideologies, the two parties have come together in the interest of the country and the state. Democracy means different ideologies can work together in the interest of the country," the Cabinet minister said.

"We must learn from history and keep history as history. We should

■ Savarkar's opponents should spend two days in the (erstwhile) Andaman Cellular Jail to understand the hardships he was put through by the British

— Sanjay Raut, Shiv Sena leader

move forward," he added.

Political observers said that Mr Raut could have made such a statement to divert the attention from his remarks on Shivaji Maharaj and late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

The Congress is against offering the Bharat Ratna to Mr Savarkar, who is hailed by the right-wing parties BJP and Shiv Sena. Savarkar has become a major political issue in Maharashtra ever since former Congress president Rahul Gandhi refused to apologise for his 'rape in India' remark in December last year, stating, "My name is Rahul Gandhi, not Rahul Savarkar".

DELHI POLICE SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

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## Bad laws

When Parliament makes bad laws, judges end up doing what lawmakers should do: Former V-P Ansari

THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 19 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI

# Nation

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## IN BRIEF

### J&K: 10 kids die of mysterious illness

**Jammu:** At least 10 children have died of a mysterious disease and six others taken ill in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, prompting the Centre to deploy a team of medical experts to join the probe to ascertain the cause of deaths, a senior officer said on Saturday. The children's death entailing complaints of fever, vomiting and low urine output were reported from different villages of Ramnagar block of the district over the past fortnight, he said. "Our survey of the affected area revealed 10 children died of the mysterious disease in an area of 40-kilometre radius in Ramnagar block. The symptoms of the disease include fever and vomiting followed by renal problem," Udhampur's Chief Medical Officer K.C. Dogra told PTI. He said six other children, all below the age of four, are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

— PTI

### Australia honour for Kiran Shaw

**New Delhi:** The Australian government has honoured Indian entrepreneur and founder of Biocon, Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw with its highest civilian award. Australia's high commissioner to India, Ms Harinder Sidhu, invested Dr Mazumdar-Shaw as an Honorary Member within the Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division. Honorary appointments in the Order of Australia are made to foreign nationals who have made an outstanding contribution to Australia or humanity at large. Dr Mazumdar-Shaw is the fourth Indian citizen to be awarded Australia's highest civilian honour. Dr Mazumdar-Shaw is the founder of Biocon — one of India's largest biopharmaceutical companies.

### Alliance Air gift for special children

**New Delhi:** In a special gesture towards the children with special needs, Alliance Air will take 44 of them for a "joy ride" on January 22 in Odisha. Alliance Air is a subsidiary of Air India and the event is being conducted in association with Department of Disabilities, Government of Odisha. Apart from 21 girls and 23 boys, 21 escorts with these kids also will be flown. The children are of 9-18 years age group. The flight duration will be almost 40 minutes over Bhubaneswar air space. These kids belong to Bhubaneswar city and Baripada, a tribal village. "Celebrations will be held at the Bhubaneswar airport to add to the excitement of the children," said an official of Alliance Air.

## DOVAL MEETS LANKA PREZ, PLEDGES AID

**Colombo:** India pledged a \$50 million assistance to Sri Lanka on Saturday as national security adviser Ajit Doval called on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and discussed a range of bilateral issues, including strengthening cooperation in defence, intelligence sharing and maritime security. Mr Doval arrived in Colombo on Saturday on an official visit during which he will also meet several foreign diplomats and discuss important issues of mutual interest. "A very cordial discussion was held with national security adviser of India, Ajit Doval today. Strengthening of bilateral cooperation on national security, intelligence sharing, maritime security & fostering of regional collaboration, were some of the key points of discussion," Mr Rajapaksa said in a tweet. The President's office said Mr Doval pledged that India will provide \$50 million to Sri Lanka to help the country purchase equipment for its security forces. Mr Doval has become the second highest ranking Indian official to visit Colombo after Rajapaksa assumed office in mid November. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar was the first foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka. Rajapaksa chose New Delhi for his first overseas visit after becoming the President.

— PTI



Defence minister Rajnath Singh takes a look of a weapon during a visit to Ordnance Factory at Ambajhari, Nagpur, on Saturday.

### Dalit man set afire in MP over minor tiff

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPAL, JAN. 18

A dalit youth in a Madhya Pradesh town was set on fire by four people following a tiff with them, police said on Saturday. The incident took place in district headquarters of Sagar late on Thursday night. Dhan Prasad Ahirwar, 24, suffered 60 percent burns after the four accused poured kerosene on him and then set him on fire when he refused to seek compromise on dispute between their families caused by quarrel among their children a few days ago, the police said.

He was first rushed to Bundelkhand medical college hospital in Sagar and then shifted to Bhopal for treatment on Saturday. According to the kin of the victim, Ahirwar had earlier moved the local police against the accused for action following dispute with them. However, he was advised by the police to resolve the issue with the accused amicably. The accused used to mount pressure on him to seek a compromise on the matter, local dalit leader Hiralal Choudhari said on Saturday.

## Akhilesh takes dig at Yogi as his former aide joins SP

**Lucknow, Jan. 18:** Former chief of Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV) Sunil Singh, who was considered the right hand man of Yogi Adityanath, at least until the latter became the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh three years ago, joined the Samajwadi Party on Saturday.

Mr Singh was inducted into the SP in the presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Some Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leaders also joined the SP at the party headquarters here. Mr Singh along with some others were expelled from the HYV, formed by Adityanath in 2002, on charges of indiscipline in 2017. He had then created a splinter outfit and declared himself as its national president.

He was first rushed to Bundelkhand medical college hospital in Sagar and then shifted to Bhopal for treatment on Saturday. According to the kin of the victim, Ahirwar had earlier moved the local police against the accused for action following dispute with them. However, he was advised by the police to resolve the issue with the accused amicably. The accused used to mount pressure on him to seek a compromise on the matter, local dalit leader Hiralal Choudhari said on Saturday.

A detailed paper presented at the 48th Indian Social Science Congress in Bengaluru on Saturday traces regionalism, favouritism and paucity of funds as major reasons for fundamental science research not getting its due share in the country. A former professor, Santosh K., of Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Biotechnology, in his paper traced the history of 150 years of development of science in the country. He observed that the first of Nobel Laureate in science, Dr C.V. Raman, who

► **The days of the Adityanath government are numbered and the countdown has already begun, says Akhilesh Yadav**

Welcoming Mr Singh and others to the SP fold, Akhilesh Yadav said, "The days of the Adityanath government are numbered and the countdown has already begun."

He said the BJP government has slapped cases against opposition leaders for protesting against its policies.

"The government is doing injustice from day one and false cases are being lodged for protesting," said the former chief minister, adding the BJP only promoting communalism and creating a Hindu-Muslim divide. Akhilesh said he was

happy that HYV workers were with the SP now and hoped that they would unmask the real intentions of the BJP.

On the occasion, Mulayam Singh Yadav termed the youth as the future of the SP and said that farmers, youth and traders have to be strengthened to make India a developed country.

Mr Singh's shift of loyalty assumes significance as the HYV was founded to promote "Hindutva and nationalism" and went on to play a significant role in shaping Adityanath's political rise in Uttar Pradesh. But signs of early strains were noticed when some ambitious HYV members sought to contest the state Assembly polls, a demand rejected by the BJP triggering massive resentment.

— PTI

## 'Favouritism, regionalism killed scientific temper'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU, JAN. 18

A detailed paper presented at the 48th Indian Social Science Congress in Bengaluru on Saturday traces regionalism, favouritism and paucity of funds as major reasons for fundamental science research not getting its due share in the country.

A former professor, Santosh K., of Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Biotechnology, in his paper traced the history of 150 years of development of science in the country. He observed that the first of Nobel Laureate in science, Dr C.V. Raman, who

started off his research work in Calcutta, too was a victim of regionalism and favouritism despite winning the Nobel. "Regionalism and favouritism seem to be ingrained in our system. Prof. Raman won the Nobel but could not win the hearts of his contemporaries in the Indian Association for Cultivation of Science (IACS), where he had joined after resigning his lucrative government job. His research at this Institute not only won him fame for himself, but also for the Institute. It eventually culminated in him winning the Nobel. But his

► **Dr C.V. Raman, who started off his research work in Calcutta, too was a victim of regionalism and favouritism despite winning the Nobel**

colleagues did not allow him to work freely thereafter. He was forced to quit IACS after the institute started receiving anonymous letters alleging that Prof. Raman was favouring South Indian students over Bengal students. As a result of such allegations, he was finally stripped of his position at IACS and

he left Calcutta and joined the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru in 1933," the paper explains.

Similarly, the paper also traces the history of another prominent scientist who was also a student of Prof. Raman, Prof. G. V. Ramachandran, who was physicist. But his research abilities and contribution in identifying Protein structure were noteworthy. "Prof. Raman's efforts to attract top-notch scientists who were fleeing from Germany also did not materialise due to non-cooperation of bureaucracy," the paper notes. The paper further adds that Prof. Ramachandran

was a pioneer in coming out with Ramachandran Phi-psi diagram or otherwise known as Ramachandran Plot and his research could have won him a Nobel, but did not because his paper could not be published. "Prof. Ramchndran worked silently, while his rivals were publishing their papers in the West. Although he was an excellent researcher, it was not enough to bring laurels to the country," the paper adds. The paper further adds that the bureaucracy was so indifferent that it did not budge an inch when Prof. Ramchndran sought funds.

## Anti-CAA protests continue, grip many Indian cities

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
Umar Khalid and Yogendra Yadav and former home minister P. Chidambaram have already visited the venue to express their support for the protesters.

In Dimapur, Nagaland, thousands of people led by students from different colleges gathered in the Supermarket to protest against the CAA. With banners and placards saying, "We stand united against CAA", "Save Dimapur — Listen to peoples' voice" and "CAA — Modi-Shah votebank", people from all walks of life joined the protest rally. Khehovi V. Choppy, president of the Dimapur District Gaon Burahs (village chieftains) Association, said outsiders will not be allowed to take away the rights of indigenous people.

Former Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party leader Yashwant Sinha, who is on "Gandhi Shanti Yatra" against the government's political and economic policies came in support of students protesting against the CAA and NRC at Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on Saturday.

Students at this university, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, have been protesting peacefully against vice-

chancellor Anamik Shah for not allowing them to fly kites with messages against the implementation of CAA and NRC on January 14.

Mr Sinha reiterated the new citizenship law is a ploy of the Narendra Modi government to divert attention of people from important issues like the "failure of economy".

Congress leader and former home minister P. Chidambaram said in Kolkata on Saturday that after the "Assam NRC fiasco", the Narendra Modi government has quickly "changed gears" and is now talking of NPR. Speaking with reporters, Mr Chidambaram said that NPR is "nothing but NRC in disguise".

"Our purpose is to fight the sinister purpose of CAA and the NPR and mobilise public opinion against them. Our stated position is that we will not agree with NPR being rolled out from April 2020," he said. The Congress leader said the issue of the constitutional validity of CAA lies with the Supreme Court. In Jaipur, Kerala governor Arif Mohammad Khan said the amended citizenship law is a subject of the Union List and not a state subject and will have to be implemented by

states. "There is no way other than implementing the Act. It will have to be implemented under (Article) 254," Mr Khan told reporters in response to a question on some states refusing to implement the new law. He said everyone should understand "one's own jurisdiction".

"You may give your arguments by using your intellect, you have the right to challenge it in the Supreme Court, but the Citizenship Act is a subject of Union List and not a state subject," he said. Mr Khan added that people have a right to be adamant about their opinion but no right to go beyond the boundary of the law. Meanwhile, a court in Muzaffarnagar granted bail to 14 people who were arrested in connection with violence during protests against the CAA last month. District judge Sanjay Kumar Pachori allowed their bail pleas and directed that they be released after furnishing two sureties each of ₹1 lakh each.

According to the prosecution, the accused were arrested and sent to jail for allegedly being involved in the violence that broke out during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act on December 20.

## Buzz of prepaid phones return

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
facilities to all institutions providing essential services such as hospitals, banks, government offices, trade, tourism and travel in the Valley. Mr Kansal, who is also principal secretary (planning), said that the competent authority has released a list of all 153 websites in the "white list" category that can be accessed through 2G mobile data services. The "white-listed" websites include four email services, including Gmail and Outlook, 15 banking websites including RBI, J&K Bank, PayPal and Western Union.

Official sources said that any violation of these directions would be viewed seriously and service providers as well as subscribers may face action in the event of deviating from these. Service providers have been told to keep a tight lid on social media websites and ensure that subscribers are not able to access these sites via mobile Internet.

Mr Kansal said that telecom service providers have been asked to initiate the process for verification of credentials of prepaid SIM cardholders to

consider provision of mobile Internet connectivity as per the norms applicable for post-paid connections. "Telecom operators are being issued instructions to operationalise these directions immediately while providing for all the safeguards detailed in the order", he said and added, "The overall effort of the government is to facilitate and keep restrictions to the bare minimum based on the ground situation."

The SC had on January 10 said that access to Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution of India and sought a review of the restrictions imposed ahead of the Centre's move to strip J&K of its special status and splitting it into two Union Territories on August 5 last year. The top court had, while hearing petitions challenging the restrictions in the erstwhile state, termed the indefinite suspension of Internet services as "impermissible" and said that restrictions can "be temporary only". However, it fell short of issuing an order for immediate restoration of Internet services.

## VHP will reach out to Kar Sevaks...

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
should be "accepted wholeheartedly by everyone."

Though the fortnight-long celebrations ahead of Ramnavami are an annual feature in the Sangh Parivar calendar, this year it will be "special."

While the VHP affiliated "Dharmansand" — a conglomerate of saints and seers from across the nation — will give a final shape to the campaign during their three-day long meet in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, from January 20, the VHP has already asked its cadre to reach out to all kar sevaks

who participated in the Ram Janambhoomi movement which led to the demolition of the Babri Masjid at the disputed site. The campaign will also see VHP cadre reaching out to those who offered or sent "Ram shilas" for the construction of the mandir during the movement. The "shilas" — bricks with "Sri Ram" inscribed on them — were collected from across the country in 1989 just before the "shilanyas" took place in Ayodhya. The VHP and the "Dharmansand" want these shilas to be used in the foundation of the temple.

Recalling the genesis of the controversy, Mr Stalin said it was triggered by Mr Alagiri's statement over the allocation of less seats to the Congress in the panchayat elections. The issue could have been settled amicably, through discussions, he added.

"We just said what we felt like saying," retorted

brought under President's Rule in June 2018 and bifurcated into two UTs five months ago, cent percent coverage of 55 beneficiary oriented schemes to all residents of the UT, rapid infrastructure development including implementation of Prime Minister's Development Programme, flagship schemes and iconic projects, good governance and rule of law with equality of opportunity to all and rapid industrial and economic growth in all sectors wit focus on incomes and employment, he said. Divisional commissioners of Kashmir and Jammu have been designated as nodal officers to coordinate the visit.

Mr Subrahmanyam has asked the district administrations to make all necessary arrangements for the programme. He has also issued directions to different departments for "putting in their best efforts towards successful conduct of this people friendly initiative."

### Kerala father molests four minor daughters; arrested

**Malappuram, Jan. 18:** In a shocker, a 47-year-old man who allegedly sexually molested his four minor daughters for years was arrested at Valancherry in this north Kerala district, police said on Saturday.

The girls were aged between 10-17 years, police said.

The crime came to light after one of the children revealed to her school teachers about the ordeal that she and her sisters had been undergoing at home.

"The teachers and the school authorities informed the Child Protection Unit at Mancherry about the crime, who in turn passed the information to us. Based on the complaint of the four girls, we took the father into custody and recorded his arrest," a senior police official said.

Belonging to a financially backward family, the children were staying and studying at a charitable boarding school.

— PTI

## Politics over Nitish bid to fight global warming

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
PATNA, JAN. 18

Rift surfaced on Saturday after a section in the grand alliance came out in support of the human chain which is being organised by Nitish Kumar government to combat climate change.

Senior Congress leader Sadanand Singh said that he will support the government on the issue as "the event is being organized for a social cause and to save the mankind".

Opposition parties RJD and Congress had earlier termed the event as "a political stunt to gain in the state assembly polls."

Reacting sharply, Congress leader Prem Chand Mishra said that, "The party has taken a decision not to extend any support to the event which has been planned by chief minister Nitish Kumar for political gains. We feel that only those leaders who have decided to join the JD(U) are going to support the Human chain".

Over 4 crore people are expected to form a 16, 300 km long human chain on Sunday.

## Stalin, Alagiri meet

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
requested action against those — like DMK treasurer Durai Murugan — for speaking against the Congress.

Recalling the genesis of the controversy, Mr Stalin said it was triggered by Mr Alagiri's statement over the allocation of less seats to the Congress in the panchayat elections. The issue could have been settled amicably, through discussions, he added.

"We just said what we felt like saying," retorted

Mr Alagiri when asked if the curtains have been pulled down on the rift between the two parties.

Mr Stalin appreciated Mr Alagiri's "constructive" statement that the Congress would support and stand by the DMK's firm position against communal and fascist forces. To a question if he had met Mr Stalin at the behest of the Congress high command, Mr Alagiri said that the party leadership had given him complete freedom.



# Internet saga and the Indian state

The growing tendency to imposing full/limited shutdowns and targeting identities for claiming citizen rights are two sides of the same coin — the Indian government's increasing distrust of its citizens

Anivar Aravind

The last decade witnessed the growth of the Internet from communication technology to essential livelihood-enabling service, with deep integration on every aspect of life from welfare delivery to job generation. Despite technological growth and increase in internet penetration, the last decade also witnessed the Indian government's growing distrust of its citizens and the law enforcement agencies' interest to prevent 'communication rights' of 'fake news propagating' 'doubtful citizens'.

India's Internet growth is a constant theme in the last decade. Our country experienced significant year-on-year growth until last year. One such recent reports by Nielsen and Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) last year has noted that India had 451 million monthly active users as of March 31, 2019. We depend upon the Internet from banking to communication, basic necessity purchase to cloud services, important aspects of our economic, social, and cultural lives now depend upon the Internet. It transformed our lives and the way we access services & work. It opened up new sets of jobs from online media spaces to taxi aggregation to food delivery. Evolution of product and service startups and their growth in the Indian economy were largely due to open Internet & growth of connectivity and user base.

The government's attempts to address this increasingly networked society started with identification efforts to target the last mile using connectivity. Aadhaar was its tool and welfare leakage was the rationale. The state introduced connectivity and biometric authentication against Aadhaar as intermediary technologies to control access to welfare. The whole narrative was to fix the leakage to "ghosts/fakes/duplicates".

The next wave was targeting 'black money'. The narrative for demonetisation and enabling cashless economy was combined with an amendment to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, making Aadhaar-Bank account linkage mandatory. People queued up, changed notes, provided Aadhaar details to make black money targeting easier. They queued up similarly for mobile-Aadhaar linkage for helping the state target 'terrorists'. Many more targeting followed from birth registration to income tax filing — all to prevent ghosts and fakes from looting the Indian state.

We have seen citizen movements for net neutrality and saving the Internet

The recent order restoring 'white-listed sites only' broadband and 2G postpaid Internet access in selective districts of Kashmir — after the SC verdict — needs to be considered as an evolution of India's own 'Great Firewall'. This 'white-listed sites only' access violates net neutrality and TRAI's differential pricing rules.

from differential pricing. This resulted in the growth of Indian Internet businesses aided by a low prices to access the Internet via mobiles. This access to communication tools also helped various players, including political parties to use fake news as a tool for opinion formation among target audiences. The Indian state also used fake news such as fabricated "Aadhaar savings" as a tool for building legitimacy for the delivery of welfare services using biometric authentication. It also tried to break encrypted communication on Internet platforms, first in the name of "lynchings" and then for "traceability".

Internet shutdowns and communication blockades evolved as a method to address law enforcement agencies' fear of chaos — first under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and then under Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. The NSO Pegasus scandal revealed that possible state actors deployed snooping technologies on mobile phones of activists, lawyers, and public intellectuals involved in the Bhima Koregaon case. The Kashmir lockdown was a continuity of this state's fear and mistrust of its citizens. It is worth mentioning that the 2016 Nielson-IAMAI reports on India Internet 2019 ranked Jammu & Kashmir behind Delhi and Kerala with 49 per cent Internet penetration. The financial impact of 165+ days ongoing lockdown seems to be very high.

National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) are the continuations of this effort of targeting population using connectivity and identifiers. The change of narrative has gradually evolved from fear of "ghosts/fakes/duplicates" to 'black money holders' to selective religious identities, 'doubtful citizens' and 'migrants'. The Anti-CAA-NRIC-NPR protests are a form of dissent by rights-aware citizens to re-engineering and re-classification of citizenship based on religious identifiers. When targeting efforts were met with unexpected protests, the mistrust of the 'database state' on citizens ended up with its default failure response: Digital India not found. December 2019 and January 2020 witnessed Internet shutdowns in 10+ states. We have seen communication shutdowns growing granularly in specific areas in Delhi and Hyderabad, and throttling Internet speeds.

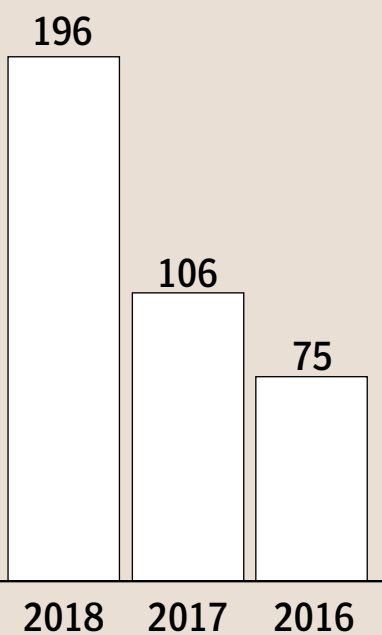
The recent order restoring 'white-listed sites only' broadband and 2G postpaid Internet access in selective districts of Kashmir — after the Supreme Court verdict — needs to be considered as an evolution of India's own 'Great Firewall'. This 'white-listed sites only' access violates net neutrality and TRAI's differential pricing rules that were set in 2016. The gov-

## TRACKING PHENOMENON



An initiative called internetshutdowns.in tracks the number of internet shutdowns across the country. It is run by Software Freedom Law Centre, India.

## STEADY RISE IN INTERNET SHUTDOWN CASES



According to SFLCI, there have been 236 preventive shutdowns i.e. restrictions imposed in anticipation of law and order situation, and 146 'reactive' shutdowns since January 2012.

