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MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

Look out for 16 Pages of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways notification with today's issue of The Indian Express

INSULT OF CONSTITUTION: STATE GOVT

Centre vs Maharashtra as Elgar Parishad probe is handed over to NIA

Home Ministry direction came a day after Sena-led govt reviewed chargesheet against activists named in case

MOHAMED THAYER & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE UNION Ministry of Home Affairs Friday handed over the investigation of the Elgar Parishad case to the National Investigation Agency, triggering a row with Maharashtra's Sena-NCP-Congress government, which a day earlier had held a meeting to review the chargesheet filed against the accused in the case.

Nine rights activists and lawyers had been arrested by the Maharashtra police in 2018 for allegedly inciting people at a meeting of the Elgar Parishad in Pune on December 31, 2017. Police claimed the activists and lawyers incited people and this



The Elgar Parishad meeting was held on Dec 31, 2017

led to caste violence in Bhima Koregaon the next day.

The state government had given indications that the case could be handed over to a Special Investigation Team if the Pune Police failed to substantiate the charges. NCP president Sharad Pawar had also written a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, alleging that the previous BJP government

EXPLAINED
E. Why this will heat up debate

THE TAKING over of the Elgar Parishad case by the NIA opens a new battle front between the Centre and the state. The timing raises questions about the federal structure envisaged by the Constitution, particularly when Chhattisgarh has already moved the SC arguing that the NIA Act is unconstitutional.

had conspired to frame the accused and a review of the case was necessary because of the
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



CHIEF GUEST IN TOWN

Brazil President Jair Messias Bolsonaro at Dilli Haat Friday. He is chief guest at the Republic Day parade. *Somya Lakhani*

Saw workers eating pocha not roti... suspicious... they were Bangladeshis: Vijayvargiya

MILIND GHATWAI & LIZ MATHEW
BHOPAL, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

AMID NATIONWIDE protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, senior BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya said at a pro-CAA seminar that he



BJP gen secy, he was speaking at a pro-CAA seminar

saw construction workers at his house "eating a lot of pocha", grew suspicious over "why they
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Broadband and data services back in Valley

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration Friday ordered restoration of broadband and data services from Saturday for the Union Territory. However, restrictions on social media will continue, at least until January 31.

This marks the restoration of Internet services across Kashmir after nearly six months. Services were snapped on August 4 night, hours before the abrogation of

Article 370. Broadband connectivity to essential services was restored on January 15. Additionally, restricted data access was restored in the North Kashmir districts of Kupwara and Baramulla.

On January 10, the Supreme Court directed the J&K administration to "review all orders suspending Internet services forthwith" since "an order suspending Internet services indefinitely is impermissible". It ruled that "freedom of speech and expression
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Govt looks to break into encrypted messages

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE INFORMATION Technology Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules, 2018, the new set of rules on regulation of social media which the government is to submit to the Supreme Court later this month, will push for "traceability" of content which in effect means breaking end-to-end encryption, even of messaging intermediaries.

This will make it difficult for

large social media intermediaries, mostly international business conglomerates, to give in without a battle.

The guidelines, which are not being discussed or debated publicly with only a few in the government privy to the details, are meant to control online content deemed "unlawful". But these will raise fundamental questions on both freedom of speech and privacy of ordinary users.

Suggested changes currently need production of a court order
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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FOOD IS MY IMMIGRANT STORY: ASMA KHAN

Her journey, from hosting supper parties at home for strangers to doing a pop-up at a pub in Soho, and finally having a restaurant, contributed in making her the first British chef to feature on Netflix's Chef Table.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT
Women-led protests try to replicate Shaheen Bagh in Bengaluru

EXPRESS EXPLAINED



JAIR BOLSONARO
The Brazilian President with quite a few extreme views

EXPRESS AUDIO

Will AI take over jobs in India?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Our tech reporters break down how artificial intelligence is used in the world around us and why the worry that automation will take away jobs needs to be examined.

CHANDIGARH

HC bans display of office description, unauthorised emblems in vehicles

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 24

THE PUNJAB and Haryana High Court Friday banned the display of designation or description of office and use of unauthorised emblems on government and private vehicles in Chandigarh.

The division bench of Justices Rajiv Sharma and Amol Rattan Singh during the hearing of a suo motu Public Interest Litigation also ordered that writing of words like high court, Army, police, press, journalists, chairman, vice chairman on private vehicles is prohibited forthwith. The authorities have been directed to begin implementation of the directions within 72 hours.

The court was of the view that the use of such terms is an attempt to "browbeat" others and observed that the display of designations on vehicles is not permitted under law. However, ambulances and fire tenders are exempted from the ban. As soon as the hearing ended on Friday, the court staff were seen removing 'High Court' sticker from Justice Sharma's official vehicle.

The court observed that a lot of "idle parking" is seen on roads and directed Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali authorities to not allow such parking.

With regard to lack of two gates in educational institutions, the division bench directed the deputy commissioners of Panchkula and Mohali to convene meetings of all the school heads within three weeks about having at least two gates. The

court was earlier told by a counsel that rush of children through a single gate may lead to stampede and there should at least be two gates. After the court was informed that CCTV cameras are not functioning in many of the school buses, the division bench directed the UT Education Secretary, DC Panchkula and DC Mohali to constitute special teams to check that all the CCTV cameras are functioning.

With Chandigarh Administration stating that the four-month time limit set by court for installation of CCTV with automatic number plate recognition technology and an Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) is not feasible, the court Friday observed that in case the authorities are not able or capable to perform the job, it can hand over the project to any other agency.

While the authorities submitted that a building has to be constructed for ICCC, the court said a building for temporary purposes can be provided and in the meantime, they should go ahead with laying of cables and installing cameras. The installation of around 2,000 cameras with dedicated fiber cables will at least take six months, the court was told. UT Senior Standing Pankaj Jain told the court that technical bid has been approved and the financial bid is to be approved now, adding the Board of Directors of Smart City Project is to hold a meeting regarding it on January 27. The authorities earlier had sought 18 months for completion of the project.

Talks of recreating ashram making residents anxious: Sabarmati Trust

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JANUARY 24

THE SABARMATI Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT) put out a release on Friday stating that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi had suggested during his visit last October that a larger Ashram premises might be recreated by consolidating all the properties on either side of the ashram road, "lack of formal communication with the residents regarding the plan has created anxiety, concerns and misunderstanding at many levels".

This was in response to a sit-in the ashram residents held at the Hriday Kunj on Friday to protest against the proposed "modernisation of the ashram premises" and to seek a stand of the ashram authorities on the issue.

The plan, said SAPMT trustees, is being made by HCP Design, the firm headed by Dr Bimal Patel who is also the president of CEPT University, and is heading the redevelopment project of the central vista of the Parliament. According to SAPMT trustee Kartikeya Sarabhai, while they have been invited to participate in discussions regarding the suggested plan for restructuring of the ashram premises, SAPMT has not received any official intimation of the said plan so far. Sudarshan Iyengar, a SAPMT trustee said, "From what I know, informal discussions are on between the PMO and (K) Kailashnathan (chief principal secretary to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani) and Bimal (Patel), but to that (effect) there has been no formal communication to the SAPMT and the other trustees."

Currently different parts of the ashram are being managed by six independent trusts -

Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh, Sabarmati Harijan Ashram Trust, Sabarmati Ashram Gaushala Trust, Gujarat Khadi Gramodyog Mandal, Khadi Gramodyog Prayog Samiti and SAPMT. SAPMT is in charge of management of the historic heritage buildings of Hriday Kunj, Prarthanabhum, Vinoba-Mira Kutir, spread over an area of nearly three acres.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Sarabhai said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's idea and vision was that instead of a limited 'ashram experience', people should rather see the whole of the ashram on both sides of the road, which would then include removal of the road dividing the ashram area in two sides. The idea had been pitched during Modi's visit to the city and the Sabarmati Ashram in October last year. Though no deadlines were fixed, the intent to commence the work before October 2, 2020, as part of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary celebrations was expressed.

According to the press release, while only three (tenant) families live in the area managed by SAPMT, Sarabhai and Iyengar added that majority of them reside in the area managed by the Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh, headed by Jayesh Patel, whose father Ishwar Patel set up 'Safai Vidyalaya' in the Gandhi Ashram that built toilets in the rural areas. Jayesh is also the son-in-law of former CM Anandiben Patel.

"The residents have come to believe that it is the moral responsibility of SAPMT to address their repeated representations. While Jayesh has done some wonderful work, the communication (of the trust members, with the residents) appears to have not been there," said Iyengar.

FROM PAGE ONE

Encrypted messages

before a messaging intermediary is required to break encryption.

The Indian Express has been told that there could be two levels of online intermediaries defined in the new set of rules, each with different regulations, for social and non-social media.

Non-social media may have relatively lighter regulations given that there could be mandatory local legal incorporation for large social media intermediaries. Non-social media intermediaries will still have to appoint a local office for grievance redressal.

On November 21 last year, Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha, confirmed that the Centre was going ahead with new amended rules for social media. He said social media companies have to follow certain due diligence as laid out in the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules, 2011 under Section 79 of the Information Technology Act.

The issue of messaging apps being required to break end-to-end encryption has been a sticky point between governments and messaging apps like Facebook-owned WhatsApp, especially after revelations last year on the use of spy software being used by governments to break into phones and conduct surveillance into private conversations of activists, journalists and lawyers, including in India.

The need to conduct surveillance for reasons of security versus the right to privacy of citizens and users has been a heated debate, and remains unresolved — the government appears to be pushing for more and intermediaries are insisting on greater transparency in the rules-framing process.

On December 24, 2018, *The Indian Express* reported that in the draft of The Information Technology Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules, 2018, Rule 3(9) required "intermediaries", or online platforms, to deploy technology-based automated tools or appropriate mechanisms, with appropriate controls, for proactively identifying or removing or disabling access to unlawful information or content".

It is now learnt that automatic

Centre vs Maharashtra as Elgar Parishad probe handed over to NIA

gross abuse of power by the state and police.

The nine arrested in the case are Rona Wilson, Shoma Sen, Surendra Gadling, Mahesh Raut, Sudhir Dhawale, Sudha Bhardwaj, Varavara Rao, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Kumar confirmed that a communication regarding the transfer of the probe had been received from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

A senior official of the Maharashtra Home Department told *The Indian Express*: "The Maharashtra DGP received a notification from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) that the case has been handed over to the NIA."

The Centre's decision is likely to further accentuate the debate over federalism and whether the NIA Act, which allows the agency to suo motu take over a scheduled offence case in any state, violates the federal structure of the Constitution. The Chhattisgarh government had earlier this month challenged the consti-

tutionality of the NIA Act in the Supreme Court.

The move took the state government by surprise. "Law and order is a state subject and without informing the Maharashtra government at all, the Home Ministry has given the case to NIA. This is unconstitutional and wrong. We were trying to reach to the root of why the case was registered when they took it away. They should not have interfered," Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh told *The Indian Express*.

It was in the Elgar Parishad case that Pune Police used the 'Urban Naxal' term. Police said they had found a letter from one of the arrested accused, Delhi-based activist Rona Wilson, which allegedly pointed to a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At the review meeting held by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Deshmukh Thursday morning, the then Additional Commissioner of Pune Police, Shivaji Bodake, and the investigating officer,

ACP Shivaji Pawar, elaborated on the evidence they had in the case. Sources said it was pointed out to police that the so-called letter that was sent via email did not appear to have two time stamps, both of the sender and receiver, and did not appear to be authentic.

Sources in the security establishment in Delhi said intelligence agencies recently provided inputs to the Union Home Ministry that some activists associated with Left organisations were offering financial assistance to those organising protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. "It was after this that Delhi got serious about taking over the Elgar Parishad case," a security establishment officer said.

Currently, a two-member commission, comprising retired Calcutta High Court Chief Justice J N Patel and former Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sumit Mullick, set up in February 2018 by the previous BJP government, is also probing the sequence of events leading to the Bhima Koregaon

violence on January 1, 2018. The commission's term expires February 8. State government officials said there was no clarity on how Friday's decision would impact the review meeting or the functioning of the commission.

Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi leader Prakash Ambedkar accused the Centre of trying to scuttle the probe. "They have done this to ensure that the truth does not come out," he said.

The BJP countered the allegations stating that leaders of the coalition government were commenting on the case from the day they took charge. "The remarks being made raise the suspicion that they are trying to protect the Naxals who are accused in the case. The NIA has taken over the case to ensure transparent investigation," said senior BJP leader and former Maharashtra minister Vinod Tawde. "Why are they worried? NIA is not an institution belonging to the BJP or Prime Minister Modi. It is the apex investigative authority in the country," he said.

proactive filtering for all unlawful content could be replaced by a "re-upload prevention" provision — it will prevent re-uploading of certain specific categories of content deemed illegal and taken down by platforms.

Social media intermediaries will still be required to provide user data within 72 hours in response to a government surveillance request, and have content-takedown timelines of 24 hours for content declared "unlawful".

Vijayvargiya

were not eating roti" and concluded that they were from Bangladesh.

When contacted by *The Indian Express*, Vijayvargiya said his comments, which were made in Indore Thursday, had been "twisted" by rivals and that he was only trying to drive home the importance of the Act to "differentiate between refugees and infiltrators".

"They were not eating rotis, they could not speak or understand Hindi. They could not tell me which district they belonged to. If they had told me which district they were from, I would have understood because I know West Bengal very well. But it was clear that they had no idea about it," Vijayvargiya said.

Reacting to the BJP national general secretary's remarks, the Congress said they established concerns about the manner in which the BJP-led NDA government is likely to conduct the National Population Register (NPR) exercise by profiling people on the basis of religion, language, community and eating habits.

"If a responsible senior leader of the BJP can today declare someone as a foreigner and infiltrator because he or she is having poha, if you can profile a person's nationality and connect it to national security,

this is the reason why we are saying this government will use NPR to profile people," Congress leader Sushmita Dev said.

Dev demanded an apology from Vijayvargiya for "instilling fear in the minds of the people", and a clarification from the BJP.

In a video clip from Thursday's seminar, Vijayvargiya is heard saying in Hindi: "Around 2 crore refugees and infiltrators are there in our country, around 1 crore in Bengal itself. They are around but you cannot even imagine where all they are. I will give you an example. My son Kalpesh is getting married, and his room is being built. One day I reached home around 9 pm. Whenever someone comes home during our meal, we feed them. When I came in front of the labourers, they were eating a lot of poha in a big plate. I asked why they were eating poha at this time and not roti.

They said they do not eat roti, they only eat poha. I grew suspicious about which country they belong to since they do not eat roti."

He is heard saying: "When I asked from where they were, their supervisor said, 'sir, they are from Bengal'. I asked from where in Bengal, they couldn't say anything. I got suspicious and asked where are you from. Then the contractor said maybe they are outsiders. I asked him how could you make them work at my home. The contractor told me they come very cheap. They work for food twice a day and Rs 300, while workers from here take Rs 600 and work only till 5 pm. They were from Bangladesh."

During the seminar, the BJP leader also claimed that a "Bangladeshi terrorist" was keeping a watch on him for the last one-and-a-half years. "Whenever I go out, six armed security personnel follow me.

Karnataka BJP MP booked for spreading religious hatred in Kerala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 24

THE KERALA Police on Friday registered an FIR against Karnataka BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje on charges of promoting religious hatred after she tweeted on Wednesday that several hindu families in Malappuram district were being denied water as they supported the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

The police said Karandlaje was booked under section 153 (A) of the IPC.

She had tweeted on Wednesday saying, "Kerala is taking baby steps to become another Kashmir. Hindus of Kuttippuram panchayat were denied water supply as they supported CAA-2019." Along with the tweet, she had posted two photographs in which women were waiting with pots for the supply of drinking water.

The case was registered

against Shobha based on a complaint from advocate Subash Chandran.

Officials said the pictures she posted were from last year.

Residents of a Dalit colony in Kuttippuram have been facing an acute shortage of drinking water. Several families used to draw water from a well owned by one Mohammed Ali.

Earlier this month, the residents of the colony had taken part in a BJP-sponsored CAA campaign meeting. Subsequently, it was alleged that Ali started denying 12 families access to water.

Panchayat member Vaseema Valeri rubbished the allegations and said that families were drawing water from Ali's well as recently as two days ago. "Only 2-3 families were earlier dependent on Ali's well. Recently, when more families started coming, he wanted to be careful so that nobody is able to exploit the water. Unfortunately, this has become linked to the CAA issue," she said.

UP Diwas: Foundation stone laid for 18 Atal Residential Schools

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 24

SAYING THAT his government would offer support to all the needy, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on the occasion of Uttar Pradesh Divas Friday, laid foundation stone of 18 Atal Residential Schools for each of the 18 divisions in the state, which would be meant for children of labourers as well as the destitute.

Referring to Uttar Pradesh as the state where the "most holy river in the world," the Ganga, flows and the state which the country gave the most number of Prime Ministers, Adityanath said that in 70 years of history, no one bothered to look into the glorious past of the state. He claimed that it was when his government came to power that on the recommendation of former Governor Ram Naik, it was decided to celebrate UP Divas on January 24, 2018, for the first time.

"Pradesh mein jiska koi nahi,

uska sashan hoga," said Chief Minister, while announcing and laying foundation stone of 18 Atal Residential Schools in the state. Chief Minister said that these schools would be built on the lines of Navyodaya Vidyalaya.

Referring to Uttar Pradesh as the land of Lord "Ram" and "Krishna", Adityanath said "We are celebrating UP Divas for the third time today but 70 years have been completed and in 67-68 years, no one had the time to know about our own past to learn something from it." He further added that no society or nation can move forward by forgetting the past. "The glorious traditions of the past inspire us to move forward, and on the basis of past experience, we make plans to build our future" said Chief Minister.

He reminded people that holiest river of the world Ganga flows through longest distance in Uttar Pradesh, confluence of Ganga and Yamuna takes place in Uttar Pradesh, it is the land of Ram, who gave us the concept of

What is happening in this country? Will people from outside enter and spread so much terror?" he asked.

On the CAA, he said: "Don't get confused by rumours. The CAA is in the interest of the country. This law will provide asylum to genuine refugees and identify intruders who are a threat to the country's internal security."

Referring to Vijayvargiya's claims about a "Bangladeshi terrorist", Chief Minister Kamal Nath's media coordinator Narendra Saluja said: "If he has not lodged a complaint, it means he is deliberately making such comments to create an atmosphere... Why was he silent before the CAA?"

Vijayvargiya, the BJP general secretary in charge of West Bengal, has been vocal in the party's high-decibel campaign on the CAA and the proposed nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Broadband back in Valley

and the freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of Internet enjoys Constitutional protection under Article 19(1)(a) and Article 19(1)(g)."

The J&K Home department, in its order Friday, stated that "access shall be limited to whitelisted sites and not to any social media applications allowing peer to peer communication and Virtual Private Network Application". It said data services shall be available on post-paid mobiles and on pre-paid mobile SIM cards "of such holders whose credentials have been verified as per the norms applicable for the post-paid connections". Network speed will be restricted to 2G. These restrictions will be reviewed post January 31.

In case of fixed-line connectivity, only 301 whitelisted sites, the list of which has been expanded to include news websites, will be restored on January 25.

Until now, the whitelist had 153 websites comprising four emailing sites such as gmail and outlook, 15 banking websites including RBI, J&K Bank, PayPal and Western Union; three employment websites, 38 educational websites including indianaresults, IGNOU and websites for five J&K based universities, three schools and Wikipedia.

Ram Rajya and Krishna, who taught us neither to show ourselves as helpless nor to run from problems.

"Na deenta dikhayenge aur na palayn karenge," said CM, citing it as the message of Krishna.

Chief Minister informed that because of One district One product scheme launched by his Government in the first year of UP Divas, the exports have increased to 28 per cent at a time, when country's export showed the growth rate of 7-8 per cent. He said that one the second UP Divas last year, his government had launched Vishwakarma Samman Yojna and this year foundation stone of Atal Residential Schools is being laid.

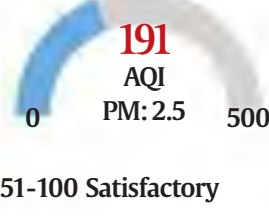
During the event, while sports persons were conferred Laxmibai and Laxman awards, with a financial assistance of Rs 3.11 lakh each as award money. Informing the gathering that today was "Mauni Amavasya", Chief Minister said that by 8 am in the morning, around 50 lakh people had already taken bath in the holy river in Prayagraj.



0-50 Good

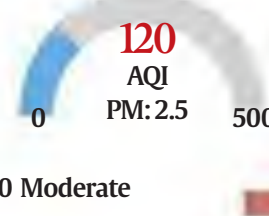
ASHOK VIHAR

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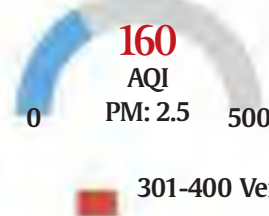
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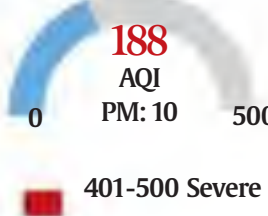
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DWARKA-SECTOR 8

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24-yr-old found dead at Taj suite, song lyrics part of suicide note

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE DECOMPOSED body of a 24-year-old man was found inside a suite at Taj Ambassador Hotel Friday afternoon. A purported suicide note was recovered from the spot, which had the lyrics of a song by the band Linkin Park: *“In the end, it doesn’t even matter.”*

Police said the man, Karan Chandra, stayed with his father, a psychiatrist, in South Delhi’s Malviya Nagar area. His elder sister and mother live separately in Saket, police said. “He was a platinum customer and had been staying at the hotel since January 19. He specifically asked hotel staff to give him a room with less sunlight, and was put up in a suite on the third floor,” a senior police officer said.

“On January 20, he put a ‘Do Not Disturb’ tag outside his suite and told hotel staff not to disturb him as he was working with an overseas company during odd hours,” a senior police officer said.

The incident came to light around 3.45 pm Friday, when hotel staff tried to approach him regarding his check-out date. “The duty manager tried to contact him on his mobile number and intercom, but there was no response. The staff came to check and started knocking on his door, but he did not respond. The room was locked from the inside, and they entered after using master key of the suite. On entering, they found the bedroom locked and sensed a foul smell. A PCR was made at

In a purported suicide note, Karan Chandra (24) said he was committing suicide and left behind contact numbers of his father and sister. The note also had the lyrics of a song by the band Linkin Park: “In the end, it doesn’t even matter”

4.10 pm and police reached the spot. The door of the bedroom was opened and Karan was found lying on his bed,” an officer said.

DCP (New Delhi) Dr Eish Singhal said inquest proceedings are being conducted under CrPC section 174.

In a purported suicide note recovered from the spot, Karan said he was committing suicide and left two contact numbers — of his father and sister.

“We found some sleeping pills and liquor bottles in the room. Prime facie, it appears he died due to an overdose of medicines and liquor, but things will be clear after conducting his post-mortem. There were no injury marks and his body has been preserved at the mortuary in RML hospital,” the officer said.

His family has been informed about the incident. Police said they will have more clarity on why he took the step after officers speak to his family members.

Enrol remaining JNU students under existing fee structure: HC

‘Burden of paying salary... cannot be put on students in govt-run institutions’

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE DELHI High Court Friday directed the JNU administration to allow its students, who have not yet registered for the ongoing winter semester, to enrol as per the old Hostel Manual and without charging any late fee or penalty. A bench of Justice Rajiv Shakdher issued notice to JNU and sought its response on the Students’ Union’s plea challenging the Inter-Hall Administration decision amending the Hostel Manual which, it claimed, was passed “illegally” in October without discussion with the Union.

While directing the students to register within a week, the court suggested the JNU administration to establish dialogue

with students’ representatives and resolve the issue. “You cannot say you will not engage. That’s my concern,” the judge said. It said the students of the reserved category can also register as per the old manual.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Pinky Anand, appearing for JNU, however, contended that 90% of university students have registered themselves as per the new Hostel Manual.

The ASG opposed the court’s suggestion to keep the increased hostel fee in abeyance for the time being, in view of concerns regarding payment of salaries to the daily wage/contractual/out-sourced staff employed by them.

The court replied, “Those who have paid, have paid. If 90% have paid, then your financial concerns have been more or less taken care of... For now engage



JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh filed the plea

with students, have a dialogue...”

“The burden of paying salary to contractual employees cannot be put on students in government-run institutions. You (var-sity) need to find the money. Maybe the Ministry of Human Resource Development can find the funds. The government has to fund public education. It can-

not get out of it,” it added.

The ASG, who was accompanied by advocates Balendu Shekhar, Harsh Ahuja and Kushal Sharma, further told the court that the new manual was introduced as per communications from the UGC and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The ASG said the University Grants Commission was already in dialogue with the students.

Noting that MHRD and UGC are not party to the hearing, it sought their stand on the issue raised in a petition filed by JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, its vice-president, general secretary and joint secretary. The court listed the matter for further hearing on February 28. The petitioners were represented by senior counsel Akhil Sibal and advocates Abhik Chimni and Aman Shukla.

Cops question former Congress MLA over December 15 Jamia violence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE SPECIAL Investigation Team probing the violence during a protest against the new citizenship law outside Jamia Millia Islamia last month questioned former Congress MLA from Okhla, Asif Mohammad, Friday over his alleged role in inciting the violence. Two others, AISA member and Jamia student Chandan Kumar and a local leader Ashu Khan, were also called to the Crime Branch office for questioning on Friday.

Police also arrested a 26-year-old electrician, Md Furkan, for allegedly inciting violence and rioting during the protest. Police alleged Furkan was seen in CCTV footage with a container near a burning DTC bus.

On December 15, violence broke out during an anti-CAA protests near Jamia. Four DTC buses were burnt, 10 police bikes damaged and protesters allegedly pelted stones. In the subsequent crackdown on protesters, police barged into Jamia campus and assaulted students.

Asif is named in one of the FIRs lodged at New Friends

Colony police station for allegedly inciting the violence last month. He was questioned for over six hours and was released around 7 pm. He was accused of allegedly rioting at Jamia Nagar and his phone was seized by police. He said that on the day of the incident, he was at Kalindi Kunj to support other protesters.

Khan told *The Indian Express* he was called along with the others at 11 am and questioned for around seven hours. “We were questioned and later we were given a form where we had to write about our whereabouts. Police alleged we took out a rally

and burnt buses but we didn’t do anything like that. We were only supporting anti-CAA protesters,” he said. Police said they have recorded the statements of the accused, adding that they will be called in later for further questioning. Kumar was unavailable for comment.

On Furkan’s arrest, a senior officer said, “Furkan was seen pelting stones outside Jamia. We have recovered CCTV footage of him with a vessel near a burning bus.” Furkan’s father, Naeem, said “He was not part of any protest. He was trying to help people by filling water in the container.”

Jitters among slum residents as Gurgaon cops ask for IDs

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, JANUARY 24

RESIDENTS OF slums near Gurgaon’s Ghasola village, most of whom hail from villages in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh and work in the informal sector, were left shaken Friday morning, when police personnel turned up at their doorsteps around 7 am, demanding photo ID proofs.

While police termed this a “routine security measure” in anticipation of Republic Day and said it is carried out every year, residents raised apprehensions against the backdrop of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC).

A slum resident, who hails from West Bengal and runs a kirana shop in the area, said he was considering returning to his native village for a while. “I have my Aadhaar card and voter ID as proof, but the address on both is of my village in West Bengal,” said the resident, who did not wish to be identified. “At least back home, I have a support system in case someone tries to harass me or my family.”

A 43-year-old woman, who also hails from West Bengal and works as a domestic help in a

gated condominium, said: “Security is fine, but why are ID proofs of people living in other villages and houses not required? Why only our community? I work in a condominium and have to submit my identity proof to get a society gate pass. Why should we have to keep proving our identity at every turn?”

Another domestic help added, “It’s not like we can just pick up our things and return to our village. We are poor people with families to support.”

Gurgaon Police insisted these fears are unfounded, and ID proof checks have nothing to do with CAA or NRC.

“This is a routine exercise before Republic Day; it happens every year and there is nothing specific or special about it. We are already in close proximity to Delhi, and this is done every year,” said Chander Mohan, DCP (East).

“We are not asking for Aadhaar cards specifically, just for identity proof, to ensure there is no unknown element or threat element here. We have been doing this for two-three days and will continue until Republic Day. So far, we have not found anybody who could not produce documentation,” he said.

TV journalist alleges attack in Shaheen Bagh, FIR registered

New Delhi: A TV journalist alleged he was attacked by protesters at Shaheen Bagh Friday. Police said they received a complaint from Deepak Chaurasia, consulting editor of *News Nation*, alleging he was beaten up by a mob and robbed of his camera. DCP (South East) Chinmoy Biswal said an FIR has been registered against un-

known persons.

A video uploaded by Chaurasia on Twitter purportedly shows a group of men stopping him and snatching his mic. Chaurasia was accompanied by two crew members. Police said the FIR has been lodged under IPC section 394 (Voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery). **ENS**

I HEREBY
DECLARES K BAGGA (65)
AAP, Krishna Nagar

TOTAL ASSETS* (2020)

₹8.28 Cr

MOVEABLE ASSETS

₹96.86 LAKH

CASH: ₹1.19 L

JEWELLERY: ₹10.08 L

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

Rs 7.31 Cr

Assets

Agricultural land ₹56 L

Houses ₹1.25 Cr

Commercial buildings ₹10 L

TOTAL ASSETS (2015)

₹741 Cr

MOVEABLE ASSETS

₹47.05 LAKH

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

Rs 6.94 Cr

EDUCATIONAL

QUALIFICATION

M.Com, LLB,
Meerut University

* including spouse's assets

DRANIL GOYAL (62)
BJP, Krishna Nagar

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)

₹64.49 Cr

MOVEABLE ASSETS

₹6.30 Cr

CASH: ₹2.99 L

JEWELLERY: ₹1.27 L

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

₹58.18 Cr

Assets

Agricultural land Nil

Houses ₹13.03

Commercial buildings ₹36.33 Cr

EDUCATIONAL

QUALIFICATION:

Master of Surgery

DRASHOK WALIA (71)
Congress, Krishna Nagar

TOTAL ASSETS (2020)

₹34.17 Cr

MOVEABLE ASSETS

₹12.95 Cr

CASH: ₹96,000

JEWELLERY: ₹1.90 L

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

Rs 21.22 Cr

Assets

Agricultural land NA

Houses ₹2.94 cr

Commercial buildings ₹18.27 cr

TOTAL ASSETS (2015)

₹33.28 Cr

MOVEABLE ASSETS

₹3.28 Cr

IMMOVABLE ASSETS

Rs 30 Cr

EDUCATIONAL

QUALIFICATION:

MBBS

'MADE EVEN SHAH SPEAK OF SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS'

Stay with them, vote for us: CM to BJP, Cong workers



VIEW FROM THE TOP At Kejriwal's public meeting in Nangloi, Friday. Praveen Khanna

SOURAV ROY BARMAN

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE AAP has changed the grammar of politics in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Friday, suggesting that it compelled even Union Home Minister Amit Shah to talk about schools, hospitals and unauthorised colonies while campaigning for the BJP.

Addressing his first public rally in the run-up to the February 8 polls, Kejriwal appealed to workers of both BJP and Congress to remain with their parties, but cast votes for AAP, "so that the pace of development doesn't suffer".

The rally was held in the courtyard of a market in Rohini's Sector 9, a constituency that had bucked the AAP wave in 2015.

AAP candidate C.L. Gupta was defeated by BJP leader Vijender Gupta by around 5,000 votes.

On Friday, C.L. Gupta was present on the dais, along with the party's candidate for the 2020 polls Rajesh Nama Bansiwala, who runs a chain of sweet shops in the area, which falls under the North West Delhi Lok Sabha constituency.

Kejriwal also read out the AAP's 10 guarantees — which cover a range of areas from water and power to education and health — but the highlight of his speech was his emphasis on the "shift" in the city's political dynamics, "where only work matters". "I felt very good after listening to Amit Shah's speech yesterday. In his speech, he spoke about schools, hospitals, unauthorised colonies. You people (pointing to the audience) have

at least changed politics. *Delhi ke andar kaam ki baat chalegi ab*. Seeking votes in the name of caste, community and religion will not work anymore," he said.

On Friday, Shah said Kejriwal and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi speak in the language of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan. He also accused the AAP of "instigating" riots in the capital.

