



SUNDAY STORY PAGE 9

Face-off, masks off

Much more than 70 seats are at stake in the Delhi Assembly elections that just ended. Why AAP, BJP are waiting anxiously for the count

BIG PICTURE PAGES 10-11

The Flu

4,000 km away from Wuhan, Kerala leans back on its Nipah experience to tackle the coronavirus outbreak



ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS WILL BE OUT ON TUESDAY

Delhi chooses AAP, exit polls predict

Pollsters say Arvind Kejriwal-led party set to form govt again, BJP in second place, Congress not in the reckoning

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE AAM Aadmi Party is set to return to power in the national capital, all exit polls released after close of polling on Saturday suggested. While the party had come to power with a majority of 67 in the Delhi House of 70 seats in the 2015 Assembly polls, most pollsters this time gave them more than 50 seats.

According to the exit polls, the BJP will improve on the tally of three seats it got the last time, but still finish a distant second. The Congress, like the last time, seems to be a non-player in the national capital, with most polls giving it 0-2 seats.

The past month had seen two very different campaigns run by the AAP and BJP — with the former asking people to vote on the basis of its work, and the latter focusing its campaign around Shaheen Bagh, where protests against the new citizenship law have been on for almost two months now.

The India Today Axis survey gave the AAP 59-68 seats, and

the BJP 2-11 seats. The Times Now-IPSOS survey gave AAP 47 and the BJP 23, while NewsX-Polstrat gave AAP 50-56 seats and BJP 10-14 seats. ABP News-CVoter gave the AAP 49-63 seats, and the BJP 5-19 seats.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said it was clear that people had voted for development. "The city has voted for education and for the work we did. They have completely rejected the politics of hate," he said.

A senior party leader said their calculation shows the AAP's tally will touch 60. "I think exit polls are a little careful. According to our estimate, our tally will cross 60 seats," he said.

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari tweeted that the exit polls were incorrect. "All these exit polls will fail. The BJP will win 48 seats and form the government in Delhi. Please don't blame EVMs. Save this tweet," he wrote.

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra said: "These exit polls are never accurate. They failed in Maharashtra and Haryana. We are hopeful we will have a good number of seats this time. Let us wait for the final results."



Voters wait outside a polling station at a government school in East Delhi on Saturday. Amit Mehra

Despite push to get voters out, turnout 61.7%, down from 2015

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

AROUND 61.71% voters turned out to vote in the Delhi Assembly elections, as per figures released by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) at 11 pm Saturday. The final outcome, the CEO said, would only have "fractional changes". This is significantly lower than 2015, when the turnout was 67.12%.

However, it surpassed the figures of last year's Lok Sabha elections, when 60.60% voters had come to the polling booths. The voting figures remained low till about 1 pm, when just 31.69% voters had cast their votes. It picked up pace in the second half. Voting began at 8 am and continued till 6 pm officially. Anyone who entered the polling booth by 6 pm was allowed to vote.

The CEO office had made multiple attempts through radio

jingles, advertisements on Delhi Metro and DTC buses, cultural programmes, among other things, to encourage citizens to vote, though the effort does not seem to have yielded the desired result.

Delhi CEO Ranbir Singh said many reasons could be attributed to the relatively lower percentage, but maintained that the voter turnout was good. "For a metropolitan city, voting

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Time ripe for law on compulsory mediation before litigation: CJI

ANANTHAKRISHNAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

UNDERLINING THE effectiveness of mediation to address commercial disputes, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde on Saturday said it is time to have a comprehensive law on making pre-litigation mediation mandatory.

"I think the time is ripe to devise a comprehensive legislation which contains compulsory pre-litigation mediation and a remedy for the biggest drawback in a mediation agreement, that is to say the unenforceability of an agreement arrived at a mediation, would ensure efficiency and also reduce the time pendency for parties as well as the courts," the CJI said.