## DEFINING INTERNET SHUTDOWN



Internet shutdown is an intentional disruption of Internet-based communications, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unavailable, for a specific population, location, or mode of access, often to exert control over the flow of information.  
— Access Now

## LONGEST PERIOD WITHOUT INTERNET

**160+ days**  
Kashmir Valley  
(August 4, 2019)

**145 days**  
Kargil (August 4 to December 27, 2019)

**133 days**  
Kashmir Valley  
(July to Nov. 2016)

**100 days**  
Darjeeling (June to Sept. 2017)

## 28 COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY SHUTDOWNS

Between January and July 2019, Access Now reports that India had **80** instances of Internet shutdowns

The second highest number of Internet shutdowns have been recorded in Kazakhstan: **Four**

## ASSAM

### LOCALS DECRY INTERNET BAN

MANOJ ANAND

From students to professionals, few lives were left unscathed by the nine-day-long Internet ban in Assam, which was imposed after the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act movement took a violent turn in December.

While the authorities have been maintaining that the move was carried out to check the spread of rumours and maintain law and order, citizens said lack of Internet access took a harrowing toll on their personal and professional lives.

Kabindra Kakoty, a Gauhati University graduate, had tried to apply for a competitive examination but he missed the deadline because of the shutdown. "We, the students, suffered so much during the ban," he rued.

Bhaben Kalita, an Uber driver, said he was still traumatised as his livelihood had taken a severe blow.

"I could not pay my EMI to the bank, which started threatening to take action."

Mr Kalita added that he was desperate to be party to the PILs filed in the Gauhati high court that challenged the Internet suspension, but financial constraints ruled out his involvement. "I wanted a direction from the court disallowed the imposition of such bans in the future," he said.

Many people faced difficulties in transferring money electronically. One college student said that his parents had sent him money before the ban was imposed but many of his friends were not as fortunate.

"My friends had to leave Guwahati as they almost ran out of cash and ATMs were also running dry," he said. People also had to shell out more for auto-rickshaws in the absence of cab services and many had to face challenges in submitting their reply to I-T and Goods and Services Tax-related queries.

ernment's 'Great Firewall' limiting citizen access to its own "free-basics" is an emerging threat to Internet freedom in India. The tendency of imposing full /limited shutdowns and targeting identities for claiming citizen rights are two sides of the same coin

— the Indian government's increasing distrust of its citizens.

Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee in November 2019 launched a "Contract for the Web", promising to take concrete steps to make the web a force for good. He appealed to governments to

## KASHMIR

### SC ORDER FAILS TO ENTHUSE

YUSUF JAMEEL

The Supreme Court's recent verdict that the access to the Internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 of the Constitution brought smiles on the faces of subscribers in Jammu and Kashmir, where the facility has been suspended for a record 24 weeks now.

But as the authorities chose to play for time the hope generated by the top court's seeking a review of the restrictive orders imposed ahead of the Centre's stripping the erstwhile state of its special status and splitting it up into two Union Territories on August 5 last year was soon belied.

The ruling termed the indefinite suspension of Internet services as "impermissible" and said that restrictions can "be temporary only". However, it fell short by not issuing an order for immediate restoration of Internet services.

Prof. Sheikh Showkat Hussain

said he was never optimistic "as the court directions are seldom respected by the authorities in J&K". Attorney and human rights activist Pervez Imroz endorsed him but added that the SC had only asked the government to review its decision and by saying that "it put the ball back in its court and gave it red herring to deny the facility to people".

Meanwhile, the Internet shutdown in the Union Territory has caused economic distress. Also adversely affected are the media and medical fraternities, students, travel organizations, trade startups, entrepreneurs, online services and others, evoking severe criticism at home and abroad.

According to Sheikh Ashique, president Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Valley's economy suffered a loss of about ₹18,000 crore in first four months of the post-August 5 restrictions and communication blockade.

(Aravind is a Bangalore-based Independent researcher looking at the intersection of technology, politics and digital rights. He tweets @anivar.)

PROTEST | POWER The draconian law is being used unflinchingly and rampantly to silence any kind of dissent and impose self-censorship

## Section 144 of CrPC: Brutal tool has no place in democracy

Lara Jesani

With the Centre moving rapidly towards implementation of the nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC) and our beloved country towards fools' day, and with the Supreme Court deferring the hearing on the matter, citizens have been left with little option but to communicate their dissent and democratically challenge the government policy. This has brought back into discussion an ever-burning concern for active citizenry and fulfillment of the objectives of a vibrant democracy, the constitutionally guaranteed right to democratic protest.

Under the umbrella of the Criminal Procedure Code 1973, the discouraging and gloomy cloud of Section 144, however, looms large to silence dissent and discourage democratic participation. A few days back, the Supreme Court upheld the preventive use of Section 144 when there is an apprehension of danger, subject to it being in the nature of an "emergency" and for the purpose of preventing obstruction and annoyance or injury to a person lawfully employed. It also spelt out in clear terms that Section 144 cannot be used to suppress legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights. In the current scenario of lockdown and clampdown, the judgment is nothing short of an achievement and a tool in the hands of protesters.

Yet, in an ideal world, the right to protest being a fundamental right, ought to be protected by the state even in situations of emergency and in removing apprehension of danger, not the right. Being a part of the fundamental rights chapter of the Indian Constitution, it is the incumbent duty of the state to ensure protection of the right to freedoms under Article 19(1)(a) and (b), and not to become its very opponents. Yet, Section 144 is the favourite tool of repression of the state, police and their allies in power. One that is unflinchingly and rampantly used to silence dissent, impose self-censorship, discourage people from organising and crackdown on peaceful protesters.

In its most brutal form, it is being used daily to impose blanket bans on protest, break assemblies using undue violence and force, enforce restrictions and curfews and criminalise peaceful protesters, thereby deterring public expression. It is hence no surprise that Section 144 is a tool in the hands of the party in power. Hence, the burden of independent institutions to preserve it morally and constitutionally is even greater. Alas, Section 144 has become a ground for direct battle between the people and the police in a brute state, with the odds clearly against the people.

Several lives, too, have been sacrificed over Section 144. On a single day — May 22, 2018 — 13 peaceful protesters were publicly killed in police firing in

## SECTION 144 OF CRPC

### ONCE SECTION 144 OF THE CRPC IS IMPOSED IN ANY AREA:

- ▶ Civilians barred from carrying lathis, sharp-edged metallic objects or firearms in public places
- ▶ Prohibits assembly of five or more people at a place

### WHO CAN ISSUE THE ORDER?

- ▶ District Magistrate (DM), a sub-divisional magistrate or any other executive magistrate on behalf of the state government

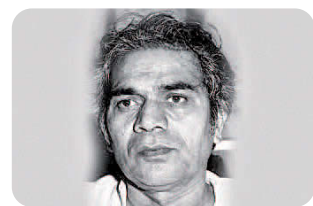
### DURATION :

- ▶ Imposed for 2 months but can be withdrawn if the administration finds situation normal

- ▶ May be extended beyond two months but not exceeding six months at one stretch

### REASONS FOR IMPOSING SECTION 144 OF CRPC

- ▶ Obstruction, annoyance or injury to any person lawfully employed
- ▶ Danger to human life, health or safety
- ▶ Disturbance of public tranquility or a riot or affray



**Madhu Limaye v SDM (1970)**

The Supreme Court upheld its constitutionality, stating that it constituted a reasonable restriction 'in the interest of public order'.

a Section 144-imposed Tuticorin district during the 100th day of anti-Sterilite protests. This brought India to the 3rd position globally on killings of environmental defenders, as per the July 2019 report of the Global Witness Monitor.

It is not surprising but shameful that Civicus Monitor has rated Indian civic space in the "Repressed" category in its recently released report in

December 2019. The claim that Section 144 is being used to prevent violence is laughable at most, with corpses of Muslim men and brutally tortured children bearing witness to the real face of Section 144 as played out by the Uttar Pradesh police. The police brutality in Uttar Pradesh, under the excuse of preventing and containing violent protests, does not just limit itself to violence inflicted on protes-

tors but extends to those who were not even involved in the protests.

For a tool being misused so rampantly and viciously even in cities like Delhi and Mangaluru, not a single order of restraint in the application of Section 144 and clampdown on democratic protests has been passed suo-moto by the judiciary, which is to our dismay the only arbiter between the police and the state.

Even in a city like Mumbai, Section 144 has been repeatedly applied to curb peaceful protests every month since October 2019. On the ground that the Bombay High Court has designated Azad Maidan as the only protest site, even the better-off Mumbai Police has been denying permission for peaceful rallies in other parts of the city. It has also evicted, detained and criminalized protestors for unlawful assembly at Gateway of India, even as no reports of violence or law and order issue have been reported during the daily protests.

If what is happening in the current scenario does not shake the legislators, jurists and independent institutions to accept the reality of Section 144, nothing else can. It is a wake-up call for the entire country, which one can guess it may have also been for the Supreme Court in the Kashmir lockdown case, that people are not going to give up their right to dissent easily.

What would preserve our right to protest, however, is to do it freely, without threat or fear, with the cooperation of the state machinery and in the spirit of democracy. It is high time that Section 144 is made a thing of the past.

(A lawyer, activist, frequent protester and believer in freedoms, Ms Jesani is an advocate at Bombay high court.)



THE ASIAN AGE

19 JANUARY 2020



Krishna Shastri Devulapalli

Off the beaten track

LETTERS

UNFAIR REMARK

I do not agree with noted historian Ramachandra Guha who said that Rahul Gandhi should not have been elected. If so, then the people want to know from Mr Guha what he would say of the elections of Sadhvi Pragya, Sakshi Maharaj and others of their ilk. One cannot hold Mr Gandhi's birth against him as a demerit. Indeed, one should not. For, the world gives every man a fair chance irrespective of his origins. If a man born to wealth is unworthy of it, he is sure to squander his fortune. Restoring the old glory of the Congress is no mean challenge. If Mr Gandhi can accomplish it, he will earn for himself a greater standing than Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Bidyut K. Chatterjee

Faridabad, Haryana

Snake in the Mami's shadow

For real diversity, let us acknowledge identity

All the high excitement in my life comes from my evening walk, the only time I take off from fearlessly saving the world via social media. Yesterday, on the corner of 4th Avenue and Rajaji Bhavan, a largish group of people was looking skywards.

Being looked upon (by myself almost entirely) as something of a boyishly good-looking village elder in my caliphate, the Greater Besant Nagar Region, I stopped to enquire.

“What seems to be the problem, beloved subjects?” I said.

“Snake, *saar*,” said Bashyam the auto man, continuing to look at the sky.

“Where?” I said.

“Up in the tree there,” said “Puma’ Sadasivam the runner, pointing to a branch twenty feet above us. “Can’t you see it?”

“Of course, I can,” I said. “It’s black and purple and sitting right there without moving.”

“No, it’s actually just greyish,” said Bashyam. “What you are looking at is a cloth fibre from your black and purple t-shirt on your glasses.”

“Yes, I knew that. I was just testing you,” I said. “Your eyesight is good, you have my vote.”

“Snakes, as you know, can crawl up trees but can’t crawl down,” said Komalam Mami. “And this is a *Gliricidia sepium*, the tree that is. Not the snake. That’s a *komberi mookan*.”

Mami had got just back from the US. How did I know this? Well, I knew because she had WhatsApped me 863 pictures of her journey — starting with her wheelchair-enabled boarding of the onward flight and ending with her wheelchair-enabled return. The 861 pictures in between were of her scuba diving, kayaking, bungee jumping, kick-boxing and playing the *mridangam* (the last two at the same time, actually), all sans any assistive devices whatsoever. Other than a hip flask, that is.

“The wretched thing has come for the eggs of the parakeet,” she continued. Mami was an expert on many subjects. “And it will fall on some unsuspecting fellow who is walking, or worse still, riding by. Even though the *komberi mookan* is non-venomous, the person will die of a heart-attack.”

“I know what to do,” I said, and dialled a number. For years I had been trying to impress Mami in vain.

“The fire service won’t come for such trivial stuff,” said Komalam Mami.

Like I said, Mami was well-informed. From the mating habits of local snakes, easy-to-make parakeet egg recipes and the ins-and-outs of government agencies, nothing was beyond her realm.

“No, actually, I’m calling a writer friend,” I said. “She writes literary fiction and lives close by.”

“How’s that going to help, sir?” said Kurkuresh, Komalam Mami’s physical trainer. He was the one who was pushing her wheelchair in the pics.

“She could do a reading at a pinch,” I said. “Something lyrical and poignant. About displacement and deep longing, most likely. About loss and redemption, most certainly. The snake will writhe in agony for a bit, froth at the mouth and fall down. It will be comatose, in fact. Rendered completely harmless. Believe me, I have seen the audiences at her book launches. A recent lit fest where she was a panellist had an ambulance on stand-by.”

“Stupid idea,” said Komalam Mami.

“And if the bloody thing still has any signs of life left, we could take care of it by asking the writer questions about her book. That ought to finish off not just the snake but its immediate family lurking in that bush over there.”

Mami harrumphed.

“On the other hand, we could call your daughter, Mami,” I said.

“What good is she?” she said. “She is in the US anyway.”

“So what?” I said. “She could perform that sinuous snake dance number that she does so well at all her recitals. And we could show it to that damn reptile via WhatsApp. The horrid thing — I mean the snake, not your Visalakshi, lovely girl — eating up all the parakeet eggs whole, has to be a male snake. It will be seduced instantly by the *shringara rasa* in the item and come rushing down in a fit of *bibhatsam*.”

Needless to say, I won’t be walking on 4th Avenue any more. Henceforth, I will be available on the Blue Cross Road for my evening consultations. I’m the guy with the Mysore-style turban, fake nose and moustache.

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a humour writer, novelist, columnist and screenwriter

Subhani



Ayesha Minhaz

No More Mansplaining

Debates about the assertion of identities are unsettling for people like me. When people from the persecuted and marginalised communities — especially women — speak up without alienating themselves from their identities, in this case, Muslims organising as Muslims against the C i t i z e n s h i p (Amendment) Act (CAA), they are often patronised or shut down. Our concerns, termed self-serving, elaborate rants, and our assertion of lived realities, ridiculed as “identity politics”.

The phrase “identity politics” is to remain in quotes as a reminder that it is often used to discredit marginalised groups reclaiming space in the political discourse; Whether it is dalits asserting against the brahminical hegemony and oppression — the Pasmanda movement, the Muslim anti-caste social justice movement, or now the Indian Muslims organising themselves against the Hindutva regime.

India legalised Islamophobia with CAA in December 2019. Since then, citizens — especially Muslims — across India have organised for the rollback of this and the National Population Register and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens. The three, together, are feared to be laying a legal foundation for pushing the largest religious minority of India towards second-class citizenship.

Much of the participation of Muslims in these protests has been dynamite. Further, like Shaheen Bagh in Delhi, most of these protests are not led by any of the Opposition parties. The unifying factor has been faith. It would be unethical to not acknowledge it.

Such a public assertion of faith has rattled many including MP Shashi Tharoor, who himself doesn’t shy away from being vocal about his Hindu identity and has even written a book — *Why I am a Hindu*. The recent furore on social media over *La Ilaha Illallah* — the Muslim declaration of faith — where a section of political and academic elites came together to one-up Muslims is rooted in the same prejudice as the one perpetrated by the Sangh.

Much has been said about Tharoor-brand liberal solidarity giving a communal connotation to such chants. Yet, reiterations won’t be a lost cause because those who believe in obfuscating identities for the larger good seldom face enough flak for their politics of convenience.

The political elites of all shades — but particularly the centrists, and the liberals — have unabashedly and repeatedly burdened the oppressed — Muslims in this case — with the responsibility of not breaking the solidarities brought together for a common cause. Tharoor’s prescription being — protest as Indians instead of Muslims against the current fascist regime in India. This suggestion was lauded by many again.

There is no reason for Muslims to shun faith while fighting against the CAA-NRC-NPR as it is inherently anti-Muslim. Let alone fascism, such subsuming of identities is a deeply amoral way to address any form of oppression or persecution inflicted upon those being born and/or choosing these identities.

Also, it conveniently erases all the physical violence that Indian Muslims have been put through: From lynching that has been lost on the memory to the most recent state-sponsored violence that killed at least 25, Muslim, protesters, since December.

The rhetoric of the cheerleaders of the common cause politics notwithstanding, Muslims — especially women like Irena Akbar — have tried explaining the same with an exemplary amount of tolerance and empathy. This, only to be met with responses swinging between patronising sympathy and discomfort for Indian Muslims and disdain for their faith. This also unleashed the worse forms of misogynistic online abuse and Islamophobia.

Such has been the consciousness among Muslims — including the Ulema — about the growing discomfort among the allies, that in the Million March in Hyderabad, people were stopped from raising *Allahu Akbar* as a slogan.

Promisingly so, some among the Hindus — mostly the disgruntled citizens again — are taking up the task of teaching the rest to sit back and listen — if not agree — as a basic courtesy when extending solidarities.

What the current debate also reflects is the lack of familiarity about Indian Muslims beyond *biryani* and *haleem*. While the Hindutva brigade reduced us to *puncture-wallahs*, even those from the allies found it apt to hold posters about *biryani* at the protests.

While pop culture indulged in reductive imagery of *kurta-clad, topi-wearing, kohl-eyed* Muslim men and the women draped in a *burqa*, a veil often fluttering over their faces; the liberal political elites peddled an idea of Muslim that even several among us fell prey to — the moderate Muslim.

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The other characterisations often floating around are atheist, cultural, progressive, practising or fundamentalist. The first three were welcome, the “moderate” Muslim being the ideal for the secular fabric of the country and the rest are to be bulldozed, lest it upsets the Hindu far-right majoritarian conscience.

At the risk of romanticisation, this is perhaps the first time in the past few decades that Muslims, sans political affiliation, have organised in such large numbers. As a Muslim, it instils hope that the fascist regime had deprived us of.

For hope, I also look up to music to seek a sense of comfort that academia fails to provide in such times. Nina Simone’s *Mississippi Goddam*, a civil-liberties anthem from the 1960s, recently hit too close to home: *You don’t have to live next to me. Just give me my equality. Everybody knows about Mississippi goddam*. I have been humming my own version of it replacing Mississippi with India since December: *And everybody knows about India goddamn*.

Probably not everyone around knows yet, but as one can see, Muslims are in no mood to give up. Armed with the Indian Constitution written by *Babasaheb*, Muslims will fight: And, we will give up neither country nor faith.

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Ayesha Minhaz is a graduate student at SOAS, University of London, and a freelance journalist based in Hyderabad

Proactive politics

When Maharashtra environment minister Aaditya Thackeray called on former Congress president Rahul Gandhi recently, the two dynasts reportedly discussed Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut’s penchant for courting controversy. This was before the Rajya Sabha MP went public claiming Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister used to meet Mumbai underworld don Karim Lala. Both Aaditya and Rahul said to be in agreement that Raut needs to be given a political role so that his periodic outbursts recede.

Lala’s other side

Interestingly, some Congress veterans are intrigued by the grand old party’s sense of outrage over the Indira-Lala interactions. Lala was close to Nehru-Gandhi family retainer Mohammad Yunus. Often, Lala used to introduce himself as Abdul Karim Khan and his visiting card identified him as an office-bearer of the All India Pakhtun Jirga-e-Hind. Pakhtun Jirga-e-Hind

was an outfit of the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Jirga-e-Hind was a respected organisation which had easy access to A.R. Antulay, Rajni Patel and several others.

Shah eye on security

Union home minister Amit Shah has been visiting offices of many centrally-run security organisations. The minister has surprised officials with his sharp focus and eye for detail. When presentations are made to Mr Shah, the minister invariably asks searching questions and raises issues that have relevance and significance. Apparently, a lot of “home work” is done before every visit.

Wedding diplomacy

A senior BJP functionary’s son is getting married and grand

Will leadership contain Raut’s ‘rage’?



By WAQYANAWIS

arrangements have been made for wedding reception in New Delhi

and Bhopal. The list of invitees to the Madhya Pradesh capital runs into thousands and some district BJP unit meetings were called to ensure management aspects of the reception. The groom’s father’s Rajya Sabha tenure is coming to end, so some party leaders view the wedding celebration build-up as a sort of lobbying for the upper house re-nomination.

Beeline for board

Who will make the cut? Union ministers Smriti Irani and Nirmala Sitaraman are vying for a place in BJP’s all-powerful party parliamentary board. Once J.P. Nadda takes over from Amit Shah as BJP national president early next week, vacancies in the BJP’s highest decision-making body after the death of Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj would be filled. Smriti’s claim is based on her sta-

tus as a giantkiller, having defeated Rahul Gandhi from Amethi Lok Sabha while Nirmala is already part of the informal big-four league consisting of the Prime Minister, home minister, defence minister and finance minister. Incidentally, BJP national president-designate J.P. Nadda’s residence in the national capital has become a sought-after place where every day, some or other important central minister is seen entering and exiting.

End of an era

The passing of Raj Kapoor’s oldest child and Prithviraj Kapoor’s oldest grandchild Ritu Nanda marks the passing of an era that will be remembered for the contribution that both the Kapoor and Nanda families made to post-Independence India. Prithviraj Kapoor, a staunch Congressman,

was about the same age as Jawaharlal Nehru and shared the latter’s ideals. At Prithvi Theatres, the Bombay-based travelling theatre he founded in 1944, Kapoor would play out the socialist vision and ideals of a secular society. Both Nehru and his daughter Indira had great respect and admiration for the Kapoor family. In *The Kapoors: The First Family of Indian Cinema*, Madhu Jain recounts how Indira Gandhi had even contemplated a matrimonial alliance between her firstborn Rajiv and Raj Kapoor’s elder daughter Ritu. Jain writes that it was not as if Indira Gandhi was star-struck or looking for a daughter-in-law with Bollywood antecedents; it was her deep regard and respect for the Kapoor name. While Rajiv was away at Cambridge for higher studies he met Sonia Maino and fell in love. They married in 1968.

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



# Soleimani was the glue of Resistance Axis



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

For millennia, in early and middle ancient eras, Europe was defined as the land contiguous to the Mediterranean Region. It included North Africa. The rapid expansion of Islam across North Africa in the seventh and eighth centuries smothered Christianity and bisected this geographical expanse into civilisational halves with the Mediterranean Sea evolving into a civilisational barrier. Islam concurrently proliferated into the region through the invasion of Persia. It then arrived in southern Europe via the conquests by of between the 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries thereby laying the field for a clash of civilizations that would play out across centuries.

During the Dark Ages, Ottoman Sultans presided over an Empire from Persia to Central Europe. They seized Byzantium-now Istanbul in 1453 terminating the Byzantine Empire. By 1680, the principal bulwark against the expansion of Islam was the Roman Catholic Hapsburg

Empire with its capital in Vienna.

