

# THE ASIAN AGE

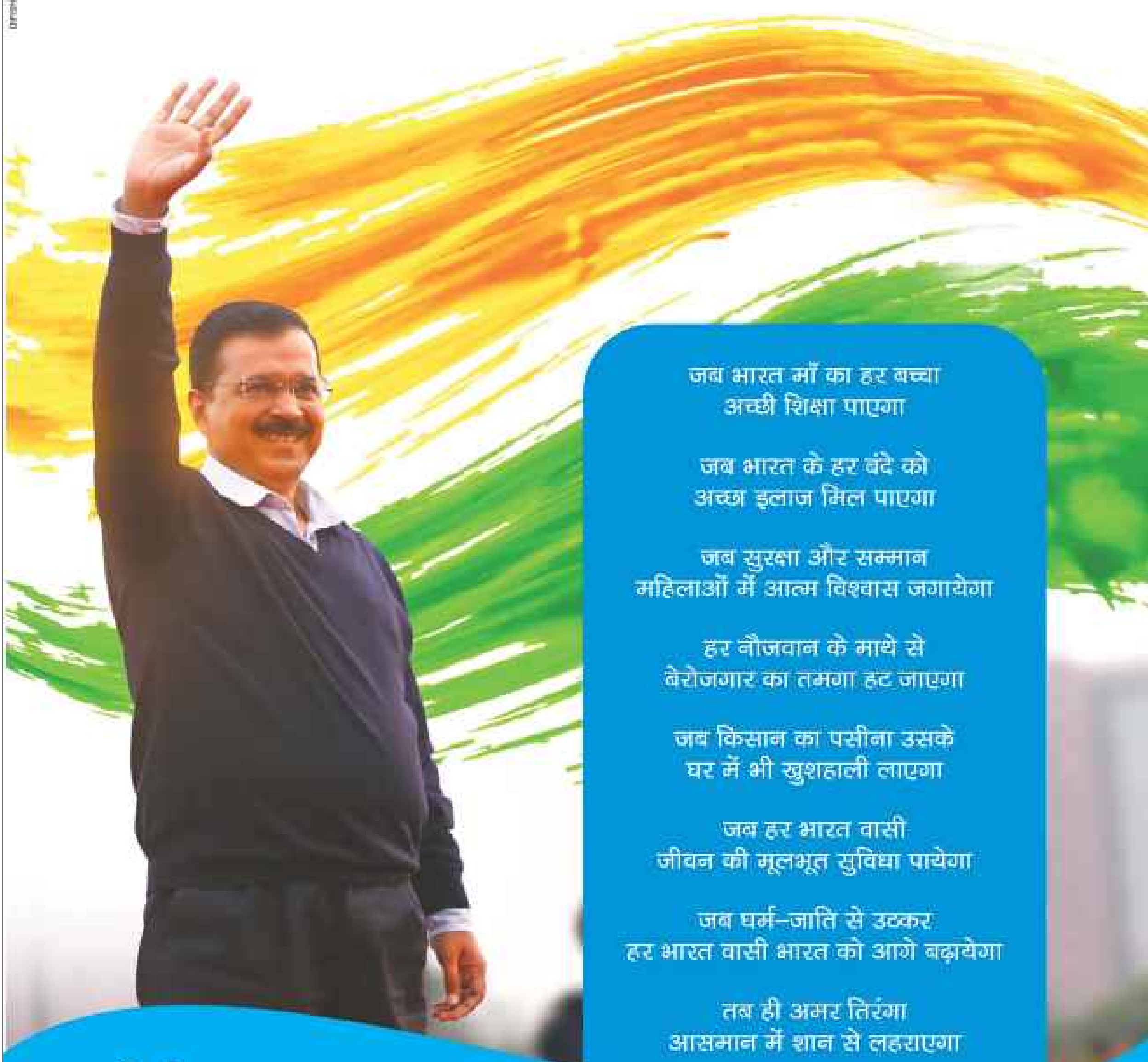
NEW DELHI SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020

## THANK YOU DELHI!

You are cordially invited for  
the oath taking ceremony of  
Chief Minister Shri. Arvind Kejriwal

on Sunday, 16 February, 10 a.m.  
at Ramleela Maidan

DIPESH/AGENCY/PHOTO/0000010-20



जब भारत माँ का हर बच्चा  
अच्छी शिक्षा पाएगा

जब भारत के हर बंदे को  
अच्छा इलाज मिल पाएगा

जब सुरक्षा और सम्मान  
महिलाओं में आत्म विश्वास जगायेगा

हर नौजवान के माथे से  
बेरोजगार का तमगा हट जाएगा

जब किसान का पसीना उसके  
घर में भी खुशहाली लाएगा

जब हर भारत वासी  
जीवन की मूलभूत सुविधा पायेगा

जब धर्म-जाति से उठकर  
हर भारत वासी भारत को आगे बढ़ायेगा

तब ही अमर तिरंगा  
आसमान में शान से लहराएगा

दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार

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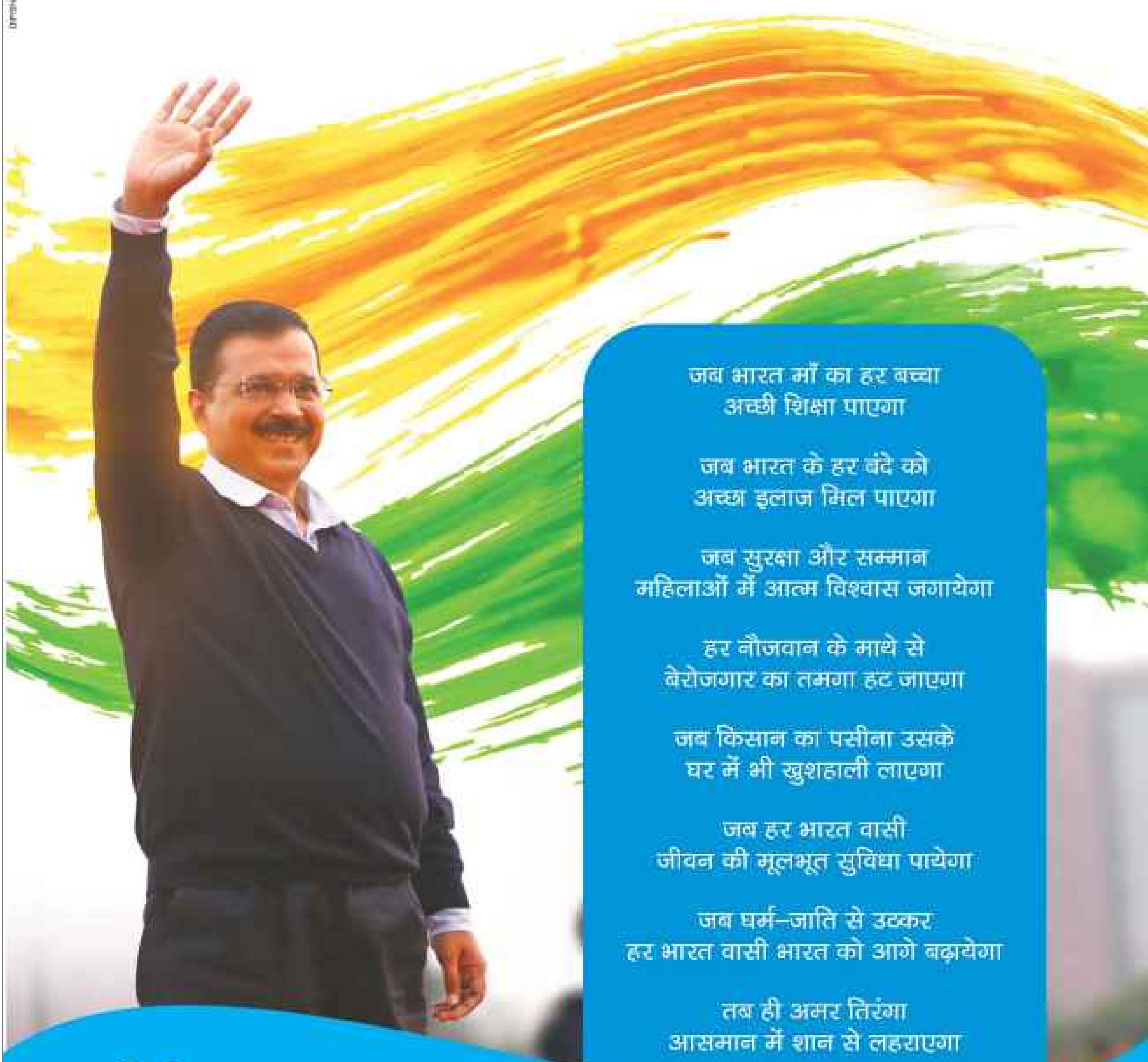
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**OUR CRITIC'S RATING** Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

## Kal, Imtiaz Ali's films were irritating, Aaj it is insufferable

SUPARNA SHARMA

*Kal*, a girl in a blue skirt and a boy in khaki pants.  
*Aaj*, a girl in shorts and a boy with questionable hygiene.

*Kal*, girl asking boy why he's chasing her.  
*Aaj*, girl asking boy why he didn't sleep with her.

*Kal*, boy says, "Okay, I will stop chasing you".  
*Aaj*, boy says, "You are special".

*Kal*, girl responded, "Did I ask you not to chase me?"  
*Aaj*, girl says, "Whateverrrrr".

*Kal*, boy is Veer (Kartik Aaryan), girl is Leena (Aarushi Sharma) in Udaipur, circa 1990  
*Aaj*, boy is Raghu (Kartik Aaryan), girl is Zoe (Sara Ali Khan) in Delhi 2020

*Kal*, Leena was a student in a convent school.  
*Aaj*, Zoe has career plans of running an event management company.

*Kal*, Veer was studying to be a doctor.  
*Aaj*, Raghu is a computer programmer.

*Kal*, Leena did kathak.  
*Aaj*, Zoe does zumba.

*Kal*, Leena wore salwar-kameez with dupatta.  
*Aaj*, Zoe wears small, trendy clothes and high heels.

*Kal*, Leena stood in balcony stealing furtive glances.  
*Aaj*, Zoe has tequila shots in a pub.

*Kal*, Leena had a plait and was very scared of her mother.  
*Aaj*, Zoe's hair is streaked and she shouts at her mother.

*Aaj*, a love guru, a philosopher-guru (Randeep Hooda) runs Mazi (past), a coffee shop cum co-working space that has a bar and booze.

He has a *kal*, and a room upstairs to make out with random girls.

Zoe works out of Mazi, and soon Raghu follows her with his laptop.

Whenever we are in *aaj* with love guru, we go to his *kal* for some love lessons.

*Kal*, Veer loved Leena, she loved him.

*Aaj*, Raghu loves Zoe, and she loves him.

*Kal*, Veer and Leena had a thing — whenever they met, she would suddenly, quickly kiss him.

*Aaj*, Zoe and Raghu make out and then she lies on top of him.

*Kal*, he had issues, complexes.

*Aaj*, she has issues, complexes.

*Kal*, Veer hurt Leena, but hurt himself as well.

*Aaj*, Zoe hurts Raghu, but hurts herself as well.

**K**al, parson, tarson, narson, in fact for barson, Imtiaz Ali has been making the same film, over and over — *Jab We Met* (2007), *Love Aaj Kal* (2009), *Rockstar* (2011), *Cocktail* (2010), *Highway* (2014), *Tamasha* (2015), *Jab Harry Met Sejal* (2017).

*Aaj*, he has made the same film, again.

*Kal*, parson, tarson, narson, his heroes and heroines found themselves through love, else they felt lost-lost, sad-sad.

*Aaj*, his hero and heroine find themselves through love, and without it they feel lost-lost, sad-sad.

*Kal*, parson, tarson, narson, Imtiaz Ali's films were about the redemptive power of love.

*Aaj*, his film is about the redemptive power of love.

*Kal*, his heroines were child-babes.

*Aaj*, his heroine is a child-babe, one at least.

*Kal*, Imtiaz Ali was besotted with boys and girls with tiny IQs.

*Aaj*, he is still obsessed with a boys and girls with tiny IQs.

*Kal*, I thought Imtiaz Ali would grow up after having made the same film over and over.

*Aaj*, it is clear that he is still obsessed with a boys and girls with tiny IQs.

*Kal*, I thought Imtiaz Ali would grow up after having made the same film over and over.

*Aaj*, it is clear that he is still obsessed with a boys and girls with tiny IQs.

**Love Aaj Kal (U/A) 141 min**  
**CAST:** Kartik Aaryan, Sara Ali Khan, Aarushi Sharma, Randeep Hooda, Simone Singh  
**DIRECTOR:** Imtiaz Ali  
**RATING:** ★

Imtiaz Ali doesn't want to grow up and will keep making the same film over and over, and then again.

*Kal*, Imtiaz Ali knew how to write and had at least a semblance of a story.

*Aaj*, he has lost that skill as well, and instead of a story has only expository dialogue.

**L**ove *Aaj Kal* 2020 has no story whatsoever and so most of the time is spent talking about love, how love feels, what love does, instead of showing it to us.

Imagine a road trip movie where instead of an actual road trip, the lead pair take turns to sit with an uncle at a coffee shop while he tells them about a road trip he once went on. But, rather than talk about interesting, fun stuff, the story he narrates goes like this: "I checked out a car, then I took it for a spin. It got a flat, I changed tyre. Again there was a puncture. Mileage wasn't good. The gear stick was wobbly, the wipers were not moving smoothly. When I put the window down, the breeze was nice, but her hair got tangled. She was not happy."

At one point, after we return from a flashback to *aaj*, Zoe says to cafe uncle, "Life, haan!"

The banality is just staggering.

Zoe's character is so idiotic that she has a hissy fit before taking all life-altering decisions, all of which are based entirely on what someone else has said or experienced.

**U**sually, Randeep Hooda is good, but in *Love Aaj Kal* he is inept and quite unbearable. Sara Ali Khan is not just bad, she is terrible, as if she has regressed as an actor since *Kedarnath* (2018).

After

**If you were planning a movie for your Valentine's date, I'd say cleaning public latrines in the service of Swachhh Bharat would be more fun than watching Love Aaj Kal.**

Now imagine that the girl who comes to listen to cafe-wale uncle, walks in and out hyperventilating, like, all of the time.

Leena of *kal* barely talks. But Zoe of 2020 more than makes up for that Leena, and all the Leenas born and brought up in the three decades between them.

Zoe's character is created out of Imtiaz Ali's issues and complexes about women and love. Thus, she has a huffy demeanour, throws tantrums, has only exaggerated, petulant responses and speaks all the time while gesturing frantically. Yet, the instructions to the cameraman were to crouch in front of her and stare up with a grin and a throbbing heart, like a duffer in love.

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After

suffering her dizzy gestures and chatter for a while, she actually started grating on my nerves.

Kartik Aaryan and Aarushi Sharma barely have dialogue, in *kal* and *aaj*, and yet they try to hold the film with some attempt at acting. But neither love nor their acting can save this meandering, dull banality.

**T**hough I enjoyed *Jab We Met*, and liked *Highway* to some extent, I have never been a fan of Imtiaz Ali and his worldview. But now, after *Love Aaj Kal*, I have developed deep contempt for his baby doll heroines who act out and throw tantrums all the time, and his indulgent, moronic filmmaking.

Somewhere in the middle of *Love Aaj Kal* sits a stand-up comic routine by one Justice Chaudhary who says that because the male members of cattle at his home are not into monogamy and don't wear any clothes, he too has decided to discard both, monogamy and clothes.

If you figure what that was about, do drop a line.

Else, please ignore the mighty producers of Bollywood who will pour in money for yet another banal *bakwas*, to sponsor some therapy sessions for Imtiaz Ali and help him grow up a little. And if they feel that ship has sailed, then the therapy could at least help him create female characters that don't have the IQ, emotions and mannerisms of eight-year-old girls.

Imtiaz Ali has a very uneasy relationship with grown women and that is visible in the way he has created the character of Zoe's mother, who has an opinion on like. Played by Simone Singh, this mommy wears her hair and expression like Mrs Addam from Addams Family and may have well arrived to the sets of *Love Aaj Kal* on a broom with a black conical hat.

**L**ove *Aaj Kal* isn't just an annoying, irritating film, it also moves at a glacial pace. At some point after interval, I tried to fixate my eyes on the head of the man sitting in front. Watching his hair grow was less excruciating than watching Imtiaz Ali's tantrum-throwing child-babe. If you were planning a movie for your Valentine's date, I'd say cleaning public latrines in the service of Swachhh Bharat would be more fun than watching this film.

## Roger Ebert's Great Movies



**THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**  
Released in 1925  
Review written on December 19, 2004

**I**t has always been a question whether *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) is a great film, or only a great spectacle. Carl Sandburg, one of the original reviewers, underwent a change of heart between his first *Chicago Daily News* review (he waited for the Phantom's unmasking "terribly fascinated, aching with suspense") and a reconsideration written a month later ("strictly among the novelties of the season"). It was not, he added on the level of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* or *Greed*, mentioning two of the greatest films of all time.

He was right about that, and could have added the greatest of all silent horror films, Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922), whose vampire may have influenced Lon Chaney's performance as the Phantom. But as an exercise in lurid sensationalism, straining against technical limitations in its eagerness to overwhelm, the first of the many Phantom films has a creepy, undeniable power.

The story is simply told — too simply, perhaps, so that all of the adaptations, including the famous Andrew Lloyd Webber musical, have been much ado about relatively little. In the cellars of the Paris Opera House lives a disfigured masked man who becomes obsessed with the young singer Christine. He commands the management to give her leading roles, and when they refuse, he exacts a terrible revenge, causing a great chandelier to crash down on the audience.

Christine's lover, a pallid nonentity, is little competition for her fascination with the Phantom, until she realises with horror that the creature wants her to dwell in his mad subterranean world. She unmasks him, is repelled by his hideous disfigurement, flees to the surface and her lover, and is followed by a Phantom seeking violent revenge. There is no room for psychological subtlety here.

It is the idea of the Phantom, really, that fascinates us: the idea of a cruelly mistreated man going mad in self-imposed exile in the very cellars, dungeons and torture chambers where he was, apparently, disfigured in the first place. His obsession with Christine reflects his desire to win back some joy from a world that has mistreated him. Leroux and his adapters have placed this sad creature in a bizarre subterranean space that has inspired generations of set designers.

There are five levels of cellars beneath the opera, one descending beneath another in an expressionist series of staircases, ramps, trapdoors, and a Styxian river that the Phantom crosses in a gondola. The Phantom has furnished his lair with grotesque fittings: He sleeps in a coffin and provides a bed for Christine in the shape of a whale boat. Remote controls give him warnings when anyone approaches and allow him to roast or drown his enemies.

To Christine, he offers wealth, luxury and opera stardom, and she is in no peril "as long as you do not touch the mask" — oh, and she must love him, or at least allow him to possess her (although his precise sexual plans are left undefined). Perhaps warned by the fate of the hero in her current production of *Faust*, she refuses this bargain, although for an engaged woman, she allows herself to be dangerously tempted.

After taking over the leading role from an ominously ill prima donna, she follows a mysterious voice, opens a secret door behind the mirror in her dressing room, descends through forbidding cellars, is taken semi-conscious by horseback and gondola deeper into the labyrinth and sees the coffin when she sleeps. At this point, her sudden cry of "You — you are the Phantom!" inspired me to write in my notes: "Duh!"

Her lover, the Viscount Raoul de Chagny, is likewise not a swift study. After the Phantom has presumably claimed dozens of victims with the falling chandelier and threatened Christine with death if she sees him again, Raoul agrees to meet her at the Masked Ball. This is held in the Opera House on the very next night, with the chandelier miraculously repaired and no mourning period, apparently, for the dozens of crushed and maimed. Christine tells Raoul the Phantom will murder them if they are seen together; but then, when a gaunt and spectral figure in red stalks imperiously into the grand hall, Raoul unmasks himself, which is, if you ask me, asking for trouble.

The Phantom's unmasking was one of the most famous moments in silent film. He is seated at his organ. "Now, when he is intent on the music," Sandburg wrote, "she comes closer, closer, her fingers steal towards the ribbon that fastens the mask. Her fingers give one final twitch — and there you are!" There you are, all right, as Chaney, "the Man of 1,000 Faces" and a master of makeup, unveils a defacement more grotesque than in any later version, his mouth a gaping cavern, his nose a void, his eyes widely staring. "Feast your eyes, glut your soul, on my accursed ugliness!"

The other famous scene involves the falling chandelier which became the centrepiece of the Webber musical and functions the same way in Joel Schumacher's 2004 film version. In the original film, it is curiously underplayed; it falls in impressive majesty, to be sure, but its results are hard to measure. Surely there are mangled bodies beneath it, but the movie stays its distance and then hurries on. Much more impressive is the Masked Ball sequence and its sequel on the roof of the opera house. The filmmakers (director Rupert Julien, replaced by Edward Sedgwick and assisted by Chaney) use primitive colour techniques to saturate the ball with brilliant scarlets and less obtrusive greens. Many scenes throughout the film are tinted, which was common enough in silent days.

*The Phantom of the Opera* is not a great film if you are concerned with art and subtlety, depth and message; *Nosferatu* is a world beyond it. But in its fevered melodrama and images of cadaverous romance, it finds a kind of show-biz majesty. And it has two elements of genius: It creates beneath the opera one of the most grotesque places in the cinema, and Chaney's performance transforms an absurd character into a haunting one.

## These birds take flight, and continue to soar

**Birds Of Prey (A) 109 min**  
**CAST:** Margot Robbie, Rosie Perez, Mary Elizabeth Winstead  
**DIRECTOR:** Cathy Yan  
**RATING:** ★★

CHRISTY LEMIRE

**M**argot Robbie is the most adorable sociopath you'd ever want to hang out and blow stuff up with in *Birds of Prey* (And the *Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn*).

The sour *Suicide Squad* gave us a little taste of the artiste formerly known as Harleen Quinzel in 2016, when she was the Joker's dutifully violent girlfriend; *Birds of Prey* offers a veritable smorgasbord of this DC Comics supervillain in all her charismatic, complicated glory. By detailing the character's origin story and establishing her own franchise, director Cathy Yan pulls off the tricky feat of blending elaborate action sequences with compelling character development, of transporting us to a richly specific Gotham City but sprinkling in just the right amount of pop-culture references, ranging from Bernie Sanders to Tweety Bird to Frida Kahlo.

From its lively and vibrant animated opening, Yan's film is a complete blast, filled with zippy energy and irresistible girl power. And Robbie, in her seemingly endless versatility, is up for every challenge in a role that's as demanding physically as it is verbally. She is positively infectious in the candy-coloured chaos she creates.

Robbie shines radiantly at the film's centre as the newly single Harley Quinn — whether she's rhapsodising about a hangover-curing bacon-and-egg breakfast sandwich or emerging from a

cloud of rainbow-coloured glitter and smoke in slow motion, a sly grin on her made-up face. But Robbie gets great help from a diverse and talented array of co-stars, including Junee Smollett-Bell, displaying serious action chops in the fierce, physical role of songstress Black Canary. The script from Christina Hodson (*Bumblebee*) is a muscular celebration of feminine strength, of women discovering and honing their powers to prop each other up in a world where men keep letting them down — or worse. These are ladies who will happily offer each other a hair tie before heading into battle together.

But after a thrilling first act with its self-referential humour, cheeky graphics and knowing narra-

tion, *Birds of Prey* drags in the middle as it jumps around in time and establishes the backstories for the various "birds" with whom Harley will team up eventually. This seems sort of inevitable when going through the motions of setting up new characters within a burgeoning franchise, but the downshift feels jarring compared to the fast-paced section that preceded it.

Besides Black Canary, the nightclub singer whose voice carries overpowering sonic waves, there's Mary Elizabeth Winstead as the amusingly stoic and socially awkward Huntress, who's spent her whole life training to exact revenge with a crossbow. Rosie Perez's Renee Montoya is a bit underdeveloped as a former

Gotham City police detective who's battling her demons even as she finds new purpose as a vigilante. And Ella Jay Basco brings a naturalism to the role of teenage pickpocket Cassandra Cain, who draws them all together when she steals the film's MacGuffin — a valuable diamond — from the head honcho to mob boss Roman Sionis, aka Black Mask (Ewan McGregor).

The glittery object that binds them to each other isn't as important as the newfound freedom they're all enjoying from the jobs, relationships and circumstances that held them down for too long. The title refers to Harley's emancipation but all five women get to

feel what it's like to blaze new trails on their own terms. The timing couldn't be more apt in this post-#MeToo era, and the tone of *Birds of Prey* feels like a welcome breath of hopeful air following last year's well-acted but self-serious *Joker*.

And the film is a consistent visual treat. Matthew Libatique, Darren Aronofsky's usual cinematographer, gives Gotham City a cool, smoky sheen, all the better to make the vibrancy of Harley's colours pop. Along those lines, the costume design from Erin Benach (*Drive*, *The Neon Demon*) is a complete kick, and not just for Harley in her wide array of playful, punk rock get-ups. Perez's Renee gets to wear a T-shirt that's so unapologetically profane, we can't repeat what it says here. And McGregor parades herself in aviators, jewel-toned velvet blazers and a collection of monogrammed gloves to protect his hands from all the dirty work he does. He seems to be having a ball.

Some of the song choices are a little painfully on the nose, though. Joan Jett & the Blackhearts' *I Hate Myself for Loving You* blares as Harley soothes herself after the *Joker* break-up by lazing on the couch in a onesie, squeezing easy cheese into her mouth and sobbing. Heart's *Barracuda* blasts during a climactic showdown between Harley and her crew vs Black Mask and the army of angry dudes he's assembled.

But Yan was wise to let the fight scenes play out rather than providing a false sense of energy by overly editing them, allowing us to appreciate all the athleticism and artistry the choreography demands. These birds truly do take flight, and they'll continue to soar.

By arrangement with Asia Features



# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020



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Kareena Kapoor is again playing a Punjabi girl in next film *Laal Singh Chaddha*



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Actress Tabu presents a creation by designer Gaurang during the Lakme Fashion Week 2020 Summer/Resort fashion show in Mumbai on Friday.

## Judge faints while dictating Nirbhaya case order in SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court judge Justice R. Banumathi on Friday momentarily fainted in her chair while she was dictating an order adjourning the hearing on the Centre's plea seeking separate hanging of three death row convicts in Nirbhaya case who have exhausted all their legal remedies and mercy petitions.

## Dr Kafeel slapped with stringent NSA

Lucknow: The stringent National Security Act has been slapped on Dr Kafeel Khan, who is lodged in Mathura jail, in connection with his anti-CAA speech at the Aligarh Muslim University. Mr Khan was arrested by the UP Special Task Force from Mumbai on January 29 for allegedly promoting enmity.

## Kanhaiya's convoy attacked near Arrah

Patna: Former JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar's convoy was attacked while he was travelling from Buxar to Arrah on Friday. This was the eighth attack in two weeks against Mr Kumar, who is leading a massive state-wide Jan Gan Man Yatra.

## Third Indian tests positive for corona on ship in Japan

The Indian embassy in Japan said on Friday that a third Indian crew member on board a cruise ship off the Japanese coast has tested positive for the novel coronavirus as authorities confirmed that total 218 people have been infected with the deadly virus on the quarantined ship. Two crew members, out of total 138 Indians on board the cruise ship Diamond Princess, were tested positive for the virus earlier.

## India may open poultry, dairy markets for US deal

New Delhi/Washington, Feb. 14: India has offered to partially open up its poultry and dairy markets in a bid for a limited trade deal during US President Donald Trump's first official visit to the country this month, people familiar with the protracted talks said.

## US official: Trump, Modi to outline next chapter of 'natural alliance'

Washington: When President Donald Trump travels to India this month to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the two leaders will outline an ambitious vision for the next chapter of the "natural alliance" between the two countries, according to a top American diplomat.