Speaking at the Third International Conference organised by the Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the CJI said:



'Will ensure efficiency, reduce pendency'

"Maybe if some method could be found for certifying that an agreement has been freely entered into and for making it executable like a degree, mediation could become the most effective ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism)."

He said though arbitration is the most preferred mode of privately resolving a varied range of disputes today, "however it must be kept in mind that the same is at the cost of mediation and conciliation which is much faster and less expensive".

Tracing the history of ADR in India, he pointed out that it is not a recent phenomenon. "Arbitration and mediation are a deeply embedded dispute

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Pak govt considering passport exemption for Kartarpur pilgrims, takes Delhi by surprise

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN A surprise for New Delhi, Pakistan's Interior Minister Ijaz Shah told Pakistan's parliament on Friday that Islamabad is considering allowing Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur corridor without a passport in order to attract more visitors to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib.

According to a Pakistan English daily, *Express Tribune*,

Shah told the National Assembly that while at present, passport-free entry of Indian pilgrims to the Kartarpur corridor is not allowed, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed between Pakistan and India, a change in this was under consideration. Detailed inputs might be sought from the Foreign Affairs Ministry in this regard, he said.

"As per procedure, pilgrims can visit the corridor from dawn till dusk after producing Indian



The Gurdwara Darbar Sahib corridor opened last year

passport or overseas citizen of Indian-origin card along with the passport of the resident country," he said. The pilgrims are exempted from visas.

Sources in New Delhi, however, said they were not aware of any such proposal from Pakistan yet. "The major challenge is that Pakistan is charging \$20 fees, which we have asked be waived. That would help attract more visitors," a government source told *The Sunday Express*.

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WORLD



VIRUS CLAIMS FIRST FOREIGN CASUALTIES IN CHINA, TOLL AT 723
PAGE 15

Supply from China hit, Govt takes stock of crucial drug ingredients

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

WITH THE novel coronavirus outbreak in China stalling import of crucial Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), the government has asked all state Food

and Drug Administrations (FDAs) to reach out to drug manufacturers and understand how much stock each has of 58 crucial APIs.

APIs are raw material used to make a pharmaceutical drug. India relies on China for 65-70 per cent of its annual API requirement. Stocks may last an-

other two months, several domestic drug manufacturers said.

The list of 58 APIs includes Lopinavir and Ritonavir, both used for HIV/AIDS treatment and

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15 MORE REACH KERALA PAGE 7

Rajapaksa keeps focus on terror, Modi says 'with an open mind'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

MORE THAN two months after India announced USD 50 million Line of Credit to Sri Lanka for security and counter-terrorism during President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's visit to India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Sri Lankan PM Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday underlined their common concerns regarding terrorism and the need to fight the problem "firmly".

Rajapaksa kept the focus on security and counter-terrorism issues in his remarks, while steering clear of the matter of

reconciliation with Lankan Tamils, like Gotabaya did during his visit. President of Lanka from 2005 to 2015, Rajapaksa headed the country when the decades-long conflict with the LTTE was crushed.

But, in his remarks, Modi said they had talked "with an open mind" on the issue. "I am confident that the government of Sri Lanka will fulfill the expectations of the Tamil people for equality, justice, peace, and respect within a United Sri Lanka," he said.

The five-day visit to India is Rajapaksa's first bilateral visit overseas. Gotabaya too had chosen to come to India for his first

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

In Himachal, a district helps women train as nurses: Ab beti aage badao

RAJESH CHANDER SHARMA
UNA, FEBRUARY 8

HER MOTHER bedridden, father and brother dead, younger sister ailing, Ritu Rani could have given up. Instead, she chose a different route.

The 21-year-old from Raipur Marwari village in Una district of Himachal Pradesh walked up to Deputy Commissioner Sandeep

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Kumar's office and told him, "Job chahiye aur padhna hai (I need a job but I want to study too)." Impressed by Rani's gump-

tion, the DC visited her home next day and, soon, worked out a solution for Rani and eight other girls in similar situation as her. Now, the district administration has "adopted" the nine and has enrolled them for a three-year General Nursing Midwifery course, all expenses paid.