With the Hapsburg's making repeated forays into Ottoman controlled Hungary it gave the Ottoman's the perfect opportunity to drive their legions into the heart of Europe and capture Vienna. Thus began the siege of Vienna that lasted from the 17<sup>th</sup> of July to the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, 1683. Eventually the Holy League defeated the Ottoman's armies and the siege of Vienna was relieved. This conquest left an indelible scar on Western psyche. They internalised a lesson that for the security of the West-Middle East has to be perennially destabilised.

Three centuries later on the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 1916, the opportunity presented itself. The high representatives of Great Britain and France surreptitiously arrived at an understanding branded as the Sykes-Picot agreement. The agreement mandated that Arab lands under the occupation of the are to be apportioned into British and French spheres of influence at the culmination of . Eventually the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire post the first world War extin-

**The Persian civilisation had to be brought to heel. General Qassem Soleimani became the perfect mark to deliver the coup de grace... The impulse — stemming from the Siege of Vienna — to keep the Middle East perennially off balance — is alive and kicking.**

guished the perennial threat of Islamic conquest that had hung over Europe since 1299. However it sowed the seeds of all modern day conflict since then.

The contested lands now labeled as the "Palestine question" were once a part of Ottoman Syria. The British got a dual mandate on Palestine on April 25, 1920. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 called for the establishment of national home for the Jewish people in Palestine became a part of the mandate. It paved the way to establish a nation for a persecuted people — the Israelis. Moreover, it established a permanent non-Islamic presence in the heart of the Islamic World.

Post the Second World War, the global power dynamic altered radically when Britain and France entered a phase of terminal decline. The United States and the Soviet Union became superpowers turning the Middle East into a major Cold War arena. At the centre of it, were Israel and oil.

The historical memories of the siege of Vienna had by that time become internalised, both subliminally and consciously, into the design of Western strategic theology. Simply translated, it meant never to allow the Islamic Middle East to threaten the West again.

The rise of Arab nationalism in 1950s and 60s under Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser presented a challenge yet again. Fashioned by Marxist, Communist and socialist thinking, the Arab National movement emerged when the Soviet Union was on the ascendant. However, the defeat of Egypt, Jordan and Syria by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967 effectively spelled the end of the Arab nationalist movement. Though secular in character, for the arch-conservatives of the West it represented Islamic Consolidation by another nom de guerre. Israel in its war effort was aided by the West. Again in 1973, the Israelis were able to deliver a hard knock to the Arabs — read Muslims — in the October war. The impulse was to knock the Islamic World of its pedestal whenever the opportunity presented.

In 1979, an Islamic Revolution swept Iran deposing a longstanding US strategic asset in the region, Mohammad Raza Pahlavi. Almost simultaneously the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. It set the stage for a decade long "Jihad" that ended not only with the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan but the

end of the Cold War and the emergence of the United States as the only global hyperpower. However, the Middle East had still to be tamed and the humiliation meted out by Iran during the hostage crisis had to be avenged.

The opportunity presented itself once again when Saddam Hussain foolishly invaded Kuwait. President Bush-41 launched Operation Desert Storm. Coalition forces swiftly drove Iraq from Kuwait, advancing into Iraq, and reaching a cease-fire within 100 hours. They however permitted Saddam Hussein to remain in power. He had to be crucified another day.

Then the European Union was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November, 1993. Turkey despite being a Euro-Asiatic power was not given admittance. Its demographics as a Muslim majority nation defined by its adversity across centuries to a Christen Europe juxtaposed with the fact that it was the seat of a former Sunni caliphate it possibly could not be admitted to a "Anglo-Saxon Club". Twenty seven years later, Turkey still continues to be petitioner in halls of Brussels despite being a long-standing Nato member.

Even before Bush-43 was elected as President, the Project for a New American Century, a report authored by a bunch of neo-cons, had decreed that Iraq be invaded to reorder the Middle East once again post the Ottoman Empire rejoin in the 1920s.

On a false pretext that Saddam Hussain had weapons of mass destruction, Iraq was invaded in 2003. The assault unleashed tectonic forces and opened deep schisms leaving the region mired in internecine struggle precisely what the West always wanted. With the Doha talks and the Taliban preparing the ground for American withdrawal from Afghanistan, what was left was the unfinished business of Iran.

The Persian civilisation had to be brought to heel. With no Iraq-style intervention possible in near future, General Qassem Soleimani became the perfect mark to deliver the coup de grace. For, Soleimani was the glue of the Resistance Axis that had fought ISIS successfully but in the process the Shia Crescent became the biggest beneficiary of the Iraqi intervention. With his assassination, the US wanted to send a message to the wider Islamic world, dehors its inter-Islam sectarian divisions, that the US, with its superior, technology could strike at will, notwithstanding its withdrawal from the region. The impulse — stemming from the Siege of Vienna — to keep the Middle East perennially off balance — is alive and kicking.

*The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari*



Dilip Cherian

Dilli Ka Babu

## COMMISSIONER SYSTEM IN UP

In the backdrop of the anti-CAA agitation and to improve the law and order situation in the state, Uttar Pradesh has decided to implement the long-pending plan for a police commissioner system for the state, starting with Noida and Lucknow. ADGs Sujit Pandey and Alok Kumar have been named the first police commissioners of Lucknow and Noida.

Sources say that the commissioner system will give local police chiefs a free hand to act swiftly in a law and order situation instead of district police chiefs seeking permission from the district magistrate. Not surprisingly, the move faced with stiff resistance from the IAS lobby. However, the IPS Association, which incidentally the Ministry of Home Affairs says it does not recognize, has been quick to welcome the move as "a great opportunity to serve the public".

In the past too, the proposal for the commissionerate system was shelved in the Chief Minister's Secretariat. But this time Yogi Adityanath rode over all opposition from the IAS officers. Apparently, the Chief Minister was convinced by the police set-up in other states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi and Karnataka where the police commissioner system is in place.

Under the new system, 40 police stations in Lucknow will be brought under the police commissioner who will have a team of two IGs as joint commissioners, nine SP-rank officials and a woman officer of SP rank along with a woman officer of ASP rank.

## SMOKE SIGNAL FOR CHANGING TRACKS

The government has initiated a major restructuring of the Railway Board, among other "reforms". The strength of the Railway Board, the apex decision-making body of Indian Railways, has been cut from eight to five members, including the chairperson. The government has also merged the different cadres into a single Railway Management System. So instead of the current eight services including engineering, traffic, mechanical and electrical, Indian Railways will now have only one cadre — the Indian Railway Service. The modalities will be worked out in consultation with the Department of Personnel and Training in a year.

But the announcement that all eight existing services within the Railways will be merged into one has caused consternation among the babus in Rail Bhavan. Many rail officials have been expressing concerns over "seniority" and "career growth" under the proposed reform. It is being said that the government should have announced the merger only after firming up the policy.

Meanwhile, the term of Chairman of the Railway Board V.K. Yadav has been extended, putting to rest rumours.

## J&K OFFICERS FEEL A CRUNCH

The Centre's decision to lower the quota for local officers from the state services in IAS and IPS in Jammu and Kashmir has expectedly not been received well in the Union territory. Several babus have said that the decision would impede the already retarded career prospects of the Kashmir Administrative Service (KAS) and Kashmir Police Service (KPS) officers.

The Centre has lowered the quota for local officers from the existing 50 per cent to 33 per cent following the nullification of Article 370 in the erstwhile state of J&K. After J&K was reorganised as a Union territory, the Centre has decided that it cannot enjoy the special quota provision and must abide by the 67:33 rule applied in the rest of India.

According to sources, the move is not surprising as various central laws have now been extended to J&K since it became a union territory. Since the reorganization, officers selected through the civil service examination will now get AGMUT cadre instead of Jammu & Kashmir.

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

# 'I don't support laws that go against Preamble'



To form a pre-poll alliance against the BJP that has been riding a wave of popularity at the national level was not easy, considering that the past experience of hobnobbing with the Saffron party had not been a pleasant experience for the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha. However, the 44-year-old working president of the JMM, **Hemant Soren**, not only successfully stitched a coalition, but also projected himself as a viable chief ministerial candidate against the incumbent. Speaking to **Pramod Kumar**, the new Jharkhand chief minister explains how he turned the electoral battle in his favour and convinced the people that a 'humble young man' is a better choice for leading the state. Excerpts from the conversation.



**How do you analyse the victory of alliance led by JMM in the high-stakes Jharkhand Assembly polls?**

Voters of Jharkhand have given a clear mandate to our alliance for which I am very thankful. I am thankful to the people of Jharkhand for the mandate. This is the time to take a vow to fulfil the expectations of the public. This win is also the result of the hard work and struggle of 'Dishom Guru' Shibhu Soren. The time has come to fulfil the goals for which this state was created. I also want to thank *Soniaji, Laluji, Rahulji, Priyankaji* and all Congress leaders for all the support and for believing in me. We fought against a mighty political force like BJP, which has huge money power.

**When the Lok Sabha elections of 2019 were held, there appeared no space for the Opposition parties, as people voted overwhelmingly for the BJP. How confident were you of the victory in the Assembly**

**polls, which was to be held in about six months' time?**

I was confident that our alliance will win with a comfortable margin. We started our groundwork for the Assembly elections immediately after the Lok Sabha polls. In the Lok Sabha elections, BJP candidates' margins were thin in the tribal area. I understood the aspiration of the tribals as well as non-tribals voters of the state and started working with them. I always remained in constant touch with the rural as well as urban voters. The previous state government, led by the BJP, tried its level best to divert attention of the masses, (but) we focused mainly on issues directly linked to the voters.

**In what way would you say the BJP tried to divert the attention of the masses?**

The Assembly polls are for the local issues. Issues like The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC),

National Population Register (NPR) and Ram Mandir do not work in the assembly polls. Local issues must be given priority in the Assembly polls. Besides, important issues like unemployment, hunger deaths and tribal unrest should also be given equal priority. Also, how can any party ignore young voters?

**Do you mean to say the BJP is ignoring the young electorate?**

I would say it in a very simple way — the youth is not the priority for the BJP. They (BJP) are not even bothered about deteriorating economy, rising inflation, poverty and issues related to adivasis. By raising issues like NRC, CAA and NPR, BJP is simply playing a divisive politics in the country.

**Since the JMM is heading a coalition government in Jharkhand with the Congress, which openly opposes NRC and CAA, what are the JMM's views on the controversial legislation?**

The entire country is up in arms against CAA. On one hand, you have worsening economic situation, but you are busy with CAA. We can't make people stand in queue again like the way it happened during demonetisation. Many people lost their lives. What's the need for such Acts? Who will take responsibility for the lives lost? We don't support laws that go against the Preamble of our Constitution.

**What are your priorities for Jharkhand?**

Jharkhand is a mineral-rich tribal state. The tribals have favoured the alliance, which

**Raghubar Das was taking orders from his bosses. He had no vision how to run the state and that worked against the party. All their talk about development is farce. It's only on papers. No central schemes had been effectively implemented.**

is perceived as a backlash against the BJP government's amendments to land tenancy laws. The anger among the tribal community was quite palpable. As promised in the manifesto, we will bring "right to land law" to give land to the landless. We will soon come out with a people-friendly industrial policy for Jharkhand in which local youth would get maximum employment, besides encouraging cottage and minor industries. Cottage and minor industries will be promoted. For the welfare and development of the deprived, dalits, tribals, the poor and minorities in the state, people living in slums will be ensured drinking water, electricity, healthcare, education, roads and housing. We have to take the people along irrespective of religion, class, caste and gender. My predecessor, Raghubar Das, never thought about the betterment of Jharkhand people

**Is this verdict against Raghubar Das or the party?**

Raghubar Das was taking orders from his bosses. He had no vision how to run the state and that worked against the

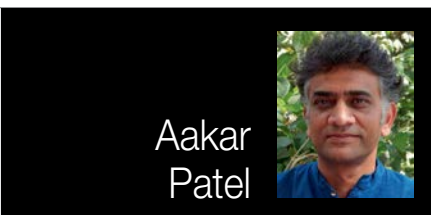
party. All their talk about development is farce. It's only on papers. No central schemes had been effectively implemented in the state. Either state government funds were not utilised properly or diverted for some other purposes by the previous government.

**How do you explain the first decision of your cabinet — to drop the cases against the Patthalgadi movement accused — considering that the BJP government had taken some stern measures in this regard? Also, are you going to order a probe against some decisions taken by Raghubar Das?**

I am against vendetta politics. But the decisions which are against the people of Jharkhand, can certainly be reviewed. Dropping cases against those accused of taking part in the Patthalgadi movement is a step in this direction.

**What about the prospect of tourism in Jharkhand?**

It is a priority area for me. Let me tell you very clearly that we will change the face of Jharkhand in terms of tourism. This is the sector which was completely ignored by the previous government in the state. I will change the perception about Jharkhand that the state is rich but people are poor here. Keeping the interest of the people of Jharkhand, including the tribal, our government will soon come out with a detailed plan. Tourism, including eco-tourism, will be developed and local youths would find employment.



Aakar Patel

## The protesters have a limited agenda — roll back CAA

I am 50 years old and I have not seen a mass movement and agitation like the one against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens and the National Population Register. It is very different from anything that we have ever seen.

I have lived through several agitations of scale. I have vague memories of the Emergency. There was excitement in our Vile Parle East neighbourhood in Bombay one night but it was not long lived. There were no large numbers of people on the streets in our area. I remember a yellow coloured booklet being circulated by the Janata Party which communicated the atrocities that Indira Gandhi's government was apparently inflicting on its opponents. There was one page which had a drawing of a man with some cigarette burns.

The Emergency's atrocities were committed mostly on Congress's political opponents and the media. The former were jailed and the latter were subjected to censorship. This was a political battle fought for power, which broadly did not touch citizens. The Indian middle class is usually willing to side with a dictator and was generally on Indira's side. It has no bad memories of Emergency.

The next period of agitation came a decade after Emergency ended and this was Mandal. But just before

Mandal, there was an agitation in Gujarat (I was now living in Surat at the time) in 1985. This was against reservations and the urban middle class, including my friends, went door to door spreading the message against Dalits. Of course, the protesters were all Savarna. As usually happens in Gujarat, this agitation turned into a riot and for no reason Muslims were punished.

A few years after that Mandal erupted. There were two sorts of protesters, those for and those against the reservations. Because Mandal empowered savarnas (many Indians do not realise that the C in OBC stands for class and not caste and that peasant shudras possess *varna*) they were able to mass mobilise in a way that dalits could not. And again, the upper castes protested the fact that their monopoly was being threatened. One individual, named Goswami, set himself on fire and became a sort of hero.

Around the same time we had another agitation, and this was the most dangerous of them all: Babri. In his autobiography L.K. Advani says that there was no violence on his Rath Yatra's route but all across India neighbourhoods were in flames and Muslims were again being punished. Two thousand Indians died after the BJP pulled down the mosque. The agitation that

preceded the vandalism was long and sustained but it was not like the current one and we will get to why that is so.

You see, all the agitations in India have been for personal reasons. The Mandal and Mandir agitators were agitating for themselves. Whether or not one agrees with reservations, the fact is that both sides in those agitations were standing up for their own benefits.

There has never been a sustained mass movement in favour of the constitution before this one. Irom Sharmila was an individual on a long protest in support of constitutionalism and human rights. This is millions of Indians standing up for values rather than an individual gain.

Many of the protesters (like me) have no interest in bringing down or damaging the government. It is elected and it will serve out its term and if Mr Modi wins again then he will serve out that third term too. That is not the object of this agitation and it is not our concern. What is being protested and what is being sought to be rolled back is the legislation that is patently discriminatory and violates India's constitution and treaties and agreements that India has signed on to internationally. It is true that many of the protesters are Muslims who are afraid that their

rights are going to be taken away from them. Their fear is legitimate. But even here they are not asking for anything more than they already have. They do not want reservations or a temple and have no other demand than they not be harassed. This is why this protest is unique and this is why this protest has for the first time made this government uncertain and doubtful of what to do next. It is not in full control of the events that will follow and that is worrying.

This is the reason why the world is taking notice and has put the Modi government under pressure. It is not only Mahathir Mohamed and US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal who are telling Mr Modi to stop what he is doing in Kashmir and on citizenship. India presently has no defence against the accusation that it is bullying its own citizens.

It is only the recognition of the fact that this is a moral and legitimate agitation and a rollback of its legislation and proposed survey that will bring an end to the protests. One hopes that the Prime Minister and the home minister, who are both among the sharpest political minds in the world, understand that and do the right thing.

*Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist*

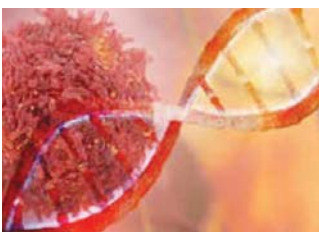


## IN BRIEF



### Early, heavy grass use linked to worse driving performance

**HEAVY MARIJUANA** users who picked up the habit before age 16 have impaired driving skills even when they're not high, a small study suggests. But chronic cannabis consumption starting later in life was not associated with worse performance behind the wheel, Dr. Staci A. Gruber, director of the Marijuana Investigations for Neuroscientific Discovery Programme at McLean Hospital in Belmont, Massachusetts, and her colleagues found. "This is not surprising to us at all, and really just underscores what we've already seen," Gruber told Reuters Health in a phone interview. "Earlier onset of the use of any substance is more likely to confer a greater risk of problems later." Eleven US states and Washington, DC, have legalised adult marijuana use, while 33 states have medical marijuana programs, Gruber and her team note in their report in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. Research on cannabis and driving has focused on acute intoxication, with some studies but not others showing that people drive more slowly when high. Studies looking at cannabis intoxication and car crashes have also had mixed results. To investigate whether heavy cannabis use might have residual effects on driving performance, the authors had 17 non-cannabis-using healthy participants and 28 chronic cannabis users complete a 10-minute, 4.2-mile driving simulation test. The cannabis users were instructed to abstain for at least 12 hours beforehand. Participants ranged in age between about 18 and 28 years old. Half of the cannabis-using group had begun heavy use before age 16. The early-use group had more crashes, missed more stop signs and red lights, and spent more time driving over the speed limit than the control group. However, there were no differences in any measure of driving performance between the participants who started using cannabis when they were older and the control group of non-users. — *Reuters*



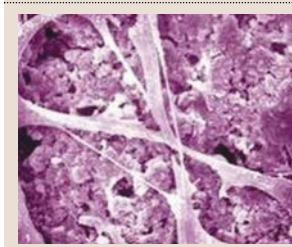
### Researchers find traces of Scurvy in Canada

**Washington:** In a recent study, researchers have found traces of a disease known as Scurvy in Canada. The debilitating condition is remembered as a disease of pirates. Scurvy, which is caused by Vitamin C deficiency, can result in bruising, weakness, anaemia, gum disease, haemorrhage, tooth loss, and even death if undiagnosed and untreated. The study was published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. McMaster University researchers surveyed the data of patients of Hamilton's two hospital systems over nine years and found 52 with low Vitamin C levels. This included 13 patients who could be diagnosed as having scurvy and an additional 39 who tested positive for scurvy but did not have documented symptoms. Among those with scurvy, some were related to alcohol use disorder or to bariatric surgery but the majority were related to other causes of malnutrition such as persistent vomiting, purposeful dietary restrictions, mental illness, social isolation and dependence on others for food. According to John Neary, the senior author of the study, "Scurvy is seen as a disease irrelevant to the modern world, but it still exists, and clinicians caring for at-risk patients should be aware of it and know how to diagnose it." — *ANI*

## Can be used to treat bones broken so severely that body can't repair itself Artificial muscle turn stem cells into bone

**Washington, Jan. 18:** In a breakthrough invention, scientists have developed a polymer sheet that mimics muscles and has the ability to turn stem cells into bones. Stem cells are special in the sense that they can differentiate themselves into different types of cells, for instance, muscle cells, cartilage, or bone cells. Just like the body, they are part of, stem cells sense what happens around them and react accordingly. For decades, researchers have been learning how to steer this differentiation process by changing the cells' environment. The knowledge acquired is already being used in tissue engineering, in other words, to generate substitute materials that restore or maintain damaged biological tissues. The study was published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

### A big breakthrough



► Stem cells from a patient's bone marrow could be cultured on the sheet and adaptively wrap around the bone during an operation. The previously 'trained' cells could then directly strengthen the bones.

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Now, researchers from the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht (HZG), the Berlin-Brandenburg Centre for Regenerative Therapies, the Freie Universität Berlin and the Helmholtz Virtual Institute for Multifunctional Biomaterials in medicine have used a dynamic scaffold. The researchers took a polymer sheet that acts like an artificial muscle. The sheet has an unusual property in that it is

trained to reversibly morph when exposed to repeated temperature changes. The researchers simply moulded a grid onto the underside of the sheet and programmed it to stretch as the temperature went from body temperature (37 degrees Celsius) to 10 degrees Celsius and to contract when re-heated. They then seeded the sheet with stem cells, and carefully observed the changing shape of the

gridded sheet and cells. With the help of this "artificial muscle", the scientists could use one physical signal — the temperature change — to simultaneously send a second mechanical signal to the stem cells. With these synchronised stimuli it is possible to encourage the stem cells to turn themselves into bone cells. According to professor Andreas Lendlein, author of the paper and head of the HZG's Institute of

Biomaterial Science in Teltow, "Our polymer actuator sheet has a so-called shape-memory function. In our experiments, this allows it to act like a transducer, with which we can effectively instruct the cells to do as we wish."

"We found that the changes in temperature, combined with the repeated stretching motion of the film were enough to encourage the stem cells to differentiate into bone cells. The programmed polymer sheets could, for example, later be used to treat bones broken so severely that the body can't repair it by itself," Lendlein added.

Stem cells from a patient's bone marrow could be cultured on the sheet and adaptively wrap around the bone during an operation. The previously 'trained' cells could then directly strengthen the bones. — *ANI*

## Cows can talk to each other with distinctive moos

**Camden (Australia), Jan. 18:** In a surprising new study, scientists have discovered that cows are able to verbally communicate with each other through vocalisations. This research that got published last month in *Scientific Reports*, revealed that heifer cows of the Holstein-Friesian breed are able to talk to each other via their distinctive moos, reported Fox News.

Alexandra Green, along with her team used acoustic analysis programs to study 333 recorded samples of cow vocalisations. As reported by Fox News, it was revealed that cows can express certain emotions vocally, that include excitement, arousal, engagement and distress.