## US A-G blasts Trump, says his tweets making job 'impossible'

Washington, Feb. 14: US attorney-general Bill Barr on Thursday delivered a highly unusual public rebuke of Donald Trump, saying the President's tweets were making his job at the justice department "impossible."

# Tributes paid to martyrs; Rahul asks 'who benefited' A year later, Pulwama sets off a fresh Cong-BJP clash

AGE CORRESPONDENTS NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

Exactly a year after the Pulwama terrorist attack, which may have possibly swung the election towards the BJP, a bitter war of words broke out between the ruling side and the Opposition as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi asked "who had benefited from the strike", while the BJP accused him of being a "known sympathiser" of terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. The ruling party claimed the "so-called Gandhi family can never think beyond benefits", and that they were not just "materialistically corrupt, their souls are also corrupt".

Earlier, paying homage to martyrs of the attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country will never forget the martyrdom of the security personnel killed in last year's attack and said the slain security-men were "exceptional individuals" who devoted their lives to serving and protecting the nation.

Last year, on February 14, a convoy of vehicles carrying security personnel on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway was attacked by a vehicle-borne suicide bomber at Lethpora in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. While paying tribute to the CRPF martyrs,

Today as we remember our 40 CRPF martyrs in the #PulwamaAttack, let us ask: 1. Who benefitted the most from the attack? 2. What is the outcome of the inquiry into the attack? 3. Who in the BJP Govt has yet been held accountable for the security lapses that allowed the attack?

— Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader

That was a dastardly attack. And this is a dastardly comment. Who Benefitted the most? Mr Gandhi can you think beyond benefits? Of course not. This so-called 'Gandhi' family can never think beyond benefits. Not just materialistically corrupt, their souls are also corrupt.

— Sambit Patra, BJP spokesperson

Congress' Rahul Gandhi raised questions on accountability for the attack. "Today, as we remember our 40 CRPF martyrs in the #PulwamaAttack, let us ask: 1. Who benefitted the most from the attack? 2. What is the outcome of the inquiry into the attack? 3. Who in the BJP Govt has yet been held accountable for the security lapses that allowed the attack?" he tweeted. The BJP was quick to hit back at the Congress leader for his "dastardly comment", saying he was insulting the memory of the CRPF personnel, and sought an apology from him and his party.

"That was a dastardly attack. And this is a dastardly comment. Who benefitted the most? Mr Gandhi, can you think beyond benefits? Of course not. This so-called 'Gandhi' family can never think beyond benefits. Not just materialistically corrupt, their souls are also corrupt."

# Kejri invites PM to swearing-in, but it's unclear if he'll attend After Delhi victory, AAP plans to fight local body polls nationwide

SANJAY KAW NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

After its landslide victory in the Delhi Assembly polls, the Aam Aadmi Party has decided to contest elections to local bodies across the country as part of an ambitious plan to expand its footprint beyond the national capital.

Senior AAP leader Gopal Rai said the party has called a meeting of its national executive on Sunday to deliberate on expanding the party by projecting its "positive nationalism". The meeting, to be held after AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and his Cabinet takes the oath in the morning, will decide the future course



Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal meets veteran writer-lyricist Javed Akhtar at his residence in New Delhi. AAP leader Sanjay Singh is also seen.

of action for the party. Mr Kejriwal has also invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his swearing-in ceremony on Sunday at the Ramlila Maidan, where the former will take the oath as

Delhi chief minister for the third time. It is, however, not clear whether the Prime Minister will attend the swearing-in ceremony as he is due to travel to Varanasi, his parliamentary con-

stituency, on Sunday to inaugurate over 30 projects.

After the oath-taking ceremony, the AAP is set to launch a massive campaign to increase its volunteer base across the country. Mr Rai, a minister in the outgoing Kejriwal government, said people will be able to join the AAP's "nation building campaign" by giving a missed call on the phone number 9871010101.

Mr Rai said: "We will fight local body elections in other states also. We will be focusing on a few states as well. The decision on the same will be taken on February 16. In future, we will also focus

# India may open poultry, dairy markets for US deal

New Delhi/Washington, Feb. 14: India has offered to partially open up its poultry and dairy markets in a bid for a limited trade deal during US President Donald Trump's first official visit to the country this month, people familiar with the protracted talks said.

India, the world's largest milk-producing nation, has traditionally restricted dairy imports to protect the livelihoods of 80 million rural households involved in the industry. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to pull all the stops for the US President's February 24-25 visit, aimed at rebuilding bonds between the world's largest democracies. In 2019, Mr Trump suspended India's special trade designation that dated back to the 1970s, after Mr Modi put price caps on medical devices, like cardiac stents and knee implants, and introduced new data localisation norms and e-commerce restrictions.

Mr Trump's trip to India has raised hopes that he will restore some of the country's US trade preferences, in exchange for tariff reductions and other concessions. The US is India's second-largest trade partner after China, and bilateral goods and services trade climbed to a record \$142.6 billion in 2018. The US had a \$23.2 billion goods trade deficit in 2019 with India, its ninth largest trading part-

ner in goods. India has offered to allow imports of US chicken legs, turkey and produce such as blueberries. India may open poultry, dairy markets for US trade deal and cherries, Indian government sources said, and offered to cut tariffs on legs from 100 per cent to 25 per cent. US negotiators want that tariff cut to 10 per cent. The Modi government is also offering to

# US official: Trump, Modi to outline next chapter of 'natural alliance'

Washington: When President Donald Trump travels to India this month to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the two leaders will outline an ambitious vision for the next chapter of the "natural alliance" between the two countries, according to a top

American diplomat. Commenting on Mr Trump's maiden visit to India, acting assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia, Alice G. Wells, said the US President and Prime Minister Modi enjoyed a very special rapport.



British PM Boris Johnson gestures as he speaks during his first Cabinet meeting after a reshuffle the day before, at 10 Downing Street in London on Friday. On his left is Rishi Sunak, the new chancellor of the exchequer who replaced Sajid Javid.

# US A-G blasts Trump, says his tweets making job 'impossible'

Washington, Feb. 14: US attorney-general Bill Barr on Thursday delivered a highly unusual public rebuke of Donald Trump, saying the President's tweets were making his job at the justice department "impossible."

"I have a problem with some of the tweets," Mr Barr said in an interview with ABC News, adding: "I cannot do my job here at the department with a constant background commentary that undercuts me."

His interview came as Trump stands accused of interfering with the sentencing recommendation for his former advisor, Roger Stone — prompting four Justice Department prosecutors to resign from the case this week. The outburst was all the more remarkable as Barr has emerged as a powerful defender of Mr Trump, earning the nickname of the "president's attorney" from critics. He has been at the center of allegations that he decided — allegedly under pressure from Trump — to overrule his own prosecutors and seek a lighter prison sentence for Stone.

## WINDOWS



Actress Tabu presents a creation by designer Gaurang during the Lakme Fashion Week 2020 Summer/Resort fashion show in Mumbai on Friday.

## Judge faints while dictating Nirbhaya case order in SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court judge Justice R. Banumathi on Friday momentarily fainted in her chair while she was dictating an order adjourning the hearing on the Centre's plea seeking separate hanging of three death row convicts in Nirbhaya case who have exhausted all their legal remedies and mercy petitions.

## Dr Kafeel slapped with stringent NSA

Lucknow: The stringent National Security Act has been slapped on Dr Kafeel Khan, who is lodged in Mathura jail, in connection with his anti-CAA speech at the Aligarh Muslim University. Mr Khan was arrested by the UP Special Task Force from Mumbai on January 29 for allegedly promoting enmity.

## Kanhaiya's convoy attacked near Arrah

Patna: Former JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar's convoy was attacked while he was travelling from Buxar to Arrah on Friday. This was the eighth attack in two weeks against Mr Kumar, who is leading a massive state-wide Jan Gan Man Yatra.

## Third Indian tests positive for corona on ship in Japan

The Indian embassy in Japan said on Friday that a third Indian crew member on board a cruise ship off the Japanese coast has tested positive for the novel coronavirus as authorities confirmed that total 218 people have been infected with the deadly virus on the quarantined ship. Two crew members, out of total 138 Indians on board the cruise ship Diamond Princess, were tested positive for the virus earlier.

## India may open poultry, dairy markets for US deal

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## US A-G blasts Trump, says his tweets making job 'impossible'

Washington, Feb. 14: US attorney-general Bill Barr on Thursday delivered a highly unusual public rebuke of Donald Trump, saying the President's tweets were making his job at the justice department "impossible."



CRPF personnel stand guard at the spot where deadly 2019 Pulwama terror attack took place at Lethpora of Pulwama District in South Kashmir on Friday.

## SC seeks J&K govt reply on Sara's plea for Omar's release

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the J&K government on a plea by Sara Abdullah Pilot challenging invoking of the Public Safety Act for the continued detention of her brother, former J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah. Mr Abdullah was detained on August 4-5, 2019, shortly before the abrogation of Article 370 and the subsequent bifurcation of J&K into two Union territories.

Issuing notice to the J&K government, a bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Indira Banerjee directed further hearing of the matter on March 2, as senior counsel Kapil Sibal urged the court it was a habeas corpus plea and an early date may be given. Not acceding to the request, Justice Mishra said you are coming so long after being detained. It is Sara Abdullah Pilot, sister of Omar Abdullah, who has moved the habeas corpus petition and challenged the invoking of the PSA, Mr Sibal told the court.

The matter came up Friday before Justices Mishra and Banerjee as Justice Mohan M. Shantanahoudar, who was a part of the bench hearing the matter, had earlier recused himself on Wednesday.

## SC warns telcos of contempt for not paying dues

DoT official's 'temerity' angers judges

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Supreme Court on Friday threatened contempt proceedings against top executives of telecom giants like Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and others for failing to comply with its directive to pay an estimated ₹1.47 lakh crores in past dues. In a judgment which will have far-reaching implications for the telecom sector, the court also expressed its displeasure at the "temerity" of a desk officer in the department of telecom for "scuttling" its order by issuing a written directive to not take any coercive action against firms for not depositing dues by the January 23, 2020 deadline.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, S. Abdul Nazeer and M.R. Shah said the companies have violated its order and asked them to clear the dues before the next date of hearing on March 17. "In spite of the dismissal of the review application (filed by the telcos), they have not deposited any amount so far. It appears the way in which things are happening that they have scant

respect for the directions issued by this court," they said in the judgment. Separate petitions filed by non-telecom firms such as gas utility GAIL and power transmission firm PowerGrid, who were slapped with a demand of Rs 2.65 lakh crores by the DoT, were withdrawn by the applicants after the court said they can represent their case at appropriate forms.

After the Supreme Court rap, the department of telecom withdrew its January 23, 2020 order that called for no coercive action against defaulting firms and started issuing notices to telcos asking them to deposit dues before midnight of Friday. While Airtel said it will

### WEATHER

Max: 25°C  
Min: 11°C  
RH: 40%  
Rainfall: 0%

Forecast: Sunny

### ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Magha Bahula Saptami till 4.34 pm  
Star: Vishaka till 5.08 am (Sunday)  
Varjyam: From 11.24 am to 12.57 pm  
Durmuhurtam: From 6.46 am to 8.18 am  
Rahukalam: From 9 am to 10.30 am  
SUNSET TODAY 6.10 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.59 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.50 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 11.15 PM



SHORT TAKES

**KERALA MULLING OVER LAW ON SUPERSTITION**

GILVESTER ASSARY  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
FEB. 14

The Kerala government has been contemplating to bring a Bill for effectively curbing superstition, practices like sorcery and exorcism. The draft proposal is currently under consideration of Law Reforms Commission. The Kerala Exploitation by Superstition (Prevention) Act drafted and proposed by home department, warranted stringent punishment against those responsible for spreading superstition and putting people's lives in danger. The punishment ranges from three years to capital punishment. The CPI which is second biggest ally in ruling LDF, wants the process to be expedited and the law passed this year itself.

Karnataka and Maharashtra had passed similar legislation earlier. Though the Left parties had promised to bring the law after coming to power in 2016, four years have passed and things have not moved at the desired pace. CPI state secretary Kanam Rajendran said the demand will be raised on February 20 which is also the martyrdom day of Gobind Pansare, an anti-superstition activist who was killed by hardline right wing group in Kolhapur in 2015. Many rationalists say despite high literacy rate, social and political consciousness, sorcery and exorcism are rampant in Kerala. There have been several cases of deaths under mysterious circumstances linked to people indulging in occult practices.

**VILLAGER KILLED ALONG LOC**

**Jammu:** A villager was killed and four others were injured on Friday when Pakistani troops engaged in heavy mortar shelling and firing on civilian areas and forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said. Pakistan Army troops launched mortar shells and fired from small arms on villages and forward posts in Shahpur and Kerni areas of the district in violation of a ceasefire agreement, they said. Pakistan troops used 120-mm mortars to target the villages, they said. In the firing and shelling, one civilian was killed and four other villagers were injured, they said. The injured have been taken to a hospital, they said. Indian troops guarding the border retaliated befittingly resulting in an exchange of fire, which continued till reports last came in, they said. Meanwhile, officials said on Friday that terror-related violence in Jammu and Kashmir has come down by 60 per cent in less than one and a half months in the beginning of 2020, in comparison to the same period last year. The information was conveyed by director general of police, Jammu and Kashmir, Dilbagh Singh who called on Union Minister Jitendra Singh in the national capital.

**STUDENTS MADE TO STRIP IN GUJARAT COLLEGE**

**New Delhi:** The National Commission for Women has set up an inquiry committee which will meet the students of a college in Gujarat who were reportedly forced to strip to prove that they were not menstruating. According to media reports, 68 undergraduate hostellers were paraded through the college into the restroom and forced to individually remove their undergarments to prove that they were not menstruating. The Commission has also sought an explanation from the trustee of Sahjanand Girls' Institute College, Pravin Pindora and the principal Rita Raniga for this "shameful exercise", an NCW statement said. The NCW has set up an inquiry team, which will meet the girls of the institute and inquire about the incident. "NCW has also apprised the Kutch University in-charge Vice Chancellor Darshna Dholakia and the DGP of Gujarat, Shivanand Jha (IPS) to look into the matter thoroughly and report to the Commission at the earliest on their action taken report," the statement added. — PTI

**Up in arms**



Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union president Aishe Ghosh raises slogans during her visit to show solidarity to Muslim women and their family members, who have been protesting against CAA, NRC and NPR for over a month, at Park Circus Maidan in Kolkata on Friday. — PTI

**Nirbhaya case: SC judge faints in courtroom**

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

Supreme Court judge Justice R. Banumathi on Friday momentarily fainted in her chair while she was dictating an order adjourning the hearing on the Centre's plea seeking separate hanging of three death row convicts in Nirbhaya case who have exhausted all their legal remedies and mercy petitions. While dictating the order adjourning the hearing till February 20, Justice Banumathi became motionless and tilted towards her right but regained her composure as court staff escorted her to chamber.

The bench headed by Justice Banumathi is holding repeated hearing of the Nirbhaya case on one ground or the other. After the rejection of the curative petitions by the convicts, the court is now, one after the other, is hearing challenge to the rejection of mercy petitions by the President.

The court is also hearing Centre and Delhi government's plea for the separate hanging of the Nirbhaya convicts who have exhausted all their legal remedies. Justice Banumathi and Justice Bhushan were also part of the bench then headed by Justice Dipak Misra (who later became CJI and since retired) which had heard and upheld the Delhi High Court verdict confirming the award of death sentence by the trial court.

The court adjourned the hearing for February 20 after it was informed that the trial court has fixed

**CLEARING THE WAY** for execution of Vinay Sharma, one of the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case, the Supreme Court dismissed his plea against the rejection of his mercy petition by the President

February 17 for hearing Centre and Delhi government's application seeking issuance of fresh death warrants.

The bench comprising Justice Banumathi, Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice A.S.Bopanna later passed the order in chamber. While deferring further hearing to February 20, it made it clear that "the pendency of the petitions (before it) may not be treated as an impediment for the trial court to consider the matter on its own merit."

Clearing the way for execution of Vinay Sharma, one of the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case, the Supreme Court on Friday dismissed his plea against the rejection of his mercy petition by the President.

The top court refused to accept Sharma's contention that the President did not apply his mind while rejecting the mercy plea and it was done in a "mala fide" manner. "When the highest constitutional authority, upon perusal of the note and the various documents placed along with mercy petition, has taken a decision to reject the mercy petition, it cannot be contended that the highest constitutional authority had not applied its mind to the documents," the Supreme Court said.

**SC notice to J&K on plea by sister for Omar's release**

Top court fixes March 2 for next hearing on plea by Sara

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from J&K government on a plea by Sara Abdullah Pilot challenging invoking of Public Safety Act for the continued detention of her brother and former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Omar Abdullah was detained on August 4, 2019, shortly before the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and subsequent bifurcation of the J&K into Union Territories. Issuing notice to the J&K government, a bench of Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Indira Banerjee directed the further hearing of the matter on March 2 even as senior counsel Kapil Sibal urged the court that it was a habeas corpus plea and an early date may be given.

Not acceding to the request by Sibal, Justice Mishra said that "you are coming after so long after being detained."

It is Sara Abdullah — the sister of Omar Abdullah — who has moved the habeas corpus petition and has challenged the invoking of PSA against former Chief Minister, Sibal told the court.

Sibal clarified that the petitioner Sara Abdullah has challenged the further detaining Omar Abdullah under the PSA and prior to the invoking of the Public Safety Act, the former Chief Minister was detained under Section 107 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Section 107 of the CrPC provides for steps to be taken by magistrate for keeping peace. In response to a poser from the court whether any matter relating to Omar Abdullah's detention was pending before the J&K high court, Mr Sibal said that there was none relating Omar Abdullah.

The matter on Friday came before the bench of Justice Mishra and Justice Banerjee as Justice Mohan M. Shantanahoudar who was part of the bench comprising Justice N.V. Ramana and Justice Sanjiv Khanna had earlier recused himself from participating in the matter on Wednesday.

Omar Abdullah, his father and former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and other senior Kashmiri leaders are under detention since August 4-5. Sara Abdullah in her petition has contended that there could not be any material for further detaining a person who is already under detention for last six months.

She has also sought quashing of the February 5, 2020, order detaining Omar Abdullah under the PSA. Describing detention as "illegal", Sara Abdullah in her petition has said, "The grounds for the detention order are wholly lacking any material facts or particulars which are imperative for an order of detention."

**PM to launch 30 projects in Varanasi tomorrow**

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Prime Minister will visit his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi on Sunday, where he would inaugurate over 30 projects, including a 430-bed super-specialty government hospital.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, Mr Modi would flag off IRCTC's 'Maha Kaal Express' through a video link.

The first overnight private train in the country will connect three Jyotirling pilgrim centres of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, and Ujjain and Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh.

The Prime Minister would also dedicate to the nation the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Memorial Centre and unveil a 63-foot tall statue of the RSS ideologue.

The PMO said it would be the tallest statue of the

**The Prime Minister would also dedicate to the nation the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Memorial Centre and unveil a 63-foot tall statue of the RSS ideologue**

leader in the country. Over 200 artisans worked day and night for the last one year to complete the structure.

The memorial centre will have the engravings of the life and times of Upadhyaya. Around 30 craftsmen and artists from Odisha worked on the project during the past year.

Later, the Prime Minister will attend a public function, where he would dedicate over 30 projects to the nation. These include a 430-bed super-specialty government hospital at Banaras Hindu University and a 74-bed psychiatry hospi-

tal, also at the university. Mr Modi would inaugurate a two-day "Kashi Ek Roop Anek" event at Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Hastakala Sankul showcasing products from all over Uttar Pradesh. He would also interact with buyers and artisans coming from countries, including the United States, England and Australia.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to participate in the closing ceremony of the centenary celebrations of Shri Jagadguru Vishwaradhya Gurukul and would release the translated version of the Shri Siddhant Shikhamani Granth in 19 languages and its mobile application.

According to officials in Varanasi, PM Modi will address a public rally and inaugurate Chowkaghat-Lehartara over-bridge. He would also inaugurate the Vedic Science Centre at BHU.

**Convoy of Kanhaiya's attacked near Bihar's Arrah**

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, FEB. 14

Former JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar's convoy was attacked while he was travelling from Buxar to Arrah on Friday.

This was the eighth attack in two weeks against Kanhaiya Kumar, who is leading a massive state-wide Jan Gan Man Yatra against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Sources said prior to reaching the venue in Arrah a group of youth chanting pro-CAA slogans began pelting stones at his convoy. However, no one is said to be injured in the attack. Activists travelling with Kanhaiya Kumar said that slogans raised by the mob during the attack indicate that they belong to a particular ideology.

"We are not bothered by such attacks and Kanhaiya Kumar will continue with his tour. It is clear that the BJP is rattled by the response Kanhaiya has been receiving from people of Bihar", activists travelling with Kanhaiya Kumar said.

The state-wide 'Jan Gan Man Yatra' which began on December 30 from Bhittharwa Gandhi Ashram in West Champaran is scheduled to conclude with a rally on the theme "nagrikta bachao, desh bachao" (Save Citizenship, save the country) in Patna on February 29.

Left leaders in Patna on Friday condemned continuous attacks on Kanhaiya Kumar's anti-CAA tour.



Sara Abdullah Pilot

**'All Kashmiris should have same rights as other citizens'**

**New Delhi, Feb. 14:** Sara Abdullah Pilot, sister of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah, on Friday said all Kashmiris should have the same rights as other citizens of the country.

Talking to reporters after hearing on her petition challenging Abdullah's detention under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in the Supreme Court, Sara said she was hopeful of an early hearing as it was "a habeas corpus case and the relief would be sooner."

She said that she and her family had full faith in the justice system. "We are here because we want all Kashmiris should have the same rights as the citizens of India and we are waiting for that day," she said and did not take any further questions from journalists.

Earlier, the Supreme Court issued a notice to the Jammu and Kashmir administration on the plea challenging Abdullah's detention under the Public Safety Act. — PTI



In this undated photo, Sitaram, a monk, plays a psalm as sloth bears gather around him in Shadol district of Madhya Pradesh. Sitaram claimed that the bears appear from the forests to listen to his hymn and to-date have caused no harm to anyone. — PTI

**400-metre-long, 7-feet-high wall being built in Ahmedabad**

**Another wall comes up for Trump**

**Ahmedabad, Feb. 14:** US President Donald Trump will be shielded from the sight of slums by a newly built wall when he visits the city of Ahmedabad during a visit to India later this month.

Construction workers build a wall along a slum area as part of a beautification drive along a route that U.S. President and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be taking during Trump's visit later this month. A senior government official said the wall was being built for security reasons, not to conceal the slum district. But the contractor building it said the government "did not want the slum to be seen" when Trump passes by on the ride in from Ahmedabad's airport. "I've been ordered to build a wall as soon as possible, over 150 masons are working round-the-



Workers construct a wall in front of a slum ahead of President Donald Trump's visit in Ahmedabad. — PTI

clock to finish the project," the contractor said, speaking on condition of anonymity. The government official conceded that the wall was part of a "beautification and cleanliness" drive. Whatever the reason, the 400-metre-long and seven-feet-high wall will prevent the U.S. leader from getting a glimpse of a slum district that houses an estimated 800 families. Trump, who has made his pledge to build a wall along the United States' border with Mexico a feature of his presidency, will visit India on Feb. 24-25 to reaffirm strategic ties that have been buffeted by trade disputes. He is expected to attend an event dubbed "Kem

Chho Trump" (How are you, Trump?) at a stadium in Ahmedabad along the lines of the "Howdy Modi" extravaganza he hosted for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Houston last September.

Speaking at the White House on Tuesday, Trump quoted Modi as saying "millions and millions of people" would attend the rally.

The event provides Trump, who was impeached in December, with the opportunity to woo the support of hundreds of thousands of Indian-American voters ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November. But some slum dwellers whose homes will be cordoned off by the wall in Ahmedabad—the largest city in Modi's home state of Gujarat—said the government was wasting taxpayer money to hide the poverty. "Poverty and slums are

the reality of our life, but Modi's government wants to hide the poor," said Parvathai Mafabhai, a day worker who has lived there with his family for more than three decades.

Meanwhile, the Congress on Friday alleged that the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) is constructing the wall to keep the slum colony, where people live in poverty, out of sight of the US President.

Gujarat Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi said, "The BJP government and the AMC are trying their best to hide reality from Trump. Instead of alleviating poverty, the ruling dispensation is hiding the poor by building a wall. Such tactics of hiding poor people were also used when Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the city in 2014. This is very unfortunate." — PTI

**Senior BJP leaders in Karnataka upset**

B. ARAVINDA SHETTY  
BENGALURU, FEB. 14

Cabinet expansion and the allocation of portfolios to newly appointed ministers has upset many BJP old-timers and senior ministers in the B.S.Yediyurappa government. The new ministers were all earlier in the Congress and JD(S) and had played a pivotal role in toppling the previous H.D. Kumaraswamy government. To placate the sulking ministers and party loyalists who are MLAs, Chief Minister B.S.Yediyurappa and party state president Nalin Kumar Kateel have called a legislature party meeting on February 16. However the party maintains that the meeting has been called in view of the joint session which will commence from Monday, to discuss floor management and other important issues coming up in the session. Senior leaders including

MLAs like Umesh Katti, S.A. Ramdas, Tippenwamy and S. Angara have openly expressed their anger against the chief minister for not inducting them into the Cabinet. Some party functionaries are also upset with the CM for allotting plum portfolios to the new ministers, sources said. At the legislature party meeting, the upset MLAs are likely to raise the neglect of party loyalists while forming the government and will insist on accommodating long-time BJP workers in the boards and corporations. Some senior ministers are upset that they had to give up prime portfolios to the newly inducted ministers with ministers K.S. Eshwarappa, Jagadish Shettar, R. Ashok, C.T.Ravi and Basvaraj Bommai not happy with the chief minister for succumbing to the pressure of the new entrants.

IN BRIEF

CBI, ED files status report in Aircel case

New Delhi: The Enforcement Direct-orate (ED) and CBI Friday submitted their status re-ports in the Aircel-Maxis case, involving former finance minister P. Chidambaram and his son Ka-rti, before a Delhi court. While the ED submitted its report in a sealed envelope and informed the court that "active investigation is underway in the matter", the CBI informed that "Letters Rogatory (LR)" has been sent to Malaysia and the response is awaited. Letters Rogatory (LR) is a formal request from a court of a sovereign nation to a court of another sovereign nation for judicial assistance in a case. On January 28, the court revived the Aircel-Maxis cases filed by the CBI and ED against Mr Chidambaram and his son that were earlier adjourned "sine die". District Judge Sujata Kohli put up the matter for further hearing on February 20. Additional solicitor general Sanjay Jain submitted the status report of the ED investigation in a sealed cover.

Bangla nationals held for forgery

Bhopal: Three Bangladeshi nationals including two women were on Friday arrested in Indore in Madhya Pradesh on charges of forgery and staying in India illegally. The three Bangladeshis' identity came to fore following their detention by police in connection with the abduction of one Anil Pal, a staff of a local school in Indore. "Three of the four people arrested by police were found to be Bangladeshis who were living here illegally. We have reported the matter to the Centre," deputy inspector general of police, Indore range, Ruchi Vardhan Mishra told reporters. The police investigation has revealed that Begum Khatoun alias Megha Verma, a Bangladeshi national, was staying illegally in Indore by making passport with the help of a forged marksheet.