BJP MLA candidates including Kapil Mishra and Tajinder Singh Bagga have been trying to corner the AAP over the Shaheen Bagh protests against CAA and NRC. Kejriwal did talk about CAA and NRC in his town hall interactions, but only when his comments were sought.

On Friday, he stuck to the theme of development, *bijli-paani, shiksha*, and his efforts as chief minister over the last five years to fulfill the role of Delhi's

"elder son", one who "pays the bills, takes care of education of children, medical needs of the family, takes the elderly on pilgrimages".

"Never has it happened before that a party comes seeking votes in the name of schools and hospitals before the polls. Jats seek votes in the name of their community, baniyas do, Muslims do. BJP seeks votes in the name of Jats and non-Jats in Haryana, Maratha and non-Maratha in Maharashtra, Patel and non-Patel, Hindu-Muslim in Gujarat," he said.

He said an RSS worker told him a few days ago that he will keep his ideology aside while voting in the Delhi polls, "because his son studies in a Delhi government school and he has seen the kind of transformative work we have carried out in education".

National issues, hyperlocal reach: Shah's capital plan

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

WITH BACK-to-back padyatras and late night meetings at the BJP's 14 Pant Marg office, Home Minister Amit Shah has assumed a firm grip of the party's campaign in Delhi. Such meetings over the last three days have had party president J.P. Nadda, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, Delhi in-charge Shyam Jai, state president Manoj Tiwari, minister Harsh Vardhan, Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel and other MPs in attendance.

Senior leaders privy to the meeting said the party's plan is to take "national issues to the hyper-local level". "The party plans to hold small gathering ranging from 50 to 500 people and tell them how confusion is being spread on CAA and NRC. They will also promote work done by the Centre on triple talaq, Ram Mandir, Article 370 along with regularisation of unauthorised colonies."

Constituency-wise plans with specific issues plaguing each area are also being drawn up, and leaders will be expected to touch on key problems during the outreach programmes.

Shah has already held gatherings at 11 places in Delhi,



Shah and Tiwari have dinner at a BJP worker's house

touching all seven Lok Sabha constituencies. Shah will also be holding a volunteers' meet on Saturday at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Weighlifting Auditorium and nukkad sabhas in two other places.

From his visit to West Delhi's Dwarka on December 17 to inaugurate the Bharat Vandana Park to laying the foundation stone of the DDA cycle project in South Delhi's Tughlakabad and a transit-oriented hub in East Delhi's Karkardooma park, he used each occasion to launch an attack on the opposition Aam Aadmi Party and Congress.

In New Delhi constituency's Lajpat Nagar, he did a door to door rally in support of CAA,

while public meetings were held in North West's Nangloi on Thursday and North East's Karawal Nagar, Mustafabad and Gokalpuri on Friday.

On most occasions, he criticised Congress and AAP over their stand on CAA, and for allegedly delaying regularisation of unauthorised colonies and stalling central schemes.

On the late-night meetings with Shah, Javadekar said, "We all go to these meetings as *karyakartas* (workers) of the party and not as ministers. These meetings are an occasion to discuss party strategy and plan outreach programmes."

He said more than 12,000 nukkad sabhas, padyatras, and small gatherings will be done by leaders, and some of them will see the Home Minister's and state president's participation.

He said the target is to have a meeting — be it by "a big leader or small leader" — in each booth.

There are 13,463 polling booths in the capital. Party leaders have done over 400 such meetings in the past two days, including many by district presidents and councillors and some by ministers. Leaders have also been advised to stay in jhuggis at night. Goel had spent a night at Choona Bhatti jhuggi on Thursday.

Not afraid of any vote bank, says Shah, cites Ram Mandir, Article 370

SUKRITA BARUAH

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

FRAMING THE Delhi election as a fight against those doing "vote bank politics", Home Minister Amit Shah said that the BJP is not afraid of any vote bank. Shah was speaking at North East Delhi's Mustafabad while campaigning for the party's candidate, sitting MLA Jagdish Pradhan.

"There are two ideologies facing each other. On one side there's Modi's ideology of *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas*. On the other side, there's the ideology of those who do greedy vote bank politics and create riots in the country..."

He also accused Congress and AAP of causing riots in Delhi, and alluded to deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's statement that he stands with Shaheen Bagh protesters. In response, Sisodia said: "If there are any disturbances in law and order, the Home Minister is answerable. Unfortunately, the Home Minister is busy looking for CCTVs and WiFi in Delhi; clearly he doesn't understand that there are law and order issues. And as far as this protest is concerned, I think the protest is about certain demands concerning the Home Minister, and I think he should speak to them (protesters)."

Bringing up the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, Shah said, "In all these years have you seen riots in Delhi? Didn't you see them suddenly? You know who is behind them, you know who is participating in them. Even today they say that they are with Shaheen Bagh. They want their vote bank... People in Delhi are not safe. If people give them control of Delhi again, then our safety is in god's hands."

"People of Mustafabad —

Shah accused Cong and AAP of causing riots in Delhi, and alluded to deputy CM's remark that he stands with Shaheen Bagh

whether you are from Uttaranchal, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Gujarat, UP or Bengal — don't you all want Kashmir to be a part of India forever? For 70 years the Congress kept Article 370 and two flags flew within Kashmir. Seventy years ago, Jawaharlal Nehru applied Article 370. No one had the courage to lay a finger on it. Why not? Because they were afraid of their vote bank. We BJP are not afraid of any vote bank."

He added: "For 500 years, citizens of the country wanted that a Ram temple that touches the sky be built in Ayodhya... but they were once again being stopped by their vote bank... We are not scared of whether we will get votes or not, we know we will get your votes."

Mustafabad is one of the five constituencies from which both AAP and Congress have fielded Muslim candidates. Within the constituency itself, a women-led protest against CAA and NRC has been taking place for the last week.

Before Shah joined the meeting, East Karawal Nagar councillor Puneet Sharma said the name of the constituency should be changed from Mustafabad to Shiv Vihar, which is the name of the pocket in which the meeting had taken place. Other local leaders referred to the contest in the constituency as a fight between "two Alis" and "one Bajrangbali".

Choice between Jinnah wali Azadi or Bharat Mata ki Jai: Javadekar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

SHARPENING THE attack on the ruling AAP and Congress over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday said people need to choose between 'Jinnah wali Azadi' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai's. Citing ongoing protests at Shaheen Bagh, Javadekar Friday said, "We have seen 'Jinnah wali Azadi' slogan being raised there. Now, Delhi people need to decide if they want 'Jinnah wali Azadi' or 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'."

He blamed AAP and Congress for "instigating" violent protests against CAA in the capital.

"Delhi people should ask both parties why they instigated violence. The nexus of AAP and Congress is behind the Shaheen Bagh protest. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia have supported the protest," alleged Javadekar.

The protest at Shaheen Bagh started mid-December.

"They (AAP and Congress) are misleading and poisoning



Prakash Javadekar at the press conference

the minds of minorities, including children," said Javadekar.

He asserted that CAA was not going to affect citizenship of any Indian, and blamed political parties for raising the bogey of CAA and NRC to defeat BJP in polls.

"Kejriwal sympathises with people raising 'Jinnah wali Azadi' slogans, not the persecuted minorities," he said.

AAP has blamed the BJP of diverting attention from issues of development ahead of Delhi polls. Kejriwal had in the past said the more pressing need was to give jobs to unemployed youth.

FIR against Mishra for 'Ind vs Pak', Shaheen Bagh poll tweets

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

DELHI POLICE Friday lodged an FIR against BJP candidate Kapil Mishra for his tweets comparing the Assembly elections to an "India versus Pakistan contest", and accusing AAP and Congress of creating "mini-Pakistans" like Shaheen Bagh.

The Returning Officer (RO) from Model Town constituency, from where Mishra is contesting, directed the police to file an FIR.

"On the complaint of Returning Officer AC-18 Model Town, an FIR against Kapil Misra... has been registered under section 125 Representation of People Act," said DCP (North West) Vijayanta Arya.

The Election Commission had earlier asked Twitter to remove Mishra's tweet and a showcase notice was also issued to him by RO Banbari Lal for "violation of poll code". Mishra responded to the notice, but the RO did not find his response satisfactory.

The Delhi CEO had last night written to the EC seeking removal



Mishra's response was found unsatisfactory

of Mishra's tweets, following which on Friday, the EC asked Twitter to take them down. Mishra said his comments had been "taken out of context".

On his comparison of Shaheen Bagh to Pakistan, he said, "It is likely that in these protests, there are separatists and rogue elements from across the border, using women to propagate their seditious ideals and hurt India administratively and economically."

On India vs Pakistan statement, he said he "merely referred to two countries, two entities who are not involved in any election process...at present".

'VETERANS, FIRST-TIMERS IN FRAY'

With 4 doctors each, Cong & BJP hope for some healing touch

ASTHA SAXENA

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

WITH AN aim to cure Delhi's problems, several doctors have taken a plunge into politics this poll season. While four doctors have been fielded by the Congress and BJP each, AAP has no medical practitioner on the list.

In East Delhi's Krishna Nagar, two doctors — a veteran politician and a first-timer — are in the fray to contest the assembly polls. A four-time MLA, Dr AK Wallia, who

also held important portfolios in Sheila Dikshit's government, is contesting against BJP's Dr Anil Goyal, who is fighting polls for the first time.

A general physician, Wallia holds an MBBS degree. Recalling his canvassing days in 1999, he explained how much of a connect a medical practitioner has with people. "While I was campaigning in Laxmi Nagar, a woman came and asked me whether I will be treating her or not. She knew me as a doctor... We have a direct personal connection with the



Dr Anil Goyal campaigns in his constituency

people. Even now, I treat patients who come to me," said Wallia (71), who is also running a nursing home in Laxmi Nagar since 1983.

On the other hand, Dr Goyal already has a list ready with the changes he wishes to make in the city's healthcare system. A urologist, he also runs an 80-bedded nursing home in Krishna Nagar. Unhappy with AAP's mohalla clinics, he believes the health scheme needs to be altered.

"If elected to power, we will have an alternative model of mohalla clinic. At present, mohalla

clinics are not equipped to deal with emergency care services. We will upgrade all dispensaries to provide basic medical care. For my constituency, there is only one government-run hospital, Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya, and that is also in shambles. We will increase the number of beds, doctors and upgrade the overall infrastructure," he said. Goyal was also president of the Delhi Medical Association in 2014-2015 and has been an elected member of Delhi Medical Council. He is also the co-chairman of Delhi

BJP's doctor cell.

Delhi Congress chief Subash Chopra acknowledged that doctors are "well-connected with people". "They deal with them on regularly, and when inside the government, they can address issues that directly affect patients."

Other doctors fielded are: Dr Naresh Kumar (Mundka), Dr Narender Nath (Shahdara) and Dr SP Singh (Gokulpur) from the Congress, and Dr SC Vats (Shakurbasti), Dr Mahendar Nagpal (Wazirpur) and Dr SCL Gupta (Sangam Vihar) from BJP.



TIT FOR TAT



Mr Kejriwal, you had said you'll provide free WiFi across the capital. I looked for WiFi the entire way here — battery ran out but I didn't get WiFi

AMIT SHAH

Home Minister



Sir, apart from free WiFi, we have arranged for battery charging facilities. Delhi provides 200 units of electricity for free

ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Chief Minister

CM shedding crocodile tears: Cong

New Delhi: Delhi Congress chief Subash Chopra said that both BJP and AAP were indulging in shadow boxing on the issue of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to fool people of Delhi. He said the "stony silence of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal on CAA proves his complicity with the BJP" in the matter. Chopra said that protests at Shaheen Bagh have been going on for the past one month, but Kejriwal and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia never bothered to support the agitation. "Kejriwal is now shedding crocodile tears with an eye on Delhi polls," he said. **ENS**

TIHAR PREPARES FOR HANGING

Dec 16 convicts told to decide date of last meeting with kin

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

A WEEK before the execution of the four death row convicts in the December 16, 2012 gangrape-murder case, jail officials said preparations are underway and the men have also been asked to decide when to have a “last meeting” with their families.

The four — Mukesh (32), Pawan Gupta (25), Vinay Sharma (26) and Akshay Kumar Singh (31) — are scheduled to be hanged on February 1.

Officials said they have been keeping a close eye on the four, especially since Vinay and Pawan had skipped meals over



The convicts are to be executed on February 1

the last three days. “Our doctors counselled the two and they resumed their prescribed diet. Still, they sometimes refuse or leave

the food. We are trying our best to keep them mentally fit.”

In keeping with norms, authorities have reduced TV and newspaper access to the men — to reduce the “mental stress” they face. Two in-house doctors give them regular counselling and conduct weekly medical tests to keep a record of their health.

Sandeep Goel, DG, Tihar Jail, said, “As of now, none of them has told us when they want to meet their families for the last time. We are following the norms. For now, families of the convicts come and meet them twice a week. Although only two-three family members per prisoner are allowed, we are allowing more for them.” He said

the convicts can pick any date till January 30 for the last meeting.

Goel said after the hanging, the bodies of the four men will be handed over to their families. The authorities will first take the bodies for a post-mortem and then for cremation outside Tihar Jail. The family will be allowed to perform last rites. When Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru was hanged on February 9, 2013, his body was cremated by officials inside Tihar Jail number 4.

The execution will take place inside jail number 3 and the hangman, Pawan Jallad, will come to Delhi on January 30. Equipment for the hanging, like ropes and the stand, has been procured and tested.

Brazil President finds mention in CP protest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

AT A demonstration to build pressure on political parties ahead of the Delhi polls to tackle the city's air pollution crisis, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro found a mention. Students and environment activists Friday collected over 200 signatures at Connaught Place to build a consensus and demand a commitment from political parties to tackle air pollution. Demonstrators also held placards saying ‘#NoBolsonaro’, referring to the Brazilian president, who arrived in Delhi Friday on a four-day visit to India.

Bolsonaro will be the chief guest at the 71st Republic Day celebrations. Bhavreen Kandhari, an environment activist, said, “How can we have someone so anti-environment as the chief guest?” A climate change sceptic, Bolsonaro called climate change predictions a hoax during his election campaign and advocated allowing businesses to expand by rolling



At the protest, Friday

back environmental safeguards.

Samay Singh (61), a resident of Uttam Nagar, said: “They must act on air pollution. Metro fares are so high that poor people cannot afford it. I travel by buses, but they too are few in number and crowded.”

Also present was Ridhima Pandey (12), who was among 16 children, including climate activist Greta Thunberg, who filed a complaint at the UN Climate Action summit in New York last year to protest lack of government action on climate crisis. “Think about the children who are five years old. They are affected more than me,” Pandey said.

Convicts’ advocate says documents not being handed over

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE ADVOCATE appearing for two of four death row convicts in the December 16, 2012 gangrape-murder case Friday moved a Delhi court, alleging that Tihar Jail authorities were delaying handing over certain documents.

In his plea, advocate AP Singh alleged that jail authorities were yet to release documents needed to file curative petitions for convicts Akshay Kumar Singh (31) and Pawan Singh (25), and the mercy petition of Vinay Sharma (25).

The hanging of the four convicts is scheduled for February 1, after a Delhi court issued fresh death warrants last week.

Singh also prayed that the central jail authorities provide him with a copy of the original personal diary of convict Vinay Sharma, which may be used to

file his mercy petition.

Singh said he had expressed “an urgent will to file a mercy petition before the relevant authorities and undertook several steps to obtain relevant information to file it”.

He said Vinay wanted to attach his personal diary containing 70 pages with the mercy petition, and had asked the jail authorities to provide it. However, the diary is yet to be provided and the plea could not be filed as a result, he said.

The counsel said he had also sought some documents of convicts Pawan and Akshay, which have not been provided, and sought directions to Tihar Jail authorities to provide the documents on “an urgent basis”.

The case dates back to December 16, 2012, when a 23-year-old woman was gangraped and assaulted inside a moving bus in South Delhi. She died on December 29, 2012.



Not Much Change

RAHUL GANDHI has often spoken about giving women adequate representation in the Congress. But women are finding little representation in the party. For instance, there were only three women in the list of 35 office-bearers announced by the party for Kerala. And one of them is party stalwart K Karunakaran's daughter Padmaja. Interestingly, the party has tried to apply one person, one post principle in Kerala. While none of the MLAs and MPs have been included in the list of office-bearers, the two working presidents — Kodiakkunnil Suresh and K Sudhakaran — will continue in their posts. Appointed in 2018, both of them are Lok Sabha MPs.

Vow Of Absence

CPI'S RAJYA Sabha MP Binoy Viswam will not attend the Republic Day celebrations in Delhi to protest against the government's invitation to Brazil President Jair Messias Bolsonaro as chief guest. Viswam has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying it is astonishing that he has welcomed a leader whose "ideology and policies are tarnished by bigotry, misogyny, homophobia, and discrimination". Viswam mentioned about Bolsonaro's "apathy and inaction" towards the Amazon rainforest fire and reminded Modi that Bolsonaro had sought sanctions against India at the WTO for the aid provided by the government to struggling sugarcane farmers in our country.

Taking Stock

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi took feedback on CAA rallies organised by the BJP in the last cabinet meeting. Ministers present in the meeting gave an account of their interaction with the different sections of the society during the outreach exercise. They talked about the pro-CAA rallies being taken out in many cities. It is learnt that the feedback was generally positive. The ministers were told to continue their outreach without bothering for publicity. The J&K visit of some of the Union Ministers also came up for discussion.

Ready framework to stop criminalisation of politics: SC to EC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

EXPRESSING CONCERN over criminalisation of politics, the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Election Commission to come up with a framework to prevent this.

"This should be done at the earliest in the public interest," said a bench of Justices R F Nariman and S Ravindra Bhat. The bench asked the petitioner, Advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, and the poll panel to work it out in a week's time. "This should not be treated as an adversarial litigation. Both of you sit together and give a joint framework as what could be done to stop criminalisation of politics," it said.

Appearing for the EC, Senior Advocate Vikas Singh told the bench that directions given by it in September 2018, asking candidates to declare criminal cases against them in the media, had not helped curb the menace and urged it to ask political parties not to give tickets to people with a criminal background. He added that the EC had taken a series of steps to put an end to such criminalisation.

"Given the situation and current composition of Parliament,

MEA reminders before expiry of passports

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

STARTING SEPTEMBER last year, the Ministry of External Affairs has started reaching out to people whose passports are about to expire. The government will send SMS reminders before the passports expire.

The government will send two messages to the passport holders, first nine months before the passport is to expire, and the second reminder will be sent

Kathmandu invites Modi and Imran to Sagarmatha dialogue

SHUBHAJIT ROY
KATHMANDU, JANUARY 24

IN A fresh initiative, Nepal has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi, leaders from SAARC countries including Pakistan, China, and other European countries for Sagarmatha Sambaad in April this year.

Nepal Foreign minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said Kathmandu is waiting for Prime Minister Modi's confirmation. The *Sambaad* (dialogue) is named after the world's tallest mountain, Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest), which is also a symbol of friendship, he said, adding it will be a "fantastic idea" for all SAARC leaders to be present at the event, fashioned along the lines of the Shangri La Dialogue.

The theme for the first edition of the Sagarmatha Sambaad, scheduled from April 2-4, is 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity', Gyawali told a group of visiting Indian reporters. It will be held every two years.

The main objectives of the first edition of the *Sambaad* are to forge a common consensus among countries on the impending climate crisis and encourage political leaders to mobilise political will to tackle the menace. It is expected to be at-

Gadkari: Issues with FASTags are starting problems

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 24

WITH FASTAGS mandatory at toll plazas on all National Highways in the country, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari termed the chaos prevailing at several plazas, while commuters make the transition, as "starting problems".

He was speaking to the media in Manesar, barely 6 km away from the Kherki Daula toll plaza — one of the places where commuters are grappling first hand with traffic congestion and confusion as FASTags come into use.

Toll officials said poor quality of FASTags makes them difficult for the RFID machines to read. They also cited "poor maintenance" of the tags themselves and said the tags often have low balance leading to delays as the bearers have to then pay by cash. Commuters have to pay double the toll amount in case they are in the FASTag only lane and are paying by other modes.

"We have received complaints, and are continuously working to improve..." he said. "Complaints from each toll are reviewed by the Chairman daily. These are starting issues. The FASTag is now in use by 72 per cent commuters all over India, and 78 per cent of the commuters at Kherki Daula specifically," he said.

Chhattisgarh scraps pension scheme for MISA detainees during Emergency

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, JANUARY 24

THE CHHATTISGARH government has scrapped a special pension scheme launched by the BJP administration in 2008 for those detained under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency.

Under the Loknayak Jaiprakash Narayan (MISA/Defence of India Rules (DIR) DIR detainees) Samman Nidhi Rule, which was repealed on January 23, people who spent three months in jail under MISA provisions during the Emergency were being given Rs 10,000 per month. Those imprisoned for six months got Rs 15,000 per month and those jailed for over six months Rs 25,000, officials said.

In January 2019, the govern-

Explained Diplomatic window for Delhi, Islamabad

NEPAL'S MOVE to host an international dialogue on climate change in April gives a diplomatic opening to India and Pakistan, much before the SCO heads of government summit later this year. With Kathmandu keen to unlock the SAARC process, it remains to be seen whether India and Pakistan decide to join the dialogue at the Prime Minister's level or send their Environment Ministers.

tended by Environment ministers, scientists, experts, officials, think tanks from the countries, Gyawali said.

Responding to questions, he said Nepal is "ready and eager" to hand over the position to Pakistan, and expressed hope New Delhi and Islamabad sort out their differences through negotiations. "At least, we should sit on the table, and discuss," Gyawali said.

The minister also assured India that Nepal will not allow its soil to be used against its neighbours and the Himalayan country will not participate in any great games.

He said SAARC was a common home and identity for all the countries in the region, and that was encouraged by the participation of Foreign Ministers at an informal meeting on the sidelines of the UNGA.



Chief Justice of India S A Bobde at the 79th Foundation Day celebrations of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal in New Delhi on Friday. Praveen Khanna

Arbitrary tax collection results in social injustice, says CJI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

A WEEK ahead of the Union Budget, Chief Justice of India Sharad Bobde Friday said while tax evasion by citizens is social injustice, excessive and arbitrary tax collection by government also results in social injustice.

"Excessive taxation can be seen as a tool of creating social injustice by the government," he said addressing the 79th Foundation Day celebrations of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT).

Making a case for speedy adjudication of tax related dis-

"Nepal strongly believes in regionalism and multilateralism," he said, adding, "We are optimistic that leaders will be able to revive the SAARC."

On the issue of dispute over borders in Kalapani, Gyawali said the "baggage" from the past was handed over to the two countries, and now that both countries have strong and visionary leaders, they can resolve it through diplomatic processes.

"Nepal has conveyed its concerns. If India can resolve its boundary issues with other countries, why can't it do with Nepal," he said, adding "there is no alternative to diplomatic discussions".

Kathmandu has proposed talks at the level of the foreign secretaries, and expected a meeting soon. "If there is a will, there is a way," he said.

Hope India takes back demonetised notes worth Rs 7 cr, says Nepal minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KATHMANDU, JANUARY 24

NEPAL'S CENTRAL Bank is saddened with Rs 7 crore of demonetised Indian currency but India is not making "adjustments" to take back the notes, Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said on Friday, hoping the scrapped notes would be accepted by New Delhi.

On November 8, 2016, the Narendra Modi-led NDA government had announced a ban on Rs 500 and 1,000 notes to curb black money in the system.

"Around Rs 7 crore (Indian) is deposited in our Central Bank. It went through the banking channel. I don't know why India is not making adjustment," Gyawali said.

"We are not talking about the money which was transacted through the informal channels but through banking channels," Gyawali said.

"... We hope India will respond positively," Finance Minister Yuba Raj Khatiwada told PTI.



Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad in Sopore on Friday. Express

J&K will witness new dawn of peace: Prasad

In Srinagar, Pokhriyal says will not allow varsities to become centre of politics

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24

UNION LAW Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir will witness "a new dawn of peace and development" as various measures are underway to ensure holistic development of the Union Territory.

Prasad made his remarks in Baramulla district's Sopore. It was the third day of his visit to the Valley, as part of the Centre's outreach programme.

Prasad stated that the Centre is committed to ensure holistic development of all the regions of J&K, adding that several economic sectors, including horticulture and tourism, shall be developed and upgraded along modern lines.

Urging the people to cooperate in taking the region to new heights of development, the minister said that "time has come to change the fate of Kashmir through peace, progress and prosperity".

Prasad said the Sopore Fruit Mandi shall be developed as an e-mandi, wherein it shall be integrated with the rest of the fruit mandis of the country. He said that Sopore is best endowed with apple tourism and it can play a larger role in the socio-economic development of the region.

Continuing his interaction with the chairpersons of the Block Development Councils, he said that the 73rd and 74th Amendments shall be effectively implemented to strengthen democracy.

DMK calls farmers' agitation against Cauvery drilling plan

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JANUARY 24

CONDEMNING THE Centre's recent order stating environmental clearance and public consultation is not mandatory for hydrocarbon projects, the DMK has called for protest rallies by farmers in five districts of the Cauvery Delta on January 28, demanding that the Centre declare the region a "protected zone".

Known as the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu, the Cauvery region witnessed massive projects two years ago over the Centre's decision to launch a hydrocarbon project in the region by drilling about 341 wells to hunt for hydrocarbon reserves.

Targeting the Centre and the ruling AIADMK, DMK chief M K Stalin has demanded that the government order be cancelled with immediate effect and that the state cabinet take a strong stand against the project. "The Centre's decision is not only destroying the rice bowl but also plans to uproot the life of the agrarian community in the delta region. If the project is implemented, the delta region will see no agriculture production in the coming years," Stalin said. The protest rallies are to be held in the five districts where the proposed wells are to be drilled.

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami too has taken a strong stand in the matter by writing to the Prime Minister

A delegation of the Federation of Industrial Estate Sopore, that met the minister on Thursday, demanded the elevation of Sopore sub-division as a district. They also demanded the construction of a mini-secretariat in the town, hi-tech ambulances for SDH Sopore, and the upgrading of infrastructure in schools and health institutions.

A delegation of the Fruit Association Sopore demanded uninterrupted movement of apple-ferrying vehicles on the national highway, compensation to orchardists whose property got damaged during the recent heavy snowfall and during floods in 2014, exemption in Kisan Credit Card loans, establishment of testing lab for pesticides, establishment of a truck terminal in North Kashmir, and other issues of vital public importance.

Meanwhile, HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', in Srinagar on Friday, inaugurated 45 projects worth Rs 135 crore. He also inaugurated 25 Smart Schools in Srinagar.

Responding to a question on extremism in universities, he said, "There are more than 1,000 universities in the country, and they are the mainstay of any country and society. I have also said that universities are centres of learning and they should grow in mission mode in this direction. How do we come in international ranking, we cannot keep our students entangled in such small matters. That is why we will never let universities become the centre of this kind of politics."



DMK chief Stalin

Narendra Modi and Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar. He urged them to restore status quo to ensure prior environment clearance and public consultation is made mandatory for such projects.

Vedanta Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Limited have been given preliminary sanction to carry out the drilling process. According to a top state government official, Vedanta plans to drill about 116 wells in Puducherry and Villupuram and 158 wells in Nagapattinam and Karaikal at a cost of about Rs 13,000 crore.

Similarly, ONGC plans to drill 40 wells in Cuddalore and Nagapattinam and 27 in Cuddalore and Tiruvavur — in two different blocks — at a cost of about Rs 5,000 crore. A senior ONGC official said increase in consumption of petroleum products had necessitated the project.

A recent amendment to the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 states that obtaining environmental clearance and holding public consultations are not mandatory for "drilling in respect to off-shore and on-shore oil and gas exploration, development & production project".

9 EXPRESS NETWORK

PROTEST WATCH

MAHARASHTRA



The Vanchit Bahunjan Aghadi party called for a state bandh on Friday as part of its protest against the CAA and NRC. There were stray incidents of violence, but normal life remained largely unaffected. *Prashant Nadkar*

UTTAR PRADESH

300 booked for anti-CAA protests in Rae Bareli

Lucknow: An FIR was registered against 300 unidentified persons on Friday for allegedly staging a protest against the new citizenship law at Town Hall locality in Uttar Pradesh's Rae Bareli district. Police said the protestors blocked the road despite being informed that Section 144 of CrPc was invoked in the district. Solan area Circle Officer Vineet Singh said that on Thursday, several women reached Town Hall from different areas and staged protest, raising slogans that CAA should be rolled back. While police were busy trying to pacify the women, men in large numbers also arrived at the spot and joined the protest.

He added the protesters later withdrew their agitation and returned on Thursday evening. "We will identify people who participated the protest and taken action accordingly," said Singh. **ENS**

TAMIL NADU



Protesters in Chennai wave the Tricolour during a demonstration against the CAA. *PTI*

PUNJAB

Farmer organisations to protest on February 16

Jalandhar: Several organisations representing farmers in Punjab would hold a protest rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in Sangrur district's Malerkotla on February 16.

The decision was taken in a joint meeting of the farmers' unions chaired by Buta Singh Burjigill, president, Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) Ekta (Dakaunda) at Barnala Friday. Burjigill said that new citizenship law was a big setback for a democracy like India. "We will put pressure on the Government to repeal this law," he said.

BKU Ugrahan leader Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan said termed the law as "draconian". BKU general secretary Jagmohan Singh said that the protest will be supported by unions of farm labourers, students unions and trade unions. **ENS**

RAJASTHAN



People protest against the CAA, NRC and NPR in front of the Ajmer Dargah. *PTI*

BIHAR

Anti-CAA, NRC protests spread across Bihar

Patna: Protests against the CAA, NRC and NPR have been spreading in Bihar, with demonstrations springing up at Gaya's Shanti Bagh and Patna's Subzibagh, along with Kishanganj, Araria, Katihar, Muzaffarpur, Araria, Champaran, West Champaran and Begusarai districts.

Though Opposition leaders have been addressing such gatherings, it has mainly been citizens groups which have led these protests.

Bihar AIMM youth president Adil Hasan Azad said, "Delhi's Shaheen Bagh has shown the way. It has been a

peaceful protest at all places in Seemanchal and has participation cutting across religious lines." He said protests in Kishanganj were being organised by the 'Samvidhan Bachao, Desh Bachao Morcha', a citizens' forum having members of several non-political groups.

One of the organisers of the protests at Muzaffarpur said, "Even though the crowd presence is not big, the presence of important leaders such as (Bhim Army chief) Chandrashekhar Azad has helped draw attention of more people." **ENS**

‘No CAA rollback, PM said no NRC, trust him’

WITH PROTESTS against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) raging across the nation, Union Minister and Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader **RAM VILAS PASWAN** spoke to **HARIKISHAN SHARMA** on the issue.

What is your opinion of the protests at Shaheen Bagh (New Delhi), Patna, Gaya, Lucknow and other parts of the country? How these are different from earlier movements?

A movement starts automatically. For instance, the student movement of 1974, which was against the corruption, continued for months... Students would burn the bus and would do whatever they wanted. One day we met JP (Jayaprakash Narayan) and requested him to lead our movement. JP said you are doing *to-dof* (sabotage) so he could not join.

When we requested again, he asked us to raise a slogan first. That slogan was "Hamla chaahe jaisa hoga, haath hamaara nahin uthega" (No matter how the attack, we will not lift our hands).

After meeting JP, we realised the importance of non-violence in a movement. It became a pan-India movement...

Now look at the present agitation, which started against the fee hike in JNU... It was not against the CAA in the beginning...

First of all, you have to understand the issue. First, there is a proposal to conduct the Census... Second, there is a Citizenship Amendment Act, 1955 which was amended by the Vajpayee government in 2003. Documents are required for citizenship. It was the UPA government which amended the rules under this act on May 7, 2010, and added a provision for preparation of NPR... Today, this issue is being raised by the same people who caused this disease...

The truth is that no one can deprive anyone of citizenship, be it Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Dalit or Brahmin. Finally, when the Prime Minister had said that there is no proposal of NRC then why is such a misconception being created?

But some people are anxious.

Some people have created the misconception that people will be asked for documents dur-



ing NPR, and if you don't show the document, the matter will be transferred to an officer. This is not true. I have said that NPR should not be mandatory. Any column can be kept in the form,

but people should have the privilege that if they do not know their own or their parent's date of birth, they can leave the column blank. I do not know the date of birth of my parents. Many people of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Muslim communities do not know their date of birth. There cannot be any threat to their citizenship on this ground...

It seems that the government is not ready to accept that 20 crore people are worried.