In a statement on the University of Sydney



website, Green said: "We found that cattle vocal individuality is relatively stable across different emotionally loaded farming contexts."

She added that "positive contexts were during oestrus (heat) and anticipation of feeding. Negative contexts were when cows were denied feed access and during physical and visual isolation from the rest of the herd." Green hopes that the awareness of these vocalisations farmers will be able to better understand and appropriately respond to the mental state of cows. — *ANI*

## Alcohol intake may lead to changes in brain function

**Washington, Jan. 18:** As people are already aware of the harmful effects of alcohol addiction, and the habit leading to many health problems, a new study has linked excessive alcohol consumption to the brain and its functions. A new study has found that alcohol addiction and abstinence both may lead to a restructuring of the brain or cause changes in its functioning.

The findings, published in the online journal *PNAS*, identified several regions in the brain, which were previously unrecognised, as new research targets for better understanding and treatment of alcohol dependence in humans.

"The neuroscience of addiction has made tremendous progress, but the focus has always been on a limited number of brain circuits and neurotransmitters, primarily dopaminergic neurons,

### Fear factor

► The findings further undermine the idea that addiction to alcohol is simply a psychological condition or consequence of lifestyle

the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex," said senior author Olivier George, associate professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine.

"Research groups have been fighting for years about whether 'their' brain circuit is the key to addiction. Our results confirm these regions are important, but the fact that we see such a massive remodelling of the functional brain architecture was a real shock," George added.

The researcher also said that the findings further undermine the idea that

addiction to alcohol is simply a psychological condition or consequence of lifestyle. "You would be surprised at how prevalent this view remains," he said.

"The brain-wide remodelling of the functional architecture observed here is not 'normal.' It is not observed in a naive animal. It is not observed in an animal that drinks recreationally. It is only observed in animals with a history of alcohol dependence and it is massive," George added.

Such a condition or a decrease in brain modularity may lead to numerous brain disorders, including Alzheimer's disease, traumatic brain injury and seizure disorders, the researcher noted.

Brain modularity is the theory according to which there are functionally specialised regions in the brain responsible for different, specific cognitive processes. — *ANI*

## Vacuum suction units that defy gravity developed

**Washington, Jan. 18:** Your dreams of scaling high rise buildings may soon come true as scientists are on their way to develop a highly effective suction unit that can be used to latch on to rough and highly textured surfaces.

This new invention may find applications in the development of climbing robots and robotic arms with grasping capabilities.

Traditional methods of vacuum suction and previous vacuum suction devices cannot maintain a grip on rough surfaces due to vacuum leakage, which leads to suction failure.

Researchers Xin Li and Kaige Shi have come up with a zero-pressure difference (ZPD) method to enhance the development of vacuum suction units.

Their method has managed to overcome leakage

► The new invention may find applications in the development of climbing robots and robotic arms with grasping capabilities

limitations by using a high-speed rotating water ring between the surface and suction cup to maintain the vacuum. They discuss their work in this week's *Physics of Fluids*, from AIP Publishing.

"There are many applications of our design, but we think the wall-climbing robot will be the most useful," said Li.

"Compared to other wall-climbing robots, the robot with our ZPD-based suction unit achieves surprising improvement in performance."

The centrifugal force of the rotating water eliminates the pressure differ-

ence at the boundary of the vacuum zone to prevent vacuum leakage, thus maintaining a high vacuum pressure inside the suction cup.

Their ZPD suction unit is energy-efficient, smaller and lighter than traditional suction units.

The researchers tested their unit with three different suction sizes and applications: on a robotic arm to grip and handle objects, on a hexapod wall-climbing robot and as a Spider-Man-like wall-climbing device.

"The next step in this research is to cut down water consumption. If the water consumption can be reduced, the suction unit will work for a very long time with little water so that the wall-climbing robot could carry its own water instead of being connected to a supply," said Li. — *ANI*

## Fish oil booster tied to sperm health

LINDA CARROLL  
WASHINGTON, JAN. 18

Men who consume fish oil supplements, which are high in omega-3 fatty acids, might get a boost in fertility, a new study suggests.

After examining data from nearly 1,700 young men, researchers determined that fish oil supplement consumption was associated with a higher sperm count, larger testes and improved levels of hormones that contribute to male fertility, according to the report published in *JAMA Network Open*.

While all men could benefit from adding omega-3 fatty acids to their diets, the biggest impact would be in those with poor sperm quality, said study co-author Tina Kold Jensen, a professor at Rigshospitalet and the University of Southern Denmark, in Odense.

That's because these types of fatty acids are essential to fertility,



► While all men could benefit from adding omega-3 fatty acids to their diets, the biggest impact would be in those with poor sperm quality

► Similarly, compared to those who did not take supplements, testicular size in men who consumed fish oil on fewer than 60 days was 0.8 mL larger and among those who consumed it for 60 days or more it was 1.5 mL larger.

Jensen said in an email. "The composition of the sperm cell membrane with rich fatty acid content is critical for proper sperm function," Jensen explained. "The sperm cell membrane plays a critical role in the key fertilisation events. Omega-3 in the sperm membrane increases as the sperm matures and it cannot be synthesised in humans and needs to come from diet."

To explore the possibility that fish oil and other nutrients might impact male fertility, Jensen and her colleagues approached men between January 1,

2012 and December 31, 2017 who were undergoing physical exams as part of Denmark's military conscription procedures.

The men were invited to participate in a study of testicular function and those who signed on were given an appointment for an examination and compensated with \$74.23.

During their appointments, the men filled out a questionnaire, underwent a physical exam, delivered a semen sample and had blood drawn. They were asked about diet, vitamins or dietary supplements, lifestyle and health issues,

and specifically about testicular health issues, such as inguinal hernias, and about sexually-transmitted diseases. The men were also asked about alcohol consumption, tobacco and marijuana use, and whether their mothers had smoked during pregnancy.

When Jensen and her colleagues analysed their data, they found that men who had consumed fish oil supplements on fewer than 60 days in the past three months had semen volume that was 0.38 mL higher than those who took no supplements. Men who consumed fish oil on 60 or more days during that period had semen volume that was 0.64 mL higher than men not using the supplements.

Similarly, compared to those who did not take supplements, testicular size in men who consumed fish oil on fewer than 60 days was 0.8 mL larger and among those who consumed it for 60 days or more it was 1.5 mL larger. — *Reuters*

## 'Dancing dragon' shows feathers grew differently on dinosaurs and birds

WILL DUNHAM  
WASHINGTON

An exquisite fossil of a fierce little Chinese dinosaur dubbed the "dancing dragon" that lived 120 million years ago — an older cousin of the Velociraptor — is showing scientists that feathers grew differently on dinosaurs than on birds.

The two-legged Cretaceous Period dinosaur, called Wulong bohaiensis, was a ban-tamweight meat-eater — a bit bigger than a crow — residing in a lakeside environment, researchers said. It possessed a scaly face, a mouth full of pointy teeth and one par-

ticularly dangerous toe claw, and probably hunted small mammals, lizards, birds and fish.

Wulong's fossil, unearthed in Liaoning Province in northeastern China, includes a complete skeleton as well as soft tissues like feathers rarely preserved in such detail. Its long arms and legs each had sets of feathers that looked similar to those on bird wings, while most of the rest of its body was covered by fluffy filaments.

At the end of its long, bony tail — fused into a stiff rod — were two very long feathers.

"The specimen of Wulong is a gorgeous fos-

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sil. With the feathers and claws, I think it would have been beautiful and just a little bit scary. I'd love to see one alive," said San Diego Natural History Museum palaeontologist Ashley Poust, who led the research published this week in the *Anatomical Record* journal.

"I don't think we know yet how it used its feath-

ers," Poust said. "It seems likely that they helped with temperature regulation and signalling to other animals, but what this would have looked like and how much these functions mattered remains unclear."

Birds evolved from small feathered dinosaurs roughly 150 million years ago. But there were many feathered dinosaurs that did not fly, like Wulong. Scientists are eager to understand the plumage differences between birds and these feathered dinosaurs.

A close examination of bones showed this Wulong individual was about a year old, a juvenile still

growing.

"Living birds shoot up to adult size very quickly, mainly as a way of getting strong enough to fly as soon as they can. But they may delay getting their adult feathers for a long time. Gulls, for example, don't look like adults for three or four years even though they learn to fly in only three months," Poust said.

The young Wulong appeared to have an adult's plumage.

"Here is an animal that has all kinds of signals of being a juvenile, outside its bones, inside its bones, in its joints," Poust said. "And it has long, isolated plumes extending from its



### Novel find

► Some bacteria become resistant to these antibiotics, allowing them to grow further and take over from non-resistant ones. The use of antibiotics, therefore, causes more and more bacteria to become resistant to antibiotics.

with antibiotics, and quickly so," Steenackers explained. "Moreover, we showed those bacteria that were resistant to the new antibacterial substance became outnumbered by non-resistant ones.

A resistant bacterium will still be able to produce slime and share this with the non-resistant bacteria in the group. However, this costs energy, while the non-resistant bacteria benefit from the protection free of charge. As a result, non-resistant bacteria can grow faster than the resistant ones, so that their share compared to the resistant bacteria increases.

"In contrast to traditional antibiotics, this substance, therefore, does not cause selection for, but against resistance. Antimicrobial treatments that stop bacteria from working together can, therefore, be a viable solution to the current problem of antibiotic resistance," said Steenackers. "Our aim is to introduce these new antimicrobials into clinical practice," explained Steenackers. — *ANI*

## New strategy to fight antibiotic resistance

**Washington, Jan. 18:** While traditional antibiotics are known to serve the purpose of killing or reducing the activity of individual bacteria, some bacteria become resistant to these antibiotics. In recent research, bio-science engineers have developed a new antibacterial strategy that weakens bacteria by preventing them from cooperating.

Some bacteria become resistant to these antibiotics, allowing them to grow further and take over from non-resistant ones. The use of antibiotics, therefore, causes more and more bacteria to become resistant to antibiotics.

The researchers showed that blocking slime production of salmonella bacteria weakens the bacterial community, making it easier to remove. They used a chemical, antibacterial substance that was previously developed at KU Leuven. The findings were published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

According to professor Steenackers of the MICA Lab, lead author of the study, "Without their protective slime layer, the bacteria can be washed away by mechanical forces and killed more easily by antibiotics, disinfectants or the immune system."

The scientists then compared the development of bacterial resistance to the new substance with that of classical antibiotics in a so-called evolution experiment. Evolution experiments are used to see how microorganisms adapt to a certain situation.

"We saw that the bacteria, as a group, did not become resistant to our antibacterial substance, while this did happen





Family, and filial and sibling bonding is a strong theme in all of journalist-novelist Ann Patchett's works, including *The Patron Saint of Liars*, *Bel Canto* and the newest *The Dutch House*. Her mother was novelist Jeanne Ray.

# Books

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THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 19 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI

# When Taslima met the characters she wrote in *Lajja*



Neha Bhatt  
diary

A literature festival on the beach: if it sounds like a balmy, charming setting, it is. With the waves crashing in the background, the Kerala Literature festival (Jan 16-19) got underway in Kozhikode this weekend, teeming with locals and those in the city for the annual event. Spread over five roomy tents set up along the shore, a range of panel discussions unfolded in English and Malayalam from 10 am to 8 pm, organised by DC Kizhakemuri Foundation. "Are Literary Festivals Overrated?" seemed like an appropriately tongue-in-cheek conversation to have on Day 1, led by festival director K. Satchidanandan. Going by the number of people who turned up to listen to authors such as Devdutt Pattanaik (on "Yoga and How to Become Rich" and "Gender and Sexuality"), Taslima Nasreen (on "In Exile: A Writer's Journey") and Ramchandra Guha (on "Patriotism Vs Jingoism"), it's easy to see the growing popularity of literary festivals, especially in smaller cities.

Many of the young attendees, book in hand, and older delegates, toddler in arms, were particularly moved by Nasreen's talk on subjects close to her heart: religious fundamentalism, women's rights and freedom of expression. "There has to be a separation of state and religion and a separation of religion and education," she said referring to the current political climate, though she refused to respond to questions about the controversial Citizen Amendment Act, which she said she wasn't qualified to speak about. This year, the author has two books coming out: a memoir on her childhood, and the sequel to *Shame*, titled *Shameless*. "It's about how I as a writer meet my creation in Kolkata when the family that escaped Bangladesh at the end of *Shame* land up at my doorstep and what happens then. It is a feminist book," she revealed in an interview after her session.

With a special focus on environment and climate change, several conversations at KLF 2020 were dedicated to deconstructing the global climate crisis and possible solutions. "One of the reasons we fail to talk convincingly about climate change is that we present it as something 'out there'. We need to make it clear it's linked to our daily decisions — such as walking or driving — and not talk about it in terms of abstractions," said climate change policy expert Navroz K. Dubash at a discussion on "Saving The Earth:

**'One of the reasons we fail to talk convincingly about climate change is that we present it as something "out there". We need to make it clear it's linked to our daily decisions — such as walking or driving — and not talk about it in terms of abstractions,' said policy expert Navroz K. Dubash.**

Science and Rationality in a Time of Madness", moderated by Pranay Lal, who works in public health and environment. The idea that we need to emit to progress is getting weaker, Dubash pointed out, while environment writer Prerna Bindra warned against the ongoing "greenwash" and recommended we rethink how we implement renewable energy. "Planting trees

the sunny afternoon melted into the evening and the crowd swelled, *Ikigai*'s co author Francesc Miralles from Spain took the stage in conversation with C. Balagopal, talking about the process of finding your *ikigai* (roughly translated to "reason for being"). But what if one doesn't want to deconstruct life into binaries, such as being happy or sad, one audience member wanted to know. "If you are happy, don't question why you are happy. It's important to find your *ikigai* only if you feel lost or empty," stressed Miralles. A person who lives a long life is likely to have many *ikigais*, and it's okay to change one's purpose and passion when you feel the need to move on, he added. "For me, in my 20s, my *ikigai* was to teach German, then to travel, be a publisher, and now it is to help people find their purpose," he said.

As the sun set on day 2, histori-

## KERALA LITERATURE FESTIVAL 2020

does not make up for cutting down trees elsewhere. You can't compensate for forests which have taken years to evolve, with its own rich, biodiverse web of life. We need to question the logic of installing windmills by destroying sensitive habitats, in places such as the Western Ghats," she said.

At the well-stocked bookstall at the venue, copies of the global bestseller, *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret To A Long and Happy Life* stood tall among other books. As

an and author Ramchandra Guha's impassioned speech on "Patriotism vs Jingoism" drowned out any other chatter on the beach. "The Gandhian model of patriotism works at multiple levels; it starts from your home, street, city, state and then the country. It is not about standing up for the national anthem," he said, adding that while patriotism is suffused by love and understanding, jingoism is driven by hatred and revenge. He spoke about the reasons behind the rise



Ramachandra Guha at KLF on Friday

## A book is born by chance



Paro Anand

essay

Sometimes the writing of a book is a deliberate process. But sometimes, it is the dance of chance that births it. *A Very Naughty Dragon* (Scholastic India) by Paro Anand and Sarah Rose is one such. It came out of the thin winter air last year.

A book I had written (*A Very Naughty Bear*, Scholastic India) had proved to be quite a little hit. The publisher and I met at a literary event and we thought this may make for an interesting series. The idea being that different animals would feature in each title. My dear friend, Jaya Bhattacharji Rose's 9-year-old daughter, a voracious reader who accompanies her mother to as many literary events as she can, was also present. And chance made her move.

I turned to Sarah Rose and asked her which animal I should feature in the next book. Her immediate response was, "Komodo Dragon".

Unusual choice for a kid, right? But that's Sarah for you. I told her that while the dragons fascinated me, I didn't know enough about them to launch into a book. Promptly, she replied, "I am good at research and you are good at writing." And just like that, a collaboration was born. We exchanged matching notebooks — Scholastic India had given out these notebooks with Siddhartha Sharma's tenth anniversary edition cover of *The Grasshopper's Run*. And Sarah and I were off.

Sarah buried herself in dragon facts. And shot them at me. She came over to my house, gave me enough fodder to get started and disappeared to play with my dogs and rabbits.

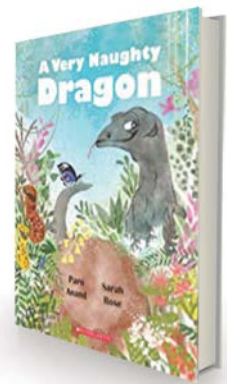
I thought that it was now my turn to take over the reins. Nothing of the sort. Sarah had ideas and opinions on the stories (we'd initially decided on three dragon stories in keeping with the Bear book). Her ideas were so unexpected that we had to write a fourth story. Like the human character Lavender Blue being a Papua New Guinean. Who would have thought, right? Not an answer you'd expect from a 9-year-old! Over meetings and Skype and inter-city phone calls, we had so much fun. Like the dragon being named Draco because his father loved the character from Harry Potter. He'd sneakily watched it while it was being screened in a village. But perhaps, the most original was Sarah's idea that Draco would eat up his very naggy parents. I had to sadly edit that out because it would alarm parents. You know how they are, they think kids will do anything they've read in a book!

A year later, with fabulous illustrations by S.M. Studio, our labour of love and fun was born. Chance continued her dance. *A Very Naughty Dragon* is the showpiece to celebrate Scholastic India's 22 years in India. It also marks the 100-year celebrations of Scholastic Inc., established in New York in 1920.

Our book is sweet and fun. But it is also a strong book of co-operation and hope and friendship between those you may not expect to be friends. An important, subliminal note for our times. One that children need to be reminded of.

And so, chance danced as an avid young reader was born into a writer. An oldie like me got a brand-new experience. And a 100-year-old publisher that has a strong belief in mentorship took the leap.

And I think a Star was born.



A VERY NAUGHTY  
DRAGON

By Paro Anand  
and Sarah Rose  
Scholastic India, ₹250

# An outsider chronicles a resilient Kabul



Sushila Ravindranath

review

Afghanistan has seen decades of violence, economic uncertainty and political instability. Just when things seem to be improving a setback happens. The US Taliban conflicts continue. It is, therefore, not surprising that when Taran N. Khan goes to Kabul, the country's capital to teach journalism, write and make films, she is told

not to walk on the streets of the city. Walking is what she ends up doing. The result is *A Shadow City*, helping us discover the city and its people. It is not the Kabul we think we know from what we read from news stories.

Her father's family are Pathans and Taran grew up in Aligarh, a university town near Delhi. Her grandfather, a scholar whose family moved to Bombay before Independence, told her stories of Kabul and exposed her to Persian poetry. Even before Taran goes to Kabul she feels an affinity towards it.

Taran arrives in Kabul in early 2006, five years after the overthrow of Taliban government by the US-led coalition forces. This is a period when there is an air of peace and optimism. She quotes a description of the city she reads some years after she arrives. "Like some people, certain cities seem to suffer from amnesia. Not that they have no past. Rather this past, no matter how glorious it may have been, will have left so few reminders, so few architectural vestiges, so few visible traces, that it remains something obscure, if not completely invisible." In this amnesiac city, Taran finds a way to exhume histo-

ry and excavate the present. There are cities within the city and walking is one way of discovering them.

In 2006, Kabul is rapidly expanding. The exodus of Afghans which began in the 1970s is being reversed. Nearly three million refugees are returning for the opportunities and the relative security the capital was perceived to provide.

It was a year of cautious optimism. On the slopes of Kabul's mountains thousands of families built and rebuilt their damaged homes. Taran says Kabul was spreading. Although there was evidence of town planning once, the current growth was haphazard. She recalls a fraught walk one afternoon with a male colleague to a house in an informal hillside residence. "To get to the house my colleague had guided me along a path marked by white stones indicating the area that had been cleared of mines, or unexploded ordnance. This was the legacy of decades of conflict rendering Kabul one of the heavily mined cities in the world. 'Red stones mean danger,' I repeated in my head nervously as I walked on the path dozens of family took every day. 'White stones mean safety.'"

Not all her walks were so fraught: "Before dinner we walked to the bakery down the street returning with warm bread tucked between newspapers, crisp and with black seeds sprinkled on the top, fragrant enough to speed our steps home."

The road to Kabul is made

up of stories, says Taran. During one of her trips to the city, Taran forgets to bring her usual stock of reading material without which she is lost. "What began as a light-heartedly desperate search for books to fill my evenings turned into a series of walks through spaces that were shaped by the written word." Walking showed her a way to read the city just as reading guided her walks through the city.

She discovers various ways of finding books as she wanders through Kabul. Kabul's chic coffee shops where patrons were offered the pick of whatever books they liked off the shelves and were requested in turn to leave behind what books they could spare when they departed. There were books by war reporters, war photographers, glossy *Lonely Planet* guides and, predictably, many volumes of *Kite Runner*.

*Baburnama*, one of the books she is looking for, was introduced to her by her grandfather. She finds it on the shelves of the Shah M. Book Co, the iconic corner bookshop of Kabul. The owner, Shah Muhammad Rais, tells her that his bookshop has remained open through each of Kabul's shifting eras, Communist, Mujahideen, Taliban, ISAF.

Taran finds unlikely titles in a small stall manned by Arash Ahmady, who works in a hospital and spends weekends selling books. She finds, among others, bound in soft blue leather a biography of M.K. Gandhi. In 1990 when the civil war moved to

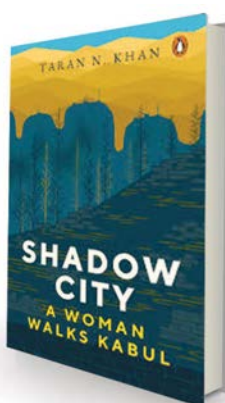
Kabul, families who could leave did. Most of the books in the stall are from embassies and cultural centres that hastily shut down.

Taran also discovers graveyards. It is a city where the dead are as much a part of the landscape as the living. There are graves with simple markers, graves with tombstones, graves for foreigners, some with hippie stone memorials. A beautifully carved headstone declares Billy Barman loves Joan, Jade, Hassan, Cالدonia and Digger.

Taran not only walks, but she also talks, visits and uses cars and jeeps when she can't walk. On a happier note, she meets a filmmaker who has continued to make Afghan romances during all the years of war and strife. She discovers the Afghan's love for Indian films. She also witnesses budding romances in cafes and extravagant weddings in huge halls.

Kabul has had many false starts over the years. People who come with the hope of a new dawn give up and leave the city. Taran's last visit is in 2014. *The Shadow City* is an unromantic but intensely felt account of her experiences and insights. However, she does not always reveal what is going on in her mind. As she says in the beginning walking in Kabul is like looking through a kaleidoscope. There it is. There it is not.