CBI starts probe into postal scam

New Delhi: The CBI has begun a probe against 12 officials of the postal department who had allegedly siphoned off over ₹11 crore from depositors' accounts through 1,297 sham transactions between 2015 and 2019, officials said on Friday. A postal agent has also been booked by the agency who had connived with the officials to withdraw money from several post office depositors' accounts, they said. The alleged racket involving 12 postal department officials ranging from post master to postal assistant continued unabated for four years at Varanasi Cantonment Head Office till anomalies were detected in a vigilance inquiry. — PTI

SPEAKER ISSUES NOTICE TO 11 AIADMK MLAS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday was informed that the Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker P. Dhanapal has issued notices to 11 AIADMK MLAs on a petition seeking their disqualification for voting against the confidence motion moved by the Chief Minister E. Palaniswami in February 2017. The court was informed on Friday that Speaker had issued notice to 11 MLAs including deputy chief minister O. Panneerselvam on February 13, 2020. Noting the statement by the Tamil Nadu advocate general Vijay Narayan that the Speaker had issued notice on the petition seeking disqualification of 11 MLAs on February 13, a bench headed by the Chief Justice S. A. Bobde disposed of the plea by DMK seeking direction to Speaker to act on the 2017 petitions seeking the disqualifications of 11 AIADMK, including Mr Panneerselvam. The court on Friday refused to pass an order, asking the Speaker for an early conclusion of proceedings. The top court in the last hearing of the matter asked the Speaker Dhanapal to inform whether he was going to take cognisance of petition seeking disqualification of 11 AIADMK MLAs including Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam.

Kafeel Khan slapped with NSA

Action taken in connection with anti-CAA speech at Aligarh Muslim University

Lucknow, Feb. 14: The stringent National Security Act (NSA) has been slapped on Dr Kafeel Khan, who is lodged in Mathura jail, in connection with his anti-CAA speech at the Aligarh Muslim University. Dr Khan was arrested by the UP Special Task Force from Mumbai on January 29 for allegedly promoting enmity between different religions through the speech he had delivered during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) at AMU on December 12. "NSA has been slapped

on Dr Kafeel. He will remain in jail," Aligarh senior superintendent of police (SSP) Akash Kulhari to PTI over phone. In Aligarh, District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh told reporters that Kafeel Khan's speech at AMU was instrumental in triggering violent incidents at the university on December 13 and 15. "We had apprehensions that after his release on bail, Dr Kafeel Khan would have caused more law and order issues in the state," the district magistrate said. Criticising his detention

Dr Khan was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force from Mumbai on January 29. Under the stringent law, Dr Khan's brother Adil Khan said the government wanted him to "remain quiet". The NSA allows preventive detention for several months if the authorities believe the person is a threat to national security or law and order. Dr Khan is currently lodged in Mathura jail

despite bail granted to him by a court in the case, registered against him at the Civil Lines police station in Aligarh for promoting enmity between different religions. Adil Khan said, "The government is trying to silence my brother. A few days ago, during a programme on a TV news channel, he had revealed that at BRD Medical College (Gorakhpur), many children are dying daily but the government is hiding the facts and data." "The (Mathura) jail was about to release him on Friday at 6 am. My brother

Kashif along with the lawyer reached the jail but by 9 am police presence at the jail was increased and we were told verbally by jail authorities that the NSA has been invoked on him," Adil Khan said. After his arrest in Mumbai, Dr Khan was brought to Aligarh, from where he was immediately shifted to the district jail in neighbouring Mathura. According to the police, this was done as a precautionary measure in view of the anti-CAA protests on the AMU campus and at the Eidgah grounds. — PTI

Assam ex-rebels to face music for unlawful actions

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, FEB. 14

In a significant move, the state government in consultation with the ministry of home affairs has decided that surrendered militants indulging in any unlawful and anti-social activities will be excluded from the proposed comprehensive relief and rehabilitation policy of the government. Pointing out that the government has already started the process of framing a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation policy for more than 1,600 surrendered cadres of the four factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), security sources said that the proposed relief and rehabilitation policy would be formulated by the state home department in consultation with the Assam police and leaders of all the four factions of the NDFB and other stakeholders. Admitting that even after the surrender of NDFB cadres in large numbers, there is apprehension in security circles that surrendered mil-

Militants who come overground for talks with the government would get ₹6,000 each

itants are holding back illegal arms, security sources said that police have been asked to keep a close watch on the activities of surrendered militants. Referring the instance of past when surrendered militants were found to have been involved in various anti-social activities with their illegal sophisticated weapons, security sources said, "We have made it clear that surrendered militants indulging in anti-social activities would not be eligible for getting the benefit of the comprehensive relief and rehabilitation scheme of the government." According to new rehabilitation scheme of the Centre, the militants who come overground for talks with the government would get ₹6,000 each as a monthly stipend and an additional incentive if they deposit arms and ammunition depending on the weapon that they deposit.

India & Portugal ink 7 pacts after Modi-Sousa talks

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held talks with visiting Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa after which the two countries inked seven pacts including in the fields of maritime transport and port development, industrial and intellectual property rights, training for diplomats, and investment for start-ups.

Seven other Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were announced between Indian and Portuguese entities including in the field of production of drones, aeronautics, nano-biotechnology, start-ups for women entrepreneurs and yoga. The Portuguese President is on a state visit to India from February 13-16 on the invitation of President Ram Nath Kovind. The Portuguese President held delegation level talks with Mr Modi at Hyderabad House in the capital. He will also travel to the states of Maharashtra and Goa on Saturday and Sunday. The pacts signed were "Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation for Setting Up a National Maritime Museum Heritage Complex in Lothal (Gujarat) between the Portuguese ministry of defence and Indian ministry of shipping, MOU between Economic and Food Safety Authority



Prime Minister Narendra Modi shakes hands with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa at Hyderabad House on Friday. — PTI

(ASAE) and DPIIT, ministry of commerce or co-operation in the field of industrial and intellectual property rights, agreement on Audio-Visual Co-production between India and Portugal, MoU between Portuguese Diplomatic Institute and Foreign Service Institute for training, Co-operation Agreement on Maritime Transport and Port Development between India and Portugal, Joint Declaration on India and Portugal Mobility Partnership, and MOU between Invest India and Start-Up Portugal. Other pacts announced were "MOU between Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) and Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon for co-operation in strategic and security areas.

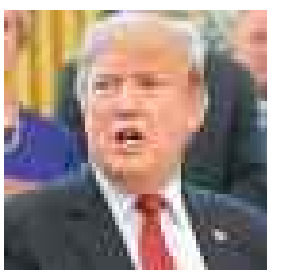


Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman interacts with the staff and officers of the Budget division and Budget press, at a high tea session, in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

'Trump, PM will outline next chapter of alliance'

Washington, Feb. 14: When President Donald Trump travels to India this month to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the two leaders will outline an ambitious vision for the next chapter of the "natural alliance" between the two countries, according to a top American diplomat.

President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump will pay a state visit to India on February 24 and 25 at the invitation of Prime Minister Modi, it was announced this week. In addition to New Delhi, Mr Trump will also visit Ahmedabad to address a joint public meeting with Mr Modi at a newly-built stadium. Commenting on Mr Trump's maiden visit to India, acting assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia,



Donald Trump

Alice G. Wells, said the US president and prime minister Modi enjoyed a very special rapport. "President Trump is eager to travel to India to make his mark on this very important relationship," she said on Thursday at a reception hosted by US India Business Council in honour of the new Indian Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu. "We are approaching an important inflection point in the US-India

relationship," Wells said. "When President Trump and Prime Minister Modi meet later this month in front of thousands of roaring fans, they're going to outline an ambitious vision for the next chapter of this natural alliance," Ms Wells said. She reminded the American business community that it was two decades ago that the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee described India and the US as "natural allies". "This year also marks the 20th anniversary of Prime Minister Vajpayee's historic visit to Washington during which he invoked that famous phrase, natural allies. We have come such a long way over the last two decades and are turning that vision into a reality," Ms Wells said. — PTI

Sharad Yadav should be face of Bihar alliance: RLSP, HAM

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, FEB. 14

With Assembly elections slated to be held later this year, the grand alliance in Bihar faces a daunting task of resolving the leadership issue. Three political parties Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP), Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) have created a flutter in the political circle by proposing the name of veteran socialist leader Sharad Yadav as the face of the grand alliance for the Assembly elections. Leaders aware of the development said that

both RJD and Congress were not invited for the meeting, which was attended by Upendra Kushwaha, Jitan Ram Manjhi and Mukesh Sahani on Friday. "In the absence of Lalu Yadav, the grand alliance has been facing a leadership crisis. It would be beneficial for all of us if we project veteran socialist leader Sharad Yadav as the face of the coalition," RLSP leaders in Patna said. The proposal made by these political parties is being seen as a major setback for the RJD, which leads the grand alliance. Sources said that Upendra Kushwaha,

Jitan Ram Manjhi and Mukesh Sahani have been miffed over RJD's decision to declare Tejashwi Yadav as the chief ministerial candidate without consulting grand alliance partners. "Decision taken during the meeting will be announced on Saturday by Sharad Yadav. We have also decided to hold another round of meeting later this month to discuss strategies for the state elections," HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi said on Friday. Sharad Yadav, after parting ways with JD(U) in 2018, had contested 2019 Lok Sabha polls on RJD symbol.

Karti allowed by SC to travel to France

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Supreme Court on Friday permitted Congress Lok Sabha member Karti Chidambaram to go to London and France to attend the international tennis tournament being played from February 17 to 23, 2020. The International Tennis Tournament, AFT Open will be played at Marseille, France from February 17 to February 23, 2020. Mr Chidambaram in his application has said that as a tennis player himself, he is associated with the sport.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S. A. B o b d e permitted Chidambaram's plea to go abroad from February 14 to 28, 2020, saddled with the conditions that the court had earlier imposed while permitting him to travel out of the country. This includes depositing with the top court registry a security of ₹10 crore. Chidambaram is one of the accused in INX Media corruption case.



Karti

Indian crew on cruise ship off Japan coast test positive for virus Screen fliers from Japan, S. Korea: DGCA

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has informed airports and airlines on Friday that passengers arriving in flights from Japan and South Korea must be screened once they step out of aerobridges in order to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (nCoV). Till date, only passengers arriving from four countries — China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore — are being screened for possible exposure to the respiratory virus at 21 identified airports in India.

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Japan said on Friday that a third Indian crew onboard a cruise ship off the Japanese coast has tested positive for the novel coronavirus as authorities confirmed that total 218 people have been infected with the deadly virus on the quarantined ship. Two crew members, out of a total of 138 Indians on board the cruise ship, Diamond Princess, tested positive for the virus earlier. In a circular, the aviation regulator was quoted

by news agencies, as stating, "Universal screening of all the passengers coming in flights directly from Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore besides the flights from China and Hong Kong shall be ensured immediately once they step out of the specific identified aerobridge." The DGCA circular was further quoted as stating, "It is advised to place the suitable signage at strategic locations at all the airports and getting the self-declaration form filled by the passengers as per the instructions of the ministry of health and family wel-

fare." The DGCA also stated on Friday, "All airlines shall make in-flight announcements in the flights coming directly from these countries and ensure strict compliance." So far, India has reported three confirmed cases of nCoV, all from Kerala. Three medical students of the Wuhan University, all residents of Kerala, who returned to India on their own recently and self-reported at a hospital in the state tested positive for the respiratory virus, named COVID-19. One of them was discharged after recovery.

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## THE ASIAN AGE

15 FEBRUARY 2020

# Denial, obfuscation by BJP after Delhi rout

**O**bfuscation is part of military science, as the *Mahabharata* story about Ashwathama informs us. Recent observations of the top tier of the ruling party appear to have extended this to the electoral battlefield and the wider ambit of politics. This is evident from observations of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah not so long ago in the context of the CAA-NRC, and the recently held election to the Delhi Assembly. Indeed, the two appear to have been closely linked since the BJP campaign for the Assembly election in Delhi was focused on the specific issue of CAA-NRC and punishing the peaceful protesters of Shaheen Bagh.

Of the PM's memorable statements made at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan in the wake of the CAA-NRC protests that have shaken up the country, one is recalled with particular emphasis by ruling party spokesmen and cadres — that the National Register of Citizens (which is so intrinsically tied to the CAA in a particular "chronology", to quote the home minister) has not once been considered officially by his government, thus suggesting that the protests against NRC are an artifice, a low tactic of the BJP's opponents to rally public opinion on a false premise.

Fact-checkers immediately set about the relatively easy task of showing this was not the case. President Ram Nath Kovind's address to a joint session of the two Houses of Parliament was fished out. It revealed the government's intention to make the NRC a reality. When the NRC comes up for discussion now, BJP-RSS spokesmen have found a new technique to play their hand. They say this is not "yet" on the menu. They no longer deny it outright.

Just like his leader, the home minister resorted to outright denial in order to get out of an unenviable situation at a media event in the national capital on Thursday. In the recent poll campaign in Delhi, he asserted — in response to a question — that no one had spoken of "bahu-betiyan ka balatkar" or the "rape of women" (in Hindu homes by those protesting at Shaheen Bagh).

Such an observation by one of BJP's most significant leaders in a generation is apt to cause surprise as millions of Indians have seen on their television screens the BJP's MP from West Delhi rant exactly on those lines at a poll meeting. He was castigating Muslims by implication and seeking to demonise the Shaheen Bagh protesters.

It is noteworthy that after such an execrable remark he was not de-rostered by the BJP as its lead speaker in the debate on the motion of thanks on the President's address in the Lok Sabha. It is no less remarkable that the home minister of India, who conceived and led his party's failed Delhi campaign, did not see it fit to have the man arrested for his inflammatory ravings, causing enmity amongst the people, and threatening the unity of the country.

It is evident that Mr Shah was obliged to fudge about his MP's words precisely because this MP was chosen to expound on the BJP's ideology in Parliament. The gold standard of leadership is met when top bracket politicians are true to responsibilities set by their office. Seeking the softer way out is for lesser beings.

## Not by fiat alone

**T**he order of the Supreme Court on Thursday directing political parties to upload the details of the criminal antecedents of their candidates on their websites should be seen as yet another attempt by the court to help cleanse a system which refuses to change. Its impact, however, is doubtful; and the suggestion that parties give reasons for selecting candidates with criminal cases pending against them is more problematic as it is hardly justiciable.

As it stands today, the affidavits candidates file when submitting their nominations as candidates in elections must contain details of the criminal cases they face. These details can now be accessed through the route provided by the Right to Information Act, and there are non-governmental organisations which regularly collect this information and publish it. The latest order will only make this process simpler.

It was in 2013 that the Supreme Court scrapped Section 8 (4) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which protected MLAs and MPs against losing their positions even if convicted in a case and sentenced to more than two years in jail. As a result, netas today stand stripped of their stature immediately on conviction. The Supreme Court has also ordered the setting up of special courts to try cases against sitting and former MPs and MLAs. Despite all the efforts by the Election Commission and the courts, we have politicians facing serious charges, including rape and attempt to murder, getting elected to legislatures and even becoming ministers.

The latest was in Karnataka where an MLA who faces as many as 15 cases, some under the Forest Act, has been appointed forest minister. The ground reality is that the state and its arms are pretty helpless if political parties choose to field candidates who can win an election by hook or by crook. It's a political issue that the polity as a whole must address; the judiciary can do only so much in this regard.

### THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani

# Seismic changes haunt BJP after Delhi shock



Sanjeev Ahluwalia

**O**n top of the BJP's rudderless leadership to get the national economy out of a rut, or very possibly because of it, comes a humiliating political defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections with Arvind Kejriwal's broom sweeping completely out of the capital's politics and limiting the BJP to single digits in the 70-member Delhi Assembly.

The dynamic Gujarati Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo who rule India from Delhi must be feeling the pinch of the thumbs-down they got from 54 per cent of 10 million Delhiites (out of 15 million) potential voters who cast their votes on February 8.

Coming as it does, despite desperate efforts to play divisive politics — the signature, winning political tune perfected since L.K. Advani's 1990 rathayatra to build a Ram Mandir — surely points to the need for a considerable rethink, especially now as Ram Lalla rests easy in Ayodhya.

Admittedly, Delhi is an outlier. It ties with Goa for the highest per capita income in the country; has high literacy levels and is a grab bag of domestic high achievers attracted to the capital by the opportunities offered — ranging from abundant well-paid, low skilled daily work to highly overpaid, top echelon professionals and savvy business folk.

Performance counts in Delhi. On that parameter, the BJP has little to show while the AAP merely points to the "positive lived experience" of Delhi citizens in public services — electricity, water, the management of sewage, education and health services.

The BJP rules at the municipality level, but it has nothing much to show for it. More impor-

tant, land management and the police, which are under the lieutenant-governor and through him the Union government, have remained pools of public dissatisfaction and discontent, with none of the spiffy governance anticipated when Narendra Modi became Prime minister in 2014.

To be sure the city of Delhi — a cossetted child of emperors starting with the Great Mughals — is spoilt silly. It expects the earth from those who rule without cooperating in the least to give something back to the city. But it is an international and a national bellwether purely because of its strategic location at the political and economic crossroads of domestic and global markets.

If the BJP is to recover from the series of recent body blows — Rajasthan, Jharkhand and now Delhi — some directional changes are needed over the next four years till 2024.

First, the BJP has retained around 39 per cent of the votes cast. But reliance on the "Modi magic" to get past the post without a second line of credible and competent North Indian leaders has cost it heavily.

Delhi is used to a long line of emperors who conquer and then choose to settle down here and adopt it as their own. The BJP has anticipated this need now by appointing J.P. Nadda as party president — a Himachali born and brought up in Bihar. But this is little more than a palliative in the face of an absent layer of high ranking North Indian leaders — beyond Rajnath Singh — in key Cabinet positions.

Second, the abnormal delay in firing on all three engines — private consumption, public investment and exports — is felt keenly in Delhi

where new projects, high consumption and exports drive the economy. The Budget for 2021 failed to provide the lift so eagerly awaited by urban India — jobs, cheaper loans and incentives for investment.

The Reserve Bank has erred in not bringing the repo rate below the psychological five per cent level. The initiative to free investment loans for specified purposes from the CRR requirement are welcome, but too timid. Between the Statutory Liquidity Ratio and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), 22.25 per cent of a bank's assets are compulsorily sequestered in low-return government debt, which earns barely two percentage points more than the cost of bank term deposit rates. The State Bank of India has reduced its deposit rates now to lower its cost of funds. Sadly, no thought was spared for the hapless lower middle class for whom a bank deposit is also a saving instrument.

For profits, banks look to private lending at usurious rates ranging between nine (house loan) to 15 per cent (car or commercial loan). This is far too high to encourage spending unless accompanied by high inflation to deflate the real interest rate to a bearable 1.5 per cent per annum — which has not been the case since 2015.

Pulling the plug on fiscal restraint was the only way to go. But Arun Jaitley's legacy of "fiscal propriety" — as defined by the Washington Consensus — still rules like a staid aunt.

Third, L.K. Advani's rathayatra gambit seems to have come to its end. Divide and rule makes sense only if you retain a core group of supporters

who stand to benefit from you. This group has rapidly shrunk. Industry and business — once the rally boys of the BJP — now look a worried lot...

who stand to benefit from you. This group has rapidly shrunk. Industry and business — once the rally boys of the BJP — now look a worried lot as Delhi acquires undertones of imperious Beijing. Indian entrepreneurs are... well Indian, in their rambunctiousness. They dislike too much restraint, unless it is aimed at their competitors.

The governance style emerging out of Delhi is far too authoritarian to assuage the average businessperson long used to a laidback, wink-wink, nod-nod, non-competitive environment. This explains the overtures made recently by the government to raise tariff walls for the import of a range of goods.

Expect many more similar actions to reach out to the core base of the BJP — Hindu voters from the upper and middle castes in the belt stretching from Rajasthan to Bihar across north and central India, with a focus on urban and peri-urban areas. Dalits, rural India and contested territories in the South and East are likely to be reduced to collateral political reserves to be accessed on a transactional basis when beneficial.

This does not augur well in the immediate future for strategic fiscal reforms in inter-state governance — devolution, decentralisation and enhanced federalism or for structural reforms in labour, land management and agriculture.

Consequently, growth will remain sluggish till the financial sector outgrows the drag of its stressed assets; public debt levels may breach prudential levels and government allocations are likely to become even more skewed to benefit specific interest groups — like big farmers — as the BJP gears up for state elections in predominantly agricultural Bihar in October this year, and later in Uttar Pradesh in February 2022.

The writer is adviser, Observer Research Foundation

## LETTERS

### HEAD TO HEAD

US President Donald J. Trump will be on a two-day visit to India this month. The main focus of this visit will be on trade agreements between him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two world leaders may also set the seal on a new defence sale — that of a US integrated air defence system. India is expected to buy 24 MH-60 Seahawk helicopters for the Indian Navy. Mr Trump's visit to India ahead of the US presidential election speaks of his hope of drawing votes from the Indian diaspora. Who will get the better of the other — Mr Trump or Mr Modi?

Mohit Rawal  
Ujjain, MP

### NEW DIASPORA HERO

RISHI SUNAK, Britain's new chancellor of the exchequer, was not even a member of parliament five years ago, but is now running the world's fifth largest economy. The 39-year-old former Goldman Sachs banker made it to the post in a dramatic fashion after incumbent Sajid Javid quit. As Britain moves towards recovery after the Brexit chaos, one of the youngest chancellors in history will face a Prime Minister who wants to increase spending on everything, from infrastructure and police to health and education. Sunak is married to the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, Akshata Murthy. After his rapid rise through the ranks, will he pass this acid test?

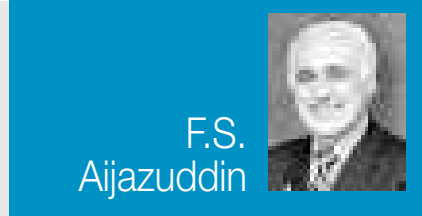
C.K. Subramaniam  
Navi Mumbai

### THE CLEAN-UP JOB

THE SUPREME COURT ordering political parties to publish the criminal antecedents of their candidates for Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, along with the reasons that made them choose tainted candidates over those with a clean record, within 48 hours of the selection of the same, is a step in the right direction. The court expressed concern over the alarming rise in the number of criminals in politics, with the "winnability" factor stealing a march over the merit of the candidate. A whopping 43 per cent of MPs have criminal cases pending against them and fielding candidates with clean hands can make our political system more reliable.

N.J. Ravi Chandrer  
Bengaluru

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters.asianage@gmail.com.



F.S. Aijazuddin

# Lear's lessons for our times: Should armies be retired?

**W**illiam Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* is not to be watched on an empty stomach. It is a gut-wrenching story of betrayal, inhuman blinding, unnatural patricide, and grey-haired hubris that ends with broken-hearted remorse. It is an indictment of those who all too often declare their "fast intent to shake all cares and business" of governance, and then refuse to relinquish authority.

Adaptation of Shakespeare's plays, whether in a modern setting or in a foreign language, is no longer a heresy. Shakespeare's archaic language may sound unfamiliar to our ears, yet his plots are timeless, relevant to every age, which is why they can withstand translation and transposition. After all, didn't Shakespeare himself borrow his ideas from others' works? He took Romeo and Juliet and also Much Ado About Nothing from the mind of the Italian Giovanni Boccaccio, his plays about Rome came from the pen of Plutarch, and his sagas of English history from

the chroniclers Edward Hall and Holinshed. To each he added his own genius, leaving pearls long after their oysters have been forgotten.

Zia Mohyeddin's latest production *King Lear* was performed in Lahore by the National Academy of Performing Arts, after an earlier run in Karachi. Zia is the last of an endangered species — a genus of Shakespearean actors who understands the playwright, who has declaimed his words on the London stage, and who still possesses the skill to present Shakespeare to an audience of Pakistanis who may never visit the Globe theatre or Stratford-upon-Avon. Zia dared to use an Urdu translation. It was a risk. For any translation to succeed, the translator must understand the original: its syntax, its subtleties, its inbuilt nuances, and then transmute that into a sibling of the original but with its own features, its own idioms, its own personality.

Mr Mohyeddin the producer could not have found a more perfect translator than the seasoned actor Khalid

Ahmad. Mr Ahmad had applied his alchemy earlier on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. His translation was faultless, at times lyrically independent of Shakespeare's original. Khalid Ahmad not only translated *King Lear*, he acted and became King Lear.

Mr Mohyeddin used bare props — a throne, a table as a catafalque, and a small mound as a hilltop. He melded his performers with their disparate experience into one seamless team. Memorable were Fawad Khan (Kent) well-known as a dastango; Paras Masroor (Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund) and Mira Sethi (Goneril) who have a television background; and Raheel Siddiqui as Dr Buddha; the wise Fool. Every play is as strong as its weakest actor. King Lear may have been let down by his daughters; Zia's audience had no reason to be disappointed by his choice of cast.

Who hasn't studied Shakespeare at school? His plays were as an inescapable as chicken pox. If one's diction was good enough, one per-

formed in them; if lucky, one saw it performed by the best. I studied *King Lear* for my 'A' levels in an English public school. Our class was taken to the Old Vic, where King Lear was played by the veteran actor Paul Rogers, his ungrateful daughters by Coral Browne and Barbara Jefford (soon to become famous). The following morning, our English teacher Mr Miller asked us what our reaction had been during the closing scene when Lear cradles the lifeless body of his youngest, faithful daughter Cordelia. Heartbroken, he shrieks: "How! How! How! O, you are men of stones! Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so/ That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone forever."

Mr Miller asked whether any of us had cried. Sheepishly, I alone put up my hand. "You are the only one who had the right reaction." E.M. Forster's description fitted my Anglo-Saxon classmates, with their "well-developed bodies, fairly developed minds and underdeveloped hearts".

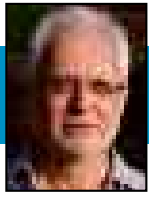
In the play, King Lear divides his

kingdom between his two obsequious daughters, on the understanding that he and 100 of his knights would be supported by each daughter in turn. The sisters, however, annoyed at the misbehaviour of his raucous entourage, demand a reduction in his knights from 100 to 50. Regan, the younger, goes further: "I'll receive him gladly, / But not one follower." Angered by their unconscionable in-hospitality, Lear curses them and leaves.

Some might see a parable between King Lear's predicament and that of the governments of India and Pakistan. An Indian newspaper recently carried a report that read: "For the first time ever, the [Indian] defence budget allocates more money for army pensions (₹1.13 lakh crore) than for army salaries (₹1.1 lakh crore). Both the salary and pension bills are bigger than Pakistan's total defence budget (₹1 lakh crore)." Shakespeare's Lear and his knights still abound.

By arrangement with Dawn

# Just shoot 'em...? UK must tackle jihadi cells in jails



Farrukh Dhondy  
**Cabbages & Kings**

*"The heathen in his blindness Bows down to wood and stone. The Colonial conceit was that The Brits knew God alone! The Heathen thinks that Christians Worship a wooden cross Which today would be an electric chair Or a noose to hang humans in the air..."*  
From **The Song of Khatribai Ghulamfagot by Bachchoo**

My father, the Indian Army veteran that he was, would read the daily headlines about various miscreants — hoarders of grain who caused shortages of food, child rapists, large-scale fraudsters — and would inevitably exclaim, in English or

Gujarati: "line the so-and-so up against the wall and shoot them". The so-and-so expletive would vary with the language in which he framed this summary sentence.

Dad wasn't given to the niceties of socio-political argument. In India recently, I read in several publications, vociferously argued cases for and against capital punishment — these in the context of the Nirbhaya rapist-murderers appealing for mercy against their hanging. The arguments were on the one side vengeful and, perhaps, karmic; on the other, a consideration that rapists and murderers were reared by the social circumstances, mentalities and morals of our society and these should be reformed.

My father's pronouncements had no consideration for such subtleties. I can't say if his

reaction was inspired by the Zoroastrian theological contention that the universe and life are the battleground of good versus evil and that, being on the side of good, he was obliged to wipe out the perpetrators of evil. Perhaps his intolerance was more likely influenced by military morals and a view that summary justice was better than the namby-pamby of "due process".

My wonderful, if hastily mistaken, dad's dictum came to mind this week in London when Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his dimwit home secretary Priti Patel put in train fast-track action and legislation on three fronts.

Firstly, they deported 27 "Jamaican" criminals who had served their sentences for manslaughter, violent acts and even paedophilia back to their "home country". At least 50 other such criminals were listed for deportation on the same chartered aircraft but appealed against it on the grounds that they were not afforded contact with any legal representation because the jail in which they were serving sentences had wifi problems. The courts upheld the stay on deportation.