"Beti bachao, beti padhao. That's fine," says Kumar. "Now the next step should be, beti aage badao (take the daughter forward)."



Nine selected for General Nursing Midwifery course. Express

For the DC, charity begins at home. He has been sponsoring education of two girls personally. While one is doing a nursing course at Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh, the other is enrolled in a tourism and hospitality course at Phagwara in Punjab.

District Programme Officer (ICDS) Satnam Singh and his team says they drew up the list of nine girls on the basis of who needed help the most. "I went to

an educational institution and explained our intent. When I was returning, a girl came running up and narrated her story. It was so touching. I shortlisted her," Singh says.

Una-based Nanda Hospital is conducting the midwifery course, and owner Dr SK Nanda says it was his way of giving something back to society. "When the DC sahib approached me, I straightaway agreed to cut the fees by half. The remaining

half is being borne by the administration." Nanda said the hospital additionally gives a discount of 10% to 20% in fees to deserving candidates.

Among those selected for the course is Kanchan Chaudhary, 18, a resident of Nagonji village, who is being looked after by her grandparents after her father died and mother remarried. With her grandfather dependent on MNREGA wages and uncle a

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IDLIB, THE SYRIAN PROVINCE

Idlib is the last stronghold of the rebels and jihadist groups in Syria and has witnessed eight years of bloody fighting with the Syrian government. The province northwestern Syria has now become the epicentre of gross human rights violations, regular air bombardments and a space where profound superpower rivalries play out.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



ARTISTS IN SOLIDARITY WITH SHAHEEN BAGH

SHAHEEN BAGH
 Madan Gopal Singh, Shubha Mudgal, Prateek Kuhad perform in solidarity with protesters

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 Why cruise ships are especially vulnerable to spread of diseases

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How Congress helped the BJP come to power

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AGAINST THE RULES IN AMARAVATI

CID finds over 100 cash transactions for purchase of assigned lands

SREENIVAS JANYALA
 HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 8

THE ANDHRA Pradesh CID has identified 106 cash transactions for the purchase of assigned lands in Amaravati Capital Region from June to December 2015, when the TDP was in power in the state.

Assigned lands are plots given by government to SCs and STs, the poor, landless beneficiaries, ex-servicemen etc. The size of the plots ranges from half to one acre. Under the AP Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfers) Act 1977, transfer or sale of assigned lands is prohibited.

The CID has found that 87.93 acres of assigned lands were sold off by the beneficiaries. The purchases were done through 106 cash transactions of various amounts ranging from Rs 2-20 lakh. All the assigned lands sold off are in Mangalagiri mandal in Guntur district.

On Thursday, the CID wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Vijayawada, requesting an Income Tax probe into cash transactions in land purchases in Amaravati. The letter stated that during the course of investigation of suspicious land deals in Amaravati Capital Region, it came to light that a huge number of cash transactions took place in purchasing lands.

"While examining those transactions, it was found that most of the transactions were done in cash, that too above Rs 2

lakh," states the letter, written by PV Sunil Kumar, Additional DGP, Andhra CID. The CID requested the I-T department to enquire and ascertain if the persons who made the cash transactions evaded paying taxes.

A cabinet sub-committee constituted by the current YSRCP government reported that real estate developers and local TDP leaders formed a coterie to force owners of assigned lands owned by SCs and STs to sell to them 444 acres of land in the Amaravati region.

A report submitted by the Cabinet sub-committee said that certain influential real estate developers, with the backing of local TDP leaders, coerced land beneficiaries to sell their land to them.

The modus operandi, according to the report, was that the realtors and political leaders approached the owners of assigned lands and informed them that their lands were not covered under the land pooling scheme and therefore, they were not eligible for monetary benefits.

With the threat of their land being taken over by the government later on, the assigned land owners panicked and sold off their lands at cheap rates. After over 444 acres of assigned lands were sold off, the TDP government released a government order that they too would be covered under the land pooling scheme. The report alleges that 30 realtors and local TDP leaders purchased 444.66 acres of assigned lands from Dalits and STs.