**Sushila Ravindranath** is a senior journalist and author of *Surge*: Tamil Nadu's Growth Story



SHADOW CITY: A  
WOMAN WALKS  
IN KABUL

by Taran Khan  
Penguin, ₹599





## No respite

Pak SC to entertain Pervez Musharraf's plea only after he surrenders to the law: Report

### BRIEF

## Four dead in Shabaab bombing

**Mogadishu:** Four people were killed in a car bombing in Somalia on Saturday that apparently targeted Turkish engineers working on a road near the capital Mogadishu, police and witnesses said. The attack was claimed by the Al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab, which has stepped up its activities in Somalia and neighbouring Kenya in recent weeks. The bomb struck near the town of Afgoye about 30 km west of the capital, killing four and wounding several including Turkish nationals, said local police officer Abdurahman Adan. "The blast was huge, it destroyed a container used by the Turkish engineers who work on the Afgoye road construction," said a witness Muhidin Yusuf.

## Sri Lanka lifts ban on drones

**Colombo:** Sri Lankan authorities have lifted a ban on drones that was imposed after the Easter Sunday attacks that left 263 dead in the island nation. The lifting of the ban comes amid a growing demand for flying drones from media institutions, foreigners, wedding videographers and photographers, and commercial advertising companies. However, drone operations will continue to be restricted in dangerous and restricted flying zones. All civil drone operators will be required to obtain approval from the defence ministry to fly drones, the ministry said on its website Saturday. The ministry said the ban was lifted on the instructions of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Authorities imposed the ban in May, citing security concerns.



## Mexico ramps up border security

**Ciudad Hidalgo (Mexico):** Mexico deployed around 200 National Guard officers to the Guatemalan border on Friday in an effort to block a huge migrant caravan traversing Central America towards the United States. A group of more than 3,000 people, mainly from Honduras and El Salvador, crossed into Guatemala on Wednesday. According to Guatemala's new President Alejandro Giammattei, Mexico has vowed to use "everything at its disposal" to stop the convoy from entering its territory. The Mexican troops were stationed at the town of Ciudad Hidalgo, one of the main crossing points into the country from its southern neighbour. Earlier in the day, Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador offered 4,000 jobs to members of the caravan in an attempt to dissuade them from travelling on to the United States. Mexico has come under pressure from President Donald Trump to slow a surge of undocumented migrants who arrived at the US-Mexican border last year. Trump threatened in May to impose tariffs on Mexico if the government did not do more to stop them.

## SCHOOL MEAL: TRUMP IN A PIZZA PUSH

**Washington:** The Trump administration took further steps on Friday towards rolling back healthier standards for school lunches in America championed by Michelle Obama, proposing rules to allow more pizza, meat and potatoes over fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains. The new proposals would allow schools more flexibility, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) said in a statement, adding: "Because they know their children best." Brandon Lipps, a USDA deputy under secretary, outlined new menu standards drawn up by the Food and Nutrition Service agency. They would allow schools to cut the amount of vegetables and fruits required at school lunch and breakfasts while giving them greater scope to sell more pizzas, hamburgers and french fries to students. The agency is responsible for administering nutritional programmes that feed nearly 30 million students at 99,000 schools, the *Washington Post* reported.

# Be careful, Trump warns Iran

## US Prez hits out at Khamenei over remarks slamming West



President Donald Trump with First Lady Melania Trump and their son Barron at the White House as they head to Marine One for a trip to Florida. — AP

## House chief threatens to subpoena Pompeo over Iran policy hearing

**Washington:** The Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee threatened to subpoena the nation's top diplomat to testify about the Trump administration's policy in Iran and Iraq. Rep. Eliot Engel, a New York Democrat, requested that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo appear before the committee on Wednesday, January 29. Pompeo did not appear at a hearing on the same matter earlier in

the week after being invited. "As the Administration's public face of this policy, your participation at this hearing is necessary so that the committee can conduct appropriate oversight and consider legislative alternatives related to the use of military force as well as the strategy and aims of American policy in Iran, Iraq, and the broader Middle East," Engel wrote in a letter.

## 8 in 10 Black voters say Trump is racist, new poll result shows

**Washington:** Black Americans are overwhelmingly dissatisfied with President Donald Trump's job performance, and a majority say he's made racism a bigger problem in the country, according to a new poll. The findings are part of a new *Washington Post/Ipsos* survey conducted earlier this month and released on Friday. According to the poll, 90% of black Americans disapprove of how

■ **A MAJOR** anti-abortion group has announced a \$52 million budget in battleground states to reelect President Donald Trump and an anti-abortion Senate majority in 2020. The group Susan B. Anthony List and its super PAC Women Speak Out PAC unveiled a campaign that "will include boots on the ground and digital ads"

Trump has handled himself in office. Plus, more than eight in 10 black Americans believe that Trump is a racist and that he's made racism an even bigger problem in the US. Three-quarters of those polled said that the things Trump is doing as president are bad for African Americans. Those findings are in contrast to Trump's statements on his accomplishments for the African-Americans.

# Taliban: Deal with US soon

**Kabul, Jan. 18:** The Taliban are aiming to reach a withdrawal agreement with the US by the end of January and are prepared to "scale down" military operations ahead of signing the deal, according to their chief spokesman.

The statement by Suhail Shaheen to Pakistani daily *Dawn* comes as the group and the US held discussions in Doha this week, after insurgent sources said they had offered to initiate a brief ceasefire. "We have agreed to scale down military operations in days leading up to the signing of the peace agreement with the United States," Shaheen told *Dawn* in a report published Saturday.

He added that the Taliban were "optimistic" a deal with Washington could be signed before the end of the month and that the reduction in fighting across the country would also include the targeting of Afghan forces. "It's now a matter of days," said the spokesman.

Washington has for weeks been calling on the militants to reduce violence, posing it as a condition for resuming for-

■ We have agreed to scale down military operations in days leading up to the signing of the peace agreement with the United States.

— SUHAIL SHAHEEN  
Taliban chief spokesman

mal negotiations on an agreement that would see US troops begin to leave the country in return for security guarantees, after a near two-decade fight.

The Taliban and the US had been negotiating the deal for a year and were on the brink of an announcement in September 2019 when President Donald Trump abruptly declared the process "dead", citing Taliban violence.

Talks were later restarted between the two sides in December in Qatar, but were paused again following an attack near the Bagram military base in Afghanistan, which is run by the US.

Any agreement with the Taliban is expected to have two main pillars - an American withdrawal from Afghanistan, and a commitment by the insurgents not to offer sanctuary to jihadists - and would ultimately have to be given final approval by Trump. — AFP

# Pak, US discuss Afghanistan, Iran

**Washington, Jan. 18:** Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has stressed on Islamabad's commitment toward "security and stability" in South Asia as he met US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo here and held wide-ranging talks on bilateral issues, the situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Qureshi called on Pompeo on Friday during his two-day visit to the US. He is scheduled to meet US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien.

On Thursday, he met lawmakers at the US Capitol. "In my meeting today with US Secretary of State @SecPompeo, discussed engagement between Pakistan and US, its mutual benefit, along with it being a factor for stability in South Asia. Exchanged how stronger trade & investment is imp for an enduring partnership," Qureshi said in a tweet after the meeting.

On the Afghan peace process, the two leaders termed it as a "shared responsibility" and spoke about the importance of US-Pakistan cooperation to bring peace in the

■ **POMPEO, IN** a tweet, said they "discussed countering Iranian aggression, the Afghan peace process, trade ties, and regional stability".

region.

"The convergence between Pakistan & US stands as a unique opp for peace in Afghanistan, ultimately a shared responsibility," he said in another tweet.

They also discussed about the latest developments in the Middle East arising out of the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani by a US drone strike and the Gulf country reiterating with hitting the US air bases in Iraq.

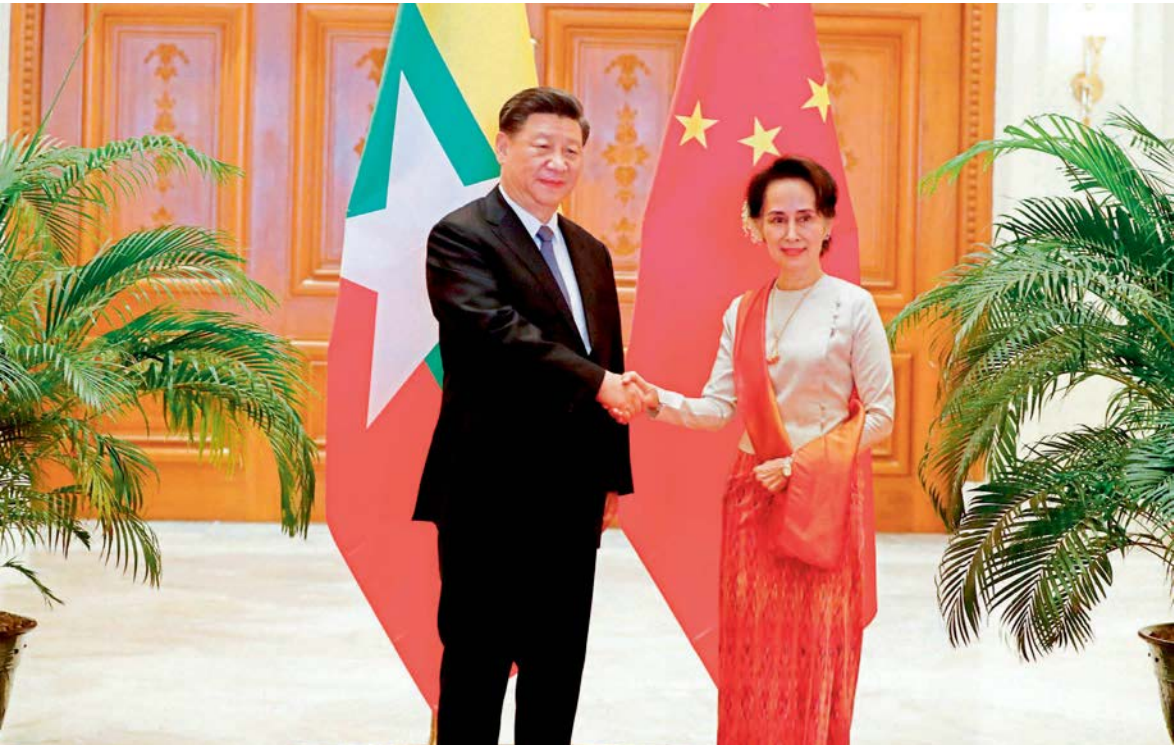
"Discussed recent developments in ME and reiterated Pakistan will continue to play part for peace in entire region. We are committed to security & stability," Qureshi said.

Pompeo, in a tweet, said they "discussed countering Iranian aggression, the Afghan peace process, trade ties, and regional stability". — PTI



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in Washington — AFP

## Xi stands with Myanmar



Chinese President Xi Jinping and Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi shake hands before a bilateral meeting at the Presidential Palace in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, on Saturday — AFP

## PRO-HAFTAR FORCES BLOCK OIL EXPORTS

**Tripoli, Jan. 18:** Forces loyal to military strongman Khalifa Haftar on Saturday blocked oil exports from Libya's main ports, the National Oil Company said, raising the stakes on the eve of international peace talks in Berlin.

The closure of Libya's "oil crescent" will cause the country's daily crude production to plunge from 1.3 million barrels to 500,000 barrels and cause losses of \$55 million a day, the firm warned.

The string of export hubs along Libya's northeastern coast has been controlled by Haftar since 2016.

A group close to Haftar had called for a blockade of the export terminals to protest a Turkish intervention against the strongman, who dominates eastern Libya.

Turkey has backed the Tripoli-based GNA, which is battling an offensive by Haftar's forces to seize the capital. Meanwhile in Berlin, UN's special envoy Ghassan Salame said that international players must stop meddling in the Libyan conflict. — AFP

■ Europe will encounter a fresh set of problems and threats if Libya's legitimate government falls.

— RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN  
Turkish President

# UK plans Brexit celebrations

**London, Jan. 18:** The British government has announced plans for special events on the night of January 31 when the country officially leaves the European Union but the country's treasury chief has admitted that some UK business sectors will suffer as a result.

Sajid Javid told the *Financial Times* in an interview Saturday that Britain's regulations will not be aligned with the EU in the future and that those changes may hurt some businesses.

Currently the EU is Britain's largest trading partner.

"There will not be alignment, we will not be a rule-taker, we will not be in the single market and we will not be in the customs union — and we will do this by the end of the

■ **Britain's** treasury chief Sajid Javid has said that the country's regulations will not be aligned with the EU in the future and that those changes may hurt some businesses

year," he said, referring to a deadline at the end of 2020 for conclusion of what are expected to be contentious trade talks with the then-27 member EU.

Britain will officially leave the EU bloc on the night of January 31, even though it will keep following EU rules for an 11-month transition period.

It will be the first nation ever to leave the bloc.

The British government

plans to mark the occasion with a series of upbeat events.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson plans to make a speech to the nation that night after holding a rare cabinet session in the north of England to emphasize his government's plan to spread opportunity to that economically beleaguered region.

The government also plans to mark Brexit by projecting a clock onto the prime minister's official residence at 10 Downing Street in London that will count down until 11 pm, when the break takes place. The entire government neighborhood of Whitehall is to be illuminated for the occasion as part of a light show, with Union flags flown on all the poles in Parliament Square. The government will also create a commemorative coin that will enter circulation that day.

But Johnson's Conservative government is no longer actively pushing a plan to have the familiar chiming of the Big Ben clock tower at Parliament sound at 11 pm despite a private fundraising push in support of activating the chiming, which are under repair.

Britain voted in a 2016 referendum to become the first nation to leave the 28-nation EU, but the process has moved more slowly than expected. A stalemate last year kept a withdrawal bill from passing, leading to a rare December election that gave Johnson's pro-Brexit Conservative Party a strong majority in Parliament. — AP

### LONG-TERM | PLAN

## Prez's actions seen as strategy to stay in power beyond 2024

# Putin's moves leave Oppn with few options

**Moscow, Jan. 18:** Russian President Vladimir Putin played it differently this time.

Instead of openly declaring plans to extend his rule like he did in 2011, Putin proposed constitutional amendments to appear to give more power to Russia's parliament.

Instead of announcing the move as a fait accompli, he said the people should vote and decide.

And then he executed a swift, unexpected reshuf-

fle of Russia's leadership, putting a low-profile official with no political aims in charge of the government.

Putin announced what many see as a strategy for staying in power well past the end of his term in 2024.

And the proposed constitutional reforms that might allow him to remain in charge as prime minister or as head of the State Council didn't elicit much public outrage.

Neither did the resigna-



Russian President Vladimir Putin presents flowers to Tatyana Yumasheva, first Russian President Boris Yeltsin's daughter, on her birthday, as Naina Yeltsina, widow of Yeltsin stands at right — AP

tion of Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's prime minister, whom Putin quickly replaced with the little-known tax chief, Mikhail Mishustin.

There was a smattering of calls for protest: One opposition supporter urged people to join his one-man picket in front of the Presidential Administration on Saturday, while another called for protesters to turn out against the "constitutional coup" at a Sunday rally in honour of

two slain activists. It was very different from what happened in 2011-2012, when efforts to engineer Putin's return to the presidency crushed Russian hopes for liberalization and sparked massive protests in Moscow.

In his speech Wednesday, Putin presented his plan to amend the constitution as a way to improve democracy. He also curtailed the authority of the president, who currently holds that power. — AP





Going green

Democratic presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg to push for new buildings to produce zero carbon emissions by 2025 and all new cars to be electric by 2035

BRIEF

SpaceX to destroy rocket

**Cape Canaveral:** Elon Musk's SpaceX is gearing up to destroy one of its own rockets on Saturday to test a crucial emergency abort system on an unmanned astronaut capsule, the company's final milestone test before flying NASA astronauts from US soil. Less than two minutes after liftoff from a launchpad in Florida, SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule will fire on-board thrusters to eject itself off a Falcon 9 rocket mid-air, simulating an emergency abort scenario that will prove it can return astronauts to safety. "I will tell you tomorrow will be an exciting day," Kathy Lueders, NASA's commercial crew program manager, told reporters on Friday.

Louvre reopens after strike

**Paris:** The Louvre in Paris, the world's most visited museum, reopened on Saturday after being shut down by workers striking over government plans to overhaul France's pension system. On Friday, hundreds of disappointed visitors had massed outside the Louvre, some hurling insults at strikers who had blocked the entrance. It was the first time since the strike began on December 5 that the museum had shut completely although it was forced to close some galleries last month. Union leaders are seeking to widen opposition to the pension reforms proposed by President Emmanuel Macron's government, which have triggered the longest transport strike in France in decades.



World's shortest man dies at 27

**Nepal:** Khagendra Thapa Magar, who stood at 2 feet and 2.41 inches tall, died Friday at 27 after recent battles with asthma and pneumonia, according to his family. "He has been in and out of the hospital because of pneumonia," his brother, Mahesh Thapa Magar, told Agence France-Presse. "But this time his heart was also affected." Magar, the son of a fruit seller in Nepal, was beloved in his country and even appointed as a Nepalese Goodwill Ambassador for Tourism. He enjoyed playing guitar and riding motorbikes, and once met the world's shortest woman. "We're terribly sad to hear the news from Nepal that Khagendra is no longer with us," said GWR Editor-in-Chief Craig Glenday in a statement.

SUV SPARKS OUTRAGE IN FORBIDDEN CITY

**Beijing, Jan. 18:** One of China's top historic attractions issued an apology after two women drove an SUV into the Forbidden City in Beijing and posed for pictures when it was meant to be closed to the public. Photos of the pair wearing sunglasses and standing in front of the luxury vehicle alone in a grand square usually packed with tourists quickly sparked outrage after they were posted on social media. The sprawling, nearly 600-year-old former imperial palace in the centre of the Chinese capital says it welcomed 19 million visitors last year, all of whom had to enter on foot. In a statement the UNESCO world heritage site, also known as the Palace Museum, confirmed that the incident happened on Monday, a day it is usually shut. "The Palace Museum is deeply shocked and sincerely apologises to the public," it said late Friday on the Twitter-like platform Weibo, adding that it would "strictly manage and stop such actions" from taking place in future. The controversial photos had been posted on Weibo this week but were swiftly deleted after sparking ire among users questioning how the women had entered the Forbidden City, which is very well guarded. Many commenters expressed indignation at privileges and freebies perceived to be dished out to China's rich elites.

Over 1k 'infected' by Wuhan virus

Chinese health authorities discover 4 more cases of pneumonia following the outbreak

US begins airport screenings



Medical staff carry a patient into the Jinyintan hospital, where patients infected by a mysterious SARS-like virus are being treated, in Wuhan, central Hubei province, China, on Saturday.

**Washington/Beijing, Jan. 18:** The US will begin screening passengers arriving from a Chinese city at the heart of a mysterious SARS-linked virus, officials said, after an outbreak that has stricken dozens claimed a second life. Three confirmed cases have now been reported outside China — two in Thailand and one in Japan — even as health authorities around the world sought to assure that the overall risk of infection remained low. Martin Cetron, a senior official at the US Centres for Disease Contr-

**INCOMING TRAVELLERS** will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and submit to a temperature check, with those showing possible signs of infection sent for a diagnostic test that could take up to a day

ol and Prevention said: "To further protect the health of the American public during the emergence of this novel coronavirus, CDC is beginning entry screening at three ports." These are San Francisco, New York's JFK and Los Angeles, the biggest destination for connecting flights. "We're expecting the

screening over the next couple of weeks could include as many as 5,000 people." Incoming travellers will be asked to fill out a questionnaire and submit to a temperature check, with those showing possible signs of infection sent on to another facility for a diagnostic test that could take up to a day. — AFP

the MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis at Imperial College in London said the number of those affected in the city was likely to be well over a thousand. The scientists at the Centre — which advises bodi-

es, including the World Health Organisation — said they estimated a "total of 1,723 cases" in Wuhan would have been infected as of January 12. The researchers took the number of cases reported outside China so far —

two in Thailand and one in Japan — to infer how many were likely infected in the city, based on international flight traffic data from Wuhan's airport. "For Wuhan to have exported three cases to other countries would imply th-

ere would have to be many more cases than have been reported," Professor Neil Ferguson, one of the authors of the report, said. "I am substantially more concerned than I was a week ago," adding, however, that it was "too early to

be alarmist". "People should be considering the possibility of substantial human-to-human transmission more seriously than they have so far," he added, saying it was "unlikely" that animal exposure was the main

source of infection. Authorities in Hong Kong have stepped up detection measures, including rigorous temperature checkpoints for inbound travellers from the Chinese mainland. — AFP



An aerial photo shows a fire-damaged landscape on Kangaroo Island, off the south coast of Australia, which has been reeling from bushfires that since September 2019 have claimed 28 lives and razed 10 million hectares of land.

Rainstorms douse bushfires

**Sydney, Jan. 18:** Rain and thunderstorms doused long-burning bushfires across much of eastern Australia Saturday, but they also brought a new threat of flooding in some areas. Major bushfires continued to rage in regions of the south and southeast of the country that have so far missed out on the rain, including in wildlife-rich forests on Kangaroo Island off the southern coast.

The fire service in New South Wales (NSW) state, the country's most populous and the hardest hit by the crisis, said 75 fires continued to burn Saturday, down from well over 100 a few days earlier. "Rain continues to fall across a number of fire grounds," the state's rural fire service said, adding that "benign conditions" of rain and cooler temperatures were helping efforts to contain the remaining blazes. To the north, Queensland state was hit by severe storms overnight, causing some flash flo-

Scientists seek rare species' survivors

**Washington, Jan. 18:** Australia's unprecedented wildfires season has so far charred 40,000 square miles of brushland, rainforests, and national parks — killing by one estimate more than a billion wild animals. Scientists fear some of the island continent's unique and colourful species may not recover. For others, they are trying to look for lifelines.

Where flames have subsided, biologists are starting to look for survivors, hoping they may find enough left of some rare and endangered species to re-

build populations. It's a grim task for a nation that prides itself on its diverse wildlife, including creatures found nowhere else on the planet such as koalas, kangaroos and wallabies. "I don't think we've seen a single event in Australia that has destroyed so much habitat and pushed so many creatures to the very brink of extinction," said Kingsley Dixon, an ecologist at Curtin University, Perth. Before this fire season, scientists estimated there were as few as 15,000 left in the wild. — AP

but forecasters expected significant rainfall in those areas Sunday and Monday, raising hopes that some of those blazes could be brought under control as well. The unprecedented fires, fuelled by climate change and a years-long drought, have claimed 28 lives over the past five months. They have scorched massive tracts of forest and bushland in eastern and southern Australia, decimated livestock on already barren farms and destroyed more than 2,000 homes.

