

'LOOK FORWARD TO BEING WITH PEOPLE OF INDIA, GOING TO BE EXCITING'

On their way

An honour, says Modi; Amit Shah in Ahmedabad to monitor preparations

PARIMAL DABHI & SHUBHAJIT ROY
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 23

HUNDREDS OF billboards hailing "strong leaders", "two dynamic personalities", "great democracies"; decorations depicting events in the life of Mahatma Gandhi; traditional artists from across the country; 28 stages representing different states along a journey labelled India Road Show; a security contingent including 15 bomb detection squads; and, the Namaste Trump event.

The government is pulling no stops in rolling out the red carpet for Donald Trump who lands in Ahmedabad at 11.40 am Monday for what officials have described as "the first stand-alone visit by a US President to India".

Setting the stage for the two-day visit, which will cover the Taj Mahal in Agra and bilateral talks in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted Sunday that "India looks forward to welcoming" the US President. "It is an honour that he will be with us tomorrow, starting with the historic programme in Ahmedabad!" he tweeted.

Trump, meanwhile, retweeted a meme on him based on a sequence from the blockbuster movie *Bahubali*, and wrote: "Look so forward to being with my great friends in INDIA!" Later, speaking to reporters outside the White House before his departure, Trump said: "I look forward to being with the people of India. We are going to have many millions and millions of people. It's a long trip. I get along very well with Prime Minister Modi. He is a friend of mine."

He said: "I had committed to this trip long time ago. I look forward to being with the people of India. We are going to have many millions and millions of people. It's a long trip. I get along very well with Prime Minister Modi. He is a friend of mine."



President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump board Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland, Sunday. AP

On the table: plan to counter China's reach with Blue Dot network

SHUBHAJIT ROY
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 23

WITH CHINA moving to expand its strategic footprint through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India and the US will discuss the Blue Dot network, a new proposal to cover infrastructure and development projects across the region and other countries.

The Blue Dot network is "a multi-stakeholder initiative to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development", sources said.

The US, which is leading the proposal, has already got Japan and Australia as partners in this idea.



The proposal, which is part of the US's Indo-Pacific strategy, is aimed at countering Chinese influence. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Waiting for Trump in Agra. Praveen Khanna

HIS DAY	
11.40 AM:	Arrives in Ahmedabad
12.15 PM:	Visit to Sabarmati Ashram
1 PM:	Namaste Trump, Motera stadium
3.30 PM:	Leaves for Agra
5.15 PM:	Visit to Taj
7.30 PM:	Reaches Delhi

RELATED REPORTS
PAGE 5

Visit will push move to set up six N-reactors

ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

AN ANNOUNCEMENT on a "project proposal" for the setting up of six nuclear power reactors in collaboration with Westinghouse Electric Company is expected during US President Donald Trump's visit this week.

The emergence of a viable proposal would set the stage for a commercial agreement to be initiated with Westinghouse Electric, which would pave the way for commencement of work on the project in coastal Andhra Pradesh.

Pittsburgh-based Westinghouse Electric employs over 10,000 people globally and is a flagbearer of the US nuclear sector, alongside the

Shaheen Bagh: Hearing today, ex-CIC says shifting will put protesters at risk

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

ANY ATTEMPT to "forcibly shift" those protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act from the road they are sitting on in Shaheen Bagh, Delhi, "would compromise their safety", former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah said Sunday, adding that police barricading of unconnected roads was behind the traffic chaos in the area.

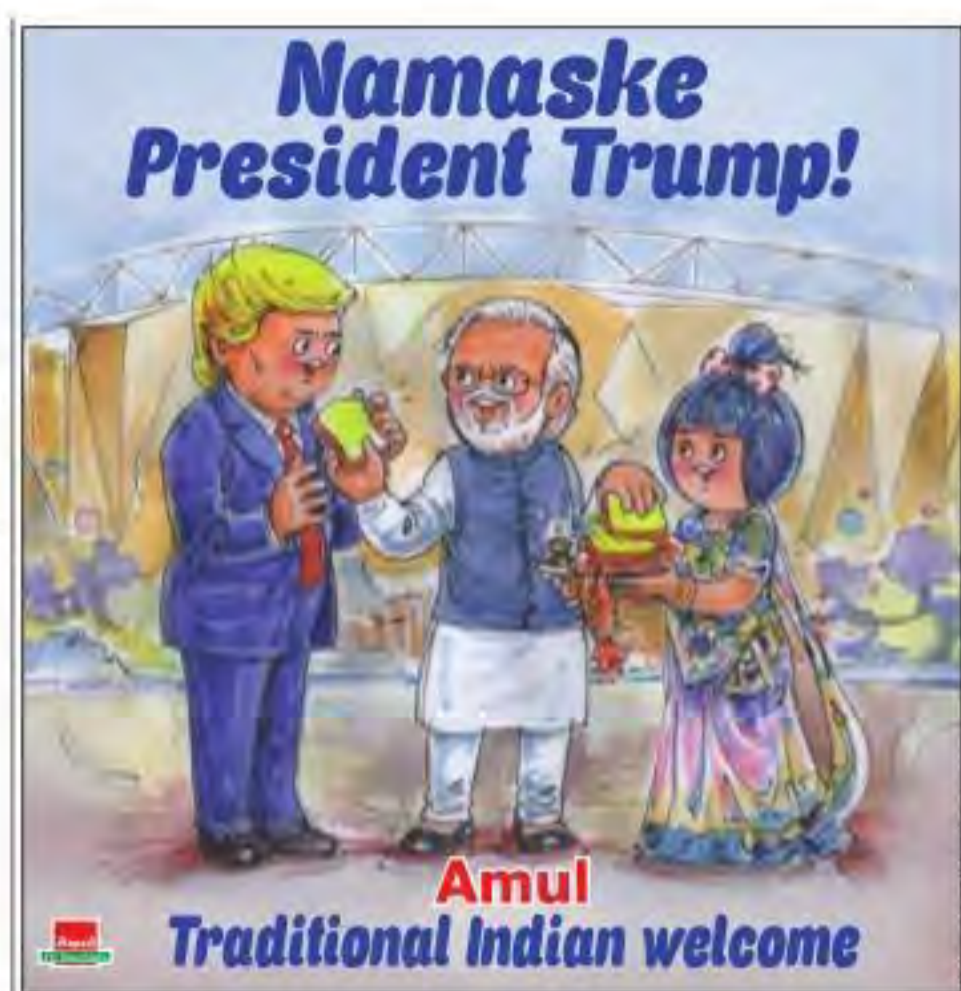
In an affidavit to the Supreme Court, which will hold a hearing in the matter on Monday, Habibullah said he visited the site on February 19 and personally inspected the barricades placed by police. He said he noticed that "there are numerous... roads that have no connection with the protest that have been barricaded by the Police unnecessarily, abdicating their responsibilities and duties and wrongly laying the blame on the protest". "It is this barricading of unconnected roads that has led to a chaotic situation."

Habibullah contended, "Any attempt to forcibly shift them (the protesters) from the present site would compromise their safety, especially in view of the abuses and threats that are regularly being meted out and hate speeches that have taken place in different parts of the country (against) those protesting against the CAA, NPR (National Population Register) and NRC (National Register of Citizens)."

The Supreme Court is hearing PILs against the Shaheen Bagh protest and the blockade of roads, saying this was causing difficulties for people in nearby areas. Expressing concern over the blockade, the court had deputed Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde and Advocate Sadhana Ramachandran to hold talks

EXPRESS NETWORK

GANGSTER RAVI PUJARI EXTRADITED, TO REACH INDIA TODAY PAGE 6



Clashes erupt in Delhi after BJP leader's rally near anti-CAA protest



Violence started in Maujpur, Babarpur soon after ex-MLA Kapil Mishra left. Gajendra Yadav DAY OF CLASHES IN DELHI P 3

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

SOON AFTER a rally was taken out by BJP leader Kapil Mishra near a demonstration against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in northeast Delhi's Jaffrabad on Sunday, clashes erupted between pro- and anti-CAA protesters in the area. Security officials at the spot admitted the violence, including stone-pelting, threatened to take a communal turn, but was contained.

Mishra, a former MLA who had been in the news during the recent Assembly polls campaign for provocative slogans, earlier in the day called people, via Twitter, to gather to protest against an

anti-CAA demonstration that had moved to a road near the Jaffrabad Metro Station on Saturday night from a nearby sit-in.

In a video released by him after the violence, Mishra can be heard threatening the anti-CAA protesters. He told *The Indian Express* he had to make the statements to "release pressure" building among the crowd.

The BJP leader gathered along with supporters next to the Maujpur-Babarpur Metro Station, 2 km from the Jaffrabad anti-CAA protest, in the afternoon. As the crowd swelled to more than 200,

CLASHES IN ALIGARH, 6 INJURED, PAGE 6

Food data raises alert: Indians are consuming less pulses and milk

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS & HARISH DAMODARAN
PUNE, NEW DELHI, FEB 23

IS THERE stagnation in demand for pulses, milk and other protein-rich foods in India? The National Statistical Office (NSO) withheld its household consumption expenditure survey report for 2017-18 but alternative data sources do suggest a slowdown — at least in respect of the ubiquitous *dal* and *doodh*.

At a global Pulses Conclave held earlier this month in Pune, the overwhelming concern expressed by participants was: Why are we not eating enough pulses?

One of the presentations at the event was a detailed analysis of the estimated consumption of individual pulses — *chana* (chickpea), *yellow peas*, *masur* (red lentil), *arhar* (pigeon-pea),

EXPLAINED Linked to income

WITH RISING income, the consumption of milk, pulses, eggs and meat had increased, especially among the poor. Flattening demand growth for protein-rich foods suggests incomes aren't rising as before. But whether consumption is actually slowing will be known only from the next NSO household survey.

moong (green gram) and *urad* (black gram) — based on year-wise opening stocks plus domestic production and imports, and deducting exports, diversion

Tharoor, Singhvi join the chorus: Cong seen to be adrift, time for action now

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

DISQUIET IS growing within the Congress over the leadership's reluctance to shed its inertia in addressing organisational challenges, mainly the election of a new party president.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor said the "perception" that the party is "adrift" is hurting it as it is driving voters towards other political alternatives, and three-time MP Abhishek Singhvi said the time for "discussion and words" is over.

In Kolkata, senior leader Jairam Ramesh told PTI that a "collective submergence of individual egos and ambitions" was needed to revive the party, and suggested that "all senior Congress leaders, after a certain age, should be mentoring juniors rather than tormenting them".



Address selection of new chief. INTERVIEW P 5

Tharoor said it is high time the party find a new president to "fill the vacuum" created in the wake of Rahul Gandhi's resignation after the Lok Sabha elections last year. He said the party should decide what it stands for and communicate it effectively and repeatedly. "We must articulate a vision for the future that embraces the aspirations of India's majority — the young," he said.

"The Congress is indispensable for India, to give the country

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THE GOVERNANCE PAGE
PAGE 11

THE EDITORIAL PAGE
US-INDIA: TERMS OF TRANSACTION
BY ARUNK SINGH PAGE 9

Ancient city in Sirsa, under a mound & 50,000 people

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

VARINDER BHATIA
SIRSA, FEBRUARY 23

A MOUND in Sirsa indistinguishable from the dusty background of most Haryana small towns could hold clues to the ancient city of 'Sarishika'. Falling on the old route to Takshashila, the 6th-5th century BC city found mention in the Mahabharata, Panini's *Ashdadhyaayi* and the Buddhist text *Divyavadana*.

However, before the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) can confirm the historicity of the site, it has to convince the nearly 50,000 people living on the identified 82 acres to move. With 788 families forcibly rehabilitated three years ago following a high court order still struggling for basic amenities, the residents, many of whom settled here following Partition, are not willing to move.

They also accuse the authorities of letting the situation fester, with a 1904 Ancient Monuments Preservation Act first declaring Sirsa's 'Ther Mound', which rises 15-18 metres above nearby areas,



Residents living on Ther Mound in Sirsa, holding remains of a 6th-5th century BC city, are resisting removal. Kamleshwar Singh

a protected monument back in July 1932.

There is also a dispute over the size of the protected area, with surveys by the ASI and government departments such as Revenue and Archaeology and Museums coming up with different figures.

Over the years, the inhabitants, who have formed a forum called the Apna Ghar Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, have acquired documents, including land conveyance deeds, sale-purchase agreements, municipal tax receipts, electricity and water meter

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TECH

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FULL COVERAGE

STONE-PELTING NEAR CAA PROTEST SITE

Incident took place on the road outside Jaffrabad Metro Station



EXPRESS AUDIO

What treating a 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan as sedition means?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In today's episode of the 3 Things podcast, we look at the case of Amulya Leona and talk about what counts as sedition and why judging it can be tricky.

FROM PAGE ONE

Blue Dot network

President Xi Jinping's ambitious One Belt One Road initiative, and is expected to be part of talks over the next two days between visiting US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to American officials, the Blue Dot network is like a "Michelin Guide", which rates restaurants around the world with stars for excellence, for infrastructure projects.

The initiative will evaluate projects on various parameters, including level of public consultation, transparency in funding, debt traps and basic environment norms. Projects that meet the norms will get a "blue dot", which will enable them to attract private funding and not have to depend on state-funding alone.

Under BRI, China's government and state-owned enterprises finance international projects by providing logistical support — from concrete and steel to workers and cash. This approach, however, has been labelled by some experts as "debt-trap diplomacy".

Blue Dot will be about "supporting alternatives to predatory lending" by facilitating foreign investment in projects that come under this network, sources said.

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and NSA Robert O'Brien have brought along the pointperson for the Blue Dot network in the US system — Adam Boehler, CEO of the US International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) — as part of the visiting delegation. The USIDFC will be part of bilateral talks between Trump and Modi.

A senior US administration official gave an indication of the idea at a background briefing in Washington DC Saturday. "Our shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific really goes to the heart of what binds our two countries together, and this is our shared democratic systems that place a premium on citizen-centric governments," the official said.

India will give the proposal "due consideration", given the conversations that have evolved since "Quad" meetings involving India, US, Australia and Japan. "India has as much role

as it wants...it is an open, inclusive network," sources told *The Indian Express*.

Tharoor and Singhvi

an alternative unifying vision to the divisive policies of the BJP government. But to get there, we have to deal with a certain perception in the eyes of the public that we are afraid, which is hurting us since such an image will naturally drive voters towards other political alternatives, as Delhi elections reflect," Tharoor said.

Singhvi listed out a series of steps for the party to take. "At the national level...Rahul Gandhi should take charge. But if he is insistent not to do so, it is but natural that we have to have a consensual leader or, at worst, a group of three consensual leaders. The time for discussion and words are over. And the time for action started yesterday."

Speaking in his personal capacity, Singhvi said that "eventually and ultimately, this national level arrangement has to be sanctified by proper elections to the top posts".

Tharoor said the delay "to a certain extent" in finding a new president is "understandable, given the special place that Rahul enjoys in the hearts of the Congress workers." "But at the end of the day, a revived Congress is indispensable. We are the only national party that can challenge the ideology and policies of the BJP government. But in order for us to fulfil this responsibility, we do need to find ourselves a new president to fill the vacuum created in the wake of Rahul Gandhi's resignation."

Singhvi said the party should conduct a "rigorous, in depth, merciless and hundred percent merit-oriented search to select two leaders per state" who "must have the non-negotiable quality of being dynamic, articulate including in Hindi and the regional language, and with unflinching loyalty".

"We should institutionally back them unflinchingly for the next four and a half years in the run up to the elections. This will yield a rich crop and a prosperous hinterland of 60 odd leaders who can revitalise and reinvent the Congress in each state. But this exercise has to be absolutely merit-oriented," he said.

Singhvi said the Congress should also categorise states into "ekla chalo (go alone)" states where the "Congress must relentlessly pursue the lonely furrow". "In a state where our revitalisation might take even longer, we may have to take the tough call, at least for the medium term, to identify a regional party which can become the pole around which other parties must rally. In some of those states, the leader may be the Congress."

In Kolkata, Ramesh told PTI: "All of us have ambitions. But right now there should be only one ambition — the party's revival, retention of support and return to power."

Food data raises alert

towards seed and feed, and closing stocks. The aggregate picture that emerged was simple: Pulses consumption in India is showing signs of flattening. Between 2013-14 and 2017-18, it rose from 18.6 million tonnes (mt) to 22.5 mt, but fell to 22.1 mt in 2018-19 and is projected to further decline to 20.7 mt this year. Some of that may be attributable to prices. Thus, 2015-16 and 2016-17 recorded a consumption drop alongside double-digit inflation. The peak consumption in 2017-18 was when prices actually dipped 20.8 per cent year-on-year. The link between consumption and inflation, however, breaks down from 2018-19.

Saurabh Bhatia of the Indian Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA) is convinced that the apparent demand slowdown is real. "We need a National Egg Coordination Committee-like body for pulses. The campaign they launched in the 1980s helped position eggs as a wholesome nutrition food. The time has come for a similar sustained drive promoting pulses as an excellent source of protein, micronutrients and fibre that is also low-fat and cholesterol-free," he says. Nitin Kalantri, a leading dal trader and processor from Latur in Maharashtra, traces the low growth in consumption to 2015-16, when retail prices of arhar dal breached the Rs 200/kg level. "Around the same time, vegetables turned relatively cheap and consumers started having more of them."

But it isn't pulses alone. Data from successive annual reports of the National Dairy Development Board shows that total liquid milk marketing by cooperatives — they account for the bulk of sales in this segment — has gone up from 201.03 lakh litres per day (LLPD) in 2008-09 to 294.44 LLPD in 2013-14. In 2018-19, this figure reached just 354.53 LLPD. In other words, a compound annual growth rate (CAGR), amounting to 7.9 per cent during 2008-09 to 2013-14, has plunged to 3.8 per cent in the last five years.

What makes this trend particularly striking — even the absolute increase in milk sales from 2013-14 to 2018-19 (60.09 LLPD) was hardly two-thirds of the earlier five years (93.41 LLPD) — is that it has occurred despite lower inflation. Between 2008-09 and 2013-14, prices of full-cream milk (containing 6 per

An honour says Modi; Shah in Ahmedabad

forward to it. I hear it's going to be a big event, the biggest event they ever had in India. That's what the Prime Minister told me. It's the biggest event they ever had. It's going to be very exciting. I am going to be there for one night."

In Ahmedabad, the billboards, artistes and stages, apart from thousands of local residents, will greet Trump on the route from the airport to Sabarmati Ashram, where he is expected to spend about 10 minutes to mark the first visit by a US President. He will then head to the newly rebuilt 1.1-lakh capacity Motera cricket stadium for the Namaste Trump event.

Trump will leave Ahmedabad for Agra at 3.30 pm and watch the sunset at Taj Mahal from around 5.15 pm — US officials believe Modi will accompany him but there was no confirmation from the Indian side. The US delegation will then head to Delhi for bilateral engagements Tuesday.

While a trade deal could not be finalised in time, a centre for counter-terrorism is likely to be announced along

with the signing of a MoU on Homeland security that will focus on aviation and immigration security. An energy dialogue to diversify India's requirement is also expected to be a key part of the talks.

The high-powered White House delegation includes three of Trump's family members, and it will be the first time that the First Lady and daughter Ivanka are travelling together on an official visit.

It was in June 2017 that Modi invited Trump to visit India during their first meeting at the White House. "He had promised to visit India in his first term, and this now stands fulfilled," Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said.

Shringla was seen overseeing last-minute preparations in Ahmedabad Sunday, with Home Minister Amit Shah arriving in the city to monitor the arrangements.

This will be the US President's fifth meeting with the Prime Minister in eight months — after Osaka, Biarritz, Houston and New York — and officials said it reflects the "renewed intensity" of high-level

bilateral engagement since the NDA government returned to power.

Between 1947 and 2000, only three US Presidents visited India — Dwight D Eisenhower (1959), Richard Nixon (1969) and Jimmy Carter (1978). Since then, there have been four such visits — Bill Clinton (2000), George W Bush (2006) and Barack Obama (2010 and 2015).

"The relationship with the US has evolved to one of our most consequential relationships today. It is a strategic partnership based on shared values and geared towards the 21st century. Whether in countering terrorism or in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific, India and the US have unprecedented convergence of interests," Shringla said.

Ahmedabad police commissioner Ashish Bhatia said 33 DCPs, 75 ACPs, 300 inspectors, 1,000 sub-inspectors, 12,000 jawans, 2,000 women personnel, 15 companies of the State Reserve Police (SRP) and three companies of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) will cover the visit in the city.

Bhatia said various security agencies, apart from the IAF, are coordinating to prevent any "untoward incident". He said that apart from the Bomb Detection & Disposal Squad (BDDS) teams, seven Quick Response Teams (QRTs) have been deployed. Police have also banned the use of drones in the city Monday, and sought help from the DRDO to help enforce the directive.

There were some last-minute glitches, though. On Sunday morning, a makeshift gate erected to welcome visitors to the Motera stadium was brought down by strong winds. No one was injured in the incident, officials said.

Ahead of the visit, Trump had said that he expected 5-7 million, or even 10 million, Indians to welcome him. When a senior Indian official was asked about the number — Ahmedabad's population is 7-8 million — he referred instead to the national figure and said: "More than one billion people are eager to welcome him."

(WITH AVINASH NAIR & SOHINI GHOSH IN AHMEDABAD AND PTI IN WASHINGTON)

Visit will push move to set up six N-reactors

GE-Hitachi combine. Officials indicated that "techno-commercial discussion to arrive at a project proposal...have made steady progress" and a fresh pact, which builds on the civil nuclear cooperation agreement signed by India and the US in March 2019, is expected to be inked during the visit.

The project is planned to be set up at Kovvada on the eastern Andhra coast, about 260 km from Vishakhapatnam, and will comprise six AP-1000 reactor units of 1208 MWe (mega watt electric) capacity each. The cost and schedule will emerge upon finalisation of the proposal and the administrative approval and financial sanction by the government.

The announcement comes amid indications that the Department of Atomic Energy is working on a report, in consultation with the Atomic Energy Commission, for amending the Consolidated FDI Policy, according to which atomic energy currently figures in the list of prohibited sectors.

The DAEC Chairman and the

Department's communications team did not respond to a set of detailed queries on this issue sent by *The Indian Express*.

In May 2017, the Union Cabinet had accorded an "in principle" approval for establishing the six AP 1000 reactors with WEC. "The discussions to arrive at project proposals to set up nuclear power projects with foreign cooperation involve complex technical, commercial, legal, regulatory and other issues, which take time for conclusion. The project proposal will put the nuclear project in execution mode," an official said.

WEC's AP-1000 reactors are types of Light Water Reactors, like the ones being set up in collaboration with Russia in Tamil Nadu's Kudankulam, where water is used both as coolant and moderator. The initial agreement to build the WEC reactors, signed in 2016, followed on from the Indo-US civil nuclear agreement signed in 2008.

WEC, alongside Wilmington-based GE Hitachi Nuclear, has been negotiating to build reactors in India since the nuclear deal was inked. The

project, however, came under a cloud after WEC filed for bankruptcy in mid-2017 following cost overruns on reactors coming up in the US.

The discussions between the two countries to enable the sale of US atomic reactors have also been impacted as India's nuclear liability rules, which apportion a part of the costs of any accident to be channelled to the manufacturer of the reactor alongside the operator of the station, had been cited as a hurdle by US companies.

After it filed for bankruptcy, Canada's Brookfield Asset Management bought WEC from Japan's Toshiba in August 2018. Government officials indicated that price negotiations had resumed late 2018 after WEC emerged from bankruptcy.

In a bid to tide over the issue of high project costs — the biggest hurdle for US reactors — the Indian side focused on bringing down the interest burden to ensure that the price of the AP-1000 series of reactors matches with the two new 'VVER' series reactor units being set up by the Russians at

Kudankulam (Units 3 and 4).

Since WEC, earlier owned by Toshiba, has traditionally sourced much of the equipment from Japan, the Indian side managed to get the US company to commit to continue sourcing components from Japan to get access to cheaper credit, thereby bringing down project costs and making the tariff competitive, officials indicated.

The nuclear power push comes amid the government's plans to triple the country's nuclear capacity by 2024 to lower the contribution of fossil fuels in India's energy mix, alongside a pronounced renewable energy push.

The finalisation of a pact with WEC also marks a full circle for India's nuclear reactor technology, given that Westinghouse's new owner is a Canadian firm. Canada played a key role in India's nuclear evolution, having supplied the Indian reactor CIRUS in 1954, well before the exports of nuclear hardware and uranium were stopped after India carried out a peaceful nuclear test in 1974.

are leaving the area peacefully. After that we won't listen to you (police) if the roads are not vacated." DCP (North East) Ved Prakash Surya is standing next to him as he makes the speech. People broke portions of boundary walls to use stones for pelting. A supporter of the anti-CAA protest was beaten up close to a barricade before he was rescued by police.

Some security personnel were seen pelting stones along with CAA supporters at the other side. Police refused to respond to questions regarding this.

While around 5.40 pm, the stone-pelting halted, it resumed 10 minutes later, underneath the Maujpur-Babarpur Metro Station. The situation was finally brought under control around 6.30 pm.

For security reasons, the entry and exit gates of the Maujpur-Babarpur Metro Station as well as the Jaffrabad Metro Station were closed through the day. Police continue to be deployed in the area in strength.

Alok Kumar, Joint Commissioner of Police, Eastern Range, said, "There was stone-pelting. We brought the situation under control and are in constant talks with locals to bring peace. We are in the process of ascertaining the number of injured." He added, "It is possible that miscreants who wanted to create a law and order situation entered the area."

Late in the evening, heavy barricades were set up on the road leading to the Jaffrabad anti-CAA protest site. Demonstrators, mostly women, have been sitting there to mark their protest against the Act. On Saturday evening,

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि., विद्युत कालोनी, गोविन्द नगर, कानपुर-208006

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अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना
अधोहस्ताक्षरकर्ता द्वारा विद्युत वितरण मण्डल-कानपुर नगर के अन्तर्गत निम्नलिखित विवरण के अनुसार कार्य हेतु अनुभवी व सक्षम निविदादाताओं द्वारा निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है, निविदा सम्बन्धी पूर्ण सूचना वेबसाइट <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर देखी जा सकती है। क्र.सं. 1. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 100/वि.वि.मं.का./2019-20 विवरण: विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-कानपुर, के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-नर्वेल के अधीन विद्युत उपकेन्द्रों पर पड़ी निष्प्रयोज्य सामग्री को भण्डार केन्द्र में जमा कराना एवं उपकेन्द्र की साफ सफाई एवं अनुरक्षण का कार्य। क्र.सं. 2. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 101/वि.वि.मं.का./2019-20 विवरण: विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-चौबेपुर, के अन्तर्गत विद्युत वितरण उपखण्ड-चौबेपुर के अधीन विद्युत उपकेन्द्रों पर पड़ी निष्प्रयोज्य सामग्री को भण्डार केन्द्र में जमा कराना एवं उपकेन्द्र की साफ सफाई एवं अनुरक्षण का कार्य। क्र.सं. 3. अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सं. 102/वि.वि.मं.का./2019-20 विवरण: विद्युत वितरण खण्ड-घाटमपुर, के अधीन विद्युत उपकेन्द्रों पर पड़ी निष्प्रयोज्य सामग्री को भण्डार केन्द्र में जमा कराना एवं उपकेन्द्र की साफ सफाई एवं अनुरक्षण का कार्य। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत वितरण मण्डल ददिविनिलि कानपुर-06 पत्र संख्या: 4509/विविमंका/ओ-3 दिनांक: 22.02.2020

around 500 of them took their protest to a road near the Jaffrabad Metro Station, blocking it, responding to Bhim Army Chief Chandrasekhar Azad's call for Bharat bandh on Sunday.

No violence was seen at this site. During the recent poll campaign, Mishra was penalised by the Election Commission for his tweets, in which he likened the contest to between India and Pakistan. In December, Mishra had led a pro-CAA rally where he had raised the slogan "Desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maaro saalon ko". After the results, Home Minister Amit Shah had said such slogans may have hurt the BJP. In an Idea Exchange at *The Indian Express*, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said people who raised such slogans should be "permanently removed".

Shaheen Bagh

with them to find a solution. The court had allowed them to seek the assistance of Habibullah Khan, along with Bhim Army chief Chandrasekhar Azad, had sought to intervene in the matter.

The former bureaucrat said that at over a thousand points in Delhi, access to roads has been blocked by "residents of different colonies, or for convenience of the powerful and the privileged", and wondered why no action is taken by police in such cases.

He said that during his visit to Shaheen Bagh, he noticed that an ambulance and a school van were given free passage by the protesters. He was informed by the protesters that they let through all such vehicles that clear barricades after being found genuine by police.

Habibullah said that the women protesters had asked him to convey to the court that they are "expressing peaceful dissent against the CAA, NPR, NRC". They were protesting "out of desperation" as they see the CAA, NPR and NRC as "sounding a death knell for their survival and survival of their future generations", the former CJS said. They also felt disheartened that despite it being a "burning issue", the Centre had not engaged in any dialogue with them to address their concerns, he said.

Habibullah added that the protesters had "pointed out that none of the residents of Shaheen Bagh or the shopkeepers who are located in the vicinity have raised objections... as they emphasise with the protest".

His affidavit said that the protesters told him they had chosen the Shaheen Bagh site as they felt secure there with many of them living nearby.

Ancient city

connections which, they point out, can't be issued to "encroachers". Attempts to evict them have seen protests, clashes with security personnel, and multiple petitions in the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

In a report to the government in January, Sirsa Deputy Commissioner Ramesh Chander Bidhan admitted, "A few have conveyance deeds of the protected government land in their favour."

The government is said to be trying to see if the ASI can take the parts of Ther that are heavily inhabited out of the protected zone.

Zulfekar Ali, the ASI Superintending Archaeologist in-charge of the mound, said they carried out the initial excavation in 2018-19 after the first round of rehabilitation. "We wanted to ascertain the antiquity of the site and the nature of a fort believed to be lying underneath. In the three months that we got for excavation and scraping of the mound, we found numerous antiquarian remains. But we need more area and more time, and need to go deeper."

The High Court got into the picture after a plea was filed in 1997, and in successive orders, directed the Centre as well as Punjab and Haryana to submit a list of their protected monuments. In 2016, the court stalled a bid by Haryana to de-notify the Ther land.

Deepak Phutela, a sweet shop owner who has a four-storey house on the Thed Mound, said this was the third generation of his family settled here. "Thousands of people came here after 1947 from Western Pakistan," he said.

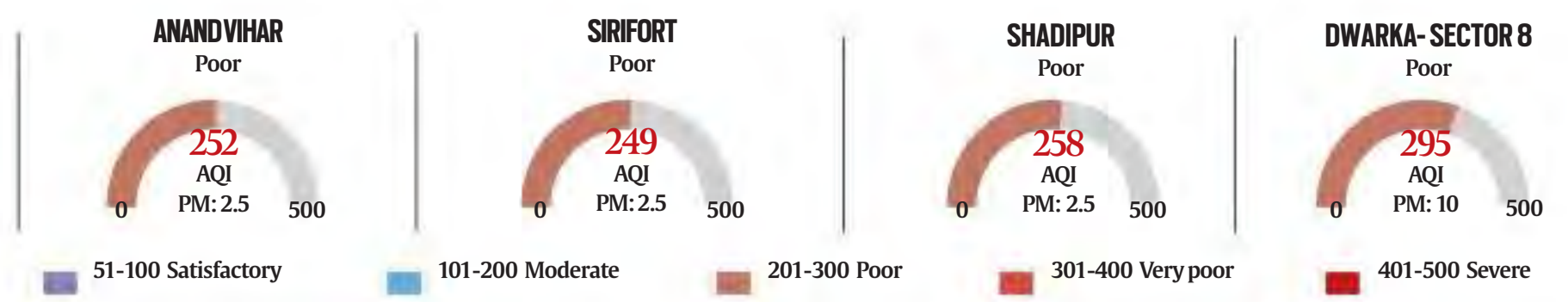
Jagjit Singh, a Councillor of Ward No. 19 under which most of Ther falls, accused the Sirsa administration of "erring repeatedly". He also claimed that the protected site "should not be more than 31 acres".