The Prime Minister and the Home Minister have repeatedly talked about it... They (the opposition) say rollback the CAA. But how is CAA linked with it (NRC)? The government has made clear that it's not mandatory to give details about the date and place of birth of your parents. Its optional.

There is an impression that Muslims are being prejudiced against.

Those who have prejudice against the BJP and RSS are creating such an impression...

Why is the government shying away from this issue?

Tension after communal clash during pro-CAA rally in Jharkhand

ABHISHEK ANGAD
CHAIBASA, JANUARY 24

SITUATION REMAINS tense in Jharkhand's Lohardaga after two communities clashed with each other on Thursday evening during a rally in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

According to district and police sources, "provocative slogans" were raised during the rally and this led to stone-pelting between the two communities.

Police sources said a few people were injured and two have been shifted to Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi. A police personnel was also injured in the incident.

On Friday evening, as rumours started doing the rounds and people from both communities gathered at several places. To prevent any untoward incident, Section 144 of the CrPc was imposed in the district and additional force was deployed.

On the incident, Director General of Police K N Choubey said, "One community started the stone-pelting after which the other side retaliated. Vehicles were set on fire. There has been no casualty."

An appeal issued by the Lohardaga Deputy Commissioner Akansha Ranjan stated, "It is to be informed that curfew has been imposed seeing the law and order problem. During the curfew, coming out of homes is prohibited... please maintain peace and do not pay attention to the rumours. Strict action will be taken against people who are found to be damaging public or private property."

Lohardaga MLA and Jharkhand Cabinet Minister Rameshwar Oraon said, "The situation has improved. Police is doing their work."

Where is the government shying away? I don't see any political party which has asked for a discussion... In fact, whenever a meeting is called, they boycott it. On behalf of the LJP, I can guarantee that the government will not take any step which is against the interest of Dalits and minorities...

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has categorically said that there is no question of NRC and no discussion on the same. He is the PM for the next five years. What else proof you want? They (opposition leaders) say roll back CAA. How can it be rolled back? How will you roll back CAA?

But Home Minister Amit Shah has said that NRC will follow the CAA.

The Prime Minister is the head (of the government)... The Prime Minister categorically said... that the CAA is to grant citizenship and not to deprive anyone of citizenship. As far as the issue of the NRC is concerned... when the Prime Minister has said (it won't happen) then you end the matter and believe his words...

What will happen if the

ANTI-CAA PROTESTS

Can't issue blanket order against invoking NSA: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE SUPREME Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea seeking to restrain authorities from invoking the National Security Act (NSA), saying it could not pass any blanket order but would consider if any specific instance of misuse is brought to its notice.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Indira Banerjee wondered how it can tie the hands of the authorities when properties are being destroyed during protests.

Taking up a plea which challenged the order of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor giving powers to Delhi Police to invoke NSA for three months starting January 19, Justice Mishra said these were law and order issues and the court had limitations to intervene.

"We are of the opinion that general writ will not lie in this case... We agree that the NSA should not be misused but there cannot be a general direction," Justice Mishra observed.

Advocate M L Sharma, who

Take action against those violent: ‘Concerned citizens’ urge Kovind

New Delhi: A group of 154 "conscientious, responsible and concerned citizens" on Friday urged President Ram Nath Kovind to take action against those indulging in violence in the name of protests against the CAA and the NRC and "safeguard" the country's democratic institutions.

Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) chairman Permod Kohli, who led the delegation that called on Kovind, said some political elements were sponsoring the "violent protestors" and there is also an "external dimension to the disturbances being created".

government brings NRC despite an assurance from the PM?

If it comes, there will be a procedure, a discussion... If we are the citizens of India, how one can dispute it? The Prime Minister has said that there is no question of NRC. So the issue ends here.

Your party is an ally of the BJP. If a discussion on NRC comes, what will be your stand?

No means no. We are allies. Can't we trust the Prime Minister's words?

The opposition says the government brought up the issue of CAA and NPR to divert the people's attention from the economy.

If the economy is not doing well, then why are you not raising that issue? Why are you raising the issue of CAA and NPR?...

We have sympathy towards the agitating people. The government does not want to see them protesting. We are pro-Dalit and pro-minority. I think the stand-off can be resolved through a dialogue only.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
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filed the PIL, referred to anti-CAA protests and said the authorities may invoke NSA against the protesters.

"You show us a specific instance... We cannot issue a blanket order. If a general direction is passed, this will create a chaos. You don't know what is going on in Calcutta, Tripura and Assam. Properties are being burnt and that may be organised," the bench observed.

Justice Mishra added, "If a person is involved in violence and involved in say hundred criminal cases, then will the government not act?"

The bench allowed him to withdraw the petition and file a fresh one showing instances of misuse of the provisions against protesters.

The Act allows people to be detained for twelve months.

On January 10, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal extended detention powers under NSA to Delhi Police for a three-month period. The PIL termed this "unconstitutional" and violative of fundamental rights. It also challenged the imposition of the Act in Andhra Pradesh.

The delegates said they were concerned about the move to "divide" the country by "some groups" to create a "vicious atmosphere". We have no objection if the stir is peaceful without any inconvenience to the public, they added.

The signatories to the memorandum, submitted to the President, include 11 former high court judges, 72 ex-bureaucrats including IAS, IPS, IFS officers and former ambassadors of India, 56 ex-top defence officers, intellectuals, academicians and medical professionals. **PTI**

At Margao, Goa Church organises first anti-CAA protest

SMITANAIR
MARGAO, JANUARY 24

AT THE Lohia Maidan in Margao, known as the ground zero for the fight for liberation, chants of 'azaadi' filled the air as thousands from all parts of Goa descended on the city on Friday to read the Preamble of the Constitution in the first Church-backed protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.

The event was coordinated by three organisations — the Council for Social Justice and Peace (CSJP), the social wing of the influential Goa Church; the Concerned Citizens for Goa, an organisation fighting primarily for issues related to the Muslim community, and the National Confederation of Human Rights Organisation (NCHRO), a human rights outfit.

The organisers ensured none of the MLAs who sat in the audience were invited to the stage, with the scheduled list of speakers including rationalist and writer Damodar Mauzo, former state election commissioner Prabhakar Timble and tribal leader Rama Kankona, among others.

Each speaker gave a rousing speech, with Father Savio Fernandes, the CSJP executive secretary, calling for a resolution in the Assembly to revoke the controversial Act, and called all the assembled to spread the word: "Refuse to share any documents connected to NPR".

The speakers also called on people to not look at the CAA in isolation, but along with the NRC and NPR.

One of the speakers, Dr Oscar Rebello, who was at the forefront



No MLAs present was allowed to take the stage. *Smita Nair*

of the Goa Bachao Andolan, appealed to the crowd that the battle is "not about Muslims alone" and called the Constitution "the holy book".

He appealed to religious outfits, which run Sunday schools teaching the Bible, Quran and

the Gita across the state, to take ten minutes every day to teach the Constitution. "Insaniyat is the only Bharat they (children) should know," he said.

The speaker who got the loudest applause was Kankonkar, who said, "They

keep repeating Hindus are in danger from Christians and Muslims. I want to say it aloud here, Hindus are in danger due to politics of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah."

A loud cheer also went up when a group from Ponda arrived with the national flag, and carried portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and B R Ambedkar.

Rajan Solomon, the NCHRO working president, told *The Indian Express*, "We went to different communities and finally told them we as Christians cannot remain silent anymore. We cannot say we cannot take sides. It was time. This is now a human rights issue."

The choice of the venue for the first Church-backed protest also was chosen strategically. "Ram Manohar) Lohia was a socialist and it is from here that he

gave the call for the liberation of Goa. This ground is actually smaller than others, but we chose it as it brings the communities together. There is an extreme sense of family when you sit and protest from here. We thought, even our protests should have a language, a sense of proximity and closeness," Solomon said.

Sameer Shaikh, president of the Concerned Citizens for Goa, said the movement was "overwhelming".

"To see another religion becoming the voice for Muslims feels strong. Delhi leaders have been taunting that only Muslims are protesting. They should put a drone on top of this ground today to know what Goa is. Every faith is here today..."

FULL REPORT ON
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with awardees of the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2020, in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

PM: Taking mantra of unity, nation will move forward

Modi says if people fulfil duties, no need to fight for rights

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Friday underlined the importance of diversity in India and called for citizens to pay more attention to their national duties, adding that if people fulfil their duties, nobody will have to fight for their rights.

Talking to the participants of the Republic Day Parade in Delhi, he said, “We do not favour uniformity, but unity. Unity in diversity. We try to keep alive the source of unity, make it stronger. Several states, but one nation; several societies, but one India; many cults, but one aim; several dialects, but one tone; several languages, but one emotion; many colours, but one Tricolour; many traditions, but one value system; different jobs, but one resolution; different paths, but one destination; different faces, but one smile... Taking this mantra of unity, the nation will move forward.”

“We must work and take the country ahead with this thought... The entire world witnesses this ability of India as well,” the Prime Minister said. He told the participants that through their displays in the parade, “the world also witnesses this strength of India”. He told them that they bring the diversity to Delhi, but when they go back, “the diversity you see here, you take it back with you to your regions”.

Talking about the slogan ‘Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat’, he said, “Along with being a country, India is a living tradition, it is a thought, it is a value system.” Referring to India as a life force made up of several ideals and values, he said, “India is a life source, a flow of energy... When India’s greatness is discussed, along with the geographical and economic greatness, the greatness of such values and ideals are also a part of it.”

Talking about the duties of citizens towards the nation, the Prime Minister said that in the last

70 years, India has become a good example as a republic. But, he said, “We need to pay attention to one aspect of the Constitution that was not discussed in detail in the last 70 years... We need to give primacy to our duties, and need to judge what we do in respect of our duties... If we fulfill our duties properly, then we will not need to fight for our rights.”

He requested the participants to discuss the duties towards the nation and become examples by acting on them when they go back home. “Such efforts will lead to creation of a new India,” he added.

He said that to fulfill these ambitions and dreams in the new India that we are moving towards, “no Indian person or region should be left behind, we need to ensure that and it is our national responsibility”. He asked people to align their efforts and ambitions with the national resolutions. “We all need to work towards making life easier for every Indian,” Modi said.

With ‘Trump of the Tropics’ as Republic Day guest, India hopes for a Brazil summer

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

LEGEND HAS it that sometime in 1500, a Portuguese explorer, Pedro Alvares Cabral, landed on the Brazilian coast as he was on his way to India. Thereafter, ships sailing between Portugal and India, which would otherwise halt at East Africa, started stopping at Goa, the Portuguese colony on the Indian subcontinent, especially the ones blown off course.

During her visit to Brazil in 1968, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi remarked that “468 years ago, Alvares Cabral set out to find India, but found you”.

More than 500 years after that happy accident of Cabral, Brazil President Jair Messias Bolsonaro is chief guest at India’s 70th Republic Day, the third time the head of the Latin American country will be gracing the occasion.

New Delhi weaves strategy with hospitality in handing out its most prestigious diplomatic invitation. With his racist and sexist remarks, Bolsonaro may have earned himself the nickname ‘Trump of the Tropics’ in his one-year tenure as President, but for India, a more interesting parallel is his image of an outsider among the country’s Leftist ruling elite.

Like Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s campaign positing him against Lutyens Delhi, the politics of 64-year-old Bolsonaro, a former Army paratrooper who retired as Captain, has been portrayed as a counter to Brazil’s well-entrenched Leftist politicians caught in a string of corruption scandals, including the impeached Dilma Rousseff and the jailed Lula da Silva.

It is this image that helped Bolsonaro to more than 55 per cent of the vote, with an electorate tired of political scandals, a four-

year-old recession and an 11 per cent-plus unemployment voting overwhelmingly for him.

In hosting Bolsonaro, Delhi hopes to build on ties that began with Cabral, were sustained by a robust exchange of crops and cattle in the colonial era, but have somewhat tapered since.

In a paper for the New Delhi-based think tank Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, researcher Priya Saxena wrote: “Interestingly, the bovines in Brazil are of Indian origin. The ‘Ongole’ strain from Andhra Pradesh led to the production of the ‘Zebu’ (Bosindicus) variety known in Brazil as ‘Nelore’. This variety corresponds to 90 per cent of the cattle breed in Brazil. The fresh embryos are still imported from India to Brazil — the second biggest exporter of cattle beef in the world. The plants of coconut and mango, both from India, were introduced in Brazil, and Brazil’s manioc and cashew began to be planted in India.”

The first wrinkles appeared when Brazil took Portugal’s side on Goa, after India’s Independence. “Brazil changed course only in 1961, when it became increasingly clear that India would wrest control of Goa from an increasingly feeble Portugal,” said Oliver Stuenkel, Visiting Professor of International Relations, University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil, in a research paper on India-Brazil ties in the Indian Foreign Affairs’ Journal.

The two countries were on the same side on trade and non-proliferation in the 1960s, taking a stand against nuclear weapons and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1967. A year later, Indira Gandhi visited Brazil. The two countries also took similar positions during trade negotiations at GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade).



Brazil President Jair Messias Bolsonaro arrives with his daughter Laura at Palam airport on Friday. Renuka Puri

During the Cold War years though, Brazil was considered closer to the United States while India was seen as being in the Soviet corner. In the 1980s, Brazil ignored India’s feelers to join the Non-Aligned Movement.

The ties saw a revival after the end of the Cold War, when both countries unleashed economic reforms. In 1996, Brazil President Fernando Henrique Cardoso came as Republic Day chief guest, followed by a reciprocal visit by President K R Narayanan in 1998.

In his first Presidential speech in 2003, Lula (in power till 2010) declared India a “priority”. The year also saw the formation of IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa), and later, with Germany and

Japan in it, the G-4 group. The G-4 group decided to make a determined push for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

In 2004, the NDA government hosted Lula as R-Day chief guest.

However, just a year later, the bilateral ties hit a speed bump when the India-US nuclear deal was proposed. Brazil saw this as India going against its stance on nuclear weapons.

Still, Brazil and India came together in 2009 for the multilateral grouping BRIC, along with the other emerging economies of Russia and China. It was touted as the beginning of an alternative world order. In 2011, South Africa joined to make it more represen-

tative of the global south.

Saying India holds Brazil in great esteem, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Vijay Thakur Singh told *The Indian Express*, “The relations are strong not only at the bilateral level but also at the plurilateral level. We coordinate in multilateral fora, particularly the UN.”

Brazil’s Ambassador to India Andre Correa de Lago said, “We speak a language other than the mainstream. Brazil and India are great supporters and defenders of democracy and all the major principles at the UN. But we still have challenges that most developed countries simply cannot understand. India and Brazil speak the same language.”

The Brazilian President also carries the weight of being the leader of a US \$1.8 trillion economy, Latin America’s largest. Brazil is also the largest country in the region, with a 210 million population, and is rich in natural resources. It is a leading producer of ethanol with a very strong track record in the technological field.

At US \$8.2 billion, the current levels of trade between India and Brazil are lower than US \$10.6 billion in 2012. The two sides are locked in a dispute over sugar subsidies. However, a new bilateral investment treaty is expected to ease these hitches. Defence co-operation is another agenda on the table.

Saying strategic, political and economic understanding are modest goals as Bolsonaro visits, Correa de Lago said, “We have a very good opinion of each other, but it is generally quite superficial. The relevance of our countries has changed a lot thanks to many achievements and our extraordinary societies... We are in the process of rediscovering each other. This meeting provides an opportunity for that rediscovery.”

Eye on jobs, Uttarakhand changes curriculum for Sanskrit schools

LALMANI VERMA
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 24

APART FROM traditional subjects such as astrology and vedas, students of Sanskrit schools in Uttarakhand will now study Computer Science and Yoga. The state government has made changes to the curriculum of Classes I to XII of these schools with an aim to skill students for more job avenues. Also, English, which was offered as an optional subject so far, can now be taken up as a compulsory subject.

Sanskrit is the second official language in Uttarakhand and the state government currently runs 97 Sanskrit schools, where an average of 2,100 students study every year.

According to officials, English was so far offered as an optional subject and marks scored in this subject were not added in the aggregate. But now, students can take English as a compulsory subject too. In that case, there will be a 100-mark question paper for students in the annual examination and the marks scored in English will be added in the aggregate.

Computer Science and Yoga will be compulsory subjects but students will get grades instead of marks in both subjects.

“Many Sanskrit students want to study English and Computer Science for

EXPLAINED Bid to make students job-ready

UNEMPLOYMENT BEING a major factor behind migration from Uttarakhand, the BJP-ruled state is trying to skill students in Sanskrit schools so that they can explore new job opportunities. With a large number of Sanskrit schools, Uttarakhand faces the challenge of creating work opportunities for students of these schools in the government sector. Officials said knowledge of English will improve students’ communication skills for interviews and knowledge of Yoga would enable them to benefit from the Centre’s push for Yoga. Adding these subjects would also attract those students who want to learn Sanskrit but avoid taking admission to Sanskrit schools fearing it might limit their job prospects.

better job opportunities. After completing graduation as a Shastri, Sanskrit students now apply for jobs as religious teachers in the defence forces and take

competitive examinations for recruitment in civil services and teaching jobs. The knowledge of English will help them in getting jobs in journalism, law, hotel management, as translators and many other fields,” said S P Khali, Director, Sanskrit Education, Uttarakhand.

He said that when students have English as an optional subject, they do not study it seriously because marks scored in the subject are not added in the aggregate.

Khali said the new syllabus for English, Computer Science and Yoga has been approved by the government and it will be applicable from the new academic session that begins in April.

“For jobs in such fields, computer science will be helpful to the students. Yoga too is creating job opportunities for students across the world and knowledge of English and computers will help Yoga students to reach a larger number of people,” said another official.

For teaching these new courses, the Uttarakhand Sanskrit Shiksha Parishad is organising a training session for its existing teachers and it will recruit new faculty members in the new session. But knowledge of Sanskrit will be essential for those teachers.

Also, new subjects like Shashtrasmarnam (Upanishad) and Prachin Vyakarnam have been added to the syllabus.

Two women cops get Bihar DGP praise after inspection

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JANUARY 24

BIHAR DGP Gupteshwar Pandey is all praise for two women constables he interacted with during a surprise inspection at the Bhagalpur Police Lines earlier this week.

Having reached Bhagalpur on the morning of January 20, Pandey said he decided to carry out an impromptu inspection of the parade. In civilian clothing, he headed to the training ground where rehearsals were on and took a full round.

“When I was about to return. I saw two newly recruited women constables carrying sophisticated automatic weapons. Without introducing myself, I asked if they knew how to fire these weapons. Both said they did and that they had shot 45 rounds recently,” he said. The DGP then asked: “What if somebody tries to snatch your weapons?” To this, the constables replied: “Will anyone dare to?”

“Suppose, I am going to loot your weapons,” was the DGP’s riposte, to which one of the constables said: “Go away or we will shoot you.” The DGP then revealed his identity.

Pandey told *The Indian Express*: “I was so impressed with confidence of the two girls... The episode gave me a sense of pride as a team leader.”



NORTH

Man given death penalty for 2009 triple murder in UP

Lucknow: A local court here on Friday awarded death sentence to a 40-year-old man in a triple murder case that took place in a village under the Malihabad police station in 2009. The deceased include two minors. The convict, Budha, is lodged in Lucknow district jail since his arrest in 2009. Government counsel

Manoj Tripathi said Budha was married to Devi's daughter Deshpati. Following alleged harassment by Budha, Deshpati had come back to her mother's house and later married again. "Angry over this, Budha developed enmity with his in-laws and murdered Devi and the two children. **ENS**



A family in Mumbai decks up their home to celebrate Chinese New Year on January 25. *Pradip Das*

EAST

Newborn dies as eunuchs snatch him from mother

Jhargram (WB): A newborn boy died in West Bengal's Jhargram district on Friday after a group of eunuchs snatched him from his mother's lap and started dancing, demanding money from the family, police said. Twins were born to Chandan Khiladi, a resident of Uttar Shilda, on December 4. One of them had heart problems and was ad-

mitted to the hospital, locals said. The boy was released on Wednesday and learning about it, three eunuchs came to their home and demanded Rs 11,000 from the family. After being refused, they then snatched the boy and started dancing. The baby fell unconscious and when rushed to the CHC, was declared brought dead. **PTI**

WEST

Mother kills girl by dropping her in cistern: Gujarat Police

Surat: A 23-year-old woman allegedly killed her two-and-a-half-month-old daughter by dropping her in a cistern on Thursday evening, police said. When the woman's husband, Navin Gohil, a resident of Palsana village in Surat, came home and asked about their daughter, Khushi, the mother, who has not been keeping well for the last

few days, told him that Khushi was crying a lot and being unable to bear it anymore, she dropped her into the cistern, police said. Gohil rushed to the bathroom to recover the child. He then informed the doctor who declared her dead. Gohil later informed Palsana police and lodged a complaint in this connection. **ENS**

SOUTH

Man kills minor in Hyderabad over rejected proposal

Hyderabad: A flex-board designer has been arrested here for allegedly killing a girl as she refused to marry him, police said on Friday. The victim, who was in junior college, was found dead with wounds on the head and neck, indicating that she was attacked with a slab of concrete on the terrace of her house on Thursday night, the

police said. The accused, Shoeb, was a former classmate of the girl and had been asking her to marry him. Her parents rejected the proposal saying she was still a minor, they said. Shoeb assumed that the girl was avoiding him, and killed her on the terrace of her house before hurling the body onto the road, the police said. **PTI**

Sunburn suspect in Lankesh case papers

Arrested in Bengal, Hazra was trainer in arms camp

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, JANUARY 24

A 34-YEAR-OLD resident of West Bengal arrested by Maharashtra ATS Thursday in connection with the Nallasopara terror case was allegedly a guest trainer at arms and bomb-training camps attended by several persons who were arrested later in the killing of Gauri Lankesh, according to papers in Karnataka Police's chargesheet.

In statements given by an arrested suspect to the Karnataka SIT probing the Lankesh case, Prathap Hazra, who was picked up with the help of Kolkata Police and produced in a Mumbai court, is identified as an alleged bomb-making expert and guest trainer at a camp held in the Mangalore area in 2015. The camps were conducted by persons linked to the Sanatan Sanstha, according to the SIT papers.

Three persons linked to the Sanstha and arrested in the Lankesh case, and four witnesses who attended the camps, have described the presence of a "Babaji" and four other "Gurujis" during training provided to make bombs, according to statements placed in court by the Karnataka SIT.

Journalist and activist

Lankesh was shot dead outside her Bengaluru home on September, 5, 2017.

While four of the guest trainers were identified by names like "Bade Babaji" and "Guruji", the fifth was named by an accused and many witnesses in the Lankesh case as Prathap Hazra, who hailed from West Bengal.

Hazra, who has been associated with radical outfit Bhavani Sena, is accused by the Maharashtra ATS of participating in a conspiracy with persons linked to the Sanstha to carry out a bomb attack on the Sunburn music festival in Pune in 2017 after declaring that it promotes "Western culture" and erodes Hindu culture.

The Karnataka SIT found that 19 camps were organised by the Sanstha-linked group in the usage of firearms, improvised explosive devices and subterfuge tactics between 2011 and 2017 — with five IED experts attending five camps held in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka as "guest trainers".

According to a statement given by Sharad Kalaskar, 26, who is accused in the 2013 murder of Maharashtra rationalist Narendra Dabholkar as well as the Lankesh killing, Hazra was a guest trainer at a camp held on a private farm in the Dharamsthal

region near Mangalore in August 2015.

The three-day camp involved training in "firing air pistols, making and exploding country bombs and pipe bombs", says a chart presented by the Karnataka SIT in its chargesheet.

According to the chart, six persons involved in the shooting of Lankesh — prime planner Amol Kale, bike rider Ganesh Miskin, and logistics providers Amit Baddi, Bharat Kurne, Sharad Kalaskar and Vasudev Suryavanshi — attended the camp. Other camps are reported to have been held in Jalna in 2011 and January 2015, Ahmedabad in November 2015 and Nasik in January 2016.

According to statements provided by suspects and witnesses in the Lankesh case, some of the trainers like "Bade Babaji" wore the garb of monks. Each trainer had his own area of expertise ranging from petrol bombs to sophisticated pipe bombs with electrical circuits.

Based on information provided by the SIT, "Bade Babaji" was arrested by the Gujarat ATS in Bharuch in November 2018, and his identity was established as Suresh Nair (45), a missing suspect from the October 11, 2007 Ajmer bomb blast, police sources said.

Pvt schools should desist from religious education: Kerala HC

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JANUARY 24

THE KERALA High Court on Friday directed the state government's general education department to direct all recognised private schools in the state to desist from imparting religious instruction or religious studies without the government's permission.

Upholding the closure of a school in the state capital which admitted only Muslim students, the bench of Justice A Muhamed Mustaque observed that the school imparted religious instruction exclusively following Islamic religion and that cannot be permitted.

"Constitutional rights to the minorities to run educational institutions do not extend to dilute secular nature of education," the bench said.

"Since it offends the very fabric of the secular society, the government is justified in ordering closure of the school," said the judge, asking the education department to issue an order to all recognised schools not to give religious lessons without the government's permission.

The petitioner was Hidaya Educational and Charitable Trust in Thiruvananthapuram. The state government had ordered the school's closure fol-

lowing a police report that it had only Muslim students and the syllabus was in accordance with the curriculum prescribed by Millet Foundation Education Research and Development. The court order describes the foundation as a common platform for Muslim educational institutions to complement the effort to achieve excellence in education within the boundaries of Islamic Shariah.

The judge observed, "Constitution accords special protection to the minorities under Article 25, Article 29 and Article 30. The right to establish and administer educational institutions under Article 30 would also include the right to choice of education, subject to any restriction imposed under law. However, these rights do not extend to dilute the secular nature of education. These rights cannot override the basic values of the Constitution," said the court.

The judge said the recognition for a school that is required from the state government under the Right to Education Act is for imparting secular education. Exclusivism or preference of one religion over others by state or public functionaries or private bodies, while discharging public functions, strikes at the very root of the fundamental values of our Constitution, namely, secularism, he added.

TN woman stabbed in Toronto, kin suspect stalker

JANARDHAN KOUSHIK
CHENNAI, JANUARY 24

A 23-YEAR-OLD woman from Tamil Nadu has been hospitalised in Toronto, Canada, after being stabbed near her university campus on Wednesday. Two days after the attack, Rachael Albert's family said they suspect a "man who was stalking her on social media" to be behind the attack.

Rachael, a student of York University, is undergoing treatment at a trauma centre. External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has expressed shock over the incident and offered immediate help to the family.

On Thursday, Ronald, a relative of Rachael, tagged Jaishankar in a tweet and sought help. Ronald said Rachael, who had gone to Canada for studies, had been stabbed and hospitalised. He said Rachael's family is at Coonoor. Replying to Ronald, Jaishankar tweeted: "Deeply shocked to learn of the serious attack on Rachel Albert, an Indian student in Toronto, Canada. Am asking MEA officials to help with her family's visa."

According to Rachael's family, she worked at a private firm in Bengaluru and was pursuing a Master's in Supply Chain Management through a scholarship at York University.

Her father Albert Rajkumar told *The Indian Express* his daughter is fine, but still not completely out of danger.

"The Foreign Affairs Ministry just contacted us. They are arranging visa for us. My daughter is stable, but she is under critical care. The last I spoke to her was at 7-8 am (IST) on Wednesday. The police informed us that the incident took place around 10 pm on Wednesday. A man had been stalking her on social media and troubling her. He had invited her for a date. I suspect that man is behind this incident."

"The police have identified him as a brownish-colored man with black hair," he said.

Toronto police put out a tweet on Thursday, looking for an "Asian male suspect who fled on foot".



Private security guards at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's Delhi residence on Friday after the Centre withdrew his security cover. The security personnel deployed at Pawar's residence had stopped reporting from January 20, said NCP spokesperson Nawab Malik . *Anil Sharma*

NCP says Pawar's security at Delhi 'withdrawn', slams BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 24

THE NCP on Friday accused the Union government of withdrawing its chief Sharad Pawar's security at his official residence in New Delhi and charged it with playing "vendetta politics".

Maharashtra minister and NCP chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said party leaders cannot be scared with such a move. The party's fight against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah will continue, he asserted.

Malik said Pawar, a Rajya Sabha MP and a former Union minister, had "Y" category security

cover in the national capital. The security personnel deployed at Pawar's residence at 6, Janpath, stopped reporting at the bungalow from January 20 and there was no prior intimation from the government about it, he added.

"This is a kind of vendetta politics. They think NCP leaders will be deterred by this. It is their misconception. The fight against Modi and Shah will continue," Malik said.

His party and ministerial colleague Jayant Patil also slammed the BJP and linked the alleged move of the Centre to the BJP losing power in Maharashtra. "From the bylanes to Delhi, BJP has taken it to heart the change of power in Maharashtra. Therefore, the BJP

is behaving with vengeance... This is detrimental to the democracy!" tweeted Patil, Maharashtra NCP president and the water resources minister in the state government.

State Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad said Pawar cannot be scared off by such steps and likened the NCP president to a "mountain from Sahyadri range". "The love and affection of the people is his security cover," he added.

Maharashtra Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde tweeted, "What level will you stoop to?"

The 79-year-old NCP president enjoys 'Z+' category protection in Maharashtra.

Data indicates similar symptoms between coronavirus, SARS: Lancet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, PUNE JANUARY 24

THE 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) appears to cause similar symptoms to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and seems to be capable of spreading from person to person and between cities, two studies published in medical journal *The Lancet* have reported.

These early findings involve only a small number of patients, and the authors stress the need to maximise the chances of containing the 2019-nCoV infection through careful surveillance, active contact tracing, and vigorous searches for the animal hosts and transmission routes to humans.

As on January 24, 835 laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV infections were reported in China, with 25 fatal cases. Many of the cases have been linked to the Huanan market in Wuhan, China, where freshly killed game animals were reportedly sold, although the original source of infection remains unknown.

WHO ASKS COUNTRIES TO BE PREPARED

New Delhi: Taking note of the human to human transmission of the coronavirus first detected in China, the WHO has asked all countries to be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread of 2019-nCoV infection, and to share full data with WHO. **ENS**

Currently, there are no specific coronavirus antiviral drugs or vaccines with proven efficacy in humans.

In the first study, researchers analysed 41 patients infected with laboratory-confirmed 2019-nCoV admitted to hospital in Wuhan between December 16, 2019, and January 2, 2020.

The authors combined clinical records, laboratory results, and imaging findings with epidemiological data. On average, patients

were middle-aged (median age 49 years), most had visited the Huanan market (27 patients), and were men (30 patients).

Like SARS, the majority of cases affected healthy individuals, with less than a third of cases occurring in people with underlying chronic medical conditions such as diabetes (20%), high blood pressure (15%), and cardiovascular disease (15%).

In the second paper, which is a first-of-its-kind genetic analysis, researchers studied a family of seven people who presented to hospital with unexplained pneumonia. They identified 2019-nCoV in five members who had recently visited Wuhan, and in one other family member who did not travel with them. Importantly, another child was infected with 2019-nCoV, but showed no clinical symptoms — suggesting that individuals may be able to spread infections in the community without knowing that they are infected.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Four suspected coronavirus cases test negative, screening stepped up

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, JANUARY 24

FOUR SAMPLES suspected to contain novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) have tested negative at the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, top officials at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) told *The Indian Express* on Friday.

As on Friday evening, five people — three in Mumbai, and one each in Hyderabad and Bengaluru — were quarantined after they displayed symptoms of the infection. Two samples from Mumbai and one each from Hyderabad and Bengaluru were sent to NIV.

"All four samples with suspected novel coronavirus that were sent to NIV for investigations have tested negative," ICMR director general Dr Balram Bhargava told *The Indian Express*.

Officials have said that the suspected cases will be observed for 28 days. Maharashtra epi-



Across airports in India, 20,844 passengers from 96 flights have been screened for the symptoms so far. *File*

demiologist Dr Pradeep Awate said, "Neither China nor the World Health Organization has transmission period for this virus. Usually, it takes only a few days for coronavirus symptoms to surface. We are observing these cases for double the period. It will provide sufficient window to detect any symptoms."

Maharashtra Director of Health Services Dr Archana Patil has also issued an advisory about the virus and said that there was no case so far in the state. Respiratory illnesses are common during this season and surveillance measures have been stepped up, Patil said, adding that a list of do's and don'ts has

also been issued.