**Predatory Patel has initiated a bill to change the liberal rule governing the release of convicted terrorists who have served half their jail terms. This is seen by that same majority that supports deportation as eminently sensible.**

Liberal opinion in the country opposed this measure but, without any statistical evidence, I feel that a vast majority of the country would have cheered it on. The one argument against such a cheer is that very many of these individuals, while not having papers to prove that they were British, had lived from childhood in this country and had been socialised and perhaps criminalised by it. Nevertheless, technically they were not British and consequently subject to expulsion from the sceptred isle.

The second measure which Predatory Patel has initiated is a bill in Parliament to change the liberal rule governing the release of convicted terrorists

who have served half their jail terms. This is seen by that same majority that supports deportation as eminently sensible. And it may be. In the recent past, two terrorists convicted of offences such as harbouring materials and recoding messages of terror, rather than having bombed a place or killed anyone, were released from prison having served half the prescribed period. They went on to murder innocents in the name of jihad.

Of course, this legislation can be seen as protective of the public, but there is the argument that spending six rather than three years in jail doesn't necessarily stop the offender when he is released from doing what he would have done after serving only half that time. There may be a case for the three extra years in jail being used to effectively deradicalise jihadis through rehabilitation and re-education programmes, but there is not much evidence that such programmes work.

There is an outcry now by prison wardens and by commentators that prison is itself a radicalising hothouse. Jihadis in contact with each other rein-

force their determination to commit acts which will transport them to heaven and grant them 72, willing or reluctant, virgins. They also come in contact with petty criminals whom they sometimes succeed in converting into murderous terrorists. There is overwhelming evidence that points to these phenomena.

What would *behesti Pappa* (dad) have said? "Line them up against the wall and shoot them."

Even Predatory Patel, whatever her instincts, can't follow such advice in an avowedly civilised and democratic society. And while she contemplates a solution to this brewing of terror in the institution of prison, she should consider evidence from other countries where dispersing terrorists, isolating them or giving them longer sentences hasn't done anything to stop the movement which is dedicated to recruiting new members.

If Prowly Patel can get the money off the new chancellor (after Sajju Javid's shock resignation from the Cabinet this week), her first move should be spending it on refurbishment of prisons.

Today, there are 82,000 pris-

oners crammed into spaces designed for 60,000. There are 10,000 assaults on prison officers each year. Britain's prisons are markets for drugs, smuggled in by bribed warders or delivered by drones.

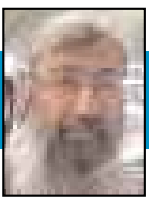
The programmes of rehabilitation are laughable. Mullahs are sent in to preach Islamic values to those convicted of serious jihadi offences such as the making of bombs or the membership of cells with published plans for terrorist acts. There is no considered programme of rehabilitation and no supervision of what these mullahs say and no assessment of what effect their preaching has on determined death-cultists.

A measure of discipline, compassion and supervision is the direction reform should take.

These would, at the least, enable an assessment of the progress towards a solution. What they won't do is make the sort of headlines this government wants in order to appeal to their core voters.

I wonder what dad would have said should be done to Cabinet ministers who pander to populism instead of implementing effective solutions.

# China's coronavirus epidemic: For India, a challenge and wake-up call



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

The deadly, undetected and symptomless epidemic coronavirus appears almost synonymous with China these days. The Chinese economy's rise and the dependence of at least 60 Third World countries on Chinese finance, and more than 50 developed countries coveting Chinese factory products — from small tools to computer software, heavy engineering apparatus to telecommunications gear — appear to be in peril. With lightning speed, the world has started (physically) distancing from China, fearing a contagious and fatal epidemic.

At a time of China's national distress, foreigners should also sympathise with the People's Republic and think of solutions, but from a distance. The world media is exhaustively reporting the crisis situation in China, but the reporting in the Indian media is fairly low-key. It's important for everyone in India to get an accurate picture of what is happening in that country.

In a first-hand account, reported by China Daily's Global Weekly (February 7-13, 2020): "Unlike any other, 2019-nCoV (new coronavirus) is more treacherous, hiding under the camouflage of flu and SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) symptoms...". The debilitating effects of the contours of the disease, as narrated by the Chinese, stand thus: "The pathogen is more noxiously evolved, embedded with murderous skills and savage velocity to spread faster and infect

more furtively even during its incubation period... This devil is also more evil... attacking the very basis of the global community: air travel and connectivity. It is unlucky that China has to withstand another wave of intensive pathogenic assault in less than two decades. The country is forced to pay heavy sacrifices. Apart from losing hundreds of lives, thousands more are hospitalised".

This scenario, as reported by the Chinese media, speaks for itself. The reality that China faces today: If not controlled immediately, things are bound to get worse. The Chinese economy seems headed for a downhill slide — which China fears most. A report says: "It's understandable for each nation to apply self-protection in line with the World Health Organisation recommendations. But proposals of 'shutting the border' to maximise one member state's interests may not necessarily immunise itself but will certainly affect public health as a whole."

This signals both a sense of fear of the Chinese, and a (veiled) warning by Beijing to all nations which are planning and trying to reduce, if not stop, though perhaps temporarily, the chance of virus contamination through cross-border physical contacts. The Chinese obviously have the Russians — their closest business and diplomatic partner — in mind. On January 30, the Russian Prime Minister announced that 16 Moscow-Beijing border crossings will be closed "to protect our peo-

**Unless it is controlled fast, the coronavirus outbreak will not only lead to a prolonged slowdown in China, but also hit global growth, and disrupt mega-projects across continents. For the moment, international tourism is the first casualty.**

ple". Russia also halted the issue of e-visas to Chinese nationals and suspended the "special permit" allowing Chinese nationals short-term access to selected tourist destinations of the great Russian land mass. Thus the world's fifth-largest land border stands between the contagious Chinese coronavirus and Moscow's desire for "self-defence". In one stroke, the chemistry and economics of the Russia-China combine is in the line of virus fire.

Unless it is controlled fast, the coronavirus outbreak will not only lead to a prolonged slowdown in China, but also hit global growth, and disrupt various mega-projects across continents. For the moment, international tourism is the first casualty. Aviation, transport, hotels, restaurants, retail stores and consumer markets already are staring at an emptiness in the high-profile destinations of the West.

How does India stand in this situation? How does India try to protect its populace from the coronavirus, which already appears to have entered this country. We have to ensure, above all, the good health of our vast population, to take every possible step to keep the nation disease-free, and not allow Indians to be guinea pigs in an experimental laboratory.

As admitted by the Chinese themselves, the Wuhan-origin coronavirus of 2019 is far more dangerous and deadlier than the 2002-2003 Yunnan-origin

SARS. It's contagion characteristics, spreading through the air and physical proximity make all public gatherings highly avoidable. Our soldiers manning the Sino-Indian frontier need to be particularly alert in this regard, for if a single undetected coronavirus-afflicted Chinese border guard comes into contact with an Indian guard, the fallout could be severe. Similar is the situation at all international airports, where Indian personnel are pretty poorly equipped to deal with this deadly global virus of Chinese origin.

India must take the latest WHO warning seriously: "The global virus spread is the tip of the iceberg." Around the globe, nations are waking up to the "Chinese threat", and India needs to resort to an immediate and urgent course correction. Whatever the pulls and pressures, the Indian government would do well to take its cue from the Russians, arguably the closest of all foreign countries to the Chinese. Close the borders. Reduce flights. Control Chinese goods as far as possible. Stop issuing visas to the Chinese. Help Indians first.

China is four times more powerful economically than India. Yet China is struggling today due to its monumental miscalculations. It has already damaged a lot of its

fertile land and air, and various experimental centres. But China being a highly secretive state, several gullible people and impressionable tourists are getting hoodwinked by the glamour and glitz of the Communist superpower.

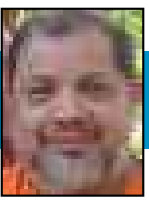
If China's Wuhan-origin coronavirus becomes an epidemic in New Delhi or its hinterland, how will the Indian authorities tackle it? How much resources will India need? What will happen to the economy, which is yet to show any signs of buoyancy? The sluggish consumer market? The rising debt-ridden and stressed banking system? The distressed agrarian sector? The visibly rickety health system in semi-urban and rural belts?

For the Indian State, the gravity of China's coronavirus epidemic has increased enormously. It's a challenge as well as an opportunity. We should help China in all possible ways, certainly, but not at the cost of the health of 1.3 billion Indians. "Health is wealth. Health is happiness". The so-called economic and financial globalisation now endangers the real health of the planet too.

*The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College and is the author of China in India*



## We must rise above likes and dislikes



Swami Tejomayananda

A person's nature is built on personal likes and dislikes, some of which keep changing, while others are firmly rooted. As a result, it becomes difficult to understand people. Likes and dislikes being unpredictable, it becomes difficult to please either oneself or others. It is perhaps for this reason some people prefer animals to humans.

This capacity to change is also the beauty of the human

being. They can also change for the better. In the Gita, Bhagavan reveals the means to bring about change. At first, we must become aware of the likes and dislikes which govern our nature. Since they can neither be wiped out completely nor neutralised immediately, convert them to become preferences. It is better not to come under their sway because then we are unable to live the knowledge we have understood from the scriptures.

For example, if you are invited for a meal and do not like what is served, let the mind not stir up a storm. Do not give way to your likes and dislikes, throw a tantrum, get upset or push the plate away. Make the best of whatever is available.

The best way of overcoming likes and dislikes is to remain steadfast in the performance of one's own duty — *svadharma*. This is higher and nobler than doing the duties of another, even though one may not see great virtue or merit in the work assigned. A door-keeper (*dvarpaal*) may prefer to perform the duty of the king (*rajpaal*) but in our interest it is better to do the duties

assigned to us. Do what you are supposed to do. Better to die in the performance of your own duty than to do the duty of another, which is fraught with fear. If the clerk who has to prepare the bank cheque imitates the boss' signature, it will be a crime because the duty of signing cheques is not assigned to him.

Bhagavan tells Arjuna that his duty is to defend dharma. In performing duty there is no room for personal likes and dislikes. If we are lazy we will be guided by *raga* and *dvesa*. Prohibited and selfish actions are also performed for the same reason. In performing duties we cannot be controlled by likes and

dislikes. So the best way to neutralise them is to remain steadfast in the performance of obligatory duties, offered as worship of the Lord. When we perform obligatory duties and dedicate our actions to God, His heart is touched. His grace, which descends on us, purifies the mind and leaves us free of *raga* and *dvesha*.

We have built our nature. Take responsibility. Understand how it has been formed. Then follow the path of transformation to reach the goal of purification and perfection!

**Swami Tejomayananda**  
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IN BRIEF

**British woman tries to end life in Goa**

**Panaji:** A British woman, distressed over being abandoned by her husband during their Goa trip, entered the sea at Baga beach to commit suicide on Friday, but was rescued by lifeguards, police said. The woman, in her fifties, was rescued by lifeguards on duty at Baga beach near here in North Goa when they found her walking into the sea beyond the area marked for tourists, they said. When lifeguards approached the lady, she went deep into the sea and refused to accept any help, police said. One of the lifeguards pulled her out of the seawater even as she insisted she wanted to end her life, a senior officer of the Calangute police station said. During questioning, the woman said her husband abandoned her during Goa trip and went away with all travel documents, he said. She was distressed over this and hence wanted to end her life, the officer said. — PTI

**Odisha session off to a stormy note**

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha Assembly's Budget Session got off to a stormy start on Friday with opposition Congress boycotting the Governor's inaugural address and a ruckus later by the Opposition forced the Speaker to adjourn the House for the whole day. As soon as Governor Ganeshi Lal started reading the achievements of the State Government, senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra stood up protesting the state government's all-round failure in addressing paddy procurement. Later, members of the Congress party staged a walkout from the Assembly. Speaking to media persons later, Congress leader Narasingha Mishra criticised the Governor's address in the Assembly. "The address of the governor has skirted the main issues confronting the state," alleged Mr Mishra.

**Pro-ILP protest erupts in Mizoram**

**Shillong:** Human resources development minister Ramesh Pokhriyal's visit to Shillong on Friday was met with pro-ILP Permit activists demonstrating on the streets. The activists from over 15 pro-ILP organisations under the umbrella of the Confederation of Meghalaya Social Organisation (COMSO) shouted slogans on the North-Eastern Hill University campus where the minister attended an official event. Several activists also held demonstrations near the NIT campus in Laitumkhrah area where the minister went for lunch. The state had in December adopted a resolution in the Assembly urging the Centre to implement the ILP under the 1873-legislated Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act. — PTI

**JAIL NO. 3, BOOKIE SANJEEV CHAWLA'S ADDRESS IN TIHAR**

**New Delhi:** Sanjeev Chawla, an alleged bookie and a key accused in one of cricket's biggest match-fixing scandals that involved former South African captain Hansie Cronje, reached the Tihar Jail on Friday, officials said. Chawla got an interim relief from custodial interrogation with the Delhi high court sending him to the Tihar Jail on Friday till further orders. Chawla (50), who was extradited from the United Kingdom on Thursday, will be kept in jail number 3. He will be the only inmate in his cell, a senior jail official said. According to the extradition treaty between India and the UK, all basic facilities will be ensured and consular access provided to Chawla and his safety and security will be ensured. Accompanied by a crime branch team from London, Chawla reached the IGI Airport here on Thursday morning. India has assured the UK authorities regarding the medical facilities to be provided to Chawla and protection from intra-prison violence. Chawla is alleged to have played a central role in conspiring with Cronje to fix South Africa's tour of India in February-March, 2000. British court documents say Chawla is a Delhi-born businessman who moved to the UK on a business visa in 1996, but continued to make trips to India. — PTI

**Remembering martyrs**



CRPF personnel pay tribute at a memorial at Letapora in Pulwama district of South Kashmir on Friday to the 40 CRPF jawans who were killed in the Pulwama terror attack in February last year. The memorial is inscribed with the names of all the 40 troopers along with their photographs and the motto of the Central Reserve Police Force — 'Seva and Nishtha' (Service and Loyalty). — PTI

**Odisha BJD leader's son threatens to self on fire**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT BERHAMPUR (ODISHA), FEB. 14**

Alleging false implication in an assault case, Krutibasa Mishra, alias Raja, son of ruling Biju Janata Dal's women wing leader Meenakshi Mishra, on Friday threatened to set himself ablaze in front of local police headquarters in Berhampur.

Raja's statement came a day after he was granted interim bail by the district and sessions judge at Berhampur. He was arrested by Baidyanathpur police over his involvement in an assault case on January 28 and later granted bail till February 25.

Earlier on February 12, Meenakshi had attempted self-immolation protesting the arrest of her son. "The allegations against me are false. I was earlier released in a case since then I am being targeted. My hometown is Berhampur but the cops are asking me to stay outside the city. Why shall I live somewhere else? My mother self-immolated her, I too will immolate myself in front of DG office if I do not get justice within 15 days," threatened Raja.

Earlier on January 28, Raja had a fight with one Sunil Moharana in front of a Kalyan Mandap at Panda colony under Baidyanathpur Police limits in Berhampur over some parking issue.

Sunil along with his friends brutally assaulted Raja.

**Govt should bring ordinance on quota in jobs, says Paswan**

**ASIM KAMAL NEW DELHI, FEB. 14**

The government should bring an ordinance to "rectify" the Supreme Court's recent decision on reservation in jobs for SC-ST communities and all such issues should be included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution to insulate them from judicial review, Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Friday.

He said the government was also mulling filing a review against the Supreme Court decision and was taking legal opinion on it.

"The review petition is there, but the matter will again go to court, it has to be looked at whether it will be successful or not. So, in my opinion the easiest way is to issue an ordinance and make an amendment in the Constitution," Mr Paswan told PTI in an interview.

The LJP leader's remarks come amidst a



Ram Vilas Paswan

political storm after the apex court recently ruled that the states are not bound to provide reservation for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in appointments and there is no fundamental right to claim quota in promotions.

"The Supreme Court saying that it is up to the state government for giving reservation in jobs and it is not a fundamental right... This is all part of the Constitution, and the people have this objection that the verdict is against the interests of the SCs and STs," Mr Paswan said.

To "rectify" the Supreme

Court verdict, an ordinance should be brought and the Constitution should be amended, the minister said.

An ordinance can be brought when Parliament is not in session. However, if the government still wants to bring one during a break in an ongoing session, one of the two Houses is adjourned sine die (indefinitely), and once the ordinance is signed by the President, the House that was adjourned for the purpose is reconvened, a senior government official said. There have been precedents.

The ordinance has a shelf life of six months. Once a session begins it has to be converted into a law within six weeks, or else it lapses.

LJP chief Chirag Paswan had also raised the matter in Lok Sabha and demanded that all such matters related with SC/ST be put in the Ninth Schedule, Mr Paswan said. — PTI

**'India has taken steps to restore normalcy in Valley'**

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, FEB. 14**

A day after a group of 25 foreign envoys concluded a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, the European Union (EU) said "the visit confirmed that the Government of India has taken positive steps to restore normalcy" but added that it is important that the remaining restrictions be lifted swiftly.

The EU also said that it "recognises the serious security concerns" of Indian authorities, and

that "the visit presented a welcome opportunity to see the situation on the ground and to interact with local interlocutors". The EU's statement is being seen as setting the stage for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to the Belgian capital Brussels next month for the 15th India-EU Summit.

"The EU ambassador to India along with some ambassadors of EU member states accepted the invitation extended by the Government of India to visit Srinagar and Jammu, on February 12-13

... The visit confirmed that the Government of India has taken positive steps to restore normalcy. Some restrictions remain, notably on Internet access and mobile services, and some political leaders are still in detention. While we recognise the serious security concerns, it is important that the remaining restrictions be lifted swiftly. The visit presented a welcome opportunity to see the situation on the ground and to interact with local interlocutors," the EU spokesperson for foreign affairs and securi-

ty policy Virginie Battu-Henriksson said.

"The programme of the visit organised by the Government of India included meetings with civil and military authorities, some political representatives, as well as selected representatives of civil society and the business community... We look forward to continuing the dialogue with India on the situation in the region," the EU added.

About half of the 25 foreign envoys who formed the second batch of foreign envoys visiting J&K

had significantly belonged to the European Union member nations, including Germany and France. The envoys had visited Srinagar on Wednesday and Jammu on Thursday. As many as 12 of the foreign envoys were Europeans. While 11 were from EU member-nations, one was the EU envoy.

Apart from the EU envoy, the EU member-nations represented were — Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia.

**Bombay HC judge quits over transfer**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, FEB. 14**



S.C. Dharmadhikari

The senior-most judge of the Bombay high court has resigned from his post. Justice Satyaranjan Chandra shekhar Dharmadhikari has tendered his resignation before the President of India Thursday evening, which is yet to be approved by the honourable president. Justice Dharmadhikari told media persons that he has tendered his resignation from the post due to family and personal issues.

According to him, he had been elevated as Chief Justice of some other state where he does not want to go. He wants to remain in the city of Mumbai because he has some personal responsibilities here. The higher authorities were not ready to elevate him as Chief Justice of the Bombay high court. "I had to resign due to purely personal and family

issues... I did not want to leave Mumbai and they were not ready to elevate me as the Chief Justice of the Bombay high court," Justice Dharmadhikari told reporters.

While hearing his scheduled petitions Friday, Justice Dharmadhikari told lawyers that he would not be available next week as Friday is his last day. It is not yet clear whether his resignation has been accepted by the honourable President. Advocate Mathew Nedumpara had mentioned a petition seeking for the court to hear it

Justice Dharmadhikari said he had been elevated as Chief Justice of some other state where he does not want to go. He wants to remain in Mumbai because he has some personal responsibilities.

next week. "When the judge said he has resigned, I initially thought that he said it in a lighter vein... He is a very senior judge and his resignation comes as a shock," Nedumpara later said.

Justice Dharmadhikari was due to retire after two years. "I have some personal responsibilities here in Mumbai, which is why I did not want to be transferred out of Maharashtra," the judge said.

Justice Dharmadhikari was made judge of the Bombay high court on November 14, 2003.

**Ramayana-themed train set to launch next month**

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, FEB. 14**

The railways' next edition of the Ramayana Express, which takes pilgrims to locations associated with Lord Ram, will give passengers the feel of being on a temple on wheels. The special feature of the train will be Ramayana-themed interiors and bhajans playing on board.

The train is likely to be launched after March 10, Railway Board chairman V.K. Yadav said and added that its annual schedule will be released in the coming week.

"The train will originate from different locations — north, south, east and west — so that people from across the country can avail its services. The exterior and the interior of the train will be Ramayana-themed. We

can have bhajans playing on board. IRCTC is planning the schedule and packages, and we are hoping to run the train after Holi," Mr Yadav said.

Earlier, the railways ran a special train named after Lord Ram, covering the destinations associated with the mythological character. This train called the 'Shri Ramayana Express', which can carry 800 passengers, started its service from November 14.

While the Shri Ramayana Express covered important destinations of the Ramayana circuit such as Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi, Ayodhya and Rameshwaram, the itinerary of the new Ramayana train is yet to be revealed.

**BJD leader confesses of committing twin murder**

**AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO RAIGARH/BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 14**

In a major development in connection with the murder of a 32-year-old woman and her daughter in 2016, the Chhattisgarh police on Friday revealed that former MLA and BJD leader Anup Sai was the prime accused in the case and he had confessed to the crime.

In a crowded press conference, Raigarh superintendent of police (SP) Santosh Kumar said that Anup had an "illicit affair" with the victim Kalpana Das after she got divorced from her husband in the year 2005. Both of them started living together along with Kalpana's daughter Pravatika Das from 2011 to 2016 in a flat bought by Anup in Sundarpada area of Bhubaneswar.

"While staying together for years, the victim asked Anup to marry her but he kept dodging her request citing that he was already married. Later, he plotted to kill her. On May 7, 2016, he used a blunt weapon to kill both and later vehicle made to run over the victims," said Raigarh SP.

During the investigation, as many as 700 people were interrogated across six states including Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, revealed the SP.

**Pulwama sets off a fresh clash**

Continued from Page 1

■ The BJP national spokesman Sambit Patra. Taking on the Congress leader for his remarks, BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi said: "Sad people with this mindset still find relevance in Indian politics. It's because of such an ethos that politician are called vultures. You lost two members from your family at the hands of terrorists, who benefited from deaths of Mrs Indira Gandhi and Mr Rajiv Gandhi?"

Another BJP MP, G.V.L. Narasimha Rao said that when the nation was paying homage to martyrs of the dastardly Pulwama attack, Mr Gandhi, "a known sympathiser of LeT and JeM", attacks not just

the government but the security forces as well, and the Congress leader "will never question real culprit, Pakistan".

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury also paid his "heartfelt homage" to the martyrs of the "ghastly terror attack", and wanted to know what had been done for the survivors and the families of those who had laid their lives down for the nation.

"Modi and the BJP directly asked for votes in the name of the martyrs of Pulwama. Where is the inquiry report one year on after the terror attack? Who has been held accountable for the loss of so many lives and the massive intelligence failure? #Pulwama," he tweeted.

**SC warns telcos**

Continued from Page 1

■ The court on Friday issued showcause notices to the managing directors/directors of the telecom service providers, asking why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against them for not complying with its 2019 order to pay the government ₹92,000 crores in dues.

The court order said: "It is made clear that in case the order passed by this court is not complied with, the above persons shall remain personally present in court on the next date of hearing."

Besides this, the court also took a serious view of the

"temerity" of a DoT desk officer in directing the accountant-general, a constitutional authority, "not to insist for any payment pursuant to the order passed by this court and not to take any coercive steps till further orders".

Observing that this was nothing but "staying" its October 2019 order, the court said: "This is nothing but a device to scuttle the order of this court. This kind of order should not have been passed by the desk officer at all."

"In the circumstances", the court said, "we draw contempt proceedings against the desk officer for passing the order and violating the order passed by this court." The court asked the desk officer to file his reply.

**After Delhi, AAP plans to go national**

Continued from Page 1

■ Asked whether Mr Kejriwal could become the face of the Opposition in the next Lok Sabha elections, Mr Rai said that the AAP supremo had already become the face of positive nationalism and people across the country relate to this kind of nationalism. He said: "Kejriwalji is not a face

of the Opposition. He is the face of the politics of work. He also attracts BJP supporters. The Delhi polls were a fight between negative nationalism and positive nationalism. The BJP is standing with negative nationalism and the AAP is with positive nationalism." Terming the BJP's nationalism "negative", Mr Rai said the AAP will expand its

base by highlighting "positive nationalism". He said: "In Delhi, we spread positive nationalism, which is based on love and respect. The BJP's nationalism is based on hatred and divisive politics... The experiment done by the AAP in Delhi has become a role model for the entire country. Our positive nationalism gives a guarantee of good education,

healthcare and livelihood to every section of society, including farmers." On the BJP's attack on Mr Kejriwal for reciting the Hanuman Chalisa on a TV channel in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly polls, Mr Rai said for the saffron party, religion is a "political weapon", but for the people of the country, religion is a belief.

**India may open poultry..**

Continued from Page 1

■ India's dairy market, but with a five per cent tariff and quotas, the sources said. But dairy imports will need a certificate they are not derived from animals that have consumed feeds including internal organs, blood meal or tissues of ruminants.

New Delhi has also offered to lower its 50 per cent tariffs on very large motorcycles made by Harley-Davidson, a tax that was a particular irritant for Mr Trump, who has labelled India the "tariff king". The change would be largely symbolic because few such motorcycles are sold in India.

Mr Trump will be feted in Mr Modi's home state of Gujarat, then hold talks in New Delhi and attend a reception that the hosts have promised will be bigger than the one organised for former President Barack Obama in 2015.

It is far from clear, however, whether India's offers will be enough to satisfy US trade representative Robert Lighthizer, who cancelled plans for a trip to India this week. Instead, he has held telephone talks with India's commerce minister Piyush Goyal. The US dairy industry remained sceptical Thursday that a viable deal is at hand. "We're always looking for market access, but in terms of India, as of today I'm not aware of any real progress going on," said Michael Dykes, president of the International Dairy Foods Association and a member of the USTR's agricultural trade policy advisory committee. Mr Dykes said the US dairy industry was looking for access in viable commercial quantities. Also, an Indian parliamentary panel is reviewing a draft data privacy law that imposes stringent controls over cross-border data flows and gives the government powers to seek user data from companies. It is not clear if it will be passed, or in what form, but the possibilities have unnerved US companies and could raise compliance

requirements for Google, Amazon and Facebook.

The draft law is not part of the trade discussions, Indian officials say, because the issue is too difficult to resolve at the same time.

"The privacy and localisation piece will be raised independently and in concert with trade discussions," said a Washington-based source with knowledge of the US administration's thinking.

Mr Trump was non-committal on Tuesday on sealing a trade deal before his visit. "If we can make the right deal, we'll do it," he told reporters.

Two US sources said progress had been made on proposed alterations to the medical device price caps. India's new import tariffs on medical devices, walnuts, toys, electronics and other products in this year's Budget on February 1 surprised US negotiators.

The new tariffs were aimed at China, that also makes medical devices, according to an Indian source. — Reuters

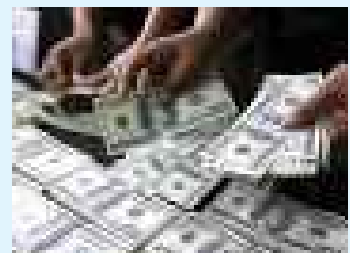
quick  
BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	41,257.74 -0.49
Nifty 50	12,113.50 -0.50
S&P 500*	3,378.56 0.14
Dollar (₹)	71.39 0.07
Pound Sterling (₹)	93.06 0.36
Euro (₹)	77.50 -0.25
Gold (10gm) (₹)	41,481.75 0.18
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	57.06 1.28
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.369 -0.864
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.585 -1.979

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

SpiceJet posts  
₹73 crore net  
profit in Q3

SpiceJet reported a net profit of Rs 73.2 crore in the third quarter against Rs 55.1 crore a year ago and said Boeing has offered an interim compensation over the grounding of MAX planes. SpiceJet expects to take a decision on Boeing compensation before March-end, CFO Kiran Koteswar said. Total income rose to Rs 3,917.34 crore from Rs 2,530.84 crore. Standalone profit from air transport services (airline) was Rs 115 crore.