The authorities are apprehensive of any forcible action as the area includes politically sensitive Gujjar and Valmiki Mohallas. Previous attempts to even paste show-cause notices of eviction have seen violent protests and manhandling of officials.

Said one resident of Valmiki Mohalla, refusing to be identified, "When they need votes, they come to us. After winning, they come with bulldozers."

"We have submitted a status report to the state government. Since the matter is in the High Court, it is not appropriate for me to share any more details," Deputy Commissioner Bidhan told *The Indian Express*.

3 THE CITY



VIOLENCE OVER CAA: STONE-PELTING IN MAUJPUR, VEHICLES SET ON FIRE

NE Delhi on boil after day of clashes

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

CAR, three motorcycles and an eatery were set on fire in North East Delhi's Karawal Nagar on Sunday night, hours after stones were pelted in Maujpur area over CAA protests.

According to police officers, while things were brought under control at Maujpur late Sunday evening, fresh incidents of violence were recorded at Sherpur Chowk in Karawal Nagar after 10 pm on Sunday.

Delhi Fire Services director Atul Garg said, "We received a call around 10 pm about rioting and fire in the area. At first, we were unable to reach the spot but were escorted by police later. The fire was brought under control by 11.15 pm."

Meanwhile, women and men continued their protest under Jaffrabad Metro station, less than 2 km from Maujpur, where stones were pelted during the day.

BJP's Kapil Mishra's call for a pro-CAA rally had been made in response to this sit-in protest, which has been on for around a month. On Saturday night, however, the protesters had occupied part of the main road. Mishra was elected as MLA from Karawal Nagar in 2015, when he was with Aam Aadmi Party.

On Sunday evening, a 100-metre stretch leading up to the Metro station had been barricaded from one side, and protesters were still gathered. The other carriageway was open and traffic from both lanes had been diverted there. Heavy police force was also been deployed at the site following tension during the day.

Police said the situation in Maujpur had been brought under control by evening but the areas remained tense.



In videos of the violence at Maujpur, security personnel can be seen pelting stones as well

The sit-in in Jaffrabad is one of many anti-CAA protests across the capital — from Shaheen Bagh and Nizamuddin to Khureji and Khajuri Khas — which started in December.

According to police, protesters from Jaffrabad had planned a march to Rajghat on Sunday, but were denied permission. As a result, police presence had been increased at the site on Saturday night itself, but protesters later moved from the colony to the main road.

While this gathering was organised by locals and people began to turn up through word of mouth, some also said they were responding to Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad's call for a country-wide *Bharat Bandh* against the Supreme Court's order on reservation in promotions.

The Jaffrabad main road and the Chand Bagh areas were two roads blocked by protesters.

Around 3 pm, trouble began brewing at Maujpur, after people gathered there for a pro-CAA rally. "... We are ready to face any obstacle that will come in the way of our protest," said Rashid, a protester.

While 15 more companies of police arrived at the site Sunday evening, protesters said they are here to stay.



Under the Maujpur-Babarpur Metro station after the violence, Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

At Hauz Rani, protesters claim lathicharge, police say mild force used

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

WOMEN AND men who were taking out an anti-CAA march in South Delhi's Hauz Rani Sunday evening alleged that police resorted to lathicharge during their "peaceful protest" — a charge denied by top officers.

They have been protesting against CAA at Hauz Rani's Gandhi Park for over a month. According to those at the site, after Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad's call for a *Bharat bandh* on Sunday, they decided to hold a small march

on Press Enclave Road. While Azad's call for a *bandh* was against SC's order on reservation in promotions, anti-CAA protesters gathered at several places in response to it.

"We marched on the main road peacefully and were returning to Gandhi Park when some women slowed down as they were tired. I was among them. Suddenly, police started to push us... I fell, along with several others. The men were beaten with batons. A young protester took me to the hospital," alleged Kusum, who goes by one name, and has been at the protest for a month.

The injured were taken to Madan Mohan Malviya

Hospital in Malviya Nagar on scooters via bylanes as the roads were barricaded. "Over 30 patients have been brought to the hospital with mild injuries such as abrasions and lacerations. No one is critically injured," said Dr Ramesh Chugh, the hospital's medical superintendent. Officials at AIIMS Trauma Centre said 10 people were brought in with minor injuries.

Police denied the lathicharge and said they used "mild force". DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said, "Protesters tried to block traffic at multiple locations. Many protesters verbally and physically abused police personnel and pushed

female personnel towards the barricades, bit them and heckled them. They were persuaded and they returned to the protest site. Police personnel showed extreme restraint... Many police personnel, including women personnel, were injured and suitable action as per law is being taken."

Allegations of lathicharge will be looked into, he said.

BRIEFLY

MCG warns against new construction near IAF depot

Gurgaon: To prevent construction of new structures within a 900-metre radius of the Indian Air Force Ammunition Depot at Gurgaon, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) began erecting notice boards within this perimeter last week to warn people against such activity. As per a 2015 Punjab and Haryana High Court order, apart from new constructions being prohibited within 900 metres of the depot, all standing structures within a 300-metre-radius of the depot are to be razed as well, officials said, adding that the owners of such structures are to be compensated.

Plantation drive held

Noida: A cleanliness and plantation drive was carried out at the Combined Government District Hospital in Noida's Sector 30, Sunday. The event was organised by the Sant Nirankari Mission and was simultaneously held across 400 cities. **ENS**

Clear roads in 3 days or we will take to streets: Mishra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

BJP LEADER Kapil Mishra, who Sunday gave a three-day ultimatum to the Delhi Police to get the Jaffrabad and Chand Bagh roads cleared of anti-CAA protesters, said that had he not made such a statement, "people would have turned violent".

"Three days ultimatum to Delhi Police, Jaffrabad and Chand Bagh road(s) must be cleared, else don't make us understand, we would not even listen to you, just three days," he tweeted.

In a video tweeted by him, where he can be seen addressing a pro-CAA gathering near the Maujpur traffic signal and standing next to DCP (North East) Ved Prakash Surya. Mishra said, "They (protesters) want to create trouble in Delhi. That's why they have closed the roads. That's why they have created a riot-like situation here. We have not pelted stones. The DCP is



Grab from a video tweeted by BJP's Kapil Mishra. Standing next to him is DCP Ved Prakash Surya

standing in front of us and on your behalf, I want to tell him that till the US President (Donald Trump) is in India, we are leaving the area peacefully. After that, we won't listen to you (police) if the roads are not vacated by then... we will have to take to the streets."

Clashes and stone-pelting erupted in the area between pro and anti-CAA protesters after

Mishra and his supporters left. Joint CP (East) Alok Kumar and DCP Ved Prakash Surya did not respond to calls and messages seeking a comment on Mishra's statements.

Mishra later told *The Indian Express* that he used such language to "release pressure", else the crowd would have not dispersed from the site.

"People were very angry because these two roads are the lifelines of this area; if they are closed, they will cut off the main areas of Delhi from North East Delhi, affecting 35 lakh people. Had I not made such statements, people would have turned violent," he said.

On why he called the gathering, he said, "People are anyway very angry, they would have come to the site even if I had not called them."

Mishra, however, said that if roads are not opened, he will "have no other option but to stage a protest at the same place". He denied that his supporters had pelted stones.

'Unsafe' building in Munirka demolished

New Delhi: The South Corporation Sunday demolished the six-storey building in Munirka that had tilted last week. However, a four-storey building next to it was damaged in the process.

Civic body officials said there was no vacant spot near the building to direct the fall. They also said labourers could not be sent inside

to demolish the building one floor at a time as it was unsafe. "It was brought down using two JCB machines; gas cutters were used to cut the columns. It took over 72 hours," said an official.

A senior official said the building, which is opposite JNU, violates civic body rules as no house should be over 15 metres.

Around 45 families had to be evacuated from the building.

Poonam Singh, who works as a cook, said her daughter has exams next week and her documents were in their flat. "We have nowhere to go, we slept at a nearby temple for the past two days before going to a relative's house," she said. **ENS**

Respect US Embassy's concerns on Melania visit to school: Sisodia

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

DEPUTY CHIEF Minister Manish Sisodia Sunday said that while he and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal would have loved to brief US First Lady Melania Trump about the happiness curriculum, certain concerns were expressed by the US Embassy regarding their presence.

Melania Trump will visit a Delhi government school on Tuesday, where she will observe a happiness class and interact with students and teachers.

According to Delhi government officials, while the initial plan was to have Kejriwal and Sisodia receive the First Lady and brief her at the school, embassy officials later said they did not want to politicise the event.

A US Embassy spokesperson said: "While the US Embassy had no objection to the presence of the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, we appreciate their recognition that

this is not a political event and that it is best to ensure the focus is on education, the school, and the students."

While the Delhi government had so far remained tight-lipped over the issue, AAP leaders had attributed the change in plans to the Centre's "pettiness", alleging that the BJP-led Union government was behind the change in the Embassy's guest list. The Centre did not comment on the matter.

"It is a matter of great pride for Delhi government, Delhi government teachers and students that Honourable First Lady Mrs Melania Trump is visiting a Delhi government school. It is a big appreciation for us... We would have loved to personally receive the First Lady and brief her about the concept of happiness classes and the positive impact it has had on students... However, certain concerns were expressed by the US Embassy... We respect the same. We welcome her whole-heartedly..." said Sisodia in an official statement on Sunday.

AIIMS notice to RDA head for 'political' tweet

New Delhi: The AIIMS administration has demanded an explanation from the president of the Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) for a tweet that it said was "political in nature".

On February 12, the RDA shared a tweet posted by its president Adarsh Pratap Singh, which congratulated residents on AAP's victory in the Delhi Assembly polls. "Congrats to the people of Delhi for showing the whole country how democratic power can prevail over fascist forces &

how people of a nation can decide on the kind of leadership they deserve! Congrats to @arvindkejriwal & @AamAdmiParty for such a great victory! #DelhiElections (sic)," the tweet read. He deleted the tweet on the same day, after objections were allegedly raised by some association members.

The AIIMS registrar issued a memorandum on February 21 and asked Singh to give an explanation within 48 hours. Singh could not be reached for a comment. **ENS**

4 HARDLOOK UPHAAR FIRE

23-YEAR-LONG BATTLE

JUNE 13, 1997: Fire at Uphaar cinema kills 59 people. Case registered at Hauz Khas police station

JULY 26, 1997: Case transferred to CBI

NOVEMBER 15, 1997: CBI chargesheets 16 people, including the Ansal brothers, PWD, MCD and Delhi Fire Services officials

NOVEMBER 20, 2007: Trial court convicts 12 people (four of the 16 chargesheeted died during the trial period)

DECEMBER 19, 2008: Delhi High Court convicts six accused

MARCH 5, 2014: Supreme Court concurs with findings, but there is dissent on punishment

AUGUST 19, 2015: SC sentences the Ansals to undergo rigorous imprisonment for two years. However, considering the accused's advanced age and other peculiar facts and circumstances, it states that if they pay Rs 30 crore each (i.e. Rs 60 crore), the sentence will be reduced to the period already undergone. However, if they fail to pay the amount within three months, they shall undergo the sentence for two years each, excluding the term already undergone

FEBRUARY 9, 2017: The 2015 judgment stands partially reviewed to the extent that benefit of reduced period of sentence to the period already undergone was disallowed to Gopal Ansal, holding there was no parity with Sushil Ansal

MAY 30, 2019: AVUT files curative petition

FEBRUARY 20, 2020: SC rejects curative petition

JUNE 13, 1997

Halfway through the screening of *Border*, a fire broke out at Delhi's Uphaar cinema, owned by brothers Sushil and Gopal Ansal, on June 13, 1997, leaving 59 people dead. Trapped inside the hall, most died of asphyxiation. The fire, one of the deadliest in the country, also left over 100 people injured.

For 23 years, families of the victims have fought a legal battle to find justice and closure. On February 20, the battle came to an end when the Supreme Court rejected the curative petition of the Association of the Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT). The plea had sought reconsideration of the 2017 verdict, which had given relief to Sushil Ansal considering his "advanced age-related complications" by awarding him jail term he had already served.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice S A Bobde, Justice Arun Mishra and Justice N V Ramana rejected the curative petition saying "no case is made out".

SOMYA LAKHANI spoke to five families who lost their loved ones about the 23-year-old battle, the emotional toll, and trying to move on.



The Uphaar fire was one of the deadliest in the country. Express Archive

Unnati (17) and Ujjwal (13) Krishnamoorthy

EVERY TIME Unnati and Ujjwal had a sibling squabble, their mother Neelam would put them in two different rooms as punishment. "It was the harshest punishment for them, they couldn't handle the separation; so 15 minutes later, they would make up," said Neelam, looking up at the ceiling to ensure tears don't roll down her eyes.

On June 13, 1997, the inseparable siblings died at Uphaar, leaving their parents Neelam and Shekhar shattered. "We were in our late 30s and people said 'why don't you try having another child'... But my kids are not toys that I can replace them. We promised our children that we will spend our lives getting justice," said Shekhar, seated in their Noida home, where the two moved last December.

In 1997 began the couple's journey of fighting for justice for the 59 who died — from memorising various laws and Acts pertaining to the case to forming AVUT. "We didn't even know the difference between a civil and criminal case; the first few months, we didn't even know what was happening in the courts... All we heard was the word 'adjournment'," said Shekhar.

The two started by flipping through obituary columns across newspapers to get in touch with families of other victims in order to fight this together. From then on, Neelam has kept the families together, the fight moving, and has memorised each date and Act.

At their new house, there's a room full of paperwork about the case, while the adjacent room is a keeper of their memories as they have re-created their children's room. "The same mattress, the same bed, their clothes, books, toys... We can't give that away. Every night, we hold each other's



Neelam and Shekhar Krishnamoorthy at their Noida home. Photos: Gajendra Yadav

hand and pray we won't wake up in the morning and every morning, we are disappointed to see another day. So, we go to the kids' room for a bit and then start the battle," said Neelam.

In the last 23 years, the couple has narrated every moment of June 13, 1997, countless times to the media — how she peeped into the kids' room early morning before leaving for a chore, a kiss that Unnati planted on her cheek, and the father-daughter sharing a private joke about chicken in soya sauce that the four had for lunch.

She also remembers the two panicky messages she sent to her children over pager when they didn't return home till late evening: "Getting worried, call back." Late at night, she saw Unnati's body on a stretcher and fainted, and was told by Shekhar when she regained consciousness that "Ujjwal's body was on a stretcher nearby".

Unnati would have been 40 years old, Ujjwal 36, this year. "I would have been a grandmother, I love kids. It would have been nice, I would have been happy," said Neelam.

Despite bouts of depression and alleged threats from people associated with the accused, the Krishnamoorthys carry on.

"This is our only motive, our only reason to live. You smile because you can't be a grouch but after a tragedy like this you are dropped out of social calendars. Friends who parted with us three times a week said, 'Neelam and Shekhar aren't the same people... no longer the life of a party, they will just sit in a corner and talk about the case.' People expect you to move on, there is no moving on," said Neelam.

Tarika Sawhney (21)

MEMORY PLAYED an odd game with Deep Sawhney aka Tony *chachu* in 2017 when he chanced on the remix of popular '90s track '*Chalti hai kya nau se baarah*'. Two decades ago, when the song, a part of Salman Khan-starrer *Judwaa*, first aired, his niece Tarika (21) had said, "*Tony chachu, picture dekhne chalte hain*."

This was in February 1997. Four months later, Tarika was among the 59 people who died in the fire that broke out at Uphaar cinema during the screening of *Border*. "You can't forget such repressed memories, they find a way to come out daily," said Deep, as he fought back tears, sitting next to Tarika's father Naveen at their Anand Niketan house. Tarika's mother Rita passed away last year.

Naveen held a framed photograph of Tarika with her teddy bear; the stuffed toy is still in the house. The watch Tarika was wearing at the time of her death has been given to Deep's daughter.

"We laugh, attend birthdays and weddings, socialise... *par andar se deemak lag gayi hai*. Bringing up a child and suddenly losing her is a phenomenal disaster for a parent. We don't watch movies in halls but now I tell my son Tarun that we can't live in phobia. He has never watched a movie



(From left) Tarika's uncle Deep, aunt Shashi and father Naveen Sawhney

in a hall with his wife and son... We have to move on," said Naveen. At the time of the incident, Naveen was at work. He was heading the sales team of Kwaliti ice creams at the time.

On the day of the incident, Tarika, who was set to join an IT course and get married to her high-school sweetheart and move to the US later that year, had stepped out to buy a birthday present for her elder brother.

A last-minute plan with colony friend Ruby Kapoor took the two young women

to Uphaar cinema. "I went looking for her at Safdarjung Hospital where bodies were just piled up, while Tarun went to AIIMS. He called me from there and..." said Naveen, unable to finish the sentence.

The same evening, the Sawhneys found Ruby's body too. "Ruby's parents were in Vaishno Devi, we brought her body home from the hospital, with Tarika's... You know what it feels like when justice is denied and delayed? Like someone is scratching your heart," said Deep.

Sudan family

SATYA PAL Sudan (81) remembers what the anchor during the 10 pm news segment said about the Uphaar cinema blaze on June 13, 1997: "*12 laashe padi hai, maathe pe likha hai unidentified*."

Seven members of his family, including his one month-old granddaughter, had not returned home from an outing that day, and he feared they might have gone to Uphaar to see *Border*.

Around 10.30 pm, he sent a relative to AIIMS to see if any of the 12 unidentified bodies were of his children, their spouses and kids.

"Can you believe it? All seven died... the baby was found snuggled next to his mother, my daughter-in-law. A part of me died that day," said Sudan.

Last year, his wife passed away, and now Sudan, who used to work at the American Embassy, lives alone, and his three daughters visit him often.

"Our house was small and we didn't have space to keep the seven bodies, so I took them directly from the hospital to the crematorium in Mehrauli. Seven people, seven pyres... there was no space," recalled Sudan, who is currently nursing a fracture in his leg.

Days before his wife died, the 81-year-old said the two spoke about the 23-year-old battle for justice, visits to the courts and the Association of the Victims of Uphaar Tragedy (AVUT).

"We have been with the Uphaar victims' association from the very beginning... Before going away, my wife had told me to remain in the association... and so I will. The other families are my family now... Only they understand the pain," said Sudan.

Vikas Sehgal (21)

ON JUNE 13, 1997, with Rs 250 in his pocket, Vikas Sehgal and his college friend Himanshu Jain reached Uphaar cinema to watch *Border*. It was a sold-out show but there was a man near the hall selling tickets in "black".

"I had given Vikas Rs 250 in the morning for *khaana-peena*, I had no idea he would go for a movie," recalled his father Mohan Lal Sehgal (73).

In the evening, as Mohan Lal left IIT-Delhi, where he worked in the admin department, he encountered a massive traffic jam and road closures. A passerby told him about a massive fire at Uphaar cinema.

"When I got home and inquired why Vikas wasn't back yet, his brother said he had gone to Uphaar for a film," said Mohan Lal.

Around 10.30 pm, he reached AIIMS, then Safdarjung Hospital in search of his son. "*Verandah mein bodies bas phaike hui thi*," said Mohan Lal.

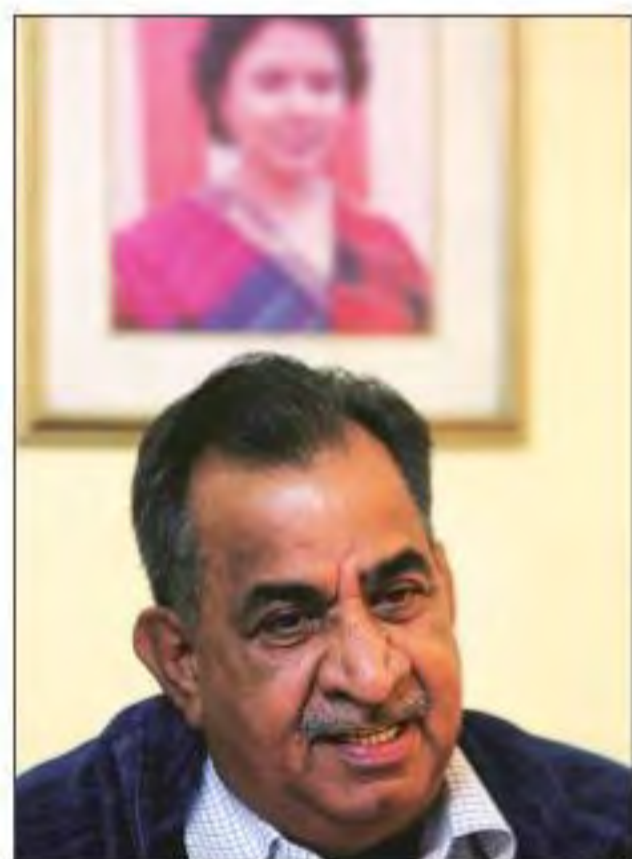
The same day, Mohan Lal had turned 50. "I have not celebrated my birthday since. My younger son's daughters want to celebrate their *daadu's* birthday but how can I? Vikas had completed his B.Com Honours and was so good at cricket and tennis... All his medals and certificates are



The 21-yr-old was a B.Com graduate

at home," he said.

The 23-year-old battle has left the Sehgal family tired and heartbroken. "My wife and I went into depression, my younger son got into an engineering college the same year but couldn't go. There is no moving on... The case has been exhausting, *thakaawat ho gayi hai*," he said.



Shyam Nagpal lost his wife in the fire

Madhu Nagpal (35)

ABOUT A decade ago, when Shyam Nagpal's youngest daughter Surabhi was in school, she asked him and her sister Megha to enact 'mummy's *humma humma*' dance moves in the car. "Oh, Madhu loved that song and would sit next to me in the car and jive to it any time it played on the radio. So, for Surabhi, her sister and I enacted that... It was a way for her to get to know her mother," said Shyam (63), seated next to a photo of his wife in the dining room of their Vasant Kunj house.

Surabhi was 11 months old and Megha was four-and-a-half-years old when their mother Madhu died in the fire.

"Six people had gone for the movie, including my wife and Megha. Madhu managed to get out but went back in as she and Megha got separated. I found Madhu at Safdarjung Hospital, dead, and Megha was injured and at AIIMS... Time doesn't heal, you just painfully learn how to live without a person you love," said Nagpal, a smile forming a crease on his face.

A Buddha artwork bought from Triveni Kala Sangam, winter coats and pullovers, saris and jewellery — the Nagpal house is full of memories of Madhu. "Megha knew her mother... for her it's someone who existed but doesn't anymore; for Surabhi, her mother is a person she has come to know through photos, songs, and stories," said Nagpal.

Apart from re-enacting Madhu's dance moves, Nagpal introduced the girls to Mohd Rafi's songs that their mother loved, took them to Cactus Park where the couple went for walks, holidays to Neemrana Fort which the two often visited, and meals at her favourite restaurant, Fujiya, in Chanakyapuri. On October 16, her birthday, the Nagpals get flowers for Madhu, cut a cake, go out or have dinner at home.

"We have fought this for 23 years but the delay and the rejection of our curative petition is painful. The delay is not the fault of the victims or their families. It's a flaw in the judicial system," said Nagpal.

Often, he wonders how life would have been had Madhu been alive. "Six days after she died, I wrote a poem, '*Madhu, the saga of your life has been a poem — an incomplete poem*.' There's no closure," said Nagpal.

5 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



THE BEELINE

AFTER PRIME Minister Narendra Modi had "litti chokha" at Hunar Haat last week, many other leaders as well as their family members too visited the same stall to have the Bihar delicacy. Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and his wife also bought a painting of Mirza Ghalib on a feather and a lamp made by artists in Saharanpur. Also among the visitors were Home Minister Amit Shah's wife, who went there along with relatives. During his visit, the Prime Minister also led by example by paying for the chokha and kulhar chai he had with his Cabinet colleague Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi. At the litti chokha stall he had given Rs 500 from his pocket and insisted that he should get the balance and at the tea stall he paid Rs 40 for the tea he and Naqvi had.

FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES

ADDRESSING THE inauguration ceremony of International Judicial Conference 2020, Chief Justice of India Sharad Arvind Bobde noted that a feature of the Indian Constitution that is "neglected" is the fundamental duties. The CJ quoted Mahatma Gandhi in his speech: "Real rights are a result of performance of duty." However, the Department of Justice, under the Law Ministry, which is the administrative wing that looks after judicial appointments, is going an extra mile to promote fundamental duties. The department has created an exhaustive list that includes a nodal officer and resource persons for every district of the country. This "resource person list", which mostly includes members of legal aid services, will be carrying out the activities in spreading legal awareness on fundamental duties.

TIME SHARE

A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND analysis undertaken by Rajya Sabha Secretariat has revealed that parties have indeed got their fair share of time in the House, commensurate with their strength. The BJP with 82 members — accounting for 34 per cent of the House strength of 239 — got 480 opportunities, or 33 per cent of the total. The Congress with 46 members, constituting 19 per cent of the strength, got 345 opportunities, which is 24 per cent of the total. The 10 recognised parties in the House with five members and above each, with a total of 190 members accounting for 80 per cent of the House strength, got about 81 per cent of the total opportunities. Others including regional parties and Independents, with the rest 20 per cent of the House membership, got 19 per cent share of participation.

DONALD TRUMP IN INDIA TODAY

Amid tight security, Sabarmati set for maiden visit by a US President

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 23

THE FIRST visit to Sabarmati Gandhi Ashram by an incumbent American president is estimated to take up around 15 minutes of his three-hour tour of the city, officials said on Sunday.

US President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania, and senior advisers to the President, Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, are expected to visit the Ashram along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi around 12.30 pm.

On Sunday, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, officials from the Ministry of External Affairs and security officials reviewed security arrangements and the itinerary for the leaders' visit to the Ashram.

Extensive reconnaissance has been carried out at the Ashram premises by the NSG, the SPG and Gujarat Police. Several police personnel and sniffer dogs have been deployed inside and outside the Ashram.

Ashram secretary Amrut Modi said Trump will spend 15 minutes at the place.

Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust trustee Kartikaya Sarabhai said a charkha model, an illustration of Mahatma Gandhi by Nandalal Bose, a special edition of Gandhi's autobiography, a book containing his quotes and a print of his talisman may be given as mementos to the dignitaries, provided security officials allow. **WITHPTI**



One of the many life-size cutouts of PM Modi, President Trump that have been put up in Ahmedabad ahead of the visit beginning Monday. *Javed Raja*

Temporary gate crashes at Motera stadium, none injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 23

JUST A day before the visit of US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a makeshift welcome gate erected at Motera stadium, the venue for the "Namaste Trump" event, crashed on Sunday. Nobody was injured, official sources said, adding that the gate crashed due to high-velocity winds.

The incident occurred near Gate No 3 of the stadium for VIP entry. When the gate made of welded rods and covered with flex banners fell, policemen and other officials were standing nearby. The gate also had a metal detector to scan those visiting the stadium. The temporary gate was re-erected with the help of a crane later, sources said.

A circular podium has been prepared near the GCA Club end from where Trump and Modi will enter the stadium. The podium, about six-feet high, has been made to accommodate both the leaders. Next to it, seating arrangements have been made on the cricket ground for VVIP guests. The cricket ground has been covered with a turf protector to save the grass from getting damaged.

Ministers' panel to look into NPR issues: Uddhav

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 23

MAHARASHTRA CHIEF Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said his government will form a committee of senior ministers from the three alliance partners — Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress — to check whether there are any "unnecessary and problematic issues" in the exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR). He also said he expressed his stand on CAA and NPR after holding discussions with the Congress.

"On the surface, there seems to be no problems in NPR. But, we will set up a committee of senior ministers from the three parties. We need to check whether there are any unnecessary and problematic issues in NPR. If there are any problematic issues, it should come before people," Thackeray said in response to a question on the BJP congratulating Thackeray on his stand on the CAA and NPR.

Thackeray's statement comes against the backdrop of a discord in Maharashtra's ruling coalition over the exercise to update NPR. During his visit to Delhi last week when he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Thackeray had voiced his support for the NPR which has not gone down well with the Congress and NCP.

Thackeray's statement on Sunday came after his meeting with NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday. During the hour-long meeting, it was decided that leaders from the three parties would sit together to discuss the differences over the NPR issue. It was decided that the questionnaire shared by the Centre will first be discussed between the allies, and objections raised, if any, would be



CM Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar on Sunday. *Ganesh Shirsekar*

conveyed to the Centre. Thackeray reiterated this during the press conference on Sunday on the eve of the Budget Session of the state legislature.

Asked about the Opposition's position that the state doesn't have the right to frame the questions in NPR, Thackeray said, "How to live is the right of the people of this country."

The Chief Minister further said that the Congress does not have a different stand on the CAA and NPR and that he expressed his stand after discussions with the party. "I don't think they (Congress) have a different stand on it. Our discussions are going on smoothly. We have discussed the CAA and NPR. After the discussions with the Congress, I expressed our stand on it," said Thackeray.

Responding to the Opposition's criticism about the state's law and order situation, he said, no riots or attacks have taken place in the state. "But, riots have taken place in BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh. In Delhi, where the Home Ministry is with Union government, protests like Shaheen Bagh have been going on for over 60 days. What is terrible is that 'terrorists' went inside JNU and attacked students. I haven't heard about any action taken against the culprits."

Agra gets makeover for Trump visit

JIGNASA SINHA
AGRA, FEBRUARY 23

ITS MARKETS full of hoardings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump and his wife Melania, and its walls painted brown to blend with the red sandstone monuments, Agra is all set to welcome its high-profile guests on Monday.

"We were informed about Trump's visit on February 14. We have reconstructed footpaths, cleaned sewers, decorated junctions with flowers and installed tricolour LED lights on electric poles," said District Magistrate Prabh N Singh.

Trump will arrive in Agra at 4.45 pm on Monday and visit Taj Mahal before leaving for Delhi. He will be welcomed by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Governor Anandiben Patel.

An official at Agra Municipal Corporation said, "To make everything look uniform, we decided to paint the walls near the streets brown. Agra is known for red sandstone structures and reddish-brown soil and we want to show this to our guests. The shops have been painted with cream colour and the boards, footpath and walls brown."

Singh said 20 golf cars have been prepared for the transport of Trump's convoy from Oberoi Hotel to Taj Mahal's forecourt. Over 3,000 artists from different parts of the country will perform



Security personnel keep vigil at Taj Mahal on Sunday. *Praveen Khanna*

for Trump and stages have been set up at 21 points on the route from the airport to the hotel.

Most markets will be closed till Monday night. Dinesh (35), who runs a departmental store near the airport, said, "Three days ago, municipality workers came and told us that they will repair the streets and the market. We were happy because we didn't have to pay. They constructed stairs near my shop, painted the walls inside and gave a new brown board. I don't know who Trump is but I like him because my shop looks new."

The UP police, which is work-

ing with US Secret Service on a three-layer security arrangement, has been holding drills for a week. SP City Rohan P Botre said, "Over 3,000 personnel have been deployed on the streets and at Taj Mahal. We have 10 companies of paramilitary forces and a few companies from Delhi."

DM Singh said that besides security arrangements, they have also double-checked medical arrangements. "Trump will be accompanied by a doctor but we have also alerted SN Medical College and Pushpanjali Hospital. Ambulances with life-support system will be ready."