On Kangaroo Island, known as Australia's "Galapagos" for the large number of unique animals and other wildlife endemic to the area, fires continued to rage in a big national park. The flames have already taken a heavy toll on the island's population of koalas, birds and other endemic marsupial species. Authorities have warned the crisis could worsen again with Australia only halfway through its summer. — AFP

As Taal simmers, Manila braces for a long crisis

**Agoncillo (Philippines):** Philippine officials said Saturday they're bracing for a long crisis whether the Taal volcano erupts more disastrously or simmers precariously for weeks or months, as massive numbers of displaced villagers languish in emergency shelters.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said more than 900 villagers who fell ill have been treated, mostly for exposure to volcanic ash, in evacuation sites since the volcano began erupting in Batangas province near Manila, the capital, last weekend.

About 125,000 people fled from ash-blanketed villages and crammed into hundreds of emergency centres in Batangas alone and many others took shelter in relatives' homes, disaster-response officials said, appealing for masks, bottled water,



A chick on a road covered with volcanic ash at a lakeshore village near Taal volcano. — Agencies

CYCLONE TINO BATTERS FIJI

**Suva (Fiji), Jan. 18:** Tropical Cyclone Tino strengthened to a Category Three storm Saturday as it closed in on Tonga after battering Fiji where two people were missing and more than 3,000 fled.

more than 15 km into the sky when it rumbled back to life, Taal has been spewing smaller emissions and shuddering with fewer earthquakes in recent days. But despite a perceived waning of its restiveness, continuing volcanic quakes, the drying of Taal's crater lake and other signs indicate magma is moving beneath. — AP

PUZZLE | UNRAVELLED

Researchers find phosphorus-bearing molecule

How key for life arrived on Earth

**London, Jan. 18:** Researchers have unravelled a key piece of the puzzle about the origin of life on the Earth with the discovery of how phosphorus-bearing molecules, essential for cell metabolism, may have reached the planet from space.

Astronomers, including those from the European Southern Observatory (ESO), used data from the ROSINA instrument on board the Rosetta spacecraft to show that the chemi-

cal phosphorus monoxide is a key piece in the origin-of-life puzzle. The study, published in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, also used data acquired by a network of 66 radio telescopes in the Atacama Desert of northern Chile called the Atacama Large Millimetre/Submillimetre Array (ALMA). Using ALMA, the scientists looked into the star-forming cosmic area AFG-L5142, and pinpointed wh-



**NEW STARS** and planetary systems spring up in cloud-like regions of gas and dust in between stars, making these sites the places to start the search for life's building blocks

ere phosphorus-bearing molecules formed in that region. According to the

study, new stars and planetary systems spring up in such cloud-like regions of

gas and dust in between stars, making these cosmic sites the ideal places to start the search for life's building blocks. Their observations revealed that phosphorus-bearing molecules are created when massive stars are formed. The scientists said flows of gas from young massive stars open up cavities in dust clouds. Phosphorus-rich molecules formed on these cavity walls. — PTI

**NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE**

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer (Train Set), Northern Railway Chargabh Workshop, Lucknow invites following e-tender from reputed firms for works as given below:- **Tender No.:** W-CB- OT21-2019-20, **Name of Work:** Overhauling / Rehabilitation / Repairing of Auxiliary Motors of DEMU/MEMU, **Estimated Cost of Work:** ₹ 45,60,785.20. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 91,200/- only (accepted through net banking or payment gateway only). **Cost of Tender Form:** Rs. 3,000/- only (accepted through net banking or payment gateway only). **Period of Contract:** 12 Months. **Date & Time for Submission of Tender:** from 30.01.2020 to 13.02.2020 up to 15:00 Hrs. **Date & Time for Opening of Tender:** after 15:15 Hrs. on 13.02.2020. • The tender form may be submitted on the website **www.irops.gov.in** from 30.01.2020 to 13.02.2020 (up to 15:00 Hrs.). • Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, any such manual offer received shall be ignored. • Contractors are allowed to make payment against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipt, FDR etc are not allowed. • The tender will be opened on specified date and time as above. In case the above date is a holiday the tender opening would be conducted at the same times on the next working day. • No post tender correspondence for submission of additional documents shall be entertained after opening the technical & commercial offers. Even suo-moto post letter of the tender shall be treated as NULL & Void. **Tender Notice No:** NR/CB Workshop/January/Auxiliary Motor/2019-20/20 Date: 14.01.2020 156/2020

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**





Showtime  
Stormi stars alongside mom Kylie Jenner in new cosmetics campaign

IN BRIEF

Downey responds to cameo rumours

Los Angeles: Actor Robert Downey Jr is maintaining ambiguity over his much-talked about appearance in Marvel Studios' *Black Widow*. The actor exited the studio's money-minting Marvel Cinematic Universe as Tony Stark aka Iron Man last year with *Avengers: Endgame*. However, soon after there were reports that Downey Jr will be making one last appearance as Iron Man in Scarlett Johansson-led *Black Widow*. In an interview with Entertainment Tonight, Downey Jr was coy about the reports. "Right. Great. I mean, it would be nice if they notified me. Forewarned is forearmed. They can do anything now. This could be a deep fake interview for all we know," the actor responded. *Black Widow* will feature Johansson as Natasha Romanoff. — AFP

Edward VIII coin sold for record £1m

London: One of the world's rarest coins, a gold piece bearing the image of Britain's King Edward VIII before his abdication, has sold for £1 million, setting a new record for a British coin. The historical oddity shows Edward, the uncle of Queen Elizabeth II, before he relinquished the throne in 1936 to marry American divorcee Wallis Simpson. The buyer was a private collector who wanted his identity kept secret. He told the BBC it was a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity. Rebecca Morgan, head of collector services at the Royal Mint, said the record price was not surprising. "The Edward VIII sovereign is one of the rarest and most collectible coins in the world," Morgan. The 22-carat gold coins were never released to the public. The Royal Mint says only a handful are known to exist. — AP



Hillary film to debut on Hulu, March 6

Pasadena: Hillary Clinton said she experienced several humbling moments while doing interviews for and watching a new documentary about her life, her surprise loss in the 2016 US presidential campaign, and the polarising attitudes she inspired throughout her five-decade career. The four-part documentary, titled *Hillary*, which debuts on Hulu on March 6, chronicles Clinton's life, from her upbringing in Chicago to Yale law school, First Lady, senator, secretary of state and her failed bid to become the first female President. — Reuters

CELINE DION MOM 'MAMAN' DIES AT 92

Montreal: Therese Dion, the mother of *Titanic* singer Celine and affectionately known as "Maman Dion" has died at the age of 92, the performer said Friday. "Maman, we love you so much... We dedicate tonight's show to you and I'll sing to you with all my heart," said the singer, who was to perform later in Miami. The star also posted on social media an old black and white family photo showing the matriarch surrounded by her husband and their 14 children. "Maman Dion died peacefully at home, last night, surrounded by her family," said Productions Feeling, which manages Celine Dion's career. Therese Dion was the wife of Adhemar Dion, who died after a long illness in 2003, and the mother of 14 children, the youngest of whom, Celine, has sold almost 250 million albums. She launched her 12-year-old daughter's career when she sent a cassette recording of her singing to Canadian music producer Rene Angeli in January 1981. He was impressed by her voice, and took her on. They later married, in 1994. Therese Dion also hosted a cooking show on television. — AFP



Therese Dion

Shabana injured in Maha road mishap

Husband & lyricist Javed Akhtar escapes unhurt

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Actor Shabana Azmi met with an accident on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway in Maharashtra's Raigad district on Saturday. Azmi (69) was first rushed to MGM Hospital in Navi Mumbai and later shifted to Kokilaben Ambani Hospital in Andheri in Mumbai. "She is stable and under observation," said Dr Santosh Shetty, executive director and CEO of Ambani hospital in a statement late in the evening.

Her husband and lyricist Javed Akhtar, who was traveling with her, escaped unhurt.

The incident took place near Khalapur, when the Tata Safari car in which they were traveling to Pune, rammed into a truck, said Raigad superintendent of police Anil Paraskar. A local police official said the car driver was apparently trying to overtake another vehicle and rammed into the truck. One more person who was traveling in the



The damaged car (above) of actress Shabana Azmi which collided with a truck on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway on Saturday. Azmi (left) being shifted to a hospital. — PTI

car sustained minor injuries, he said. His identity was not known yet.

MGM Hospital officials said, "Shabana Azmi has got minor injuries on her nose. No other visible injuries till now. She is right now in a state of

shock. Her treatment is still on. Condition is stable" Azmi's spokesperson said the actor was undergoing a check-up. "She is fine, nothing to worry about," the spokesperson added. Photos of the incident that went viral on social media show Shabana Azmi being helped out of the rear seats of the SUV, her face and eye swollen.

Rising rent throws iconic bookshop out of Paris' gay district

Paris: France's oldest LGBT bookshop is being pushed out of Paris' trendy gay district due to skyrocketing rents fanned by gentrification, tourism and top brands which have opened outlets there. "Les Mots a la Bouche" has been a landmark in the Marais, one of the most sought after areas in the French capital, since it opened in the early 1980s. But the landlord now wants the rent to be hiked by four times — in keeping with the market rate — and the bookshop will have to relocate after more than 36 years, Nicolas Wanstock, who works at the bookshop, told AFP.

Les Mots a la Bouche is a historic bookshop, Paris' deputy mayor for culture Christophe Girard, told AFP. "We are very attached to it and our aim is to save it. We are continuing to seek options".

he shop, which has been in the Marais since 1983, is open seven days a week until 11pm and stocks more than 16,000 titles. But like many historic gay bars that closed under pressure from rising rents, the shop has been given until March to find a new location elsewhere in Paris. There are rumours that a Doc Marten shoe shop will take its place. Several historic establishments in the Marais, which was also the city's traditional Jewish quarter, have been pushed out by sky-high rents. — Agencies



Serbian Orthodox faithfuls jump into the cold water of the Sava river in Belgrade Saturday to mark the upcoming Epiphany, cleaning themselves with water deemed holy for the day. — AFP



Actress Kerry Washington participates in a discussion in Pasadena, California, on Friday. — AP



Joey King and Logan Browning (right) pose with the dogs used to roll out the carpet following the Red Carpet Roll Out ceremony of the 26th Annual SAG Awards in Los Angeles on Friday evening. — AP



US drag queen and actor RuPaul poses with drag queens (above, left) during RuPaul's DragCon UK 2020 at Kensington Olympia in London Friday. Drag queens pose on the pink carpet as they participate in the event. — AFP

Disney drops 'Fox' name from film studio: Reports

New York: Disney will rename 20th Century Fox to distance its legendary film studio from the assets of media tycoon Rupert Murdoch, US media reported Friday.

The entertainment conglomerate last year acquired most of the assets of 21st Century Fox group, including the film house, while former owner Murdoch and his shareholders kept several TV channels, including Fox News. Variety magazine reported that the entertainment giant decided to rename its subsidiary to remove all links with Fox due to the ultra-conservative image of Murdoch and his Fox News channel — the preferred news source of President Donald Trump. Disney's decision is a symbolic step for one of

Disney will rename 20th Century Fox to distance its legendary film studio from the assets of media tycoon Rupert Murdoch

Hollywood's founding studios, which began production in 1914 and merged with 20th Century Pictures in 1935.

The Fox Searchlight studio, 20th Century Fox's younger sibling, will also be rebranded as Searchlight Pictures.

Disney has yet to decide on the fate of television studios 20th Century Fox Television and Fox 21 Television, according to Variety. Disney did not respond to AFP's request for comment. Variety

magazine, which broke the news about the name change, said it had spoken to an unnamed Disney source, who said: "I think the Fox name means Murdoch, and that is toxic." Hollywood is known for being liberal, unlike the Australian tycoon. Disney has also renamed Fox Searchlight Pictures, the arthouse arm, as simply Searchlight Pictures.

Staff emails were changed on Friday, from @fox.com to @20thcenturystudios.com or @searchlight.com.

The original 20th Century Fox company was formed in 1935 following a merger. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation bought it in the mid-1980s, and the Fox News channel was created in 1996. — Agencies

5 women, 7 men to serve on Weinstein rape trial jury

New York: Seven men and five women were chosen Friday to decide Harvey Weinstein's fate in his rape and sexual assault trial following an acrimonious jury selection process.

Prosecutors accused the defense of striking out young white women while Weinstein's attorneys complained that a juror had written a novel about predatory older men.

The legal teams spent almost two weeks picking 12 jurors from around 700 candidates for the high-profile trial seen as key to the #MeToo movement.

The makeup of the jury is expected to factor heavily in whether Weinstein, 67, is convicted of predatory sexual assault charges that carry life in prison.

Half of the jury will be white men. Only two will be white women.

Lead prosecutor Joan Illuzi-Orbon accused the defense of limiting the number of young white women, possibly in the belief they would be more sympathetic to Weinstein's accusers.

Attorneys on both sides can rule out up to 20 potential jurors each without needing to express a reason why.

"They are systematically eliminating a class of people from this jury," Illuzi-Orbon said in court Friday. — AFP

Style legend Gaultier retires from fashion

FIACHRA GIBBONS PARIS



Jean-Paul Gaultier

French designer Jean-Paul Gaultier shocked the fashion world Friday by saying his next Paris haute couture show will be his last.

The flamboyant creator said he would be bowing out Wednesday with "a big party" to mark his 50 years in the business after his latest collection hits the catwalk.

His brand told AFP that his high-end fashion and perfume business would live on, but that 67-year-old Gaultier was stepping back from designing clothes himself.

"Rest assured, haute couture will continue with a new concept," said the designer, who made pop history by putting Madonna in a conical bra, invented the "man skirt" and brought body diversity to the runway.

American singer Beth Ditto and the bearded

'El Chapo' beer launched by his daughter in Mexico

Guadalajara, Mexico: Have a cold one, have an "El Chapo" beer. That's the message of Alejandrina Guzman, whose company has developed a craft beer dedicated to her infamous, incarcerated kingpin father Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman. The beer is part of the "El Chapo 701" brand, which has already launched a clothing line, and gets its name from when Forbes named him the 701st richest person in the world in 2009. Forbes estimated his net worth at \$1 billion at the time.

"This is an artisanal beer, with 4% alcohol. This prototype is a lager, and it's made up of malt, rice and honey so it's good," said Adriana Ituarte, a salesperson for the brand. "And the idea is for it to be sold at bars that stock craft beer." A 355 ml bottle is due to be priced at 70.10 pesos (\$3.73). "El Chapo", who shipped narcotics around the world and escaped two maximum security prisons before his final capture, was extradited to the US in 2017 and found guilty in a U.S. court last year. — Reuters



Tulips, waiting to be picked for free, are put on display on Dam Square in front of the Royal Palace in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on Saturday, known as national tulip day. This event marks the opening of the 2020 tulip season. — AP



# DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 19 JANUARY 2020



## SPORT | Cricket

Series on the line as India take on Australia in final ODI

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Ash, Andrey are the new Adelaide champs

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'Grateful for the love'



## GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

**1** Which Indian city was the first to get an electric tram service, in 1895?

- Calcutta
- Bombay
- Madras

**2** Published in 2004, *No Woman, No Cry* is the memoir of which legendary singer's widow?

- Kurt Cobain
- Bob Marley
- Frank Sinatra

**3** What practice was ended in the United States with the 21st Amendment to the Constitution?

- Slavery
- Affirmative action
- Prohibition on alcohol

## SHORT TAKE

### 11 stolen vehicles recovered, 1 held

**New Delhi:** A 30-year-old man has been arrested by Delhi Police in connection with theft of vehicles in the national capital. Police have also recovered 11 stolen vehicles including two cars from the possession of the accused. Police said that a reward of ₹50,000 was also declared on information leading to his arrest. The accused has been identified as Nazir, a resident of South Delhi's Chhatrapur. During interrogation, Nazir revealed that he headed a auto-lifting gang, active in South and Southeast districts of the city. It specialised in stealing vehicles and further selling them after producing forged documents.

### Arms supplier held, loaded pistol seized

**New Delhi:** A 26-year-old man, suspected to be an arms supplier, was arrested from Dwarka by Delhi Police on Saturday and a loaded country-made pistol was seized from him. Police said that Rahul alias Tunna, a resident of Kadipur village in Gurgaon, procured arms from Bihar and supplied it to various Delhi-based criminal groups. In 2013, Rahul was arrested by the Bihar Police for supplying arms in Shastri Nagar. After he got bail in the case, he came to Delhi with his family and started supplying arms, police said. In 2016, he was arrested by the Delhi Police for possessing a firearm and was also arrested in cases of armed robbery in 2017 and 2018 respectively, said the police.

### Gupta honoured for financial leadership

**New Delhi:** Director (finance) in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Subodh Gupta has been honoured with "Top Rankers Excellence Award 2020" for best finance professional of the year. Mr. Gupta has been instrumental in revamping the financial systems and procedures in BHEL and ensuring best corporate practices. The award was presented to Mr. Gupta at the 21st National Management Summit in New Delhi.



THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- Prohibition on alcohol
- Bob Marley
- Madras

## Gudiya case: 2 convicted for raping 5-year-old girl in 2013

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

A POCSO court in the national capital convicted two men on Saturday for raping a five-year-old girl in East Delhi seven years ago, saying the case had shaken the collective conscience of the society. The gruesome incident, in which convicts Manoj Shah and Pradeep Kumar shoved objects in the victim's private parts and abandoned her in Shah's room believing her to be dead, had taken place four months after the Nirbhaya gangrape-and-murder case in December 2012.

The child, who was named Gudiya by sections of the media, was rescued 40 hours later on April 17, 2013.

Additional sessions judge Naresh Kumar Malhotra convicted the two, saying the child experienced exceptional depravity and extreme brutality.

The father of the victim expressed satisfaction on finally getting justice for his daughter. "Though the trial should have been completed in two years, we are happy we got justice after six years," he said.

The court fixed January 30 for arguments on the quantum of sentence. Shah and Kumar were arrested by the Delhi police separately from Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga in Bihar respectively in 2013.

The chargesheet was filed on May 24 that year and charges were framed by the court on July 11. The police had said some foreign materials — three pieces of a candle and one hair oil bottle — were taken out from the body of

### Kejri: Rape convicts should be punished within 6 mths

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said a system needs to be developed to ensure that rape convicts are punished within six months. Reacting to the verdict in 2013 "Gudiya" rape case, Mr Kejriwal said it took seven years to find the accused guilty.

"Both accused in the Gudiya rape case were



Arvind Kejriwal

ensure that no one misbehaves with our sisters and daughters we need to develop a system which ensures that accused are punished within six months," he said in a tweet.

the victim, which was also proved by doctors during recording of their statements in the court.

While in the Nirbhaya case a trial court had convicted and awarded death penalty to the four convicts in a span of 10 months, it took six years, seven judges, and 57 prosecution witnesses to complete the trial in the 2013 gangrape case.

It took almost a year for the court to complete recording statement of the accused, from December 5, 2018, to September 25 last year, following which the prosecution and the defence counsel completed their final arguments last December.

The trial saw an interesting turn in 2014 when Kumar had moved the court claiming he was a juvenile at the time of his arrest. The trial court took three years to decide his application of juvenility and transferred the case in April 2017 to the Juvenile

Justice Board, which granted him bail in June.

Following this, the mother of the rape survivor moved the Delhi high court against the trial court's order declaring Pradeep to be a juvenile. The high court, in 2018, declared that Pradeep was not a juvenile and sent him to trial before the sessions court.

The court had framed charges of raping a minor, unnatural offence, kidnapping, attempt to murder, destruction of evidence, and wrongful confinement with common intention under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the duo.

It had also framed charges of aggravated sexual assault under the POCSO Act, which entails a maximum punishment of life term. Charges of rape and unnatural offence were slapped on the two by the court as these two sections were not invoked by the police in its charge sheet.

## Encroached govt land to be freed, says Verma

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma on Saturday said that government land in the city encroached by religious structures will be freed if BJP comes to power in the national capital. The Lok Sabha member from West Delhi, Mr Verma had earlier this week said that mosques constructed on encroached government land here are certain to be demolished.

The Delhi Assembly elections will be held on February 8 and the results for the 70 Assembly seats will be declared on



Parvesh Verma

February 11.

"The government land, on which religious places are constructed, will be vacated after BJP forms government in Delhi.

Complaints have come regarding more than 54 mosques and madrassas on government land," Mr Verma tweeted.

## After 30 years in exile, Kashmiri Pandits expect compensation, safe return home

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

The exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits will be completing 30 years on Sunday (January 19), but the community is still waiting for justice and their return to homeland with honour and dignity. Late Sarwanand Koul Premi is still being remembered in Kashmir as a renowned poet, a social activist, a journalist and a reputed author of around three dozen books. Being a known figure, he chose to stay back in his native place when the Valley was in the grip of turmoil.

Unfortunately, his belief was brutally shattered and cost him his life and his younger son's life. On the intervening night of April 29-30, 1990, some unknown persons kidnapped Premi and his son Veerji Koul from their

► **The Kashmiri Pandits living in the national capital are now expecting the Centre to chart out a concrete roadmap for their safe return and rehabilitation in the trouble-torn valley**

native village Soafshali and then killed them. An FIR was registered at the local police station Dooru. Unfortunately, no clue regarding the accused was stuck out, so the probe in the case was closed as untraced.

Further, the family suffered another blow when on the intervening night of August 11-12, 1998, some miscreants set the residence of Premi on fire regarding which an FIR was registered. The case was again closed as

the culprits were untraced.

However, Rajender Koul Premi, the elder son of Sarwanand Koul Premi, who was forced to migrate to Delhi after the horrifying incident with his family is still fighting for justice not only for his personal cause but also for the entire community.

Mr. Premi, who is the complainant, told this newspaper that even after 29 years of the tragic incident, the inaction and insensitive approach of the government, which initially had made huge promises to compensate and resettled the family, has miserably failed to transform the same into action.

"For the last 29 years, I have met Prime Ministers and chief ministers, Union ministers and top officials but everything went in vain, we are yet to get justice. My family

has lost everything so as my community. We want justice, due compensation and return to our homeland with safety and security. He further said that after the government revoked Article 370 last year, we got a ray of hope. People are now coming forward for the our cause.

The State Human Rights Commission on February 22, 2012, in its double-bench verdict has ordered very valid recommendations and has asked the state government to redress the grievances of the family "sooner the better" but nothing has changed since then," said Mr Premi.