Forex reserves  
soar to record  
\$473 billion

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$1.701 billion to a record high of \$473 billion in the week to February 7 on account of an increase in foreign currency assets. In the previous week, the forex reserves had swollen by \$4.607 billion to \$471.3 billion. Foreign currency assets, a major component of the overall reserves, rose by \$1.938 billion to \$439.186 billion. Gold reserves declined by \$218 million to \$28.779 billion.

Forms for lower  
corporate  
taxes notified

The Income Tax Department has notified forms for companies to avail of the reduced corporate tax rates that were announced in September last year. The Central Board of Direct Taxes has notified Forms 10-IC and 10-ID for existing companies that want to avail of lower I-T rate and new manufacturing firms, respectively. In Sept., the Centre announced a cut in base corporate tax for existing companies.

Srei Infra's  
consolidated net  
falls 34% to ₹60 cr

Srei Infrastructure Finance reported a 34.4 per cent fall in consolidated net profit at Rs 60 crore for the December quarter from Rs 91.41 crore in the year-ago period. Total consolidated income was down at Rs 1,402.81 crore from Rs 1,722.52 crore. Hemant Kanoria, chairman, Srei, said: "For last few years, our focus has been to grow our equipment finance portfolio, where we are witnessing a silent recovery in demand."

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■ Finance ministry to give details of Vivad se Vishwas scheme soon  
Ready to go beyond Budget  
to boost growth: Sitharaman

New Delhi, Feb. 14: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said that if required, the government would take more steps beyond the Budget announcements to boost economic activities.

At an interactive session on 'Budget and Beyond' with professionals from asset management, wealth advisory, tax consultancy and other related industries, the minister also said Budget 2020-21's impact on equity, bond and currency markets would be positive.

"If more has to be done beyond the Budget 2020, we are willing to do that," Sitharaman said at the session, where the participants made several suggestions to boost economic activities in the country.

The government announced a host of steps in the budget, to expand the economic activities at a time when the country is faced with a demand slowdown.

During the interactive session, participants made suggestions for increasing consumption, giving more money into the hands of consumers, measures required to boost liquidity and hosts of suggestions for the capital markets.



## WPI inflation rises to 3.1%

New Delhi, Feb. 14: With a sharp rise in the prices of food articles like onion and potato, the wholesale price inflation, or WPI, for January rose to 3.1 per cent, from 2.59 per cent in December and 2.76 per cent in January 2019.

The food articles saw an 11.51 per cent jump in prices in January from 2.41 per cent a month earlier. Vegetable prices surged by 52.72 per cent, mainly over onion, which saw a 293.37 per cent jump in prices. —FC Bureau

Several suggestions were also made on the 'Vivad se

Vishwas' scheme to deal with the disputes related to

## Exports contract by 1.6%



New Delhi, Feb. 14: The country's exports dropped 1.66 per cent to \$25.97 billion in January, the sixth straight month of contraction, owing to a significant fall in shipments of petroleum, plastic, carpet, gems and jewellery, and leather products. Imports also fell for the eighth consecutive months, down

0.75 per cent to \$41.14 billion, widening the trade deficit to a seven-month high of \$15.17 billion. Gold imports shrunk by about 9 per cent to \$1.58 billion in January.

Of the 30 key sectors, 18 segments showed negative growth in exports last month. —FC Bureau

the direct taxes. She said the finance ministry will

provide details of the scheme soon. —PTI

## Amazon gets stay against CCI investigation

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, FEB. 14

The Karnataka High Court has ordered a stay on the competition watchdog's investigations against e-commerce biggies Amazon and Flipkart.

The court felt that the ongoing investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) should be first completed before the Competition Commission of India could initiate a probe. Last year, the ED had initiated an investigation against Amazon and Flipkart for alleged violation of foreign direct investment (FDI) laws. The court opined that FDI violations

being in the realm of the ED and the adjudicating authority under the Fema, the case of CCI vs Bharti Airtel would apply to this case as well and the ED would have to give its report before the CCI could proceed with the matter.

The HC also noted that while the CCI had asked Amazon for its comments in a previous case filed by All-India Online Vendors' Association, it should have also called the parties in the current case.

Amazon had filed a writ petition in the court on Monday against the probe ordered by CCI in January. The Competition

Commission had ordered the probe against both Amazon and Flipkart in a complaint filed by the Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM), representing small businesses. The petitioner had alleged that the e-commerce companies were violating the competition laws.

In its plea, Amazon had sought "quashing and setting aside" of the CCI's probe order dated January 13, claiming that the fair competition watchdog passed orders against the company without applying mind and caused serious loss to its reputation.

Commenting on the stay, Amazon said: "while we

welcome and respect the decision of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka, this is just a step in the legal process. We are confident about our compliance."

Both Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh and Confederation of All India Traders (Cait), which had impleaded as a party to the case, have decided to file an appeal against the order of the High Court soon. Meanwhile, Cait said it will ask the Union government to speed up the ED investigation.

The court has asked the respondents in the matter, including CCI and Cait to file their responses within eight weeks.

Supreme Court stance  
jolts several stocksRAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, FEB. 14

Telecom stocks of Vodafone Idea, Bharti Infratel, Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries and their lenders were impacted after Supreme Court came down heavily on telecom companies and government officials for non-compliance of its October 24 order to pay dues and refused any relief in payment of AGR dues and directed them to pay up by March 16.

The telecom companies, Vodafone Idea, Bharti Airtel and Tata Teleservices and Hughes, had sought a modification of the court order in the light of the financial distress.

The Supreme Court, however, made it clear that they will have to cough up Rs 1.47 lakh crore in adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues.

Shares of Vodafone Idea fell over 27 per cent to touch a low of Rs 3.25 on the BSE and later closed 23.21 per cent down at Rs 3.44. Vodafone Idea posted over Rs 6,400 crore loss in the third quarter, as reported by the company on Thursday.

Bharti Airtel shares rose 4.69 per cent to close at a new high of Rs 565. However, shares of another Bharti Group company, Bharti Infratel, fell 4.04 per cent to Rs 235.25.

Reliance Industries, which owns Reliance Jio, gained 0.86 per cent closing at Rs 1486.65.

Shares of lenders like SBI and IndusInd Bank, which have big exposure to the telecom companies facing AGR dues, also fell by 2.41 per cent and 4.38 per cent, respectively.

Non-telecom PSUs saddened with AGR dues also fell as the apex court also dismissed similar pleas by non-telecom PSUs, asking

SC rejects plea for  
more time to sell  
BS-IV vehiclesMICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, FEB. 14

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected the Federation of Automobile Dealers' Associations' (FADA) appeal to extend the deadline for sales of BS-IV vehicles beyond March 31.

The new and stringent BS-VI emission norms are mandated to be implemented from April 1 all over the country.

FADA had asked for a one-month extension of the deadline, which was rejected by the apex court.

The FADA appeal was based on the fact that the auto industry is facing a significant slowdown in both wholesale and retail.

At present, the overall sales for the auto industry in January was 1,739,975 units, down 13.83 per cent, with passenger vehicles at 262,714 units, down 6.2 per cent, commercial vehicles at 75,289 units, down 14.4 per cent, three-wheelers at 60,903 units, up 12.69 per cent and two-wheelers at 1,341,005 units, down 16.06 per cent.

The auto dealers lobby had filed the application in Supreme Court on December 18, seeking

modification of its October 2018 order, where the apex court ordered that no BS-IV vehicles can be sold after March 31, 2020.

Automobile dealers had previously said that they might fail to liquidate the BS-IV inventory before this timeline.

With the new emission norms set to be implemented in less than two months time, several automakers, including market leader Maruti Suzuki, Tata Motors, Hyundai and Mahindra, have already transitioned a major chunk of their product portfolio to BS-VI from BS-IV.

Earlier on Monday, Mahindra had said that it was stuck with some 3,000 BS-IV vehicles, as a couple of couple of electronic components were in short-supply over the China lockdown, and might move the apex court for a relaxation of the March 31 deadline to sell the units.

FADA represents over 15,000 automobile dealers having 25,000 dealerships across India and employ over 2.5 million directly and another 2.5 million indirectly.

## Risk of duopoly in telecom seen

New Delhi, Feb 14: With the Supreme Court on Friday taking a strong view of non-compliance of its order on payment of statutory dues by telecom firms, the situation for Vodafone Idea is "particularly vulnerable" and the risk of duopoly in the sector is higher than before, according to an analyst.

"There is no question that this is bad news for the telecom industry. It makes situation of Vodafone Idea particularly vulnerable, even more than it was," Mahesh Uppal, director at consulting firm Com First India, said. He also said the risk of a duopoly in telecom sector is higher than before.

Now there are three private players in the Indian mobile market—Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Reliance Jio—besides the ailing BSNL & MTNL.

Uppal said the room for manoeuvre is less now for the operators, but added that if the government saw the situation as long-term problem, it could

consider a policy change.

The Supreme Court directed the managing directors and directors of telcos and other firms to explain why contempt action be not taken against them for non-compliance of its order to pay AGR of Rs 1.47 lakh crore to the Department of Telecommunications.

Taking strong note of the non-compliance of its order, a bench of Justice Arun Mishra, Justice S Abdul Nazeer and Justice M R Shah expressed anguish over the order passed by DoT's desk officer, staying the effect of its verdict in AGR matter. "We don't know who is creating this nonsense. Is there no law left in country... It is better not to live in this country and rather leave the country," the bench observed.

In all, 15 entities owe the government Rs 1.47 lakh crore—Rs 92,642 crore in unpaid licence fee and Rs 55,054 crore in outstanding spectrum usage charges.

—PTI

them to challenge the government demand notices in appropriate fora.

Non-telecom PSUs losers included Gail India (-5.91 per cent), Power Grid Corporation (-3.26 per cent) and Oil India (-2.87 per cent).

The apex court's strong words means end of the road on any further extension of AGR dues, analyst said.

"No company has paid these dues for 20 years," Justice Arun Mishra said. "This corruption must end."

"A review has been dis-

missed. There's no stay, but not a penny has been paid," Justice Mishra said. The bench of judges hearing the matter listed the case for further hearing on March 17.

Jimeet Modi, founder & CEO, Samco Securities, said, "Supreme Court ruling on AGR dues is a big jolt to Vodafone Idea and Bharti Group...But, given the fundraising done by Bharti Airtel, it seems that the company would remain ironclad from this judgment. Vodafone, however, would suffer tremendously."

## Toilet paper is the hot new currency in Singapore &amp; HK

DAVID RAMLI &  
ABHISHEK VISHNOI  
SINGAPORE, FEB. 14

In the high-stakes world of gift giving in Asia's financial hubs, Montblanc pens and leather folios are out - toilet paper and surgical masks are most definitely in.

As fears of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) spread across the region, pharmacies and supermarkets in Hong Kong and Singapore are running out

of basic supplies like toilet paper, paper towels, hand sanitizer and especially masks.

That's created an opportunity for financial service providers looking to wow clients and bolster relationships. The Singapore arm of online trading provider IG Group went viral after handing out party packs with 3M Co's N95 face masks, digital thermometers and bottles of Dettol antiseptic.

IG began distributing the gifts after Singapore raised the viral alert to orange—a critical

level. What started as an amusing idea from the company's local management team quickly spiraled and now its staff and clients have been receiving the care packs in the office and via mail. The gift has proven timely with some banks across the central business district evacuating their offices and requiring employees to work from home.

"It all started as a precaution for friends and family and then others started asking how to get the masks and other

things," said Terence Tan, head of business development at IG Asia Pte. "So we thought: Why not get these things for our staff and clients?"

He said the first packages for clients went out today and they'll send out more packages as additional supplies come in.

American Joel Werner runs a hedge fund, Solitude Capital Management in Hong Kong. On February 10, he bought the equivalent of 216 rolls of toilet paper on Amazon.com Inc. after his family tried in vain

for days to find any in Hong Kong. The shipping alone cost \$200 but he thinks it was worth it. He kept half of the bounty and plans to give the other half to friends and colleagues.

"It's a better gift than wine now," he said.

Household items also are gaining traction in the social lives of those in the financial hubs. Friends gathering at a restaurant in Hong Kong this week were asked to bring contributions of face masks or toilet paper for a lucky draw.

And in a sign of love in the time of the coronavirus, photos of bouquets stuffed with instant noodles and vegetables instead of roses are making the rounds of Singapore's finance WhatsApp groups for Valentine's Day after a run on supermarkets forced them to impose limits on shoppers.

It all goes to show that when crisis strikes, it's the thought - and thickness of the toilet tissue—that counts.

—Bloomberg

IN BRIEF

Indian visits UAE, kills wife

Dubai: An Indian in the UAE has allegedly stabbed his wife to death with a sharp-edged weapon over suspected infidelity outside her office here, media reports said on Friday. She was stabbed three times with a knife in the UAE's most populous city, *Khaleej Times* reported. The 44-year-old man, who was in Dubai on a visit visa, killed his wife over suspicion that she was cheating on him, the Court of First Instance has heard.

Turkish novelist acquitted

Istanbul: A Turkish court on Friday acquitted renowned novelist Asli Erdogan on charges of membership of an armed terror organisation. The court in Istanbul also acquitted Erdogan, who is living in exile in Germany, of disrupting the unity of the state. Erdogan, whose books have been translated into various different languages, was an occasional columnist for pro-Kurdish newspaper *Ozgur Gundem* which was shut down after the failed 2016 coup against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Mali policeman escapes jihadists

Bamako: A Malian police officer captured by jihadists escaped and trekked 80 kilometres to freedom, officials said. Al-Qaeda-linked militants attacked a camp in Sokolo, central Mali, on January 26, killing 20 gendarmes and wounding five more. The Group to Support Islam and Muslims claimed responsibility and said it had also captured three gendarmes, members of a police force under military control. But one captive managed to slip away and walked 80 km south through arid terrain before reaching the town of Niono, a local gendarme said on Friday, speaking on condition of anonymity. The individual was identified as a non-commissioned officer but his name was not given.

Tractors snarl Valencia

Madrid: Thousands of Spanish farmers were out protesting on Friday, their tractors gridlocking the streets of Spain's third-largest city as they demanded "fair prices" for their products. Since the end of January, thousands of farmers and livestock breeders have joined a growing wave of protest over low prices and rising production costs which unions say have eroded profitability across the sector. During the late morning, thousands of demonstrators and hundreds of tractors brought the coastal city of Valencia to a halt, with tractors also blocking many roads in the southern Andalusia region. Other rallies were taking place in Asturias in the north as well as in the northeastern region of Catalonia.

APPEAL OVER PELL CONVICTION SET FOR MARCH

Sydney, Feb. 14: The final appeal by Cardinal George Pell against his child sex abuse convictions will be held by Australia's High Court on March 11-12, the court announced on Friday.

Turkey to help Pak against FATF action

A minimum of three votes are required for any country to escape the FATF blacklisting

Islamabad, Feb. 14: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said he would help Pakistan stay off a terrorism financing blacklist at a meeting of a global finance watchdog, a move he suggested would counter "political pressure" from Islamabad's critics.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which tackles money laundering, told Islamabad late last year that it could face blacklisting if it continued to apply inadequate controls over terrorism financing.

The FATF is meeting

next week in France, and support from Turkey and longtime allies like China, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia could help Pakistan remain off the blacklist.

A minimum of three votes are required for any country to escape the blacklisting.

If it joined the blacklist alongside Iran and North Korea, Islamabad would face sanctions and economic setbacks at a time when its economy is struggling with a balance of payment crisis.

"We will be supporting Pakistan at the Financial

Action Task Force meetings, where Pakistan is subject to political pressure," Erdogan told Pakistan's parliament a day after he arrived in Islamabad.

The FATF already has Pakistan on its "gray-list" of countries with inadequate controls over curbing money laundering and terrorism financing. But India, which came close to war with its nuclear-armed neighbour last year, wants Pakistan blacklisted.

Of 40 recommendations made by the watchdog, Pakistan had fully com-

plied with only one, largely complied with nine, partially complied with 26, and totally missed four parameters, which were mandatory if Islamabad wanted to be removed from the gray-list, a review by the group last year said.

The FATF says Pakistan should adequately identify, assess and understand risks associated with militant groups operating in Pakistan such as Islamic State group, al-Qaeda, Jamat-ud-Dawa, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad, which continue to raise funds openly. Pakistan says it has

made a significant improvement on the requirements since the last review.

Islamabad says it has seized the groups' assets and put the militants on trials, like the entire leadership of the JuD, including its chief Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks in India, which killed 166 people.

In a move praised by Washington as an important step forward, Saeed was jailed for 11 years on Wednesday on terrorism financing charges.

— Reuters



Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan receives Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the Parliament in Islamabad on Friday. — AP

PROSECUTORS GET FINAL WORD AT HARVEY TRIAL

New York, Feb. 14: By the time prosecutors at Harvey Weinstein's rape trial give their closing argument on Saturday, it will have been more than a week since jurors heard one of his accusers recount what prosecutors describe as a vile sexual encounter with the disgraced Hollywood mogul.

In the days since, Weinstein's lawyers have called witnesses who raised doubts about the accusers' testimony, brought in an expert who spoke about memories getting fuzzy over time and offered an epic, hourslong closing argument painting the prosecution's case as a "sinister tale" and the allegations as "regret renamed as rape."

Now, prosecutors look to focus the jury's attention back on the accusers who testified and their harrowing accounts alleging rapes, forced oral sex, groping, masturbation, lewd propositions and casting couch experiences.

Several women testified that Weinstein ignored pleas of "no, no, no" as he assaulted them.

The woman Weinstein is charged with raping said he would turn violent when he couldn't get his way and that, "if he heard the word 'no,' it was like a trigger for him."

Another woman recalled Weinstein sneering, "You'll never make it in this business, this is how this industry works," when she laughed off his advances. Having the last word before jurors hear instructions and start deliberating Tuesday, prosecutors must also answer some of the defense's knocks on their case. Chief among them: that the two women Weinstein is charged with attacking were opportunists who willingly latched on to the once-powerful producer. — AP



Harvey Weinstein

MEMORY | POWER

Mom 'reunites' with dead daughter in VR show

Seoul, Feb. 14: A tearful reunion between a mother and her dead daughter via advanced virtual reality for a South Korean television has become an online hit, triggering fierce debate about voyeurism and exploitation.

The footage began with the girl — who died of leukaemia in 2016 — emerging from behind a pile of wood in a park, as if playing hide-and-seek. "Mum, where have you been," she asks. "I've missed you a lot. Have you missed me?"

Tears streaming down her face, Jang Ji-sung reached out towards her, wracked with emotion. "I have missed you Na-

Mammoth task



Adine Roode, founder of the Hoedspruit Elephant Rehabilitation and Development center, tries to feed Khansya, a five-month-old albino elephant in Hoedspruit, South Africa. Khansya was severely wounded by a manmade snare set by a poacher in the lower Kruger park. She was found days later severely dehydrated and brought to the Hoedspruit elephant rehab center. — AP

UAE's first temple not to have steel, ferrous materials

Dubai, Feb. 14: The first Hindu temple in the UAE's capital Abu Dhabi will not use any steel or ferrous materials and will be built adopting the traditional temple architecture in India, temple committee officials have said.

Two years after the groundbreaking ceremony of the Swaminarayan temple of the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) witnessed a major construction milestone as first fly ash concrete pouring for its raft foundation took place on Thursday.

A large number of expatriates from the Indian diaspora gathered at the site of the temple to witness the major construction milestone. Describing the ceremony as UAE's largest single pouring of fly ash concrete in 3,000 cubic meters, Ashok Kotecha, spokesperson of the temple committee, told *Gulf News*: Usually, (building) foundations have a mix of concrete and steel. However, as per traditional temple architecture in

India, no steel or iron reinforcements will be used. "Fly ash will be used to reinforce the concrete in the foundation. Throughout the (whole structure of the) temple, the architecture is like several pieces of jigsaw put together without any steel or ferrous materials.

Fly ash is used as a reinforcement in concrete. In some cases, fly ash can add to the concrete's final strength and increase its chemical resistance and durability. Fly ash can significantly improve the workability of concrete.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for BAPS temple in the capital of the UAE, home to over three million people of Indian origin, in 2018 via video conferencing from the Dubai Opera House. Over 3,000 craftsmen are working tirelessly in India, carving icons and statues with 5,000 tonnes of Italian Carrara Marble and the exteriors will be made of 12,250 tonnes of pink sandstone. India's ambassador to UAE Pavan Kapoor and Indian Consul General in Dubai Vipul were present along with several prominent members of the Indian business community and members of the Community Development Authority (CDA), Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the *Gulf News* reported.

Addressing the audience, Kapoor thanked the UAE government and said, it was a great privilege and honour to visit the temple site for the first time. The ceremony was conducted by Brahmavihari Das, the senior most saint of the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple group. — PTI

ISRAELI ATTACK ON DAMASCUS KILLS 7 FIGHTERS

Beirut, Feb. 14: Israeli strikes on Damascus airport killed seven fighters, a war monitor said on Friday, the latest in a string of attacks targeting Iran's military presence in Syria.

Syrian state media said only that its air defenses intercepted missiles over the capital overnight while Israel did not immediately comment on the strikes.

Israel routinely fires missiles at what it says are Iranian targets in Syria, where elite Iranian forces and allied militia play a key role.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the strikes launched on late Thursday hit military targets in the area of the international airport.

Rami Abdel Rahman, the director of the Britain-based Observatory, said the dead were three Syrian soldiers and four members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

A Syrian army source quoted by SANA said the attack took place at 11:45 pm. — PTI

Fat cat candidates shake up race to be US president

Washington, Feb. 14: They're flooding the airwaves with campaign ads targeting Donald Trump. And they're paying for them with their own money.

Billionaires Mike Bloomberg and Tom Steyer have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in their efforts to win the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. And so far, it seems like that strategy is working.

Bloomberg, who skipped the Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary — is mounting in nationwide polls, while Steyer is gaining ground in South Carolina, a key state that votes later this month.

But some of their rivals are crying foul, accusing them of corrupting the party's contest for the right to take on Trump in November.

"He's part of the problem," frontrunner Bernie Sanders said in an interview with SiriusXM radio.

"Look: Bloomberg — anybody else in America — has the right to run for president, but I think in a democracy, you do not have the right to buy the presidency."

From when he entered the White House race in November until end of 2019, the 77-year-old Bloomberg, a media mogul and former New York mayor, spent about \$200 million of his own money on ads, his campaign said.

According to tracking

firm Advertising Analytics, he spent more than \$300 million through early February.

"It's completely unique. There's been nothing like this in the history of American politics," said Bill Sweeney, an expert on politics at American University.

Bloomberg — the ninth richest person in the world, according to *Forbes* with a net worth of more than \$55 billion — has shaken up the Democratic presidential campaign.

While most other contenders have been on the trail for more than a year meeting voters, the ad blitz by the one-time Republican has already had a serious impact.

Bloomberg is now running third in nationwide polls behind Sanders and former vice-president Joe Biden, according to an average compiled by RealClearPolitics.

Of course, polls at this stage of the game are to be taken with a grain of salt, because the race really is a state-by-state affair.

But even on that level, Bloomberg is investing, building a vast grassroots staff and setting up campaign offices. Some of his rivals cannot afford to match such a presence.

Bloomberg is looking ahead to Super Tuesday on March 3, when voters in 14 states will cast their ballots. He will also formally skip the Nevada caucuses and the South Carolina primary. — AFP

INDIAN SENTENCED FOR FERRYING PEOPLE WHO ILLEGALLY ENTERED U.S.

New York, Feb. 14: A 30-year-old Indian citizen, who worked as an Uber driver, has been sentenced to a year in prison for knowingly transporting individuals who had entered the US illegally in exchange for money.

He was sentenced on Friday to 12 months in prison for knowingly transporting illegal aliens within the United States for the purpose of financial gain, US Attorney Grant Jaquith said.

Singh, who worked as an Uber driver, admitted that between January 1, 2019 and May 20, 2019, he picked up several aliens whom he knew had crossed illegally into the United States and transported them into the interior of the country, in exchange for payment. On May 20, 2019, the day he was arrested for this offense, Singh drove to a location in New York State to pick up two aliens — including a child — who had illegally crossed into the US from Canada. The aliens paid Singh USD 2,200 after he picked them up. Singh, who previously sought and received asylum in the United States, faces possible deportation as a result of this offence. — PTI

BABY AMONG 87 RESCUED OFF CANARY ISLANDS

Madrid, Feb. 14: A baby born on a rickety boat bound for the Canary Islands was one of 87 migrants picked up by rescuers overnight, Spanish rescuers said on Friday.

The migrants, all of them from sub-Saharan Africa, were travelling on three boats which were picked up just south of the island of Gran Canaria, a spokeswoman for the Salvamento Maritimo rescue service said.

"A new-born baby was rescued and it seems that the mother gave birth in the boat just beforehand," she said. — AFP

yeon," she told the computer-generated six-year-old, her hands moving to stroke her hair. But in the real world, Jang was standing in front of a studio green screen, wearing a virtual reality headset and touch-sensitive gloves, her daughter's ashes in a locket around her neck. At times the camera cut to Jang's watching husband and their three surviving children, wiping away tears of their own.

A nine-minute clip of the Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) documentary *I Met You* has been watched more than 13 million times in a week on Youtube. Many viewers



The documentary showcasing advanced virtual reality technology by engineering an encounter between a mother and her dead daughter, has triggering an outpouring of sympathy and debate over the issue. — AFP

offered Jang their sympathy and support for the concept. "My mother unexpectedly passed away two years ago and I wish I could meet her through virtual reality," said one. But media columnist

Park Sang-hyun said the documentary amounted to exploitation of personal pain.

"It's understandable a grief-stricken mother would wish to meet her late daughter. I would do the same," he said.

"The problem lies in that the broadcaster has taken advantage of a vulnerable mother who lost a child for sake of the viewer ratings."

"If the mother had been counselled before the filming," he added, "I wonder what kind of a psychiatrist would approve this."

It took eight months of filming and programming to create the virtual Na-yeon, but the makers of

the documentary insisted the broadcast was intended to "console the family" rather than promote virtual reality in ultra-wired South Korea.

The technology presented a "new way to keep loved ones in memory", one of the producers told reporters.

Jang herself — who has her daughter's name and date of birth tattooed on her arm in memory — hoped the programme could "console" others who had lost loved ones.

"Even though it was a very brief... I was really happy in the moment," she wrote on her blog — which she has since turned private. — AFP

IN BRIEF

**Saudi, Israel have no plans to meet**

**Dubai:** Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said no meeting is planned between the kingdom's crown prince and Israel's prime minister, a statement apparently meant to quash reports circulating in Israeli media this week of an alleged summit between the two. "There is no meeting planned between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saudi Arabia's policy has been very clear since the beginning of this conflict," Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud told the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya English news website in a report on Thursday.

**48 Rohingyas held at Myanmar coast**

**Patheingyi (Myanmar):** Nearly 50 Rohingya Muslims have been detained at sea by Myanmar's navy, a local official said on Friday, the latest from the persecuted minority to be caught trying to flee camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar's restive Rakhine state. It was not immediately clear where the group started their boat journey but they were likely aiming for Malaysia or Indonesia. Thousands of Rohingyas have taken to the sea over the years in high-risk attempts to escape sprawling refugee camps in Bangladesh and oppressive conditions in Rakhine. Village administrator Myint Thin told AFP by phone the navy had picked up 48 Rohingyas men, women and children, as well as five "traffickers", at sea on Wednesday evening.