Meanwhile, a few shopowners alleged that their shops were forcibly shut down. Arif Khan, who owned a fruit-juice shop, said, "My shop was in front of the monument. We were told that our shops must be cleared to make a passage for people. But our shops aren't near the road, we tried to reason with them but they told us to remove our things. I set up the shop with my savings in January. I had permission. Now I have lost everything."

Asked about this, DM Singh said, "Their shops were encroaching upon the area for a free passage."

MANN KI BAAT

The student within us must never die: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday said "New India" was not prepared to work under old approaches, and in this "New India", women were taking the lead in facing new challenges. Citing examples of women doing extraordinary work throughout the country, Modi, in his monthly radio address "Mann Ki Baat", also said "age and disability" were no longer hurdles in achieving goals.

The Prime Minister referred to women in Pune who made a self-help group, and from getting meagre amounts from mulberry cocoons, are now making silk sarees that sell for thousands of rupees. He gave examples of a 105-year-old woman who recently cleared 'level 4' examination in Kerala, a 12-year-old girl who scaled Mount Aconcagua in South America and a young man from Uttar Pradesh with physical disability who opened his own slipper manufacturing unit, to drive

home his point.

On 105-year-old Bhagirathi Amma, the Prime Minister said, "If we wish to progress in life, we should develop ourselves, if we wish to achieve something in life, the first pre-condition for that is the student within us must never die." Referring to 12-year-old Kanya Karthikeyan, who scaled the highest peak in the Andes, Modi said, "A nation that is fit, will always be a nation that is a hit."

The Prime Minister said that during his visit to Hunar Haat in Delhi earlier this week, he found that more than 50 per cent of artists there were women and that "is giving wings to the dreams of people". Lauding ISRO for its attempts at inspiring children to take up science, Modi said, "Visitor gallery has been built in Sriharikota which can seat 10,000 people, and this can be booked online as well. I have been told that many schools are taking students to show them rocket launches...I request school principals and teachers to make use of this facility in the future as well."

SC showed judicial power through Ayodhya ruling, says Adityanath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 23

ON HIS first visit to Ayodhya after the formation of Shri Ram Janambhoomi Trust for the construction of Ram temple, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the current generation is "lucky to see the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya" as many generations have perished during the "struggle of last 500 years".

Addressing a gathering of saints at Sugriv Quila, he lauded the Supreme Court, saying it has shown its judicial power to the world through its verdict on the disputed land. He also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying he always told saints that Ram Temple will be constructed only under his leadership

"The country's apex court has showed its judicial power to the world and to 700 crore people in the world with the Ram Janambhoomi verdict," he said. During his four-hour visit to Ayodhya, Adityanath visited Ram Lalla and Hanuman Garhi temple and attended Sita-Ram Naam Yaagya. His meeting with Mahant Nriya Gopal Das was cancelled as the latter was in Jhansi, sources said. Earlier in the day, he inaugurated the fourth Arogya Melai in the district and said that under Modi's leadership, "India is emerging as a power in the world". "PM Modi abrogated Article 370 in Kashmir and prohibited practice of triple talaq. He amended the citizenship law... Under his strong leadership, a way has been paved for the construction of a grand temple of Bhagavan Shri Ram in Ayodhya."

'We need to find new president to fill vacuum after Rahul resignation'

Congress MP SHASHI THAROOR speaks to MANOJ CG on organisational challenges before the party

The Congress has suffered yet another poll defeat (in Delhi). What, in your view, is the road ahead for the party?

My starting point is that the Congress is indispensable for India, to give the country an alternative unifying vision to the divisive policies of the BJP government. But to get there, we have to deal with a certain perception in the eyes of the public that we are adrift...since such an image will naturally drive voters towards other political alternatives, as the results from the Delhi elections reflect. At the same time, there are clearly certain organisational and structural challenges that we are working to overcome...

able to choose a new leader even after so many months?

The delay to a certain extent is understandable, given the special place Rahul Gandhi enjoys in the hearts of Congress workers. Given that it was less than two years since he had taken over, it was always going to be a tough challenge to find an individual capable of stepping in and filling his shoes. That's why the Working Committee turned to Sonijai, but she had just given up the presidency and it is unfair to expect her to serve indefinitely. But at the end of the day, a revived Congress is indispensable for India...But in order for us to effectively fulfil this responsibility, we do need to find ourselves a new president to fill the vacuum created in the wake of Rahul Gandhi's resignation and, we need to do so

without any further delay.

What should the Congress do in your opinion?

I think this is a call for the incoming President to take...But as I mentioned, I would certainly welcome an internal process for elections, where members of the AICC plus PCC delegates could collectively vote for the post of president and the elected members of CWC...

As for the rest, my prescription is simple. First, we must decide what we stand for and communicate it effectively and repeatedly. We must articulate a vision for the future that embraces aspirations of India's majority — the young...We have to return to the ethos of politics as social work for those who cannot help themselves. And



strategically, we must explore pragmatic coalitions with regional parties so as not to let the government take advantage of the division of anti-government votes. If we do all of this, we will prevail over the BJP in 2024.

What do you think is wrong, or is anything wrong, with the Congress's messaging, especially on ideological and polarising issues like CAA or

Article 370? BJP has been somewhat successful in projecting Congress as a pro-Muslim/anti-Hindu party.

...We are the party that won India's independence while the BJP's forebears sat out the freedom struggle or collaborated with the British. We are the party that was in office when India prevailed in three out of four wars with Pakistan (and we loyally supported the government in the fourth, over

Kargil). The difference is that we don't do the unseemly chest-thumping and boasting BJP specialises in. As for being pro-Muslim, we are pro-Indian. We stand for the interests of India and Indians, whatever faith they belong to...

The India of 2020 is aspirational and young. The youth, many believe, despise entitlement in politics. And the Congress has a lot of second generation and third generation leaders. How do you deal with that?

The fact remains that in politics, just like in many other professions where sons and daughters take up a similar occupation as their parents, success and effectiveness ultimately only comes when one has the necessary aptitude, skillsets, energy and work ethic...So, I don't see this as an argument for or against entitlement, but at the end of the day an argument for capability and capacity. The Indian voter is intelligent

enough to recognise the latter...

What is your opinion on the view that Congress should bring a non-Gandhi at the helm and make a fresh start.

There is no denying the clear fact that the Gandhi family has a special place in the hearts of the Congress members — and with good reason too. Besides the great legacy they have inherited from their illustrious forebears, they have consistently brought together the various groups, ideologies, geographies and communities that collectively make up the fabric of the Congress and have a clear record of success and experience in leading the party, both when in government and during tough times in the wilderness...

But again, the repeated question of "Gandhi or non-Gandhi" is missing the wood for the trees. The urgent need is to find a new president and I am confident that if we do so through a participatory, transparent and democratic elec-

toral process internally, the workers will at the end of the day throw their might and energy behind whoever emerges as the winning candidate.

The Congress attacks the BJP and PM Narendra Modi, but without offering an alternative. Should the party start making constructive criticism and offer a credible, forward looking and modern alternative to the BJP?

I don't think that is a fair assessment and on the contrary, whether in Parliament or outside its walls, I do believe that we have presented ourselves as a constructive opposition and have advocated a fundamentally different politics, an alternative vision, to that of the BJP. We have rejected their exclusionary, chauvinistic and polarising politics of hatred, and in its place reiterated a call for an inclusive and accepting India.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

India, China spar over export curbs on medical products

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

INDIA AND China were locked in a verbal duel on Sunday over export restrictions on medical products in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

Chinese medical institutions, charity organisations and local authorities have complained that medical products needed in fighting the epidemic in China are prohibited for export by the Indian side. In a statement, Chinese embassy spokesperson Ji Rong said on Sunday that the WHO has repeatedly opposed any travel and trade restrictions on China, which should be followed by all parties.

"It is hoped that the Indian side could review the epidemic situation in an objective, rational and calm manner, handle with China's much-needed items in a cooperative and constructive way, and resume normal personnel exchanges and trade between our two countries as soon as possible," she said.

In response, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said the precautions taken by India are in accordance with WHO's advisory about the outbreak of coronavirus.

"Some restrictions have been imposed on the export of certain medical equipment in view of the fact that these items are in short supply here too. Just like any other country, India with a billion-plus population has the responsibility to take the necessary measures to combat the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak which if not properly managed can become a global risk," he said.

However, he said, "Responding to the needs of our Chinese friends, the government had allowed a one-time exemption for the export of some items which had been restricted for export."

He reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had written to the Chinese President and

EXPLAINED

F **Lockin** **in a tussle**

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi had offered help to Chinese President Xi Jinping in the hour of need. But Delhi and Beijing are now locked in a tussle over export restrictions on medical supplies and approval for flight with medical supplies. The two sides must realise that both need to cooperate to fight the epidemic.

offered assistance in the hour of need. "In a humanitarian gesture of medical relief, a gift reflecting the solidarity of the people of India with the people of China is expected to be delivered to Wuhan by a special flight. We have also called upon the Chinese authorities to allow Indian citizens and those of our neighbouring countries to return by the same flight. We hope they will give it positive consideration," he said.

This came a day after India and China were engaged in a face-off over a flight to send relief supplies to Wuhan which will bring back stranded Indians and nationals from neighbouring countries.

Sources on Saturday had said China is "deliberately delaying" permission for an Indian Air Force plane to Wuhan. India submitted its request with Chinese authorities on February 13 for the C-17 aircraft and the flight plan was submitted on February 15 with a proposal mentioning February 20 as date of departure. A Chinese Embassy spokesperson said there was no deliberate delay in grant of permission, adding that China always attaches great importance to health and safety of Indian nationals living in the country.

6 injured as anti-CAA protesters, police clash in Aligarh, 2 serious

ENS & PTI
LUCKNOW, ALIGARH, FEB 23

SIX PEOPLE were injured, including two critically, as clashes erupted between police and anti-CAA protesters in Uparkot area of Aligarh on Sunday evening. Among the injured were two policemen.

The father of one of those injured said his son was a bystander who had been fired at by a person whom he could identify. Four others suffered injuries, two of them in their eyes, with one of them likely to lose his left eye, according to doctors treating them.

District Magistrate Chandra Bhushan Singh said there had been no firing from police side.

Police said miscreants pelted stones, damaged public and government vehicles and also opened fire, but the situation had been brought under control. Police also

used teargas to disperse the crowd. A shop was partly burnt in the violence.

A heavy contingent of police remains deployed in the area, while Internet services were suspended in the district for 24 hours.

"It took us around 10-15 minutes to bring the situation under control," said DM Singh.

He accused women students of Aligarh Muslim University of instigating the protesters and said their roles would be probed. "We will seek compensation for the damages from people involved in the violence," he added.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Aligarh Range) Preetinder Singh told PTI that some persons were detained after the violence.

A large group of women along with children have been staging a protest against the CAA and the proposed National Register of Citizens outside Shahjamaal Eidgah in Aligarh since last month.

In the first week of February, the Aligarh police had issued notices to 153 of them to sign a bond promising to maintain peace.

On Thursday, following rain, the protesters sought permission to set up a tent. After they were turned down, a section began a protest outside the Uparkot Police Station. Police had been trying to convince them to disperse fearing violence.

The clashes broke out shortly after a Bhim Army-led march by hundreds of anti-CAA protesters heading to the district collectorate was stopped by police and Rapid Action Force jawans. The protesters then headed towards the Eidgah area.

Station House Officer, Uparkot Police Station, Ravindra Kumar Singh said that towards evening, some of the women started pelting stones at a police vehicle at the station. When stopped, they allegedly damaged vehicles parked

on the road as well as attacked shops. Singh said another group of protesters attacked vehicles in the nearby Babri Mandi area.

According to PTI, the father and brother of 22-year-old Tariq, who received bullet injuries, told police he was shot in the stomach by a "miscrunt" as he stood outside his home. Tariq was admitted to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital at AMU, where doctors described his condition as "serious".

A hospital spokesperson said five people had been admitted to the hospital after clashes. One of them, 25-year-old Mohammad Ibrahim, had pellet injury in his left eye, the spokesperson said, adding that while they had done an operation, he could lose his vision in that eye. The spokesperson said two other injured, Rashid, 20, and Kalim 22, with eye injury and with rubber bullet injuries in the chest, respectively, were out of danger.

Gangster Ravi Pujari extradited from Senegal

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 23



Ravi Pujari

MORE THAN a year after he was arrested in the west African country of Senegal on the basis of information provided by Indian agencies, notorious extortionist and gangster Ravi Sulyia Pujari, 51, will be brought to Bengaluru to stand trial in a murder case early Monday following completion of the extradition process in Senegal.

A police team from Bengaluru "will be reaching with him on an Air France flight tonight", Karnataka police sources familiar with the arrest and extradition process said on Sunday.

An Air France flight from Paris is scheduled to arrive in Bengaluru a little after midnight and Pujari has been put on the flight after he was brought to Paris from Senegal, the police sources said.

Karnataka Additional Director General (Law and order) Amar Kumar Pandey, involved in locating Pujari and co-ordinating his arrest and extradition process with officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and other Indian agencies, has been out of the country over the past week. Last year, the Ministry of External Affairs had given clearances to ADGP Pandey to travel to Senegal to facilitate Pujari's extradition.

The state police set in motion the process for Pujari's extradition with the help of the government of India to stand trial, primarily in a 2007 shootout case in which his gunmen killed two employees of a south Bengaluru real estate agency, Shabnam Developers, after its owner resisted his extortion attempts. There are 96 other cases against Pujari in Karnataka of extortion. There are also dozens of cases against him in other states.

Tracking and finding Pujari proved to be a difficult task for the police since the gangster always used Voice Over Internet protocols

for communicating with associates in the countries where he operated. When Pujari made extortion calls, call records on the victims' phones would show the location of countries in the Pacific region, western Europe and Africa, police sources said.

A tip-off about Pujari being a partner in a restaurant chain called "Namaste India" in several west African countries set the police on his trail in 2018 and eventually led to his arrest in Senegal on January 19, 2019. Indian agencies picked up Pujari's trail in Burkina Faso, where he was partnering a few Indian associates.

Pujari who was living under the identity of Antony Fernandes — a Burkina Faso national and businessman — had built an image for himself as a philanthropist and was even featured in local newspapers for his charitable work. While trying to track him down in Burkina Faso, the Indian officials found that Pujari had moved over to Senegal.

He was eventually located and detained at a barber's shop in Dakar in Senegal by Dakar police. Senegal's interior ministry informed Indian authorities on January 21 about the detention to facilitate the process of extradition.

The identity of Pujari, who had assumed a new name, was established through fingerprints sent to Senegalese authorities.

In the absence of a bilateral extradition treaty with Senegal, the Indian government moved for extraditing Pujari under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, adopted in 2000 as "the main international instrument in the fight against transnational organized crime".

President lauds SC for rulings on gender issues

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

"GENDER JUSTICE must remain high on the global agenda," President Ram Nath Kovind said on Sunday and lauded the Supreme Court for its "proactive and progressive" stance.

Delivering the valedictory address at the International Judicial Conference, 2020, the President said that "from issuing guidelines on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace two decades ago to providing directives for granting equal status to women in the army this month, the Supreme Court of India has led progressive social transformation".

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde said that the judiciary "is the guardian of constitutional values and serves to counter-balance



President Ram Nath Kovind delivers the valedictory address at the International Judicial Conference, in Delhi on Sunday. Twitter

populist forces in a commitment to the rule of law".

The CJ said two facets of globalisation that have posed the greatest challenges to judiciaries across the world are the rise of global supply chains and the proliferation of information technology.

"Technology has placed the world in the palms of our hands, making it possible to communicate with great ease across the world. But the widespread use of technology has also brought with it concerns over mass data collection and an individual's right to

privacy," he noted.

Justice D Y Chandrachud said judges were entrusted by the Constitution to decide cases in the "belief that in the work of judges, the law is moulded as an instrument of protecting constitutional values and ensuring justice to those in our communities who need it the most".

He said that challenges posed by technology, climate change and terrorism transcend individual jurisdictions.

Hackers, private companies and the government present "challenges to privacy" and the question is how courts should balance right to privacy with other rights and supplement existing legislative frameworks, he said.

Justice SK Kaul, who delivered the vote of thanks, said governments normally reflect the majority view "and it is the judiciary which plays the balancing act".

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Offered money, tried labour chowk: what MP officials did for sterilisation target

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 23

HEALTH workers in Madhya Pradesh offered money from own pockets to try and meet sterilisation targets set earlier this month. One of them, in tribal-dominated Alirajpur, said he gave one person Rs 5,000, over and above the Rs 2,000 paid by the government. A health worker in Bhopal talked of desperately approaching labourers gathered at a square on the capital's outskirts for work to convince them.

Alirajpur Chief Medical and

Health Officer Dr Prakash Dhoke, who admitted that health workers resorted to such measures, is not surprised. The district saw all of six male sterilisations between 2015 and 2019. But, in the 10 days since a February 11 circular mandated that each health worker ensure at least one male sterilisation by March 31 or face loss of pay or job, it logged in 12 cases. The target the health workers in Alirajpur district were set was 693.

The Kamal Nath government has since withdrawn the controversial circular, following a report by *The Indian Express*, while blaming officials for it. National Health

Mission's state director Chhavi Bharadwaj has been removed.

Alirajpur has 27 multi-purpose health workers (MPHWs) to carry out its sterilisation drive. At a meeting of the District Health Society in the last week of December, they were told by officials to meet sterilisation targets or face punitive action. Officials said those 50 or older or who had completed 20 years in service were warned they might be the first to go.

Arvind Bairagi, 46, has been an MPHW with the Madhya Pradesh Health Department for 21 years, earning Rs 34,000. Alirajpur where

he is based is a tough case for the Health Department as bigamy is common in the tribal district as are multiple children given the high rate of infant mortality.

Bairagi admitted that at his Malpur sub-centre in Bhabra block, he had been unable to convince even one man in six years to undergo vasectomy. After the circular came, he looked for willing men in villages around. When he couldn't find any, he said, "I somehow convinced a government employee and offered him Rs 5,000. Jabran karvaya payment de ke (I got it done forcibly)," Bairagi told *The Indian Express* over the phone.

"A load lifted off my mind... Pressure was building for days," he added, saying he had little choice.

Even after the government employee, who underwent sterilisation on February 19, accepted the money, Bairagi said, doctors had to reassure him that the operation would not affect his sex drive — a common fear believed to be behind the low rate of vasectomies in India despite it being the safest form of family planning.

Suresh Ajnar, another MPHW in Alirajpur district, said he could not get even one man to agree though he offered up to Rs 4,000. One reached the point

of filling the consent form. Ajnar said. "But on the day of the camp, he fled to Gujarat, where he works as a labourer. I almost went into depression."

Ajnar added that, but for the last few days, in his 21 years on the job he hadn't been able to get a single man to undergo vasectomy. While he had better success with women, even getting them to agree to sterilisation in tribal areas was not easy, Ajnar said.

Said CMO Dr Dhoke, "Men think sterilisation will leave them 'inferior'. Health workers run the risk of assault on the field."

Dr Dhoke added that earlier

too they had been set sterilisation targets, but this time formal orders were issued.

Ravi Kishwaha, a 43-year-old MPWH in Bhopal, said that even in the capital city, meeting sterilisation targets was difficult. He tried his luck at the Karond square where up to 40 labourers queue daily for work.

Regional Joint Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Swasthya Karmachari Sangh, Vimlesh Khode said while the Health Department always reviews progress of the family planning programme, such a circular had never been issued.

Kafeel Khan's uncle shot dead in Gorakhpur

Lucknow: A maternal uncle (55) of suspended paediatrician Dr Kafeel Khan was shot dead by two men outside his house at Bankatichak area in Gorakhpur district on Saturday night.

Police said Nusratullah Warsi was shot in the head from point-blank range. They suspect a property and monetary dispute.

An FIR has been lodged against Imammuddin and Anil Sonkar at the City Kotwali police station, said police. Neither has been arrested. "There was a property and monetary dispute between Warsi and others, including Imammuddin and Anil Sonkar. We have got some lead in the case and hope to solve the case soon," said Circle Officer, Kotwali, Virendra Pratap Singh.

According to Singh, as Warsi reached near his home Saturday night, the assailants arrived. "After speaking to him for a while, they opened fire at Warsi and escaped. Hearing gun shots, Warsi's family came out of the house. He was taken to hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival," said Singh.

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
P.O.: Donimal Township, Taluk - Sandur, District-Ballari
Karnataka, Pin - 583 118 CIN: L13100TG1958GOI001674

OPEN TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sealed tenders in two bid system are inviting from the competent and experienced bidder for the following works:

Tender No. Name of Work and Completion Period	Estimated Cost (₹)	Sale/download period upto 15:00 hrs. From To
No. CE/W/16/145/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Afforestation of 12000 Saplings work at KIOM Plot-A (ML No. 1111) for the year 2020-21 as per R & R Plan including 3 years Maintenance after Planting of Saplings with period of completion 03 months (Including Monsoon Period and 3 years maintenance after completion of planting of sapling)	40.96 Lakhs	24/02/2020 to 23/03/2020
No. CE/W/16/145/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Afforestation of 12000 Saplings work at KIOM Plot-B (ML No. 1111) for the year 2020-21 as per R & R Plan including 3 years Maintenance after Planting of Saplings with period of completion 03 months (Including Monsoon Period and 3 years maintenance after completion of planting of sapling)	40.96 Lakhs	25/02/2020 to 24/03/2020
No. CE/W/16/145/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Afforestation of 12000 Saplings work at KIOM Plot-C (ML No. 1111) for the year 2020-21 as per R & R Plan including 3 years Maintenance after Planting of Saplings with period of completion 03 months (Including Monsoon Period and 3 years maintenance after completion of planting of sapling)	40.96 Lakhs	26/02/2020 to 25/03/2020
No. CE/W/16/145/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Afforestation of 12000 Saplings work at KIOM Plot-D (ML No. 1111) for the year 2020-21 as per R & R Plan including 3 years Maintenance after Planting of Saplings with period of completion 03 months (Including Monsoon Period and 3 years maintenance after completion of planting of sapling)	40.96 Lakhs	27/02/2020 to 26/03/2020
No. CE/W/18/66/2020 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Strengthening of Secondary level platform members at Screening Plantation (DIDM) with period of completion: 06 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	30.54 Lakhs	28/02/2020 to 27/03/2020
No. CE/W/17/259/2020 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Repair and Maintenance of Drains and Culverts in North Block at Donimal Township with period of completion: 06 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	29.05 Lakhs	02/03/2020 to 01/04/2020
No. CE/W/16/145/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Construction of CC Road in Navakali Village with period of completion: 03 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	13.80 Lakhs	03/03/2020 to 03/04/2020
No. CE/W/15/104/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Construction of CC Road in Navakali Village with period of completion: 03 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	88.99 Lakhs	03/03/2020 to 03/04/2020
No. CE/W/15/105/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Construction of CC Road in Navakali Village with period of completion: 03 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	47.05 Lakhs	05/03/2020 to 04/04/2020
No. CE/W/14/57/2020 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Cleaning Collection of Garbage from Door to Door and Disposal of Garbage of South Block at Donimal Township for One Year (Job Contract Basis) with period of completion: 12 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	26.54 Lakhs	07/03/2020 to 07/04/2020
No. CE/W/14/58/2020 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Cleaning Collection of Garbage from Door to Door and Disposal of Garbage of North Block at Donimal Township for One Year (Job Contract Basis) with period of completion: 12 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	23.93 Lakhs	08/03/2020 to 08/04/2020
No. CE/W/24/4/2020 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 Clearing of PWD road in Narasapur Village and Rangihura Village for a period of One Year (Job Contract Basis) with period of completion: 12 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	21.91 Lakhs	10/03/2020 to 09/04/2020
No. CE/W/8/430/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 House Keeping of NMDC Yashodha Aranyavardhini Hospital for a period of One Year (Job Contract Basis) with period of completion: 12 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	13.90 Lakhs	13/03/2020 to 13/04/2020
No. CE/W/8/430/2019 vide Date of notification 22/02/2020 House Keeping of NMDC Yashodha Aranyavardhini Hospital for a period of One Year (Job Contract Basis) with period of completion: 12 months (Including Rainy Season from July to October)	42.34 Lakhs	16/03/2020 to 16/04/2020

For accessing the tender document or download from NMDC Limited website: <https://www.nmdc.co.in/midcindex/india/asp>

For any clarification bidders may contact DGM (Civil), by mailing to dlcmcivil@nmdc.co.in or by fax message to 09395274644.

Date: 22/02/2020

For and on behalf of NMDC Ltd.,
Dy. General Manager (Civil)

E - TENDERING PRESS NOTICE

Executive Engineer, Civil Division No. IV, Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, L.M. Bund Office Complex, Shastrji Nagar, Delhi-31 invites on behalf of President of India online Percentage rate tender from approved and eligible contractors registered with Irrigation & Flood Control Department upto 3.00PM dated on 28.02.2020 for the works:

H.O.A.: MLLALAD FUND UNDER DEPTT. OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

1. NIT No. 188/CD-IV/IFC/2019-20 (ID No. 2020_IFC_188185_1)

Name of work: Improvement of Rajiv Nagar Kabristan in Mandoli Village near Bank Colony of Gokalpur Constituency (AC-68). Estimated Cost of Rs. 85,46,628/- Earnest Money Rs. 1,70,933/- period of completion 180 days.

H.O.A.: MLLALAD FUND UNDER DEPTT. OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

2. NIT No. 188/CD-IV/IFC/2019-20 (ID No. 2020_IFC_188179_1)

Name of work: Improvement of Mandoli Village Kabristan at Sewadham road in Gokalpur Constituency (AC-68). Estimated Cost of Rs. 82,48,843/- Earnest Money Rs. 1,64,977/- period of completion 180 days.

Note:

- The enlistment of the contractors should be valid on the last date of opening of tender. In case only the last date of opening of tender is extended, the enlistment of contractor should be valid on the original date of opening of tenders.
- The following Scanned copies of documents are required to be uploaded:- (i) Copy of GST Registration/upto date file returned copy (ii) Registration of enlistment in the appropriate class. (iii) Scanned copy of EMD (iv) Scanned copy of ESI and EPF registration. (v) Copy of PAN Number. (vi) Valid Mobile Number, WhatsApp Number and E-mail ID.
- EMD's in the form of DD/FDR in favour of EE, CD-IV may be submitted in the O/o of EE, CD-IV physically upto 3.00 P.M. in the date of opening tender. If the same shall not be deposited Physically, the tender shall be treated as cancelled. The Detail of above mentioned work can be seen and downloaded from website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
- No manual tender shall be accepted; Only tender submitted through e-procurement portal shall be considered.

Sd/-
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
DIP/Shabdarth/1383/19-20

Kerala police, NIA probe into recovery of 'Pak-made' bullets

Thiruvananthapuram: Central and state security agencies have begun a probe into recovery of live bullets — suspected to have been made in Pakistan and China. The bullets were found at a roadside by local people under Kulathupuzha police limits in Kollam district on Saturday.

DGP Loknath Behera told reporters on Sunday that the probe was handed over to anti-terror

BANGALORE AIRPORT HOTEL LIMITED (BAHL)
Administration Block, Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, Bangalore 560 300
Web: www.bangaluruairport.com

NOTICE-INVITATION TO EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Bangalore International Airport Limited ("BIAL"), a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956, is the developer, owner and operator of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru ("Airport"). BAH is a 100% subsidiary of BIAL. BAH is the owner of the Taj Hotel at Kempegowda International Airport, Devanahalli, Bengaluru, operated by Indian Hotels Company Limited.

Expansion of the existing Taj Hotel, which includes the construction of about 1,84,000 sq. ft. of built up area (part basement + lower ground + ground + 5 levels + Terrace) and associated infrastructure facilities on a plot area of approximately 91,191 sq. ft. at Kempegowda International Airport, Devanahalli, Bengaluru (the "Project").

Brief scope of work of this package (Package-3): Carrying out Civil & Interior Finishing Work of Guest Rooms, Public and BOH area and associated work of the hotel expansion project. Work shall include - but not limited to - construction of Civil & Interior Finishing work including, but not limited to, flooring, ceiling, wall finishes, sanitary fittings & fixtures, interconnecting doors, fixed mill work, fixed furnishing work, lighting work of entire expansion. Work shall also include area/ site barricading, safety aspects, site access, other enabling, installation and associated work of the Project scope.

BAHL invites interested applicants to submit their Expression of Interest ("EOI") for carrying out the work and successfully handing over the Project. Response to the EOI shall be permitted only by Indian entities; consortium/joint venture participation is not submitted.

Information on the EOI can be obtained from the BIAL website www.bangaluruairport.com (<http://www.bangaluruairport.com/ourBusiness/tender.aspx>) (Information Document). Bidding for this Project is through e-tendering. Applicants shall register on www.bialtenders.com, as per the e-Tendering instructions provided with Information Document.

Applicants shall view/download the EOI document from the e-portal <https://www.bialtenders.com> from IST 14.00 Hrs on **February 24, 2020 to IST 16.00 Hrs on March 9, 2020**. Responses to the EOI must be submitted online at <https://www.bialtenders.com> on or before **IST 17:00 Hrs on March 9, 2020**.

Addendum if any, to this EOI shall be made available on BIAL website and e-portal.

3 picked up on suspicion of being Bangladeshi turn out to be Indians

ATIKH RASHID
PUNE, FEBRUARY 23

THREE men, who were rounded up by Pune Police after "vigilante-style raids" on their homes by MNS workers and a police team on Saturday on the suspicion that they were Bangladeshi migrants, were released after it was confirmed that they were Indian citizens from West Bengal.

One of the men has submitted a complaint against MNS workers, alleging harassment, trespassing and invasion of privacy. No FIR has been registered so far.

The incident took place on Saturday morning when about 50 MNS workers, led by party leader Rahul Gawli, barged into a building in Balajinagar area of Dhankavadi. Accompanied by policemen, they entered the homes of three suspected Bangladeshi and demanded documentary evidence that they were Indians. The three men, identified as Dilshad Mansuri, Roshan Shaikh and Bappi Sardar, were

rounded up, questioned in front of other residents of the locality and asked to fetch documents to prove their identity. Although the men reportedly showed documents to prove that they hailed from Bengal, they were taken to Sahakarnagar police station and detained there till Saturday evening before being released.

Dilshad operates a food stall, Bappi is an electrician and Roshan earns a living by polishing gold and silver jewellery.

Roshan said he hails from Hooghly district in West Bengal and shifted to Pune in 1998.

In his complaint at Sahakarnagar police station, he said, "At the police station, police took details about my mother who stays in Hooghly and called her. She confirmed that I belong to Hooghly, but the police officer asked her to go to the nearest police station and request local police to re-confirm to Pune police that it was her son and born in India. My mother had to rush to the Pandua police station and request the policeman to speak to

their counterparts in Pune. Even after this was done, they made me wait at the police station until 6 pm, while my wife and children anxiously waited for me."

Confirming that the three are Indian citizens, ACC Sarjerao Babar said, "All three men are Indians and hence they were let off. It's true that one of the three has submitted a complaint, alleging that he was harassed by MNS activists. We will inquire and take appropriate action."

A MNS leader said the party high command had asked them to conduct raids and continued to claim that the men were Bangladeshi. "Raj Thackeray/saheb had given us an 'aadesh' to remove Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims staying in Maharashtra illegally. Accordingly, we gathered early morning in the presence of police at Balajinagar, where many illegal immigrants stay. After the raids, we handed over the illegal Bangladeshi to police. Although they showed documents, they clearly were fake," said party leader Sachin Katkar.