Meanwhile, the Kashmiri Pandits living in the national capital are now expecting the Centre to chart out a concrete roadmap for their safe return and rehabilitation in the trouble-torn valley.

## Cong declares candidates' list for Delhi Assembly polls

SUNIL THAPLIYAL AND BHASKAR HARI SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

In order to regain the lost ground, the Congress on Saturday declared its first list of candidates for the 54 constituencies for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. The 2020 election is crucial for the grand old party which is not in a mood to take any risk, hence fielded the best possible candidates comprising of experience as well as youths.

The party is relying on heavyweight candidates which includes, former state ministers Arvinder Lovely from Gandhi Nagar constituency, Haroon Yusuf from Balliamaran, Ashok Walia from Krishna Nagar and former Union minister Krishna Tirath from Patel Nagar.

Poonam Azad, wife of party's campaign committee chief of Delhi Kirti Jha Azad will be contesting from Sangam Vihar and senior leader Rajesh Liloitha is being fielded from Mangolpuri constituency.

Former AAP leader Alka Lamba, who switched over to the Congress, has

► **After being dropped by AAP from its list of candidates, sitting MLA from Dwarka Adarsh Shastri, the grandson of Lal Bahadur Shastri, joined the Congress**

been fielded from Chandni Chowk constituency; Mateen Ahamad has been fielded from Seelampur, while Lakshman Rawat will contest against Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia from Patparganj seat. It is also being speculated that former CM Sheila Dikshit's daughter may contest against Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal from New Delhi Assembly seat.

After being dropped by AAP from its list of candidates, sitting MLA from Dwarka Adarsh Shastri, the grandson of Lal Bahadur Shastri, joined the Congress. He has been fielded from Dwarka.

In total, the party has fielded 10 woman candidates, including Mrs Amar Lata Sangwan from Timarpur, daughter of Congress leader Kanwar Karan Singh Ms Akansha

staged a protest outside BJP national working president J.P. Nadda's residence demanding ticket for their leader.

Workers from Gandhi Nagar and Model Town protested against giving party tickets to AAP turncoats Anil Bajpai and Kapil Mishra.

Congress leader Mr Shastri, meanwhile, said: "I sent my resignation from Congress to party's Delhi affairs in-charge P.C. Chacko on Friday as there were differences on the distribution of tickets to candidates."

Mr Chopra and Mr Chacko denied having any information about the move. "I have not received any resignation letter from Shastri," Mr Chacko told reporters.

Mr Chopra termed Mr Shastri's allegation "very serious" but denied having any information of his resignation. Mr Shastri said senior leaders like him were not receiving

"respect" in the party under Mr Chopra's leadership. "Delhi Congress is being headed by a president who does not respect anyone. He has been surrounded by persons who are indulging in ticket sale for Assembly elections," he charged.

Mr Chopra, however, asserted he has repeatedly warned party leaders against any irregularity in ticket distribution and added that people were expected to level allegations if denied ticket. "I have repeatedly said in party meetings that if anyone demands money for ticket, he should be thrashed. Not all can get tickets and so allegations are natural to be levelled by those not getting it," he said.

Sources in Delhi Congress said Mr Shastri demanded ticket for himself but the party wanted to field his daughter in the February 8 election.



Asian Age staffer G.C. Joshi during his farewell at the office in New Delhi on Saturday.

— BUNNY SMITH

## Asian Age bids adieu to staffer

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

Mr G. C. Joshi, working with the administration department of Delhi Asian Age, retired on Saturday after 25 years of service in the organisation. He had joined Asian Age on May 2, 1995. Mr Joshi was given a warm farewell by his colleagues.

## Court issues arrest warrant against Noida hospital chief

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JAN. 18

An arrest warrant was issued against Dr Purushottam Lal, the chairman of the Noida Metro Multi-specialty and Cardiology Institute, by a court in Faridabad for alleged fraud by raising false invoices.

Earlier, Dr Shyam Sunder Bansal, the managing director of Metro Heart Institute, alleged that Dr Lal allegedly used fraudulent documents and defrauded the government departments of several crores of rupees.

Dr Bansal had lodged an FIR on July 30, 2018, at Faridabad central police station under Sections 420, 467, 468, 471, and 120B of the IPC.

In the FIR it was alleged that Dr Lal rigged the Central Government Health

► **Judicial magistrate Mohommad Sager directed Faridabad Central's SHO to produce Dr Purushottam Lal before the court at 10 am on February 1**

Scheme (CGHS) and the UP Power Corporation and prepared false bills for treatment of Haryana and UP government employees.

After a hearing on Wednesday, judicial magistrate Mohommad Sager directed Faridabad Central's SHO to arrest Dr Lal and produce him before the court at 10 am on February 1.

There are two Metro Hospitals in Noida—one in Sector 12, which is a heart institute, and the other in Sector 11, which is a multi-specialty hospital.





## Coaches back out

Bangladesh's batting coach Neil McKenzie (in pic) and fielding coach Ryan Cook have withdrawn from the first leg of the upcoming Pakistan tour, the country's cricket board said on Saturday

THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 19 JANUARY 2020 | NEW DELHI

# Cricket

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## SHORT TAKES



Umesh Yadav

## Lack of workload worries Umesh

**New Delhi:** At a time when international bowlers are worried about their workload, India's Umesh Yadav lamented the lack of it, saying he is "playing lesser and lesser" in top-flight. In fact, one of India's fastest bowlers is now eyeing a lengthy stint in county cricket in order to have more miles in his legs. A part of India's fearsome pace quartet, Umesh does not feature in the white-ball set-up now, and wants a bit of clarity from selectors as to how his game time can increase. "Workload management is a balance that you strike when you are constantly playing matches. In my case, it's been the opposite. I have played lesser and lesser in the past two years (2018 and 2019). So there hasn't even been optimum workload for me," Umesh said. He is in the city to play a Ranji Trophy game for Vidarbha. The man who has 142 wickets from 45 Tests feels that at his age, he needs to play more and more in order to stay in rhythm. — PTI



N. Srinivasan

## CSK will retain MSD: Srinivasan

**Chennai:** The lack of a central contract for MS Dhoni sparked rumours of his retirement in the last few days but Chennai Super Kings owner N. Srinivasan confirmed on Saturday that the former Indian cricket team skipper will be leading the IPL side in 2021. Dhoni has been a part of CSK since its inception and apart from the two seasons when the franchise was suspended, the wicket-keeper batsman has led the team in IPL. "Dhoni will play this year, next year he will go to the auction and we will retain him," Srinivasan said in an event. Dhoni has been part of the franchise since its inception in 2008, barring the two seasons he played for presently-defunct Rising Pune Supergiants in 2016 and 2017 owing to the suspension of CSK over corruption charges. Being the skipper of the franchise over its 10 seasons, Dhoni has also led CSK to three title triumphs and were the runners-up in 2019. — Agencies

# Sunday showdown

## Series on the line as India take on Australia in final ODI

RAM TEJA  
BENGALURU, JAN. 18

A collective team performance from India made sure that the series was kept alive at Rajkot and set up an engrossing final in the three-match ODI series against Australia at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Sunday. Virat Kohli's men fought back valiantly to win by 36 runs after falling to a 10-wicket defeat in Mumbai.

With the series evenly poised at 1-1, it will be a winners take all affair with the series on the line and a chance to avenge the ODI series loss last year that was played in the build-up to the 2019 World Cup.

What would have pleased Virat Kohli most in the previous game was that the win came on the back of a fine team performance. Shikhar Dhawan, Virat Kohli, and K.L. Rahul showed why the hosts are a force to reckon with the bat, given the batting resources available at their disposal. Dhawan who is going through a purple patch at the moment was unlucky to miss out on a hundred at Rajkot, but more importantly gave the team a solid start along with Rohit Sharma.

Rohit went down with an injury in the second innings at Rajkot clutching his left shoulder while fielding in the deep, but Kohli insisted post-match that he would be fine for the final one-day international. If Rohit was to sit out the game, K.L. Rahul might slot back into the opening role after a game-changing role at number 5. Rahul's innings at Rajkot provided that late impetus in the death overs and showed his adaptability batting at a number he is not accustomed to.

With the bowlers all clicking in unison after a miserable outing in

## LIVE on TV

India vs Australia  
on STAR Sports 1, HD

@ 1:30 PM

Mumbai, the bowling attack looks fairly settled with Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Shami and Navdeep Saini expected to comprise of a five-man bowling attack along with Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja. The ease with which the pacers were able to execute the yorker in the previous game would have given the team management one less thing to worry about if they are asked to bat first considering that whichever team wins the toss would prefer to bowl first.

The Chinnaswamy Stadium with its shorter boundaries has seen totals in excess of 300's and some memorable encounters between India and Australia. It was the series decider in 2013 at Bengaluru when Rohit Sharma cracked his first double-hundred in ODI cricket and David Warner struck a hundred in the previous encounter back in 2017.

The Aussies have enough firepower with both bat and ball to make it an even contest and will fancy their chances likewise. If Warner and Aaron Finch struck hundreds in the opening game, Steve Smith along with Marnus Labuschagne (46) put Australia on track in pursuit of 340 before he fell short on 98. In Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins, Finch has a lethal fast bowling combination that can unsettle any opposition along with the guile of Adam Zampa who has found a knack to pick up wickets in the middle overs.

ODIs AT BENGALURU					
Team	Played	Won	Lost	Tie	N/R
India	20	13	5	1	1
Australia	9	4	4	-	1
India (vs Aus)	7	4	2	-	1



I spoke a lot to Virat (Kohli) and watched a lot of videos of AB (De Villiers) and Steve Smith for that matter and how they build their innings.

—K.L. RAHUL

# MSK & Co. seek clarity on Pandya fitness

**Bengaluru, Jan. 18:** Awaiting clarity on all-rounder Hardik Pandya's fitness status, the national selection committee headed by MSK Prasad will pick India's Test and ODI teams for the New Zealand tour after a few days. The meeting was earlier tentatively scheduled for Sunday. "There isn't going to be too much of brainstorming with regards to the team. But a fit Hardik is a necessity. The moment NCA (National Cricket Academy) gives Hardik green light to play com-

petitive cricket, he will be an automatic choice. So the selectors will wait for a few more days," a senior BCCI official said on the condition of anonymity.

In case Hardik fails to make it, the selectors might either look at the hitting prowess of Suryakumar Yadav since the ODIs in New Zealand will be an extension of T20s in the World Cup year.

As far as the selections are concerned, KL Rahul's stupendous white ball form makes him a firm favourite to get his

place back in the Test team.

Rahul has been India's most consistent player in T20s and ODIs but he lost his place in the Test squad after the tour of Australia.

With skipper Virat Kohli now saying that it's difficult to leave a player like Rahul from any squad, he has better prospects than a fit-again Prithvi Shaw or Shubman Gill, who was the reserve Test opener during the home series last season.

The other change in the Test squad could be the

fast-rising Navdeep Saini going as an extra pacer rather than Kuldeep Yadav as the third spinner since only one among Ravichandran Ashwin or Ravindra Jadeja will make the playing XI.

**KL inspired by Smith and Williamson**

He is most comfortable to bat as an opener but to deliver as a middle order batsman, KL Rahul prepared for the challenge by picking the brains of modern-day great Virat Kohli apart from watching videos of Steve Smith and Kane Williamson.

"I don't think technically I have practiced anything different. I just spoke a lot more to middle-order batsmen and watched a lot of videos. I spoke a lot to Virat (Kohli) and watched a lot of videos of AB (De Villiers) and Steve Smith for that matter and how they build their innings," Rahul said.

"Kane Williamson is somebody I've tried to go back and watch some of his videos and see how he builds his innings and how they play in certain situations." — PTI

# BCCI begins hunt for new selectors

**New Delhi, Jan. 18:** The BCCI on Saturday invited applications for the post of national selectors with only two slots to be filled in the senior panel vacated by incumbent chairman MSK Prasad and his colleague Gagan Khoda.

The advertisement also makes it clear that selection committee tenure will be four years and Sarandeep Singh (North), Devang Gandhi (East) and Jatin Paranjpe (West) will continue for one more year. However it is clear, however the new selector is will be the chairman as neither of the three existing have the stature to lead a senior selection panel. The senior selection committee will be in charge of picking the India, India A, Duleep, Deodhar, Challenger series and Rest of India for Irani Cup squads respectively.

Along with the senior selection committee, the entire women's selection panel will be overhauled while the junior men's committee will feature two changes. The last date for submission is January 24.

It is still not clear whether the proposed Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Madan Lal, Gautam

● **The BCCI advertisement makes it clear that selection committee tenure will be four years and Sarandeep Singh (North), Devang Gandhi (East) and Jatin Paranjpe (West) will continue for one more year.**

Gambhir and Sulakshana Naik will be conducting interviews of the interested candidates. The criteria to become a national selector rules out anyone who is above 60 years of age.

Former India batsman Dilip Vengsarkar, whose name was floated by a section of the media, is 64 years old.

The BCCI brass led by Sourav Ganguly has adhered to specifications given in the new constitution where qualification for applying for senior selector's post requires a candidate to play either seven Tests and 30 first-class games or 10 ODIs and 20 first-class matches. The person needs to be retired from all forms of cricket for at least five years.

— PTI



A general view shows the Motera Cricket Stadium, the world's largest cricket stadium, illuminated with LED lights during a lighting test in Ahmedabad. The stadium will have a seating capacity of 110,000. — AFP

# India colts meet SL in Cup opener today

**Bloemfontein, Jan. 18:** Defending champions India, with five new IPL recruits in their ranks, will be the overwhelming favourites when they start their campaign against Sri Lanka in the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Sunday.

India have time and again showed at the junior level the gulf that exists between them and other teams, the testimony being their two titles and one runner-up finish in the last four edition. Even in the run-up to the ongoing edition, India have won a bilateral series against South Africa, followed by a Quadrangular contest.

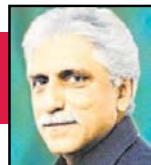
The 'Boys in Blue' also beat Afghanistan comprehensively in a practice game, and the same

Afghanistan then hammered South Africa in the World Cup opener. Since Rahul Dravid took over the mantle of junior cricket, the robust structure created has produced many talented players.

In this edition, India's campaign will be headlined by left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal, who recently landed a Rs 2.4 crore contract with IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals. Still weeks short of becoming eligible for procuring a driving license, Jaiswal is already touted as the next big thing in junior cricket, having hit a double hundred in the country's Sr National One Day Championship (Vijay Hazare Trophy).

— PTI

# It's no more than a storm in a teacup



## Ayaz Memon Over The Top

**M**ahendra Singh Dhoni's omission from the central contracts announced by the BCCI last week had Indian cricket fans divided and the media world agog.

There was furious speculation whether this was the BCCI's way of nudging Dhoni towards retirement. If so, Dhoni's diehard fans saw it as disrespectful to a magnificent cricketer who has brought rich laurels to the country.

I see the episode as no more than a storm in a teacup. True, a central contract suggests that the player who has received one is on the radar or shortlist of the selectors for inclusion in the national team. But there is a protocol for this, which Dhoni did not fit into.

Fundamental to being considered for a central contract is that the player should be active in domestic cricket at least. Dhoni has not stepped on to a

cricket field since the World Cup semi-final against New Zealand in July last year.

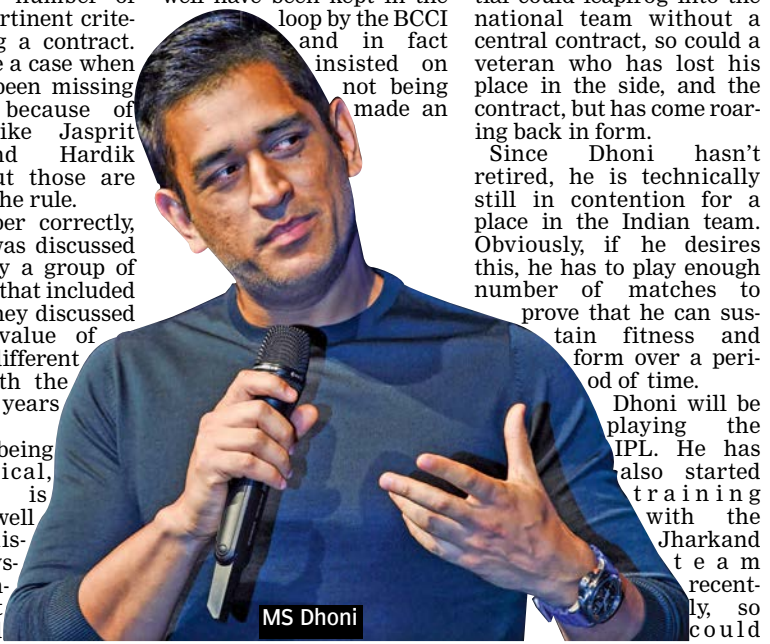
A minimum level of participation (in number of matches) is pertinent criteria for getting a contract. There could be a case when a player has been missing for months because of injury — like Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya — but those are exceptions to the rule.

If I remember correctly, the protocol was discussed and ratified by a group of senior players that included Dhoni when they discussed raising the value of contracts in different categories with the BCCI a few years back.

Apart from being commonsensical, the protocol is important as well to prevent misuse of the system. If a central contract had to be doled

out on reputation alone, without fulfilling other requisites, it would be unfair and could also invite recrimination within the fraternity.

My surmise is that the omission wasn't sprung on Dhoni. He would have known from experience, as captain and then senior pro, how a central contract is decided. Indeed, he may well have been kept in the loop by the BCCI and in fact insisted on not being made an



MS Dhoni

exception!

The flip side to the situation is no less interesting. A central contract does not guarantee a place in a squad for a series or tour. It just means, as mentioned at the start, that the player is shortlisted.

However, the absence of a central contract in itself is not a negation of eligibility. A youngster of great potential could leapfrog into the national team without a central contract, so could a veteran who has lost his place in the side, and the contract, but has come roaring back in form.

Since Dhoni hasn't retired, he is technically still in contention for a place in the Indian team. Obviously, if he desires this, he has to play enough number of matches to prove that he can sustain fitness and form over a period of time.

Dhoni will be playing the IPL. He has also started training with the team in Jharkhand at a team camp recently, so could

also play other domestic matches too. This should give him as well as selectors and team management an idea of how good he could be for international cricket still.

Dhoni's replacement in the Indian team, Rishabh Pant, hasn't quite been able to cement his place. Chief coach Ravi Shastri, aware of this shortcoming in the team for the World T20 later this year, has spoken of how Dhoni's experience could be vital if he meets all other criteria.

This leaves the door ajar for him. But after last week's matches against Australia, it's by no means a Pant or Dhoni choice any longer. KL Rahul has come into serious contention as batsman-wicketkeeper with his rousing knocks and impressive glove work when Pant got injured.

It might be recalled that Rahul Dravid had played in this capacity in ODIs (71 matches, no less!) before Dhoni arrived on the scene in 2004. If KL Rahul has the wherewithal to cope with this dual responsibility, the arguments and dynamics for selection to the T20 World Cup could see major shift.

The suspense grows!

# Bess takes five wickets as England in strong position

**Port Elizabeth, Jan. 18:** Rookie off-spinner Dom Bess claimed his first Test five-wicket haul as England moved into a strong position on the third day of the third Test against South Africa at St George's Park on Saturday.

Bess took the first five wickets as South Africa struggled to 208 for six in reply to England's 499 for nine declared, still 291 runs in arrears — and 92 short of avoiding the follow-on.

Joe Root's side would have been in an even stronger position had it not been for a lengthy rain interruption which wiped out the afternoon session and some defiant South African resistance, notably from Quentin de Kock, unbeaten on 63 and dropped three times by Ben Stokes, and nightwatchman Anrich Nortje.

The 22-year-old Bess, playing in his fourth Test after being called up as cover for his sick Somerset teammate Jack Leach who has since flown home, finished the day with five for 51.



England's Dominic Bess in action during the third Test against South Africa — AP

He might have had more as Root dropped a regulation slip catch to reprieve the stubborn Nortje who bravely defied the hostility of Mark Wood and the guile of Bess.

He had batted for 193 minutes and faced 136 balls when he edged a ball from Ben Stokes to Root at second slip.

This time the England captain held on. De Kock showed the familiar muscularity which brought him half-centuries in the first two Tests, clubbing nine fours in his 63. He had added 54 for the seventh wicket with Vernon Philander, 27 not out, when stumps were drawn. England remain well-placed to take a 2-1 lead in the four-match series. The second new ball was taken for the last three balls of the day, bowled by Bess at a time when fading light allowed only spinners to be used. — AFP

**Brief scores:** England 499/9 decl. vs South Africa 208/6 in 82 overs (Q. de Kock (batting) 63, V. Philander (batting) 27; D. Bess 5/51, B. Stokes 1/26).





## Adieu Anastasi

Former Juventus striker Pietro Anastasi, who scored in Italy's 1968 European Championship final victory over Yugoslavia, has died at the age of 71

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### SHORT TAKES

## Prajnesh in Oz Open main draw

**Melbourne:** Indian tennis player Prajnesh Gunnewaran on Saturday sneaked into the Australian Open men's singles main draw as a lucky loser and may run into World No.1 Novak Djokovic if he clears the first hurdle. The Indian left-hander had lost the final qualifying round to Latvia's Ernests Gulbis in straight sets but was fortunate to make the main draw as one of the direct entrants withdrew from the tournament. It will be Prajnesh Gunnewaran's fifth straight appearance in the main draw of a Grand Slam. Last year also, the Chennai player had come through the qualifiers in Melbourne but made the cut at Wimbledon, French Open and the US Open owing to better ranking. A good draw has put Prajnesh against Japanese Tatsuma Ito, ranked 22 places below the Indian at 144. — PTI

## Kyrgios shuts down Zverev

**Melbourne:** Australia's Nick Kyrgios dismissed criticism from Alexander Zverev on Saturday after the German said he was a step behind some of his main rivals when it came to challenging for Grand Slams. Zverev said some of the other young players were "just better" than Kyrgios, who provocatively dropped and did push-ups when the World No.7 served double faults during Germany's clash with Australia at the ATP Cup. "I'm not going to entertain that too much. With everything going on, that's the least of my worries," said Kyrgios, who has been at the forefront of fundraising efforts for Australia's bushfire crisis. "He's a great player. I'm not quite sure where those comments come from. I'm sure he didn't mean them in a bad way. But if he did, then I'm sorry for whatever I've done to you," he added. Zverev told media in Melbourne that "there's a lot of young guys that are right now, no offence, just better than (Kyrgios)." — AFP

## PBL all set to kick off in Chennai

**Chennai:** The world's best badminton players have descended here in Chennai as the fifth season of Star Sports Premier Badminton League is all set to be held from January 20 to February 9, 2020. Indian shuttlers B. Sai Praneeth, Lakshya Sen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy were present along with Olympic silver medalist Christinna Pedersen, former World No. 9 Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk and PBL's youngest player 15-year-old S. Sankar Muthusamy at the official trophy unveiling here today ahead of the 21-day event that is set to be played in three venues - Chennai, Lucknow and Hyderabad. "This league has played a major role in making badminton even more popular and has taken the sport to greater heights. We hope to play some amazing matches over the next few days here in Chennai, said Sai Praneeth.