Across airports in India, 20,844 passengers from 96 flights have been screened for 2019-nCoV symptoms as on Friday evening. A travel advisory has been extended to 12 more airports. These are Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Coimbatore, Guwahati, Gaya, Bagdogra, Jaipur, Lucknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Varanasi and Visakhapatnam. At all these airports, signages have been displayed at prominent locations informing the public about self-reporting of illness. Immigration officers manning the counters have also been sensitised.

Thermal screening is currently being done at the International airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Cochin.

The US-based Centre for Disease Control in their statement said, "Person to person spread of 2019-nCoV is occurring though it is not clear how easily it spreads and further investigations are underway."

WITH ENS DELHI, MUMBAI

JHARKHAND KILLINGS

Wife of arrested ex-mukhiya denies Pathalgadi link: Never forced anyone

ABHISHEK ANGAD
CHAIBASA, JANUARY 24

MUKTA HORO, whose husband and former headman of Burugulikera village in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district has been arrested in connection with the killing of seven people, said Pathalgadi had nothing to do with the murders. Seven persons were killed in Burugulikera on Sunday evening and their decapitated bodies were recovered on Wednesday. It is alleged that the killings were a fallout of a clash between a pro-Pathalgadi group and an anti-Pathalgadi group.

Those accused of the killings had not taken ration and pension and availed any government service, while the other side was not rejecting government services.

Horo, the wife of former headman Ranasi Budh, denied any link between Pathalgadi and the killings. She alleged that James Budh, one of the victims, and others would drink and create ruckus.

"They were told several times to desist from such acts, but to no avail. On January 16, they ransacked our houses and also beat up a few people. One of them beat me up...two of our neighbours are also missing," she alleged, adding that James was part of the group which beat up people.

Asked about her stand on Pathalgadi, she said, "We burnt our documents and rejected government services to protect



Members of the Special Investigation Team at Burugulikera village in Chaibasa. Abhishek Angad

our land, among other reasons. We have been doing this for one year. We have been peaceful and never imposed anything on them...But they provoked us."

Nathuram, brother of James Budh, has alleged that Ranasi Budh pressured them to submit their documents and reject government services. He has alleged that the ransacking story was "cooked up".

Horo, however, said, "We were very angry. A meeting was called where nine people who were responsible (for the ransacking) were asked to attend...Two of them ran away, the villagers tied up the seven

others, after which the killings happened."

On Friday, an SIT headed by district SP Indrajit Mahata went to the spot of the meeting on Sunday and the place where the bodies were recovered.

A senior police officer said they received a tip-off of a large gathering on Tuesday evening. "The pro-pathalgadi people had convened another meeting and around 700 people had gathered. When we reached there, we were not allowed to enter and everyone was aggressive."

After the bodies were recovered on Wednesday, pro-Pathalgadi villagers allegedly put

up barriers. "They repeatedly asked who had given us the location of bodies...The SP was told that he was their sevak and made to sign in a few places," the police officer said.

Another police officer said the father of Boas Longa, one of the victims, said they too attended the meeting on Sunday. "He said that the meeting decided that they will be punished because they had committed a mistake. The father agreed that they should be punished, but he did not know that they would be killed. However, when we asked him to identify those involved, he said it was dark."

Terrorist killed in Pulwama belonged to Jaish: J&K Police

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24

A MILITANT who was killed in an encounter in South Kashmir's Pulwama district this week has been identified as a foreign militant commander affiliated with Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), police officials said on Friday.

"He (militant) was affiliated with Jaish and was a top commander (in the Valley)," J&K Police Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) South Kashmir Range Atul Goel told *The Indian Express*. He said the slain militant was active in South Kashmir for the last one-and-a-half years.

A senior police officer in South Kashmir said the slain

militant operating under the code name 'Abu Qasim'.

He was killed after fresh firing resumed between militants and security forces on the second day of the encounter in Pulwama, which started on Tuesday in the Khrew area. An Army jawan and a policeman were killed in the operation.

Initially, the police had said they received inputs about the presence of two militants. After security forces suffered casualties on the day one of encounter (Tuesday), the militants had managed to escape from the site. Security forces, however, launched a massive search operation in the area and contact between the militants was re-established on Wednesday.

S S Thampi's ED custody extended by four days

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

A DELHI court Tuesday extended the custodial interrogation of NRI businessman C C Thampi by four days after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) told the court that two witnesses did not turn up for questioning.

Special Judge Arvind Kumar, while granting custody, told the ED to complete their probe in four days. He listed the mater for hearing on January 28.

Thampi was arrested by the ED in connection with a case of alleged money laundering it is probing against Robert Vadra, son-in-law of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, and arms dealer Sanjay Bhandari.

The ED, represented by Amit Mahajan and NK Matta, also told the court that Thampi was trying to delay the probe by writing replies to the ED's questions in capital letters. Thampi's counsel said, "Our table shows 16 previous appearances... He has had a cataract operation, he can't write in small letters. They are trying to keep him in incarceration for as long as possible," the counsel said.

Nearly 600 schools in Odisha dist shut due to man-elephant conflict

SAMPAD PATNAIK
BHUBANESWAR, JANUARY 24

AROUND 600 schools in three blocks of Jajpur district remained closed on Friday a day after an elephant killed two people in the district.

Jajpur district education officer Krushna Chandra Nayak confirmed the closures saying, "The Collector ordered a shutdown of schools in three blocks of the district — Korei, Danagadi and Sukinda. We circulated the message immediately."

Nayak said the decision was taken "purely as a precautionary measure".

Police sources in the district confirmed Thursday's incident involving the elephant.

Odisha's Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) and Chief Wildlife Warden HS Upadhyay said the elephant is no longer in the vicinity and added that the situation is under control.

The incident however, has led to concerns among wildlife experts in the state. Former National Board for Wildlife member Biswajit Mohanty flagged man-elephant conflict as

Odisha's Principal Chief Conservator of Forest and Chief Wildlife Warden HS Upadhyay said the elephant is no longer in the vicinity

a very serious issue in the state.

In a written statement, Mohanty said, "In the last 9 months and 21 days, 100 humans have been killed in Odisha. This is a record for the state since last year, we lost only 92 people to elephant attacks. We have now acquired the dubious reputation of being the state which sees the highest number of human kills by elephants."

According to data shared by Mohanty, also the secretary of the Wildlife Society of Odisha, over the past ten months, there have been 177 human-elephant encounters in which 100 people were killed and 102 people were injured.

Mohanty's data from 2014 to 2020 also shows a sharp rise in human deaths and injuries since 2018.

24-yr-old doctor killed in Bareilly college fire

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 24

A 24-YEAR-OLD doctor was found charred to death on Friday in her hostel room after it caught fire under mysterious circumstances at Ram Murti Medical College in Bareilly, police said. The victim, identified as Sukriti — a resident of Bihar — was interning at the college from 10 months. She had recently graduated her MBBS course.

Police suspect that the fire could have been caused by a room heater which, they said, was placed very close to Sukriti's bed. Bareilly SSP Shailesh Kumar Pandey said Sukriti died before the police reached the hostel.

"Hostel residents told us a heater was placed next to the woman's bed. It is possible that a piece of cloth may have caught fire from the heater..." said the SSP, ruling out any foul play.

Meanwhile, The body of an MBBS final year student at Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Memorial Medical College was fished out on Friday from the Ganga river in Unnai. According to police, she had jumped into the river in Kanpur on Thursday.



WORDLY WISE
CLOTHES MEAN NOTHING UNTIL
SOMEONE LIVES IN THEM.
— MARC JACOBS

The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

HOME TRUTHS

CAA protests reflect a vibrant civic democratic culture.
Government must engage, not brand them as seditious

IN THE FIRST Sukumar Sen memorial lecture, organised by the Election Commission of India in memory of India's first Chief Election Commissioner, former President Pranab Mukherjee mentioned that the "present wave of largely peaceful protests" against the new citizenship law will deepen "our democratic roots". He referred to the presence of a large number of youth in the protests and said "their assertion and belief in the Constitution of India is particularly heartening to see". And he stated a fundamental principle of democratic practice. Mukherjee said: "Consensus is the lifeblood of democracy. Democracy thrives on listening, deliberating, discussing, arguing and even dissent."

Mukherjee's wise words come at a time when influential politicians holding public office have been heard arguing for criminalising dissent. As Mukherjee mentioned, protests are taking place across the country against a severely contested law. The protesters have sought legitimacy by anchoring their dissent in the Indian Constitution. The protests in many places, many of them led by Muslim women, have been reminiscent of the satyagraha pioneered by Gandhi during the freedom struggle. These sit-ins have also been a restatement of constitutional values, with protestors holding readings of the Preamble of the Constitution, reciting patriotic songs and celebrating inter-faith harmony. They have been public acts of listening, deliberation, discussion and argumentation about citizenship as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of both citizens and the state. These exercises have sought to remind us that democracy is not just about holding elections at regular intervals and having legislative deliberations, but also to be experienced as a process of consensus building through extended dialogue and debate.

However, the making of an informed citizenry seems to have upset a section of the political class, who have sought to demonise the protests as anti-national. For instance, UP Chief Minister Adityanath has been attacking women who are attending the anti-CAA sit-ins in a coarse language reeking of patriarchy. Ironically, these politicians had in the past defended the Modi government's decision to criminalise triple talaq as an act of empowering Muslim women. Now, as the women show agency to protest a law that they believe is aimed at reducing Muslims to second class citizens, the likes of Adityanath taunt them for voicing their concerns independent of men. Adityanath has also threatened to book those who raise the slogan, azaadi, for sedition. The Indian Constitution and its juridical interpretations allow citizens to peacefully protest and even speak of azaadi, if they do not incite violence. The Uttar Pradesh administration has sought to criminalise dissent against the CAA and put down the mobilisations using excessive force — at least 20 people, all Muslims, were shot during the police crackdown on protests. These actions speak poorly of the state of both governance and democracy in UP. The government should listen to Mukherjee, who has been a student of democracy and spent a lifetime in public life, and rethink its approach to the anti-CAA protests.

UNSEEMLY HASTE

Those sentenced to death have the right to exhaust all
remedial options, and must be given the time to explore them

IN THE US, where police investigation is generally an efficient and fair process, and corruption is low, 165 convicts on death row have been exonerated before their execution since 1973. This is one of the reasons why, until the date set for execution, convicts are allowed to seek remedy — the death sentence is irreversible, and no room for error should remain. However, as the December 16 rape and murder case draws closer to the date of execution, the Centre has asked the Supreme Court to set short deadlines for convicts to seek legal remedy, limiting the time for filing curative petitions. And in the course of hearing review petitions in another matter which has attracted the death penalty, Chief Justice of India Sharad A Bobde observed that capital punishment must reach finality, and the condemned cannot be allowed to contest it indefinitely.

Really, what's the hurry? The death penalty is awarded in the rarest of rare cases, a minuscule fraction of the business of the courts. Hastening the process would scarcely improve the justice system. Of course, the impatience of the court and the government is not unprovoked. In cases attracting more than one death sentence, it is indeed a common stratagem for convicts to file petitions in turn, as a dilatory tactic. But delaying tactics are par for the course in a legal system where counsels are gauged by their ability to secure adjournments, using delay as a weapon to wear down the other side even in routine civil matters. If efficiency in disposal is sought, it should apply across the board, and not only to cases which result in a death penalty. Indeed, the heinousness of the crime only dictates the modicum of the response of the law, and not the despatch with which the sentence is carried out.

Besides, in this case, it appears that the government is seeking tighter deadlines in the light of an extremely emotive case, which agitated civil society and triggered political mobilisation. But such a change in guidelines should be sought only when justice is seen to have not been done in a number of cases. If change is actuated by a single matter, it runs the risk of appearing to be a primitive quest for retributive justice, devaluing the system.

THE SHOWSTOPPER

Jean-Paul Gaultier's haute couture legacy is as playful
as it is subversive and serious

IT WAS TYPICAL of Jean-Paul Gaultier to propose a solution to the fashion industry's waste problem in the midst of what was, frankly, a carnival. Never mind that the show on January 22 was the 67-year-old French designer's last ever runway show; Gaultier, expectedly, refused to let his retirement party be a solemn, one-note affair that looks only to the past. The catwalk inside Paris' Théâtre du Châtelet saw actors, musicians, drag queens and dancers pose in campy mourning costumes, smoke and then flick their cigarettes at the audience or be carried onto stage by topless men, all while wearing creations that were upcycled from previous collections. "There are too many clothes, and too many clothes that are useless. Do not throw them away, recycle them," Gaultier exhorted his adoring audience.

If anything, this attitude will be the iconoclastic designer's lasting legacy: That fashion can be fun without being frivolous. This is, after all, the man who made innerwear acceptable as outerwear and put men in skirts, who found inspiration in urban subcultures and alternative lifestyles, and who made runway models out of tattooed and pierced, ordinary and old, gender non-conforming and full-bodied people. Perhaps, Gaultier is who he is because he came of age as a designer in the 1980s, the era of punk and power-dressing, ath-leisure and unisex clothing. This was the decade when second-wave feminism swept through the Western world, Madonna (who wore Gaultier-designed conical bras on her Blond Ambition tour) sang with burning crucifixes in the background and the collapse of the Iron Curtain began. It was a time when greed was good, but having a conscience better, and Gaultier, in the socio-cultural subversions he brought into haute couture, captured it all.

Long before terms like gender fluidity and body and sex positivity became woke buzzwords, Gaultier used his creations to declare loudly and proudly: There is no room for gate-keeping and conformity in fashion. How we dress is, after all, our first and most visible declaration of who we are.



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

AS THE INDIAN Republic completes another year, there is uncertainty in the air. India finds itself in the middle of nowhere. After gloating about being a global power, it has been reduced to justifying its domestic actions to the world outside. After seeming to emerge as a strong economy, it has slipped up badly — but the government appears to be cavalier about it. It has reposed faith in a leader who has stooped to nauseating arrogance and aloofness. The country is at a dangerous cusp, politically. It has chosen to undermine most institutions of prestige — in fact, its democracy itself. It has a regime that relies on surveillance and suppression. The "emperor" appears devoid of the clothing of compassion and concern. From the surge of hope and expectation that marked 2014, India has dipped to a resigned nothingness.

The spate of protests in the country since December last year needs to be understood in this larger context of anxiety and loss of hope. In a sense they represent the moment — they are indeterminate and inconclusive while the regime is unresponsive and ill-intentioned. While the protests do not seem to stop, they also don't seem to be heading anywhere. In their spontaneity and persistence, the protests seem to indicate there is something deeply wrong with politics, governance and public policy. Yet, the state of stalemate carries a warning about valuable human energy evaporating without effectively addressing the ills that led to the protests in the first place.

Even then, the dispersed protests are an immensely valuable democratic resource for three reasons. First, the sheer resilience and patience of the protesters. We can ignore or belittle them only at the peril of our basic social sensibility. Those protesting are not demanding anything for themselves — that is a rare moment in a life of a democracy when people suffer simply to make a point on a matter of principle.

Two, these protests are also important as a warning. They warn all of us — the rulers, the elite, the bystanders. They warn us of a deeper rot, and not just about the CAA or NRC. More than the immediate provocations, the protests tell us something about larger societal apathy coupled with the ruling establishment's cynicism. They tell us about the institutional callousness that marks this moment

The CAA protests have inspired a new vocabulary of
citizenship, but the Republic needs much more

An absence of coordination, a romanticism reflected in the lack of leadership and a void in the realm of strategy stare the protesters in the eye. The republic requires astute and resolute resistance while what we are witnessing presently are ideologically ambivalent and strategically ill-prepared series of autonomous protests. They may recover the vocabulary of the Constitution, they may show us the possibility of a new idea of citizenship but only if the protests of today graduate into a movement would there be a recoupling of the Indian state and democracy.

and inform us about the uneasy social status of many communities whose location in the Republic is always at the mercy of someone else. They warn us of the fragility of the social contract that holds our republic together. In fact, the protests alert us to the impending loss of the social contract which made the Indian Republic possible.

Third, the protests are a reminder of people's energy that alone can invigorate the Republic's democratic essence. And for that reason, they also constitute a moment of assurance in these times of scepticism. This assurance has multiple facets.

To begin with, the protests have exemplified the worth of constitutional and democratic methods of popular resistance. That Muslims are participating in the protests in large numbers is reassuring in itself. Minority politics often finds it difficult to fit itself into the vocabulary of "secular" politics, but these protests have helped us rediscover the strength of secular political routes for articulating the minority's concerns. Having been at the receiving end for the past five years, the minorities have refused to be cowed down. But they have also refused to be driven to dare-devilry. While articulating their exasperation, they have laid claims on the Constitution and tricolour. The claim on the nation and its democracy means that irrespective of who the protesters are — or whatever clothes they wear — the protests cannot be easily rejected as an agitation "by the minorities". This has ensured that the issues at stake do not remain confined to the interests of a particular community. They, instead, appeal to anyone who is reasonably inspired by the wisdom of the Constitution — and the dream of democracy.

A vocabulary that draws on the Constitution and is inspired by national pride has opened up another positive possibility — the return of intergroup dialogue. One of the worrying developments of the 1990s was the eclipse of dialogue across caste, religion or region. The Republic has probably rediscovered that such conversations are possible — within the frameworks of our sectarian and identity-based social and political existence, there is scope for carving a common platform as citizens. This fits well with the initial non-homogenising imagination of the Republic wherein one does not have to give up other

identities in order to be an Indian.

An agitation that began in response to an assault on the constitutional idea of citizenship has opened the doors for redefining the idea in a manner that would have made the Republic's founding fathers proud of today's protesters. On the occasion of Constitution Day, the PM chided citizens about not following their duties. Little would he have expected that citizens would take his admonition seriously. The current protests are a classic instance of citizens selflessly doing their duty towards the nation — the duty to protect the Constitution, to consolidate fraternity and to ask for dignity of all irrespective of religion. In fact, probably for the first time since the founding of the Republic, the Constitution has become the centre of public conversations. That the Preamble is being read out at small and large gatherings speaks of a resolve to enrich the spirit of the Constitution by taking it out of libraries and lawyers' chambers.

But these are only silver linings. The Republic is gripped in melancholy. In part, this is because the government takes no note of the protests except through undemocratic police action and insensitive political name calling. The democratic urge of the protesters is matched by the complete cynicism of the ruling powers.

The other reason for the melancholy, as mentioned earlier, is the possibility that these protests would perhaps become a mere footnote in the history of Indian democracy's demise. An absence of coordination, a romanticism reflected in the lack of leadership and a void in the realm of strategy stare the protesters in the eye. The Republic requires astute and resolute resistance while what we are witnessing presently are ideologically ambivalent and strategically ill-prepared series of autonomous protests. They may recover the vocabulary of the Constitution, they may show us the possibility of a new idea of citizenship. But only if the protests of today graduate into a movement, would there be a recoupling of the Indian state and democracy. And only then, will the Republic survive.

The writer, based at Pune, taught political science and is currently chief editor of Studies in Indian Politics



KHALED AHMED

PAKISTAN WAS SUPPOSED to become like India if it wanted to survive. India's former foreign affairs minister, Yashwant Sinha, used to point out that while India had fought a war with China in 1962 and still had territorial disputes with it, China was India's largest trading partner. Today, Sinha is not a part of the BJP. And, instead of Pakistan following India, India is becoming like Pakistan.

Pakistan refuses to budge from its revisionist track. It keeps on fighting sub-nuclear wars with India and hurting its economy. It has disputes with India, but so has Bangladesh. But Bangladesh doesn't challenge its bigger neighbour like Pakistan. Look at the figures: Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves stood at \$15 billion in October 2019, while Bangladesh's reserves were \$32.93 billion in 2018. Bangladesh's economy is expected to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2019, and around 6.8 per cent in 2020. Pakistan is in the IMF's oxygen tent for the coming years given its indebtedness.

Despite being in the US's anti-China camp, bilateral trade between India and China is set to cross \$100 billion in 2019. Pakistan didn't listen to Sinha — today India too doesn't — and its defence budget is 3.6 per cent of its GDP. But according to the World Bank figures for 1988 to 2003, Pakistan's military expenditure represented 25-29 per cent of the Central government

BECOMING LIKE PAKISTAN

India should realise that trade and opening borders can address Kashmir dispute

expenditure, and 6-7 per cent of its gross national income. On the other hand, India's defence budget is 1.6 per cent of GDP, while Bangladesh's is 1.4 per cent.

The "rejected economist" Atif Mian said in *The New York Times*, "Pakistan's economy, like the airplane, has crashed 13 times in the last 60 years, each time requiring an IMF bailout. It wasn't always so. During the 1980s, in per capita terms, Pakistan was richer than India, China and Bangladesh by 15, 38 and 46 per cent. Today Pakistan is the poorest."

In 1948, Pakistan's trade with India formed 56 per cent of its exports and 32 per cent of imports. In 2018, the bilateral trade between Pakistan and India was merely 2.76 per cent and 0.35 per cent of their global trade. In 2018, Pakistan even banned border trade with India after the latter abrogated Article 370 of its Constitution.

When Imran Khan became prime minister of Pakistan he called on his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi to "normalise" relations because Pakistan wanted to trade rather than fight. But, Modi was busy getting rid of Article 370 even as Khan got together with his army chief General Bajwa to open the Kartarpur Sahib shrine for Indian visitors.

What happened in the Valley was hair-raising enough to shock the world and drag Pakistan back into its national position of challenging India. Soon, both Khan and Modi

faced their own separate challenges on the economy, one going into the IMF tent, the other getting hit from low growth and weakening political strength in states.

Khan has failed to get the world to support his claim about the abrogation of Article 370; not even the so-called Islamic world is willing to stand with him on the Kashmir dispute. Yet, Pakistan feels less challenged today on the eastern front than on its western boundary. Once considered Pakistan's "strategic depth", Afghanistan has emerged as the most unpredictable counter in Pakistan's foreign policy gameplan. India is there in Kabul and is close to Iran as well.

Once the Americans leave, the Kabul government will fall, handing it over to the Taliban and their al Qaeda and ISIS soldiers. They will milk both India and Pakistan, but will endanger Pakistan more with their ideology which blends dangerously with Pakistan's "weak" territories abutting the Durand Line. Pakistan, which is planning to hold the next summit of the defunct regional trading bloc SAARC in Islamabad in 2020, must convince India that through trade and opening of borders, the dispute of Kashmir can be laid to rest.

The writer is consulting editor, *Newsweek Pakistan*

JANUARY 25, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

ASSAM FOREIGNERS

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi told the Lok Sabha that those who had lived and voted in Assam for years should normally be considered as citizens not "foreigners". Intervening during a calling-attention motion on the violence against linguistic minorities in Assam, she said that the question as to who was a foreigner and to what date one must go back to establish citizenship, had to be discussed with the people of Assam.

RESERVATION CONTINUES

LOK SABHA UNANIMOUSLY passed the 45th Constitution Amendment Bill extending for a period of 10 years the reservation of seats

in state assemblies and the Lok Sabha for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Anglo-Indians. All the 423 members present in the House voted for the Bill which was piloted by the home minister, Giani Zail Singh. The extension is quite timely as the reservation of seats expires tomorrow.

US ON PERSIAN GULF

PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER in a major new unilateral American commitment told a joint session of Congress last night that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and it will be repelled by

use of any means necessary, including military force." American officials immediately amplified his message to include not only political intimidation and external threat but also internal subversion.

UNIDO CONFERENCE

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES STEPPED up their pressure on developed countries at the UNIDO conference to ensure that the New Delhi meet yields something substantial. While India offered to share its experience and expertise with other developing countries, Tunisia turned the table on the richer countries by asking them to adopt a more realistic attitude.



Reclaiming the Republic

Countrywide protests signify a nod to new humanism that seeks to synthesise, not splinter political ideas and identities



AMIT CHAUDHURI

“FOR AN OCCURRENCE to become an adventure,” said Sartre in his brief memoir, *Words*, “it is necessary and sufficient for one to recount it”. Necessary and sufficient: By which I suppose Sartre means that what makes an adventure adventure-like is determined after the fact, when an inchoate event has a narrative and a sort of completeness imposed upon it in retrospect. You can’t decide to have an adventure; you can’t always know you’re in one.

What Sartre said about the adventure, I often felt was true of history: That few people are actually aware of being in history, or in a significant historical moment. The present is frayed, open-ended, distracting, often humdrum: It doesn’t have the polish and carefully-put-together air that history does in books, whether they’re scholarly works or novels, or in cinema. Most people I’ve met who’ve lived through great historical change confess to not being aware at the time of the experience of the importance, the historicity, of what they were going through.

The events in India in the last month and a half have made me revise my view. For the first time I can think of, I am aware of living in history. It has all the frayed and unpredictable qualities of the present; yet its *sui generis* nature has taken us by surprise. We weren’t schooled to recognise it or led to expect it; but we know it for being history now that it has happened.

I’m referring, of course, to the nationwide protests that began in the midst of the deep gloom of the Citizenship Amendment Bill becoming an act in both houses of Parliament. They first started in Assam for a particular set of reasons; then — related to the fraught question of what it means to be Indian — in Jamia Millia, Aligarh Muslim, and Jawaharlal Nehru universities; spreading then to streets and squares everywhere, breaking with the terrible “normalcy” of the BJP’s second term’s first seven months, replacing the post-CAA despair with incandescence and exuberance.

No historical moment, or protest, is like another — this much is clear now. Not only India, the world has known nothing like this before. What’s being formulated is the thought that to be Indian is not only to be secular — it is to be human. Although the conflagration and revaluation was prompted by religion, it’s not God that’s at issue here.

The words, “idea of India”, trip readily off the tongue. But what does being an “Indian” actually mean? At which point did the word begin to be used by the English, and when and how was it wrested away from the coloniser so that it became a keyword, a potent concept, for the “natives”? To be Indian was to be many things, but I think it also comprised an overhaul of the coloniser’s ownership of humanism. When a late 19th-century Englishman used the word “human”, he most often meant “Englishman” or, at best, “European”. When late 19th-century Indians, increasingly divorced from power in their own country, used the word “Indian” for themselves, they were inserting themselves into the history of humanism, which gave them the freedom to perform and be defined by a range of characteristic but seemingly contradictory actions. Whether or not the



C R Sasikumar

“Indian” was a Muslim or high or low-caste Hindu or a Christian or man or woman, they could read, equally, the Gita, the Bible, or Wordsworth, or listen to a qawalli or a bhajan, often in new secular contexts; to be Indian also meant one could oppose the English coloniser politically while being able to study, and be moved by, English poetry. This is how the experience and consciousness of “being Indian” expressed anew, and in an unprecedented way, what it meant to be human. That to be Indian was not a political identity alone. Besides civilisational pride, it was this modulation of humanism that gave Indians their sense of parity, their absence of a sense of cultural marginality, in relationship to their political rulers.

In the last half century, it’s not only liberalism and, in India, secularism that have been called out as fraudulent; humanism, of which the other two are offshoots, is a world-view that’s been largely put on the shelf. The reasons for this are unarguable: To do with the powerful — whether they’re European, or male, or elite, or all of these — using the word “human” primarily to refer to those who are European, or male, or elite, and leaving the rest of the world outside the word’s purview. On these grounds, humanism was made illegitimate, both by the Left and the Right, as an idea that was more exclusionary than inclusive. It splintered into a variety of political identities, to do with class, race, gender, and postcolonial difference, which the word “human” had once enveloped and muffled. No one but a nostalgist would invoke humanism. It had had its day.

Or so it seemed until last month. The protests since mid-December — participated in by women, men, and children of all religions and classes, almost entirely peaceful and mostly unaffiliated to any political party — represent the first resurrection anywhere in the world of what one thought was an anachronism: The humanist legacy. The resurrection has brought renewed attention to the Constitution, which is a humanistic rather than a nationalistic document. To be Indian is to be Hindu, the BJP has instructed us, in a way that mutilates both categories. The protests have replied: To be Indian is to be human.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“Though money and power will continue to compel, Saudi’s partners should ask themselves: with friends like these, who needs enemies?.”

— THE GUARDIAN

Separating fact from economic fiction

GDP and consumption did very well between 2011-12 and 2017-18. Growth slowed beyond expectations starting late 2018



NO PROOF REQUIRED

BY SURJIT S BHALLA AND KARAN BHASIN

IF POLITICS is mixed with economics, and the two are combined with ideology, then what we have is what can be called a “po-tent” mixture. That is the case today with discussions on the Indian economy.

We belong to the camp which believes that GDP growth was 7 per cent for the first five years of the Narendra Modi government, and that growth has fallen woefully short of predictions, and expectations, to 5 per cent in 2019-20. This is an unprecedented fall in a non-crisis year and all experts who were arguing for a tight monetary and fiscal policy should ask themselves where they went wrong.

While this soul-searching is going on, we want to address the confusion that has erupted because of the steep slide in GDP growth in 2019-20. Many commentators have conflated two distinct episodes and are presenting them as one. Their contention is that the recent slowdown has been a permanent fixture of the Indian economy, especially since Modi took over the reins in 2014. Some experts say that India is already back to its pre-liberalisation era of slow economic growth of around 3-5 per cent.

Now, couple this with the fact that the Modi government has dumped the NSS consumer expenditure survey for 2017-18. Incidentally, we are in full agreement with the decision to treat the report with the disdain it deserves. But, we are not in agreement with the decision to not release the unit-level data. The unit-level data must be released, if only to document the reality that there is something wrong with the NSS architecture in collecting data.

We believe that the truth is hidden somewhere in the muddled data, and that the responsibility of a good researcher is to extract information from the noise. Towards this end, we bring a diverse set of statistical facts to the table — from night lights data, to national accounts, to data brought out by organisations on TV sales, internet subscriptions, automobile sales, and airline passengers.

Is 2019 different from the 2014-2018 period? A resounding yes, according to the night lights data. The nightlights data is available with the Earth Observation Group at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It comprises low-light imaging data collected by satellites and filtered to measure the quantity of artificial (human-generated) light in an area. The data enabled us to capture economic activity between 2012 and 2017. Data for the first four months of the first four years (for 2019, data is only available till April) shows an average growth of 12.5 per cent per year; growth for the first two quarters (January to June) between 2014 and 2018 averages 7.1 per cent annually. In the first two quarters of the 2019 calendar year, GDP growth averaged 5.4 per cent, while night lights averaged 5.8 per cent. Both very distinct meas-

ures of economic activity suggest that 2019 was a bad year and that the prior years had significantly higher economic activity.

Some political economy experts believe that demonetisation is responsible for the 2019 slowdown, while others believe that the GDP data are flawed because it does not adequately capture informal sector activity. The months immediately following demonetisation (November-January) do show an average growth of minus 20 per cent, while over the next 16 months, growth averaged 23 per cent. This strongly indicates that something happened to cause growth to sharply decelerate in late 2018. But, it was not demonetisation or GST. We believe the evidence is supportive of the argument that the ultra-tight monetary policy followed by the Ujit Patel-Viral Acharya duo and the NBFC crisis (exaggerated by tight monetary policy) precipitated our recent growth slowdown.

Was 2017-18 a bad year for economic activity? According to the NSS data, real per capita consumption declined by 3.7 per cent between 2011-12 and 2017-18. This is almost unheard of in most mature economies; even in our worst growth year in recent memory (1991 or 2009) per capita GDP growth declined by 0.5 per cent (1991) or increased by 2.5 per cent (2008). We strongly believe that a misdiagnosis of what happened in 2017-18, or in 2019, can lead to faulty policy prescriptions. As it happens, 2017-18 was a very good year for economic activity. The night lights data consistently find 2017-18 to be the best year for economic activity in the last seven years.

We have attempted to construct an alternate consumption series for 2017-18 using various sources of data. Rice, wheat and cereal production (accounting for about 8 per cent of the consumption basket in 2011-12) shows an average per capita annual decline of 0.02 per cent between 2011-2017. But, per capita consumption of meat, eggs, pulses, edible oils, and even turmeric shows a healthy increase between 2011 and 2017. The food and tobacco consumption components — these account for 42 per cent of the consumption basket — show an annual real per capita increase of 2.6 per cent over 2011-12.

For an additional 27 per cent of expenditure (TV, internet, laptops, petrol, electricity, education, health, and airline travel) there is an annual per capita increase of 5.7 per cent. Overall, data for about 75 per cent of expenditure shows a 3.5 per cent annual increase in per capita consumption (this contrasts with about a 4 per cent annual increase according to national accounts). It is unlikely that the remaining items would have grown at less than the average rate of growth of the 75 per cent items included here. At the end, we just might be reaching the conclusion that the national account estimates of consumption and GDP growth have been fairly accurate.