7 THE WORLD



USA DAREDEVIL DIES IN ROCKET CRASH

A self-styled daredevil died Saturday after a rocket in which he launched himself crashed into the ground, a colleague and a witness said. "Mad" Mike Hughes died after the homemade rocket crashed on private property near Barstow, California. In March 2018, Hughes, who believed the Earth is flat, propelled himself about 1,875 feet into the air before a hard landing in the Mojave Desert.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Thich Quang Do

VIETNAM Dissident monk, a Nobel nominee, dies at 93

Hanoi: Thich Quang Do, a dissident Buddhist monk who has effectively been under house arrest since 2003 and was nominated multiple times for the Nobel Peace Prize, has died aged 93. Head of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), the vocal patriarch was born in 1928 in Thai Binh province and spent most of his life advocating for religious freedom and human rights in communist-run Vietnam. His staunch activism landed him under what was effectively house arrest in Ho Chi Minh City in 2003, where he was under constant surveillance.

PAKISTAN Pak inaugurates 1st-ever Afghan transit cargo train service

Karachi: Pakistan Railways has inaugurated the first ever freight train service that will transport cargo from port city of Karachi to Kandahar in Afghanistan. Pakistan Railways Chairman Habib-ur-Rehman Gilani inaugurated the train on Saturday which departed from the Pakistan International Container Terminal in Karachi with 35 containers on board for the country's southwest Chaman city bordering Afghanistan. From there, the goods will be shifted across the border via road.

FRANCE Da Vinci fans pull Louvre all-nighters

Paris: It's a half hour after midnight, and a huge crowd is massed in front of the illuminated glass pyramid at the Louvre for a rare night-time visit to the museum's most ambitious show in years, a landmark collection of works by the Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci. Since Friday, the Louvre has opened its door for three nights of free visits to the exhibition before it wraps up Monday. The 30,000 tickets were snapped up in just three hours when they were made available online earlier this month.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

S Korea on virus high alert; Italy, Iran take drastic steps

Number of cases triple over the weekend to 602 in S Korea

AGENCIES CODOGNO, SHANGHAI, FEB 23

SOUTH KOREA went on high alert Sunday following a sharp jump in coronavirus cases, and Italy and Iran took their own drastic containment steps as an epidemic that has killed nearly 2,500 people in China continued a relentless global expansion.

South Korea is raising the nation's alert to its "highest" level, President Moon Jae-in said on Sunday after the number of infections more than tripled over the weekend to 602.

Led by an outbreak cluster in a religious sect in the southern city of Daegu, South Korea now has the most infections outside of China apart from the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship docked in Japan, which has seen more than 600.

South Korea reported 169 new cases and three deaths on Sunday, taking the countrywide toll of fatalities to six.

More than 300 cases have been linked to the Shincheonji Church of Jesus sect in Daegu — whose founder claims the mantle of Jesus Christ and vows to take 144,000 people with him to heaven on judgement day.

Italy, Iran shut schools
Elsewhere, Italy and Iran began introducing the sort of con-



Ambulances carrying patients infected with COVID-19 arrive at a hospital in Daegu, South Korea, on Sunday. AP

tainment measures previously seen only in China, which has put tens of millions of people under quarantine lockdown in the epicentre province of Hubei.

More than 50,000 people in about a dozen northern Italian towns near the business hub of Milan were urged by authorities to stay home, while shops and schools were shuttered.

With 132 cases, Italy on Friday became the first European country to report one of its nationals had died from the virus, followed by a second death Saturday.

Iran ordered the closure of schools, universities and cultural centres across 14 provinces from Sunday following five deaths and 43 confirmed cases in the Islamic Republic — the most out-

side East Asia. Meanwhile, Iran on Sunday announced a 42% turnout in its parliamentary election, the lowest rate since the 1979 Islamic revolution, while its top leader said Tehran's enemies played up the new coronavirus threat to dissuade people from voting. "Their media did not miss the tiniest opportunity for dissuading Iranian voters and resorting to the excuse of disease and the virus," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said.

China reported another 97 deaths in its daily update Sunday, taking its total to 2,442, plus 648 new infections. Nearly 80,000 people have been infected worldwide, the vast majority in China.

Amid fears, Moscow targets Chinese with raids

ASSOCIATED PRESS MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 23

BUS DRIVERS in Moscow kept their WhatsApp group chat buzzing with questions this week about what to do if they spotted passengers who might be from China riding with them in the Russian capital.

"Some Asian-looking (people) have just got on. Probably Chinese. Should I call (the police)?" one driver messaged his peers.

"How do I figure out if they're Chinese? Should I ask them?" a colleague wondered.



Medical workers at a railway station in Moscow

The befuddlement reflected in screenshots of the group exchanges seen by The Associated Press had a common source — in-

structions from Moscow's public transit operator Wednesday for drivers to call a dispatcher if Chinese nationals boarded their buses, Russian media reported.

A leaked email that the media reports said was sent by the state-owned transportation company Mosgortrans told dispatchers who took such calls to notify the police.

The email, which the company immediately described on Twitter as fake, carried a one-word subject line: coronavirus.

Since the outbreak of the new virus, Russia has reported two cases. Both patients, Chinese na-

4 more Indians on board cruise ship test positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA TOKYO, FEBRUARY 23

FOUR MORE Indian crew members on board a cruise ship moored off the Japan coast have tested positive for the coronavirus and those who are not found to be infected would be facilitated to travel back home once all the results are declared, the Indian embassy said on Sunday.

With the fresh infections, the total number of Indians infected with the virus on the vessel rose to 12, the embassy said.

Passengers showing no signs of the deadly disease started deboarding the ship, *Diamond Princess*, after the quarantine period ended last week.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said that over 1,000 passengers and crew will remain on board.

On Saturday, around 100 more passengers, who were in close contact with the infected people on board, were allowed the deboard the ship.

"Unfortunately, results received as of 1200 JST (Japan Standard Time) include 4 Indian crew members having tested positive," the Indian embassy tweeted.

nationals hospitalised in Siberia, recovered quickly.

Russian authorities nevertheless are going to significant — some argue discriminatory — lengths to keep the virus from resurfacing and spreading.

Moscow officials ordered police raids of hotels, dormitories, apartment buildings and businesses to track down the shrinking number of Chinese people remaining in the city.

They also authorised the use of facial recognition technology to find those suspected of evading a 14-day self-quarantine period upon their arrival in Russia.



US Democratic presidential candidate, Senator Bernie Sanders, addresses his first campaign rally after the Nevada Caucus, in El Paso, Texas, on Saturday. Reuters

2020 DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

Sanders wins Nevada caucuses, strengthening his primary lead

JONATHAN MARTIN & ALEXANDER BURNS LAS VEGAS, FEBRUARY 23

SENATOR BERNIE Sanders claimed a big victory in the Nevada caucuses that demonstrated his broad appeal in the first racially diverse state in the presidential primary race and established himself as the clear front-runner for the Democratic nomination.

In a significant show of force, Sanders, a liberal from Vermont, had a large lead over his nearest rivals with 50% of the precincts reporting, and *The Associated Press* named him the winner Saturday evening.

His triumph in Nevada, after strong performances in Iowa and New Hampshire, will propel him into next Saturday's primary in South Carolina, and the Super Tuesday contests immediately thereafter, with a burst of momentum that may make it difficult for the still-fractured moderate wing

NEVADA RESULTS: 60% PRECINCTS COUNTED				
Candidate	Sanders	Biden	Buttigieg	Warren
Total CCDs*	3,523	1,496	1,172	773
Pct.	46%	19.6%	15.3%	10.1%

*Candidate totals are county convention delegates (CCDs) won, which are derived from caucus vote tallies and determine the number of pledged delegates each candidate receives. Source: NYT

of the party to slow his march.

Sanders, speaking to jubilant supporters in San Antonio, trumpeted what early results suggested would be a landslide victory.

"We have just put together a multigenerational, multiracial coalition, which is not only going to win in Nevada it's going to sweep the country," he said.

As results were being counted Saturday night, former Vice President Joe Biden, former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, billionaire investor Tom Steyer and Senator Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota were competing for what would be a distant second-place finish. **NYT**



Houses are reduced to rubble after an earthquake hit villages in Baskale in Van province, Turkey. AP

Nine dead in Turkey after earthquake at Iran border

IREM KOCA & JONATHAN SPICER ISTANBUL, FEBRUARY 23

NINE PEOPLE died and hundreds of buildings collapsed in southeastern Turkey on Sunday after a magnitude-5.7 earthquake struck near the border with Iran, injuring dozens in villages and towns in both countries, government officials said.

Three of those killed were children and 37 Turks were injured, including nine critically, Turkey's health ministry said.

The shallow tremor caused more than 1,000 buildings to collapse in Turkey, prompting a brief rescue effort to find those trapped under rubble.

The quake damaged buildings some 90 km to the west in the Turkish city of Van, and to the east in dozens of villages in Iran, where state TV said 75 people were injured including six in hospital, though there were no fatalities.

Crisscrossed by major fault lines, Iran and Turkey are among the most earthquake-prone countries in the world.

TV footage showed people digging with shovels and their hands in the rubble, as well as furniture and belongings strewn on cracked, snowy roads. In one village the ground cratered under several buildings, while in others residents were wrapped in blankets outside homes with crumbled exterior walls, fallen metal roofs and twisted wiring. **REUTERS**

US to start enforcing regulation that could deny Green Cards to immigrants on benefits

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 23

THE UNITED States on Monday will begin enforcing a regulation that could deny green cards or legal permanent residency to legal immigrants who seek public benefits like food stamps.

The move might affect a number of Indians who are on H-1B visas and are in long queues to get permanent legal residency.

The decision follows the Supreme Court's ruling on Friday which lifted the final remaining injunction on the "public charge" regulation.

"As a result, the Department

EXPLAINED South Asians could be among worst hit

A LARGE number of South Asians, especially Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians, seek work and permanent residency in the US. According to a Migration Policy Institute Report from 2018, 61% Bangladeshi families, 48% Pakistani families and 11% Indian families in the US receive public benefits, PTI reported. This means a big percentage of South Asians could be affected by the rule.

of Homeland Security will be able to implement its regulation on Monday," said White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham.

The final rule published on Aug 14, 2019 was originally scheduled to come into effect on Oct 15, 2019, but could not be implemented due to various court rulings.

70TH BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: DAY 3

Time to Hunt: Pacy South Korean thriller set in a dystopian future



SHUBHRA GUPTA FEBRUARY 23

BLAME IT on *Parasite*. The lines for South Korean actioner *Time to Hunt* stretch all the way down two floors out of the Cinemaxx theatre, one of the main screening venues at the Berlinale. The press line is the buzziest it has been: finally it feels like a hot film at one of the biggest film festivals.

The film is a pacy thriller, focusing on three young men try-

ing to hack a life in the near-future, which is, of course, dystopian. The frames are kinetic and stylish as it tracks the three friends, one who has just been released from prison, and has thought of a last job before they take off to a warm tropical island. Part heist, part chase, the film has shades of the *Terminator* movies; and the on-the-run bits, in which the trio is chased by a bigger gang, puts you in the mind of *Mad Max*.

Those are the influences director Yoon Sung-hyun admits to while making *Time To Hunt*, which comes nine years after his debut coming-of-age feature, *Bleak Night*. At the journalist's roundtable post-screening, the 'dystopia' question comes up first. Does he think the future is all dystopic?

Yoon, speaking through his interpreter, comes back with a "no". His film is not a prediction of the future, he says. It is a metaphorical expression of contemporary South Korean society. "I wanted to capture the emotions of the young people around me, the ones who are struggling to make sense of the economic downturn." The elements of the movies he has loved, which also includes Spielberg's 1971 *Duel*, found their way into his own, which evolved into a genre film.

I ask him a double-barrelled question. Is violence the answer to the world's troubles? Also, post-*Parasite*, with its staggering sweep at the Oscars, does he think the South Korean film industry will change in any way?



Time to Hunt director Yoon Sung-hyun says the physical violence in the movie is meant to represent and visualise the psychological violence within society

The South Korean brand of cinematic violence, the visceral sort we've seen in such films as *Old Boy*, which is very different from the contemplative kind in

Memories of Murder, have had a great deal of impact on action movies around the world, including Bollywood. (*Old Boy* was officially remade by Sanjay

Gupta, as *Zinda*, starring Sanjay Dutt and John Abraham).

Yoon says he uses violence only as a tool to tell his stories. It is neither an answer nor a solution. The physical violence is meant to represent and visualise the psychological violence within the society. But the stylishness of the violence is also numbing and alienating — in a way it keeps you from feeling. Is he aware of how dangerously seductive it can be? That's why for him emotions are so important, he says. Family and friendship are key.

Which is what you see on screen. It is a bromance. The young men are close, with deep ties that bind them, not just their criminal activities. And they are not scared to show their feelings,

in a new kind of masculinity.

Yoon says he thinks that there will be a lot of change in Korean filmmaking after *Parasite*. Before, it was kind of passive. Bong Joon Ho is a master, and he has paved the way for us, the younger generation will now have the courage to do new story-telling, and not just repeat old story and styles, he says.

Is there any pressure to better Bong? He smiles, and demurs. Bong is a legend. I have just begun. Good answer.

And immediately after, I'm in a film which I predict will come away with a win. Kelly Reichardt's *First Cow* is a lovely, delicate rumination on many things: about being an outsider, longing to belong, male friendship. The film is a

Western with a difference; no gun-toting cowboys brandishing lariats, but fur-trappers who are also looking for their patch of land in America, in the beginning of the 19th century.

An unlikely relationship is struck between a Chinese immigrant who shows up in a rough-and-ready camp in Oregon, and a man who loves to bake. And as they navigate the terrain, untouched, beautiful, they come across dangers they haven't anticipated. How they deal with these, and make their way past them, forms the bulk of this film. It takes a little while to get into it, but the submission to its quietly observed joys brings the kind of happiness a really good film does.



THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD SO HUNGRY, THAT GOD CANNOT APPEAR TO THEM EXCEPT IN THE FORM OF BREAD. — MAHATMA GANDHI

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Terms of transaction

Trump administration seems supportive of India as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy, while also counting gains for itself



ARUN K SINGH

THE STAGE IS now set for the 36-hour Donald Trump show. He will arrive today in Ahmedabad, and will be received, in a gesture usual towards visiting US presidents, by the prime minister himself at the airport. They will drive together to the newly constructed Motera stadium, with a record capacity of more than one lakh. He has cited this approvingly in several of his recent speeches in US, pointing out that this is double of what he draws in the US. He says he has been promised huge crowds along the route. These are the only two aspects he has repeatedly mentioned while talking publicly about the India visit. After a three-hour stay, he will fly to Agra, for the iconic moment with his wife in front of the Taj Mahal, and reach Delhi later the same evening.

In Delhi, the programme is a standard one, with the ceremonial welcome in the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan, homage at Rajghat, talks with the PM and subsequent press comments at Hyderabad House, a business meeting arranged by the US embassy, a banquet hosted by the US President, and then flying out immediately thereafter. He will not be addressing a joint session of Indian parliament, reflecting, no doubt, the opposition he inevitably generates in political groups everywhere.

Neither side has so far publicly touted any major substantive outcomes of the visit. To create some positive atmospherics, the Indian Cabinet Committee on Security just gave final approval to \$3 billion worth of pending contracts to purchase military helicopters from US companies Lockheed Martin and Boeing. The US Administration, on its part, informed Congress of its willingness to authorise sale of another \$1.8 billion worth missile defence system, indicative of its growing willingness to allow higher technology defence equipment to India. The Trump Administration has gone far beyond its predecessors in the technology levels it is willing to offer, including Guardian drones in 2017, and placing India at STA-1 level, similar to its closest allies and partners.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs indicated on February 20 that five MoUs can be expected, inter alia, on intellectual property, trade facilitation and homeland security. There will also be the regulation joint statement. This time it will be parsed in more than usual detail for indications of future direction and intent for the partnership, when the US has been talking of "Make America Great Again", advocating for sovereignty and nationalism rather than the post 1990 globalisation, decrying alliance commitments, readying to sign an agreement with the Taliban by month-end leading to a drawdown of US troops

presence, yet articulating repeatedly about India being a lynch pin of its "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy".

The two countries have not been able to finalise even a "limited trade package", which has been under discussion for two years. Obviously, there is a gap between what India can accommodate, and what the US negotiators want for their own political reasons. The Trump administration has taken several steps that have negatively impacted on India. It has imposed additional tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from India, ostensibly on national security grounds. This flies in the face of citing strategic partnership and convergence in Indo-Pacific strategy. It has withdrawn hitherto available GSP benefits from certain categories of labour intensive Indian products. It has taken India out of its list of "developing" countries, lowering the threshold for counter-vailing trade action. These go against the grain of the US articulation that it sees the rise of India to be in US benefit. It also does not make sense when India is an overall trade deficit country, even though it has a \$20 billion surplus with the US which pales compared to China's \$350 billion surplus. On trade, however, Trump has taken unprecedented action against the closest US allies. He has also repeatedly publicly ridiculed Indian tariffs, claiming recently that India has not treated the US fairly.

Given the contradictory impulses, it would be fair to ask what the future holds for the India-US relationship, and where would the Trump visit and its aftermath take us. Can India consider the US a reliable and "all weather" partner, or be constantly juggling convergences and divergences? Is it better for India when a Democrat or a Republican is president?

Historically, four factors have affected the India-US relationship at any point of time: US global posture and priorities; strength of bilateral relations; role assigned to Pakistan in its global objectives; strategy towards China.

During the Second World War, Democrat Roosevelt pushed Britain to grant independence to India, facilitated a separate official Indian representation in Washington through an Agent General since 1941, but did not go far enough fearing disruption of the necessary war time alliance. In the post war period, Democrat Truman spoke of partnering with developing countries for their industrial and scientific progress, welcomed Indian PM Nehru for an acclaimed visit in 1949, but initiated the Cold War containment strategy against the Soviet Union, and the assessment of newly independent countries from that lens. Republican Eisenhower embraced and armed Pakistan in

its CENTO and SEATO military alliances, but emphasised food and economic assistance to India seeing it as a democratic bulwark against a Communist China, and made a successful first-ever visit of a serving US President to India, welcomed also by a 5 lakh crowd in Connaught Place.

Democrat Kennedy was extremely supportive of democratic India's economic assistance requirements, and for military assistance during the 1962 China conflict. Republican Nixon visited India for a day in 1959, was upset with Indian criticism of his Vietnam military offensives, sided completely with Pakistan during the Bangladesh crisis of 1971, sent the US seventh fleet into the Bay of Bengal to pressurise India, and sought to reorder the global balance by outreach to China through a secret Kissinger visit that year. Democrat Carter, wedded to human rights issues, acclaimed India's post Emergency elections, but was critical on non-proliferation differences. Republican Reagan explored economic and science cooperation with India, but was absorbed with Pakistan's support in pushing the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. Democrat Clinton stabilised the relationship after the dissonance and sanctions following our 1998 nuclear tests, and gave full support to India's position during the 1999 Kargil conflict with Pakistan. Republican George W Bush transformed the relationship with the civil nuclear cooperation agreement of 2008, perceiving again the technological, military and political challenge to the US from a rising China. Democrat Obama came out in support of India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council, and declared India a Major Defence Partner, enabling higher level technology authorisations.

It is clear, therefore, that India's interests have been impacted a bit by party orientation on issues, but more by the overall global circumstance. Trump, who is around for at least one or possibly five more years, wants to focus on reviving US manufacturing and technological edge, reduce its sapping overseas military involvements, and has come out stridently against what his administration describes as Chinese unfair trade, forced technology transfer practices and theft of intellectual property.

Under Trump, therefore, we will have to deal with a transactional administration, supportive of strengthening India as part of its Indo-Pacific strategy, but also counting the gains for itself.

The writer is former Indian ambassador to US, France and Israel

BUMPER PROBLEM

Open-ended procurement of paddy and wheat at MSPs out of sync with market prices is unsustainable

ON FEBRUARY 1, foodgrain stocks in government godowns were, at over 75 million tonnes (mt), the highest in any year for this time. If that weren't enough, the country, according to the Union Agriculture Ministry's advance estimates, is set to harvest a record 106.21 mt of wheat in 2019-20. This crop will start arriving in the markets from late March. Given the 34.13 mt procured from last year's lower production of 103.60 mt and the increase in minimum support price (from Rs 1,840 to Rs 1,925 per quintal), wheat purchases by government agencies are likely to be even more this time. With procurement of the 2019-20 paddy crop still on, and after deducting sales during February-June, total grain stocks in the Central pool could well touch 100 mt by July 1.

This is unsustainable, both physically and fiscally. The total storage capacity available with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and state agencies as on end-2019 stood at 75.85 mt. Within that, the covered godown space was 62.65 mt and the balance 13.20 mt being just concrete plinth structures with tarpaulin tops in open area. Simply put, public warehouses are already bursting at the seams and finding place to stock more grain, without leaving them at the mercy of the elements or rodents, will itself present a challenge. More daunting is the fiscal challenge. The 2020-21 Union Budget has made a provision of Rs 1,15,569.68 crore towards food subsidy. But this figure excludes the FCI's borrowings from the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) that are projected even higher, at Rs 1,36,600 crore. With its outstanding dues to NSSF slated to reach Rs 3,22,800 crore by March 31, 2021, the FCI is heading towards a liquidity crisis. And that's only to be expected, when its budgeted "economic cost" of Rs 26.84/kg for wheat and Rs 37.27/kg for rice in the coming fiscal is way above the corresponding public distribution system issue prices of Rs 2 and Rs 3/kg.

The conclusion is inescapable: Open-ended procurement of paddy and wheat at MSPs completely out of sync with market prices has to go. Physical and fiscal non-sustainability apart, it discriminates against farmers growing other crops requiring less water and fertiliser per kg. Farm support should be crop-agnostic and the best way to do it is by giving a flat per-hectare or per-holding subsidy. By moving from price to income support, all market-distorting input and output subsidies can be collapsed into the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi or PM-KISAN scheme. The government should stock sufficient quantities of all essential food items — not only rice and wheat — that enable effective market intervention, with the interest of poor consumers better taken care of through targeted cash transfers. These are much-needed reforms that are easier to implement now than closer to the 2024 national elections. Kicking the can down the road isn't an option.

PRIVACY BREACH

Justice Srikrishna sees the shadow of Big Brother in reworked data protection bill. His concern is not misplaced

WHILE FRAMING A law for personal data protection, India had sought a middle path between the industry-friendly laissez faire approach of the US and the scrupulously strict, citizen-centric European General Data Protection Regulation. The former had enabled the explosive growth of the Silicon Valley giants. The latter seeks to protect citizens from unhealthy effects of the explosion. The privacy Bill, drafted by Justice BN Srikrishna in 2018, did balance the interests of industry and individuals, but the version which was cleared by the cabinet in December had been reworked by the information technology ministry to foreground another stakeholder: The government. At the same time, the burden on industry imposed by data localisation requirements had been reduced, at the cost of public safety. Justice Srikrishna anticipates that the system update would pave the way to an "Orwellian state".

The government has arrogated to itself the right to define the nature of critical private data and the constitution of the proposed Data Protection Authority. In the original draft, the body was at arm's length from the government, with members appointed by an independent committee. The revised bill transfers this power to government officials, allowing the government of the day to acquire control of the institution. The power to define sensitive and non-sensitive personal data, which is at the core of the privacy law, will also vest with the government. Coupled with the right to call in all non-critical personal data held by any entity, this could legally and democratically enable pervasive state surveillance, which is a feature of authoritarian governments.

While increasing the government's grip over the privacy law apparatus and allowing it to get under the hood, the revised draft has also diluted provisions requiring foreign fiduciaries from locating and processing data within the territory of India. Data localisation was deemed necessary due to the slow and outdated processes of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, which Indian authorities must follow to secure information from American entities for the purpose of law enforcement. Whether localisation would provide faster access to the data of entities incorporated overseas remains a matter of debate, since the legal process would remain offshore. However, the concerns about a shift in the balance of power raised by Justice Srikrishna are beyond question. Data laws are not made for an ideal world run by high-minded governments. They are written to protect the individual from both Big Digital and Big Brother.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



WHY CAMPUS NEEDS GANDHI

His philosophy has no place for enemies



SANTOSH K SINGH

IT IS IRONIC that at a time when we are celebrating Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the campuses of higher education have witnessed an escalation of violence and conflicts. Gandhi, in particular, is immensely helpful in such a time of polarisation. Public spaces are painted in black and white, without a possibility of grey zones. The fine, sublime art of patient engagement and nuanced debate is not an option.

Gandhi was not about binaries. He was for the rural, but not against the urban. He was for the poor, but not against the rich. In Gandhi, there was no notion of an enemy or the other. He transcended these mundane binaries by taking a more universal-humanistic view of the pragmatic and egotist considerations of his time. Many think, for example, that Gandhi was against modern technology. That he extolled the virtues of "tradition". This is where people miss the larger point. In *Hind Swaraj*, he does indeed argue against the dominance of technology. But that was not to dismiss the humane use of technology. He was critiquing the overbearing dominance of technology in organising human life, which would make humans slaves of technology.

IN GOOD FAITH

It is important to engage with students in all circumstances. The worst is to act or even appear to be partisan. In fact, it helps to be endearing and friendly with those students who do not agree with you often. This moral courage and conviction can only come from the Gandhian philosophy of enemylessness.

Didn't Gandhi use a watch to organise his day? If Gandhi had looked at a watch as the enemy, he would not have exhibited it so prominently. Did Gandhi use a bullock cart to travel to Champaran? No, on the contrary, in his life, train journeys occupy the status of historic milestones. Gandhi could live these apparent paradoxes precisely because of his "enemy-less" philosophy.

I believe it is this "enemylessness" of Gandhi that offers enormous possibilities for the teachers and the administrators in these turbulent times. A touch of forgiveness, a few gentle words of affection and empathy, and an undying belief in communication with compassion with the students can make a huge difference. Understandably, the landscape of a university campus is dotted with diverse ideologies and political philosophies. Like a student, a teacher too, for instance, may be a believer or an atheist. But as a teacher, one is not expected to indulge in any form of ideological untouchability. More importantly, one has to engage and reach out to those students who carry contrary opinions with warmth and gentleness and not with arrogant epistemic violence. "It is easy," Gandhi once said,

"to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regard himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion." Students are students, irrespective of their location and politics. For a teacher, they ought to be equals. This is, however, easier said than done. Young people are restless, angry and sometimes impolite. They are under pressure of all kinds. The onus of guiding them is on the teachers.

It is important to engage with students in all circumstances. The worst is to act or even appear to be partisan. It helps to be endearing and friendly with those who do not agree with you. This moral courage and conviction can only come from the Gandhian philosophy of enemylessness. In this state, anger, hatred and hierarchy dissolve to create a more compassionate ecosystem of learning. Campuses should promote healthy discussions where dissent and dialogue ensure a space where the mind is without fear. Non-violent campuses are possible only when their stakeholders transcend the binaries, like Gandhi did all his life.

The writer is a sociologist with the Global Studies Programme, School of Global Affairs, Ambedkar University, Delhi

FEBRUARY 24, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO



KABUL RAGES ON
FIGHTING BETWEEN ANTI-COMMUNIST Muslim rebels and Soviet and Afghan troops continued for the second day on a reduced scale, after yesterday's clashes which left hundreds dead and several thousand injured, according to hospital sources. A western diplomat who picked up an injured man in the street and took him to Jomouriet Hospital counted more than 50 bodies lined up on the floor for burial.

JAGJIVAN TALKS ON
THE MEETING CALLED by Jagjivan Ram to consult his 200-odd supporters, mostly de-

feated Janata Party MPs, to review their association with the Janata Party will continue tomorrow. Talking to newsmen, after today's meeting, Ram said that the "response to his invitation was very good". Asked to sum up the trend of discussion after his own speech, he said that "there were suggestions for formation of a new party, for reviving the CPD and even for reforming the Janata Party. Everybody said that I should be authorised to take a decision".

ASSAM FOREIGNERS
THE UNION HOME minister, Zail Singh, expressed the hope that his discussions for a viable formula on the foreigners issue in

Assam would yield "fruitful results". He told a press conference at Raj Bhavan in Delhi that a "basis" had already been found for a permanent solution to the problem of illegal entry of foreigners in the state. But he said that the disclosure of such "basis" at this stage of discussions would not be conducive.

Singh said that the Centre had decided to evolve suitable machinery to detect and deport foreigners from Assam. Government and opposition leaders of Meghalaya who met him also stressed the need to check the further inflow of foreign nationals which threatened the basic fabric of the tribal way of life, Singh said.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"As the (UK) government is slowly learning, sound bites are easy enough to deliver but translating them into concrete strategies and plans is rather more difficult." — THE INDEPENDENT

The US's real deal

Defence purchases are likely to be the focus of Trump visit. Delhi must push for FDI, FII investments linked to technology transfer



ABUSALEH SHARIFF

ALTHOUGH OVER FOUR years away, the path to Modi 3.0 seems under way, and Trump 2.0 (if it happens), might result in major shifts in the global political and business architecture. But Donald Trump's denial of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSPs) to India in the past and the insistence on a new Foreign Trade Agreement (FTA) can turn India's \$5-trillion economy target into a pipe-dream.

Trump's arrival in India is, reportedly, minus a business delegation. He will, instead, hard-peddle defence supplies, patent protected medicines/medical devices and cheap agricultural produce. Imagine India importing milk, edible oil, grains and chicken from the US. Are our PL-480 days back? Overall, India accounts for only three per cent of US trade. The bilateral trade is more consequential to India — 16 per cent of exports and over 6 per cent of its goods are imported from the US.

Trump has triumphed against all odds and has survived a Democratic party onslaught, which is a spectacular feat indeed. Recall how Trump's presidency campaign was marked by racial undertones and support in rural America, including from white supremacists, as a backlash against eight years of the Barack Obama presidency. His acquittal in the impeachment proceedings by the US senate in February has granted him the confidence to destabilise the global trading architecture. In real political terms, the US is split in the middle: The rural (dominantly Republican) versus the urban (dominantly Democrat) divide. The urban demographic across the US is characteristically unique due to the concentration of pluralistic, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural communities in cities and workplaces — largely the result of a positive immigration policy.

Right now, the race for the White House has begun in earnest. The outcome of the 2020 US presidential election will have an impact around the world, especially on the global economy. Though there is still some time to cover, a second term for Trump looks like a possibility. The US policies vis-a-vis India, then, during 2020 and beyond, might depend on who Trump appoints as his advisers and to his cabinet.

Effective from June 5, 2019, Trump terminated India's eligibility for GSPs, scuttling forever the very basis of India's preferential market accesses. The withdrawal of the "least developed country tariff" and imminent negotiations towards a new FTA would pose huge losses to India sooner rather than later. It will be disastrous for India to anchor its economy on current US

policies, which lack coherence, transparency, continuity and respect for international rule of law.

The reckless immigration and visa policies of the US have also hurt the prospects of Indians in the technology sector — the US has increased the cost of visas and tinkered with dependent visa (H-4) holders, who have only received partial and temporary relief from the courts. Although the number of Indian students in American universities has increased marginally, they have no hope of establishing a stable livelihood in the US after having spent large sums to meet their education expenses.

How much does India really stand to gain from the US? The structure of trade is a helpful pointer: The total bilateral trade stands at about \$85 billion, the balance favouring India. Compare this with the US-China two-way trade, which was \$660 billion in 2018. The structure of Indian exports to the US does not support higher growth spurts. Trade in services seems to be neutral. The Indian export structure, when it comes to manufacturing and consumer goods, is somewhat rudimentary. It appears that the top items for both exports and imports between India and the US are what can be termed as "re-exports": That is, import raw or semi-finished goods and export them back after processing. Gems/jewelry and processed petroleum are India's top re-exports and the net gain to the economy is just the value added or the cost of labour.

As a regular at US mega-stores, I have found only one major store selling garments made/stitched in India. Although we hear and read about India-made pharmaceuticals that are exported to the US, the "made in India" imprint is often missing. There are a good number of Indian or South Asian grocery stores across major cities, but most of them sell products made in New York or Chicago.