**Man sentenced in Hisahito case**

**Tokyo:** A Japanese man who left two kitchen knives on the school desk of Japan's Prince Hisahito, who is second in line to the throne, was given a suspended sentence on Friday. The man was handed an 18-month sentence, suspended for four years, a Tokyo district court spokesman said. Kaoru Hasegawa was arrested in April on suspicion of illegally entering the premises of the junior high school that the prince attends. He was also accused of violating Japan's firearms law.

**Balloon attacks re-emerge in Gaza**

**Gaza:** As the bunch of brightly-coloured balloons floated into Gaza's evening sky, there was a piercing crackle of gunfire. Moments earlier, the balloons had been launched by a group of masked young Palestinian men huddled near the Al-Bureij refugee camp. They attached explosives to the balloon before setting it adrift towards Israel. Israeli troops along the border tried to down the device, but the balloons floated on. Explosives tied to balloons and kites first emerged as a weapon in Gaza, ruled by the Islamist group Hamas, during intense protests in 2018, when the devices drifted across the border daily, causing thousands of fires in Israeli farms and communities. Israel blamed Hamas for the balloon attacks, which eventually stopped after the two sides reached secret agreements to slightly ease the blockade in exchange for calm.

**LANKA OKAYS EXTENSION OF E-VISA FACILITY**

**Colombo, Feb. 14:** Sri Lanka has approved the extension of the free visa-on-arrival scheme until April 30 for the citizens of 48 countries, including India, a senior minister said, as the country's tourism sector took another hit due to the deadly coronavirus outbreak in China. In April, Sri Lanka suspended its plans to grant visa-on-arrival to citizens of 39 countries after the devastating Easter Sunday bombings that killed 258 people. In July, the island nation added more countries, including India and China after it re-launched the free visa on arrival scheme, which was implemented from August 1. "With the introduction of the free visa scheme, we saw an increase of 10 to 12 per cent in tourist arrivals after the Easter attacks but with the coronavirus onset, the sector is getting adversely affected once more and hence it is important to extend the facility for three more months," Ramesh Pathirana said.

# 11 passengers leave cruise ship

Those who test positive will be transferred to the hospital, says Japanese health min

**Yokohama, Feb. 14:** The first passengers began leaving a quarantined cruise ship off Japan's coast on Friday to finish their isolation in government-designated lodging after testing negative for the new coronavirus. Japan's government has given passengers aged 80 or older in poor health or confined to wheelchair inner cabins on the Diamond Princess the chance to move from the ship to accommodation on land. But only those who test negative for the virus that has so far infected more than 200 people on board the ship have the option to move.

The first of them departed the massive cruise ship on Friday afternoon, travelling in buses with blacked out windows. At the wheel, one driver was dressed in a head-to-toe white protective suit, complete with goggles and mask. A government official said 11 people had left, but declined to say whether more would depart or offer further details.

The move comes a day after the number of infections diagnosed on the ship rose to 218.

Senior health ministry official Gaku Hashimoto boarded the ship Friday morning to announce that all passengers "who are considered to be high risk in general health" would now be tested for the virus. "Those who test positive will be transferred to the hospital. Those who test negative will — at the request of the individual — disembark and be transferred to accommodation provided by the government," he said in a statement in English read out by the ship's captain in a public broadcast. "We are aware that many people are worried and concerned about the situation. However, to improve the situation as much as possible, the government is making its best efforts," the statement said.

There were more than 3,700 people on the ship when it arrived off the Japanese coast last week, but those diagnosed with the virus have been taken off the boat, along with some people suffering other health conditions requiring medical attention. Ten of those hospitalised are now in serious condition, Health minister Katsunobu Kato said on Friday. Excluding the cases on the ship, and an infected quarantine officer, Japanese authorities have so far diagnosed 33 people with the newly named COVID-19. The newly diagnosed cases include a woman in her 80s whose positive test result emerged after she died in hospital.

The woman was reportedly the mother-in-law of a taxi driver in Tokyo who has also been diagnosed with the virus. A doctor in Wakayama prefecture and a patient treated in the hospital where the doctor worked have also been diagnosed.

Officials in the region said they were still not sure if the doctor had infected the patient. "It is difficult to trace the route of the infection", governor



A bus with a driver wearing protective gear departs from the docks next to the Diamond Princess cruise ship at the Daikoku Pier Cruise Terminal in Yokohama port on Friday. — AFP

## Love in the time of Coronavirus

**Tokyo, Feb. 14:** "Cupid's avocado" for dinner, heart-shaped messages for the crew, but also painful separation: for those trapped on board the quarantined Diamond Princess cruise ship, Friday is no ordinary Valentine's Day.

Wearing a red dress and a red hair tie, the ship's entertainment manager Natalie posted a Valentine's Day video on Twitter to try to keep spirits up. "I just wanted to check in with everybody and say that we are all hanging in there, doing fine and keeping together as a big family," she said, admitting with a smile: "This hasn't

been my regular attire for the last week or so." Passenger Matt Smith, 57, was marking Valentine's Day on board with his wife of 21 years, Katherine Codekas, also 57 — and admitted this was not their first-choice location for the special day.

"After 21 years of marriage, we don't make a big deal of it, but I usually get Katherine a card at least," he told AFP from the ship. "I think she was a little disappointed with our setting," he added. "Facebook reminded me this morning that three years ago we were in Las Vegas. Way to rub it in!" Passengers on

board were being offered a "Valentine's Day" breakfast, Smith said. "We were reminded what day it was by the delivery of what the crew member said was a 'special' breakfast," he said.

"Not sure why hard-boiled eggs, sausage, and sauteed mushrooms are special." The dinner menu, on the other hand, promises several special treats in honour of the day. "Cupid's Avocado and Shrimp salad" to start, followed by "Shrimp Valentine Japanese style with rice and vegetables." The main course is the French classic Coq au Vin with

mashed potato and vegetables, and a "Valentine's Day surprise dessert of the day" is promised. "Coq au Vin, yes please," tweeted Yardley Wong, who has been posting her efforts to keep her young son entertained on the ship. "A special meal for Valentine's Day, a reserved bottle of red," she added, with her usual hashtag #hanginthereDiamondPrincess and a picture of a bottle of wine.

She also posted a drawing by her son for Valentine's Day, with the caption "Stay strong, we are with you Diamond Princess." — "Love never fades" — AFP

## 121 new deaths from COVID-19 in China

**Beijing, Feb. 14:** The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has spiked to nearly 1,500 with 121 new fatalities reported mostly from the worst-affected Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection jumped to nearly 65,000, health officials said on Friday.

The hard-hit Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak, has reported 116 new fatalities and reported 4,823 new confirmed cases on Thursday, the provincial health commission said on Friday.

The death toll in China's coronavirus epidemic has gone up to 1,488, the health officials said on Friday. The National Health Commission said, with 5,090 new cases the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases soared up to 64,894 as of Thursday.

The commission said it received reports of 121 deaths on Thursday with 5,090 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection from 31 provincial-level regions. Among the deaths, 116 were in Hubei Province, two in Heilongjiang, and one in Anhui, Henan and Chongqing respectively, the commission said. The number of new cases in Hubei Province included 3,095 clinically diagnosed cases, which have been seen as con-

**ALREADY 15-MEMBER advance WHO team has arrived in China on Monday.**

**COMMISSION SAID it received reports of 121 deaths on Thursday with 5,090 new confirmed cases of novel coronavirus infection in China**

firmed cases. The new deaths also include eight who were clinically diagnosed.

The latest report brought the total confirmed cases in Hubei province to 51,986, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The World Health Organisation on Thursday said a sharp rise of 254 cases of COVID-19 (official name for coronavirus) cases in China, due to a change in counting methods, did not represent a big shift in the epidemic.

Of the 254, Hubei and its provincial capital Wuhan reported 242 deaths, the single highest in a day so far. "This does not represent a significant change in the trajectory of the outbreak," Michael Ryan, head of WHO's health emergencies programme, told a press conference in Geneva.

"We're not dealing, from what we understand, with a spike in cases of 14,000 on one day," he said.

— PTI

## Masks top V-day gift in Hong Kong

**Hong Kong, Feb. 14:** Hong Kong's flower markets are lamenting a dismal Valentine's Day sales as the city battles the deadly coronavirus outbreak, with admirers joking that a box of face masks is a better way to say "I love you" than a bouquet.

A man Fong, an art director at a flower shop in the district of Mong Kok, says the usually bumper week leading up to Valentine's Day has been horrendous for business. "It's much worse than previous years, not many people are going out onto the streets because of the virus," he told AFP, estimating a 40 percent drop in sales.

The supply of flowers has "also dropped as many of our original suppliers from the Chinese mainland... are closed because of the coronavirus," he said, adding his company has had to import flowers from the Netherlands and Taiwan instead.

A manager at another store, who gave her name as Joyce, said her shop has had to reduce what they buy as customer interest wits. "Fresh flowers could only keep for five to seven days. We don't want to order too much in case we can't sell them," she said.

The hot commodity this year is instead face masks, an item in short supply,

**BUSINESSES ARE bracing for a hit, knowing couples are less likely to leave their apartments but some are implementing measures to draw the intrepid out. Multiple cinema chains have said they will only sell tickets for every other row in a bid to widen the distance between customers**

with lengthy queues popping up outside any pharmacies that announce a new delivery.

A third of respondents to a customer survey by local matchmaking service Hong Kong Romance Dating said surgical masks and hand sanitiser were the Valentine's Day gifts they were most hoping for.

Social media was full of pictures of alternative bouquets — of masks, rice, wet-wipes, toilet roll and other commodities disappearing from supermarket shelves.

Businesses are bracing for a hit, knowing couples are less likely to leave their apartments but some are implementing measures to draw the intrepid out. Multiple cinema chains have said they will only sell tickets for every other row in a bid to widen the distance between customers. — AFP



A jubilant passenger reacts as he disembarks from the Westerdam cruise ship in Sihanouville, Cambodia on Friday. — AFP

# China refutes charges on lack of transparency on patients

**Beijing, Feb. 14:** China on Friday rejected US allegations that it is not transparent enough in sharing the details about the coronavirus outbreak, saying it was working with the international community in an "open and highly responsible manner" to contain the global crisis.

China's comments came after Larry Kudlow, the director of President Donald Trump's Economic Council, said that the US is little disappointed over not being invited in the medical operations and the lack of transparency coming from the Chinese over coronavirus outbreak.

Stressing that unanswered questions were mounting and there was no sign of the promised cooperation, Kudlow said: "We're more than willing to work with the WHO on this (coronavirus) and they won't let us".

"I don't know what their motives are. I do know that apparently, more and more people are suffering over there," Kudlow said in Washington.

The death toll in China's novel coronavirus outbreak has spiked to nearly 1,500 with 121 new fatalities reported mostly from the worst-affected Hubei province while the confirmed cases of infection jumped to nearly 65,000, health officials said on Friday.

State-run CGTN reported that 505 cases of the virus were abroad, including 15 cases of the virus in the US. Ever since the coronavirus outbreak that shook China and the world, Beijing has not acceded to requests by the US to permit American specialists to visit the country to take part in the medical operations to counter the virus. Instead, China has permitted a team of the

WHO specialists to visit the country and assist it to contain the virus.

While a 15 member WHO advance team has arrived on Monday, the rest expected to reach here soon.

However, China's foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said that China has been working with the international community to tackle the epidemic in an open, transparent and highly responsible manner. China has been working with the international community to tackle the epidemic in an open, transparent and highly responsible manner for the sake of global public health security and all people's health," Geng was quoted as saying during an online media briefing by the AFP. — AFP

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
TIMBER NOTICES  
Invitation of Tender for Road & Timber (L&E) (Contract System)  
The O&M (Contract System) Free Tender (2020) for and on behalf of the president of the Corporation is invited to submit proposals for the supply of timber and other materials through the procurement system for many of the following items:

No.	Item Description	Qty.	Closing Date
1	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
2	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
3	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
4	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
5	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
6	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
7	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
8	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
9	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
10	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020

For more information, please visit the website: [www.northernrailway.com](http://www.northernrailway.com)

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7	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
8	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
9	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020
10	RESIDUAL	1,000,000	11.02.2020

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**CAN FIN HOMES LTD.**  
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMEDIATE PROPERTY  
The below described immovable property is being offered for sale by the Seller to the Buyer through the online platform of the Seller's website. The Seller is a registered real estate agent and is authorized to sell the property on behalf of the Seller. The Buyer is invited to submit proposals for the purchase of the property through the online platform of the Seller's website. The Seller is a registered real estate agent and is authorized to sell the property on behalf of the Seller. The Buyer is invited to submit proposals for the purchase of the property through the online platform of the Seller's website.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**  
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**IN BRIEF**

**Billie Eilish unveils  
Jame Bond's music**

**Los Angeles:** Teen pop sensation Billie Eilish has come out with the official theme song of Daniel Craig's upcoming James Bond movie *No Time To Die*. The 18-year-old singer, who has written the song with her brother Finneas O'Connell, is the youngest artist in history to record the theme track for the long-running spy franchise. The slow, moody track song produced by Eilish, Finneas and Stephen Lipson, and has orchestral arrangements by Hans Zimmer and Matt Dunkley and guitar from Johnny Marr. "It feels crazy to be a part of this in every way. To be able to score the theme song to a film that is part of such a legendary series is a huge honour. James Bond is the coolest film franchise ever to exist. I'm still in shock," the singer said in a statement posted on official site of the franchise. With her track, Eilish follows in the footsteps of British singers Adele and Sam Smith, who won an Oscar for *Bond* franchise songs. — PTI

**Rufus Sewell to play  
Elvis Presley's father**

**Los Angeles:** Actor Rufus Sewell will be essaying the role of Elvis Presley's father Vernon Presley in filmmaker Baz Luhrmann's much-anticipated musical drama on the life of the legendary singer. Austin Butler is playing the king of rock and roll in the film, titled *Elvis*, which also feature actor Tom Hanks as Presley's manager, Colonel Tom Parker. The movie will follow the veteran manager and the young singer, who came from dirt-poor origins to become an icon who changed the course of music history, reported Variety. Besides Sewell, the film also star Maggie Gyllenhaal as Presley's mother Gladys. — PTI



**Pattinson's Batman  
revealed in new video**

**Los Angeles:** Filmmaker Matt Reeves has revealed the first look of Robert Pattinson as *The Batman* from his upcoming film about the iconic DC superhero. The filmmaker took to Twitter to shared the first camera test for the upcoming film, titled *The Batman*. In the short clip, Pattinson, dressed as the caped crusader, is approaching towards the camera that is set in a dark room saturated in red light. First capturing the superhero's official logo on the chest, the camera then moves upward to show the actor with the iconic cowl. All this while, Michael Giacchino's thunderous and emphatic score is ringing aloud in the background. Pattinson is taking on a part that was previously played by the likes of George Clooney, Christian Bale and Ben Affleck, among others. — PTI

**BRIAN HENRY TO  
PLAY MARVEL'S  
FIRST GAY HERO**

**Los Angeles:** Actor Brian Tyree Henry's Phastos in Marvel Studios big budget film *The Eternals* will be the first LGBTQ character of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), his co-star Haaz Sleiman has revealed. Henry, best known for starring in movies such as *If Beale Street Could Talk*, *Widows* and *Joker*, is starring alongside Richard Madden, Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Gemma Chan and Kit Harington in the much-awaited film. The project, being helmed by Chloe Zhao, will release worldwide in November this year. Sleiman, who has starred in movies such as *The Visitor* and *Those People*, told *New Now Next* that he is playing the husband of Henry's character, who will be the first gay superhero of the MCU. "I just shot a Marvel film with the first openly gay superhero, *The Eternals*. I'm married to the gay superhero Phastos, played by Brian Tyree Henry, and we represent a gay family and have a child," the 43-year-old actor said. — PTI



## Board of French Oscars quits after Polanski row

Filmmaker wanted in US for raping 13-year-old girl since 1978

**Paris:** The entire board of the Cesar Academy, France's equivalent of the Oscars, resigned Thursday just two weeks ahead of its gala award night after more than 200 actors, producers, directors and movie personalities demanded "profound reform".

The academy had come under fire after Roman Polanski's new film *An Officer and a Spy* topped the list of nominations for this year's Cesar awards which will be handed out on February 28.

Polanski has been wanted in the US for the statutory rape of a 13-year-old girl since 1978 and is persona non grata in Hollywood.

"To honour those men and women who made cinema happen in 2019, to find calm and ensure that the festival of film remains just that, a festival, the board... Has unanimously decided to resign," the academy said in a statement.

"This collective deci-



Roman Polanski

The academy had come under fire after Roman Polanski's new film *An Officer and a Spy* topped the list of nominations for this year's Cesar awards which will be handed out on February 28

sion will allow complete renewal of the board," it added.

A general meeting will be held after the upcoming awards ceremony to elect a new board and management which will work on implementing reforms and modernisation, it said.

On Wednesday in an open letter, more than 200 actors, producers, directors and movie personalities denounced the "dysfunction" at the academy and "opaqueness" in its accounts.

They also complained that the founding statutes

of the Cesars had not changed "for a very long time" and that the academy's nearly 5,000 members do not get a vote or a say in its decisions.

The academy's board in response said it would ask the National Centre for Cinema, a culture ministry agency, to appoint a mediator to oversee "deep reform" of its statutes and governance.

The academy had previously announced measures to boost female representation in its membership and representation.

The inclusion of Polanski's film on the

Cesars' shortlist was condemned by France's equality minister, women's groups and film critics, but the Cesar Academy said it could not be expected to take "moral positions" when evaluating films.

The accusation, which Polanski, now 86, denies, sparked a further backlash against the film, with some screenings cancelled. Despite this, *An Officer and a Spy* did well at the box office in France, with more than 1.5m ticket sales.

Polanski, who was expelled from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2018, launched *J'Accuse* in France last year days after a French photographer, Valentine Monnier, accused him of raping her in a Swiss ski resort when she was a teenager.

— AFP



A model (clockwise), Diana Penty, Dia Mirza and Malaika Arora (below) during the Lakme Fashion Week in Mumbai on Friday.



Miley Cyrus walks the ramp during a Fashion show in New York on Thursday.

**Russian soldier  
rolls out tanks  
for romantic  
manoeuvre**

**Moscow:** A Russian soldier has pulled out all the stops to propose to his girlfriend, with his fellow officers manoeuvring 16 tanks to surround the couple in a heart shape. The high-octane romantic stunt was filmed in a video published by the defence ministry on Friday, Valentine's Day.

As snow fell, the T-72B3 tanks rolled into position on the Alabino training ground outside Moscow.

Lieutenant Denis Kazantsev led his long-term partner Alexandra Kopytova into the centre as she held her hands over her eyes, the defence ministry's TV channel *Zvezda* reported.

Kazantsev, a platoon commander, went down on bended knee, holding a bunch of red roses.

"We've been together a very long time. We've stood the test of time and distance. Marry me!" he said as his girlfriend nodded silently. He then put a ring on her finger.

"I still don't understand what's going on," Kopytova said. "It's very unexpected." The tanks used falso take part in the annual Victory Parade on Red Square, *Zvezda* reported. — AFP

## Mariah Carey to headline Brighton Pride festival

**Los Angeles:** Mariah Carey will headline the Brighton Pride festival this summer, organisers have announced.

The singer, who has had 19 number one singles and sold more than 200 million albums, will play Pride in the Park on Saturday 1 August.

The three-day event runs from 31 July to 2 August. On Sunday, *The Pussycat Dolls* — who recently reformed — are the headline act.

Chris Jepson, from the festival, said Mariah was "a huge LGBTQ+ ally".

Last year, Kylie Minogue headlined the festival, and



in 2016 so she's a huge LGBTQ+ ally and works with the community for acceptance and inclusion. She's been a friend of the community for many years. She's a global icon, not just for the LGBTQ+ community."

He also said that he did not know how much she was being paid for the gig. Last year the festival brought more than 250,000 people to the city.

However, environmentalists criticised revellers for the volume of litter left behind, including a huge amount of laughing gas canisters. — Agencies

## Robot waitress serves in war-torn Afghanistan

**Kabul:** Afghanistan's first-ever robot waitress glides up to a table of curious diners in central Kabul and presents them with a plate of French fries.

"Thank you very much," the machine says in Dari, one of Afghanistan's two main languages. Restaurant manager Mohammad Rafi Shirzad says the humanoid robot, imported from Japan and designed to look vaguely like a woman wearing a hijab, has already pulled in new customers since it started working last



Waitress robot Timea delivers food to customers at a restaurant in Kabul on Thursday.

they see the robot bring them food."

While robots are becoming increasingly commonplace in Japan and China, they are not unusual in conflict-ravaged Afghanistan.

After decades of war that has left much of the country's infrastructure in ruins, the sight of a battery-powered waitress has provided some light relief in Kabul. Named "Timea" and measuring about five feet in height, the robot performs only rudimentary tasks. — PTI

## Macron's candidate for Paris mayor quits over sex video

**Paris:** Emmanuel Macron's candidate for mayor of Paris in next month's municipal elections has been forced to stand down after the leak of sexual images and messages online, blaming what he called "vile" attacks on his private life on social media.

Benjamin Griveaux, who was standing for the president's governing centrist La République En Marche (LREM) party, made the announcement on Friday morning less than 48 hours after the material was first posted to a website.

"My family does not deserve this. Nobody should ever be subjected to this kind of abuse," Griveaux said in a statement after a crisis meeting at his Paris campaign headquarters.

"For more than a year, my family and I have been subjected to defamatory remarks, lies, rumours, anonymous attacks, the revelation of stolen private conversations and death threats. As if all this was not enough, yesterday a new level was reached."



Benjamin Griveaux

Griveaux received support from politicians including the Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, and hard-left leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who said "The publication of intimate images to destroy an adversary is odious."

A video and text messages to a young woman purportedly from Griveaux, whose campaign has been struggling against rivals including the Socialist incumbent, Anne Hidalgo, and the former LREM MP Cédric Villani, were published by a website late on Wednesday and then spread to social media. — Agencies

**NEWS NUGGETS**

**Playing golf may help older adults live longer: Study**

**Washington:** According to recent study, playing golf at least once a month can lower older adults' risk of premature death.

"The intensity level of the activity is such that it can be maintained for a longer period of time, and it's something that people can continue to do on a regular basis," said Dr. Adnan Qureshi, the study's lead author and neurology professor.

The complete findings will be presented later in February at the American Stroke Association International Stroke Conference in Los Angeles. — Agencies

**'Smart bandage may help heal chronic wounds'**

**Boston:** Scientists have developed a wireless-controlled bandage, and a smartphone-sized platform that can precisely deliver different medications to facilitate the healing of hard to treat wounds.

According to the research, the bandage is equipped with miniature needles that can be controlled wirelessly — allowing the drugs to be programmed by care providers without even visiting the patient.

"This is an important step in engineering advanced bandages that can facilitate the healing of hard to treat wounds. The bandage does not need to be changed continuously," researcher said. — PTI

**Emotional storyline can reduce virtual reality cybersickness, says study**

**Toronto:** A storyline with emotionally evocative details may reduce feelings of nausea, disorientation, and eye strain associated with virtual reality (VR) in some people, according to a study.

Researchers found that storylines that provide context and details can help users reduce cybersickness.

"We found that people who had little to no experience playing video games had reduced cybersickness if they received this enhanced narrative, but regular video gamers did not need it because they were not predisposed to feeling symptoms," said researchers. — PTI



A model displays a design partially made of chocolate in a fashion show during an annual chocolate festival in Brussels on Thursday.

## Antarctica shatters temperature record with 20.75°C

**Sao Paulo:** Scientists in Antarctica have recorded a new record temperature of 20.75 degrees Celsius (69.35 Fahrenheit), breaking the barrier of 20 degrees for the first time on the continent, a researcher said Thursday.

"We'd never seen a temperature this high in Antarctica," Brazilian scientist Carlos Schaefer told AFP.

He cautioned that the reading, taken at a monitoring station on an island off the continent's northern tip on February 9, "has no meaning in terms of a climate-change trend," because it is a one-off temperature and not



A view of Orne Harbour in South Shetland Islands, Antarctica.

part of a long-term data set. But news that the icy continent is now recording temperatures in the relatively balmy 20s is likely to further fuel fears about the warming of the planet.

The reading was taken at Seymour Island, part of a chain off the peninsula that curves out from the northern tip of Antarctica. The island is home to

Argentina's Marambio research base.

Schaefer, a soil scientist, said the reading was taken as part of a 20-year-old research project on the impact of climate change on the region's permafrost.

The previous high was in the 19s, he said.

"We can't use this to anticipate a climatic changes in the future. It's a data point," he said.

"It's simply a signal that something different is happening in that area." Still, he added, a temperature that high had never been registered in Antarctica. Accelerating melt-off

from glaciers and especially ice sheets in Antarctica is helping drive sea level rises, threatening coastal megacities and small island nations.

The news came a week after Argentina's National Meteorological Service recorded the hottest day on record for Argentine Antarctica: 18.3 degrees Celsius at midday at the Esperanza base, located near the tip of the Antarctic peninsula.

The previous record stood at 17.5 degrees on March 24, 2015, it said. It has been recording Antarctic temperatures since 1961. — AFP

# DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020



**SPORT | 14**

**Openers fail seam and bounce test before Vihari, Pujara come to rescue**

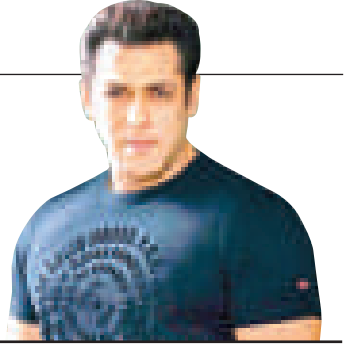


**SPORT | 16**

**Humpy shares lead after sixth round in Cairns Cup**

**TABLOID | 24**

**Salman's famous line from Wanted will also feature in Radhe, its unofficial sequel**



## GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

**1** The deepest trenches of the ocean are found in the?

- Indian ocean
- Pacific ocean
- Atlantic ocean

**2** Which one of the following national park is spread over three states?

- Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary
- Eravikulam National Park
- Bandhavgarh National Park

**3** The author of the New Deal was?

- President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- President Theodore Roosevelt
- President John Kennedy

## SHORT TAKE

### Liquor mafia held after encounter

**Noida:** A 35-year-old liquor mafia, who was trying to flee with his accomplice on a motorcycle, was held after an exchange of gunfire with the Noida Police early on Friday, officials said. The encounter took place around midnight near the Noida Special Economic Zone (NSEZ), under Phase II police station limits, they said. Two men riding on a motorcycle were intercepted by the local police for checking. Their vehicle did not have a registration plate and were gestured to slowdown for inquiry. Instead, they sped away and were chased down by the police. While fleeing, one of the men opened fire at the police team. The cops retaliated with gunshots in which the pillion rider got injured and fell off the motorcycle. The injured man was identified as liquor mafia Mehndi Hasan, who has been previously booked in at least nine cases, including one under the Gangsters Act, police said. Combing operation was launched to nab his aide who managed to escape in the night after the encounter, they added.

### 1 held for stealing water motors

**New Delhi:** A 19-year-old man was arrested for allegedly stealing water motors and meters in south-east Delhi, police said on Friday. Acting on a tip-off, police laid a trap in Kalkaji Extension area on Tuesday and nabbed Bilal while he was attempting to steal a water motor, deputy commissioner of police (Southeast) R.P. Meena said. During interrogation, the accused said he used to steal water motors and meters from the Govindpuri and Kalkaji. Six water motors and three metres were recovered from him, the DCP said.