Our analysis has implications for poverty analysis and for the analysis of policies that the Modi government has followed. Our very conservative estimate is that absolute poverty in 2017-18 was in the low to mid-single digits — a decline of 6-8 percentage points from the 14 per cent level in 2011-12. This is indeed a happy note as we celebrate 70 years of the creation of the Indian Republic.

Bhalla is executive director, IMF representing India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Karan Bhasin is an independent economist. Views are personal



KAPIL SIBAL

The people deserve better

As the Republic turns 70, the nation’s growth prospects seem fraught

IN THE 70th year of our Republic’s tryst with destiny, we should have been proud of a robust nation: Inspired by the sacrifices of all who fought for our freedom, energised by the present and full of hope for our future. We dreamt of a Republic alive, protective of its democratic institutions, engaged in meaningful conversations and marching with the rest of the world to compete and conquer with our creative genius. Instead, we seem to have lost our way, unclear of the fundamentals that we need to address as those who govern us unleash an agenda that seeks to dominate, suppress dissent, encourage violence and espouse discriminatory policy prescriptions that have spread unease in the minds of concerned citizens.

The IMF believes that India’s GDP for 2019-20 will be 4.8 per cent — a drag on the global economy. That is not the only aspect of our economy that worries us. The oxygen necessary to achieve a GDP growth rate of 8 per cent and above requires bold initiatives. While some of the problems may have been inherited and termed as “legacy issues”, this government had a unique opportunity with the vast majority at its command to take bold decisions to create an environment that encourages both domestic entrepreneurs to invest and attract foreign capital, especially in infrastructure. What is also required is to put more money in the pockets of the poor. That

would have, in turn, given a kick-start to our consumption cycle, allowing people at the bottom of the ladder to fuel the economy with increased spending. But the animal spirits of entrepreneurs have been doused by the fears of investigating agencies looking for opportunities to target trade and industry. Instead of a genuine attempt to fight corruption, what we see is both prosecution and persecution based on suspicion, which tends to destroy confidence in the system.

Bureaucrats and bank officials are targeted along with the persecution of political opponents. Those close to the establishment are protected. Such partisan attitudes tend to make both bureaucrats and bankers pliant. It also makes for a soulless bureaucratic system where bureaucrats bend over backwards to please their political masters for protection. This is because bureaucrats who take principled positions, not willing to succumb to the dictates of their political masters, are either shunted out of their positions or dealt with in other ways. The bureaucrat-banker-political nexus is thriving with the blue-eyed boys of industry being openly granted favours for crucial infrastructure projects in this country. The promise of an independent Lokpal is a far cry. That the Lokpal is not yet fully in place shows the BJP’s reluctance to deal with corruption: This government will ensure that the Lokpal is not given the opportunity to get at

the truth, lest it may deeply embarrass people in high places.

It is only a healthy, growing economy that brings home prosperity even to the common man. Only 4 per cent of our population contributing to our tax revenues is proof of an ailing economy, where millions live on the margins. That over 70 per cent of our nation’s wealth is owned by less than 10 per cent of our population, even after 70 years of independence, is reason to lament. The fall in consumer spending due to low rural demand for the first time since 1973, falling family savings, lack of credit offtake in the banking sector and high levels of NPAs in public sector banks augurs ill for the future. Exports are stagnant and key sectors of the economy show no signs of recovery. Telecom may see the exit of Vodafone while other players are unable to meet DoT’s demands for AGR dues. Real estate is in ICU.

Thus, the economic downturn has led to a fall in direct tax revenues. Collection of indirect taxes through GST, not matching the government’s expectations, has further dampened the economic sentiment. The hope that the revenue gap will be met by achieving the disinvestment target of Rs. 1.05 trillion in the current fiscal year is unlikely to be realised. It is unfortunate that valuable assets of Central Public Sector Enterprises are being sold to meet the fiscal gap, instead of using proceeds

of such asset sales to create new assets to increase the prospects of growth.

The unemployment rate of those in the age group of 20-24 during the period September-December, 2019, is 37 per cent. Within that category, the unemployment rate of graduates is over 60 per cent. In fact, in 2019, the average unemployment rate of graduates was 63.4 per cent, much higher than in the previous year. Unemployment rate of those in the age group of 25 and 29 is 11 per cent, while it is 23.4 per cent amongst graduates in that age group. Unemployment amongst postgraduates is also frightening, reaching a rate of 23 per cent in 2019. The rate of urban unemployment for youngsters in their early twenties, between September and December 2019, was as high as 44 per cent, reflected in the levels of unrest which we witness in protests across India.

It is the robustness of the economy, which alone can deliver millions out of poverty. Yet since 2014 to the 70th year of our Republic, the economy has been given step-motherly treatment. This government’s agenda is not just politics, but divisive politics. The duo at the helm of affairs hopes to capture the Hindu mind by pitting it against others. In the 70th year, our Republic deserves better.

The writer, a senior Congress leader, is a former Union minister

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NET BLACKOUT

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘The shadow of emergency’ (IE, January 24). Last month, authorities imposed an internet clampdown in parts of the capital and in areas of Assam and Uttar Pradesh as protests raged against the CAA. The internet blackout and restrictions on movement have severely disrupted the lives of millions and had an impact on everything from college admissions to businesses filing tax returns.

Vandana, Chandigarh

SING FEARLESSLY

THIS REFERS TO the articles, ‘A hymn in retreat’ and ‘A poet of many worlds’ (IE, January 23). Hum dekhenge by Faiz and Abide with me by Henry Francis are excellent literary compositions. They are a part of our history and culture. To name one as anti-Hindu, and to do away with the other in the name of patriotism and nationalism is not only unfortunate but ridiculous.

Jayshree Thatte, Thane

SOREN ON BACKFOOT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Rumblings in Ranchi’ (IE, January 23). The victory of JMM, Congress and RJD alliance in Jharkhand owed in large measure to the fact that it was attentive to the concerns of the tribal people.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

TARGET MISSED

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Three as one’ (IE, January 22). According to the government, CAA gives citizenship to the persecuted Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and Parsis of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. But the six clauses of CAA do not even mention the word “persecuted”. Does that mean a Muslim majority country cannot persecute Muslims? Pakistan doesn’t consider Ahmadis as Muslims. Similarly many in India claim there are no persecuted Hindus. But what about the Dalits, OBCs or even the poor?

Ranjit Nimbalkar, Pune

Though it is early days

16 | E. EXPLAINED



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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

HOW EFFECTIVE ARE SURGICAL MASKS AGAINST A VIRAL INFECTION?

AMID A coronavirus outbreak that has killed over two dozen and infected over 600 so far, Chinese authorities have encouraged people in Wuhan city to wear surgical masks in public. Surgical masks are often worn when there is an outbreak, or extreme air pollution. But do these really prevent viral infection? The expert view is that their effectiveness is limited.

Several studies, in fact, have found that surgical masks work well in protecting healthcare workers in hospitals from infections from sick patients. It is also generally agreed that if an infected patient wears a surgical mask, it may prevent the infection from spreading to others. Indeed, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised surgical masks for patients under investigation for the coronavirus. "Such patients should be asked to wear a surgical mask as soon as they are identified and be evaluated in a private room with the door closed, ideally an airborne infection isolation room if available," the advisory states.

Where evidence is lacking, on the other hand, is about the effectiveness of surgical masks in protecting uninfected people outside healthcare settings. The effectiveness of a mask depends on whether it forms a proper seal around the mouth and nose — gaps mean that air can still be breathed in. A surgical mask does, however, protect the user from droplets of sneeze and cough of infected patients, according to a report in *The New York*



People line up outside a Shanghai drugstore to buy masks. *Reuters*

Times quoting various experts.

Dr P V Sudhakar, Dean of Andhra Medical College is Visakhapatnam, told *The Indian Express*: "Surgical masks (two-dimensional) can offer some amount of protection", but "the better method is to use N95 (three-dimensional). They fill out all the gaps around the nose and the mouth." He added that people wearing masks should not touch the masks with their bare hands and should also be careful while disposing of them.

WHO's standard recommendations to protect against the novel coronavirus include frequently cleaning hands with alcohol-based hand-rub or soap or water, avoiding close contact with anyone who has a fever or cough, and avoiding consumption of raw or undercooked animal products.

MEHR GILL

THIS WORD MEANS ARCHAEA

Rarely studied microorganisms; now a new species has been found in Sambhar Lake. Why is it important?

SCIENTISTS AT the National Centre for Microbial Resource — National Centre for Cell Science (NCMR-NCCS) in Pune have reported a new archaeon (a kind of microorganism), which they discovered in Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan. The discovery was described on Thursday in the *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology*. This is the only journal that publishes the description of new microbial taxa, said Dr Yogesh Shouche, senior scientist at NCCS.

WHY IT MATTERS: Archaea (singular archaeon) are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes. These slow-growing organisms are also present in the human gut, and have a potential relationship with human health. They are known for producing antimicrobial molecules, and for anti-oxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste water treatment.

Archaea are extremely difficult to culture due to challenges in providing natural conditions in a laboratory setting, said Dr Avinash Sharma, one of the researchers at NCMR-NCCS. Very few groups are working on their cultivation, said co-author Swapnil Kajale. Scientists in China, Israel, Russia and a few countries in Europe are working on the taxonomy of archaea, but going by the number

of publications that are coming out on all bacterial taxonomy, the studies on archaea are outnumbered. As archaea are relatively poorly studied, very little is known about how archaea behave in the human body.

SEARCH & DISCOVERY: Sambhar Lake has been poorly studied for microbial ecology studies. With a salt production of 0.2 million tonnes per annum, it is also a hypersaline ecosystem which provides an opportunity for microbial ecologists to understand organisms that thrive in such concentrations.

Once the new organism was found, it took researchers one year to complete the study because archaea grow so slow. Based on a mandatory genome analysis, researchers found that the organism has potential gene clusters that helps maintain the metabolism of the archaea to survive in extreme harsh conditions. This particular organism also harbours specific pathways for DNA replication, recombination and repair.

The new archaeon has been named *Natrialba swarupiae*, after Dr Renu Swarup, secretary, Department of Biotechnology, for her initiative in supporting microbial diversity studies in the country, the researchers said.

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What is Vyommित्रा's space job?

Before India's first human spaceflight, a half-humanoid will travel solo to help determine if the trip is safe enough. How ISRO is preparing for the unmanned and manned trips, and where the half-humanoid fits in

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, JANUARY 24

ON WEDNESDAY, Vyommित्रा, a "half-humanoid" being developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), announced herself in Bengaluru. She is the prototype for a half-humanoid that will eventually fly to space on an unmanned mission later this year, aiming to lay the ground for ISRO's manned mission Gaganyaan in 2022.

What is a half-humanoid?

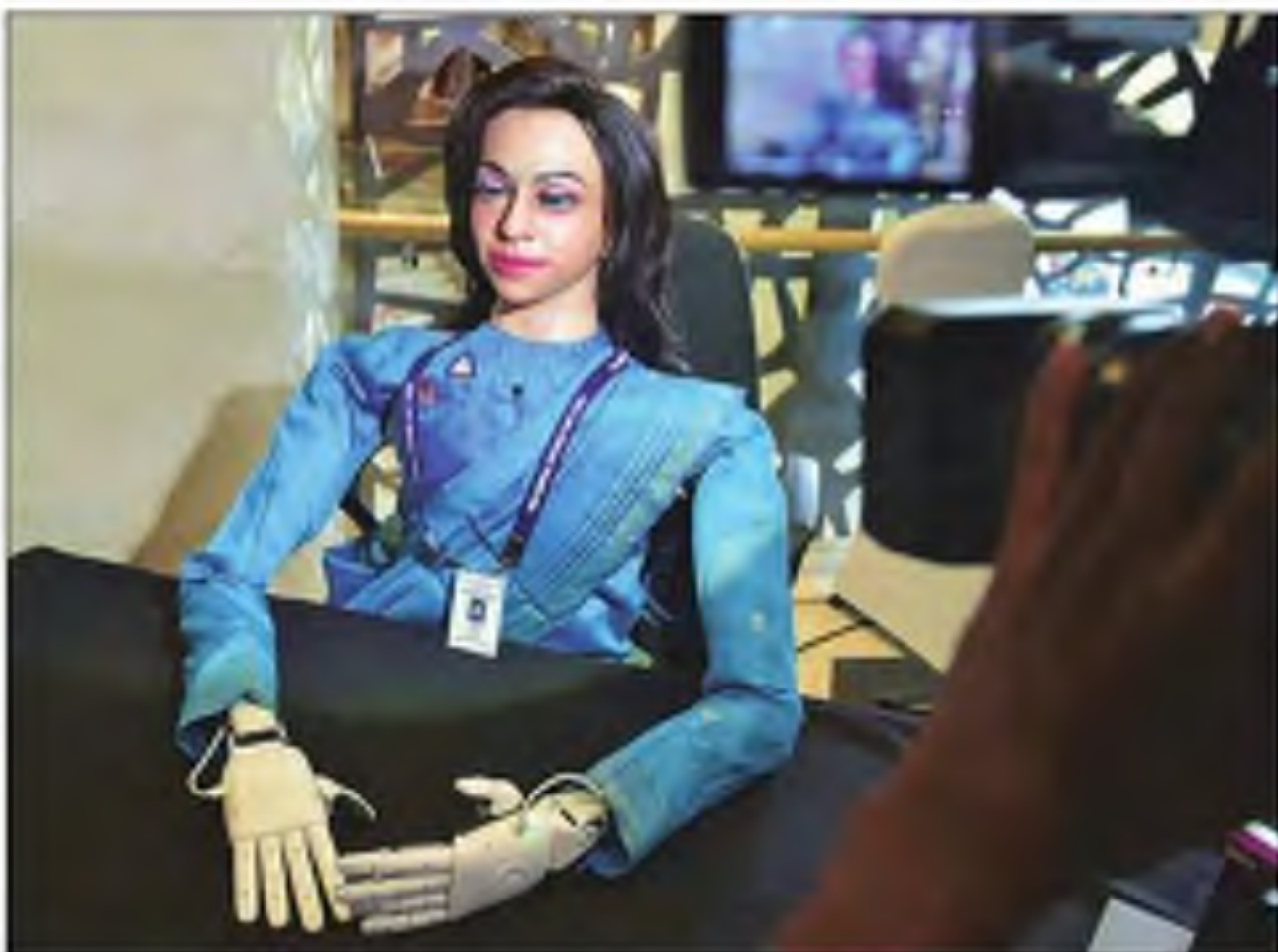
A humanoid is basically a robot with the appearance of a human being. ISRO's Vyommित्रा (vyoma = space, mitra = friend) is also being called a half-humanoid since she will only have a head, two hands and a torso, and will not have lower limbs.

Like any robot, a humanoid's functions are determined by the computer systems to which it is connected. With the growth of artificial intelligence and robotics, humanoids are being increasingly used for repetitive jobs, such as that of a waiter at a restaurant. The artificial intelligence technologies that power modern systems such as autonomous cars, or voice-operated systems such as Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant, Cortana and Bixby, are extended in a humanoid to perform simple functions that include walking, moving things, communicating and obeying commands.

Why is ISRO developing a humanoid?

ISRO plans to send a human into space for the first time by 2022. It is racing against time to develop a crew module and rocket systems that will ensure the safe travel and return of the Indian astronaut. Other countries that have successfully launched humans into space did so after having used animals for conducting tests of their rockets and crew recovery systems, while ISRO will use the humanoid to test the efficacy of its GSLV Mk III rocket to transport a human to space and back. The humanoid is under development at a robotics laboratory at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre.

ISRO's GSLV Mk III rocket is currently undergoing improvisation to ensure that it is human-rated or, in other words, declared safe to



Vyommित्रा on display in Bengaluru on Thursday. *PTI*

transport a human being to space. Its first unmanned mission with the human-rated rocket is planned for December 2020. The crew module system, too, is under development, and ISRO will attempt to carry out several tests over the next few months to launch and recover the module using new test launch rockets, which too are under development.

ISRO has considerable experience in building robotic systems for its space projects. Artificial intelligence was at the core of the Vikram lander system used for the September 2019 Chandrayaan 2 mission to the Moon by assessing distances, speeds and processing commands stored in the lander systems (the lander made a failed attempt to descend to the surface from an orbit around the Moon).

Once flown into space, ISRO's half-humanoid will be able to test systems in the crew module meant for the survival and safe travel of the first Indian astronaut in 2022.

What are the tasks that Vyommित्रा will

perform in space?

A central character in the science-fiction film *Interstellar* (2014), which is about space and time travel, is an artificial-intelligence-and-robotics-powered computer system called TARS, which talks to the astronauts, assists them in mission functions, and even rescues them in times of crisis. TARS was not a humanoid, but a robotic system with exceptional capabilities.

The Vyommित्रा humanoid, which will test the ground for the human spaceflight, will be a very basic version of a TARS-type, artificial-intelligence-and-robotics system. The activities that Vyommित्रा will be able to perform, once fully developed for the unmanned flight, will include procedures to use equipment on board the spacecraft's crew module such as safety mechanisms and switches, as well as receiving and acting on commands sent from ground stations. Attaining launch and orbital postures, responding to the environment, generating

warnings, replacing carbon dioxide canisters, operating switches, monitoring of the crew module, receiving voice commands, responding via speech (bilingual) are the functions listed for the humanoid.

Vyommित्रा, whose human-like face has already been on display, will have lip movement synchronised to mimic speech. She can also double up as an artificial buddy to an astronaut — providing audio inputs on aspects like the health of the spacecraft during the launch, landing and orbital phases of the manned mission.

Vyommित्रा will also report back to Earth on the changes occurring in the crew module during the spaceflight and return, such as heat radiation levels, to enable ISRO to understand the safety levels required in the crew module that will eventually fly a human being.

Have other space missions used humanoids?

There have been many space missions featuring dummy astronauts. There have also been many featuring humanoid robots like Vyommित्रा. The most recent mission with a dummy astronaut was in March 2019, when a mannequin called Ripley was flown on the Dragon crew capsule, launched on a SpaceX Falcon rocket, and sent to the International Space Station. Ripley was fitted with sensors to measure forces that act during a space flight as part of SpaceX preparations to send a human into space in 2020 for NASA.

An artificial intelligence robot ball called CIMON (Crew Interactive Mobile Companion) was deployed on the ISS by Airbus. Int-ball, a floating camera robot, was deployed on the ISS by JAXA space agency.

Kirobo, a humanoid robot astronaut built in Japan, was flown to the ISS along with the first Japanese commander of the ISS, Koichi Wakata, to serve as the astronaut's assistant in conducting experiments on the space station. Kirobo was equipped with technologies such as speech recognition, facial recognition, language processing and telecommunication capabilities.

A Russian humanoid robot, Fedor, was sent to the ISS in 2019 to carry out mechanical functions on the space station.

Why Punjab land decision has upset Dalits

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA
JALANDHAR JANUARY 24

OVER THE last several days, various organisations in Punjab have been protesting against a revised land policy relating to village common land, which is known as 'shamlat' land. The state Cabinet recently approved an amendment to the Village Common Land (Regulation) Rules, 1964, allowing panchayats to sell shamlat land to industrial houses, entrepreneurs, businessmen, and companies for setting up micro, small and medium industrial units.

What is shamlat land

Shamlat is one of three categories of common land in Punjab villages. 'Shamlat' land is owned by the village panchayat. Of the other two categories, 'Jumla mushtraka malkan' is land in a common pool made with villagers' personal contributions, and is managed by the panchayat. The third category, 'Gau charan', too belongs to the panchayat, and is for cattle grazing. Over time, however, all such lands have come to be known as shamlat land. Shamlat land is mainly used for cultivation, and is allotted for this through an open auction that is conducted by the Rural Development and Panchayat Department every year.



Protest against the amendment in Sangrur district on Friday. *Express*

Why it matters

One-third of Punjab's shamlat lands are reserved for Dalits. Around 25,000 to 26,000 families in the state, mostly Dalits, depend on this land for their livelihood, according to a survey by Zameen Prapti Sangharsh Committee (ZPSC), an umbrella of eight organisations, mostly representing Dalits.

"For instance in Sangrur district, around

4,000 Dalit families are cultivating shamlat land. Not only are they earning from the crop, but around 15% of these families running small dairies are benefiting by growing their own fodder on this land," said Mukesh Malaudh, ZPSC president.

The recent government move has sparked fears of unemployment. On Friday, ZPSC members agitated outside the homes

of ministers and Congress MLAs in their respective districts, demanding withdrawal of the Cabinet decision.

The land & the earnings

Punjab has 1,70,033 acres (68,839 hectares) shamlat land in around 8,000 of the state's 13,000 villages, according to the Rural Development and Panchayat Department. The one-third that is reserved for Dalits (who represent one-third of the population) comes to around 56,677 acres (22,946 hectares). According to a response to an RTI query by ZPSC in January 2018, over half of Punjab's shamlat land is concentrated in the six districts of Patiala (highest at 15.5%), Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, Kapurthala, Fatehgarh Sahib and Amritsar.

Some 23,000 acres shamlat land is under the control of land grabbers; of the remaining 1.47 lakh acres, most is auctioned by panchayats every year, and any villager can bid for cultivation. The average rent is Rs 20,000 per acre in the reserved category (Dalits), and around Rs 28,000 in the general category. In comparison, lease rates to private persons (farmers) are Rs 60,000 per acre annually in Malwa region, and Rs 25,000-45,000 in other regions.

The auctioning fetches nearly Rs 372 crore annually to 8,000 villages, and the proceeds are used for development work.

17 The World

TOPOF THE WORLD



Isabel dos Santos

ANGOLA

Ready to fight graft claims, says dos Santos

Luanda: Isabel dos Santos, the tycoon daughter of Angola's ex-president who is at the centre of an anti-graft investigation, on Thursday vowed she was ready to fight against what she called "misleading and untrue" allegations. Dos Santos, dubbed 'the princess' in Angola, is accused of using her father's influence to steal millions of dollars from state companies and siphon funds overseas during his rule. The allegations stretch across state oil and diamond industries and banks to Lisbon. Named in the probe, the head of one of Angola's largest banks has resigned.



Reuters

'No, No AMERICA'

■ Thousands of Iraqis rallied at two central Baghdad intersections on Friday after a prominent cleric called for a "million strong" protest against American military presence

■ Since mid-morning, large crowds gathered on the Muslim day of prayers as loudspeakers blasted 'No, no America!' at a central square in Baghdad

■ The march called by Moqtada al-Sadr aimed to press for a pullout of US troops. Sadr, who commands a following of millions, opposes all foreign interference in Iraq

■ Marchers were protected by Sadr's Saraya al-Salam brigades and Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces, an umbrella grouping of Iran-backed Shi'ite militias, witnesses said

US to limit visas for pregnant women to curb birth tourism: 'A glaring loophole'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 24

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump opened a new front in his battle against immigration on Thursday, barring the issuing of visas to pregnant women seeking to enter the United States for so-called "birth tourism."

In announcing the move, which takes effect Friday, the White House said foreigners were using the visas "to secure automatic and permanent American citizenship for their children by

giving birth on American soil." "The integrity of American citizenship must be protected," White House spokeswoman Stephanie Grisham said in a statement.

Temporary B-1 and B-2 visitor visas would no longer be issued to "aliens seeking to enter the United States for 'birth tourism,'" the White House said.

Calling the practice "a glaring immigration loophole," it argued that the crackdown on "birth tourism" was for public safety and national security as well as to maintain the "integrity of our immigration system."

EXPLAINED Implementation may present some issues

HOW CAN consular officers decide whether or not someone could imminently give birth? This will be one of several issues when it comes to implementing the new regulation. It is unclear what counts as an "articulable reason" to ask a woman if she is pregnant — "visual cues" being one potential approach. There are also cases in which visas are granted for long periods, with the result that someone could receive a visa long before pregnancy is even a factor, as per experts. They said tackling the birth tourism industry directly would be a more effective approach.

Benghazi attack: Libyan gets 19-year prison term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 24

A 47-YEAR-OLD Libyan man who was captured by US special forces in Libya and brought to the United States for trial was sentenced to prison on Thursday for his role in the 2012 attack on the US mission in Benghazi.

Mustafa al-Imam, who was convicted of terrorism charges and other offenses in June 2019 after a six-week trial, was sentenced to 19 years and six months in prison by a US District Court judge.

United States ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans died in the September 11, 2012 attack on the US mission in Benghazi and the CIA annex there.

"Each sacrificed his life promoting American ideals," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement, adding that Al-Imam's sentencing "sends a strong message to those who would attempt to commit such a heinous crime."

Imam was captured by US troops in Libya in October 2017 and brought to the United States.

'CAN'T TRUST HIM TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT FOR THE COUNTRY'

Impeachment: Democrats seek to pre-empt Trump's defence

SHERYL GAY STOLBERG
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 24

HOUSE DEMOCRATS sought on Thursday to pre-emptively dismantle President Trump's core defences in his impeachment trial, invoking his own words to argue that his pressure campaign on Ukraine was an abuse of power that warranted his removal.

On the second day of arguments in the third presidential impeachment trial in American history, Democrats sought to make the case that Trump's actions were an affront to the Constitution. And they worked to disprove his lawyers' claims that he was acting only in the nation's interests when he sought to enlist Ukraine to investigate political rivals.

In doing so, they took a calculated risk in talking at length about Trump's targets — former Vice President Joseph R Biden Jr and his son Hunter Biden — and underscored the political backdrop of a trial that is unfolding only 10 months before the election and is likely to reverberate long after the verdict.

"You know you can't trust this president to do what's right for this



A sketch of the impeachment trial proceedings. AP

country — you can trust he will do what's right for Donald Trump," said Representative Adam Schiff, the lead impeachment manager, said in an impassioned appeal as the clock ticked past 10 p.m. "This is why if you find him guilty, you must find that he should be removed. Because right matters. Right matters and the truth matters. Otherwise we are lost."

The team of seven Democratic impeachment managers repeatedly attacked the idea that when the president withheld military aid from Ukraine and sought to secure a

promise to investigate Joseph Biden, he was merely making a foreign policy decision to root out corruption in Ukraine.

Trump has suggested, without any evidence, that Biden pushed to remove a Ukrainian prosecutor who was investigating Burisma, a Ukrainian energy company with a long history of corruption that employed Hunter Biden on its board. Representative Sylvia R Garcia, Democrat of Texas, spent nearly an hour debunking the claim, and said that, in fact, the opposite was true. **NYT**

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

China shuts down 13 cities as toll hits 26, 41 mn people affected

Number of cases in China rises to 800, Nepal reports first case on its soil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, JANUARY 24

Battling the fast spreading coronavirus, China on Friday said that it is building a 1,000-bed hospital for patients infected with the deadly virus that has claimed 26 lives so far with confirmed cases rising sharply to over 880, prompting authorities to shut down 13 cities during the country's most important holiday.

Dampening the celebrations of the Lunar New Year, China, in an unprecedented move, has shut down transportation in at least 13 cities — Wuhan and 12 of its neighbours — in central China's Hubei province to contain the coronavirus.

According to the National Health Commission, 26 people have died so far with over 880 confirmed cases being treated mostly in Hubei province. Twenty nine provinces have reported the cases. China's biggest city Shanghai raised the emergency response of public health safety to level 1, the highest, following Beijing, and Hubei, Hunan, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Guangdong provinces as more cases were reported.

Beijing so far reported 34 confirmed cases of coronavirus infection, official media reported.

Shanghai Disneyland will close until further notice, the



TWITTERATI

BORIS JOHNSON, UK PM, ON BREXIT AGREEMENT

"Today I have signed the Withdrawal Agreement for the UK to leave the EU on January 31st, honouring the democratic mandate of the British people. This signature heralds a new chapter in our nation's history."



At a hospital in Hong Kong. Reuters

amusement park said Friday.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Thursday stopped short of declaring the virus a global public health emergency, despite China's climbing death toll.

The virus has spread to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and the United States as of Thursday. Japan on Friday reported a second confirmed case.

Nepal on Friday confirmed the first case of the coronavirus in the country, identifying the infected person as a Nepali student who recently returned from Wuhan, local media reports said.

The US confirmed its second case — a woman in Chicago in her sixties. In the UK, 14 people have been tested for the virus so far. Public Health England, the executive arm of the government's Department for Health, said five people had tested negative and nine others await their results.

INDIAN EMBASSY CANCELS REPUBLIC DAY CEREMONY

THE INDIAN embassy in China on Friday announced on social media that it has cancelled its Republic Day ceremony, citing the virus outbreak

IN VIEW of the evolving situation due to the coronavirus outbreak in China as well as the decision of the Chinese authorities to cancel public gathering and events, @EOI Beijing has also decided to call off the Republic Day reception scheduled to be held @EOI Beijing on January 26th," it said on Twitter

AFTER WORLD COURT'S ORDER

Myanmar already protecting Rohingya, says ruling party

THU THU AUNG & SAM AUNG MOON
YANGON, JANUARY 24

MYANMAR HAS put in place measures to protect Rohingya Muslims, a spokesman for the ruling party said on Friday, shrugging off an order from the International Court of Justice a day earlier to stop genocidal acts against the ethnic minority.

The Hague-based court ordered Myanmar to protect the persecuted Rohingya against further atrocities and preserve evidence of alleged crimes, after mostly Muslim Gambia launched a lawsuit in November accusing Myanmar of genocide.

"The government is already doing most of the orders," Myo Nyunt, a spokesman for the ruling National League for Democracy, told Reuters by phone, without elaborating.

"One more thing we need to do is submit reports," he said, referring to one of several measures approved by the court requiring Myanmar to write regular summaries of

Under the current political circumstances, we have difficulties solving some issues — such as the (order) that the government must ensure its military or armed insurgents do not commit genocide or attempt to commit genocide against Rohingya or Bengali"

— NLD SPOKESPERSON

its progress.

But he said the civilian government, who rule jointly with the military in an awkward constitutional arrangement that reserves great powers for the commander-in-chief, could not control troops.

More than 730,000 Rohingya fled western Rakhine state for neighbouring Bangladesh in 2017 to escape a military-led crackdown that the UN has said was executed with genocidal intent. **REUTERS**

Iran faces detente calls from West, Middle East

DMITRY ZHDANNIKOV & LUKE BAKER
DAVOS, JANUARY 24

IRANIAN FOREIGN minister Javad Zarif skipped this year's Davos, but Tehran was still a hot topic for many Western and Middle Eastern powers hoping for detente less than three weeks after the United States killed Iran's top general.

Zarif, normally a regular at the World Economic Forum, canceled on Monday, with his ministry citing program changes. Organisers of the annual gathering in the Swiss ski resort did not comment on the reason given.

While Iran was absent from the corridors of the conference centre, there was an urge for de-escalation among those present.

Iraqi President Barham Salih said he had a productive conversation on Iran with US President Donald Trump, who made few public comments on the issue while in Davos, after signaling this month he was ready to de-escalate the situation.

"We had a very candid conversation (about) the need for basically restraint, calming things down... This is not time for another conflict," Salih said on Wednesday.

Washington blamed Qassem Soleimani, Iran's top general, for masterminding attacks by Iran-aligned militias against US forces in the region. His killing in a US drone attack left regional analysts concerned it could spark a war.

Iran responded to Soleimani's killing by launching missiles at US targets in Iraq, although it flagged that the attack was coming and no US soldiers were killed. **REUTERS**



Javad Zarif

LARGEST ANNUAL RISE SINCE MEASUREMENTS BEGAN IN 1958

Australia fires fuel biggest annual spike in global CO2 levels

NINA CHESTNEY
LONDON, JANUARY 24

THE CONCENTRATION of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere this year is likely to show one of the largest annual rises since measurements began in 1958, partly fuelled by Australian bushfires, according to research by Britain's Met Office.

The concentration of CO2 is expected to peak above 417 parts per million (ppm) this May, while the year's average is expected to be around 414 ppm, up to nearly 3 ppm above the aver-



AP/File

Bushfires scorched an area one-third the size of Germany

age for last year.

Man-made emissions are the overall driver of the long-term rise in CO2 concentrations in the atmosphere, which is the main cause of climate change.

However, added to that, weather patterns linked to swings in Pacific Ocean temperatures are known to affect the uptake of CO2 by land ecosystems.

In years when there is a warmer tropical Pacific, many regions become warmer and drier, which limits the ability of plants to grow and absorb CO2 and increases the risk of wild-

fires, which release further emissions.

Along with other weather patterns and human-induced climate change, this has contributed to the recent hot, dry weather in Australia, which played a key role in the severity of bushfires, the Met Office said. An unusually long bushfire season has scorched an area one-third the size of Germany in Australia.