Given such a weak trade link, why is the Trump visit hyped so much? It is not trade, stupid. It is the politics of defence purchases.

At the very least, India must push for diversified oil imports and higher FDI and FII investments linked with technology transfers. Despite the government's efforts to enhance foreign investments, new data suggests that FDI flows have slowed down to a trickle — at \$8 billion in the last nine months. This is the lowest FDI seen during comparative months since 2015. Further, despite improving its standing in "ease of doing business" indices, India has failed to attract international investors mostly due to institutional failures. Global investors are wary of unstable policies in banking, international financial flows, legalities of business contracts, land and property acquisitions, and, politically biased judicial pronouncements.

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Hearths of a nation

What we eat and why has a richer history and cultural tapestry than the political chauvinism of today would have us believe

world. Associations between morality and cuisine are a legion. In his magisterial *Bangalir lithas*, the historian Niharranjan Ray writes that the ancient law giver Vhrhaspati condemned the upper castes of Bengal "for their love of fish". The fifth century AD Chinese traveler, Fa Hsien, notes in his memoirs "that the people who eat onions are scorned". His countryman, Hieun Tsang, who visited India two centuries later, echoes his predecessor: "If anyone uses onion for food, they are expelled beyond the walls of the town."

Hieun Tsang's account, though, is dotted with references that speak of a competing human trait — compassion. The seventh century king Harsha, writes the Chinese traveler, built inns where weary travelers were provided free meals. The history of food is also about generosity and the bonds humans forge between each other. One of the many stories about the origins of the dum biryani, for instance, associates the delicacy to the anti-famine measures of the Awadh Nawab.

"Do not refuse anyone at your door, share food with everyone including strangers," advises a verse from the Taittiriya Upanishad. The Biblical phrase, "Breaking bread," evokes a sentiment that is way older than Christianity — or any organised religion. In *Catching Fire, How Cooking Made Us Human*, anthropologist Richard Wrangham suggests that tending fires forced humans to figure out how to cooperate — though this also led to the exploitation of cooks, in most cases, women.

The Taittiriya Upanishad has a delightful ode to food: "From food, verily creatures are produced/whatsoever creature dwells on Earth/By food, in truth, they live/Into it they finally pass/For food is the chief of beings." Human societies have given expression to this philosophy in myriad ways. In several cultures, people leave delicacies beside the final resting place of the departed. "The three basic human needs, for food, security and love," writes the celebrated American food writer, MFK Fisher, "are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot think of one without the others".

At Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, contingents of farmers from Punjab have organised *langars* for the protesters. The sight of women sitting

in circles to roll out chapatis, men and women stirring cauldrons on makeshift hearths, and rows of people — most of them strangers, except in their opposition to the CAA — eating daal and crisp rotis make one recall Fisher's words, "there is a communion of more than our bodies when bread is broken".

The institution of *langar*, writes the eminent Sikh studies scholar, the late Hew McLeod — once a Presbyterian missionary — "was a deliberate attack on the caste system". In the *Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* (edited by Pashaura Singh and Louis Fenech), another religious studies scholar, Michael Hawley, writes that the common kitchen "was a practical means to challenge the social conventions around the caste system and the preparation of and eating of food". The hearths at Shaheen Bagh exemplify this spirit of inclusivity.

The *karah parshad* at *langars* and Sikh gurdwaras is the halwa. The historian Alan Davidson believes that the gummy confection originated in Arabia in the 12th century. But others dispute this theory. The food scholar, K T Achaya, believes that the word is of Arabic origin though the dish may have independent origins — including in parts of India. That is how food history is: Much like human societies, fixing origins of most food history is a fraught endeavour. This holds true for a lot of the food that is traced to the Mughal period, including the biryani. As the historian Lizzie Collingham writes, "apparently mismatched culinary cultures came together to produce a synthesis of the recipes and foods of India, Central Asia and Persia".

The communal vitriol against biryani does disservice to such creativity. But then it would be naïve to reduce food history to a linear narrative of social generosity and ingenuity. As the writer Tom Standage points out in *The Edible History of Humanity*, the most effective weapon in the history of warfare, isn't a sword, a gun or even the atom bomb, it's cutting off food supplies. It's not incidental then that during the anti-CAA protests, the UP police has been accused of confiscating blankets and food items.

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A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

The editorial acknowledges that much more needs to be done: "Despite having touted all the progress that has been made thus far, including a high-profile arrest [of Hafiz Saeed] on terror-financing grounds, and despite that fact that Pakistan enjoys the confidence of the US in delivering a peace plan for Afghanistan and has an ally in China that is the president of the watchdog body, it is obvious the danger of blacklisting has not gone away, and the authorities are still struggling to implement the entire action plan."

CHINA VS NEPAL PRESS

The February 23 editorial in *The Kathmandu Post* flags the degree to which China's influence in Nepal has grown, and the fears this pressure has begun to engender. The newspaper published an opinion article on February 18, with an illustration, to which the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu took umbrage.

This is what the editorial has to say about China's reaction: "The Post is well aware of the fact that any individual or organisation is free and holds the right to disagree with the material that is published. But the Chinese embassy did not just express its discontent with the article published; it went so far as to disparage the Post's Editor-in-Chief and employ threatening language. The undiplomatic-and

frankly menacing-manner in which the Chinese embassy made its objections known is condemnable. The actions of the embassy, which represents a foreign country in sovereign Nepal, are forbidding. They go above and beyond the scope of the embassy and the ambassador's diplomatic ambit, and can be perceived as a direct threat to the Nepali people's right to a free press, freedom of opinion and freedom of expression."

The high-handed approach of the Chinese highlights the importance of masking the iron fist of hard power with the velvet glove of decency and respect. India, too, has had to learn this lesson in the neighbourhood.

The editorial warns the Nepali people: "The Chinese embassy's statement, ultimately, is not just about the Post, or its Editor-in-Chief. It is a rebuke to not bite the hand that feeds. It is about an ostensibly friendly neighbour testing the waters to see if Nepalis and Nepali society will tolerate this kind of intrusion into values that Nepal holds sacrosanct. If Nepal is to keep its sovereignty, it needs to ensure that no foreign nation, no matter how powerful, gets to dictate what principles Nepalis uphold."

KHALEDA'S PAROLE

The release of Khaleda Zia, former prime

minister and leader of the opposition BNP, has been a long-standing demand from her party. But recently, according to Golam Mortaza writing in *The Dhaka Tribune*, the demand for "parole" for Khaleda has been gaining ground in some quarters in the ruling Awami League. The reason is her deteriorating health.

Legally, Khaleda is still an undertrial in many of her cases: "So far, there are 34 ongoing cases against Begum Khaleda Zia; she has already been sentenced for two of them. The two cases have been disposed of at the Appellate Division. Which means, the cases have ended. Since they have been disposed of, there is no scope of her getting bail in these two cases. The only way Khaleda Zia can get bail is for the ongoing cases. And even if she gets bail in all the ongoing cases, she cannot escape prison. Apart from getting out on "parole" there is a scope to seek presidential clemency. According to Article 49 of the Constitution, if someone admits one's guilt, such clemency can be given. The president has the power to reject the plea for clemency. He can also pardon all the sentences or reduce the duration of the sentence. He can also suspend the sentence for a specific time and arrange for release from prison."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BAD ARGUMENT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Misreading the Mahatma' (IE, February 20). The writer claims that "no government can provide resources" for a population growing at 15 million per year. On the other hand, the government intends to fast-track citizenship via the CAA for many in South Asia. Won't this have an impact on scarce resources and jobs? Also, by won't the detention centres, which will house those deemed not-citizens under the proposed NRC not take up resources? The author claiming that Gandhiji who was against violence, supported war, is also a stretch.

Abhinav Kushwah, Ghaziabad

LET BANKS BE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Public to private' (IE, February 21). One of the key reasons for the relatively poor performance of PSU banks vis-a-vis private ones are complacent human resources who enjoy secure jobs. The other is the government's incessant interference in their working by asking them to promote government welfare schemes, often financially unviable, like Jan Dhan accounts. By all accounts, private banks have been giving PSU banks a run for their money, this will benefit the end user.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

RSS AND NAZISM

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Don't use word nationalism, some link it to Nazism: Bhagwat' (IE, February 21). The climate of hyper-nationalism has been the BJP's own creation under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mohan Bhagwat's pontification as-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

LR Murmu, Delhi

LONG WAY TO GO

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Not by ideology alone' (IE, February 21). The Delhi Assembly elections are significant because the Aam Aadmi Party won on the basis of its programme. But there is a long way to go for this change in politics to spread nationally. The voters in India are educated but politically illiterate. The Caste based polarisation and enticement before elections still hampers honest leaders who favour a development programme over ideology.

Vaibhav Pimpale, Pune

VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



MILES TO GO

"A PERCEPTION HAD been created that the arrest of UN-designated terrorist Hafiz Saeed," writes the editorial in *Dawn* "would pave the way for Pakistan to be removed from the list but this has not happened." The "list" the editorial refers to the FATF grey list, on which Pakistan has featured for some time now because of its role in terror financing. In fact, the perception across diplomatic and strategic circles in South Asia and beyond has been that China has played a significant role in blocking Pakistan being put on the terror finance watchdogs "blacklist".

In the Pakistan English-language media, though, the steps taken by the country's government had been reason to hope. *Dawn* writes: "Despite the seriousness with which Pakistan had committed itself to complying with FATF standards, the global financial watchdog is still not convinced of its progress and requires more action on some of the targets that it says have not been achieved."

The deliberations of the FATF in Paris stated that Islamabad must make "significant and sustainable progress especially in prosecuting and penalising" in prosecuting terror financing. The editorial asks "what does 'special attention' mean here? What are its ramifications?"



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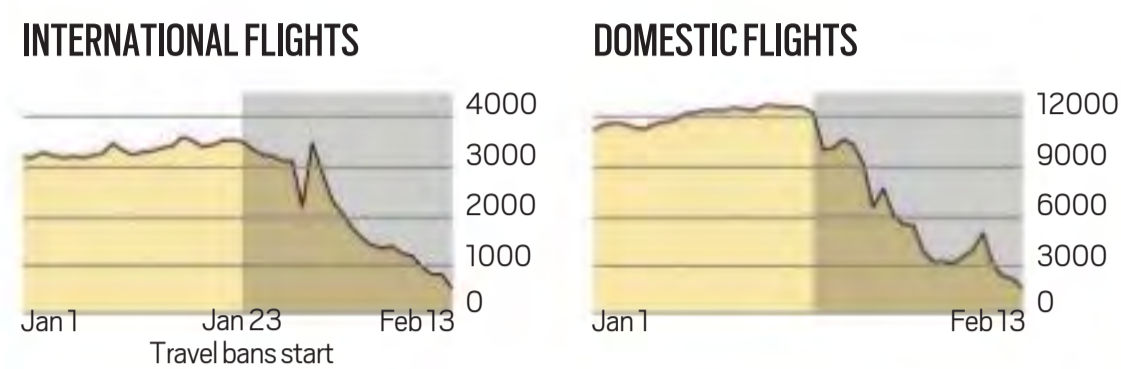
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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

TELLING NUMBERS

Coronavirus hits China flights: from 15k/day to 2k/day in 3 weeks

CHINA'S DAILY DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS



TENS OF thousands of flights have vanished from China's skies in recent weeks, a fallout of the outbreak of COVID-19 caused by the novel coronavirus. While various countries have issued bans or advisories against travel to China, the country itself banned domestic travel to Wuhan from January 23. Within three weeks — from January 23 to February 13 — the number of daily departures and arrivals for domestic and international flights dropped to just 2,004, from 15,072, according to Flightradar24, an industry data firm.

China's increasing isolation from the world could have lasting economic consequences. When tourists stop showing up to the temples in Kyoto or the malls in Hong Kong or the beaches in Thailand, their absence is felt. Chinese travellers account for about a fifth of all tourism spending, more than any other country, according to the UN's World Tourism Organization. In 2018, Chinese residents spent \$277 billion abroad, according to the UN, or nearly twice as much as residents of the United States.

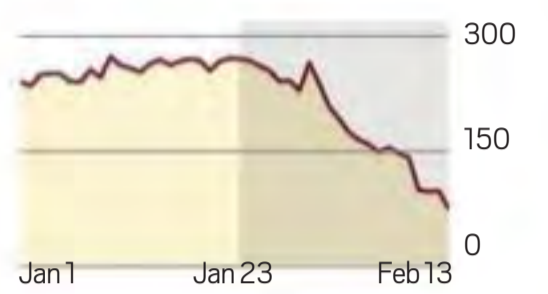
If the coronavirus crisis is anything like the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s, it could eliminate \$29 billion in global airline revenue this year, resulting in a small industry contraction, the International Air Transport Association said. The vast majority of the losses would be concentrated among airlines in the Asia-Pacific region, it said. The SARS outbreak wiped out about \$6 billion in annual revenue for airlines there.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

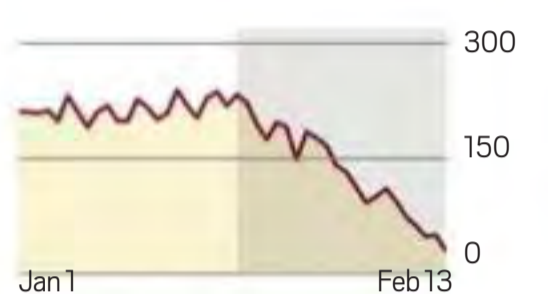
Source: Flightradar24 via NYT

DAILY FLIGHTS TO THE TOP FOUR DESTINATIONS FOR CHINESE TOURISTS

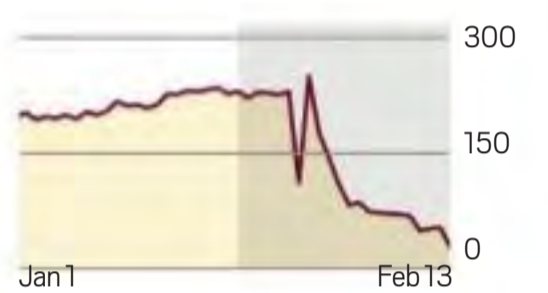
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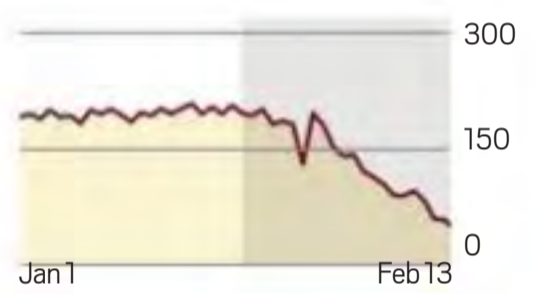
HONG KONG



THAILAND



SOUTH KOREA



THIS WORD MEANS

C. GRETATHUNBERGAE

A new snail species, named after Greta Thunberg

A GROUP of citizen scientists working together with scientists from Taxon Expeditions, which organises field trips of taxonomic experts and laypeople to discover unknown species, has identified a new species of land snail. They have named it *Craspedotropis gretathunbergae*, in honour of Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg. The species has been described in the *Biodiversity Data Journal*.

The new species comes from tropical rainforests and is sensitive to drought and extreme temperatures, which are likely to be more frequent as climate change continues. Hence the honour to Thunberg, who has been making efforts to raise awareness about climate change.

The snails were found during a field course conducted by Taxon Expeditions at Kuala Belalong Field Studies Centre in Brunei. When they were found, the snails were at the foot of a steep hillslope, next



Craspedotropis gretathunbergae. Schilthuizen et al/Biodiversity Data Journal

to a riverbank while they were foraging at night. The two-millimetre-long snails have dark grey tentacles, a pale body and a concave shell, whose outer part is greenish-brown.

In 2018, a Taxon Expedition team had named a new species of beetle after the actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who is also a climate activist.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

How to unify defence resources

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat is working on a timeline for the rollout of joint commands of the Army, Navy and Air Force. What are the existing commands in India, and how will jointness help?

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

ON MONDAY, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat said his office is working on a tentative timeline for the establishment of joint commands among the three defence services — Army, Navy and Air Force — beginning with an Air Defence Command. With the creation of the CDS post on December 31, the government has set the ball rolling for bringing jointness and integration among the services.

What are joint commands?

Simply put, it is a unified command in which the resources of all the services are unified under a single commander looking at a geographical theatre. It means that a single military commander, as per the requirements, will have the resources of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force to manage a security threat. The commander of a joint command will have the freedom to train and equip his command as per the objective, and will have logistics of all the services at his beckoning. The three services will retain their independent identities as well.

There are two tri-services commands at the moment. The joint command at the moment, the Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC), is a theatre command, which is headed by the chiefs of the three services in rotation. It was created in 2001 after a Group of Ministers had given a report on national security following the Kargil War. The Strategic Forces Command was established in 2006 and is a functional tri-services command.

What is the structure right now?

There are 17 commands, divided among the three services. The Army and the Air Force have seven commands each, while the Navy has three commands. The commands under the Army are Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western, Central, Southwestern and the Army Training Command. The Air Force has Eastern, Western, Southern, Southwestern, Central, Maintenance and Training commands, and the Navy is divided into Western, Eastern and Southern commands.

These commands report to their respective services, and are headed by three-star officers. Though these commands are in the same regions, but they are not located together.

How do joint commands help?

One of the main advantages is that the leader of a unified command has control over more varied resources, compared to the heads of the commands under the services now. For instance, the head of one of the proposed commands, Air Defence Command, will have under him naval and Army resources, too, which can be used as per the threat percep-



CDS Gen Rawat is tentatively looking at Air Defence Command first, Peninsula Command next. Prem Nath Pandey/Express Archive

tion. And the officer commanding the Pakistan or China border will have access to the Air Force's fighter jets and can use them if needed.

Rawat clarified, however, that not all naval resources will be given to the Air Defence Command, nor will all resources of the Air Force come under another proposed command, Peninsula Command, for the coasts. The Peninsula Command would give the Navy Chief freedom to look at the larger perspective in the entire Indian Ocean Region in which China's presence is steadily increasing. The other key advantage is that through such integration and jointness the three forces will be able to avoid duplication of resources. The resources available under each service will be available to other services too. The services will get to know one another better, strengthening cohesion in the defence establishment.

When will the new commands be ready?

CDS Rawat has said a study for a proposed Air Defence Command has already been initiated and a report on the details of the command are expected by end of March. He said the Air Defence Command should start becoming operational by the end of this year, and the Peninsula Command by the end of 2021, followed by theatre commands — joint commands looking at the land boundaries

— with the first of these to begin rolling out by the end of 2022.

Army chief General M M Naravane is not as optimistic about the timeline for the theatre commands, and said on Thursday that the idea is still at a "very preliminary" stage, and added that at the moment it is "just very loud thinking". He said the rollout of the theatre commands will take "much longer".

How many such commands are expected to roll out?

While the number of commands India needs is still being studied, the CDS has envisaged that there could be between six to nine commands. It is not certain how many land-based theatre commands on the borders will come up. The CDS said it will be studied, and the study group will be given the options for creating two to five theatre commands. One possibility is to have single commands looking at the China and Pakistan borders respectively, as they are the two major threats. The other option is to have a separate command for the border in the Jammu and Kashmir region, and another command looking at the rest of the western border. There could be independent commands looking at the border with China which is divided by Nepal.

There will be two functional commands

as well. A proposed Logistics Command will bring the logistics of all the service under one person, and the CDS is also looking at a Training and Doctrine Command, so that all services work under a common doctrine and have some basic common training.

A committee headed by Lieutenant General D B Shekatkar had earlier recommended three new commands: Northern, for China; Western, for the Pakistan border and Southern, for maritime security.

Do militaries of other countries have such commands?

Several major militaries are divided into integrated theatre commands. China's People's Liberation Army has five theatre commands: Eastern, Western, Northern, Southern and Central. Its Western Theatre Command is responsible for India.

The US Armed Forces has 11 unified commands, of which seven are geographic and four functional commands. Its geographic commands are Africa, Central, European, Indo-Pacific, Northern, Southern and Space. Cyber, Special Operations, Transportation and Strategic are its functional commands.

Rawat has said India will not follow any country and find its own structure for the unified commands.

How Twitter plans to flag lies and fake videos

SHRUTI DHAPOLA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

OVER THE YEARS, Twitter has often been called out by misinformation spread by its users, some of whom are politicians and public figures with a wide audience. Earlier this month, Twitter announced plans for dealing with deep fakes, or manipulated video.

Now, news has emerged that Twitter is testing out a new way to combat misinformation in tweets. This was first reported last week by NBC News, which attributed its information to a leaked demo of a new feature.

What is this new feature?

Tweets that have potential misinformation or lies will start showing an orange or red label with the tag 'Harmfully Misleading' beneath them, according to screenshots shared by NBC News. The message beneath the label

reads, "Twitter Community reports have identified this tweet as violating the Community Policy on Harmfully Misleading Information. The tweet's visibility will be reduced."

How far can this stop the spread of misinformation?

The red and orange labels will be hard to miss. At the very least, these will warn users about misinformation. More importantly, Twitter will reduce the reach for the particular tweet, which means it will show up on fewer timelines and will have much less visibility.

Twitter will also highlight tweets that point out the false claims being made in the misleading tweet. Twitter is looking to encourage community members to write "Notes" and provide "critical context" to earn points. It will rely on community-based feedback system to remove misinformation.

This reliance on community reports can, however, be problematic. This opens up the

possibility of ill-judged reporting, or individual or ideological biases coming into play. For instance, a historian could tweet out a view that might not be favourable with a certain section of people and it might get tagged as misleading, even if that were not really the case. At the moment, it is not clear how Twitter will assess these 'community' reports, given that the context will vary from one country to another.

Twitter will reportedly give out a "community badge" to those who "contribute in good faith and act like a good neighbour". This again will raise questions on what exactly the criteria will be for determining who gets designated as "good neighbour". Verified fact-checkers, journalists are expected to get preference when calling out tweets with misleading information.

What is Twitter's plan for deep fakes?

Deep fakes, which Twitter calls "synthetic

or manipulated media", are videos on which complex AI tools are used to create a fake video or image or audio, which is difficult to identify as such. Deep fakes can be used to attribute false speech to a politician. They are also used to create pornographic videos.

Twitter revealed that where it fears an image has been "significantly and deceptively altered or fabricated", it will provide additional context by applying a label. A tweet with a deep fake media would also appear with a warning before more users retweet or like the tweet. It also plans to reduce visibility for such tweets, and prevent it from being recommended.

If Twitter assesses the deep fake is likely to cause harm, it will remove the tweet. Such media would include threats to a person or group, mass violence, or impacting the privacy of a particular user. The labelling of tweets containing deep fakes will start on March 5.

The spying scandal that claimed the job of Credit Suisse CEO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

EARLIER THIS month, Credit Suisse ousted its chief executive Tidjane Thiam, capping a spying scandal that had rocked the Switzerland-based financial services company. In July last year, it emerged that detectives had followed an executive who had quit Credit Suisse for another group; in December, it was reported that another former executive had been followed. And while Credit Suisse exonerated Thiam of involvement in both instances, these are widely seen as having turned the bank's board against him. Thiam has since been replaced with Thomas Gottstein.

The rise

Before Credit Suisse, Thiam, now 57, was with Prudential Inc; before that, he was a

minister in his home country, Ivory Coast. Educated in France, he worked as young man with McKinsey, then with the World Bank, before going home to Ivory Coast, where he became minister in charge of privatisations. Following a military coup that felled the government, he left Ivory Coast in 2000. *The Guardian* wrote in a profile of Thiam.

It set him off on a career in financial services. At Prudential between 2009 and 2015, he more than doubled Prudential's profits and tripled its share price; when he left for Credit Suisse in 2015, its shares rose almost 7% while Prudential's fell 3%, according to *The Guardian* profile.

When Thiam left Credit Suisse, it was just after the bank had posted its highest profit in a decade. It was 3.419 billion Swiss francs (\$3.5 billion) for 2019, the best since 2010. However, Reuters noted, this came with a steeper-than-expected loss in the in-



Tidjane Thiam in Zurich; he resigned earlier this month. Reuters

vestment banking business.

The fall

Before Thiam joined, Credit Suisse chairman Urs Rohner reportedly spent months wooing him. After he joined, Thiam and Rohner were initially seen as being close, before signs of a rift began to emerge. *Bloomberg News* described a conflict over Thiam's dispute with ex-international wealth management head Iqbal Khan — one of the two executives spied on later.

"Under Thiam, Khan enjoyed a steady rise. The two men were so close that they became neighbors in the upscale Zurich suburb of Herrliberg," *Bloomberg* wrote. "But their relationship soured as Khan's success grew and he assumed the role of 'crown prince' in a possible CEO succession. Tensions between the two men erupted in an altercation at a party at Thiam's house in

January 2019, prompting Khan to complain to the bank's board. The next month, Khan was passed over for a promotion that elevated two of his colleagues to the executive committee. And by July, the wealth-management star was quitting to join crosstown rival UBS Group AG. What happened next sparked an international scandal."

The detectives who followed Khan were reportedly hired by one of Thiam's deputies, Pierre-Olivier Bouee. It became public after Khan confronted his pursuers in Zurich. An internal probe absolved Thiam and blamed Bouee, his long-time aide across three companies and a decade. Yet Thiam said publicly that he wasn't "sure you can describe him as a friend".

In December, the second controversy unfolded. This time, it emerged that former HR head Peter Goerke who had been followed. This episode was a turning point for

Rohner because, as *Bloomberg News* noted, it indicated a pattern and left the bank unable to explain the spying.

The exit

Several top shareholders are reported to have come to Thiam's defence, demanding instead that Rohner should be the one to go. While the chairman appeared to be on the defensive, he was reportedly lining up support from other shareholders, and counting on the board's support.

"The issues accelerated, probably more than we wanted in the last couple of days," Rohner has been quoted as saying. He received unanimous backing from the directors on the board.

Thiam's exit took formal shape at a board meeting on February 6. Thiam agreed to resign after acknowledging that the spying scandal had "disturbed" Credit Suisse.

11 THE GOVERNANCE PAGE



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EDUCATION REFORMS

How the Andhra Pradesh government is overhauling school education ecosystem

Reforms include changing the medium of instruction, revamping infrastructure, and updating curricula

SREENIVAS JANYALA
VIJAYAWADA, FEBRUARY 23

THE ANDHRA Pradesh government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and Education Minister Audimulapu Suresh, is undertaking sweeping school-level education reforms in the state that are set to be unveiled on March 1.

There are several pillars to the new strategy adopted by the state government. These include changing the medium of instruction from Telugu to English (and training teachers, not just students, for this purpose), significantly changing the academic curricula in consultation with several leading international universities, reducing the monetary burden of schooling by providing free school supplies (such as books and uniforms) to students, upgrading the mid-day meal menu to make it more nutritious, revamping the school-level infrastructure such as proper classroom furniture, clean running water, toilets etc, and lastly establishment of skill development centres across the states.

The breathtakingly wide scope of reforms — changes will affect over 62,000 schools across the state, impacting over 80 lakh students — is matched by the ambition that is driving the change.

"The reforms programme aims at transforming government schools into vibrant and competitive institutions. The goal is to meet the requirement of what the fast-changing technology in the world expects from youth ten years from now," Education Minister Suresh told *The Indian Express*.

The biggest change by far is the change in the medium of education. That's because it affects not just the new students but also requires helping transition existing students to the use of the English language. Moreover, any change on this count has to start with teachers who need to be equipped first.

As such, a massive exercise to train nearly 1 lakh teachers — so that they are capable of instructing in English — is already underway. Close to 2,700 instructors are undertaking the training that is set to be completed by the end of February. This training will extend all the way down to the village-level schools.

The second and equally important aspect is to prepare existing students to adjust to



One of the renovated government schools in Andhra Pradesh. *Express*

SWEEPING REFORMS

- Coverage includes 39,495 Primary schools, 9,597 Upper Primary schools, and 12,664 High schools
- Over 80 lakh students (including private schools) covered
- 6 Lakh students appearing for Class X board exams in 2019-20
- In 2018-19, the Pass percentage in Class X board exams was 94.88%
- 6.25 lakh students appearing for Class XII board exams in 2019-20
- In 2018-19, the Pass percentage in Class XII board exams was 72%

the English medium. To this end, starting March 1, a two-month bridge course will be held for students of classes IV and V. For students of classes I, II and III, a two-month intensive learning course will be conducted to

initiate them into English medium. The training to the students will be provided in residential schools at the Mandal level and students will be provided food and lodging during this period. Moreover, the training will be provided through digital classrooms, educational movies and videos. The idea is to acclimatise students to the English medium and ensure that students who have till now studied through Telugu medium are not left at a disadvantage.

The next big reform relates to improving and updating curricula. The officials in the state's Education Department said that they have consulted education experts in reputed international universities of Chicago, Oxford and Cambridge as well as taken assistance from educational institutions of Australia and Sri Lanka to improve the curricula and make it more suitable for the emerging realities of everyday life. As part of this change, students will be provided new textbooks and workbooks, and even parents will be involved so that they can properly guide their children.

Further, all these schools supplies (including books and uniforms) will be provided

EXPLAINED

The four pillars of change

THE MOST important shift is the medium of instruction being changed from Telugu to English; this has meant training both the existing teachers as well as the students. The second pillar is the improvement in curricula to best equip students for the emerging realities. Then there is a massive revamp of school infrastructure. Lastly, better facilities like more nutritious mid-day meals and free school supplies.

free to the students from the coming academic year. This move is not only aimed to reduce the monetary strain of education but also to transform schooling over the course of the next couple of years.

To this end, the government is also improving the existing school infrastructure. All schools will be provided with well-functioning basic amenities like furniture, clean drinking water, toilets etc. In the first phase — essentially spanning the first year — these changes will be implemented in close to 16,000 schools at the cost of Rs 3,500 crore. The next phase, spread over three years, will cover the rest of the schools in the state and it will require an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore.

Another change, which is quite significant given India's poor record of child health, pertains to the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme. In particular, the menu is being made more nutritious. Apart from sambhar and rice, the new menu will include egg (five days a week), and a leafy vegetable curry, dal, and various other local delicacies such as *pulihora* (tamarind rice), *khichdi*, *pongali* (rice mixed with milk and sugar) and chutney etc.

'To an extent, both supporters and critics of Aadhaar for service delivery are correct'

LAST WEEK, Karthik Muralidharan (Professor of Economics, University of California, San Diego) and two other researchers published their study on the use of Aadhaar-based biometric authentication (ABBA) in PDS delivery. Here are the edited excerpts of his replies to UDIT MISRA about the findings.



THE POLICY INTERVIEW
KARTHIK MURALIDHARAN
Professor, University of California, San Diego

What are the main implications of the study for policy?

Overall, the results suggest that both the supporters and critics of ABBA for service delivery are correct to some extent. On the one hand leakage did fall once the government started reconciliation and used ABBA records to reduce disbursements. On the other hand, critics are also correct to worry about exclusion because 22-34% of the reduced disbursement corresponded to lower benefits and exclusion of some genuine beneficiaries.

In my opinion, it would be a mistake to imply that these results suggest that ABBA in PDS should be withdrawn for two reasons. First, leakage did fall meaningfully during reconciliation (and is also seen in the lower expected bribe to obtain a PDS license). Second, ABBA enables beneficiary-centred reforms like portability of benefits, which are increasingly important for migrant worker populations. Such a benefit would not be possible without transaction-level authentication and a back-end that can record when and where benefits have been collected. At the same time, it would be a mistake for the government to equate all reductions in disbursements or spending to a fall in leakage, since some of this led to reduced benefits and increased exclusion of highly vulnerable populations.

Given the mixed results, how would you recommend moving forward on using Aadhaar in service delivery in India?