### 1.10L Saudi Riyals seized at IGI airport

**New Delhi:** The CISF detected 1.10 lakh Saudi Riyals worth ₹20 lakh at the IGI Airport on Thursday, officials said. CISF surveillance and intelligence staff noticed the suspicious activities of a passenger in check-in area of Terminal-3. The passenger, identified as Afzal Ahmad, an Indian citizen, was bound for Dubai by an Air India flight. On physical checking of his hand bag, 40,000 Saudi Riyal were found concealed under the false back of his backpack. On thorough checking, 70,000 Saudi Riyal was also found concealed under the false bottom of his registered baggage.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- Delano Roosevelt
- President Franklin Sanctuary
- Mudumalai Wildlife
- Pacific ocean

## Kejri invites PM, city BJP MPs, MLAs for swearing-in

Modi may not attend due to his scheduled Varanasi trip

**SANJAY KAW**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

Aam Aadmi Party supremo Arvind Kejriwal has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his swearing-in ceremony on Sunday at the Ramlila Grounds where the former will take oath as Delhi chief minister for the third time. Preparations for the swearing-in ceremony are afoot at the historic Ramlila Maidan which served as the battleground for the 51-year-old bureaucrat-turned-politician during the Anna Hazare-led India Against Corruption movement.

The sprawling Ramlila Maidan, where socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan had addressed a massive gathering during the "Total Revolution" movement in 1970s, has a capacity of about 1.25 lakh people. In 2013 after the AAP's first poll victory, Mr Kejriwal's swearing-in ceremony was held at Ramlila Maidan. In 2015 too, his oath-taking ceremony had taken place at the same venue on the Valentine's Day on February 14.

Though an invitation has been sent to the Prime Minister, it is, however, not clear whether Mr



A worker installs CCTV cameras at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

Mr Kejriwal has invited Delhiites to attend his oath-taking ceremony. 'Delhiites, your son will take oath of Delhi CM for the third time. You must come to bless your son. Sunday, February 16, 10 am, Ramlila Maidan,' Mr Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.



Arvind Kejriwal

Modi would attend the swearing-in ceremony as he is travelling to his parliamentary constituency Varanasi on Sunday to inaugurate over 30 projects. Invitations for the swearing-in ceremony have also been sent to BJP's newly elected eight legislators and the party's

seven sitting local MP's. Cutting across party, Mr Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, NCP supreme Sharan Pawar, TMC's Mamata Banerjee, BJD's Naveen Patnaik and DMK supreme M.K. Stalin (DMK) had congratulated Mr Kejriwal for the historic victory.

Wishing Kejriwal on his Delhi success, the PM had tweeted: "Congratulations to AAP and Shri @ArvindKejriwal Ji for the victory in the Delhi Assembly Elections. Wishing them the very best in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Delhi." Acknowledging the wishes from the PM, Kejriwal tweeted back: "Thank u so much sir. I look forward to working closely with Centre to make our capital city into a truly world class city."

The Delhi government, North Delhi Municipal Corporation, which owns Ramlila Maidan, and Public Works Department are working in tandem to make the venue ready for the occasion. Senior AAP leader Gopal Rai will visit the Ramlila Maidan on Saturday to assess the preparations for the event.

Mr Kejriwal has extended invitation to Delhiites to attend his oath-taking ceremony to "bless their son". "Delhiites, your son is going to take oath of Delhi chief minister for the third time. You must come to bless your son. Sunday, February 16, 10 am, Ramlila Maidan," Mr Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

Controversial statements by Union ministers, MPs backfired

## City BJP holds meetings to review party's defeat

**SHASHI BHUSHAN**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

BJP's Delhi unit on Friday held a series of meetings to review the party's debacle in the recent Assembly elections.

The meetings were attended by Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari, national general secretaries Arun Singh and Anil Jain, and state unit general secretary (organisation) Siddharthan. The Union minister for state, Nityanand Rai, was also present in the meeting in the evening. The attendees of these review meetings pointed out that the inactiveness of municipal councilors, local organisation, and failure of leadership to counter AAP's government freebies are key reasons apart from many others for their defeat.

A party insider said: "Leaders in these review meet strongly complained about the inactiveness of BJP councillors and claimed that majority acted against party candidates.

Some said that ground workers and office-bearers at block level were least interested in ensuring victory of BJP candidates." Some leaders and workers also questioned about the membership drive held last year, in which the party claimed that

## Race begins for Leader of Opposition in Assembly

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

The race for the post of Leader of Opposition among party MLAs in the newly elected Delhi Assembly has started.

According to party sources, the top contenders for the post include MLA (Rohini) Vijender Gupta, the Leader of Opposition in the previous Assembly;

MLA (Karawal Nagar) Mohan Singh Bisht; and MLA (Badarpur) Ravir Singh Bidhuri.

Sources claimed that besides the trio, the party can also nominate a fresh face from among the remaining MLAs. In case of freshers, first time MLAs Ajay Mahawar from Ghonda and Abhay Verma from Laxmi Nagar, too have good chances," said a source.

nearly 18 lakh new members were enrolled in the party. Few pointed out that all the data of membership drive were fudged and that the in-charge of these membership drives must be questioned about missing members.

Some pointed out that controversial statements by Union ministers and MPs also worked against the party. Few felt that youths, especially college students, voted against the party to vent out their anger in the recent violence in campuses.

Some leaders told the state leadership that the presence of too many senior leaders, Union minis-

ters, and MPs also did not benefit as all the resources and time of candidates were wasted in making arrangements for these leaders instead of campaigning. Some complained late announcement of names of candidates.

"It was noted that not only were names of candidates announced late giving them a very short period of campaigning, their door-to-door visits were hampered by a large number of start campaigners holding large number of meetings during the limited days available for it," said a party leader.

## Global meet on traditional medicines in city from today

**New Delhi, Feb. 14:** Experts from India and abroad will deliberate on the strengths of the traditional medicine system and the challenges it faces at a three-day conference from Saturday here. The 7th International Congress of the Society for Ethnopharmacology (SFEC 2020), to be inaugurated by minister of state for AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik, will be attended by more than 2,000 experts and representatives from the industry.

Organised by Jamia Hamdard University, Delhi, the experts will dwell upon and endorse the scientific validation of regional traditional medicines and their use in the world besides deliberating on their regulatory aspects. The mega event is being supported by the Ministry of AYUSH and department of biotechnology.

On the occasion, Naik will also felicitate outstanding achievers for their contribution to the sector. The SFE-Herbal Industry Leader Award-2020 will be conferred upon K.K. Sharma, founder of AIMIL Pharmaceuticals (India) for his contribution in the field of herbal drugs as an industrialist, while the SFE Lifetime Achievement award will be given to Dr Nitya Anand in recognition to his role in discovering, designing and development of herbal medicines. The award for Outstanding International Ethnopharmacologist-2020 will be given to Dr Roy Upton, founder of American Herbal Pharmacopoeia. "Traditional medicine knowledge often gets lost while passing through generations and preserving it could be the key to address the current medical challenges," Dr Sayeed Ahmed, organising secretary of SFEC 2020 said. —PTI



Youth Congress workers protest against LPG cylinder price hike outside Shastri Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday. — BUNNY SMITH

## 2 more held in Gargi College case

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

Two more persons were arrested in connection with the alleged molestation of girls during a cultural festival at the all-women Gargi College here last week, officials said. Both the accused were 19 years of age, they added.

The police arrested two persons in connection with the incident on Thursday. On Wednesday, 10 persons,

aged between 18 and 25 years, were arrested in the case. One of the accused arrested on Thursday is a 22-year-old graduate preparing for competitive exams, while another, aged 19, is working as a telecaller in a company in the national capital.

On February 6, a group of men broke into the Gargi College during the "Reverie" fest and allegedly groped, harassed and molested the attendees, who claimed that security officials stood watching when the incident took place.

Scores of students took out a march in Delhi University's north campus on Friday in solidarity with anti-CAA protesters and the students of Gargi College. The students stopped at various points on the campus where they recited poems and raised slogans of "azaadi" and "Inquilab Zindabad".

## Kashyap visits Jamia, offers support to students

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

After Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) spectacular victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, Bollywood director Anurag Kashyap, on Friday, visited the anti-CAA-NRC protesters at Jamia Millia Islamia. He took the stage and expressed concerns about the political situation in the country.

Mr Kashyap told the protesters that he does not support the NRC (National Register of Citizens) or the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) and urged them not to lose hope as it was a "fight of patience" they were battling for the past 60 days. He started off by saying that this was his first visit



Film director Anurag Kashyap addresses anti-CAA & NRC protesters on Jamia campus in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

to Jamia and that he feels alive as he steps into the premise, "Main Jamia main pehli baar aaya hoon. Kahin lag raha tha hum mar gaye hain, par yahan aa kar laga ki hum zinda hain."

Mr Kashyap's speech received thunderous

applause from everyone gathered. When some started peaceful sloganeering, urging Mr Kashyap to join in, he said: "Main naare nahi lagata. Main sirf dil ki baat kehna hoon." Talking about the anti-CAA protests that started with Jamia and that have

## Bookie Chawla sent to Tihar jail

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 14

A day after a trial court allowed custodial interrogation of Sanjeev Chawla, the alleged bookie and key accused in one of cricket's biggest match-fixing scandals that involved former South African captain Hansie Cronje, the Delhi high court on Friday sent him to Tihar jail till further orders.

The trial court on Thursday sent Chawla to 12-day custodial interrogation by the Delhi police noting that the matter was to be probed further for which he has to be to various cities across the nation.

Chawla, extradited from the UK, has challenged the trial court order saying that during the extradition, the MHA had given assurance to the UK government that he will be kept in Tihar jail only to face trial.

As the investigating officer was not present, Justice Anu Malhotra directed the crime branch to file a status report in

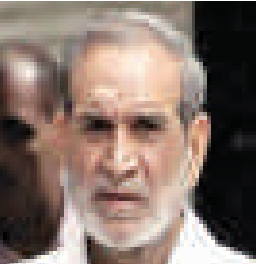
Chawla has challenged the trial court order saying that during the extradition, the MHA had given assurance to the UK government that he will be kept in Tihar jail only to face trial

the matter and said that Chawla be sent to Tihar jail till further orders.

The court also issued notice to MHA on the petition and listed the matter for further hearing on February 19. Cronje, who died in a plane crash in 2002, was also involved, the police told the court.

Chawla is alleged to have played a central role in conspiring with Cronje to fix a South African tour to India in February-March 2000.

The British court documents say Chawla is a Delhi-born businessman who moved to the United Kingdom (UK) on a business visa in 1996, but continued to make trips to India.



Sajjan Kumar

## SC refuses interim bail to riots accused Sajjan Kumar

**New Delhi, Feb. 14:** The Supreme Court Friday refused to grant interim bail to former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar, sentenced to life imprisonment in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case, and said it will hear his plea during the summer break. Kumar, who sought bail on health grounds, was awarded life imprisonment by the Delhi high court on December 17, 2018 in the case.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde made clear that the medical report of All India Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on health conditions of Kumar would be considered by it in March after a nine-judge Constitution bench would conclude hearing in the Sabarimala reference matter.

"There are cases. But this case is different and you (Kumar) have been convicted by the High Court... You (senior lawyer Vikas Singh) argue at length during summer vacations," said the bench which also comprised Justices B.R. Gavai and Surya Kant. Singh, appearing for the former Congress leader, said Kumar had been on bail all along during the trial and the lower court had acquitted him in the case and the high court set aside the verdict. "The appellant was of 67 kgs and has lost 13 kgs in last almost 13 months... Who will be responsible if something happens to him," the lawyer said, adding that the bail plea be considered urgently. —PTI

now become a nationwide phenomenon, Mr Kashyap said, "Mere liye yeh andolan Jamia se shuru hua. Yeh ladaai bahot lambi hai. Kal parson aur chunava ke sath khatm nahi hogi."

Mr Kashyap, who has been vividly critical of Union home minister Amit Shah, said that he doesn't trust what he says because none of what he or his party says is coherent.

"Humain vishwas nahi hai home minister kya kehete hain. Woh contradictory statements dete hain. Unhone kaha bill nahi layenge. Phir kaha ki teen din main baat karengi. Main sunta hi nahi hoon ab." Instead, Mr Kashyap said that he believes in people's voice. "Hum ismain vishwas

karte hain ki aap kya karte hain. Woh log jo kuch nahin keh rahe hai, woh bhi silence main apke saath hain," he added. Mr Kashyap said that the government should have a dialogue, rather than a monologue, with its people. Only that, according to him, will solve the issue at hand.

Questioning the home minister's role in controlling dissent, he said, "Home minister ka kaam hota hai humari security. Woh dissent dabane ka kaam karte hain."

Mr Kashyap also questioned why there were no arrests made post the Jamia violence. "No arrests were made in Jamia violence. The police needs to do its job; it needs to identify who those people were."

## SHORT TAKES

### Smriti rises to 4th in T20 rankings

**Dubai:** India star Smriti Mandhana on Friday rose three rungs to fourth but Jemimah Rodrigues dropped to seventh in the latest ICC women's T20 International rankings for batters. Harmanpreet Kaur has remained static at ninth in the same list. Among the bowlers, Poonam Yadav dropped six places to fall out of the top 10 and take the 12th position. Although Suzie Bates, New Zealand's No.3, retained her top spot, there were other movements in the top 10, with Bates' teammate and captain Sophie Devine rising four spots to no.2, the ICC said in a statement. Australia opener Beth Mooney and Mandhana, who made two half centuries during the tri-series, both made upward movements, while Meg Lanning, despite dropping three positions, hung on to the top five. Among the bowlers, Ellyse Perry's golden run with the ball gave her a jump of four places into the top 10, to No.7. England fast bowler Anya Shrubsole tumbled six places to fall out of the top 20. Anuja Patil and Delissa Kimmince lost out big as well, falling 11 places to 31, and 14 places to 33 respectively. — PTI

### RCB unveil new logo ahead of IPL

**New Delhi:** The Virat Kohli-led Indian Premier League side Royal Challengers Bangalore on Friday unveiled its new logo ahead of the upcoming season starting March 29. The club said the new logo design, which features a lion, "embodies the bold and fearless attitude" of the side. Speaking on the launch of the new visual identity, Sanjeev Churiwala, Chairman of Royal Challengers Bangalore, said, "The elements in the logo is a commitment to continuously entertain and engage with fans who are the force behind Royal Challengers Bangalore. "We believe a change in identity for the club was necessary to effectively live and breathe this vision and celebrate the passion for cricket and playing bold," he added. — PTI

### SA call off Pak tour citing workload

**Johannesburg:** South Africa have ruled out participation in a proposed T20 series in Pakistan following their India tour next month, citing players' workload. The tour will be rescheduled at a later date suitable to both the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Cricket South Africa (CSA), reported *ESPNcricinfo*. South Africa play three ODIs in India from March 12 to 18 and the tour of Pakistan for three T20s in Rawalpindi was planned after that. South Africa are currently playing T20s against England after competing in four Tests and three ODIs. After the three T20s against England, the Proteas will host Australia for three ODIs and as many T20s with the last match ending on March 7, leaving less than a week in between for the series-opener in India at Dharamsala. — PTI

### BCCI ACU CHIEF WANTS ACCESS TO SANJEEV

**New Delhi:** BCCI anti-corruption chief Ajit Singh on Friday said he will request Delhi Police to allow his team to question Sanjeev Chawla, an alleged bookie and key accused in one of cricket's biggest match-fixing scandals that involved late South Africa captain Hansie Cronje. Chawla, who was extradited from the United Kingdom on Thursday, has been sent to 12-day police custody by a trial court, which he has challenged in the High Court. Singh said talking to Chawla might help the BCCI get some valuable information for future investigations. "We will contact the Delhi police as he is in its custody. We would like to know from Delhi Police what all information he has shared with it. And if possible, we would like to talk to him also but totally depends on Delhi Police's permission," Singh said. "It is an old case and if it is time barred in our courts, it doesn't make a difference. We can update our data in terms of anything new he reveals which may not have been in public domain," said the BCCI ACU boss. — PTI

# Shaky start

## Openers fail seam and bounce test before Vihari, Pujara come to rescue

**Hamilton, Feb. 14:** Hanuma Vihari's gutsy hundred and the seasoned Cheteshwar Pujara's 92 were the bright spots in an otherwise dreadful batting performance by India on the first day of their warm-up game against New Zealand XI here.

All the three designated openers — Mayank Agarwal (1), Prithvi Shaw (0) and Shubman Gill (0) — failed the seam and bounce test, falling cheaply. With skipper Virat Kohli opting for an intense net session over the warm-up game, India managed only 263 with none apart from Vihari (101 retired) and Pujara able to score even 20 runs on a Seddon Park track that had liberal grass covering.

What would worry the Indian team management was failure of all the three openers. Shaw and Gill were undone by the extra bounce while Agarwal failed to counter to seam movement. New Zealand pacer Scott Kuggeleijn (3/40) got the ball to rear up awkwardly from length during his first spell and Shaw's dismissal was the ugliest one.

Kuggeleijn, who was hitting the deck hard, got one into Shaw's rib-cage leaving the batsman in no position to duck. The eyes were not on the ball with the bat face closed. The awkward hit ballooned up and was taken by Rachin Ravindra at short leg. Agarwal, who has been in horrible form of late, then edged an away going delivery to keeper Dane Cleaver behind the stumps. Another classic Test match dismissal was Gill, who was given the no.4 slot in absence of skipper Kohli. The snorter from Kuggeleijn grew big on Gill, who tried defending but the thick edge flew to gully making it 5 for 3 in no time.

Ajinkya Rahane (18) was out by the end of the first hour, edging one to the slips, before Vihari and Pujara stemmed the rot and got a 195-run stand. Once they saw of Kuggeleijn's first spell and the skiddy Blair Tickner,



India openers Mayank Agarwal and Prithvi Shaw get ready to walk in to the field. — BCCI

## Turner puts onus on Bumrah, Shami

**Hamilton, Feb. 14:** Former New Zealand skipper Glenn Turner is quite surprised that his country has its "nose ahead" in the ongoing bilateral series against India and the reason, according to him, is the underwhelming performance of the Jasprit Bumrah-led visiting pacers. However, Turner expects Bumrah and Mohammed Shami to lift their game in the upcoming two-Test series, which begins on February 21. After winning the five match T20 series 5-0, India lost the ODI series 0-3 failing to defend 347 in one game and nearly 300 (296) in the final match.

"I have no time at all for T20 cricket. It's a blot on the game. 50-over cricket, you can have a game. Technically, I felt bowling from both sides have been way below than what I had expected at international levels in both formats,"

batting became easy in the second and third session.

Once the spinners were in operation, Pujara pulled Ish Sodhi over long leg for a six while Vihari also hit three down the ground off left-arm spinner Ravindra. Pujara was finally out in the final ses-



Glenn Turner

Turner said. "Turner believes Bumrah and Shami's ability to swing the ball will work to India's advantage during the Test series. "At the moment, New Zealand have their nose ahead but I have been rather surprised, that has been the case. India have shown in three-match series they have several whats and I am surprised that they have not performed better than they have," he said. — PTI

son trying to hook Gibson even as Vihari got to the three-figure mark.

— PTI  
**Brief scores:** India 263 in 78.5 overs (Cheteshwar Pujara 92, Hanuma Vihari (ret'd out) 101, Kuggeleijn 3/40, Ish Sodhi 3/72) vs New Zealand XI.



Hanuma Vihari celebrates his hundred in a warm-up game. — BCCI

## Vihari ready to open batting if required

**Hamilton, Feb. 14:** Hanuma Vihari on Friday said he won't mind taking up the opener's role if the team management asks after India's inexperienced opening options were technically exposed by a second-string New Zealand attack on the opening day of the warm-up game here.

Coming in at no.6, Vihari scored a hundred but Mayank Agarwal, Prithvi Shaw and Shubman Gill were dismissed early, undone by the extra bounce and seam movement during the match against New Zealand XI.

The trio's performance raised doubts about its ability to face the likes of Neil Wagner, Trent Boult and Matt Henry. "As a player, I am prepared to bat anywhere. As of now, I've not been informed anything. As I said before as well, if the team requires me to bat wherever, I am ready to bat," said Vihari, who retired after scoring 101.

The Andhra player has delivered whenever given a chance. Does he feel bad about not getting to play four successive Tests after the series-opener against South Africa at Visakhapatnam last year in October?

"Sometimes you have to understand the team combination as well. You can't get disheartened by it. I understood when you are playing at home, we play five bowlers. It's obvious that one batter has to miss out. So I took it in my stride. I don't want to prove anything to anyone but just follow the process," Vihari said.

Vihari was surprised by the extra bounce on offer on Friday but is happy to have countered the challenge in the warm-up game which provided him with an opportunity to prepare well. He added 195 runs with Cheteshwar Pujara (93) after none of the other batsmen crossed the 20-run mark.

"Initially, I thought the extra bounce surprised us. (In) the couple of matches I played against New Zealand A, the pitch didn't do as much as what it did in the morning today. "Once we adjusted, me and Puji (Pujara's nickname), we got our eye in, then we knew we had to bat long and that's exactly what we did," Vihari said after the end of day's play. — PTI

# No one has perfect career: Taylor on 100 Tests



Ross Taylor

**Hamilton, Feb. 14:** Senior New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor has learnt to live with his imperfections as he stands on the cusp of a coveted 100th Test of his career.

Only Stephen Fleming, Brendon McCullum and Daniel Vettori have played more Tests than Taylor who will only enter an elite club by playing his 100th Test in the series opener, beginning in Wellington on February 21. "No one has a perfect career and you fail at some stage especially as a batter. Mistakes and scenarios make you grow as a per-

son," Taylor told reporters on Friday.

Asked what does 100 Tests mean to him, he cheekily replied: "Probably getting older! But no, I think I have been happy with what I have achieved to date."

"Test cricket and cricket in general as a batter, you go through a lot of ups and downs and that's definitely what I have been through, and as a team as well. "But Wellington holds a special place in my heart and I am sure having a lot of family and friends there will be something that I will be proud of and

● **Only Stephen Fleming, Brendon McCullum and Daniel Vettori have played more Tests than Taylor.**

look back on at the end of my career with fond memories," said the 35-year-old Taylor.

On emotions playing a distracting role in the first Test, Taylor downplayed that factor.

"I guess at the end of the day, it is another game of cricket and you try and contribute in any way

that's possible. But at the same time, you got to enjoy it for what it is. "But I am sure once you get into the game, you can enjoy it and just play cricket like you want to. Wellington can do a little bit early on, so I am sure batting or bowling, it is going to be an interesting contest."

For a journeyman cricketer, a family ready to make sacrifices is very important which is where wife Victoria's role has been pivotal in Taylor's successful journey. "It is not easy on my wife Victoria to raise three kids for as long as she has. We

play a lot but that's probably why when you do play at home, it's nice to be a dad and it's nice for them, Jonty and Mackenzie to be old enough to sort of understand what dad does."

And then he said what perhaps holds true for any professional. "Regardless of whether you score runs or not, they (kids) give dad a hug. That puts everything into perspective and hopefully when they are bit older than they are now, they will be proud of what I have achieved as a cricketer for them," added Taylor. — PTI

## MCC'S TOUR OF PAKISTAN

# Sanga's poignant return to Pak

**Lahore, Feb. 14:** Sri Lanka great Kumar Sangakkara will relive his fateful 2009 journey to Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Friday after returning for the first time since the deadly attack which plunged Pakistan into cricket isolation.

Sangakkara is captaining England's venerable MCC for four games in Lahore, where he was wounded in a militant attack on the Sri Lankan team that left eight people dead in March 2009.

International cricket is only now returning to Pakistan, who hosted Sri Lanka late last year for their first home Test series since the guns-and-rocket attack. Sangakkara, 42, suffered shrapnel wounds to his shoulder and narrowly escaped a bullet which whistled past his head as the Sri Lankan players lay pinned down on the floor



Kumar Sangakkara, captain of MCC team, walks in for a training session at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. MCC team will play a round of matches as part of the club's vision of supporting cricket in Pakistan. — PCB

of the team bus. But Sangakkara, who is also the president of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), said Pakistan was slowly restoring its reputation as a safe destination for visiting teams.

"Security is always a major concern everywhere in the world," he said after arriving in

Lahore on Thursday. "I think the steps that have been taken in Pakistan over the past few years have instilled a great amount of confidence in the cricketing nations.

"I think slowly and surely that confidence is building up and the more times international sides tour,

that message becomes stronger and harder to ignore."

The few international games in Pakistan have been guarded by tight security, with snipers on rooftops, roads sealed off and heavily armed patrols. But Sangakkara, one of the world's best batsmen of the past two decades, said playing in Lahore sends out a powerful symbol.

"I think the best thing is to send the message by the way we play on the field," said Sangakkara.

"I am happy that we are able to play our part to try and encourage countries to look at Pakistan as one of the best cricket destinations.

"It has been in the past and I am sure it will be that again very soon."

The MCC will open their tour with a Twenty20 match in Lahore on Friday. — AFP

# Bengal, K'taka make it to Ranji quarter-finals

**Patiala, Feb. 14:** Bengal and Karnataka scripted contrasting wins over Punjab and Baroda respectively to qualify for the Ranji Trophy quarter-finals on Friday.

The results on day three of the final round of Ranji Trophy also knocked Delhi out of the tournament. Punjab, needing 190 runs for victory, fluffed their run chase to be bowled out for 141, handing Bengal a 48-run victory.

Spinners dominated the game with Bengal left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed picking up four wickets in the second innings to take his match-haul to 11. Resuming day three at 199 for nine, Bengal scored only three runs to set Punjab a 190-run target. It turned out to be enough in a low-scoring game with Punjab get-

ting bowled out in 47.3 overs. Ramandeep Singh (69 not out off 104) ran out of partners in the end.

Bengal gained six points from the win, pushing them on the top of the standings.

In Bengaluru, Karnataka advanced to the quarterfinals with an eight-wicket win over Baroda. It was an improved batting effort from Baroda in the second innings after being shot out for 85 on day one.

They ended their second innings at 296 all out, setting Karnataka a 149-run target, which the hosts reached in 44.4 overs with the loss of just two wickets.

Karnataka skipper Karun Nair took the team over the line with an unbeaten 71 off 126 balls. — PTI

## BRIEF SCORES

**In Rajkot:** Tamil Nadu 424 vs Saurashtra 346/6 (Arpit Vasavada 126 not out, Avi Barot 82; K Vignesh 2/57)

**In Hyderabad:** Hyderabad 272 & 139/7 in 49 overs (Buddhi Rahul 39, Prateek Reddy 26, A. Sarvate 4/68) vs Vidarbha 333 in 113.4 overs (Faiz Fazal 151, Ganesh Satish 65; Ravi Kiran 3/25).

**In Bengaluru:** Baroda 85 and 296 (A Pathan 90, Abhimanyusingh 52; M Prasad Krishna 4/45) lost to Karnataka 233 and 150/2 (Karun Nair 71 not out; Bhargav Bhatt 2/62).

**In Nadiad:** Andhra 177 & 216/7 in 89 overs (Karan Shinde 64, B. Sumanth 47, Axar Patel 5/77) vs Gujarat 406 in 109.4 overs (Parthiv Patel 57, Axar Patel 89, Chirag Gandhi 93; Shoabid Khan 4/80).