The impact of weather patterns on ecosystems is expected to increase the rise in CO2 concentration by 10% this year and the emissions from

the bushfires contribute up to one fifth of this increase, the Met Office said.

"Although the series of annual levels of CO2 have always seen a year-on-year increase since 1958, driven by fossil fuel burning and deforestation, the rate of rise isn't perfectly even because there are fluctuations in the response of ecosystem carbon sinks, especially tropical forests," said Richard Betts, of the Met Office Hadley Centre

"Overall, these are expected to be weaker than normal for a second year running," he added. **REUTERS**

19 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 41,613.19 ▲ 226.79 NIFTY: 12,248.25 ▲ 67.90 NIKKEI: 23,827.18 ▲ 31.74 HANG SENG: 27,949.64 ▲ 40.52 FTSE: 7,630.81 ▲ 123.14 DAX: 13,575.79 ▲ 187.37

*International market data till 1900 IST

RBI GUV: CENTRAL BANK AHEAD OF CURVE IN ACTING EARLY TO ADDRESS SLOWDOWN

Ahead of Budget, Das underlines need for more structural reforms to revive growth

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

CITING LIMITATIONS of monetary policy to push growth, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday said structural reforms and more fiscal measures are needed to revive growth.

Das said the central bank has been ahead of the curve and acted early with monetary policy easing to address the imminent slowdown in the Indian economy.

"We, in the Reserve Bank, therefore, constantly update our assessment of the economy based on incoming data... This approach helped the Reserve Bank to use the policy space opened up by the expected moderation in inflation and act early, recognising the imminent slowdown before it was confirmed by data subsequently," Das said at conference at St Stephen's College, New Delhi — his alma mater.

At its monetary policy review last December, the central bank slashed the GDP growth forecast by 190 basis points to 5

EXPLAINED

RBI Governor in favour of proactive fiscal policy

AMID GROWING clamour among economists asking the government to postpone fiscal consolidation to boost growth, the RBI has weighed in to suggest that fiscal policy must be "further activated" to revive consumption and support economic expansion.

The RBI Governor's comments are critical as they come just ahead of the Union Budget to be presented next Saturday on February 1, wherein the Centre is expected to overshoot the fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent of GDP in 2019-20.

per cent over the last two policy statements in a matter of two months — its sharpest revision in at least a decade. The RBI's monetary policy committee also kept the repo rate — the rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks — unchanged at 5.15 per cent as inflation risks were expected to rise. To support growth, the RBI has cut its repo rate by a cumulative 135 basis points during February-October 2019. GDP growth in

July-September 2019 quarter has hit a six-year low of 4.5 per cent, as per the government data.

Das indicated that the RBI may have limited room now and fiscal policy will need to be "further activated" to support faltering growth. The government is widely expected to breach its fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent of GDP in the current year, with analysts expecting it to touch 3.7 per cent.

Many economists have suggested that the government should delay fiscal consolidation for a couple of years and support the economy through elevated spending.

The RBI governor's comments are critical as they come just ahead of the Union Budget to be presented next Saturday on February 1. "Monetary policy, however, has its own limits. Structural reforms and fiscal measures may have to be continued and further activated to provide a durable push to demand and boost growth," Das said. The government is also focusing on infrastructure spending which will augment growth potential of the economy. States should also play an important role by enhancing capital expenditure which has high multiplier effect, he said.

"I have (earlier) highlighted certain potential growth drivers which, through backward and forward linkages, could give significant push to growth. Some of these areas include prioritising food processing industries, tourism, e-commerce, start-ups and efforts to become a part of the global value chain," Das said

in his speech on 'Seven ages of India's monetary policy'.

Apart from growth and inflation, the RBI has given due importance to financial stability, he stressed. "Although global experience with financial stability as an added policy objective is still unsettled, the Reserve Bank has always been giving due importance to financial stability since the enactment of the Preamble to the RBI Act... More recently, the focus of financial stability has not only confined to regulation and supervision but also extending the reach of formal financial system to the unbanked and unserved population," he said.

Admitting that correctly assessing the current economic situation and thus formulating the necessary monetary policy is a challenge now, he said this is why monetary policy around the world is in a state of flux today.

The precise estimation of key parameters such as potential output and output gaps on a real time basis is a challenging task, although they are crucial for the conduct of monetary policy, he said.

Budget FY21: Govt likely to impose tariff and non-tariff import barriers

Move to reduce fund outflow, help in job creation

SANDEEP SINGH & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

INA move that may help the government achieve twin objectives of reducing outflow of funds on account of imports and help domestic manufacturing and job creation, the government is likely to impose tariff and non-tariff barriers on various import items in the forthcoming Budget, set to be presented by the Finance Minister on February 1.

The list of items that may see imposition of non-tariff barriers may include silk and garments, mobile charger, printer, electronic broadcasting equipment, toys, electrical lights, handicrafts, vegetables & fruit and copper alloys.

A source close to the development told *The Indian Express* that with growing concerns over increasing trade deficit with certain countries and rising outflow of funds on account of imports, the government is deliberating on a proposal to impose non-tariff barriers to address these concerns. He said it will help domestic manufacturing.

Non-tariff measures are policy measures other than ordinary customs tariffs that can potentially have an economic effect on international trade in

The items that may see imposition of non-tariff barriers include silk and garments, mobile charger, printer, electronic broadcasting equipment, toys, and vegetables and fruit

goods, changing quantities traded, or prices or both, while tariff measures raise duties to make them uncompetitive.

Sources said the government is likely to impose higher customer duties — raising them by up to 10 per cent — on many of the identified items and in some case it would be accompanied by non-tariff measures.

Even as the government has opened up a number of sectors for higher foreign investment, in the last couple of years, it has hiked duties on a series of items to protect and promote the domestic industry.

In the Budget announced last July, the government raised the customs duty on gold and precious metals from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent. Apart from gold, duties on many other items — luxury cars, cashew kernels, several electronics and associated products such as CCTV cameras and IP cameras, split AC, imported books and newsprint — were also raised. Further, customs duties on items such as

windscreen wipers, sealed beam lamp units, intake air filters, oil or petrol filters, vehicle locks and glass mirrors were among the other items on which duties were raised.

The Union Budget of 2018-19 too had increased customs duties on 46 items, while marking a calibrated departure from the underlying policy of reducing import duty over the last two decades. The hike in customs duty on these 46 items was mainly across two broad categories of goods — imported branded goods and those involving technological value-addition — where duties were mostly raised from the 10 per cent bracket to 15 per cent and 20 per cent, with one segment seeing a five-fold increase in duty to 50 per cent.

Since early 2016, when attempts to get the domestic industry to rekindle the investment cycle failed, the government has increasingly resorted to tariff hikes to signal an incentive for domestic investors.

'Deal activity by PE investors surged to \$48 bn in 2019'

Propelled by infrastructure bets, deal activity by private venture investors grew by 28 per cent to \$48 billion in 2019 but will slow down to under 20 per cent in 2020, a EY report said

BACKGROUND
The surge in deal making to record highs comes at a time when economic growth is plummeting to new lows every quarter

AREAS OF CONCERN
Growth capital investments grew by a modest 9 per cent to \$14.5 billion, which was helped by the infra sector, the report said, adding pure play PE/VCS' growth capital investments declined 26 per cent in terms of value and 13 per cent by volumes



EXIT PERSPECTIVE
There were 156 deals in which investors took cheques of \$11.5 billion

OUTLOOK
While the outlook for 2020 is positive, EY expects investment growth to slow to 15-20 per cent in 2020

Source: EY/PTI

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS by private equity and venture capital funds accounted for \$14.5 billion during the year, which is higher than the play in seven years combined

PRIVATE INVESTMENTS in public equity (PIPE) deals, wherein the PE/VCS invest in listed companies, increased 40 per cent to \$5.3 billion, while the credit investments were up 20 per cent at \$3 billion

START-UP INVESTMENTS at \$7.9 billion were the highest ever, it said, adding such transactions constituted for a majority 610 of the 1,037 deals in 2019

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS were up 225 per cent over the year-ago period, while real estate were up 33 per cent to \$6.1 billion

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

NON-TELECOM PUBLIC sector companies like Oil India (OIL), Gail India, Power Grid Corporation (PGCIL) and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday moved separate pleas before the Supreme Court seeking clarity on the applicability of its October 24, 2019, order on payment of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues. They have sought a clarification from the apex whether the order on payment of licence fee and spectrum usage charge dues also applies to them.

Senior counsel Maninder Singh mentioned the applications for urgent hearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice SA Bobde, which posted the matter for hearing next week along with various modification applications filed by telecom companies, in-

Ind-Ra downgrades Voda Idea NCDs

New Delhi: India Ratings and Research on Friday downgraded the rating of Rs 3,500 crore non-convertible debentures of Vodafone Idea on account of liabilities related to adjusted gross revenue dues.

The NCDs were issued by erstwhile Vodafone Mobile Services.

The credit rating firm downgraded the rating by one level to IND BBB from IND A+

cluding Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and Tata Teleservices. The telcos have sought permission to approach the DoT for scheduling their payments and also easier payment terms.

Over the next few days, more public sector undertakings are likely to approach the SC for sim-

ilar clarification.

The PSUs have told the SC that they were never heard on the issue before the order was passed and their revenues from their regular businesses were disproportionately higher than the income from the telecom business.

The DoT has demanded Rs

1.72 lakh crore from Gail, Rs 48,000 crore from Oil India, Rs 22,168 crore from PowerGrid and Rs 5,841 crore from DMRC, among others.

OIL, in its application, said that while it earned barely Rs 1.47 crore from leasing spare capacity, the DoT has demanded Rs 40,108 crore licence fee based on its entire revenue, including sale of oil and gas, thus "completely ignoring the fact that the AGR definition under the UAS Licence Agreement is materially different from the definition of 'revenue' under the NLD Licence Agreement".

DMRC, which also sought clarification, said that the DoT's "unjust demand" would lead to "evaporation of financial structure of DMRC and would lead to operations coming to a standstill to the great detriment of the commuting public of national capital region". **FE**

AS 50TH ANNUAL MEETING OF WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ENDS, LEADERS CALL FOR STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY

Soros: Biggest setback was in India where ... Modi is creating a Hindu nationalist state

BARUN JHA
DAVOS, JANUARY 24

BILLIONAIRE INVESTOR George Soros, known for his outspoken liberal views, has criticised virtually all economic powers of the world, including the US and China, for being ruled by "would-be or actual dictators" and named India among the countries where nationalism is making further headway.

In a statement released here during the WEF 2020 week, he also questioned success of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, saying it has required giving large loans, some of which will never be repaid.

The 89-year old, who has been a big donor for Democrats, said the strongest powers, the US, China and Russia, have "remained in the hands of would-be or actual dictators and the ranks of authoritarian rulers continued to grow".

Stating that he had last year hoped things to improve, including on international cooperation, Soros said his hopes crashed badly and nationalism, far from being reversed, made further headway.

"The biggest and most frightening setback occurred in India where a democratically-elected Narendra Modi is creating a



Investor George Soros.
@georgesoros Twitter handle

Hindu nationalist state, imposing punitive measures on Kashmir, a semi-autonomous Muslim region, and threatening to deprive millions of Muslims of their citizenship," he claimed.

In Latin America, a humanitarian catastrophe continues to unfold.

"To top it all off, Kim Jong-Un threatened the United States with its nuclear capabilities in his New Year's speech and Trump's impetuous actions heightened the risk of a conflagration in the Middle East," Soros said.

On the relationship between the United States and China, he said it has become incredibly complicated and difficult to understand.

He said the two presidents, Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, face internal constraints and various enemies. **PTI**

Had a downgrade in India but believe that's temporary: IMF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DAVOS, JANUARY 24

IMF CHIEF Kristalina Georgieva on Friday said growth slowdown in India appears to be temporary and that she expects the momentum to improve going ahead.

The world appears a better place in January 2020 compared to what it was when IMF announced its World Economic Outlook in October 2019, she said at the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2020 here.



IMF MD Kristalina Georgieva. AP file photo

She said the factors driving this positive momentum include receding trade tension after the US-China first phase trade deal and synchronised tax cuts, among others. She, however, said 3.3 per cent is not a fantastic growth rate for the world economy.

"It is still sluggish growth. We want fiscal policies to be more aggressive and we want structural reforms and more dynamism," the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said.

On Monday, the fund lowered

growth estimate for the world economy to 2.9 per cent for 2019, citing "negative surprises" in few emerging market economies, especially India.

The IMF also revised downwards its forecast for India to 4.8 per cent for 2019-20.

Regarding emerging markets, Georgieva on Friday said they are also moving forward.

"We had a downgrade in one large market India but we believe that's temporary. We expect momentum to improve further going ahead. There are also some

bright spots like Indonesia and Vietnam," she noted.

According to Georgieva, a number of African countries are doing very well, but some other nations like Mexico are not.

On risks ahead for the global economy, the IMF chief listed factors like weakness in long-term productivity growth and low inflation.

"We are living in a more risk-prone world. It is only January and there have been events that are sparking risks for the global economy," she added. **PTI**

EU, China and 15 others agree temporary fix to WTO crisis

REUTERS
BRUSSELS/DAVOS, JAN 24

THE EUROPEAN Union, China and 15 other World Trade Organization members agreed on Friday to create a temporary mechanism to settle trade disputes after US action rendered the WTO incapable last month of acting as the umpire of global trade.

The European Commission said the WTO members involved had agreed to preserve the WTO's two-step dispute system until the WTO's own Appellate Body became operational again.

Washington froze the Appellate Body, which acts as a supreme court for international trade, by blocking appointments for over two years. Two of the body's three members came to the end of their terms in

December, leaving it unable to issue rulings.

Lower level three-person WTO "panels" will still advise on trade disputes, but such cases could be left in limbo without an appeals mechanism.

The EU had previously teamed up with Norway and Canada to form a separate appeals body that could resolve disputes.

The other countries that signed up on Friday are Australia, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, South Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland and Uruguay.

While the United States is outside the group, US President Donald Trump, speaking in Davos on Wednesday, vowed "very dramatic" action for the Geneva-based WTO.

MEANWHILE

1st consortium for e-currency governance

Davos: The World Economic Forum on Friday announced the first global consortium focused on designing a framework for the governance of digital currencies, including stablecoins. The Global Consortium for Digital Currency Governance will aim to increase access to the financial system through innovative policy solutions that are inclusive and interoperable. **PTI**

Kuroda: Japan economy likely shrank in Q4

Davos: Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said on Friday the economy likely suffered a contraction in the final quarter of last year, largely due to the hit to factory output from a string of typhoons that struck the country. As a country prone to natural disasters, Japan must do more to mitigate the risks associated with climate change, he added. "In the fourth quarter of last year, the Japanese economy had negative growth ... largely because of two typhoons. Natural disasters are really intensifying in Japan," Kuroda told a seminar at the WEF. **REUTERS**

CBDT: Tax raids led to detection of over ₹1,000-cr undisclosed foreign assets

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

DETECTION OF undisclosed foreign assets of over Rs 1,000 crore and domestic evasion of over Rs 35 crore has been allegedly found by the Income-Tax Department during its recent searches conducted against the Bharat Hotels group, which runs the hotel chain of Lalit Hotels, officials said.

The searches so far have resulted in seizure of unaccounted assets worth Rs 24.93 crore (Rs 71.5 lakh cash, jewellery worth Rs 23 crore and expensive watches worth Rs 1.2 crore), the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement on Friday.

“Evidence seized during the search reveals that a large amount of black money was stashed abroad by the group, through the mechanism of Trusts, formed in early 1990s in tax havens. Such foreign holdings of the main persons have remained hidden for decades beneath complex multi-layered structures, located in different countries, ensuring secrecy,” the statement said.

While CBDT did not name Bharat Hotels in their statement,

officials confirmed the details pertain to the searches conducted against the group earlier this week. The CBDT said the group is a “leading member of the hospitality industry, running a hotel abroad and a chain of luxury hotels under a prominent brand name situated at various locations in India”.

“The investigation has successfully lifted the veil, leading to detection of undisclosed foreign assets of more than Rs 1000 crore, apart from domestic tax evasion of more than Rs. 35 crore which may, inter alia, lead to consequences under the Black Money Act, 2015, as also, action under the Income-tax Act, 1961 respectively. Foreign assets include investment in a Hotel in UK, immovable properties in UK and UAE and deposits with foreign banks. Further investigations are in progress,” the statement said.

The tax department further said that the search action further revealed that one of the close relatives of the promoter family was intentionally introduced as a front to escape the provisions of domestic tax laws.

The department had launched raids at 13 premises of the group, Suri and others on January 19 in and around Delhi.

DECEMBER QUARTER

BoB reports ₹1,407-crore loss on higher provisioning

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 24

BANK OF Baroda (BoB) on Friday reported a Rs 1,407-crore loss for the quarter ended December at a time when most bankers have been claiming the NPA (non-performing assets) cycle has peaked and that the worst is over.

BoB’s fresh bad loans shot up 73 per cent sequentially to Rs 10,387 crore and provisions surged 156 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to Rs 7,155 crore.

The state-owned lender’s management attributed the jump in slippages to divergences between the bank’s assessment of asset quality and the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) for the year ended March 31, 2019, with over Rs 4,000 crore of fresh bad loans resulting from the central bank’s review.

“We have had a rough quarter due to divergences. There are some short-term challenges due to amalgamation. In the long term we are go-

FRESH BAD LOANS RISE 73%

■ BoB’s fresh bad loans shot up 73 per cent sequentially to Rs 10,387 crore and provisions surged 156 per cent year-on-year to Rs 7,155 crore

■ The state-owned lender’s management attributed the jump in slippages to divergences between the bank’s assessment of asset quality and the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) for the year ended March 31, 2019, with over Rs 4,000 crore of

ing to create fair value of assets,” Sanjiv Chadha, MD and CEO, BoB, observed.

The divergence in both gross and net non-performing assets (NPA) stood at a very large Rs 5,250 crore, while that for provisioning was as much as Rs 4,090 crore.

After recognising the additional bad loans identified by

fresh bad loans resulting from the central bank’s review

■ The divergence in both gross and net non-performing assets (NPA) stood at a very large Rs 5,250 crore, while that for provisioning was as much as Rs 4,090 crore

■ Domestic advances grew 0.67 per cent y-o-y to Rs 5.45 lakh crore at the end of December 2019

the RBI, BoB restated its net loss for FY19 at Rs 10,998 crore, against Rs 8,339 crore earlier.

The gross NPA ratio at the end of December stood at 10.43 per cent , up 18 basis points (bps) sequentially. Net NPAs were at 4.05 per cent , 14 bps higher than 3.91 per cent at the end of the September quarter. The provision coverage ratio

(PCR) of BoB improved to 77.77 per cent from 70.72 per cent a year ago.

A major part of the stress came from three accounts in the NBFC sector, a few accounts in power and one account in the chemicals sector.

Net interest income (NII) — the difference between interest earned and interest expended — stood at Rs 7,129 crore, up 50 per cent y-o-y. The bank’s net interest margin (NIM) fell marginally to 2.81 per cent from 2.8 per cent at the end of September. The bank will maintain a target of 2.9-3 per cent for NIM in the coming quarters, even as pressure from NPAs persists.

Domestic advances grew 0.67 per cent y-o-y to Rs 5.45 lakh crore at the end of December 2019. The lender’s current and savings account (CASA) ratio improved to 38.8 per cent in Q3FY20 from 36.2 per cent in the same quarter last year. Its domestic deposits rose 1.3 per cent y-o-y to Rs 7.82 lakh crore at the end of the December quarter. **FE**

Tata-Mistry case: SC stays NCLAT’s Jan 6 order rejecting RoC petition

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

THE SUPREME Court on Friday stayed the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal’s order earlier this month that rejected Registrar of Companies’ plea to modify its December 18, 2019, order casting aspersions on its role in approving Tata Sons as a private limited company from a public limited one.

A bench led by Chief Justice SA Bobde issued notice to the Cyrus Mistry group and also stayed the NCLAT’s January 6 order that rejected the RoC’s application for impleadment and modification.

It also tagged the petition with the earlier batch of related appeals against the December order.

The Supreme Court had on January 10 stayed in entirety the December 18 order that reinstated Mistry as chairman of Tata Sons after calling his removal in October 2016 as “illegal”. The appellate tribunal, while terming Tata Group’s actions against Mistry “prejudicial” and “oppressive”, had also termed the appointment of N Chandrasekaran as the new chairman “illegal”. It had also called Tata Sons’ move to turn into a private company from a public limited as unlawful, and had ordered its reversal.

While dismissing the RoC’s application, the NCLAT had also allegedly assigned “fresh and

While dismissing the RoC’s application, the NCLAT had also allegedly assigned “fresh and additional reasons” to support the conclusion given in its earlier December judgment, which according to Tata Sons was not required

additional reasons” to support the conclusion given in its earlier December judgment, which according to Tata Sons was not required.

The NCLAT said that in the absence of any prescription of minimum paid-up share capital required for a private company, the RoC cannot wield any power or jurisdiction to carry out any changes in the RoC or certificate of incorporation of Tata Sons and the Memorandum of Association of the Tata Sons.

Tata Sons said that NCLAT exceeded its scope by giving a new dimension to the issue of minimum paid up share capital for private companies, which would adversely affect all private companies, including it. The new reasoning, given by the appellate tribunal, that there cannot be a private limited company since the minimum paid-up capital has not been prescribed by the central government leads to entirely “anomalous and absurd results”, Tata Sons said.

The NCLAT “fails to consider that absence of prescription of a minimum paid up share cap-

Sensex, Nifty advance for 2nd day on pre-Budget rally in banking stocks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JANUARY 24

MARKET BENCHMARK index BSE Sensex rose by 227 points on Friday, extending gains for a second day after a rally in banking and cement stocks on hopes of a good budget and financial results.

After opening on a weak note, the 30-share BSE index settled higher by 226.79 points or 0.55 per cent at 41,613.19. It hit an intra-day high of 41,697.03 and a low of 41,275.60.

The broader NSE Nifty closed 67.90 points, or 0.56 per cent, up at 12,248.25.

Ultratech Cement was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, advancing 2.47 per cent after it posted 80 per cent jump in October-December net profit to

SENSEX HITS INTRA-DAY HIGH

■ After opening on a weak note, the 30-share BSE index settled higher by 226.79 points or 0.55 per cent at 41,613.19. It hit an intra-day high of 41,697.03 and a low of 41,275.60.

Rs 712 crore.

Banking stocks gained ahead of the Union budget for 2020-21. Axis Bank rose by 2.01 per cent, Kotak Bank by 1.98 per cent, ICICI Bank by 1.18 per cent while State Bank of India advanced 0.25 per cent.

HDFC rose by 1.02 per cent while Bajaj Finance gained 1.56

OTHER RESULTS

Ultratech net soars 80% to ₹712 cr

Mumbai: UltraTech Cement’s consolidated net profit for the December quarter rose 79.8 per cent to Rs 712 crore year-on-year, boosted by higher price realisation and a 15 per cent decline in energy costs to Rs 941 per tonne. Net sales of the company declined 1.15 per cent y-o-y to Rs 10,176 crore. Volumes for third quarter declined 4 per cent to 20.9 million tonne, impacted by a 3 per cent decline in domestic sales to 19.4 million tonne.

Despite the sales slowdown, UltraTech’s consoli-

dated Ebitda for the December quarter rose 25.4 per cent to Rs 2,141 crore, on 35.5 per cent increase in price realisation.

The management said it saw a demand turnaround in several geographies, driven rural housing and infrastructure projects. Operating earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) per tonne of the cement major stood at Rs 1,004 per tonne in December compared with Rs 741 per tonne last year, boosted by falling pet coke prices. **FE**

Indian Bank profit jumps 62%

New Delhi: State-owned Indian Bank on Friday reported 62.3 per cent jump in net profit at Rs 247.16 crore for December quarter 2019-20, mainly due to reduction in bad loans.

The bank’s profit in the year-ago period stood at Rs 152.26 crore. Total income during the quarter under review was Rs 6,505.62 crore, up from Rs 5,269.10 crore in the same period a year ago, Indian Bank said in a BSE filing.

The bank’s net non-performing assets (NPAs) as a percentage of assets reduced to

3.5 per cent during October-December 2019-20 from 4.42 per cent in the year-ago period. Similarly, the percentage of gross NPA was lower at 7.2 per cent as against 7.46 per cent. In absolute terms, net NPAs stood at Rs 6,487.58 crore. This compares with Rs 7,571.07 crore in the third quarter of the last financial year. The bank further said it had made provisioning of Rs 1,529.26 crore towards bad loans and contingencies. During October-December 2018-19, the provisioning stood at Rs 923.67 crore. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

ITI’s ₹14,000 cr FPO op on bourses

New Delhi: The follow-on-public offer of public sector unit ITI Ltd, which is expected to garner Rs 1,400 crore, opened on Friday. ITI Ltd on Thursday said it intends to raise about Rs 1,400 crore of which Rs 607 crore will be utilised for repaying loans. The issue will close on January 28. The company intends to sell its 18 crore shares, besides one per cent (18 lakh shares) quota for the employees, in the bracket of Rs 72 to Rs 77 per share.

Operations may be impacted due to strike: SBI

New Delhi: The country’s largest lender SBI on Friday said its operations may be impacted to some extent due to the proposed two-day nationwide strike beginning January 31. The bank has however made all arrangements to ensure normal functioning. SBI said in a filing to the BSE. “While Bank has made all arrangements to ensure normal functioning in its branches and offices, it is likely that work in our Bank may be impacted to some extent by the strike,” the filing said.

New India Assurance settles case

New Delhi: State-owned New India Assurance Company Ltd has settled with markets regulator Sebi a case of alleged violation of insider trading norms by paying over Rs 62 lakh towards the settlement charges. The move comes after the insurer filed an application proposing to settle, without admitting “the findings of fact and conclusions of law”, the case of delayed compliance with insider trading regulation in respect of change in its shareholding in Axis Bank through a settlement order.

JSW Steel net falls 88% to ₹187 crore

New Delhi: JSW Steel reported a 88 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 187 crore for the December 2019 quarter, mainly due to lower net sales realisation that pulled down the revenues. The company had reported a profit after tax of Rs 1,603 crore in the year-ago quarter. Its consolidated income during the October-December 2019 period was Rs 18,182 crore, registering a fall of 10.6 per cent over the year-ago period. **PTI**

Global Talent Competitiveness Index: India at 72nd spot

India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position in the 2020 Global Talent Competitiveness Index that measures and ranks countries based on their ability to grow, attract and retain talent

WHAT IS THIS INDEX?

The GTCI report was launched by INSEAD, a partner and sponsor of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Tent

OTHERS IN BRICS

- 42 China
- 48 Russia
- 70 South Africa
- 80 Brazil

THE HIGHEST-RANKED SUB-PILLAR is employability for India, but the ability to match labour market demand and supply stands in contrast to the country’s poor “mid-level skills”, which result in a mediocre score in vocational and technical skills

OUTLOOK

The report added India’s GTCI score and GDP per capita are both lower than the corresponding medians of its other emerging market economies such as BRICS -- Brazil, Russia, China, and South Africa

CHALLENGES

- Weak ability to attract and retain talent
- Strengthening role of minorities and women

THE TOP 10

- 1 Switzerland
- 2 The US
- 3 Singapore
- 4 Sweden
- 5 Denmark
- 6 The Netherlands
- 7 Finland
- 8 Luxembourg
- 9 Norway
- 10 Australia

Source: INSEAD/PTI

Siemens to buy C&S Electric

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

SIEMENS ON Friday said it has inked an agreement to acquire 99 per cent equity in New Delhi-based C&S Electric for around Rs 2,100 crore.

“In a step to meet the increasing demand for electrification across industry, infrastructure and buildings in India,

Siemens Ltd today (on Friday) signed an agreement to acquire New Delhi-based C&S Electric Ltd,” according to a statement by Siemens.

Siemens will acquire about 99 per cent of the equity share capital of C&S Electric for around Rs 2,100 crore (nearly EUR 267 million). Closing of the acquisition is subject to regulatory approvals, the statement added.

14.33 lakh new jobs created in Nov, says ESIC payroll data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

AROUND 14.33 lakh jobs were created in November 2019 as compared with 12.60 lakh in the previous month, according to payroll data of the Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).

Gross enrolments of new subscribers with ESIC were 1.49 crore during the entire financial year 2018-19, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said in a report.

It also showed that during the September 2017-November 2019 period, around 3.37 crore new subscribers joined the ESIC scheme. The NSO’s report is based on the payroll data of new subscribers of various social se-

GROSS ENROLMENTS

1.49 cr

■ Gross enrolments of new subscribers with ESIC were 1.49 crore during the entire financial year 2018-19, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said in a report

curity schemes run by ESIC, retirement fund body EPFO and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

It has been releasing the payroll data or new subscribers data of these three bodies since April 2018, covering a period starting from September 2017.

All options open at OPEC+ meet: Saudis

REUTERS

DUBAI, JANUARY 24

SAUDI ARABIA’S Minister of Energy Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud said all options are open at an OPEC+ meeting in early March, including further cuts in oil production. Al Arabiya television reported.

But he added that it was too early to make a call on the need for more cuts. “I can’t judge now if the

market needs additional cuts because I haven’t seen the balances for January and February,” he said.

He said that when the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies led by Russia convene for an emergency meeting in March, the grouping will study where the market is and “objectively decide” if more cuts are needed.

OPEC+ agreed in December to widen their supply cuts by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) to

1.7 million bpd until the end of March.

OPEC+ is due to meet in Vienna on March 5 and 6 to set their policy. A ministerial monitoring committee for the deal will meet in Vienna on March 4. Crude prices fell more than 2 per cent on Friday, heading toward \$60 a barrel and a steep weekly decline over concerns that the coronavirus in the world’s second-largest oil consumer China will spread farther.

PANGA ★★★

Director : Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari **Cast :** Kangana Ranaut, Jassi Gill, Yagya Bhasin, Richa Chadha, Neena Gupta

Chasing Lost Dreams



SHUBHRA GUPTA

WOMEN TRYING to get back to work after becoming wives-and-mums is an issue Bollywood hasn't bothered to explore in any detail. *Panga's* protagonist is a former kabaddi player whose life has been subsumed by the tedium of everyday domesticity and jobbery. That Jaya Nigam, played by absolute conviction by Kangana Ranaut, dares to dream of a past life where she was in the spotlight, is a straight-off win, subject-wise.

But just how tough is it for a mainstream Bollywood movie to focus on a woman like Jaya, is evident in the long build-up to the point where she can say to her husband: when I think of you, I feel happy. When I think of Adi (her son), I feel happy. But when I think

of myself, I'm not so happy. Or words to that effect.

By that point we are fully primed to support Jaya, because we've seen her do the stuff middle-class, working mothers do every day of their life: wake up early, get the tiffins packed, see off the child to school, make sure the home runs smoothly, and get herself to office only to have to deal with a tetchy boss. Fine, we say, she's done all this smilingly, now she can go off and do her thing, if she wants to. And we say this only because the push-and-shove comes from the son (Bhasin), and the husband (Gill).

Phew. What if Jaya's bosom buddy and kabaddi mate Meenu (Chadha), who is still so married to the sport that she doesn't have the time for a proper *'shaadi'*, were the 'heroine'? And having-plumped-for-*ghar*-and-*gri-*

hasti-Jaya was the one in a supporting role? What if, Jaya had ditched her family, not having found enough fulfilment, and merrily gone her way? Nah, we are still far away from that kind of film.

Till such time, we will make do with *Panga*, which gives us an array of wonderful women walking the talk. Ranaut has the courage to go plain-faced, minus pancake: her sure-footedness right through the film, on and off the mat, is spot-on. Chadha, armed with a bouncy ponytail and buoyant back-chat, is a lot of fun, as is Neena Gupta's bracing mother. The two current kabaddi players, whom Jaya spends time with, in the second half, both leave a mark. And it's nice that Jaya is made to work hard for her climactic triumph; the victory is then even sweeter.

My interest flagged a little post-interval,

when the film becomes repetitive and flat, and Chadha is used to explain a scene which has just got done, or about to come, like an old-fashioned *sutradhar*. But Gill, as the supportive husband, who learns how to function minus his loving wife, is solid, and keeps us going. As does Tailang, in a brief kabaddi official role. Young Bhasin as Adi is a charmer, but is given too much talk-time, and the dialogues he mouths sometimes sound like they are there strictly to be played for laughs.