There are three main recommendations. First, it would be better to focus on using biometric authentication technology to improve the beneficiary experience rather than fiscal savings per se. In PDS, examples include portability of benefits across the country, and potentially even a choice between receiving subsidised PDS grains and a DBT of the subsidy amount into their bank accounts. Such reforms empowering beneficiaries would not be possible without Aadhaar, and it would be

both politically and ethically prudent to focus on such empowerment instead of fiscal savings per se. The fiscal savings will come over time, but focusing on these savings raises the risk of exclusion as seen in our data.

Second, it is essential to implement solutions for real-time measurement of beneficiary experiences to quickly detect problems of exclusion and address them promptly. One promising way of doing this may be to use outbound call-centres to make thousands of short calls each day. We tried this approach recently in Telangana and found that such improved measurement significantly raised the quality of service delivery.

Third, and more broadly, navigating such a complex issue requires more trust between the government and civil society. If critics are seen as wanting to shut down Aadhaar regardless of its benefits, the government may tune out legitimate concerns as being "motivated". On the other hand, the government cannot simply assert that all reduction in spending is leakage reduction, without acknowledging the possibility of exclusion. Complex policy issues require "public reasoning" based on independent and objective data to clarify facts and trade-offs. We hope that our study can contribute to such reasoning.

Full interview on indianexpress.com

FROM STATES REFORMS TRACKER

KERALA
India Skills 2020 event kicks off

ON SUNDAY, the state saw the start of India Skills Kerala 2020 -- an event where the youth from all across the state will showcase their technical proficiency and compete. The event has been organised by the Industrial Training Department (ITD) and Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE). As many as 253 participants — who have won at the district and zonal levels — will compete in 39 disciplines. The total prize money for the event is Rs 78 lakh and the event will be spread over three days. Beyond the monetary prize, what is up for grabs is an opportunity to participate in national events, which, in turn, enable a contender to represent India at the World Skills 2021 in Shanghai.

RAJASTHAN
Education, health and jobs top priorities

IN THE BUDGET for the coming financial year, the state government has allocated over Rs 39,524 crore for the education sector. To ease the burden on students, Saturdays will be 'No Bag Day' in all government schools. In particular, computer education will be given priority. For the health sector, the government has allocated over Rs 14,533 crore.

UTTAR PRADESH
Preventive measures against locusts

THE STATE government has reportedly issued an advisory to sugarcane farmers in western UP to guard against a locust attack. This is the peak time for sugarcane crushing but locusts have caused considerable damage in Pakistan and several western states of India.

West Bengal govt makes public bus services better, boosts incomes, and reduces subsidies

ATRI MITRA
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 23

OVER THE past three financial years, the West Bengal government has been consistently reducing the subsidy payouts to the three transport corporations — namely the West Bengal Transport Corporation (WBTC), South Bengal State Transport Corporation (SBSTC) and North Bengal State Transport Corporation (NBSTC). In 2017-18, for instance, the annual subsidy (see table) bill towards these three entities was Rs 830 crore. But this bill has been coming down and in the current financial year, it is expected to fall below the Rs 700 crore level.

The trick was to reduce costs and increase the net incomes of the transport corporations. Narayan Swarup Nigam, the Principal Secretary to the Transport Department, said,



MORE INCOMES, LESS SUBSIDIES

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Subsidy to transport corporations	₹830 cr	₹745 cr	<₹700 cr
No. of buses	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
WBTC	1500	1675	1680
SBSTC	720	770	890
NBSTC	805	887	944

"during this economic year the price of diesel increased and the maintenance cost of the buses also increased. Despite that, we are tar-

getting to reduce the subsidy because we are now generating higher incomes". The government also plans to increase the number of buses. This, in turn, is expected to generate more revenue. In the process, the government plans to recruit at least 750 additional drivers and conductors. "The state Cabinet has already given the green signal for this," said Nigam.

A key change has been the introduction of electric buses. These reduce the overall bill as an electric bus runs at almost half the cost. As of now, around 80 electric buses are being used in and around Kolkata, and 70 other in Haldia, Asansol and Siliguri.

Another change that reduced costs and boosted incomes was the rationalise the number of workers employed per bus from over 10 to just 3.5 during the tenure of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Another decision that boosted incomes was the use of air-conditioned buses.

EFFECTIVE SCHEME IMPLEMENTATION

Himachal Pradesh: First to achieve 100% LPG coverage

GAGANDEEP SINGH DHILLON
SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 23

TWO YEARS ago, 38-year-old homemaker Sheela started using an LPG cylinder for cooking at her house in Garshi village near Shimla. Switching to a new fuel after years of cooking over firewood on a *chulha* (clay stove), Sheela said she was struck by the ease of use. "On a *chulha*, it sometimes took half an hour just to start the fire. Then you have to constantly manage the fire while cooking. One benefit of using LPG is that I can prepare tea instantly for my guests," she said.

Sheela is one of the two women in her village who were without of an LPG connection until the government gave it to them for free.

On December 27, when the state government completed two years, it declared that Himachal Pradesh had become the first state in the country to have "100% LPG gas coverage".

"There's not a single home in the state now where firewood has to be burnt for cooking," said Union Home Minister Amit Shah while addressing a public rally in Shimla that day.

According to state residents and officials, these claims may not be entirely true, but they are not too far off the mark either. Following the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the state government launched its own Himachal Grihini Suvudha Yojana in May 2018 to cover the remaining households. Except families having a pensioner, income taxpayer or any member employed with the government, board, corporation etc, all households of the state without an LPG connection were eligible.

"The first step of the programme was to promote wide publicity of the scheme," said Shiv Ram, Hamirpur District Controller, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (DFSC). His department was the nodal agency for the scheme's implementation.



Nirmal, a beneficiary of Himachal Grihini Suvudha Yojana. *Express*

Unless there was no female member in the family, the connections were issued only to women. In many cases, officials issued kits to a cluster of villages from a focal point.

Till December 27, 2019, the department issued around 2.64 lakh such kits around the state which has a total population of 68.64 lakh (Census 2011). Some families were still left out, as is evident by a few thousand applications received after the deadline was extended. "But we managed to cover at least 99 per cent of the households. There are around 18 lakh ration cards in the state, and almost an equal number of LPG connections now," said Mandi DFSC L S Kanet.

Also, not all homemakers have completely switched to the new fuel. "Many people continue to use the *chulha* and prefer to use the cylinder occasionally or during emergencies. I myself prefer to use *chulha*," said OP Thakur, Pradhan of Kufri Gram Panchayat in Mandi. Sixty-year-old Kumja Devi of Bohag vil-

lage in Shimla, too, said that she only partially uses LPG. "*Dal-sabzi* and *chai* on the gas, and *roti* on the *chulha* — that's my usual practice. In winters, we have nearly cut-down on using LPG to save money and bask in the mud stove's warmth," she said, echoing the views of several other women who said that using the *chulha* serves the dual purpose of cooking and heating during winters.

While the "food cooked on *chulha* has a distinct flavour, LPG is time-saving, smoke-free, requires less effort," said 40-year-old Nirmala, another beneficiary from Shimla.

Department officials said that a major challenge before them was to scrutinise applications in order to sift out those applicants who already possessed a cylinder. "Many people wished to get another cylinder for using it commercially at their shops or for other reasons... We collected the Aadhaar numbers of not just the applicants but the entire family and conducted a de-duplication process," said Ram.

12 ECONOMY

MARKET WATCH
FPIs INVEST ₹23,102 CR IN FEB SO FAR
New Delhi: Overseas investors have pumped in a net amount of Rs 23,102 crore in February so far driven by positive sentiment around the budget and RBI's decision to maintain an accommodative stance in the latest monetary policy. **PTI**

RISE BY \$3.08 BN IN WEEK ENDED FEBRUARY 21 TO REACH \$476.09 BN

Forex reserves touch new high on steady FPI inflows, virus-led crude price slide

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

THE FOREIGN exchange reserves rose \$3.08 billion in the week ended February 21 to hit a fresh high of \$476.09 billion, as India continued to benefit from lower crude oil prices that lowers the import outgo as well as on account of continued strong inflow by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs).

While the outbreak of coronavirus poses threat to global economic growth, it has also resulted in lower Brent crude oil prices — currently trading at around \$58 per barrel, down from over \$70 per barrel in the first week of January 2019.

Market participants say that India is a big beneficiary of a lower crude price as crude oil import accounts for around one-fourth of the country's annual import bill.

In the current calendar year till date, the forex reserves have jumped at a faster pace and have expanded by \$18.6 billion. During this period, not only have crude oil prices ruled at a relatively lower price but the FPI flow has also stood strong.

Since the Budget announce-

EXPLAINED

Reserves expand by \$47.5 bn after corporate tax cuts

IT WAS the 21st successive week when forex reserves continued their expansion and grew by \$47.5 billion since the week ended September 20, 2019, when the forex reserves stood at \$428.57 billion.

The decision to withdraw the higher surcharge on gains from equity for foreign and domestic investors as well as cut in corporate tax rates last year also drew investors to the Indian economy and markets.

ment on February 1, foreign institutional investors have pumped in a net of Rs 23,120 crore into Indian capital markets. Since September 20, 2019, when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a cut in corporate tax rates, FPIs have pumped in a net of Rs 77,173 crore (around \$11 billion). In the same period, the foreign exchange reserves have grown \$44.4 billion — from \$428.5 billion in September 20, 2019 to \$476 billion in the week ended February 14, 2020.

This was after the Finance Minister announced a sharp cut

in corporate tax rates from 30 per cent to 22 per cent (exclusive of surcharge and cess).

According to data released by the Reserve Bank of India, while the foreign exchange reserves rose by \$3.08 billion in the reporting week ended February 7, the rise in reserves was mainly on account of an increase in foreign currency assets that rose \$2.77 billion to \$441.95 billion.

It is important to note that while there was a sudden spike in global crude oil prices in January following geopolitical tensions between the United States and Iran

and the price hit a 8-month high of \$70.25 per barrel on January 6, 2020, it fell sharply following the de-escalation of tensions and then the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in China.

While the Brent crude price hit a low of \$53 per barrel on February 10, it was trading around \$58 per barrel on Friday.

The continued inflow of funds by foreign investors, despite a slowdown in economic growth, has fuelled the rise in forex reserves.

While investor sentiment turned weak after the Budget 2019 announcement in July last year to impose higher surcharge, market participants say that the government's move to reverse this decision relating to higher surcharge impact on FPIs along with a cut in the corporate tax rate in September last played a significant role in turning the investors' mood and draw them to invest in the Indian economy and markets.

While a decline in global crude oil prices has played an important role in keeping India's import bill under check, the impact of the novel coronavirus on China's economy over the next few months is likely to keep the global crude oil prices lower.

RISING FOREX RESERVES

WEEK ENDED	FOREX (US\$ BN)
Sept 20	428.57
Sept 27	433.59
Oct 4	437.8
Oct 11	439.7
Oct 18	440.75
Oct 25	442.5
Nov 1	446.09
Nov 8	447.8
Nov 15	448.2
Nov 22	448.5
Nov 29	451.08
Dec 6	453.4
Dec 13	454.49
Dec 20	454.9
Dec 27	457.46
Jan 3	461.15
Jan 10	461.21
Jan 17	462.15
Jan 24	466.69
Jan 31	471.3
Feb 7	473.01
Feb 14	476.092

Source: RBI

FINANCE MINISTERS AND CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS' MEETING

At G20 meet, FM pitches for new international tax system to handle disputes efficiently

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday called for closer collaboration between international revenue agencies to investigate tax affairs of offenders who cross borders for escaping tax investigation.

Speaking in Riyadh at the first Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' meeting held under Saudi Arabia's G20 presidency, she highlighted steps taken by India to deepen corporate bond market and attract foreign portfolio investments in the private debt and government securities market.

"... The international community has a unique opportunity to design a new international tax system to handle the challenges of digitalisation with a cost efficient dispute prevention mechanism," she said while participating in the discussions during the two-day conference, according to a tweet by the Finance Ministry.

Participating in a session on Financial Resilience & Development, she explained steps taken by the government



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman (right) during a ministerial symposium on international taxation at the G20 meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. via Twitter: @FinMinIndia

such as removal of capital controls for identified categories of G-sec and increased FPI limit on corporate bond market.

In the Union Budget 2020-21 announced on February 1, Sitharaman had announced several steps to widen and deepen the corporate bond and the government securities market.

The Centre substantially raised investment limit for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to 15 per cent of the outstanding stock of corporate bonds from 9 per cent earlier in the Budget.

The Reserve Bank of India had last December raised FPI investment limits in G-sec as well as short-term bonds. The government also proposed to for-

mulate a law for expanding the credit default swaps market.

The Centre also proposed to float a new debt exchange-traded fund (ETF) that will comprise of government securities (G-sec), to enable retail investors — who are so far not investing much in the G-sec market — buy a basket of government bonds through the units in the proposed debt ETF in a seamless manner.

With regard to infrastructure development, the minister suggested G20 nations to refrain from developing any common prescriptive approach since different countries are at varied stages of adoption of technology in infrastructure.

BRIEFLY

Lotteries to attract 28% GST from Mar 1

New Delhi: A 28 per cent GST will be levied on lotteries from March 1, according to a notification. The GST Council had in December last year decided to impose a single rate of 28 per cent on state-run and authorised lotteries.

24x7 customs clearance at sea ports, airports

New Delhi: To facilitate faster clearance of consignments to and from China once coronavirus subsides, a 24x7 customs clearance facility will be available at all sea ports and airports till May 2020. The CBIC has written to all Chief Commissioners (Customs and Central Tax) asking them to work out arrangement and deployment of sufficient number of officers on 24x7 basis at sea ports / Air Cargo Stations / Inland Container Depot / Container Freight Station etc falling in their jurisdiction to tackle any incipient instance of congestion/surge.

'RBI alone can not contain inflation'

New Delhi: Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor C Rangarajan has said the central bank alone can not contain inflation as supply side shocks are needed to be managed by the government. In a paper titled 'The New Monetary Policy Framework - What it Means', Rangarajan talked about the limitations of the RBI's monetary policy in containing inflation. **PTI**

'Reliance Retail tops list of 50 fastest growing global retailers'

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Retail has topped the list of 50 fastest-growing retailers globally between FY2013-2018', in Deloitte's Global Powers of Retailing 2020 index



\$18.5 billion RETAIL REVENUE RECORDED BY RELIANCE RETAIL IN FY2018, RISING 88.4 PER CENT FROM ITS FY2017 PERFORMANCE

>50%: PERCENTAGE OF RETAIL COMPANIES AMONG THOSE FEATURED THAT WERE FROM JAPAN

~25%: PERCENTAGE OF RETAIL COMPANIES AMONG THOSE FEATURED THAT WERE FROM CHINA AND HONG KONG

TOP THREE COMPANIES IN GLOBAL POWERS OF

250 NUMBER OF COMPANIES RANKED BY DELOITTE GLOBALLY IN ITS ANNUAL REPORT BASED ON THEIR REVENUES FOR FY2018

RETAILING RANKINGS:

- Walmart Inc
- Costco Wholesale Corporation
- Amazon

FACTORS THAT MAKE INDIA ONE OF THE GROWING RETAIL DESTINATIONS:

- Young consumer profile
- Increasing dependency on convenience through access to technology and digital platforms

Source: Deloitte/PTI

AGR DUES

Govt officials hold high-level meet, discuss relief measures for telcos

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

THE DEPARTMENT of Telecommunications (DoT) on Sunday held a high-level meet, which was attended by officials of the Finance Ministry and NITI Aayog, to explore solutions for the crisis emanating from the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues.

Though government officials refused to comment, sources said the meeting was the first in a series and was held to apprise officials across ministries of the crisis at hand and possible solutions which the Centre can look at.

Though nothing emerged from the meeting, sources said the DoT has been asked to prepare a proposal which would then be vetted by the Finance

Ministry and subsequently be put up before the Digital Communications Commission.

The government is trying to balance between complying with the Supreme Court's order by which the companies are required to pay up their dues by March 17, and offering financial sops to the operators.

The government has made it clear to the operators that they would have to pay up as it is the apex court's order, but it would try to defer or waive off dues like licence fees and spectrum usage charge. How much and for what period are issues that need to be decided after deliberations, sources said.

The total dues of around 15 operators is to the tune of Rs 1.47 lakh crore but since many have shut down or are undergoing in-

solvency, the dues owed by the three functional companies — Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, and Tatas — is of Rs 1.02 lakh crore. Of this, around Rs 16,000 crore has been paid till date — Rs 10,000 crore by Bharti, Rs 3,500 crore by Vodafone Idea, and Rs 2,197 crore by Tata Teleservices.

While Bharti Airtel has raised funds and has said it will pay the balance before March 17 after completing its self-assessment exercise, Vodafone Idea has expressed its inability to pay any more and is desperately looking for some relief from the government.

Tatas have said as per their calculation they have paid their full dues, which the government will cross-check through its flash check and in case of any discrepancy will send notices. **FE**

Post-Brexit trade deal with India likely, says City of London official

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
 MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 23

POST BREXIT, India and the United Kingdom are set to improve trading relationships and there could be a trade deal between the two countries, according to Catherine McGuinness, Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, City of London Corporation.

"Based on the willingness of both sides, I'm sure there will be a post-Brexit trade deal between India and the UK, but do remember these things take time," she said in Mumbai.

"We've identified a number of areas where the UK and India can work more closely together in innovative financial services — cyber, green and fintech. In fact, our ties are already strong in these areas, and many firms from the UK are already based

here. Vice-versa, many Indian firms are in the UK," McGuinness said.

After all, London's expertise perfectly matches India's fast growing market, she said. "We have also been working for many years to further tighten cooperation between the two countries in insurance, and to assist in the development of India's reinsurance market," McGuinness said.

"We can also assist in making insurance easier and clearer to understand here, with a view to increasing penetration of the market in India," she added. Moreover, India's insolvency and Bankruptcy Code has led to greater work between the legal sectors, and with UK investors.

McGuinness said UK insuretech firms can also support the Indian government's initiatives, providing digital platforms that can connect micro-insurers, in-

surers, policyholders, and intermediaries and increase insurance take-up.

"Two examples that come to mind are disaster & climate change insurance and cyber, both of which the City specialises in."

The UK-India bilateral trade stands at over £20 billion. Financial services accounts for a small but growing proportion — £440 million — but there is plenty of room to grow our relationship in this area, particularly in areas like cyber, green finance, fintech and insurance, she said.

The government support on both sides remains strong, and work is already underway to strengthen ties through the ongoing UK-India Joint Trade Review, the only of its kind that the UK has with any other country, and one which will lay the framework for the future trade partnership.

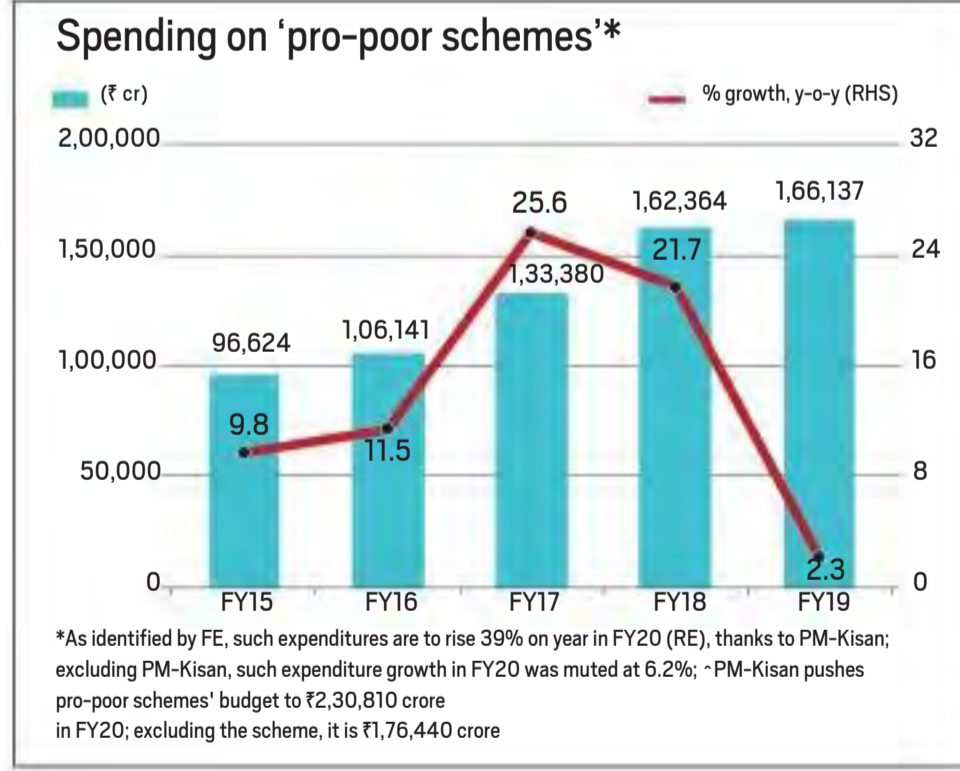
Slowdown effect: Expenditure on 'pro-poor schemes' plunges between FY17 and FY19

PRASANTA SAHU
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

THE SLOWDOWN in economic growth has undermined the government's ability to augment expenditure on schemes meant for redistribution and welfare of the poor and the disadvantaged.

While there isn't a clear segregation of 'pro-poor schemes' in the Budget, an analysis by *FE* identifying items of expenditure with purposes of welfare/uplift of the poor showed that growth of such spending nosedived from a robust 25.6 per cent in FY17 and 22 per cent in FY18 to just 2.3 per cent in FY19. GDP expansion rate fell from 8.2 per cent in FY17 to 7.2 per cent in FY18 and to 6.8 per cent in FY19.

Had the election-bound Modi 1 government not opted for a fiscal slippage of 0.5 per



cent to introduce the income support scheme PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in February 2019, the growth in pro-poor spending would have remained constrained in FY20

also. The budget for PM-KISAN in FY20 is Rs 54,370 crore (revised estimate) and Rs 75,000 crore in FY21.

Launch of PM-KISAN, however, resulted in continued slow

growth in conventional pro-poor schemes; such spending stood at Rs 1.76 lakh crore in FY20, up just 6.2 per cent from Rs 1.66 lakh crore in FY19. The budget estimate for pro-poor schemes, excluding PM-KISAN, is just 2.5 per cent in FY21. Of course, if expenditure on PM-KISAN is included, the annual growth in pro-poor spending would be 39 per cent in FY20 and 11 per cent in FY21.

Given major expenditure items like interest payments, establishment, Finance Commission grants, which are not amenable to immediate pruning and the commitment to overall fiscal discipline, the additional fiscal space for acceleration of pro-poor spending could be created only by curbing expenditure on explicit subsidies like food and fertilisers by rationalisation and better targeting. **FE**

China braces for inevitable big hit to economy from coronavirus: Xi

REUTERS
 BEIJING, FEBRUARY 23

CHINA WILL step up policy adjustments to help cushion the blow to the economy from a coronavirus outbreak that authorities are still trying to control, President Xi Jinping was quoted as saying on Sunday.

Chinese policymakers have rolled out a raft of measures to support an economy jolted by the virus, which is expected to have a devastating impact on first-quarter growth.

The situation is showing a positive trend after arduous efforts but there is no room for

POLICY ADJUSTMENTS TO BE STEPPED UP

China will step up policy adjustments to help cushion the blow to the economy from a coronavirus outbreak that authorities are still trying to control, President Xi Jinping was quoted as saying on Sunday

The situation is showing a positive trend after arduous efforts but there is no room for "weariness and relaxed mentality" among officials, state television quoted the Chinese President as saying

"weariness and relaxed mentality" among officials, state television quoted the president as saying.

"At present, the epidemic situation is still severe and complex, and prevention and control

work is in the most difficult and critical stage," Xi said.

"The outbreak of novel coronavirus pneumonia will inevitably have a relatively big impact on the economy and society," Xi said, adding that the

impact would be short-term and controllable.

The outbreak, which has infected nearly 77,000 people and killed more than 2,400 in China, is one of the most serious public health crises to confront Chinese leaders in decades.

"For us, this is a crisis and is also a big test," Xi said.

China's economic growth may show a sharp slowdown in the first quarter, probably dipping to 3 per cent or even lower from 6 per cent in the previous quarter — which was the weakest pace in nearly 30 years, economists estimated.

Some forecasters also say there is a growing risk the econ-

omy could contract in the first quarter from the previous three months, as factories have been slower than expected to resume production due to shortages of staff and raw materials.

Low-risk provinces should focus on restoring work and production in an all-round way, provinces with medium-level risks should aim for an orderly work resumption, while high-risk regions should focus on epidemic controls, Xi said.

He highlighted the importance of fighting the epidemic in the capital Beijing, which has recently required people arriving from elsewhere in China to be quarantined at home for 14 days.

"The safety and stability of the capital is directly related to the overall work of the party and the state," Xi said.

The government would step up policy support to help achieve economic and social development targets for 2020, the Chinese President said.

China would maintain a prudent monetary policy and roll out new policy steps in a timely way, he said, adding the government would also study and roll out phased tax cuts to help tide small firms over difficulties.

The government would also take steps to support flexible employment and help college graduates to find jobs, Xi added.

G20 finance heads see modest growth pickup, to monitor virus

Riyadh: Finance leaders of the world's top 20 economies expect economic growth to pick up modestly this year and next on loose monetary policy and easing of trade tensions, and vowed to monitor the effects of coronavirus outbreak.

The G20 finance ministers and central bank heads faced a sober presentation by the International Monetary Fund, which predicted the epidemic would shave 0.1 percentage points off global growth.

"Global growth is expected to pick up modestly in 2020 and 2021. The recovery is supported by the continuation of accommodative financial conditions and some signs of easing trade tensions," the communique from the financial leaders said. "We will enhance global risk monitoring, including of the recent outbreak of COVID-19. We stand ready to take further action to address these risks," the statement said. **REUTERS**

COVID-19

Watchful waiting

Experts predict that covid-19 will spread more widely



A man and a boy at Myeongdong shopping district in Seoul, on February 20. Growing numbers of countries are screening passengers at airports and borders for signs of covid-19. Reuters

"THERE ARE so many crises in Congo." Gervais Folefack, who co-ordinates the emergency programmes run by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, has mastered the art of the understatement. The country has been shattered by war and corruption. "All the time we are responding to crises," says Dr Folefack. He lists the most recent: Ebola, measles, cholera. To them, he may well have to add covid-19, a respiratory disease that originated in China. Those who would need to respond to a surge in covid-19 cases are already busy with the Ebola outbreak that began in 2018. "We are trying to prepare," continues Dr Folefack, but there is simply not enough time.

So far 99% of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus have been in China. Of the 1,000-odd cases outside mainland China, more than half have been on the *Diamond Princess*, a cruise ship docked in Japan; the rest are scattered among 27 countries, mostly in Asia. Covid-19 has spread rapidly in China despite the government locking down entire cities for weeks. China's efforts, along with the travel restrictions that many countries have imposed on its citizens, have slowed the virus's progress. But many experts fear that it will inevitably become a pandemic. Health authorities are frantically trying to prepare.

On February 12th Nancy Messonnier of America's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said America should be prepared for the virus "to gain a foothold" in the country. Doctors in South Africa are on high alert, says Cheryl Cohen of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. More than 850 medics in all nine of the country's provinces have been taught to spot the disease. The WHO is sending surgical masks, gowns and gloves to hospitals in more than 50 countries. It is teaching health workers across Africa how to use them to prevent covid-19 infections—and how to treat those

who have the disease.

Growing numbers of countries are screening passengers at airports and borders for signs of covid-19. But when a virus starts travelling around the world, says Michael Ryan of the WHO, its real point of entry is a busy emergency room or a doctor's surgery. In the 2003 outbreak of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), another coronavirus which spread to more than 20 countries, about 30% of the 8,000 people infected were health-care workers. Many, if not most, of the SARS outbreaks around the world—from Toronto to Singapore—started in a hospital with a single patient who had been infected abroad.

In countries where covid-19 cases are still rare doctors are, for now, trying to identify suspected patients by asking those with a cough and fever about recent travel to countries with outbreaks of the disease and then testing them. In America if patients test negative for seasonal flu, laboratories are starting to test for covid-19 (the country has so far identified 29 cases).

Confirming a suspected infection in a laboratory can take days. Some small European countries have just one or two laboratories able to process covid-19 tests. Europe's entire supply of test kits is shipped from the two main laboratories of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the EU's public-health agency. America's supply all comes from the CDC in Atlanta. It will be several months before commercial tests are available.

Tests could soon run short if other countries experience covid-19 epidemics like China's. Delays in getting the results would increase. A lab technician must first prepare the samples. After that, processing each test through a molecular-analysis machine can take an hour and a half. These machines also run tests for the seasonal flu and other diseases. A covid-19 epidemic in the middle of winter—peak season for the common flu—would

quickly overwhelm laboratories in most countries. Rapid diagnostic tests for the new virus that are as quick to carry out in doctors' offices as pregnancy tests were at the top of the wish-list at a WHO meeting about research priorities for covid-19 in February.

Once an epidemic is in full swing, extensive testing to find everyone who might have the disease is less useful, says John Hick, an emergency co-ordinator at the Hennepin County Medical Centre in Minneapolis. At that point, he says, doctors will start to diagnose probable cases by symptoms alone—which is common practice for many illnesses, including the flu. Medics in parts of China are already doing this.

As with other contagious diseases, covid-19 patients in hospitals must be isolated to prevent its spread. When patients become too numerous to contain in isolation rooms, shared rooms, wings or entire floors may be set aside for covid-19 patients only. The Vrije University hospital in Amsterdam has dusted off its plans for doing this, including where to put "do not cross" lines to separate such sections, says Rosa van Mansfeld, who oversees infection prevention there. When all Dutch hospitals are overwhelmed, the lights will be turned on at the country's "calamity hospital", a fully equipped facility in Utrecht that is otherwise shut (it last opened to care for the victims of a terrorist shooting in 2019). In Kinshasa, Congo's capital, an empty Ebola treatment centre will be used when covid-19 cases are identified.

Dr Hick says the biggest challenge if the disease starts to circulate widely in

Minneapolis will be staffing. With no vaccine to protect them, many doctors and nurses will be infected. Others will need to stay at home to look after their children because schools may be closed. In its disaster planning, the hospital where Dr Hick works considered offering child care on-site for its staff. But he admits that people may be reluctant to bring their offspring to a hospital during an epidemic.

Hospitals will encourage people who do not seem to be seriously ill to stay away, as they do during the peak of seasonal flu. In part, that is to prevent them from straining the capacity of hospitals that are already overwhelmed. Doctors have no treatment to offer those with mild symptoms but in a hospital they can infect other patients or medics. Such people will be advised to isolate themselves at home. Others with mild symptoms may in fact have a different bug—but if they flock to hospitals, they may contract covid-19 for real.

Hospitals in both rich and poor countries are worried that in the event of an epidemic they will quickly run out of masks, gowns and gloves. Guidelines by the ECDC say that 24 disposable sets per day may be needed for a covid-19 patient in an intensive-care unit. The WHO says that a global shortage is already occurring, with a 20-fold rise in prices for some types of equipment. Surging demand in Asia, stockpiling by hospitals and disrupted production in China have all contributed to shortages of surgical masks.

Some hospitals are trying to conserve supplies. Dr van Mansfeld says that nurses in her hospital in Amsterdam are being reminded not

to use the high-protection respirator masks if they are caring for patients for whom the guidelines say ordinary surgical masks suffice. At some point, says Dr Hick, medics may have to start reusing respirator masks judiciously. Instead of throwing them away after each patient, they could remove them, handling them particularly carefully so that any germs on the outer surfaces are not transferred to their mouths or noses, and re-use them.