FROM PAGE ONE

Time ripe for law on compulsory mediation before litigation: CJI

resolution mechanisms in India's commercial practices and social life... Sage Yajnavalkya is said to have, in ancient Indian texts, referred issues to various arrangements including srenis (occupational guilds), kula (family or clan assemblies), and puga (tribunals that comprised of people dwelling in the same place), all of which closely approximate the present system of arbitration."

Despite its long history, the arbitration regime in post-Independence India was considered to be archaic, unpredictable and expensive and it was in this background that the Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996 was enacted.

The last few years, CJI Bobde said, "have witnessed an accelerated maturing of the Indian arbitration regime and community spurred on by an ever-increasing demand for arbitration services in India".

The success in endeavours aimed at transforming India into an international arbitration hub, he said, would depend on the diligence shown by various stakeholders in spotting and addressing relevant concerns and issues.

Institutional arbitration, he said, has met with limited success in India as Indian parties still show a strong preference for ad hoc over institutional arbitration. He stressed the importance of the role of members of the legal fraternity in solving this and said "a robust arbitration bar is critical" for this.

The CJI also touched upon the importance of "disruptive technologies" in arbitration and said "as one scholar puts it both 'IA' (International Arbitration) and 'AI' (Artificial Intelligence) are leading alternatives to status quo: IA to traditional methods of dispute resolution, AI to traditional methods of performance".

"Artificial Intelligence could provide immense benefits for the arbitration process and its users. By augmenting human cognitive abilities, AI powered services could assist lawyers in drafting, identification of better authorities, reviewing of documents, etc... AI-assisted arbitration holds immense promise for the arbitration community," he said.

Pak minister says may exempt passport for Kartarpur, takes Delhi by surprise

New Delhi also maintains that any change regarding passports for access would have to be incorporated in the agreement between the two countries on operationalising the Kartarpur corridor.

In November last year, Pakistan and India had separately inaugurated the historic corridor on their sides of the border. The corridor provides the shortest route for pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur area of Pakistan's Narowal district, where Guru Nanak is believed to have spent last 18 years of his life, round the year, without visas.

Officials in Delhi said the facilitation procedures were part of the bilateral agreement with Pakistan, finalised after discussions. "Any change can be undertaken only with the consent of both parties formally and not through a tweet or statement," an official said, adding that a regular review regarding Kartarpur is undertaken by an Empowered Committee chaired by an officer

Turnout 61.7%, down from 2015

percentage of over 60% is pretty good. Also, we surpassed figures of the Lok Sabha elections," he said.

"Many factors can be responsible for the lower figures. It depends on the voters' political interest. It can also be that elections were held on a Saturday, and some families would have gone out for the weekend on a holiday. We also have a large number of people who have died or shifted but Form 70 was not filled to remove names from the list. That could also be a factor," Singh said.

According to data until 3 pm from the districts, North East had the highest polling percentage at 50.75%. Whereas

the lowest (42.07%) was recorded in New Delhi district, from where Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is contesting. The final district-wise figures will be released Sunday.

At a press conference after the polls, Singh said the election process had gone off "peacefully". For the first time, poll staff were made to stay overnight at the polling booth to ensure that polling stations were in place in time. "We saw less than one per cent replacement of VVPAT machines, which is significantly lower than in the Lok Sabha elections last year (almost 6%). I attribute this to the overnight stay of staff, and it gave them enough

time to get comfortable with the arrangement," he said.

Another first this time was the postal ballot facility issued to voters aged over 80 and persons with disabilities. "Of the 488 PWD voters whose forms we found valid, 429 ended up voting. Similarly, of the 2,429 octogenarian voters, 2,257 cast their votes. This is a significant achievement for us, otherwise these votes would have been lost," Singh said.