I will take this, if it comes with a film that celebrates a woman trying to reclaim her dream, even if it comes sanctioned by family. The film springs to life when Jaya raises her fist, and slaps her thigh: it is a *panga* worth taking.

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From Magic to Tragic

JUDY
Director : Rupert Goold
Cast : Renée Zellweger, Finn Wittrock, Jessie Buckley, Rufus Sewell, Michael Gambon

MANOHLA DARGIS

ONE DAY in 1968, the year before she died, Judy Garland watched a television interview she had done with Dick Cavett. Noticing Cavett's fidgeting, she wondered why she made everyone so uncomfortable. Because, a friend replied, no one knew if she was going to sing *Over the rainbow* or open her veins. "Sometimes I do both," Garland said, "at the same time."

In *Judy*, Renée Zellweger plays a few variations on Garland near the end of her life: worried mother, needy lover, disaster, legend. The woman who remains out of sight, though, is the sadder, scarier Judy who threw a butcher knife at one of her children and threatened to jump out of a window in front of another.

One of those biopics that tries to encapsulate the sweep and substance of a life by narrowing in on ostensibly representative moments, *Judy* concentrates on Garland's bumpy, weeks-long engagement at the Talk of the Town, a London cabaret-restaurant where patrons sometimes threw breadsticks at the faltering talent. When Garland arrived in London in late December 1968, she was

broke. She had been forced to sell her house in Los Angeles — fans and servants had been helping pay the bills — and had effectively become a vagabond, which is how Gerald Clarke describes her in his sympathetic book *Get Happy*.

When Zellweger first sweeps into the movie there's nothing to suggest that Judy is in trouble. She looks strong, with eyes and a smile that are naturally bright rather than pharmaceutically amped. Sailing down a palatial hotel lobby with her two youngest children, Lorna (Bella Ramsey) and Joey (Lewin Lloyd), she commands the space like a genuine star, dressed in a floral pantsuit, her hair as feathered as a cockatoo's crest.

Judy tries to check in but her account is in arrears. The staff is embarrassed. She's outraged. With no money and no place to go, she and the kids clamber into a car. They're headed into the next sad chapter of their life — the children soon move in with dad — the night city glowing in the distance like a lighted stage. Zellweger purses her lips and Judy shakes out a few tablets. Lorna asks her mother not to go to sleep. "No, no, no," Judy says, Zellweger dragging out the words so that they slide together, like the pills she's about to swallow. "These are the other ones." She pops them and we're off to the races for good times and bad.

Judy is based on Peter Quilter's play *End of the Rainbow*, which had a well-received Broadway run in 2012 and skitters between



Judy ripping her heart out in a London hotel and at the theater where she will become the talk of the town. The movie, directed by Rupert Goold and written by Tom Edge, is a gentler, squarer mash note to the Great Woman that's part maternal melodrama, part martyr story.

The Judy Garland story is an oft-told tragedy of greatness devoured by fame, by the entertainment machine, the audience's habit-forming adoration and bad personal choices. The movie adheres to that template, delivering the usual scoundrels (Finn Wittrock as a lover), courtiers (Jessie Buckley as a minder) and facile psychology, sometimes with a #MeToo spin, most overtly in the scene of the boss Louis B Mayer (Richard Cordery) touching the young Judy's chest. The real Garland said that Mayer groped her, but that she put an end to his harassment. She continued to speak

well of him after he died and long into her own life, perhaps because people are far more complex than biopics like this one can admit.

By the late 1960s, Garland had made and lost fortunes, was addicted to drugs and had repeatedly attempted suicide and cried out for attention by threatening to do so, by cutting herself, swallowing aspirins. She overdosed so often that her daughter Liza apparently acquired a stomach pump. Of course, in the end, there was no one to help and Garland died at 47 from an accidental overdose. Judy tries hard to inject brightness and pleasure into this bleak picture as this lost, luminous woman grabs onto one last chance, one more man. It shows the highs and some of the lows, piles on the strained smiles and upbeat tunes, embracing the woman even as it tries to temper the despair that comes from watching someone die in slow motion.

NYT



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Forgotten Histories

**THE FORGOTTEN ARMY:
AZAADI KE LIYE (AMAZON PRIME)**

★★★

Director and Creator : Kabir Khan
Cast : Sunny Kaushal, Sharvari Wagh, MK Raina

EKTAA MALIK

WE CAN'T seem to get enough of our histories. After *Manikarnika*, *Panipat*, *Kesari* and *Kalank* last year, we now have a mini-series that takes you into the jungles of Burma, up, close and personal with the Azad Hind Fauj, or the Indian National Army, founded by Subhas Chandra Bose. Titled *The Forgotten Army: Azaadi Ke Liye*, the five-part show, 'passion project' that director Kabir Khan has been nurturing for the past two decades, is now streaming on Amazon Prime.

The series, which took three years in the making, travels in two timelines. One is told through a young Surinder Sodhi (Sunny Kaushal), an officer, who is captured by the Japanese in the Battle of Singapore while fighting for the British Indian Army. He is then inducted into the Azad Hind Fauj, motivated by the stirring speech by Netaji in Singapore where the battle cry '*Dilli chalo*' resonates with many like him. The other is where Sodhi has aged, and is visiting family in Singapore in 1996. Through conversations with a young grand-nephew, he revisits the journey of the Azad Hind Fauj, and we travel back and forth with him, the memory aided by black and white footage and pictures of that time and a voice over by Shah Rukh Khan.

A riveting premise and a story that needs to be told today more than ever when concepts like nation, nationalism and patriotism are thrown around casually, *The Forgotten Army* falls prey to its own vision of scale. Add to the fray a certain 'Bollywoodness', and we have something that you should only watch because the messaging is so on point.

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No Moves to Remember

STREET DANCER

★★

Director : Remo D'Souza
Cast : Varun Dhawan, Shraddha Kapoor, Prabhu Deva, Raghav Juyal, Nora Fatehi

THE FIRST thing a good dance movie ought to do is give us numbers that make us want to leap up to our feet right there in the aisle, and goshake-shimmy-shake. On that score alone, *Street Dancer*, the third in the *ABCD* line, flubs it. Except for maybe two-and-a-half dance numbers which are passable, you are sitting there, wondering just why is it so difficult to choreograph original, rousing sequences: the others are as much as a drag as the film.

The film is based in London, so the two chief competing gangs have to be, naturally, Indian and Pakistani: the first is headed by hot-headed Sahaj (Dhawan), the other by pretty Inayat (Kapoor). Recognising that neither is exactly fleet-footed, she much less than he, a sub-plot involving illegal immigration is shoe-horned into the film. It ends up sticking out clumsily, added only to add teary melodrama about *apna watan*, and the longing to return home.

The real trouble is that the dances are so seen-it-before, so-not-exciting. The two teams squabble while watching India and Pakistan play cricket, minded by club-owner



Ram Prasad (Prabhu Deva), who is given lots of time showing off his trademark moves (his iconic number *Muqabala* is given a long make-over), and it says something about the quality of the rest of it, that it stands out, regardless. As does Fatehi, who burns it up, whenever she gets a chance.

Another film would have made something of the fact that its two warring-but-will-turn-into-loving leads belong to 'enemy' countries. But all this one does is have Sahaj, repping Big Brother India, lecture Inayat's conservative family so she is 'allowed' to do what pleases her. When the film starts making noises about India-Pakistan *bhai-bhai*, with *Mile sur mera tumhara* ringing in the background, you want to give it a bravery award: any talk of *bhaichara* in these times deserves attention, even if it stays strictly on the stage. If only the dancing were better.

SG

BREAKING DOWN NEWS



BY PRATIK KANJILAL

DAVOS IS back on our screens. Specifically, Indians in Davos are back on our screens, from Kamal Nath to Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, all being interviewed by Indian journalists. The whole exercise could have been accomplished right here at home, in the studios of the National Capital Region, without the bother of having to buy international tickets and fill out those peculiar visa forms where they require travellers to declare that they have never supported terrorism, never committed war crimes and never stolen candy from a laughing baby's mouth, to paraphrase Jethro Tull. For the international news from Davos, European

services like Deutsche Welle and Euronews are generally more illuminating. Don't miss Imran Khan's interviews, in which he alternately speaks of the "extreme ideology" which runs India, and professes not to "know enough" about the detention and re-education of Uighurs in China. Actually, he had to feign ignorance to TRT World at Davos last year, too. It's a tough neighbourhood he lives in.

Now, to space. C3PO would have loved this, for anthropomorphism in space is in fashion. In August 2019, the Russian space agency Roscosmos sent Skybot F-850 'Fedor' (Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research), who bears a passing resemblance to the Star Wars character, to dock with the International Space Station. Functionally, he appears to be a cross between the Terminator and Robocop. Videos posted by Dmitry Rogozin, director general of Roscosmos, had entertained millions when they were run by CNN Tech, showing Fedor with a pistol in either mechanical hand on a shooting range, driving a car and doing pushups.

This week, Isro has revealed that our

Delhi in Davos

Indians interview Indians in Davos, while Brazilian President prepares to ring in Republic Day

own pioneers in space, scheduled for launch in 2022, will find the trail blazed by an anthropomorphic robot named Vyomamitra, modelled on a woman. She is everything that Fedor is not. The choice of gender may have been actuated by the same logic that causes announcements in airport terminals, rail stations and the telephone system to be delivered in artificially generated female voices — instinctively, we perceive women to be reliable. Since anthropomorphic robots will accompany human crew on long space flights in the hostile environment of space, hearing a reassuring female voice could be more comforting than having a gunslinging robot pal on board.

Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro is to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, and is accompa-

nied by a large entourage of ministers, officials and businessmen. And coinciding with the visit are reports of Glenn Greenwald, co-founder and editor of the "adversarial journalism" news site *The Intercept*, being charged by Brazilian prosecutors with cybercrimes, including spreading cellphone messages "that embarrassed prosecutors and damaged the reputation of an anti-corruption task force." Sounds like a serious and condemnable act of reporting, doesn't it? Greenwald has clarified that he was cleared of charges on the basis of the very same evidence two months ago, and that the present charge has been brought by a prosecutor who tried and failed to attack the head of the Brazilian bar association for criticising a minister.

Accused of being disengaged from the

protests in progress in Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal did an extraordinary takedown of Times Now in its own programme, accusing the channel of going on about Hindu-Muslim issues 24x7 because it does not

have the courage to raise the question of unemployment. If it did, he said, to a cheering audience, the channel knows it would be shut down. Unstoppably, he spoke of a progressive dream, with schools and colleges everywhere, the inculcation of the scientific temper, when everyone has access to roads, electricity, water and sewerage. He has acquired the skills of a demagogue, the foremost of which is to be able to keep talking, no matter who or what gets in the way. Thankfully, his focus is civic amenities, and the method is to offer government as a service, rather than a Big Brother.

Speaking of engagement with protests, a debate seems to be beginning in the US about Clearview AI, a service with the

world's biggest people database, scraped off social media and other websites, which matches faces to provide all sorts of details, including names and addresses. It is being used for crime-fighting, since it dwarfs even

the FBI's database, which is based on official photo ID like passports and driving licenses. But the reason for disquiet is that the service may be released to the public in the future. The software which now finds stalkers may be used by stalkers to find victims. It is problematic even without a public release, if you consider the many instances where police

licemen were found video recording the Delhi protests. Identifying all associated with a protest amounts to deterrence. And why would the authorities need to make their own recording anyway, when there are hundreds of TV cameras there to put everything and everyone on the record?

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25 BODY & MIND

Is society’s idea of success, stability harming our children?

The idea of success is hugely problematic when from an early age, we are recruiting our children into believing there is only one right way to live life



IMAGINE
BY SHELJA SEN

“I AM going to kill myself.” This is what Jahaan told me in his first session. He had been brought to me by his parents as they were concerned that he was not studying. He was 18 years old, in Class 12, preparing for his Board exams which he did not plan to take as, according to him, “I would be dead by then.” There was a steely determination in his tone that made it evident to me that he had been thinking and possibly planning for some time. His parents, oblivious to all this, were extremely frustrated with him for being “so lazy” and “setting himself up for failure”. He came from a family of engineers and in Class 11, he had been forced to take science and enrolled in coaching classes despite his reluctance. It is the same old story — Jahaan wanted to be a filmmaker but his parents insisted that engineering would give him a “secure future”. Slowly, all things that he enjoyed

were taken away from him — cricket, hanging out with friends, his camera, drums and instead, he was expected to get up early to study, go to school and straight to tuitions from there, to return for more studies and then back to the same back-breaking cycle again. After all, it was his “Board year” and “it would decide the rest of your life”. Ironically, it had, as he had come to a decision that he did not want to live anymore. I have met so many Jahaans where the adults in their life have decided what is better for them and they are left with a sense of despair. You might say that parents do know what is best for their kids and Jahaan would have wasted precious years of life on film-making and those years would have been better spent studying engineering and getting a stable job and successful life. Of course, we need to deconstruct what success means in the general sense in the society — money, promotions, fancy cars etc. A ladder where the higher you go, the more you get. But then, why is that so many people step off this ladder or find that every rung up in the ladder makes them more and more miserable? The so-called success should make us happier, but in reality, it is not. Off-the-chart suicide rates of IIT aspirants in coaching centres of Kota should shake us out of our collective stupor of what we see as the making of a “good life”. A study conducted by ASSOCHAM in 2018 (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India) found that

42.5% of employees are struggling with depression and/or anxiety in their high-pressured jobs. They had possibly climbed the ladder of success and security to find it is an illusion. This idea of success is hugely problematic as right from an early age, we are recruiting our children into believing that there is one right way to live their life. It is a myth and instead, I would urge you to redefine the idea of a good, or I should say good enough, life — with three aspects at its core — agency, purpose and connection. Let me unspool it: **Agency:** Suppose rather than telling them all the time, we started asking young people what they wanted to do in their life, about their aspirations and their dreams. Their answers might be simple, concrete and far-fetched, but that is just the beginning. It sets their intentions which works at pulling them forward with much greater force than all the pushing we adults end up doing. When I asked Jahaan what his dreams were, he told me that from the time he was little, he had been fascinated by wild life and watching documentaries on it. He wanted to travel the world, visit wildlife parks, sanctuaries and oceans and capture them on his camera. **Purpose:** As Jahaan shared his dreams, his face lit up as he explained to me the different cameras that wildlife photographers use, the skill required in just waiting and observing for hours, the adventure of going to remote



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

places nobody has been to. The same boy who had walked in with such despair and determination to end his life was painting his dreams to me with such purpose and passion. **Connection:** We are hard-wired for connections, for belonging, for seeking out people who will accept us the way we are, who understand us and share what we value. Jahaans of our world are locked in a constricted world of regimented classrooms, coaching classes and heavy textbooks which does not leave much room for seeking connections, fun and laughter. It is also important to state here that Jahaan’s parents were not some demonic, insensitive tyrants. They were well-meaning,

loving parents who wanted the best for their child. They had bought into society’s propaganda of success. When we started unpacking the problem, they could step back and reflect on what they really wanted — their son’s happiness and more than that, his life. And the turning point was when they became witness to our discussions where they watched their son come alive with questions nobody had ever asked him before — what do you want to do? What does it say about your values, your dreams, your aspirations? Who are the people who matter to you? If you want to observe a fertile ground for depression, then all that you have to do is under-

stand how the Board exams are designed in our education system. I have a daughter sitting for one, so I know what I am talking about. From November onwards, all that she has been doing is taking exams — first her finals, then the pre-Boards and followed immediately by the Boards which will end in March. For almost five months, children are expected to lock themselves up in their rooms, or in their tuition centres and cram. There is no personal agency, no purpose (except scoring high marks which is quite meaningless) and no scope for connection. No wonder we see so many young people with severe mental health problems during this period. Try talking to any of the Boards like CBSE, ICSE and explain the sense of agency, purpose and connection to them and it might be like banging your head against their rusty walls. *Take any young person who is struggling with depression and you will find that like Jahaan, they have been stripped of agency, purpose and connection.* And what turns things around for them is when they are able to connect to these vital ingredients for a meaningful life. This is true not just for young people, it is true for each one of us who are stuck in the narrow definition of success. We all need a sense of being in charge of our life, doing things that we see as worthwhile and making deep connections that bring us joy and belonging. Jahaan did something about it; what about you?

(Dr Shelja Sen is therapist, writer and co-founder of Children First, a child & adolescent mental health institute) write to shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com

DIET DIARY

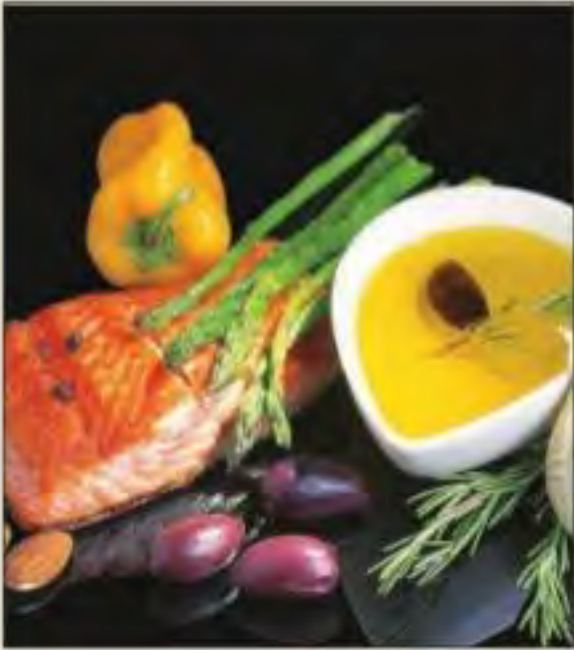
Key to good health—right in our genes

Research shows role of Sirtuins in improving metabolism and reducing susceptibility to disease



BY ISHI KHOSLA

THE SEARCH for diets to lose weight, slow down ageing, reduce risk for cancer and live healthier lives continues to fascinate people and researchers. A new family of genes in our bodies called Sirtuins has been recently identified. Scientists made a startling discovery when they engineered yeast cells to produce much higher than normal levels of the regulatory gene Sirtuin. They found that engineered cells lived 30 per cent longer than normal. Sirtuins are a group of genes that are involved in the regulation of lifespans of organisms. These can be called house-keeping genes. In other words, they are responsible for the repair and maintenance of cells. Each one of us houses these and they are referred to as skinny genes. They have the power to determine our ability to burn fat and improve metabolism, our susceptibility to disease, and even how long we are able to live. What makes sirtuins so powerful? Sirtuins have a special ability to switch our cells to a kind of survival mode — triggering a powerful recycling process that clears out cellular toxins and facilitates burning of fat. And what can we do to activate sirtuins? It is well-known that both fasting and exercise activate sirtuins. While these do require discipline and commitment, eating certain foods can help to activate sirtuins. Research has shown that certain plant chemicals called phytonutrients which are rich polyphenols have the ability to switch on our sirtuin genes. The very same ones are activated by fasting and exercise. In fact, two UK-based nutritionists recently formulated a diet called the Sirtfood diet, which promotes plant-based foods rich in polyphenols and sirtuin activators. These include berries,



A Mediterranean diet is rich in polyphenols, which switches on our Sirtuin genes

turmeric, kale, extra virgin olive oil, nuts, dark chocolate, coffee, macha tea, parsley and red onions. In 2013, results published in a nutritional study called Predimed studied the difference between a Mediterranean-style diet supplemented with either extra-virgin olive oil or nuts and a more conventional modern diet. Results showed that after five years, heart disease and diabetes were slashed by 30 per cent with major reductions in the risk of obesity in the Mediterranean diet group. There was no difference in calorie, fat, or carbohydrate intake between the two groups. The difference was in the levels of polyphenols. Over just the five-year period, those who consumed the highest levels of polyphenols had 37 per cent fewer deaths compared to those who ate the least. Rich in antioxidants and polyphenols, berries have been known to improve digestive system and have anti-cancer properties. The pharmaceutical industry has been quick to exploit these sirtuin-activating nutrients, investing hundreds of millions to convert them into panacea drugs. However, there is no substitute to a healthy diet customised to individual needs.

Author is a clinical nutritionist and founder of www.theweightmonitor.com and Whole Foods India

GRETCHEN REYNOLDS

IN A world that encourages inactivity, even our babies may be moving too little, according to an innovative new study of physical activity patterns during a child’s first year of life. The study, which used tiny activity trackers to monitor babies’ movements, found associations between infants’ squirming, kicking, crawling or stillness and the levels of fat around their middles, raising provocative questions about just how early any links between inactivity and obesity might begin. We already have considerable evidence, of course, that children in the Western world tend to be sedentary. According to recent estimates, most school-age children in the United States sit for more than eight hours a day, while children as young as 2 or 3 years of age can be sedentary for 90 per cent or more of their waking hours. These statistics are concerning, because other studies suggest that inactive children face much higher risks of becoming overweight or obese than children who move more often. But little has been known about how much — or little — tiny babies move and if there might be correlations between their activities and their rotundity, and if such correlations matter. So, for the new study, which was published this month in Obesity, a group of researchers from Johns Hopkins University and other institutions decided to fit baby-size trackers to infants’ ankles and watch how they wiggled. They began by turning to new mothers already participating in a large, ongoing study of the health of mothers and newborns and asking if they could now track their babies’ activities. The researchers wound up recruiting 506 young boys and girls from various socio-economic levels, more than half of them African-American. The researchers visited these infants in their homes when the babies were 3, 6, 9 and 12 months old, weighing and measuring the children, gently checking their body fat with calipers and fitting them with tiny accelerometers. The babies then wore these monitors for four days after each home visit, to provide a measure of how active they were. Such measurements of infantile activity are inherently “problematic”, says Sara Benjamin-Neelon, an associate professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the new study’s lead author. Accelerometers on infants “will pick up movements like kicking and rolling over”, she says, which are made by the baby. But they also can capture and potentially misinterpret movements initiated by parents or caregivers, such as picking up the child or swinging him about, although the child is not then moving on her own. But even recognising those obstacles, the researchers saw clear, consistent patterns in the babies’ movements when they compared readouts month over month. “Activity increased” as the babies grew older, Benjamin-Neelon says, “which is

Do our babies need to move more?

A study that used activity trackers to monitor babies found associations between infants’ movement and levels of fat



GettyImages

what we would expect to see”. In fact, the babies’ daily physical activities grew by about 4 per cent over the course of each three-month period, marking their normal progress toward starting to stand, crawl and sometimes toddle. But there were differences among the children, with some babies moving noticeably more each day than others, starting at the age of 3 months. And when the researchers compared those differences to the babies’ adiposity then, they also found another clear pattern. Those babies who moved the least generally were also the babies with the most fat around their middles. (The researchers controlled for breastfeeding.) Babies are not meant to be svelte, of course. Beachball physiques are standard in this age group. But even so, the correlation between relative inactivity and greater adiposity in these

babies was noteworthy and could be worrisome, Benjamin-Neelon says. “Infants who are heavier and infants who gain weight too quickly in the first year of life tend to be heavier children later,” she says. The accelerometers did not show what inactive babies were doing instead of wiggling, scooting or walking. But the researchers suspect that they were “spending a lot of time in restrictive devices”, Benjamin-Neelon says, such as strollers, highchairs and car seats. Many also may have been staring at screens. Other data collected among the volunteer families (but not included in this study) indicates that about half of the 3-month-old infants and three-quarters of the 1-year-olds “engaged with screens”, Benjamin-Neelon says, some for two hours or more each day.

This study did not track babies after they turned 1 and cannot tell us whether inactive infants face risks of being sedentary or overweight later

The upshot of these findings, limited and preliminary as they may be, would seem to be that parents and caregivers might want to monitor how much babies move and encourage them to move more, Benjamin-Neelon says. “Allow babies to spend supervised time each day moving freely on the floor,” she says, “as long as the environment is safe”. Even infants who are too young to crawl can benefit. “Tummy time allows infants to lift their heads and develop and strengthen upper-body muscles”, she says. “This is anecdotal, but I have heard pediatricians say that many infants in their practice now are lacking upper-body strength.” This study did not track babies after they turned 1, however, and so cannot tell us whether inactive infants face lingering risks of being sedentary or overweight later. The researchers are still working with these same children, some of whom will start kindergarten soon, and plan to report on their health and physical activities in future studies. **NYT**

SHORT COURSE

[0-10 YEARS]

Study: Flu vaccination cuts hospitalisation in kids by half



FULLY VACCINATING children against influenza reduces their risk of hospitalisation by over 50 per cent, according to a study. Researchers noted that in Israel, as in the US, guidelines recommend that children 8 or younger who have never been vaccinated, or who have only gotten one dose of flu vaccine, receive two doses. Children vaccinated according to government guidelines are better protected from influenza than those who only receive one vaccine, said Hannah Segaloff, a research fellow at University of Michigan. “Over half of our study population had underlying conditions that may put them at high risk for severe influenza-related complications, so preventing influenza in this group is critically important.” **PTI**

[10-20 YEARS]

Cyberbullying may worsen depression, PTSD in teens: Study



CYBERBULLYING CAN amplify symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in young people, according to a study which may lead to new targeted interventions for teens to overcome the mental illnesses. The study examined the prevalence of cyberbullying in 50 adolescent psychiatric inpatients between the ages 13 and 17, and related it to their social media usage, current levels of symptoms, and histories of adverse early life experiences. “Even against a backdrop of emotional challenges in the kids we studied, we noted cyberbullying had an adverse impact. It’s real and should be assessed,” said Philip Harvey, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at University of Miami. **PTI**

[20-50 YEARS]

Marijuana use may be linked to increased risk for heart: Study



MORE THAN two million adults with cardiovascular disease in the US reported that they have used, or are using marijuana, according to a review of studies which says effects of the drug on heart are understudied. Earlier research has linked marijuana use to a range of risks, including stroke and arrhythmia, according to the study, published in *Journal of American College of Cardiology*. “More patients are curbing cigarette smoking,” said study co-author Muthiah Vaduganathan, a cardiologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in the US. “In contrast, we’re seeing an accelerating use of marijuana. We need to turn our attention and resources toward understanding the safety profile of its use.” **PTI**

[50+ YEARS]

Vegetable diet doesn’t affect prostate cancer progression



MEN WITH EARLY stage prostate cancer are often advised to increase intake of vegetables to lower the risk for progression. But a randomised trial has found vegetables have no discernible effect on prostate cancer progression. Researchers divided 478 patients with biopsy-confirmed early stage prostate cancer into two groups. Men in one group were enrolled in a behavioural counselling programme and were encouraged over calls to eat at least seven daily servings of fruits and vegetables. The second were given written information about diet and prostate cancer. But there was no difference between the groups in time to progression to higher grade tumours. **NYT**



MALIK SHINES FOR PAK

Recalled Shoaib Malik smashed a solid half-century to anchor Pakistan's five-wicket win over Bangladesh in the first Twenty20 international in Lahore on Friday.

Whattashot: The strokes that took the breath away

Amidst a carnage of boundaries—Indian batsmen hit 13 fours and 10 sixes — the shots that stood out for their grandeur, timeliness & timelessness

THE SWAT-SIX (18.1)
REQUIRED RATE: 12 OFF 18 BALLS
This one from Shreyas Iyer had Virat Kohli hyper-excited. Iyer just backed away and flat-batted a back-of-length Tim Southee ball over long-off. When a batsman backs away, he usually targets either the extra-cover (when it's full) or square (when short). But to hit over long-off requires a lot of elements to sync perfectly, like the power behind the shot, the perfection in placement and beyond it a flexible mind. For, Southee was sharp enough to detect Iyer's plan and followed him with a back-of-length ball at his body. But Iyer was sharper in adjusting and cleared the front-leg (it was beyond the wide-marker), so that he could get a lot of power behind the shot, and he ended almost out of the turf in his follow-through. Iyer showed that one could premeditate a shot, without overtly committing to it.

THE SHUFFLE FLICK (17.2)
REQUIRED RATE: 25 OFF 17
A classic instance of Iyer's intuition. As soon as medium-pacer Hamish Bennett started coming around the wicket, Iyer second-guessed his intentions, that he would target the middle and leg stump with full deliveries. So he began shuffling across as the bowler was in his delivery stride and pick him on the leg-side. The first ball, on off-stump, was twirled past fine-leg. The next, he knew, would be on the middle-stump. So he shuffled across even wider, got deeper in the crease so that he could get under the ball and convert the low full-toss into a more productive half-volley, and flicked the ball, pitched on off-stump, between long-on and mid-wicket. He was also front-on than sideways in his stance, as it opened up a bigger scoring arc on the legs.

THE ALMOST DHONI PULL (16.1)
REQUIRED RATE: 38 OFF 23
A bit MS Dhoni-like in deliverance, Iyer moved across a fraction, covered the line and hopped at the point of impact like the former Indian captain when he would pull and glided it over fine leg. The finesse of the short was remarkable, as was the daring because even slight misjudgement can make the batsman look utterly silly. The most remarkable aspect of the shot was fast his sized up the length of the ball, coming at around 140kmph, and moved into a position that would enable him to unfurl the pull. Once he was in his position, he was still at the crease, waiting for the ball than reacting for it. Had he stayed where he was at the crease, it could have come awkwardly into his body, denying him the width to play the pull.

WRISTY RAHUL (4.5)
REQUIRED RATE: 157 OFF 92
KL Rahul's leg-side mastery is often lost in his off-side expertise. You notice his masterful cover drives and lofted shots over extra-cover. But the flicked-six off Blair Tuckner would attest to his range of mind-boggling leg-side strokes. He left no hints of flicking the particular delivery, just pressed forward, as if he's intending to defend it, before at the exact point of contact he twirled the bat, guiding the ball over square leg. The batswing was non-existent, the bat came down straight and not diagonally as when batsmen flick. Resultantly, there wasn't much of a follow-through either. It was like a short-arm flick. If you freeze his follow-up frame, you'd assume he had played a gentle on-drive.



The wristy flick is one of Rahul's pet shots in the shorter versions. Videograb

KOHLI, STRAIGHT AND SWEET (3.1)
REQUIRED RATE: 173 OFF 102 BALLS
The Indian skipper's favourite six-hitting arc on the off-side is between long-off and extra-cover. His strikes are generally flatter too—the batswing is barely extravagant. He often strides out to the pitch and powers it beyond the ropes. But on this occasion, he just made a firm front-foot thrust and went through with the stroke, more in vintage Tendulkar fashion than the characteristic Kohli way. Such balls, more so in other formats, he is wont to driving through the extra cover, slightly opening the face of the bat. But maybe, because it's T20s and the ground was small that he went for the extravagant loft. And it made a beautiful sight—the sweet batswing as magnificent as the imperious follow-through.

ENS

Win sets us up for the whole tour: Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AUCKLAND, JANUARY 24

INDIA ALSO beat the jet lag besides New Zealand in the T20 series opener here and skipper Virat Kohli said Friday's convincing win was just the kind of start his team was looking for. India, who arrived here only a couple of days ago, chased down New Zealand's 203 for five with an over to spare. Kohli had spoken about the tight scheduling in the pre-match press conference but there was no such talk within the team. "We enjoyed this. Landing two days before and playing a game like this, it was fantastic... This sets up for the whole tour for us. Felt like 80 percent support was for us and the crowd was right behind us. You need that sort of push chasing 200 plus. We never spoke of the jet lag in the team. We didn't want any excuse," said Kohli at the post-match presentation.

New Zealand is a good seven and a half hours ahead of India time. India came into the series high on confidence, having beaten Australia 2-1 at home in the ODI series that concluded on Sunday.

"We had a really good series against Australia and we took that confidence in here. You can't be harsh on anyone on this kind of pitch. I think we did well in the middle overs, to restrict them under 210 was a good effort. I think fielding is one thing that we can improve on, just getting used to the ground dimensions and the ball snaking a bit," said Kohli, referring to the longer side boundaries and short straight boundaries at the peculiar shaped Eden Park.

Shreyas Iyer (58 not out off 29) finished the game for India after K.L. Rahul (56 off 27) and Kohli (45 off 32) provided the launch pad.

KL Rahul kept full-time first during three-match ODI series against Australia last week. Following his good work with both bat and behind the stumps, Kohli had said he will continue with his dual role "for a while" as it lends massive balance to the team.

"I'm quite honestly loving it. At the international stage, it might seem very new and it might seem like I've never kept. (But) I've kept for my IPL franchise for the last 3-4 years, and I've kept for my first-class team as and when there is an opening. I've still stayed in touch with wicket keeping."