## NO FOOTBALL MATCHES IN IRAN: AFC

**Tehran:** Iran's football federation said Friday it has been banned from hosting international matches inside the country. The "federation received a letter today from the Asian Football Confederation... Announcing the decision to hold AFC Champions League matches hosted by Iranian teams in neutral countries," said a statement on the federation's website. An extraordinary meeting was immediately held to address the situation and the managers of the four clubs representing Iran in the tournament will be consulted on Saturday, it added. Those teams are Persepolis, Esteghlal, Sepahan and Shahr Khodro. "The final position of Iranian clubs and the federation will be announced in the following days," it continued. The federation did not state the reason for the ban. The federation's spokesman said Iran is prepared to host foreign teams and has guaranteed match security to the AFC, calling on the organisation to stand against any accusations stating otherwise. — AFP

# Barty, Rublev rock

## Ash, Andrey are the new Adelaide champs

**Adelaide (Australia), Jan. 18:** Ashleigh Barty ended a nine-year Australian home title drought on Saturday with a 6-2, 7-5 victory over Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska at the Adelaide International. The World No. 1 became the first Aussie woman to lift a trophy on a home court since Jarmila Wolfe won Hobart in 2011. Barty beat 24th-ranked teenager Yastremska in 87 minutes at Memorial Drive to gain a boatload of confidence heading into Monday's start of the Australian Open in Melbourne, where she is top seed.

She was presented the carved wood trophy by a painted Aboriginal elder who blessed with a chant it before it was handed over.

"The best part about this week is I fought and scrapped my way through and got better and better in each situation, in each match," Barty said.

"I just put myself in the position to play for another title, which is really exciting. It's been incredible to play at home...I can't wait to get started in Melbourne next week," she continued.

Barty will take to the court at Rod Laver Arena on Monday night.

"It's going to be exciting and a fresh tournament... I have to start with my clean slate for the Australian Open, I'm looking forward to that first round," Barty added.

Barty won the opening set against her 19-year-old opponent, losing just two points on serve and breaking three times.

After starting the second set with a break, the Australian momentarily lost her edge, dropping serve for two all.

But Barty kept up the pressure, earning three break points in the 11th game. One was enough after Yastremska put a backhand wide.

The next game Barty earned three match points and took the title when her opponent sent a return long over the baseline.

### RUBLEV TWO FOR TWO

In the men's draw, Andrey Rublev set a record of his own as the Russian crushed South African qualifier Lloyd Harris 6-3, 6-0 in 57 minutes.

Rublev, who lifted the Doha trophy last weekend, is the first man since Dominik Hrbaty in 2004 to win two titles in the first two weeks of a season.

The Russian has not lost a match since November — 12 in a row — and stands 8-0 this season.

"I don't how I've done this. It seems amazing to me," Rublev said of his back-to-back double.

"I'm so happy with how I've been playing these two weeks, I've really enjoyed my tennis a lot. Lloyd and I are the same age but we never played in juniors, so this was our first time," the winner Rublev added. — AFP



Naomi Osaka of Japan hits a return during a practice session ahead of the Australia Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on Saturday. — AFP

## Air quality bothers players

**Melbourne, Jan. 18:** Roger Federer demanded better communication about air quality at the Australian Open Saturday after smoke from bushfires hit the tournament's build-up, as officials announced new guidelines on pollution.

Federer, the 20-time Grand Slam champion, said a lack of information made matters worse for players who were forced to stay on the courts on Tuesday and Wednesday, when air quality in Melbourne was among the worst on the planet.

Slovenian Dalila Jakupovic was forced to retire during qualifying after a distressing coughing fit, while Britain's Liam Broady claimed "multiple" players needed asthma medication.

"I think communication is key from the tournament to the people, to the media, to the fans, to the players, because you do hear it's not safe to be outside, keep your pets inside, close your windows," Federer said.

World No.6 Stefanos Tsitsipas was another player who was troubled by the smog, saying he had difficulty breathing even after practising indoors in Melbourne.

"I was coughing a lot, had troubles breathing for



Left: Stefanos Tsitsipas during a practice session at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Saturday. Right: Roger Federer plays a shot during his practice session on Saturday. — AUSTRALIAN OPEN



a couple of hours," Tsitsipas said Saturday, while Canadian young gun Denis Shapovalov also put forth his say and claimed "I wouldn't play" if conditions deteriorated during the tournament.

In the wake of the backlash, Australian Open organisers on Saturday

unveiled a five-step air quality rating to determine when play should be halted, based on pollutants measured by monitoring stations throughout Melbourne Park.

Play will be stopped if the particulate matter rating (PM2.5) — the solid and liquid particles sus-

pended in the air — hits 200, or five on the air quality scale.

Between 97 and 200 — a four rating — will trigger a discussion between medical staff and officials about halting play, with the match referee able to suspend a match if he sees fit. — AFP

## MARSEILLE ENTER LAST-16 STAGE OF FRENCH CUP

**Paris, Jan. 18:** Marseille struck three times in the final 15 minutes to overcome fourth-tier Granville 3-0 in the last 32 of the French Cup on Friday.

Alvaro Gonzalez, Nemanja Radonjic and Dimitri Payet all scored for Marseille after Granville were reduced to 10 men following the dismissal of William Sea.

Marseille have won the French Cup on 10 occasions — second only to Paris Saint-Germain (12) — but haven't lifted the trophy since 1989.

They were dumped out of the competition in the round of 64 last season by fourth-division Andrezieux, and only narrowly avoided a similar upset earlier this month when they beat Treilissac on penalties. — AFP

## Powell casts spell on Wizards

**Los Angeles, Jan. 18:** Norman Powell scored 28 points off the bench as the Toronto Raptors used a balanced offence to continue their domination over the Washington Wizards with a 140-111 rout on Friday.

Marc Gasol added 20 points to become one of seven players in double figures for the Raptors, who have won seven straight games over the Wizards.

The Raptors tied their franchise points total of 140 points which they earned in a double overtime two-point victory over the Wizards in January 2019. It is the most points they have ever scored in regulation time.

Toronto has been struggling to hold big leads of late, but they hope to have finally reversed that trend with Friday's season-high scoring total.

"We're trusting one another, we're moving the ball. We're letting the offence work for us," Powell said.

The Raptors led 38-26 at the end of the first quarter and took a 24-point lead into the fourth quarter.

They increased it to 30 points with 4:36 remaining and cruised from there to improve to 27-14 on the season.

Terence Davis scored 23 points, OG Anunoby added

● **Norman Powell of the Toronto Raptors scored 28 points while Marc Gasol added 20 points to trounce Washington Wizards 140-111.**

● **It is the most points Toronto Raptors have ever scored in regulation time.**

18 points and Serge Ibaka had 15 points and eight rebounds. Pascal Siakam had 12 points, and Kyle Lowry contributed 11 points and eight assists.

Troy Brown had 22 points for the Wizards, who have lost three straight. Isaac Bonga added 17 points and 10 rebounds.

Bradley Beal had 14 points, Ish Smith and Davis Bertans each had 12 and Anzejs Pasecniks 11 in the loss. Toronto shot 57.1 per cent from the field and are now 20-4 against Washington dating back to the 2013-14 NBA season.

Elsewhere, Malcolm Brogdon drained a clutch basket with 18 seconds remaining as the Indiana Pacers spoiled the return of Karl-Anthony Towns with a 116-114 win over the Minnesota Timberwolves. — AFP

## CHAMP SUDHA OUT TO DEFEND MUMBAI TITLE

**Mumbai, Jan. 18:** Defending champion and course record holder Sudha Singh, Srinu Bugatha, Jyoti Gawte, and Rashpal Singh are prepared to go head to head over the classic distance in this year's Tata Mumbai Marathon and clock in a new personal record.

Top contender and a crowd favorite is Sudha Singh who won the Tata Mumbai Marathon twice in 2018 and 2019, achieving personal besting timing of 2:34:56 in 2019.

Coached under Bijendra Singh, Sudha is all set to be back in the marathon scene after a break of 2 months.

Commenting on her gap,

Sudha shared, "Tata Mumbai Marathon will help me add more to training foundation and mentally prepare for future competitions. I have high hopes from the event given the better weather conditions this year. I could feel it during my morning run today."

On being asked about her Doha Championship, she shared, "The training and diet have improved a lot. I am not just hoping for Indian athletes to not just qualify but also for us to bring in more medals home." Sudha also holds the title of a gold medalist at 3,000 metres' steeplechase at the esteemed Asian Games in the year 2010. — Agencies

## Honda's Brabec wins Dakar Rally

**Riyadh, Jan. 18:** Ricky Brabec of Monster Energy Honda Team rode his factory CRF450 RALLY to overall motorcycle class victory in the final, 12th stage of the Dakar Rally 2020 here.

His win on Friday gave Honda its first Dakar victory in 31 years. Their last win came in 1989.

The 28-year-old American rider rode his first Dakar Rally in 2016 with Team HRC, making 2020 his fifth attempt.

After winning stage 3 in this year's edition, Brabec led the overall race, which he defended through solid riding in the subsequent stages, finally achieving his first overall win at the event.

Teammates Jose Ignacio Cornejo finished fourth overall, and Joan Barreda seventh, placing three Monster Energy Honda Team riders in the top 10.

Honda first competed in the third Paris-Dakar Rally in 1981. It's first victory came in 1986 on an NXR750, which was followed by three consecutive wins up to 1989.

Honda left the Dakar the following year, and in 2013,

● **Ricky Brabec of Monster Energy Honda Team rode his factory CRF450 RALLY to overall motorcycle class victory in the final.**

decided to race once again in the Dakar Rally, then held in South America, with its new CRF450 Rally factory bike.

Despite finishing runner-up in 2015 and 2018, victory had eluded Honda until this year, the eighth attempt after returning to the Dakar in 2013.

The Dakar Rally was first held in 1979, making this year its 42nd edition.

Known as the most dangerous sporting event in the world, this year's race in Saudi Arabia took drivers and riders over more than 7,000km (of which 75 per cent was in the desert), in 12 stages over 13 days.

"We finally did it. This victory couldn't possibly be better for Honda and the team. It was a tough and long race, but the team worked great together. — PTI



Ricky Brabec is all smiles after winning the rally.





## Italian move

Manchester United defender Ashley Young signs for Inter Milan on a six-month deal with an option for a further season

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### SHORT TAKES

## India rout Holland in Pro League debut

**Bhubaneswar:** The Indian men's hockey team made a dream debut at the FIH Pro League, beating world number three Netherlands 5-2 in the opening match of the two-game encounter here on Saturday. Rupinder Pal Singh (12th, 46th minutes) converted two penalty corners, while Gurjant Singh (1st), Mandeep Singh (34th) and Lalit Upadhyay (36th) scored three fine field goals for India. Jip Janssen (14th) struck from a set piece, while Jeroen Hertzberger (28th) scored from a field effort for the Dutch side. After having missed the first edition of the Pro League, the Olympics-bound India kick-started their preparations for the quadrennial showpiece in earnest. With all the top teams of the world in the fray, the home-and-away Pro League is looked upon as an ideal preparation for world number five India ahead of the Summer Games later this year. — *PTI*

## Munda beats Rao to become AAI prez

**New Delhi:** Union minister Arjun Munda was on Saturday elected as president of the suspended Archery Association of India in its much-delayed elections, which were held here smoothly in the presence of three observers. Enjoying the support of former AAI president Vijay Kumar Malhotra, Munda had a smooth sailing as he beat his rival BVP Rao by a margin of 34-18 votes. Munda's entire panel secured majority share of votes and were elected for a full tenure of four years. Pramod Chandurkar of Maharashtra defeated Maha Singh of Chandigarh 31-21, while captain Abhimanyu Sharma (Haryana) became the senior vice-president with a 32-20 win over G A Ilophishak Sharma (Manipur). Rajendar Singh Tomar of Uttaraanchal defeated Samikhya Nanda Das of Odisha 34-18 for the post of Treasurer. A total of 31 state associations were part of the AAI but only 26 states — each having a share of two votes — casted their votes. — *PTI*

## Anand plays out another draw

**Wijk Aan Zee, The Netherlands:** Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand was held to an easy draw by Dutch hopeful Jorden Van Foreest in the sixth round of Tata Steel Masters here on Saturday. As has been the case throughout the event, Anand has been trying to play very complicated positions and the sixth round was no different. The Indian ace faced the Four Knights opening as black and unleashed an attack in the centre early by sacrificing two pawns. Even though it's part of theory, it is considered a bit dangerous for both. White's king was stuck around the centre for a long time while Anand's pieces tried to make a foray. After the trade of queens, it was a cautious approach by both players especially after white lost back one pawn. The draw was agreed upon once Anand picked the second pawn. With three points to his credit from six games, Anand remained in joint sixth spot in one of the strongest tournaments in the world. — *PTI*

## ATK BLANK GOA TO TAKE TOP SPOT

**Kolkata:** Bolstered by their merger with the country's oldest club Mohun Bagan, ATK returned to winning ways in style, blanking leaders FC Goa 2-0 in a one-sided Indian Super League fixture here on Saturday. The high-voltage clash gained momentum only in the second-half when Pritam Kotal's rising header from a set piece opened it up for the hosts, smarting from their first loss at home to Kerala Blasters in the last round. ATK's Fijian captain Roy Krishna latched onto a free-kick on the right-hand side inside the box and chipped the ball into the centre from the byline. An unmarked Kotal got in between the Goa centre-backs and nodded the ball into the net to give them the lead. The last season's runners-up, who had won the opening leg 2-1, tried their best to attack but ATK were solid in their defence and did not let the visiting team to squeeze one into the net. With two minutes left in regulation time, Jayesh Rane redeemed himself for missing a sitter when he slid in the ball to seal the issue for ATK, as the home side jumped past Goa to occupy the top spot on goal difference. — *PTI*

# THE MUM RETURNS!

## Sania enjoys winning comeback with Hobart doubles title after having baby

MOSES KONDETY  
HYDERABAD, JAN. 18

Tennis ace Sania Mirza won the Hobart International title on Saturday. She may well have sealed the 2020 Mother of The Year award too, in the very third week itself.

In an incredible comeback, the 33-year-old returned from a two-year maternity break to combine with Nadiia Kichenok of Ukraine to beat Shuai Peng and Shuai Zhang of China in the women's doubles final in Australia. Unseeded Sania-Nadiia punched above their weight to topple the second seeds in straight sets 6-4, 6-4 for a stupendous victory.

Sania's 14-month-old son Izhaan was at the venue as Big Momma took her 42nd WTA doubles title, the first since Brisbane International in 2017. She then spoke to this newspaper. *Excerpts from an interview:*

### How special is this win?

It's really amazing, something that I could only dream of, to come back like this and win a tournament straightaway... not just two-and-a-half years later but also after becoming a mom and having Izhaan. There's a lot of hardwork, sweat and blood that went into it. I am so glad that I was able to achieve this.

### Tell us about the hard-work involved and the challenges faced?

There's so many. Just the fact that your body completely changes as a woman after childbirth... it's extremely different and difficult to get your body back in shape, to being at your fighting best to play tennis at the highest level. It's the weight gain and a lot of other changes that happen. It's not just losing those 23-26 kilos but about getting strong again and trusting yourself to be good enough to compete at the top level. There are so many things that go into it and there are other things like feeding, issues of time management, the baby needs your attention and how you take out time to put in hours of practice. There's so much struggle that comes along with it.

### What sort of mental toughness is needed to do all this?

I would think a lot (laughs). But it's not something that I consciously thought of. I just went



Izhaan just understands the celebratory high-five, which is close enough to him making out anything right now. I hope that one day he sees all this, understands the magnitude and is proud of his Mom.

Sania Mirza gives high-five to son Izhaan after her victory in Hobart.

After child birth it's extremely difficult to get your body back in shape, to being at your fighting best. It's not just losing those 23-26 kilos but about getting strong again and trusting yourself to be good enough to compete at the highest level.

— Sania Mirza, after winning the Hobart doubles title

comeback after her second child as well! She had made a comeback after her first too. So there's lot of inspiration around and also within.

### What has been Izhaan's reaction to your exploits on the court?

He just understands the celebratory high-five, which is close enough to him making out anything right now. I hope that one day he sees all this, understands the magnitude and

is proud of his Mom.

### What kind of support did you receive in your endeavour?

A lot, from my parents and my entire family which has been behind me, always. I would not have been able to give my 100 per cent if I didn't have them with and pushing me as well. Then there are friends and coaches... I don't

think I could do without any of them.

### What goals did you set for yourself when you came back on to the circuit?

I didn't think I would get the title at first go but definitely did aim for it. You always enter a tournament to win it. However, I was being as realistic as possible and thought it would be great if I get a couple of matches in just before Melbourne (Australian Open, the season's first Grand Slam), so it was more of that thought process than 'ok, I have to go and win this tournament.' The desire to win every match that you play comes naturally to an athlete but you also have to be a little realistic.

The title notwithstanding, how do you feel on the court? Are you

### back to your best or is there more to come?

I am pretty critical of myself so I don't think I am back to my best by any measure but I do think I am playing better than I expected and close to how I used to play. I still think there are lots of things I can improve upon.

### Having made a remarkable start to the season, what are you looking at now?

No targets per se. For me it's about staying healthy, taking it one match/ tournament at a time and just see where it takes me. Honestly, where I want to reach is not something that I am thinking of consciously. I want to try to be as best as I can be and as good as I can be personally.

Sania Mirza (left) and her partner Nadiia Kichenok pose with their trophies after winning the Hobart International women's doubles final.

## Unseeded duo win in style

**Hobart, Jan. 18:** In a dream start to her second innings after a two-year break, Sania Mirza lifted the WTA Hobart International trophy with partner Nadiia Kichenok after edging out Shuai Peng and Shuai Zhang in the final, here on Saturday.

The unseeded Indo-Ukrainian pair pipped the second seed Chinese team 6-4, 6-4 in one hour 21 minutes. It is Sania's 42nd WTA doubles title and first since Brisbane International trophy in 2017 with American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands.

Sania did not compete on the WTA circuit in the entire 2018 and 2019 seasons to start a fam-

ily with Pakistani cricketer husband Shoaib Malik.

Sania and Nadiia began by breaking the Chinese players in the very first gamet.

The two pairs played close games towards the end and at 4-4, 40-all, Sania and Nadiia got the crucial break, earning the opportunity to serve out the set. There was no twist in 10th game with Sania and Nadiia comfortably pocketing the first set.

The second set could not have started better for them as they broke the Chinese rivals to take early lead and consolidated the break with an easy hold.

The game of the Chinese was falling apart as they dropped

serve again in the third but broke back immediately to repair some damage.

Sania and Nadiia were now feeling the heat at 0-30 in the sixth game but Peng and Zhang let them hold serve for a 4-2 lead. The Indo-Ukraine team raised their game when it mattered as it broke Peng and Zhang for one final time in the ninth and served out the match in the next game.

Sania and Nadiia split \$13580 as prize money and eared 280 ranking points each for their winning effort.



## VINESH CLINCHES GOLD, BAJRANG ENTERS FINAL

**Rome, Jan. 18:** India's star wrestler Bajrang Punia assured himself of at least a silver medal by entering the final of the 65kg freestyle category at the Ranking Series event here on Saturday. He had to sweat it out in the first round against Zain Allen Retherford of USA before prevailing 5-4.

Bajrang will take on another American wrestler Jordan Michael Oliver in the final later Saturday night.

Meanwhile on Friday night, a dominant Vinesh Phogat won her first gold medal of the 2020 season. She downed two tough Chinese rivals on her way to the 53kg gold medal bout in which she overpowered Ecuador's Luisa Elizabeth Valverde 4-0. Vinesh won by technical superiority against Khrystyna Bereza (10-0) and Lannuan Luo (15-5) before getting the better of Qianyu Pang (4-2).

However, it was curtains for Jitender in the 74kg and world championship silver medallist Deepak Punia in the 86kg category. — *PTI*

## Watford stalemate hits Spurs Euro hopes

**Watford, Jan. 18:** Troy Deeney saved his penalty saved as Watford drew 0-0 with Tottenham on Saturday, extending Nigel Pearson's unbeaten Premier League run to six games and further damaging Spurs' Champions League ambitions.

The key moment at Vicarage Road came with 20 minutes to go when Spurs goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga dived low to his left to keep out the Watford captain's spot kick.

Spurs came agonisingly close to snatching the win in stoppage time only for Watford substitute Ignacio Pussetto, making his debut for the club, to clear an Erik Lamela effort off the line.

But it was another point claimed during Watford's resurgence under Pearson, who has now overseen a run of four wins and two draws in his past six league games. The result is frustrating for Jose Mourinho, whose team, without the injured Harry Kane and with uncertainty over the future of Christian Eriksen, could be 11 points off fourth spot by the end of the day.

Mourinho was pleased with Tottenham's performance but admitted they missed the physical presence of the injured Moussa Sissoko and Harry Kane, and Kane's eye for goal.

The Spurs boss said he would like to boost his forward options in the January

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transfer window but only if the right options became available.

"This is not the last match in Tottenham's history," he said.

"Next Wednesday we have another one and next season we have many more so we have to be calm, be loyal

to these boys, also respecting everything they try to do and if it happens it happens."

Pearson praised his side despite the disappointment of the missed penalty but said they were not yet out of the woods.

"I give the players credit for the fact that they've embraced the situation for what it is," he said. "They understand where we are and they've not shirked responsibility."

He added: "We've got to deal with the fact that we're in a relegation battle and what we've produced recently is good but that's the baseline for us."

Son Heung-min looked lively on the left of

Tottenham's attack and had the first shot on target but despite all their possession Watford goalkeeper Ben Foster rarely looked troubled.

#### WATFORD THREAT

The home side gradually worked their way into the game and started to see more of the ball.

There was a long interruption just before the half hour when referee Michael Oliver's battery equipment suffered a technical failure which may have stopped him checking a potentially dangerous foul by Etienne Capoue on Japhet Tanganga, with the Watford man escaping a card completely. — *AFP*