The swine-flu pandemic, which was caused by the H1N1 virus and infected 16% of the world's population in 2009, brought home the message that doctors would have to make such tough decisions when big epidemics strike, says Dan Hanfling of In-Q-Tel, an American organisation that invests in national-security technology. Between the first and the second wave of H1N1 infections in America, the country's National Academies of Sciences developed a set of "crisis standards of care". These specify what doctors should do as shortages of medical supplies become worse.

One course of action is to substitute treatments with near-equivalents, such as drugs that have a similar effect. Another is to adapt what is available for different uses. For example, simpler breathing machines from ambulances may be used as substitutes for the sophisticated machines in intensive-care units. Medics may have to clean and re-use equipment, such as catheters, rather than throw it away after each use (as doctors in poor countries do every day, Dr Hanfling points out).

The hardest decisions would come when all these options are exhausted. Few countries have discussed how doctors would choose which patients get ventilators when there are not enough for everyone who needs one. If doctors have one patient who is on a ventilator but clearly getting worse, and another who is healthier and more

likely to survive, they can justify reallocating the ventilator to the second patient. But such decisions would be particularly hard to make with covid-19, based on what doctors already know about the disease. A patient may be on a ventilator for several weeks and show little improvement but still make a good recovery.

Be prepared

America is ahead of most countries in planning for such things, says Dr Hanfling. Disasters such as Hurricane Katrina—when many patients died in hospitals that were unprepared for disaster—laid bare the need to prepare for the worst. Each year the federal government gives states and hospitals about \$1 bn specifically for disaster preparedness. That is more than the national health budget of many African countries. Other countries' recent experience may help them. Kerala, the only state in India to have confirmed cases of covid-19, swiftly contained an outbreak of Nipah, a nasty virus, in 2018 and has since bolstered its health system. Uganda has held back the spread of Ebola from next-door Congo and in the process built up stocks of protective clothing for health-care workers.

But poor countries would be hit particularly hard by outbreaks of covid-19. Uganda is used to dealing with diseases transmitted through blood, mosquitoes or parasites. Covid-19, if it comes, could spread quickly and unpredictably, which would test a cash-strapped health-care system. Ian Clarke, chair of a private health federation based in Uganda, worries that the mortality rates could be higher in Africa than they are in China because many people already have weakened immune systems as a result of HIV or poor nutrition. SARS mostly skipped Africa; the continent may not be so lucky with the new virus.

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BRITAIN'S LEGAL SYSTEM

Boris v the judges

The government wants to restrict the power of the judiciary. It shouldn't

IN SEPTEMBER last year, when the Supreme Court overruled a government attempt to suspend Parliament during the Brexit negotiations, Boris Johnson called the decision "unusual", but a source from Number 10 was franker: the court had made "a serious mistake in extending its reach into these political matters". Payback, it seems, is coming. Mr Johnson has appointed a new attorney-general, Suella Braverman, who has made clear her enthusiasm for curbing the judiciary's power.

That the power of judges has grown in the past few decades is not in doubt. This is the consequence of three factors: the public's growing enthusiasm for taking the government to court through judicial review; the spread of law to corners of people's lives into which it did not previously much intrude (such as family life and the environment); and the Blair government's espousal of constitutional reform.

Among Britain's messy constitutional arrangements, the rules governing the judi-

ciary's role were particularly anomalous. The top judges, for instance, sat in the House of Lords, the legislature's second chamber. Tony Blair's new dispensation took the judges out of the Lords and housed them in a new Supreme Court over the road, removed the power of appointing judges from the government and gave it to an independent Judicial Appointments Commission, and extended the judges' powers through the Human Rights Act (HRA).

This government takes the view that the balance of power has tipped too far from politicians and towards an unelected caste of lawyers whose views are out of kilter with voters'. The argument is not driven purely by the judges' willingness to put Mr Johnson's nose out of joint. There is a genuine worry among its proponents about a popular backlash against Britain's system of government, of which Brexit is Exhibit A. Judicial decisions—over the rights of foreign criminals to avoid deportation, for instance, or British

forces' treatment of enemy fighters in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, or Muslim clerics preaching hatred of Britain—that are out of line with public opinion are said to be stoking popular anger. In an article on the Conservative Home website published last month, which was widely interpreted as a job application, Ms Braverman criticised the judiciary for "trespass[ing] into inherently political terrain for which a legal answer is wholly insufficient".

The best way, goes this argument, of discouraging newspapers from labelling judges "enemies of the people"—as the *Daily Mail* did when the High Court decided that Parliament should have oversight of a decision about Brexit—is to reassert a degree of political control over judges. Three main proposals are under discussion: a review of judicial review; putting the judges back in the House of Lords; and reintroducing some sort of political control over judicial appointments.



Boris Johnson outside Downing Street in London, in September 2019. Reuters

Sinister headlines aside (though they are not entirely beside the point, since the author of the *Mail's* is now Mr Johnson's official spokesman), claims of a backlash against the judiciary are ill-founded. A recent survey found that, whereas 81% of Britons trust judges, just 14% trust politicians. Nor is judi-

cial overreach to blame for most of the decisions that are said to outrage the public. The extension of the purview of law into previously personal areas of life and the rise of judicial review are the result of new legislation, and are thus the politicians' fault. If the government thinks that the state

intrudes too far into people's lives, then it could legislate to that effect, thereby also curtailing judicial review. And if it reckons the HRA does not have public support, then, although this newspaper would regret it, it could repeal the act.

For the executive to curb the judiciary directly would neither achieve those ends nor serve the British people. An independent judiciary is an essential check on the tendency of majorities to mistreat minorities and of executives towards authoritarianism. Enthusiasm for undermining that independence, as in Poland and Hungary, is a good indicator of a government's authoritarian instincts. The Supreme Court should remain physically separate from the House of Lords, for that is an expression of its independence. Judicial appointments should also be kept safely beyond the reach of politicians. Where that is not so, partisan rows over appointments undermine faith in the courts. The former attorney-general, Geoffrey Cox, said that the government did not intend to go down the American route; it is to be hoped that Ms Braverman takes a similar view.

Post-Brexit, the government is in a radical mood. That is a good thing. It should be open to ideas about how Britain might do things better. Limiting the power and independence of judges is not among them.

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15 TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



ANIMAL FARM

Bestselling author Dan Brown (*pictured*) in this debut picture book tells the story of a big blue whale, speedy cheetahs, tiny beetles and graceful swans. Releasing on September 1, *Wild Symphony* will have illustrations by Hungarian graphic designer Susan Batori.

WEEK AHEAD



Life of a Woman

HISTORIAN AND feminist scholar Uma Chakravarti will deliver the 'Social Change: Golden Jubilee Lecture 2020', organised by Council for Social Development (CSD). The lecture will examine "the arc of violence that women in India have been historically subjected to". On February 24, 6.30 pm, Kamaladevi Complex, India International Centre.



Shades of Life

AS PART OF Devi Art Foundation's exhibition 'Sunnata Samanta (Emptiness Equality)', artist Prabhakar Kamble (*pictured*) will present a performance *The Stain*. It will be followed by a conversation between activist Bezawada Wilson, JNU Prof YS Alone and S Anand, the curator. On February 28, 6 pm, at Sunita Vadehra & Associates, Okhla.



Paying Tribute

A READING OF excerpts from the writings of eminent educationist S Anandalakshmy (*pictured*) will be held on February 24, 7 pm, at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre. A professor at Lady Irwin College, her research has been in the area of the girl child, cognitive development in early childhood and socialisation. It will be followed by a dance recital by Leela Samson, in Bharatnatyam, and in Odissi by Madhvi Mudgal.

VANDANA KALRA

WITH BANNERS in their hands, determined to fight for justice, hundreds of women gathered on the streets of Kathmandu, in 1981, to protest the rape and murder of two school-going girls, Namita and Sunita Bhandari. The suspects were members of the royal family. The case was inconclusively closed in 2003. The echoes of the protest, however, can be heard till date. While the photographs of the fearless women were trending in the wake of the #MeToo movement, recently they were being discussed at the India Art Fair. In a rather busy corner, photographer NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati, co-founder of the Nepal Picture Library, was sharing their concerns with curious visitors. She introduced them to several other resolute women from Nepal who feature in the project, "The Public Life of Women: A Feminist Memory Project".

The parallels between the movements led by women in Nepal and India are unmistakable, especially at a time when the women protesters of Shaheen Bagh have been much talked about. "So many friends are actively involved in what is happening here," says Kathmandu-based Kakshapati. She made repeated trips to Shaheen Bagh during her Delhi visit, also meeting young photographers and filmmakers in the area. "Women are not just participating but also taking leadership roles on so many fronts... (those exhibited) are stories of ordinary women who participated and led in so many different ways. Many of their struggles were invisible for so long, and therefore we felt the need to excavate this history and document it," says Kakshapati.

The belief led her to launch the Nepal Picture Library project and photo, circle in 2010. The initiatives were directed at creating a visual archive of Nepal's social and cultural history through old photographs of Nepali families. "I realised that photography was not only a tool to tell stories and document but also to get people to act," says Kakshapati. Over the years, the platform has collected thousands of photographs and research material that studies marginalised histories, centering on women, Dalit, Madhesi, indigenous and queer people. "We have tried to conceive alternative structures that allow for more participation in the archival process," she adds. Gradually, the material began to be organised and presented as different chapters. In 2016, the project Dalit history of Nepal recorded the struggles of the community. But what is perhaps one of the most celebrated projects of the collective is "The Feminist Memory Project", initiated in 2018. "It redefined and reclaimed mainstream narratives that have historically been dominated by men," says Kakshapati.

The collection, till now, has been categorised into six thematic sections, including "Reading under the Candlelight" that documents women in education; "Words of Women" featuring those who wrote feminist literature, and "Out in the World" contains photographs of women who travelled the globe. One of the most recognised of the categories — "The Public Life of Women" — was presented at the fair. The walls had stories of women who had dared to challenge the norms. Among



(Above) Chandra Kanta Devi Malla, known as the first 'guruama' of Nepal, with other instructors and students. At the time when public education was seen by the ruling elites as perilous and women's school unheard of, Chandra Kanta managed to convince the Rana government against the odds to let her open a girls' school in Makhantole. Chandra Kanta Devi Malla Collection/Nepal Picture Library; a student and a teacher from Shree Krishna Ratna High School in Chautara. Kate Hall

Voices that Nobody Heard

The Nepal Picture Library project is a powerful archive of women who have spoken truth to power



them was a photograph of Dang, one of the Tharu women from Karjahi, who led a peasants' revolt against the abuses of local landlords in 1980. Another photograph had social worker Punyaprabha Devi Dhungana, who founded the All Nepal Women's Association in 1951 and campaigned against women's oppression.

There was also Nepali politician Hisila Yami, who went underground in 1996, after the inception of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) led People's War. In a letter written to her daughter, she offers ample advice, including how to deal with period cramps. Kakshapati's own engagement with

photography began with her father's camera when she was a child. As a teenager, she volunteered at the Family Planning Association of Nepal. After graduating from Mt Holyoke College, Massachusetts, with a degree in International Relations and Studio Art, she studied documentary photography at SALT Institute of Documentary Studies, and interned with Equal Access, a non-profit organisation that operated community radio in developing countries, including Nepal. "I heard several episodes and that made me think what was I doing in San Francisco, there was so much happening in Nepal," recalls Kakshapati. In 2006, she headed home, where she began working as a freelance photographer and documented the second people's movement that brought an end to the monarchy. Kakshapati vividly recalls how she was invited by a journalist friend to attend a Maoist press conference. This is when the final ceasefire between the Nepal government and the Maoists was announced. Consequently, the changes in the political environment and close observation of the various ethnic groups, led her to embark on a portrait series called "Being Nepali", that was shown in Toronto in 2016.

"There was a focus on systems of inclusion because for so long people were excluded from decision making — whether it was the government or civil society," says Kakshapati, who comes from a mixed ethnic background.

While the archive is constantly expanding, back in Nepal, Kakshapati and her team are preparing for the third edition of Photo Kathmandu — an international photography festival co-founded by Kakshapati in 2015 — that will take place in October. This time, the focus will be on gender, patriarchy, power, identity and sexuality.

In Troubled Waters

Director Sahidul Haque on his play, *The Old Man*, and how Assam inspires his theatre

DIPANITA NATH

WHEN THE final draft of the National Register of Citizens, an exercise in Assam to determine who an Indian citizen is, was published in 2018, Sahidul Haque's name was missing. "My immediate response was, 'There has been a mistake. I am definitely Assamese,'" he recalls, lounging in the food court of the National School of Drama (NSD) in Delhi, where his play *The Old Man* was performed as part of the theatre festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), this month. "My mother went to the NRC office in Guwahati armed with papers to convince the state about my citizenship. In September 2019 the final NRC list was published and I was on it," says Haque.

Assam is the protagonist of Haque's theatre. It flows as the Brahmaputra in *Bubbles in the River* (2018), a play about ethnic tribes that are threatened by globalisation. In *Nawor* (2017), Haque worked with a little-known tribal language, Tiwa. *Bubbles in the River* was staged at BRM in 2019 and *Nawor* in 2017. In *The Old Man*, adapted from Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Haque explores the indomitable spirit of the Assamese people by placing an elderly fisherman alone in the waters of the Brahmaputra.

The Old Man has been shortlisted for the Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META), in categories such as Best Play and Best Light Design (for Tapan Baruah). Niranjan Nath, who plays the fisherman, has been nominated for Best Actor (Male) in Lead Role. Haque is nominated for Best Director, Best Stage Design and Best Choreography. "I have learnt many artforms. Like many Assamese people, I have been painting, singing and dancing since I was young," says Haque.

In *The Old Man*, people and props shift form — a box becomes a house, a boat and a platform. Sticks turn into oars and fishing rods. A chorus of four morphs into waves, fish and a wide cast of characters through lyrical body movements. "There are a lot of



A scene from *The Old Man*; Sahidul Haque (left)

physical movement in my plays. I like using the body to speak," says Haque.

He began performing in theatre as a child. His father, a farmer, left him free to pursue his art. In 2007, after graduating in political science from Nowgong College, Gauhati University, Haque enrolled at the Himachal Cultural Research Centre in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. In the past seven years, he has created 35 plays — many of which were made when Haque was actor-researcher with the Theatre in Education programme at NSD. Among these are *Black Rain* (2019), a play he devised with children about children in the war zones of Kashmir, Syria and Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "I wanted to ask, 'How do children see war?'" says Haque. Before a play, Haque and the troupe start living together. The conversation is buzzing with ideas for the next production. "We are thinking of a play on the NRC. Newspapers tell you facts but a play can show you what happens to people so that you feel their anguish," he says.

ON THE LOOSE



LEHER KALA

Great Expectations

The Indian family is evolving. Don't blame affluence for divorce

WHILE ADDRESSING RSS workers and their families recently, chief Mohan Bhagwat extolled the virtues of a Hindu society and cautioned against a life without "sanskara". Commenting on modern living today, Bhagwat, a 69-year-old bachelor had a unique take on marital problems. "People fight over trifling issues. The cases of divorce are more in educated and affluent families because then people become arrogant," claimed Bhagwat. He went on to explain the great value in "matru shakti", an Indianised concept of women's empowerment, needless to say, coined by men. "Women members of the family create the identity of a society," asserted Bhagwat, blissfully oblivious to the possibility that these supporting roles so kindly doled out to women could be precisely the reasons for relationship chaos.

In this gloomy world full of tragedy, one must be grateful for moments of hilarity that we in India are lucky enough to receive regularly, from elected representatives. We must be philosophical and accept that though the AQI is a dismal 150 and unlikely to improve, at least we can count on an occasional laugh via quotes of priceless inanity. I have often wondered at the lack of imagination among publishers who are always complaining that people don't read anymore. Somebody should come up with a compilation of such gems by India's political class or godmen, and market it as a realtime joke book. It's sure to be a bestseller. Though, Bhagwat's sweeping correlation between wealth, education, arrogance and divorce deserves careful scrutiny because it is a common enough refrain, hardly restricted just to politicians with verbal diarrhoea.

Indeed, there is a strong link between money and divorce. According to a UN report published in 2019, divorce rates in India have doubled in the last two decades, and the numbers are significantly more among educated and economically independent women. Obvious reasons being, there's no question of leaving someone if you can't afford to. But, with money comes the agency to reject situations women have been forced to grin and bear in the name of marriage, for generations. Bhagwat may think money has caused 'arrogance' but what it has caused is an explosion in self-worth. Earning a salary has come with some startling revelations for women — they don't have to stick around in unhappy marriages.

In one scene in the grave and nuanced Oscar-nominated film *Marriage Story*, the divorce lawyer is counselling the tearful protagonist about to leave her husband: "What you're doing is an act of hope. You're saying I want something better for myself." Perhaps it is time to acknowledge that vows like 'for better or worse' or 'till death do us part', have to be framed in a new context. What Bhagwat and a lot of people don't get is that a new generation of Indians don't believe it's their duty to shelve their dreams and keep up a lie in the (alleged) interests of family and society. Till fairly recently, unless you were getting beaten black and blue or unless your husband was a hopeless drunk, women were expected to stay for the sake of the children. Even now, among the most emancipated, if someone wants to leave a marriage because there's nothing going on in it, they are likely to be dismissed as selfish and immature. However, with foreign influence, and most importantly money, Indians have slowly come around to believing, lesser reasons than getting beaten up are also perfectly valid grounds for a separation.

Bhagwat's irresponsible generalisation on modern marriages feeds into orthodox stereotypes that project divorce as shameful. There are few societies left on earth that take marriage as seriously as Indians. Absolutely nobody here enters a union with the intention of eventually breaking up. People deserve some sensitivity when they take these hard decisions. The more useful way of approaching the divorce conundrum is to recognise that time is gone when lifelong partnerships were based on mutual sacrifice for the greater good. If divorce is rising, it's because of the huge gap between existing 'family values' and peoples realities.

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The Chemould Couple

A film on the late gallerists Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi honours their legacy to Indian art and shows how art and politics are never far removed

BENITA FERNANDO

THE LATE Kekoo Gandhi and his wife Khorshed were pioneers in the Indian art world. Through a framing company in Mumbai which grew to become Gallery Chemould, the couple was instrumental in the growth of Indian modernism, supporting artists including MF Husain, Tyeb Mehta and SH Raza. For his longstanding involvement with the arts, Kekoo was awarded the Padma Shri in 2008. But none of this would have come to pass were it not for a car stranded on Juhu Beach.

The story of Kekoo and Khorshed is revisited in a film made by filmmakers Behroze Gandhi and Dilsh Korya. London-based Behroze, 68, their second daughter, is an independent producer and filmmaker. The film, titled *Kekeke Manzil - The House of Art* (85 mins), is named after the Gandhys' home. The sunlit Kekeke Manzil, with its uninterrupted view of the Arabian Sea, was constructed in the same year that Kekoo was born, and is named after him. It is currently the residence of the youngest of the Gandhi children, Shireen, who continues her parents' art business through her gallery, Chemould Prescott Road.

Behroze screened the film in Mumbai this month to honour Kekoo's birth centenary, with plans to show it across India in the coming months. She started filming her parents in 2002, about a decade before they passed away. "I sat them down with a simple recorder. I remember them sitting very



(Left) Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi; a still from the film

brother Dara, he helped a Belgian gentleman whose car was stuck in the sand. Roger Van Damme, the Belgian, had an import-export business that had been hit by the war, and wanted to manufacture something locally through a picture-framing factory that he owned. Kekoo tied up with him, and went on to open Chemould Frames. With more such happenstance, Kekoo was catapulted into the heady world of Indian art, but still rooted in India's sociopolitical fabric. Both during the Emergency and in the riots that followed the Babri Masjid demolition, Kekoo was knee-deep in the political life of the country, from sheltering dissenters to participating in mohalla committees.

Kekoo isn't always portrayed as the dapper young entrepreneur. Here is a man who may have put art dealing ahead of parenting on occasions, who was subjected to the tyrannies of advancing age and the vagaries of his mental health. "It is an inside story," says Behroze. "There are so many truths in him and these are personal vignettes. Those who knew my dad knew that he was the kind of person who suffered."



NISHAN-E-PAKISTAN FOR DARREN SAMMY
Pakistan will confer Nishan-e-Pakistan — the country's top civilian award — and honorary citizenship on former West Indies captain Darren Sammy next month for his 'invaluable contribution' towards the return of top-flight cricket to the country.

PORT ELIZABETH 201

South Africa fight back to seal game in the final over

REUTERS
PORT ELIZABETH, FEBRUARY 23

AUSTRALIA OPENER David Warner scored an unbeaten half-century in vain as Australia blew what appeared to be a comfortable chase and South Africa claimed a 12-run victory in the second Twenty20 International on Sunday.

South Africa posted a below-par 158 for four in their 20 overs as Australia strangled their bright start, but were able to defend the total as the wicket slowed up and the touring side found scoring increasingly difficult.

Warner was unbeaten on 67 from 56 balls and having reached 98 for one in the 13th over, Australia looked odds-on for the victory until South Africa found a way to cut off the boundaries and they finished short on 146 for six. The series is level at 1-1 with the decider to be played in Cape Town on Wednesday, after which the sides will contest three one-day internationals.

"We've played here a number of times and I've realised that the new ball is key," South Africa captain Quinton de Kock said at the post-match presentation.

"We understand that this wicket, especially late afternoon, for the team batting second it's always going to be difficult."

De Kock was again the mainstay of the South African innings, his clean striking bringing five fours and four sixes in a fine 70 from 47 balls before he holed out to mid-off.

Rassie van der Dussen (37 from 26 balls) provided a vital contribution, but South Africa were 20 or so runs short of where they should have been, having scored only 36 runs in the last five overs with wickets in hand.

Seamer Kane Richardson was the pick of the Australian bowling attack with 2-21 in four overs. Australia appeared to be cruising in their reply and when Steve Smith (29 from 26 balls) was out with the score on 98, they required 61 from 45 balls with eight wickets remaining. But South Africa used the slow wicket expertly as leg-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi returned figures of 0-17 in his four overs to increase the pressure on the visitors.

Australia needed 20 from the final 12 balls and when Kagiso Rabada's penultimate over went for only three, they were firmly on the back foot and never recovered momentum. "I thought we were in the hunt for most of the chase. We just didn't get that kick at the end that we needed," Australia skipper Aaron Finch said. "Both teams bowled well at the end, it's not ideal but a great game."

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 158/4 (Q, de Kock 70, K. Richardson 2-21) beat Australia 146/6 (D. Warner 67, L.Ngidi 3-41) by 12 runs.

AARON FINCH,
AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN



PRITHVI SHAW | 14

The opener unsuccessfully tried to fend off a short-pitched delivery from Trent Boult on his chest.



CHETESHWAR PUJARA | 11

The No.3 left a fullish Boult delivery, bowled from wider of the crease angling in, which hit his stumps.



VIRAT KOHLI | 19

India captain tried to pull a quick bouncer from Boult, but was late on the stroke. Photos AP



EXPRESS IN NEW ZEALAND

SANDIP G
WELLINGTON, FEBRUARY 23

BY EVENING on the third day, the Basin Reserve had shed its hue of green, lost the dampness after overnight rain, and resembled a first-evening subcontinental strip. For most of the day, it behaved like one too — there was no swing, only fractional seam movement with the new ball. It was time for the Kiwi bowlers to think out of the box.

So it began, with an extended chat between their new-ball exponents Tim Southee and Trent Boult before the fifth over. The ball was doing just enough to trouble the batsmen, but the pair knew it wouldn't be long before the strip would become a batting beauty. So they changed trajectories, mixed up angles and release points, and shuffled their lengths and lines. As the Indian batsmen left the show one after the other, it was a tribute to the veteran pair's planning, perfection and execution.

Victim A: Prithvi Shaw

If they'd done adequate homework, they would have worked out plans for the aggressive opener. Bowl full outside the off-stump and shape the ball away. His crease-tied feet and hard hands make him vulnerable to the away-goer. So the strategy seemed as Southee hit the length that has troubled him the most. Shaw was beaten on a few in-

stances, to which he responded by shuffling across more to cover the line. Maturity on the feet by the Mumbai opener, who seemed certain that Southee and Bolt were probing relentlessly on his vulnerability outside the off-stump.

Little did he know that he was walking into a trap. Eighth over, Boult decided to come around the wicket, unusual considering his most finnish delivery is the one that bends back into the right-hander. The around-the-wicket ploy so early in an innings could be misunderstood as a sign of panic.

A short-of-length ball outside the off-stump, first up. Shaw, hanging on the back-foot, comfortably defended. Second ball, short of length again, but a little wider and Shaw deployed his dexterous hand to guide it between slip and gully. A well-controlled shot to the rope.

Then came the sucker punch, awkward short ball at his chest. Boult let it rip from the surface, hurling it a touch faster than his previous two balls. Shaw didn't know what to do. He stood unmoved and just tried to ride the bounce by hanging his angular bat away from the body, more as a reflex movement than a sturdy defensive shot, wishing that the edge would somehow elude the fielder. The wish was futile. It was spongy bounce, which on slow surfaces is more dangerous than quick bounce.

Victim B: Cheteshwar Pujara

A difficult batsman to set conventional traps, they beat Pujara at his own game — the patience game.

The short-ball plan had him hanging on by the skin of the teeth. Kyle Jamieson thought he had nabbed him, when he had him fending a shoulder-high short ball, which replays showed had brushed his arm guard. Before that, Pujara had gloved a Boult bouncer to the vacant short-leg region.

Usually, an assured defuser of the

bouncer, a master at judging the line and weaving away from it, or at times even pulling it, he looked rattled. It was the angle that harried him the most.

Pitched on middle stump, angling in and climbing into him. Slightly wider on either stump, he would have harmlessly left it. But here he had to play at every ball. And every ball was coming at a different pace too. Pujara dug a trench and slunk into it, as he often does.

But with Boult and Jamieson left the bowling crease, the Kiwis reworked their plan. Southee and Colin de Grandhomme, not equipped with the pace of Boult or the bounce of Jamieson, settled into a tight back-of-length rhythm, testing his patience. At times, they set curious fields — at one stage there was short cover, short mid-off and a short point, waiting for an uppish drive as the ball often stopped at him. But Pujara blunted them to the point of tedium.

Then came Boult again, for a final burst before tea. First over: four balls around the wicket and two over the stumps. Four of them were back-of-length outside off-stump. Two were fuller.

The strategy was clear: Push Pujara back and then make him nibble at the fuller-length deliveries. He couldn't be lured. A similar pattern played out in the next 12 balls before Boult came around the wicket.

Pujara sensed the strategy — another short-ball jugular — only to be proved fatally wrong. The first four balls were full outside off-stump or thereabouts. Four times, he defended and once he left. Then on the last ball of the session, he had an utter brain-freeze. He left a fullish delivery, bowled from wider of the crease angling, bending in and distorting his stumps.

The India Test No.3's judgement was affected by the unusual angles and the short-ball barrage.

Victim C: Virat Kohli

The skipper was Boult's third wicket, but Jamieson deserves partial credit. The lanky seamer, frequently interchanging sides and angles, cannoned short balls at fiddly angles. Most of that Kohli dealt comfortably, getting nicely behind the line, either leaving or defending. Unlike in the first innings, he seemed assured with his footwork. From the other end, Southee kept landing the ball closer to Kohli. It seemed like a first-innings replica, where they kept pounding short of a length, before slipping one fuller.

Then strode in Boult again, the knockout puncher of the team. A full, wish ball had Kohli driving crisply to cover. Then, like a flash of lightning, came the full-pelt bouncer. Short and express quick, as though the ball had explosiveness of its own. Kohli's instinct was to pull, but he was late on the stroke.

Later, Boult candidly explained the strategy to Kohli: "In terms of Virat, he likes to feel the bat on the ball like a couple of their guys. Definitely, almost we miss (our lengths and lines), he hits, and he hits it well and gets boundaries. From our point of view, we were trying to dry that up and for me personally, using the wicket and the shorter ball was a good plan to try and control his run rate," he said.

It was 18 deliveries since Kohli had slapped his last four, and incrementally, the pressure was piling on him. He was equally irritated when the bowlers kept changing sides, as he had to retake his guard, get used to the new angle and field setting. All these were gnawing at him, which manifested in an untimely shot.

Thus with a ruthlessly calculated bowling effort, the ever-underestimated Kiwi bowlers showed that although the Basin Reserve strip is no longer as green as it used to be, they can still be frightening with a bit of planning, plotting and execution.

Clever planning and thinking on their feet help New Zealand bowlers snare wickets on a docile Basin Reserve pitch

SCORECARD >>
NZ vs India

1st Test | Wellington | Toss: NZ

INDIA 165 ALL OUT (68.1 OVERS)
NEW ZEALAND 348 IN 100.2 OVERS

- T Latham c Pant b Sharma 11 (30b)
- T Blundell b Sharma 30 (80b, 4x4)
- K Williamson c sub b Shami 89 (153b, 11x4)
- R Taylor c Pujara b Sharma 44 (71b, 6x4, 1x6)
- H Nicholls c Kohli b Ashwin 17 (62b, 2x4)
- B Watling c Pant b Bumrah 14 (30b, 1x4)
- C de Grandhomme c Pant b Ashwin 43 (74b, 5x4)

- T Southee c Sharma b Shami 6 (13b, 1x4)
- K Jamieson c Vihari b Ashwin 44 (45b, 1x4, 4x4)

- A Patel not out 4 (5b, 1x4)
- T Boult c Pant b Sharma 38 (24b, 5x4, 1x6)

■ Extras: (b 1, lb 1, w 6) 8
Fall of wickets: 1-26 (Tom Latham, 10.2 ov), 2-73 (Tom Blundell, 26.4 ov), 3-166 (Ross Taylor, 52.1 ov), 4-185 (Kane Williamson, 62.4 ov), 5-207 (Henry Nicholls, 69.5 ov), 6-216 (BJ Watling, 71.2 ov), 7-225 (Tim Southee, 74.3 ov), 8-296 (Kyle Jamieson, 90.2 ov), 9-310 (Colin de Grandhomme, 94.2 ov), 10-348 (Trent Boult, 100.2 ov)

- Bowling:
- J Bumrah 26-5-88-1
- I Sharma 22-2-6-68-5
- M Shami 23-2-91-1
- R Ashwin 29-1-99-3

INDIA (2ND INN) 144/4 (65 OVERS)

- P Shaw c Latham b Boult 14 (30b, 2x4)
- M Agarwal c Watling b Southee 58 (99b, 7x4, 1x6)

- C Pujara b Boult 11 (81b)
- V Kohli c Watling b Boult 19 (43b, 3x4)
- A Rahane not out 25 (67b, 4x4)
- H Vihari not out 15 (70b, 2x4)

■ Extras: (w 2) 2
Fall of wickets: 1-27 (Prithvi Shaw, 7.4 ov), 2-78 (Cheteshwar Pujara, 31.6 ov), 3-96 (Mayank Agarwal, 38.4 ov), 4-113 (Virat Kohli, 45.2 ov)

- Bowling:
- T Southee 15-5-41-1
- T Boult 16-6-27-3
- C de Grandhomme 14-5-25-0
- K Jamieson 17-7-33-0
- A Patel 3-0-18-0

BOWLING MIRRORS BATTING

Boult swings it NZ way — first with the bat, then with ball

SANDIP G
WELLINGTON, FEBRUARY 23

FIVE DAYS before the start of the Wellington Test, Trent Boult dropped in with brother Jono for a club game, representing IMF Elements against Generations Lake Taupo in the Versatile Tauranga Williams Cup. He told him: "Jono, I just need some batting practice."

Boult had just recovered from a broken arm, after getting struck by Mitchell Starc, forcing him to miss the remainder of the Australia Test series and the white-ball leg against India, and perhaps wanted to regain his morale.

Lower-order batsmen, even the most useful ones, get finicky if they get hit on their bodies. Stuart Broad, owner of a Test century, was never quite the same post a blow on his body from Varun Aaron in 2014.