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said defending 203 was always going to be tough at this venue. "We know coming to Eden Park it's hard to defend and there was a bit of dew and obviously India showed their class. We knew batting first we had to get a good total on the board. Being a second-used surface, it was a high scoring game. But with ball in hand, if we could get three or four early, we could have got ahead of the game."

Williamson himself blazed away to a 26-ball 51. "We do need to find ways to pick up some wickets."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JANUARY 24

YEARS LATER, Shreyas Iyer would revisit this dreamy night at the Eden Park with fondness. It could well be the night that could define him, the night that could also solve India's middle-order conundrum in the shorter formats. His unbeaten 29-ball 58 was a superlative exhibition of unbridled hitting that left New Zealand shellacked. For the sense of occasion and the circumstances under which it was orchestrated, it was an epic knock.

Nearly 26 ago, it was here and against the same opposition that Sachin Tendulkar opened the innings for the first time and scored a breathtaking 48-ball 82, a knock that made the slot his own for two decades. If Iyer goes on to build a great India career, this effort would be reminisced in a similar way.

When he walked out to bat, India was fairly well placed at 115/1 after 10 overs in pursuit of 204, with KL Rahul and captain Virat Kohli getting them off to a rollicking start. The blitzkrieg upfront was followed by a period of lull when Rahul and Kohli would get dismissed in the space of eight deliveries. At this stage, Iyer had barely got into his groove, having scored just 2 runs off 3 deliveries. Neither these twin setbacks nor the galloping run-rate seemed to bother the Mumbaikar. If anything, he was buoyed by Eden Park's insanely short 65m boundary lines, and a New Zealand bowling attack that looked severely out of depth.

From then on, he just went into overdrive, taking his foot off the pedal only after he had comfortably taken his team past the finish line with an over to spare. Iyer didn't resort to the pyrotechnics that was a recurring theme in T20s.

Instead, he would just pick his spots and backed his natural instincts to clear the ropes at will. This was the finest display of clean and controlled hitting. There wasn't a particular area on the ground that he targeted. If New Zealand bowled full, Iyer would drill it past long-off for a boundary, and if they erred marginally onto his pads, he would launch them over the mid-wicket fence for a six. Not surprisingly, this belligerence put pressure back on the home team.

The spinners, Ish Sodhi, in particular, resorted to a more flattish trajectory. It was a buffet on offer, and Iyer had his full. Despite the carnage, India still required 18 runs off the final two overs, and had to see off a crucial penultimate over from Tim Southee. It was in these tense moments when Iyer unfurled his killer blow, the final nail in the Black Caps coffin that punctured their hopes for good.

He simply backed off to thump a length delivery from Southee over mid-off region for a six. Five deliveries later, Iyer would back off once again, this time to smoke the pacer



Shreyas Iyer hit five fours and three sixes to help India bounce back after the dismissals of KL Rahul and Virat Kohli. BCCI

His unbeaten 29-ball 58 was a superlative exhibition of unbridled hitting that left New Zealand shellacked. For the sense of occasion and the circumstances under which it was orchestrated, it was an epic knock.

for another maximum over the mid-wicket fence to complete the formalities. Clearly, the 25-year-old was not a big fan of tense last-ball finishes.

Looking back, Iyer knew that he always had the skill and the temperament to unleash such a match-winning act. The potential was always there and in the preceding 12 months, he had always threatened to unleash himself. In his 18th T20I, things fell in

place and the stars aligned for him. This career-defining knock was brought about by having supreme confidence in his own abilities. It cannot be denied that his IPL stints with the Delhi Capitals did play a part in his transformation.

The most comforting factor was the unflinching trust shown by his captain in backing him at the No.4 slot. In recent times, this batting position had given the team management considerable strife.

Between 2015 and India's calamitous implosion in the 2019 World Cup semi-final at Old Trafford, India had tried out as many as 13 players in this position.

Iyer was also one among them. It was a hit-and-miss affair. He was not to be blamed though. The constant churn and the lack of continuity affected his morale. Since November 2019, during the home series against the West Indies, Iyer has been persisted in that spot. "One of the areas we concentrated on over the last two years was to

blood as many youngsters as possible. Shreyas Iyer, for instance, he is going to stay at No. 4," India's head coach Ravi Shastri had said. He responded to the coach's faith with resourceful knocks of 70 and 53. But you got a sense that a manic knock was just around the corner. He followed it up with an unbeaten 44 in the third ODI against Australia in Bangalore last week. That innings had all the ingredients to match his efforts in Auckland. He was involved in a stellar chase with Kohli, and it was capped with shots reminiscent to the ones he had played in Auckland.

In that sense, Iyer had continued from where he had left off. "It's amazing coming overseas and it's a really good feeling to win the game and being not out. We had lost two quick wickets and it was really important to build a partnership. We knew the ground is short and we could cover the run-rate at any time," he summed up. A dreamy night. The pleasant memories of it would linger on for a long time.

SCORECARD »
India vs New Zealand

1st T20I | Auckland | Toss: India

NEW ZEALAND 203/5 IN 20 OVS

Martin Gupthill	c Sharma b Dube	30 (19b, 4x4, 1x6)
C Munro	c Chahal b Thakur	59 (42b, 6x4, 2x6)
K Williamson	c Kohli b Chahal	51 (26b, 4x6, 4x4)
C de Grandhomme	c Dube b Jadeja	0 (2b)
R Taylor	not out	54 (27b, 3x4, 3x6)
T Seifert	c Iyer b Bumrah	1 (2b)
M Santner	not out	2 (2b)
Extras:	(lb 1, w 5)	6
Fall of wickets:	1-80 (Martin Gupthill, 7.5 ov), 2-116 (Colin Munro, 11.5 ov), 3-117 (Colin de Grandhomme, 12.2 ov), 4-178 (Kane Williamson, 16.6 ov), 5-181 (Tim Seifert, 17.5 ov)	
Bowling:		
J Bumrah		4-0-31-1
S Thakur		3-0-44-1
M Shami		4-0-53-0
Y Chahal		4-0-32-1
S Dube		3-0-24-1
R Jadeja		2-0-18-1
INDIA		204/4 IN 19 OVS
R Sharma	c Taylor b Santner	7 (6b, 1x6)
KL Rahul	c Southee b Sodhi	56 (27b, 4x4, 3x6)
V Kohli	c Gupthill b Tuckner	45 (32b, 3x4, 1x6)
S Iyer	not out	58 (29b, 5x4, 3x6)
S Dube	c Southee b Sodhi	13 (9b, 1x4, 1x6)
M Pandey	not out	14 (12b, 1x6)
Extras:	(nb 1, w 10)	11
Fall of wickets:	1-16 (Rohit Sharma, 1.4 ov), 2-115 (KL Rahul, 9.6 ov), 3-121 (Virat Kohli, 11.1 ov), 4-142 (Shivam Dube, 13.2 ov)	
Bowling:		
T Southee		4-0-48-0
M Santner		4-0-50-1
H Bennett		4-0-36-0
B Tuckner		3-0-34-1
I Sodhi		4-0-36-2
India won by 6 wickets.		

"We bowled well but sometimes have to give credit to how batsmen are. In T20s you have to learn quick and we have to adapt. Our bowlers will have to look at them and at the same time their batsmen are a class line-up all the way through. The way we attack them in the next game will be crucial."

ROSS TAYLOR

Rain, spinners help Colts make it three in three

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BLOEMFONTEIN, JANUARY 24

LEFT-ARM SPINNER Atharva Ankelekar showed big heart while leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi was all guile in India's 44-run win against New Zealand as they set-up a quarter-final date with Australia in the ICC U-19 World Cup here on Friday.

During a rain-hit final Group A league encounter reduced to 23-overs per-side, India scored 115 for no loss in 23 overs with openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (57 not out off 72 balls) and Divyansh Saxena (52 no off 62 balls) hitting half-centuries.

New Zealand needed 193 as per DLS method calculations but managed only 147 in 21 overs as India emerged group toppers with six points. Left-arm orthodox Ankelekar, who played through pain with a fractured finger on his right hand, had figures of 3 for 28 in five overs with some accurate wicket-to-wicket bowling. This was after New Zealand No.3 Fergus Lellman hit him for two sixes off his first two deliveries.



Spinners Ravi Bishnoi (in pic) and Atharva Ankelekar shared seven wickets between them. ICC

Bishnoi, a Rs 2 crore buy for Kings XI Punjab, is fast turning out to be the biggest star in the junior line-up with his variation and control. He bowled googlies, sliders and top-spinners to end with 4 for 30 from five overs as vice-captain Dhruv Jurel was fantastic behind the stumps with some neat glove-work.

India will now meet Australia in the Super League quarter-final at Potchefstroom on January 28. Put into bat, both Yashasvi and Divyansh were watchful but didn't wait to punish the loose deliveries. Yashasvi, who will be playing for Rajasthan Royals in the 2020 IPL, again held anchor hitting four boundaries and two sixes.

His opening partner Divyansh was a bit more aggressive as he hit six boundaries in his half-century. Just when they had completed a century stand, the heavens opened up to play spoilsport. Once New Zealand had a target of 193, they showed intent with some lusty hits reaching 53 in just over five overs before India's most dependable breakthrough provider Bishnoi got into the act.

He slid one past opener Ollie White

who had given him the charge to let Jurel complete an easy stumping.

Then it was Atharva, India's Junior Asia Cup final hero, who got into the act after being hit for two consecutive sixes by Lellman. Before that he dropped a catch due to a plastered right hand. However he got other opener Rhys Marieu (42 off 31 balls) caught in deep. Ankelekar then had his revenge on Lellman who was played on and then had Nicholas Lidstone leg before with an arm ball. That was good enough to break New Zealand's resistance as Bishnoi ran through lower middle-order.

Bishnoi, who now has 10 wickets from three group league games, said that he tried to bowl wicket to wicket which yielded results. "I want to be like Shane Warne as every aspiring leg-spinner," Bishnoi later said.

BRIEF SCORES: India U-19 115/0 in 23 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 57 off 77, Divyansh Saxena 52 off 62 balls) beat New Zealand U-19 147 (Rhys Mariu 42 off 31, Fergus Lellman 31 off 19; Ravi Bishnoi 4/30, Atharva Ankelekar 3/28) by 44 runs (D/L revised target 192 off 23 overs).

England wobble after century opening stand

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG, JANUARY 24

Zak Crawley's maiden Test half-century gave England a solid foundation before South Africa struck back on the first day of the fourth and final Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Friday.

Holding an unbeatable 2-1 series lead, England were 192 for four when bad light ended a rain-shortened day. England's youthful opening pair of Crawley (66) and Dom Sibley (39) shared England's first century opening partnership since 2016 and blunted South Africa's fast bowlers on a pitch which both captains expected to be challenging for batsmen.

Crawley, 21, and Sibley, 24, put on 107 before Sibley was caught down the leg side by wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock to give new cap Beuran Hendricks his first Test wicket. South Africa claimed three more wickets to

have England at a slightly precarious 157 for four but captain Joe Root and Ollie Pope took the tourists safely through to the close in deteriorating light.

Rain prevented any play before lunch and the South African bowling was surprisingly unthreatening when it did get under way. Both teams opted for an all-seam attack on a pitch which usually favours fast bowlers but there was no discernible swing or sharp movement off the surface as England's openers scored at better than three runs an over.

England were 100 for no wicket at tea but South Africa changed their tactics after the interval, bowling more short-pitched deliveries. Crawley, in his fourth Test, batted confidently from the start and drove strongly off the front foot, although on 56, shortly before tea, he was hit on the helmet when he missed a pull against Anrich Nortje.

BRIEF SCORES: England 192 for 4 (Crawley 66, Sibley 44; Philander 1/37) v South Africa.

Slicing it too close

Two points from defeat against local favourite Millman, Federer fights back to record 100th win at Australian Open; Serena, Osaka out

REUTERS
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 24

ROGER FEDERER looked defeat full in the face before rallying in the 10-point tiebreaker to edge local battler John Millman in a five-set thriller on Friday night and reach the last 16 of the Australian Open. It was Federer's 100th victory at Melbourne Park and few of them can have been as hard as the four-hour, 4-6 7-6(2) 6-4 4-6 7-6(8) epic he shared with the teal tough world number 47 on Rod Laver Arena.

The 20-times Grand Slam champion made an extraordinary 82 unforced errors to go with 62 winners in a contest that was decided by the extended tiebreak introduced to prevent even longer contests.

Even that was not straightforward for Federer. The apparently indefatigable Millman held leads of 5-2 and 8-4 on the back of some brilliant tennis, forcing 38-year-old Federer to rattle off five straight points before securing the victory with a crosscourt forehand winner.

"Thank God it was a super tiebreaker or I would have lost that one. John played a great match ... he deserves more than half of this one," said a relieved Federer, who will play Hungarian Marton Fucsovics in the fourth round. "He came up with all that good stuff at the start of the tiebreak and I was saying 'Okay, I didn't play that bad' and was getting ready for the press conference.

"It was really Johnny who made it difficult for me tonight."

Millman, who got the better of the Swiss at the 2018 U.S. Open, produced a fighting performance worthy of the archetypal Australian battler Lleyton Hewitt, who was watching courtside.

"Disappointed, left it all out there. Didn't win," said the crestfallen Australian. "Roger made it tough, that's what the best players do. I know I'll cop some (criticism) but I think when you understand tennis and stuff, I don't think there was a whole lot wrong. It would have been great to serve an ace and put it to bed but ... I played some alright tennis to get there, to that stage."

Millman was on the front foot from the start and won the opening set before Federer grabbed the second on a tiebreak and the third with a late break of serve.

The Australian was never going to fold, however, and he pounced to break the six-times Australian Open champion for 4-3 after one of the many lengthy rallies that subdued the match before taking the fourth set.

Millman also got an early break in the decider but Federer broke back and, as the crowd roared both players to the rafters, the match headed towards its dramatic denouement. Defeat would have meant Federer's earliest exit from a Grand Slam for five years but he would not have been alone as a big name departing after an upset on Friday.

'Super breaker to his liking'

Tiebreaks are traditionally played to seven and the new rule caused some confusion on its Melbourne debut last year.

Had this third-round match been played at the U.S. Open Millman, rather than Federer, would have progressed.

Each of the sport's four Grand Slam tournaments feature different ways to finish matches. The French Open has retained long fifth sets with no tiebreaks while last year Federer got painful first-hand experience of Wimbledon's new system, losing a conventional tiebreak at 12-12 in the deciding set of an epic final against Novak Djokovic.

The U.S. Open, the first to adopt sudden-death finishes, uses tiebreaks at 6-6 in the deciding set. There have been calls for uniformity and Federer says he likes the now defunct 'into infinity' system that produced the 70-68 fifth set between Nicolas Mahut and John Isner at Wimbledon in 2010, a match lasting more than 11 hours.

But he says he is happy to win, whichever way. "I have been in so many different types of endings, I don't even care what the ending is as long as I know what the deal is at 6-6," he said. "I listen very carefully to the umpire and they say, 'it's a 10-point tiebreaker'. I'm like, all right, it's a 10-point tiebreaker."



Third seed Roger Federer recovered from 8-4 down in the fifth set tiebreak to complete a four-hour, 4-6 7-6(2) 6-4 4-6 7-6(8) comeback victory. Reuters

Freaky Friday claims the past, the present

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE, JANUARY 24

DOWN TO what sure felt like her last chance, Serena Williams came through with a cross-court forehand winner to close a 24-stroke point, then raised her arms, held that celebratory pose and looked over toward her guest box. Finally, on her sixth try, after 1{ hours of action, she had managed to convert a break point against 27th-seeded Wang Qiang in the Australian Open's third round.

Right then, it appeared that the comeback was on, the bid for a 24th Grand Slam singles title could continue. It turned out that Williams only was delaying a surprising defeat. So tough at the toughest moments for so many years, Williams just could not quite do enough to put aside some shaky serving and all manner of other miscues, instead making her earliest exit at Melbourne Park in 14 years, a 6-4, 6-7(2), 7-5 loss to Wang on Friday.

"I was optimistic that I would be able to win. I thought, 'OK, now finish this off.' I honestly didn't think I was going to lose that match," Williams said about her mindset after forcing a third set.

She began by crediting Wang but eventually shifted to criticizing herself for not playing well enough to win. "I didn't return like Serena. Honestly, if we were just honest with ourselves, I lost that match," Williams said. "I can't play like that. I literally can't do that again. It's unprofessional. It's not cool."

This was hardly the only meaningful - and unexpected - result on Day 5: Hours later, 15-year-old sensation Coco Gauff became the youngest player to eliminate a defending women's champion at a Grand Slam tournament since 1991 by defeating Naomi Osaka 6-3, 6-4. Gauff took advantage of Osaka's myriad mistakes to get to the fourth round in her Australian Open debut.

Williams was broken in the final game after more than 2 1/2 hours, fittingly ending things with a backhand into the net. That was



Serena Williams' bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam was shattered by the unlikely figure of China's Wang Qiang, while defending champion Naomi Osaka was ousted by 15-year-old Coco Gauff. Reuters

her 27th unforced error on the backhand side, part of a total of 56 miscues. Wang made only 20. "I'm better than that," said Williams, who trudged through the long walkway that leads to the locker room, carrying two bags, while Wang was doing the winner's interview in Rod Laver Arena.

Later, at her news conference, Wang laughed as she said: "I always believed I could do this one day. I didn't know which day."

Since grabbing major championship No. 23 at the 2017 Australian Open, while she was pregnant, Williams hasn't added to her total. She appeared in four major finals over the past two seasons, losing each one.

And she bowed out much, much sooner this time, animated as can be, often displaying what she later called "the signature 'Serena frustration' look."

Unexpected results

Williams owns seven trophies from the Australian Open and hadn't lost as early as the third round at either of the hard-court Grand Slam tournaments - in Melbourne or at the U.S. Open - since all the way back in 2006. Here is just one measure of how unexpected this result was: The only other time these two women faced each other came at Flushing Meadows last September - the only Slam quarterfinal appearance of Wang's career thus far - and Williams needed all of 44 minutes to dominate her in a 6-1, 6-0 victory. The total points were 50 to 15. Wang quickly surpassed those game and point totals Friday, thanks in large part to nearly flawless play in the first set.

She saved all four break points she faced in that set, accumulated 10 winners and made just five unforced errors. Wang picked up the

lone break she needed at love with an easy forehand putaway winner that made it 5-4, and she soon owned the set.

After that lopsided loss in New York, Wang decided she needed more powerful strokes to compete with the likes of Williams, devoting her offseason to more work in the gym. "I think it worked," Wang said, nodding. "You can see the result."

Wang quickly went up a break in the second set, too. Then, when Wang served for the victory at 5-4, Williams seemed to shift the entire complexion of the match.

She was 0 for 5 on break chances until then but the sixth time was the charm. On the point of the day, with both players slugging away from the baseline, it was Williams who did what it took to take it. She was superior in the tiebreaker, too, and on they went to a third set. "During the second set, (I was) a little bit confused. ... I have to be calm, you know?" Wang said. "A little bit confused inside, but my mind always told me I had to focus on the court, focus on the point and trust myself."

Asked whether she would party Friday night, Wang offered a simple answer: "No."

So what were her plans?

"Rest," she said, "and just prepare for the next match." That will come against 78th-ranked Ons Jabeur of Tunisia, who ended the career of Caroline Wozniacki by eliminating the 2018 Australian Open champion and former No. 1 by a 7-5, 3-6, 7-5 score.

The 29-year-old Wozniacki had announced that she would retire after this tournament. Following her final match, she sat on her court-side chair and cried. At least the Dane was able to quickly joke about the circumstances, saying: "It was only fitting that my last match ended with a forehand error."

She and Williams are close friends; their losses concluded at around the same time. They ran into each other in the locker room and "were both kind of bummed," said Williams, who teared up herself while discussing Wozniacki.

TRAMLINES

From 4-8 to 10-8, a tale of six points

The first 12 points of the super-tiebreaker was the four hour-long five-setter in a nutshell. John Millman stepped up, hitting two winners and an ace. Federer did the rest, his ground-strokes flying long or crashing against the net. At 4-6, a section of the Rod Laver Arena came unglued as local favourite Millman deposited a forehand down the line past Federer at the net. Tiebreaks are traditionally played to seven and the new rule caused some confusion on its Melbourne debut last year. Had this third-round match been played at the U.S. Open Millman, rather than Federer, would have progressed.

"I felt the roar was big when he won his 7th point in the breaker. People must have thought it was over," Federer joked in the press conference. What followed after the first 12 points was a Federer masterclass, and Millman crumbling under pressure.

5-8 Federer capitalised on a weak return for a backhand wide off the court. Millman, on a roll, went for an audacious, off-balance backhand down the line which sailed over.

6-8 Federer controlled a 13-shot rally, positioning Millman firmly in the ad court before sending a forehand down the line. Millman rushed and hit the forehand long.

7-8 Millman's second service point unfolded almost in an identical manner; only this time the Aussie hit it long cross-court without Federer's direction-changing pressure. Millman needless review afterwards a sign of the the heat he was suddenly feeling.

8-8 Calibrations done, Millman avoided the errors from the previous points. He controlled the cross-court rally and didn't fluster when the ball was sent down the line. Federer then pulled out a fresh trick, a sharp drop shot. Millman made the run, but the forehand was long again.

9-8 All even again, and Federer wouldn't let it slip. His wide serve gave the Swiss a chance to charge the net. Millman again went for the high-risk option, and his lob missed the court.

10-8 Match point, and a serving Millman came to play. Quick, down the T and Federer was on the backfoot. An inside out forehand caught the corner, and Federer's stretched backhand saved the day. Millman motioned to go for the inside out again, before drilling it down the line. Federer was ready with a cross-court winner.

I think it's important to have different endings at every Slam. We got that. Making sure I experience them all before I leave the game. I have been in so many different types of endings, I don't even care what the ending is as long as I know what the deal is at 6-6. But, no, I mean, look, in a funny way I'm okay with all four endings, because they all have a reason to end the way they do."

ROGER FEDERER,
ON THE SUPER TIEBREAKER

KEY RESULTS

Men's second round: No. 2 N Djokovic beat Y Nishioka 6-3, 6-2, 6-2; M Cilic beat No. 9 RB Agut 6-7 (3), No. 14 Diego Schwartzman beat No. 24 Dusan Lajovic 6-2, 6-3, 7-6(7).

Women's third round: No. 1 A Barty beat No. 29 E Rybakina 6-3, 6-2; No. 27 W Qiang beat No. 8 S Williams 6-4, 6-7 (2), 7-5; C Gauff beat No. 3 N Osaka 6-3, 6-4; No. 7 P Kvitova beat No. 25 E Alexandrova 6-1, 6-2

FALLING SHORT

Tokyo qualifiers: Men, women fail to book place on Olympic table

SHAHID JUDGE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 24

TEAMMATES JUMPING over advertisement boards, rushing onto the playing area to greet their compatriot, who already has hands raised up high in celebration. This is an image that has been associated with Indian table tennis quite often these last few years. It happened when both the men's and women's teams won gold at the Commonwealth Games, when the men's team won bronze at the Asian Games, and when the men's team finished in the top 15 at the World Championships in 2018.

It was an image that was, at least for the men's team, expected to be repeated at the ITTF's team Olympic qualification event in Gondomar, Portugal on Friday. But it wasn't to be.

The Indian women's team, seeded 17th defied all odds when they stretched the fifth seeded Romania to the final rubber of the best-of-five tie, only for Manika Batra to stumble at the final hurdle. A few hours later, the fifth seeded Indian men's team were unexpectedly beaten 3-1 by Slovenia.

Former Olympian Neha Aggarwal sums up the Indian challenge: "It was disappointing by the men, they should have done much

better. But it was a heartening effort by the women."

There's still a chance for both teams to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games later this year, as they move onto the second stage of the qualification tournament. But, at least for the men's team, it should never have gone down this far.

Both teams needed to win two consecutive ties to make the Tokyo cut. The men's team, ranked ninth in the world, made quick work of Luxembourg in the first round. Only Slovenia stood in the way of the Indians and a berth at the Olympics. And they had the players to win that tie as well.

India had the likes of world no 30 and 33 Sathiyan Gnanasekaran and Achanta Sharath Kamal - both of whom have been instrumental in the rise of the Indian team - respectively in the ranks, while Slovenia's highest ranked player was world no 40 Darko Jorgic. And the Indian pair made a commanding start to the tie, winning the doubles rubber in three straight games. In the singles though, Sathiyan was blanked 3-0, Harmeet Desai lost 3-2 and Sharath went down 3-1 to hand Slovenia the Olympic spot.

"I'm not sure what went wrong with the men. They were a strong team and had



On paper, Manika Batra should have beaten current world no 134 Daniela Monteiro Dodean. But her opponent was a former world no 19 who was getting back up the rankings.

trained very hard for this tournament, even holding camps in Chennai and Dusseldorf," Aggarwal says. "It was probably nerves because apart from Sharath, the rest were all gunning for their first Olympics. But at the same time, if they want to be the best in the world, they will have to learn to embrace the

EXPLAINED

Men's and women's teams can still make the Olympics

THE WORLD Team Olympic Qualification tournament has been held to award nine teams each from the men's and women's draw quotas for the 2020 Tokyo Games. The event follows a knockout format starting from the round of 32 draw.

In the pre-quarterfinals, or the round of 16, the eight teams their respective ties win earn an Olympic quota.

For the remaining ninth and final quota, the eight teams that lose in the round of 16 enter a second stage, which also employs a knockout format. The team that goes on to win in the final in the second stage will earn the last quota place for the Olympics.

Based on this format, both the Indian men's and women's team still

has a chance to make it to the Olympics. After coming up with a surprise win over the higher ranked Swedish team in the round of 32, the Indian women's team lost out closely to Romania in the pre-quarterfinals.

The men's team in turn, who were the fifth seeds and were widely expected to make the Olympics cut without much fuss, were upset by Slovenia.

But by virtue of making it to the round of 16, both teams will now compete in the second stage of the tournament, where they will start in quarter-final stage (the men playing Czech Republic and women playing France). To win the quota though, they will they will have to win the tournament - win three consecutive ties.

pressure."

The women's team meanwhile played better than expected. Led by world no 61 Manika Batra, the Indians first came up with a win over 16th seed Sweden before putting up a strong challenge against the Romanians.

After going down in the doubles, Batra pulled off a 3-1 win against world no 19 Bernadette Szocs. Sutirtha Mukherjee also beat Szocs in the fourth rubber to level the tie at 2-2 and take it to the decider.

In the fifth, Batra was to play current world no 134 Daniela Monteiro Dodean. On paper, it was a match Batra should have won, but her opponent was a former world no 19 who was getting back up the rankings after being away from the tour on maternity leave.

"Daniela is from my batch. She's a very tactical and smart player and that made the difference," Aggarwal says. "She knew how to counter the long-pimple game Manika plays. So she kept playing inside-out forehands deep onto Manika's backhand."

Batra ended up losing the rubber 3-1, and the Indian women bowed out 3-2.

The women's team will now take on France in the quarterfinal of the second stage of the tournament on Saturday. Meanwhile the men will play the Czech Republic.



Tokyo prediction: US to top , 12 medals for India

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, JANUARY 24

THE TOKYO Olympics open in exactly six months, and the United States and China are picked to finish 1-2 in the overall medal count and the gold-medal count. That's the easy part in a forecast done by Gracenote Sports about which countries will win the most Olympic medals. Gracenote supplies analysis for leagues around the world and has had a solid track record forecasting recent Olympics.

The United States and China are easy to handle. The tough part is figuring out how to deal with Russia. Russia is facing a four-year Olympic ban for manipulating doping data. It has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport with a ruling expected in several months.

The sanctions imposed by the World Anti-Doping Agency forbid the use of the Russian team name, flag, or anthem. However, some Russian athletes are still expected to compete as neutrals - as they did in the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang. Of course, no one knows how many.

All of this really fouls up Gracenote's calculations. First, a look at the United States and China with the Olympics opening on July 24. Gracenote, which forecasts medals based on performances in major events since the last Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, has the United States leading the overall medal count with 117, and the gold-medal count with 47. China is picked to win 87 overall and 43 gold. Russia is next with 66 overall and 25 gold, followed by host nation Japan with 65 overall and 30 gold.

Reds snatch game from Wolves' jaws

Liverpool forward Firmino slots winner in the dying moments to extend their victory-streak

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
WOLVERHAMPTON, JANUARY 24

LIVERPOOL MANAGER Jurgen Klopp hailed another moment of magic from Roberto Firmino as the Brazilian's late winner opened up a 16-point lead at the top of the Premier League with a 2-1 victory at Wolves on Thursday.

The European champions' now 14-game winning streak in the league seemed set to end as Raul Jimenez cancelled out Jordan Henderson's early opener. Liverpool were even grateful to goalkeeper Alisson Becker for not falling behind in the second half.

However, like crucial victories against Leicester, Aston Villa and Crystal Palace earlier in the campaign, Liverpool left it late to snatch another vital three points in their quest to end a 30-year wait to win the title as Firmino smashed home six minutes from time.

"You just have to find a way to win and have someone who makes the perfect decision and that was Bobby again," said Klopp. "A worldie I would say from Bobby, a super goal."

Liverpool, who now have 22 wins in 23 league games this season, also have a game in hand over second-placed Manchester City to come. However, victory could still come at a cost as Mane hobbled off with a hamstring injury in the first half. "We don't know exactly (the severity of the injury). He felt something in the hamstring," added Klopp, whose side are also still in the hunt for the FA Cup and Champions League.

Defeat leaves Wolves still six points off the top four in seventh, but Nuno Espirito Santo's side showed why they are on form the most likely challengers to fourth-placed Chelsea for a place in next season's



Roberto Firmino scored a goal in the 84th minute in Liverpool's 2-1 win over Wolves. AP

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Matches where Liverpool changed the outcome of the game this season in the last 15 minutes.

5 Oct	Liverpool	2-1	Leicester	James Milner	90+5' (pen.)
20 Oct	Manchester United	1-1	Liverpool	Adam Lallana	85'
27 Oct	Liverpool	2-1	Tottenham	Salah	75' (pen.)
2 Nov	Aston Villa	1-2	Liverpool	Andy Robertson	87'
23 Nov	Crystal Palace	1-2	Liverpool	Firmino	85'
23 Jan	Wolverhampton	1-2	Liverpool	Firmino	84'

Champions League. "It was a fantastic game of football," said Nuno. "We have to keep going and keep getting stronger."

Nuno's one regret from his side's display was the manner of the opening goal.

Set-pieces have been one of the keys to Liverpool's success and a well-worked corner got the visitors off to a flying start as Henderson headed home. Matt Doherty should have lev-

elled shortly afterwards before Liverpool's threat on the counter-attack was curtailed when Mane pulled up.

The Senegalese's absence for a few weeks is unlikely to sway the momentum of the title race, but he could now be a doubt for the first leg of Liverpool's Champions League last 16 tie at Atletico Madrid next month. Jimenez and Adama Traore were left on the bench when

the sides met in late December just two days after they had scored in a thrilling 3-2 win over Manchester City and Wolves' two most dangerous attacking weapons made a huge difference. "Traore is pretty much unplayable," added Klopp. "Not only on the wing any more, but he keeps the ball, holds the ball and sets up goals."

The Spaniard's pace was too much for a Liverpool defence

EPL TABLE

Team	GP	W	L	Pts
Liverpool	23	22	0	67
Man City	24	16	5	51
Leicester	24	15	6	48
Chelsea	24	12	8	40
Man Utd	24	9	8	34

that had kept seven consecutive Premier League clean sheets to handle six minutes after the break. Traore's run down the right pulled Van Dijk out of the centre of the defence and his pinpoint cross found Jimenez to bullet home his 20th goal of the season.

That was the first goal Alisson had conceded in the league for two months and the Brazilian had to be at his best to then turn a Traore drive to safety and stand up bravely to block from Jimenez. Firmino looked to have missed the chance to claim all three points when he fired into Patricio's legs with just the Portuguese number one to beat.

But he quickly made amends with a thumping finish from Henderson's pass.

3rd-tier Tranmere to play Utd in FA Cup

Third-tier club Tranmere set up a fourth-round match with Manchester United in the FA Cup after beating Premier League team Watford 2-1 after extra time on Thursday. Watford paid the price for fielding a severely understrength lineup for the replay at Prenton Park, which came just two days after Nigel Pearson's relegation-threatened team played a game in the league.

Substitute Paul Mullin, who scored the equalizer in the first game that saw Tranmere rally from three goals down to draw 3-3, grabbed the winner in the replay in the 104th minute.