## SHORT TAKES

### NBA All-Star to pay Kobe tribute

**Los Angeles:** Tributes to the late Kobe Bryant, the Los Angeles Lakers legend who died last month in a helicopter crash, will play a major role in Sunday's 69th NBA All-Star Game. This year's annual showcase of league talent will be played in Chicago and feature numerous nods to Bryant, a five-time NBA champion who also matched a league record with four NBA All-Star Game Most Valuable Player awards. All-Star teams guided by LeBron James and Giannis Antetokounmpo will compete to win each of the first three quarters, which will all start 0-0 and last 12 minutes. At the start of the fourth quarter, the clock will be turned off and a final target score will be established by taking the leading club's cumulative score through the first three quarters and adding 24 points — the number representing the jersey number worn by Bryant for the final 10 seasons of his NBA career. — AFP

### Kuchar grabs lead as Tiger falters

**Los Angeles:** Matt Kuchar fired a sparkling seven-under 64 on Thursday to seize a three-shot lead after the first round of the Genesis Invitational at Riviera Country Club. South Korea's Lee Kyung-hoon and Americans Russell Henley, Wyndham Clark, Adam Schenk and Harold Varner shared second on 67 with Rory McIlroy — newly returned to world number one — headlining a group of 10 on 68 that also included Australia's Jason Day and former Masters champion Patrick Reed. Tournament host Tiger Woods closed with a bogey to fall out of that bunch, cooling off after a hot start to post a two-under par 69 as he pursues a record 83rd US PGA Tour title. Woods was still a teenager when he played his first US tour event at Riviera, but he has never won on the classic course in the Pacific Palisades west of Los Angeles in 12 prior tries, and his struggles continued on Thursday. — AFP

### Park aims Tokyo slot for S. Korea

**Adelaide, Australia:** Reigning Olympic champion Inbee Park vaulted into the joint lead at the LPGA Australian Open Friday in her quest to make South Korea's team for the Tokyo Games and defend her 2016 gold medal. The seven-time major winner and former world number one carded a four-under-par 69 at the Royal Adelaide Golf Club, with England's Jodi Ewart Shadoff, the overnight leader, sinking birdies on the final two holes for a 70 to join her. They are one clear of American LPGA Tour rookie Jillian Hollis and two ahead of South Korea's Ayeon Cho and American Marina Alex. Park has set an aggressive early-season schedule to try to climb the rankings and qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. "It's probably tougher than getting a medal in the Olympics to make the team," Inbee said ahead of the tournament. — AFP

### INVINCIBLE CALEB TAKES ON VINCENT

**Washington:** Undefeated Caleb Plant defends the International Boxing Federation super middleweight title on Saturday in a hometown appearance against Germany's Vincent Feigenbutz at Nashville, Tennessee. Plant, 19-0 with 11 knockouts, won the title with a unanimous 12-round decision over former champion Jose Uzcategui of Venezuela in January 2019 at Los Angeles. He comes into the bout after defending the crown last July with a third-round stoppage of US compatriot Mike Lee at Las Vegas. "I'm excited about fighting in my hometown. I'm ready to have a great performance. This is going to be fireworks," Plant said. Vincent Feigenbutz, 31-2 with 28 knockouts, has won his past 10 fights over four years to earn the title bout in his first contest outside of Europe. "I'll win this fight anywhere it's fought," the 2016 middleweight title holder said. "I'm very happy to be here in the US on this big stage. I'm looking forward to winning a world title here," he further added. — AFP

# Celtics control LA

## Tatum pairs with Smart to outsmart Clippers

**Washington, Feb. 14:** Jayson Tatum scored 39 points, two off his career high, and Marcus Smart added 31 on Thursday to lift the Boston Celtics over the Los Angeles Clippers 141-133 in double overtime.

Tatum hit 14-of-23 from the floor, 5-of-10 from three-point range, and grabbed nine rebounds in more than 47 minutes while playing tough defense against Kawhi Leonard to send the Celtics into the NBA All-Star Game break as winners. "This was a tough one. It's nice to go to the All-Star break with a win and enjoy those moments off," Tatum said.

Tatum's hot night came after a 5-for-15 shooting effort and 0-for-7 three-point performance earlier in the week against Houston. "Just a lot of hard work. My teammates trust me and vice versa. We do a good job of getting the hot guy the ball whoever it is," Tatum said of his sizzling shooting.

Tatum struck for two late hoops in overtime, a layup over Leonard with 24.8 seconds remaining to put Boston ahead 127-124. But Landry Shamet's three-pointer pulled the Clippers level and sent the game into a second extra period, which the Celtics dominated to claim the triumph.

Lou Williams came off the Clippers' bench to score 35 points while Leonard had 28 points and 11 rebounds. Montrezl Harrell added 24 points and 13 rebounds. In the only other game on the last night of contests before the NBA All-Star Game break, Italian forward Danilo Gallinari scored 29 points on 12-of-18 shooting to lead the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 123-118 victory at New Orleans.

German reserve Dennis Schroder added 22, New Zealand center Steven Adams contributed 11 points — including his first NBA three-pointer —

and 11 rebounds. Chris Paul had 14 points and 12 assists for the Thunder. Pelicans rookie star Zion Williamson scored a game-high 32 points in his 10th NBA contest while J.J. Redick added 24 points



Abdel Nader (centre) of Oklahoma City Thunder shoots next to Jaxson Hayes (right) of New Orleans Pelicans during their NBA game in New Orleans on Thursday. The Oklahoma City won 123-118. — AP

off the bench for New Orleans. The Celtics announced Thursday that Kevin Garnett, who helped Boston capture the 2008 NBA crown, will have his number 5 jersey retired next season, the

24th former player so honored by the club. "I'm honored and thankful to have my number retired with the Celtics," Garnett said. He was the 2008 NBA Defensive Player of the

Year and an NBA All-Star in five of his six seasons with the Celtics. In 396 games for Boston, Garnett averaged 15.7 points, 8.3 rebounds, 2.7 assists, 1.2 steals and 1.0 blocks a game. — AFP

# Dortmund look to Haaland again

**Berlin, Feb. 14:** Borussia Dortmund must tighten their defence and trust teenage striker Erling Braut Haaland to provide the goals against Bundesliga giant-killers Eintracht Frankfurt on Friday after a "week to forget".

Dortmund conceded two goals inside 82 seconds late on during last Saturday's 4-3 defeat at Bayer Leverkusen which left senior club bosses fuming.

After eight goals in his four previous games, it was the first time new signing Haaland, 19, had failed to score for Dortmund.

Former captain Sebastian Kehl said the Leverkusen defeat capped a "week to forget", four days after being dumped out of the German Cup with a 3-2 loss at Werder Bremen.

"We're conceding too many goals, which often means we lose the reward for our work as we're scoring enough," said sporting director Michael Zorc.

The league and cup disappointments leave third-placed Dortmund lagging four points behind leaders Bayern Munich.

It will be no easy task to reboot their title challenge at Signal Iduna Park against Frankfurt, while they also have Tuesday's

Champions League last-16 first leg against Paris Saint-Germain looming on the horizon.

Dortmund are missing injured forwards Marco Reus and Julian Brandt, while visitors Frankfurt have already claimed two big

scalps in the league this season. Bayern suffered a humiliating 5-1 defeat in Frankfurt last November, and second-placed RB Leipzig also went down 2-0 at the Commerzbank Arena in January.

Dortmund coach Lucien Favre has been correcting defensive

flaws in training after neither Manuel Akanji nor centre-back partner Mats Hummels covered themselves in glory in Leverkusen.

"It takes time to correct a few things, but it's coming," said Favre, who comes under more pressure with each defeat.

"I don't see any other solution apart from work, work, work," he added.

In the four Bundesliga games since the winter break, Dortmund have scored 18 goals but conceded eight.

January signing Emre Can urged his teammates to "play dirty — a foul here, defend better there".

Eintracht welcome back Dutch striker Bas Dost after a stomach bug kept him sidelined for last weekend's 5-0 thumping of Augsburg.

Bayern could be without captain and goalkeeper Manuel Neuer at Cologne on Sunday as the Germany skipper has a virus, with reserve keeper Sven Ulreich on stand-by. The reigning champions are bidding for a seventh win in eight league games, after being held to a goalless draw by Leipzig last Sunday. — AFP



In this file photo, Dortmunds Norwegian forward Erling Braut Haaland celebrates after scoring during the German first division Bundesliga football match against FC Union Berlin in Dortmund.

Champions League last-16 first leg against Paris Saint-Germain looming on the horizon.

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# Tokyo Games are safe, insists IOC

**Tokyo, Feb. 14:** Olympic chiefs admitted Friday they face a "very big communications job" to soothe concerns over the coronavirus epidemic in the run-up to this summer's Tokyo Games.

The head of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) coordination commission insisted there was no danger of Tokyo 2020 being cancelled or moved, despite fears over the fast-spreading virus which has killed nearly 1,400 and infected around 64,000 — most of them in China.

But he said the IOC will send out information packs to reassure athletes that it's safe to come into contact with competitors from China.

"The advice we have received from the World Health Organization (WHO) is that there is no case for a contingency plan to cancel or move the Games," John Coates told reporters after a project review meeting.

"Certainly it's a very big communications job that needs to be undertaken," he added, noting that China is set to send more than 600 athletes to Tokyo.

"But we hear that most of the Chinese athletes are now out of China. I don't know how many were to be involved in test events here, but I don't see a problem if they're coming from another country," he added.

Coates promised lessons would be learned from Rio four years ago, when concerns over the mosquito-borne Zika virus led to several top athletes pulling out of the Olympics, including golfers Jason Day and Rory McIlroy. "The WHO pointed out the likelihood of Zika being a problem at the time of the Games was very low," he said.

"But we did lose some



The advice we have received from the World Health Organisation (WHO) is that there is no case for a contingency plan to cancel or move the Games.

— JOHN COATES head of the IOC's coordination commission

athletes — Jason Day's wife was pregnant. We didn't communicate the information well enough," he added.

Tokyo organisers have slammed "fake news" and scare-mongering over the coronavirus outbreak for causing panic ahead of the Games, which open on July 24.

More than 25 countries have confirmed cases of the flu-like disease, which the WHO has declared a global health emergency.

Japan, which registered its first fatality on Thursday of someone who had tested positive for the virus, is one of the worst-hit countries outside of mainland China.

There have been 33 cases on land and more than 200 positive tests of people quarantined on a cruise ship floating off Yokohama since last week. Coates conceded that there could be fear among athletes about facing competitors from China. — AFP

# DIACK JUNIOR DENIES RUSSIAN DOPING GRAFT

**Paris, Feb. 14:** Papa Massata Diack, the son of former world athletics supremo Lamine Diack, has denied corruption linked to the Russian doping scandal, saying he is too rich to bribe.

Diack has been indicted by French prosecutors for allegedly accepting millions of dollars along with his father, Lamine Diack, in return for covering up positive Russian doping tests.

Diack junior is a former marketing consultant for the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), now renamed World Athletics, which was run by his father from 1999 to 2015.

He was due to go on trial in Paris from mid-January along with his father but has refused to cooperate with French authorities and remains in Senegal.

Despite two international arrest warrants issued by France, the Senegalese authorities have said they will not extradite Diack junior. In testimony to an investigating magistrate in Senegal in November, Papa Massata Diack said he was too wealthy to need to take bribes and denied covering up positive Russian doping tests from 2011.

"In all the years I worked with the IAAF and Dentsu-AMS (the IAAF marketing rights holders), I earned around \$10 million (nine million euros) from sponsoring contracts and TV rights," he testified. — AFP

# I am doing well, reassures Pele

**Rio De Janeiro, Feb. 14:** Brazilian football legend Pele sought to reassure fans on Thursday that he was doing fine, after his son alluded to depression and said the ageing star now barely leaves home.

"Thanks for your prayers and your worry. I am doing fine. I will be 80 this year," Pele, considered by many to be the greatest footballer of all time, said in a statement.

"I have good days and bad days, which is normal for people of my age," he added.

Pele has been in and out of hospital in recent years for various health issues. He never fully recovered from one of his hip operations, leaving him dependent on a walker, his son Edinho said in an interview published Monday.

"I am not missing my (advertising) commitments on my busy schedule," said Pele, the only player to win three World Cups — in 1958, 1962 and 1970.

"I continue to accept my physical limitations in the best way possible, but I try to keep the ball rolling," he added.

In the interview published on the sports news

site *Globoesporte.Com*, Edinho said his father is "pretty fragile in terms of his mobility... And that makes him suffer a kind of depression. Just imagine, he's the 'King,' he was always such an imposing figure, now he can't walk normally. He gets very shy, very embarrassed about that." — AFP



Thanks for your prayers and your worry. I am doing fine. I will be 80 this year. I have good days and bad days, which is normal for people of my age.

— PELE Retired Brazilian star footballer

# BOPANNA AND SHAPOVALOV ARE INTO SEMIFINALS

**Rotterdam, Feb. 14:** India's Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov advanced to the men's doubles semifinals of the ABN Amro World Tennis Tournament with an impressive win over fourth seeds Jean-Julien Rojer and Horia Tecau here.

They defeated the Romanian-Dutch pairing of Tecau and Rojer 6-2, 3-6, 10-7 in a quarterfinal.

They next meet the winners of the quarterfinal between Henri Kontinen and Jan-Lennard Struff, and Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski. — PTI



Stefanos Tsitsipas waves after losing his pre-quarterfinal 5-7, 4-6 to Aljaz Bedene at the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam on Thursday. — AFP

# Jordan stuns Isner at NY

**New York, Feb. 14:** Australian Jordan Thompson upset US top seed John Isner 7-6 (7/2), 6-7 (3/7), 6-3 on Thursday to reach the ATP New York Open quarterfinals.

Thompson, who will face Italy's Andreas Seppi on Friday for a berth in the semifinals, avenged a loss to Isner in last year's New York quarterfinals.

The world number 63 took his first victory in four meetings with the big-serving American.

The 25-year-old from Sydney surged ahead 5-0 in the first tie-breaker, then fell behind 4-1 in dropping the second only to take the lone break of the match in the final set.

Defending champion Reilly Opelka got the better of Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-4, 6-4, sending the US third seed into a quarterfinal against Taiwan's Jason Jung, who upset British seventh seed Cameron Norrie 6-4, 6-4. — AFP



SHORT TAKES

**Gokulam crowned IWL champions**

**Bengaluru:** Gokulam Kerala were crowned champions of the Hero Indian Women's League after a dramatic 3-2 victory over Kangchup Road Young Physical and Sports Association (KRYPHSA) FC in the final here on Friday. Gokulam Kerala raced to a 2-0 lead through early goals from Prameshwari Devi and Kamala Devi but Dangmei Grace pulled one back for Kryphsa to reduce the deficit before half-time. Ratanbala Devi levelled the scores in the second-half to set her team on course for what would have been a phenomenal comeback. However, it was Sabitra Bhandari who struck a late winner for Gokulam. The Malabarians took the lead after just 49 seconds on the clock. Kryphsa were caught napping when a speculative clearance from the Gokulam half found Sabitra Bhandari. — PTI

**Saurabh, Joshna in national finals**

**Chennai:** Tanvi Singh pulled off a surprise win over second-seeded Sunayna Kuruvilla, winning in five games to reach the women's singles final of the 77th Senior National Squash Championship here on Friday. Top seeds Saurav Ghosal and Joshna Chinappa marched into the finals with easy victories while the experienced Harinder Pal Sandhu, on a comeback trail, crashed out after going down to second seed Abhay Singh. Tanvi prevailed 11-6, 3-11, 11-8, 8-11, 12-10 in a thriller against Sunayna, the local girl, for her maiden entry into the national final. Ghosal, the 12-time champion in the men's and 17-time champion in the women's, did not have to exert themselves much to seal their berths in the summit clash. Sandhu appeared to be down and out after losing the first two games against his Mumbai opponent before launching a tenacious fightback. — PTI

**Pranavi makes a winning debut**

**Chennai:** Young Pranavi Urs made a winning start to her professional career as she notched up a one-shot victory in the third leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Friday. It was a second successive victory for Pranavi, who had emerged victorious in the second leg of the tournament, albeit as an amateur, last month in Mumbai. The 16-year-old from Mysore had won another one in 2018 as an amateur. Pranavi carded two-over 74 in the final round to end with a total of 223, one shot ahead of Amandeep Drall (77). Oviya Reddi, the local teen, had a tough final day with three double bogeys and three other bogeys against three birdies. Saaniya Sharma showed that good course management would pay as she carded the day's only sub par score. It was also the second best of the week after Pranavi's second round 69. Saaniya tied for third with Oviya, for whom this was the best finish as a pro. — PTI

**ODISHA FC KEEP PLAYOFF HOPES ALIVE WITH WIN**

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha FC kept themselves in the hunt for a Hero Indian Super League playoff spot after a come-from-behind 2-1 win over NorthEast United FC at the Kalinga stadium here on Friday. Martin Chaves (24th minute) had handed the visitors the lead but Odisha turned it around in the second half, thanks to goals from Manuel Onwu (46th) and Martin Perez Guedes (72nd). The win saw Odisha rise to the fifth spot and still with a chance to qualify for the play-offs, while NorthEast United's poor run of form continued. Odisha started the game on the front foot with Guedes seeing a shot go wide early in the game. NorthEast started to grow into the game but Odisha carried the bigger threat. Odisha had a good chance when they broke forward from a NorthEast corner in the 18th minute. Onwu charged forward before finding Xisco Hernandez who opted to go for goal from distance which forced a save from Subhasish Roy Chowdhury. However, against the run of play, NorthEast took the lead in the 24th minute. A quick free-kick from Federico Gallego sent Chaves through on goal and the Uruguayan held off Shubham Sarangi and slid a finish past goalkeeper Arshdeep Singh. — PTI

**Ron's rescue act**

**Cristiano penalty snatches Juve first-leg draw at Milan**

**Milan, Feb. 14:** Cristiano Ronaldo's injury-time penalty grabbed Juventus a 1-1 draw at AC Milan in their Italian Cup semi-final, first leg on Thursday as his incredible scoring run continued. The 35-year-old has now scored 12 goals in his last eight games in all competitions after the Portuguese ultimately got the better of old rival Zlatan Ibrahimovic despite being largely anonymous for much of the match. Milan paid for Theo Hernandez's 71st-minute red card as they failed to close out a game they had dominated for long periods and led through Ante Rebic.

Juve will now be favourites to finish the job in the second leg at the Allianz Stadium next month, with a final against either Inter Milan or Napoli up for grabs. The hosts started strongly, with Ibrahimovic heading over the crossbar inside the first minute. He continued to be a threat to his former club early on, but could only direct an ambitious backheel flick beyond the far post, before picking up a booking which will see him miss the second leg through suspension. Juventus finally produced their first shot in anger nine minutes before half-time, as Juan Cuadrado saw his low strike well saved by Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Milan started the second half as they did the first, on the front foot, but Rebic was denied an opening goal by Gianluigi Buffon. Samu Castillejo also called Buffon into action seven minutes after the break, with the 42-year-old goalkeeper able to make a comfortable save. Stefano Pioli's side finally made the breakthrough in the 61st minute, though, as Castillejo's clipped cross was volleyed home at the back post by Rebic.

Juventus were gifted a way back into the game with 18 minutes remaining as Hernandez was handed a second yellow card for a late challenge on Paulo Dybala. Dybala curled wide with five minutes remaining, but Juve were awarded a spot-kick in the final minute of normal time as VAR spotted a handball by Davide Calabria. Ronaldo stepped up and slammed the ball down the middle to score his 24th goal of the season. — AFP



Juventus' Cristiano Ronaldo (left) celebrates after scoring a penalty against AC Milan in their Italian Cup semi-final first leg match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan on Thursday. — AFP

**Reds look to extend lead as top-4 battle heats up**

**London, Feb. 14:** Liverpool are expected to take another step towards clinching a long-awaited Premier League title at bottom-of-the-table Norwich, while behind the runaway leaders the battle for Champions League places takes centre stage this weekend. The Reds can extend their mammoth 22-point lead over Manchester City at Carrow Road on Saturday as they aim to not only win the league for the first time in 30 years, but smash the record books in the process.

Jürgen Klopp's men have dropped just two points all season and are on a run of 16 consecutive league wins. That march towards the title began on the opening night of the season when Norwich visited Anfield and were 4-0 down inside 42 minutes. An injury to Alisson Becker was the one big concern of that victory for Klopp as the Brazilian was sidelined for two months. After taking some time to get back to his best form, Alisson has saved

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- Norwich vs Liverpool** from 11 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

26 of the last 27 shots he has faced, with Liverpool racking up an aggregate score of 23-1 in that time. "We want to win the title and for winning the title, you need to win everything," Alisson told Premier League Productions. "The way we play, you need to enjoy that because if you don't enjoy that then you cannot play all the games with our intensity." A massive 55 points separate Norwich from the champions-elect with the Canaries seven points adrift of safety. Daniel Farke's men desperately need to start turning good performances into points to beat the drop. However, they have shown an ability to upset

the odds with one of their four league wins this season coming against Manchester City.

**RODGERS WELCOMES A REST**

For a long time, Leicester were Liverpool's closest challengers at the top of the table, but the Foxes' form before a two-week winter break had faded with just one win in four league games. An eight-match winning streak earlier in the season means Brendan Rodgers's men still have a 10-point cushion in the race for a Champions League place and can even move back up to second with victory at Wolves on Friday. And Rodgers is hoping a fortnight's rest, without any overseas training camp, will have been the perfect tonic to recharge his side for the run-in. "There's improvements to be made, no doubt," said the former Liverpool boss. "We will now regain a bit of stability. We're all fresh ahead of this final third of the season." — AFP

**REAL SOCIEDAD EDGE CLOSER TO SPANISH CUP FINAL**

**Madrid, Feb. 14:** Real Sociedad edged second division Mirandes 2-1 in their Copa del Rey semi-final first leg on Thursday, taking a tentative step closer to a potential all-Basque final against Athletic Bilbao. Sociedad had knocked out Real Madrid 4-3 in the quarter-finals and they were in control early on at home against Mirandes, the only second-tier side to make the last-four. Captain Mikel Oyarzabal gave them a ninth-minute lead from the penalty spot after a foul by Odei Onaindia on Portu.

Mirandes were on level terms on 40 minutes thanks to Matheus Aias but Sociedad restored their advantage through Norwegian prodigy Martin Odegaard just two minutes later. Mirandes, however, will not be cowed by the challenge in the second leg next month as they bid to become the first second division side to make the final in 40 years. They have already knocked out three top flight teams to get to this stage having seen off Celta Vigo, Sevilla and Villarreal. — AFP

**BADMINTON ASIA | TEAM C'SHIPS**

**India pip Thailand to enter semifinals**

**Manila (Philippines), Feb. 14:** The Indian men's team assured itself of a medal after progressing to the semifinals with a thrilling 3-2 win over Thailand at the Badminton Asia Team Championships here on Friday. After star shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth and B. Sai Praneeth faced reversals in the first two singles ties, India fought back to win the next three ties, which included a single and two doubles rubbers, to prevail over Thailand in the quarterfinals and set up a last four meeting with two-time defending champions Indonesia. The men's team had last won a bronze after losing 1-3 to Indonesia in the semifinals of the 2016 Hyderabad edition. World Championships bronze medallist Praneeth started the proceedings, but his gallant effort ended in a 14-21, 21-14, 12-21 loss to world No. 12 Kantaphon Wangcharoen, as India lagged 0-1.

In the second singles, former world No. 1 Srikanth went down 20-22, 14-21 to Kunlavut Vitidsarn, a three-time world junior champion, as India slipped to 0-2. The pairing of M.R. Arjun and Dhruv Kapila kept India in the hunt with a 21-18, 22-20 win over Kittinupong Kedren and Tanupat Viriyangkura in the first doubles. Young Lakshya Sen, who had a stellar run in 2019 with five titles, then registered a 21-19, 21-18 win over world No. 45 Suppanny Avihingsanon to bring

India back on level terms. It then all boiled down to the makeshift pair of Chirag Shetty and Srikanth and the Indian duo dished out a superb game to outwit the pairing of Manepong Jongjit and Nipitphon Phuangphupet 21-15, 16-21, 21-15 in the deciding second doubles tie. "It is an incredible result for us considering the fact that we didn't have Satwiksairaj (Rankireddy) and we generally depend on the singles to get us the win. But after we lost the first two singles, the way we got that doubles win and then Lakshya brought us back to level, it was a complete team effort," Chirag said. India, who had lost to China 1-3 in the last edition in 2018, will now lock horns with Indonesia in the semifinals. Indonesia boast of Asian Games champion and world number seven Jonathan Christie and world number five Anthony Sinisuka Ginting. They also have the world number one pair of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo, apart from the formidable Hendra Setiawan and Mohammad Ahsan.

"Beating Indonesia will be a difficult task because they have such formidable doubles pairs and even in singles, there players are ranked in top 10, so tough but if we can put the best foot forward like today, we hope to do well," Chirag signed off. — PTI

**CAIRNS CUP CHESS**



**Humpy shares lead after sixth round**

**St Louis (USA), Feb. 14:** India's Koneru Humpy defeated former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Russia in 61 moves in the sixth round of the Cairns Cup chess tournament here to move into joint lead with Chinese ace Wenjun Ju. Dronavalli Harika, the other Indian in the fray, shared points with the world champion Wenjun Ju of China in 40 moves on Thursday. With four points in her kitty, Humpy shares the lead with Wenjun Ju. Harika, on the other hand, is on three points after six rounds and is in joint third spot with two other players. Humpy, the reigning world rapid champion and the country's number one, played the Nimzo-Indian against the experienced Kosteniuk and took advantage of a mistake on the

50th move to record her second win in the tournament. Harika, playing with black pieces, opted for King's Indian and equalised rather easily against Wenjun Ju. American youngster Carissa Yip posted her second straight win after four losses, beating Valentina Gunina in the only other decisive game of the day. In the seventh round, Humpy will take on American Irina Krush while Harika is up against Yip. — PTI

**Results after Round 6:** Koneru Humpy (IND, 4) beat Alexandra Kosteniuk (RUS, 3.5), Wenjun Ju (CHN, 4) drew with D. Harika (IND, 3), Kateryna Lagno (RUS, 3) drew with Nana Dzagnidze (GRG, 3.5), Mariya Muzychuk (UKR, 3) drew Irina Krush (USA, 2), Carissa Yip (USA, 3) beat Valentina Gunina (RUS, 2).

**Bagan's 'sixer' maul Neroca in I-League**

**Kalyani (West Bengal), Feb. 14:** A rampaging Mohun Bagan mauled Neroca FC 6-2 for their fifth straight win in the I-League, here on Friday. Fran Gonzalez headlined the drubbing with a first half hat-trick (10th, 24th and 45th minute), while Fran Morante (13th), Baba Diawara (37th) and Alexander Romario Jesuraj (70th) scored once each in the rout. Mohun Bagan were reduced to 10 players after captain Dhanachandra Singh was sent off for handling a goal-bound ball at the one-hour mark. Nigerian frontman Philip Adjah (41st) and Subhash Singh (45+2nd) scored for the Imphal outfit as the first half saw seven goals in front of an excited Kalyani Stadium crowd. It was also for the first time in the I-League that seven goals were scored in the first-half. Unbeaten in the last 10

matches, the 2014-15 champions looked set for a second title in their last I-League season, with a massive 11-point lead over Minerva Punjab (18) atop the standings. Neroca FC languished at the bottom with 12 points from 13 matches with relegation threat looming large. Eight goals, two missed penalties, a hat-trick and a red card — the game had it all. Seven of the eight goals and a missed penalty came in a fascinating first-half and it was all started by Gonzalez as early as the 11th minute. Fellow Spaniard Joseba Beitia was in top form, registering a hat-trick of assists in the game, setting up Gonzalez. The former also played a part in Morante's goal, as he sent in a corner that was controlled at the far post by Komron Tursunov, whose shot was nodded in by Morante. — PTI



Action from the I-League match between Mohun Bagan and Neroca FC in Kalyani, West Bengal, on Friday.

**GUJRATHI, HARIKRISHNA SETTLE FOR DRAWS IN PRAGUE CHESS**

**Prague, Feb. 14:** India's Vidit Santosh Gujrathi and P. Harikrishna had to settle for half-a-point each on a day of draws in the Masters event of the Prague Chess Festival here. Grand Master Gujrathi, the second highest-ranked Indian in the FIDE list after five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand, had to settle for a draw against David Anton Gujjarro of Spain in 49 moves late on Thursday. He is in joint lead with 1.5 points from two rounds with Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Nikita Vitiugov. Harikrishna battled top-seed Duda of Poland and signed the peace treaty in 31 moves in a Catalan opening game. "I thought I had some chances, but I missed 24...Qd7. It's a rather simple move, with which black is completely fine," Harikrishna said. — PTI