Jono told him: "You can bat at number 4." Later, after Boult scythed through the opponents with a four-wicket burst and bundling them out for 66, he told him: "You're the No 3, pad up."

Boult kept waiting but the opportunity never arrived and he was agast at his brother. "Don't worry bro, you'll get to bat in the Test," Jono consoled him.

He did, and demonstrated why he likes to bat. His helter-skelter 38 off 24 balls was classic No. 11 stuff, a freewheeling show of wanton strokes that flew from his bat from parts he didn't know and to areas of the field which he didn't plan.

His pre-delivery strides were hilarious, he would move all over the place, sometimes back away to the edge of the crease, sometimes shuffle across, expose his stumps, sometimes shimmy down the track, sometimes move deep into the crease.

Then he would look to slap, heave, sweep, hoick, of course slog, paddle, slash, at times conceding the impression that he wants to play all the strokes at once. Something like batting on a one-wheeled bike, or with skates under his shoes. So wildly was Boult swinging that even a mistimed shot off Ashwin sailed over long-on. In essence, it was throwback to the times when lower-order batsmen provided more entertainment than value addition.

But in the context of this game, he both added value as well as entertained, so much so that there was rippling laughter each time he attempted something funny, and he did so each ball. His 38 runs swelled New Zealand's lead and annoyed the Indian bowlers. But he was still angry with himself, not at missing a probable half-century, but a first Test hundred.

Entertainment guaranteed

On a slightly serious note — he can never be fully serious — he says: "My hand is still not quite right. I enjoy my batting, it looks like I'm laughing and mucking around, but nice to make contact with a couple today. I guess it was just a bit of fun. In terms of the lower order, we do speak a bit about the bottom four being able to contribute. I suppose in the big scheme of things being able



Trent Boult's whirlwind 38 helped New Zealand's lead swell to 183 runs. AP

to push the lead a bit further forward is useful." His four centuries at club level attest to some sort of untapped batting potential.

In many ways, his bowling resembled his batting on Sunday. Not in the hilarity of it, but in the way he used the crease. Realising that it wasn't the pitch where he

could relentlessly hit one area, Boult changed his line of thought. Like a trained sleuth, he began grilling the Indian batsmen with different interrogation methods.

Full balls interspersed with good-length first, short ball next, then a medley of all these in the same over. Then he went around

the stumps, then reverted to over the wicket, then back to around the stumps. Likewise, he would bowl one delivery from wide of the crease and the next from closer to the stumps. He would bowl a slow bouncer, immediately follow it up with a quicker one. It the situation demanded slowing up the proceedings, he would amble back to his run-up; if it commanded the opposite, when the light was fading and the team wanted to sneak in as many overs as possible, he would bullet back to his run-up.

Then he makes no fuss of it. Smiles disarmingly, and puts it down to sheer hard work and experience.

"I think the luxury is that I have played a lot of cricket at the Basin Reserve. Generally, the wind is the biggest thing to deal with. But if I can chop and change those angles and not let a batsmen get familiar or get set with what I'm trying to do, then I hope that will interrupt them. That's the luxury of being a left-armer and being able to use those subtle changes. If that's (swing) not happening for me, then it comes down to changing angles and using different parts of the crease," he explained. Just like he used different parts of the crease to get his runs.

So much of his variegated skills are wrapped under the condescending swing-bowler category. He's much more than that, has several bows in his string, and arguably New Zealand's most complete bowler after Richard Hadlee. And as he likes to brag in his CV, a handy lower-order batsman.

'Setting target far away, we have to bat out 1st session'

Wellington: Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels that setting a target is still some distance away in the first Test as Ajinkya Rahane and Hanuma Vihari will need to bat out the first session on the fourth day on a helpful track against an incisive New Zealand attack.

"They are bowling lovely lengths and incisive in second innings even when the pitch is not the same as first day. They have made it hard for us and like the Test has just begun for us. They have bowled 65 overs and we have to see how they wake up and we have to bat another session in morning," Ashwin said at the press conference. Asked what kind of total can be defended in the fourth innings, Ashwin remained non-committal.

"I know to keep it simple and say this is defendable and this is not, (it) is pretty much how you would want me to present it, but it's too much -- like six sessions to go and we are not even at a stage where we can say what is a good score to defend."

But something nearer New Zealand's first innings total of 348 could mean that India can have an opportunity. "But that is very far away and we have to take every ball at a time to be honest, because there is still enough in the surface. We are not yet in a stage from our perspective where we can look at it very far," he added. PTI

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Du Preez clinches tense win for South Africa

REUTERS
SYDNEY, FEBRUARY 23

SOUTH AFRICA'S Mignon du Preez celebrated her 100th T20 match by hitting a six and a four in consecutive balls in the final over to power her team to a thrilling six-wicket win over England in the Women's Twenty20 World Cup in Perth on Sunday.

South Africa appeared in a precarious position in their chase of 124, needing 33 from the last three overs, but they managed to bring the equation down to nine from six balls. Experienced England seamer Katherine Brunt conceded only two in her first two deliveries before Du Preez sealed the win for South Africa in the Group A clash.

Natalie Sciver's knock of 50 from 41 balls helped England post 123 for eight in their 20 overs after being asked to bat first at the WACA ground. South Africa were going well with an 84-run stand for the second wicket between captain Dane van Niekerk, who made 46, and Marizanne Kapp.

But they lost both batsmen in consecutive overs as the asking rate kept climbing in the face of clinical left-arm spin bowling from Sophie Ecclestone, who finished with 2-19.

Earlier, South African bowlers kept picking up wickets at regular intervals to stall England's momentum. Opener Amy Jones provided a solid start for England with a knock of 23 but they lost Jones and fellow opener Danni Wyatt in quick succession while captain Heather Knight also fell cheaply to leave them tottering at 43-3 in the ninth over. Sciver steadied the innings, however, and hit five fours and a six before falling in the 19th over to Ayabonga Khaka, who finished with figures of 3-25.

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 127/4 beat England 123/8 (Sciver 50, Khaka 3-25) by six wickets.

Can't be complacent against Bangladesh: Krishnamurthy

Perth: India's middle-order batter Veda Krishnamurthy has warned her colleagues against complacency after their splendid win against Australia, saying they must stay focused ahead of their clash against Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup, here on Monday. India's impressive bowling display lit up the tournament-opener with leg-spinner Poonam Yadav playing a key role with four wickets to halt the defending champions' run chase.

Krishnamurthy does not want to see India let their emotions get the better of them, insisting the top and middle order need to survive longer. "We can't be complacent with the victory (against Australia). We have to let go of those emotions now and focus on repeating all the good things we did," Krishnamurthy said on the eve of the match. India will need to improve their batting performance as they scored a below par 132 against Australia. Since the tri-series preceding this World Cup, the Indian batting has been inconsistent, struggling to post big totals.



Mignon du Preez hit a six and a four off consecutive balls in the final over to seal a thrilling 6-wicket win for SA.

SILVER LINING: NO GOLD ON FINAL DAY BUT INDIA MANAGE RECORD HAUL



Jitender Kumar (R) goes for a leg attack in the 74kg category final against Kazakhstan's Daniyar Kaisanov in the Asian Championship in New Delhi on Sunday. He lost the bout 3-1 to settle for a silver medal.

■ A gold eluded India on Sunday with Jitender Kumar (74kg category) winning a silver medal while Deepak Punia (86kg) and Rahul Aware (61kg) finishing with bronze.

■ The four medals took India's over tally to 20, making it their best performance at the Asian Championship. India won 5 gold, 6 silver and 9 bronze medals.

■ The hosts had won one gold and four bronze medals in the Greco-Roman style to finish fifth overall. In women's wrestling, India finished second behind Japan after winning three gold, two silver and three bronze medals while in men's freestyle, they won one gold, four silver and two bronze to finish second once again, this time behind Iran.

■ It must be noted, however, that the tournament had a depleted field due to a combination of factors: China and North Korea had pulled out in the aftermath of coronavirus while Iran, Mongolia and Japan did not send their best teams in some categories because of the Olympic qualifiers next month.

We will stick to what had been said before – those who have won a medal at the Asian Championship will not have to give another trial. Jitender has won a silver, so he will be in the team for the qualifiers. It will be unfair on him otherwise. Trials will be held in three categories only.

BRIJBHUSHAN SHARAN SINGH
PRESIDENT, WRESTLING FEDERATION OF INDIA

Jitender's medal puts the heat on Sushil

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 23

FOR CLOSE to four months, Jitender Kumar toiled for hours on the wrestling mat to improve his attacking game. But ironically, that was a nervy, ultra-defensive show that earned him a place in the Indian team for next month's Tokyo Olympics qualifiers.

It means that if the 25-year-old reaches the final in Bishkek, not only will he make it to his maiden Olympics, but also shut the door on two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar and rookie Gourav Baliyan, billed as the next big thing in Indian wrestling.

That is subject to the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) sticking by its policy, in the absence of any written guideline. But as things stand, Jitender has his – and Sushil's – fate in his hands.

Such a scenario has emerged after Sushil, citing injury, opted out of the national selection trials for the Asian Championship and Asian Olympic Qualifiers. In his absence, Jitender clinched a berth but the WFI later said they would conduct a re-trial in weight categories where India don't win a medal in the continental championship, which concluded here on Sunday.

That left the door ajar for Sushil, but Jitender won a silver on Sunday – his maiden Asian Championship medal – which means he will get a shot at earning a Tokyo Olympics quota before his idol. "We will stick to what had been said before – those who have won a medal at the Asian Championship will not have to give another trial. Jitender has won a silver, so he will be in the team for the qualifiers. It will be unfair on him otherwise," WFI president Brijbhushan Sharan Singh said.

While Sushil will have to wait and see if he gets a second chance, Rio Olympics bronze medalist Sakshi Malik (62kg category) has an opportunity to make the cut for the Bishkek-bound team after the WFI decided to hold trials in her weight category. India, who won a record 20 medals, could not finish on the podium in women's 62kg and 76kg classes along with the 60kg category in Greco-Roman style. "Trials will be held in these three categories only," Sharan said.

Relief for Jitender

The WFI's decision will come as a relief for Jitender, who looked a tad anxious at the start of the day. That reflected in the way he wrestled as he appeared to be fighting with an intention to not lose, rather than going all out for a win, which his coach Shako Bendinitis has been working on. The 10-0 win over Thailand's Parinya Chamnanjan in the opening round was his only dominant performance.

After defeating Iran's Mostafa Mohabbali Hosseinkhani in a low-scoring quarterfinal, Jitender's last-four bout against Mongolia's Sumiyabazar Zandanbud was another dull, defensive affair. Both wrestlers could not manage any attacking moves and earned just penalty points because of the passivity of their opponent. Jitender ultimately won the bout 2-1, which took him into the final – as well as into the team for the Olympic qualifiers.

Another cagey display in the final saw him lose to Kazakhstan's Daniyar Kaisanov 3-1. The defeat, however, will not bother him. If Jitender reaches the finals of the Olympic qualifier, he will secure an Olympic quota for himself. If not, it will be a three-way race between him, Sushil and Baliyan for the final qualifying tournament in April-May.

India have so far won four Olympic quotas – Vinesh Phogat (53kg), Ravi Dahiya (57kg), Bajrang Punia (65kg) and Deepak Punia (86kg).

Porel catching up on lost time

Bengal pacer has worked on his fitness, strength and action to become a much-improved bowler this season

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
CUTTACK, FEBRUARY 23

A PIECE of advice and a couple of video clips on WhatsApp from Amol Muzumder acted as catalysts for Ishan Porel this season. After the fourth day's play in the Bengal-Odisha Ranji Trophy quarterfinal at the DRIEMS College ground, the Bengal seamer gave the lowdown. "During the Duleep Trophy, Amol sir sent me video clips of my bowling vis-à-vis Prasad Krishna's (Karnataka pacer). The videos captured how my front leg was collapsing (at the time of loading), while Prasad Krishna's front leg was a lot straighter. The advice was that a straighter front leg would help me generate more pace," Porel explained.

It prompted the pacer to get down to work. "A complete change would have required a break from matches and going back to the nets. I was playing back-to-back matches. So I worked on the strength and mobility of my legs and kept the advice in mind while bowling in the nets."

It worked. Last season, Porel was mediocre. In six Ranji Trophy matches, he had 17 wickets at an average of 31. He looked pedestrian on pitches that didn't offer help. This season however, Porel is into his fourth fixture, and has already accounted for 15 scalps at an average a shade over 18. His pace is up and extracts steeper bounce. Bengal head coach Arun Lal called him an "old woman" last season. He now calls the 21-year-old "India material". Porel has graduated to India A, and had decent outings in New Zealand last month.

Muzumder recognises the improvement. "A noticeable change for me is that he has started to bowl a yard up (to the batsman). In first-class cricket, you won't get away with it, if

RANJI ROUND-UP

Gujarat reach semis

At Valsad: Gujarat hammered Goa by 464 runs to reach the Ranji Trophy semifinal. Given an improbable target of 629 runs, Goa's second innings folded for 164. Left-arm spinner Siddharth Desai bagged a five-for for Gujarat. Left-arm seamer Arzan Nagwaswalla took four wickets. **Brief scores:** Gujarat 602/8 decl. and 199/6 decl. (Lakshay Garg 3/40) beat Goa 173 and 164 (Suyash Prabhudessai 66; Siddharth Desai 5/81, Arzan Nagwaswalla 4/18) by 464 runs.

Karnataka take the lead

Jammu: Karnataka took the crucial first-innings lead after bowling out Jammu and Kashmir for 192 on the fourth day of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal here on Sunday. Resuming the day at 88/2 in reply to Karnataka's 206, Jammu and Kashmir let the advantage slip by losing wickets at regular intervals. **Brief scores:** Karnataka 206 and 245/4 (KV Siddharth 75 not out, Samarth 74) vs J&K

192 (Shubham Khajuria 62, Abdul Samad 43; Prasad Krishna 4/42)

Saurashtra tame Andhra

Ongole: Saurashtra have effectively reached the Ranji Trophy semifinal after finishing Day Four with a 658-run lead over Andhra. The only thing now needs to be seen if they secure an outright win on the final day. **Brief scores:** Saurashtra 419 and 375/9 (Prerak Mankad 85, Dharmendra Jadeja 60; N Sai Krishna 4/47) vs Andhra 136.

Bengal grind Odisha

Cuttack: After a shaky start on the fourth day, Bengal sauntered to safety to all but secure their spot in the semifinal, taking a 443-run lead over Odisha. For Bengal, it was a 102-run fifth wicket partnership between Abhishek Raman and Shreevats Goswami that slammed the door shut on Odisha. **BRIEF SCORES:** Bengal 332 and 361/7; (Shreevats Goswami 78, Abhishek Raman 67) vs Odisha 250. **ENS**

you aren't bowling the first-class length – short of a length. About the video clips, I really don't want to make it a big thing. He is a much-improved bowler. He has got the advantage of height. The target should be to bowl 15-20 overs in a day. The more you bowl, your bowling muscles improve and consequently your pace improves," he told *The Indian Express*.

Porel is doing a lot of strength-training as well. "I'm doing the extra yards in the gym. I know I have to train harder. I have to build

more strength in my legs," he explained, crediting the Bengal head coach for organising an extensive pre-season. "The last season didn't go as well as I wanted. But this season, the ball is rolling for me. We had a very good pre-season, where Lal ji (Arun Lal) pushed us hard. That really helped me a lot."

Things haven't come easy to the boy from Chandernagore, Hooghly. Two years ago, he went to the U-19 World Cup as part of the pace bowling trio with Shivam Mavi and



Porel finished with figures of 3/72.

Kamlesh Nagarkoti. But in the first match against the Australia colts, he bruised his heel and hobbled off the field. He came back to the fold all right, but by then, Mavi and Nagarkoti had stolen a march on him, at times hitting 145kph. They were the stars of India's U-19 World Cup-winning campaign. Kolkata Knight Riders forked out Rs 3 crore for Mavi and Rs 3.2 crore for Nagarkoti at the 2018 IPL auction. But injuries ruled out Nagarkoti for two IPL seasons running, while Mavi, too, missed last year's edition due to a lower-back stress fracture. In fact, Nagarkoti hasn't played competitive cricket for two years now. Mavi, on the other hand, featured in just one Ranji Trophy match for Uttar Pradesh this term. Porel will play the IPL this year, as a Rs 20 lakh buy for Kings XI Punjab. But back in 2018, he was playing catch-up.

Porel has matured enough to deal with bowling on placid pitches. He did it here against Odisha with a heavily-strapped ankle – a minor twist – and returned with three wickets in the first innings. By his own admission, he now handles the new ball better. "I always preferred to bowl with the older ball because I have natural reverse swing. Now, by bowling with the new ball has improved."

[SPORTS BAR]

Odisha, Kerala 8-goal thriller ends in a draw

Odisha FC and Kerala Blasters played out an entertaining 4-4 draw in the Indian Super League here on Sunday. Manuel Onwu scored a hat-trick for the hosts, while Bartholomew Ogbeche netted twice to lead the Golden Boot standings with 15 to his name. Odisha FC ended their league stage campaign with 25 points, while Kerala Blasters finished seventh with 19 points in their kitty. Odisha took the lead through Manuel Onwu in the very first attack of the game. Jerry Mawihmingthanga's cross saw Onwu head it first time as he left Bilal Khan stranded to his position to make it 1-0.

Khelo: Jain University swimmers shine

A four-gold medal haul at the swimming pool helped Jain University, Bengaluru, take early lead in the inaugural Khelo India University Games on Sunday. Guru Nanak Dev University's (Amritsar) fencing squad claimed three gold to be on the second spot on a day when fencer Riya Bakshi of Cluster University, Jammu, won the first gold medal on offer. SV Nikitha was the toast of Jain University, winning the women's 400m Freestyle gold with nearly five minutes to spare and then anchoring the 4x200m Freestyle relay team to a handsome victory over Delhi University and University of Mumbai.



The Indian pair lost 5-11, 9-11, 11-8, 9-11 to German combination of Benedikt Duda and Patrick Franziska.

Sharath, Sathiyana win silver at Hungarian Open

Indian men's doubles pair of Achanta Sharath Kamal and Gnanasekaran Sathiyana settled for a silver medal at the ITTF World Tour Hungarian Open after losing the summit clash to German combination of Benedikt Duda and Patrick Franziska. The Indian pair, which defeated top seeds Ho Kwan Kit and Wong Chun Ting of Hong Kong 3-2 in the semi-finals, put up a strong effort in the summit clash but eventually went down fighting 5-11 9-11 11-8 9-11 to the 16th seeds German pair in a 30-minute showdown on Saturday. It is Sharath Kamal's second medal from the prestigious tournament. He also won a bronze with Manika Batra in mixed doubles. It turned out to be a super Saturday for India as Chennai's Mathan Rajan Hansini bagged a bronze medal in the mini-cadet girls' singles category at the Swedish Junior and Cadet Open in Orebro, Sweden. The 10-year-old Class V student started her main draw challenge after a couple of wins in the group stages before going down to Russia's Iuliia Pugovkina 12-10, 9-11, 5-11, 8-11 in a gruelling semi-final match.

Bharat, 13, stuns Chinese GM in Moscow

India's 13-year-old Bharat Subramniyam stunned Chinese Grandmaster Jiancho Zhou in the fourth round to jump to joint top spot in the 'A' group of the Aeroflot Open chess tournament in Moscow. Playing with white pieces, Subramniyam, an International Master, outlasted Zhou in a long-drawn game in 74 moves for his third win in the tournament on Saturday. He now shares the top spot with Azerbaijan GM Rauf Mamedov, who was held to a draw by India's SP Sethuraman. Both Subramniyam and Mamedov have 3.5 points. Subramniyam had earlier registered his second victory in the event by beating the second seeded Gabriel Sargissian.

Rashpal and Gawte defend titles in Delhi

Rashpal Singh and Jyoti Gawte thwarted a strong field of runners to successfully retain their crown at the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon on Sunday. Army Sports Institute's (Pune) Rashpallived upto his top billing and finished the full marathon (42.2k) with an impressive time of 2:23:29 hours to pocket the coveted title. Jyoti of Maharashtra proved to be untouchable in the women's category, winning the title in a canter. She completed the full marathon, which was flagged off from JLN Stadium, in 2:50:37 hours, with almost eight minutes to spare.



Aizawl snatch a point from Chennai City FC

Defending champions Chennai City FC played out a 1-1 draw to share the spoils with Aizawl FC in the I-League on Sunday. Veteran Katsumi Yusa (in pic) broke the deadlock in the business end of the first half before Rochharzela brought the visitors back to level terms with a well converted penalty in the second half. Both coaches made three changes apiece. Chennai gaffer Akbar Nawas reinstated Pravitto Raju and Jishnu Balakrishnan to his midfield along with Varun Mathur who made way for Rohit Mirza. Aizawl boss Stanley Rozario recalled Juuko Richard Kassaga to his backline and opted for a different line of control upfront, naming Jonathan Lalrawngbala and Justice Morgan in his starting eleven. The first goal-bound opportunity fell the way of the hosts in the ninth minute.

Fury gives Wilder a licking

Brit licks his opponent's blood before knocking him out in seventh round



Tyson Fury knocks down Deontay Wilder during the world heavyweight championship bout in Las Vegas on Saturday. Reuters

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAS VEGAS, FEBRUARY 23

TYSON FURY reinvented himself once again, and once again he's a heavyweight champion. The Gypsy King dropped Deontay Wilder twice Saturday night in their heavyweight title rematch, turning from boxer to puncher to win the title when Wilder's corner threw in the towel as he was taking a beating in the seventh round. It was a stunning turnaround for a fighter who came back from drug and alcohol abuse to win the title for a second time, made even more surprising because Wilder was the devastating puncher in their first fight 14 months ago. "The king has returned to his throne," proclaimed Fury, who fought to a draw with Wilder in their first fight.

Fury dropped Wilder in the third round with a right hand that seemed to take the legs out of the champion. He put him down again in the fifth round, this time with a left hand to the body. He also bloodied Wilder's ear, and seemed to lick the blood off his shoulder in a bizarre scene in the sixth round. If that wasn't enough fun for the night, he tried to lead the crowd in a singalong of "American Pie" after the fight. Fury knew all the words.

The end came at 1:39 of the seventh round when referee Kenny Bayless stopped the fight after Wilder's corner threw in the towel as he was getting pummeled in a neutral corner. Blood was pouring out of Wilder's ear for several rounds before Fury went in for the shoulder lick. It was the first loss for Wilder in 44 fights, and it came in the 11th defense of the title he won in 2015. "Even the greatest have lost and come back," Wilder said. "I make no excuses. This is what big-time boxing is all about."

The two fighters are under contract for a third fight, though Wilder could opt out of it as the loser. If the fight happens, Fury would get the better part of a 60-40 purse bid. Fury stalked Wilder almost from the opening bell, using his jab to control the early rounds. He

EXPLAINED

What happens next

THIS IS the most fun the heavyweight division has been in a long time. It's also real fractured, with the top boxers in the camps of different promoters and broadcasting giants.

Fury is promoted by Bob Arum and ESPN. Wilder is with Al Haymon and Fox Sports. And while Arum and Haymon hadn't done much business together before, the two heavyweights of combat sports put together a jointly-broadcasted fight. Wilder has a rematch clause, one he would have to trigger in 30 days for the third fight and a 40-60 payday. The beating that the 34-year-old took might deter him from going forward with the trilogy. With Wilder out, the fight to make now is Tyson Fury versus Anthony Joshua for the WBA (Super), IBF, WBO, IBO, WBC, The Ring and lineal belts. For the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world.

Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn and Arum don't see eye to eye. In wake of Fury's domination, social media was rife with speculations suggesting Hearn will protect Joshua and duck the fight.

won every round on the scorecard of the Associated Press and was in total command of the fight when it ended. Ringside punch stats demonstrated Fury's

dominance, showing him out landing Wilder 82-34 in total punches. Fury landed 58 power punches in less than seven rounds of the rematch after landing just 38 in the first fight Wilder landed just 34 punches all fight and just 18 power shots. Wilder briefly protested the stoppage, as a pro-Fury crowd of 15,816 at the MGM Grand hotel roared in delight. The highly anticipated fight drew a heavyweight record \$16.9 million gate and promoters believe it sold well on pay-per-view, too. "I wish my corner would have let me go out on my shield," Wilder said. "He did what he did. There's no excuses."

Wilder, who at 6-foot-7 and 231 pounds was the smaller man in the ring to the 6-foot-9 British giant, was backpedaling the entire fight, trying to catch Fury coming in with a right hand. But he was never able to throw it effectively, and unable to deal with Fury's jab either. Two judges had Fury winning every round, while the third gave Wilder one round. Fury had a point deducted for grabbing and pushing in the fifth round. "He manned up and he really did show the heart of a champion," Fury said. "He's a warrior, he will be back, he will be a champion again. But the king has returned." Fury had bulked up to 273 pounds for the rematch, vowing to change tactics and become the big puncher. He was true to his word, dominating early with a jab that stopped Wilder in his tracks and then landing combinations to the head and body.

Fury (30-0-1, 21 KO) came into the ring carried aloft on a throne with a crown on his head. Then he showed he was really the Gypsy King as he made it an easy night against a fighter who had gone 12 years without losing as a pro. For Wilder it was a stunning end to an unbeaten mark that had seen him knock out 41 of his previous 43 opponents. But his devastating right hand was never a factor, and Fury seemed to walk through it. That was unlike the first fight 14 months ago when Wilder knocked Fury down twice on his way to a draw. Both fighters were guaranteed \$5 million in the rematch but could make \$40 million apiece.

Coronavirus effect: Three Serie A matches postponed

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
ROME, FEBRUARY 23

ITALIAN AUTHORITIES have ordered the postponement of three Serie A football matches on Sunday over coronavirus fears in northern Italy.

The matches between title-chasing Inter Milan and Sampdoria, Atalanta against Sassuolo and Hellas Verona versus Cagliari have been pushed back to avoid the spread of the virus with 79 confirmed cases in an out-

break that has claimed two lives in the country. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced late on Saturday evening that all sporting events in the Veneto and Lombardy regions would be suspended on Sunday.

Ronaldo sets record

Juventus played earlier on Saturday to extend their lead on the top of the standings with a 2-1 win at SPAL in Emilia-Romagna. Inter Milan are six points behind the champions in third. Cristiano Ronaldo scored for a record-equalling 11th consecutive Serie A

game in his 1,000th professional match. The 35-year-old tapped in six minutes before the break to equal the mark held by Gabriel Batistuta and Fabio Quagliarella.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner has scored 25 goals in all competitions this season for Juventus, including 16 in his current run of 11 matches. Aaron Ramsey added a second after an hour, before Andrea Petagna pulled one back from the spot for SPAL, amid controversy as the penalty was awarded following a VAR review despite the pitchside monitor not working.

— JOURNALISM OF COURAGE —

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Messi scores four as Barcelona overtake Real before Clasico

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MADRID, FEBRUARY 23

LIONEL MESSI scored four goals and Barcelona reclaimed top spot in La Liga as Real Madrid suffered a surprise defeat by Levante on Saturday, a week before the Clasico. Madrid's nightmare afternoon was made worse by another injury to Eden Hazard, who was forced off in the second half of their 1-0 defeat in Valencia and is now doubtful to face Manchester City on Wednesday in the Champions League. "It doesn't look good," said Real coach Zinedine Zidane afterwards.

Messi, meanwhile, ridiculed talk of a drought by scoring four goals against Eibar after four games without one, while emergency signing Martin Braithwaite made two assists off the bench, teeing up Messi and then Arthur Melo in injury-time. Their 5-0 rout, coupled with Madrid's defeat, means Barca move back to the summit of La Liga, two points ahead of Zidane's side ahead of next Saturday's showdown at the Santiago Bernabeu. "We've had good times this season and now this is a bad time," said Zidane. "Now we have a week where everything is at stake."

It amounts to a considerable shift in momentum, with Barcelona away at Napoli in the first leg of the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday. Madrid host City a day later and the plan had been for Hazard to regain form and fitness in what was only his second start since returning from three months out with a broken right foot. But the Belgian sat in the dug-out with an ice pack around the same foot after going off and Zidane suggested it was a repeat injury after the match. "It's sore now but we will see tomorrow after more tests."

Madrid were shaken by Hazard's departure and Levante capitalised as Jose Luis Morales banged a shot into the top corner from the angle, even if Thibaut Courtois pulled out of a save he



Lionel Messi scored four goals in Barcelona's win over Eibar on Saturday. Reuters

should have made.

For Madrid, playing catch-up again next weekend will be a particularly heavy psychological blow, especially given the series of off-field problems engulfing Barcelona in recent weeks.

Man Utd outclass Watford

Manchester United kept alive their hopes of finishing in the Premier League's top four after goals from Bruno Fernandes, Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood secured a 3-0 home win over Watford on Sunday.

Portugal midfielder Fernandes scored his first goal for United with a 42nd-minute penalty before Martial and Greenwood netted fine individual efforts to lift them two places up to fifth on 41 points from 27 games.

United are three points behind fourth-placed Chelsea and one ahead of Tottenham Hotspur while struggling Watford stayed 19th on 24 points.

Playing tonight: Liverpool vs West Ham United, Star Sports Select 1, 1.30am



Monday, 24 February 2020

10.00a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Akademi Exhibition (Showcasing glimpses of Akademi's activities in 2019) Inauguration by Mannu Bhandari Eminent Hindi Writer
2.30p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns All India Tribal Writers' Conference
6.00p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Cultural Programme: Shri Krishna Parijat, A Traditional Folk Musical Drama by Durgavva Mudhol and Fellow Artists from Lokapur, Karnataka

Tuesday, 25 February 2020

10.00 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns All India Tribal Writers' Conference (contd...)
10.00a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Purvottari : North-Eastern and Northern Writers' Meet
11.00a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Media Interaction with the Awardees
 5.30p.m. : Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi
Presentation of Sahitya Akademi Awards 2019
 Chief Guest : **Gulzar**
 Distinguished Poet, Fiction writer and Film Director

Wednesday, 26 February 2020

10.00 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Writers' Meet (Award-winning writers will share their creative experiences)
10.00a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns All India Tribal Writers' Conference (contd... 2)
2.30p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Panel Discussion on Present Scenario of Playwriting
6.00p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Samvatsar Lecture : The Enduring Legacy of Arthashastra by Sri Pranab Mukherjee
 Eminent Thinker and Former President of India

Thursday, 27 February 2020

10.00 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Face to Face
 Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 Winners in conversation with eminent writers/scholars
10.30a.m. : Sahitya Akademi Auditorium National Seminar: Regionality, Environment and Literature
2.00 p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns All India LGBTQ Poets' Meet
6.00p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Cultural Programme : Taal Vadya Kacheri
 An Ensemble of Indian Percussion Instruments led by Perovali Jaya Bhaskar

Friday, 28 February 2020

10.00 a.m. : Sahitya Akademi Auditorium National Seminar: Regionality, Environment and Literature (contd.)
10.30 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Panel Discussion on Art of Translation: Cultural Responsibility
2.30 p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Panel Discussion on Media and Literature : Information and Sensibility
6.00 p.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Cultural Programme: Dastangoi
 by Mahmood Farooqui

Saturday, 29 February 2020

10.00 a.m. : Sahitya Akademi Auditorium National Seminar: Regionality, Environment and Literature (contd.)
10.00 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Spin-a-Tale : Programmes for Children
10.00 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns Panel Discussion on Publishing in India
10.30 a.m. : Rabindra Bhavan Lawns New Harvest : All India Young Writers' Meet

Book Exhibition & Sale
10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. daily at Rabindra Bhavan Lawns
Avail upto 75% Discount

All Are Welcome

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