There were a total of 1.47 crore voters this time, voting for 672 candidates in total. Matiala had the highest number of voters at 4.32 lakh, while Chandni Chowk with 1.25 lakh voters had the lowest number.

Minority-dominated seats recorded among the highest polling percentage, as per estimated voter turnout figures on the EC app. Seelampur, which saw many anti-CAA protests, showed an estimated voter turnout of 71.4% at around 11 pm Saturday. Mustafabad, which had seen a BJP victory in 2015 after a split in Muslim votes, saw an estimated voting figure of 70.55%. Seemapuri and Matia Mahal also saw estimated voter turnouts of 68.08% and 68.36% respectively.

Gokalpuri is the only non-minority dominated constituency which was among the seats with the highest voter percentage, at 69.73%.

Visiting Rajapaksa keeps focus on terror

visit after being elected president.

Modi described terrorism as a major threat facing the region and asserted that Delhi and Colombo would expand cooperation on the challenge. "Both our countries have fought this problem firmly. There were painful and barbaric terrorist attacks on Easter Day in Sri Lanka in April last year. These attacks were not only a blow to Sri Lanka, but also to humanity. In our talks, we discussed furthering our

anti-terror cooperation," the PM said.

Rajapaksa expressed gratitude for India helping Colombo "enhance capabilities" to counter terrorism. He recalled Modi's visit to Sri Lanka and assistance to counter terrorism, thanking him for his government's 'neighbourhood first policy'. "India is our closest neighbour and long-standing friend. The close historical links have provided a solid foundation to our ties," he said.

During Gotabaya's visit in

November too, Modi had talked about the reconciliation process in Sri Lanka, expressing similar hope for justice, peace and respect in his statement.

On the fishermen issue, Modi said both sides had decided to adopt a humanitarian approach. "The issue directly affects the livelihood of people of both countries," he noted.

Modi said he and Rajapaksa also talked about joint economic projects as well as enhancement of trade and investment. "We discussed ways

to deepen people-to-people contact, promote tourism and improve connectivity."

Noting that India has been a "trusted partner" in Sri Lanka's development, Modi said stability, security and prosperity in the island nation was important for India as well as for the entire Indian Ocean region.

The Sri Lankan PM also met President Ram Nath Kovind and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. He will travel next to Varanasi, Sarnath, Bodhi Gaya and Tirupati.

ROW OVER INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

UP: Community panchayat chief held for 'social boycott' of man's family

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 8

JHANSI POLICE Saturday arrested the head of a community panchayat facing allegations of issuing a directive that a "fine" of Rs 5 lakh would be imposed on a man for marrying a woman belonging to another caste in 2015. According to the FIR registered on the basis of the husband's complaint, the panchayat issued the "diktat" in a meeting held last month to lift the "social boycott" on the man's family ordered in 2015.

While it is not mentioned in the FIR, the man claimed to mediapersons that the community panchayat chief also said his (complainant's) family members would be "allowed in the community only if they drink

cow urine and eats cow dung". On Friday, a meeting of the panchayat was about to start but officials from the district administration reached the spot and stopped it.

The people gathered there were given a warning and asked to go home.

The man filed a complaint later in the day based on which an FIR was registered against the community panchayat head and others.

"The panchayat meeting did not take place Friday after a team of district administration and police went there. Role of other persons is being probed," said a senior police officer.

Police have also issued notices to five persons who were part of the panchayat, telling them to sign a bond to maintain peace, he added.

Soldier killed in Pak shelling along LoC

Jammu: A soldier was killed and three others were injured on Saturday as the Pakistani army violated the ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing of small arms and mortar shelling along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said.

The soldier, manning a forward post, was killed and three others were injured in Degwar sector, they said. Earlier, a defence spokesperson said Pakistan initiated the unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars in the sector around 3.45 pm. PTI

Man who shot UP Hindu outfit leader held: Cops

Lucknow: Lucknow police Saturday claimed to have arrested a man who allegedly shot dead Hindu Mahasabha leader Ranjeet Bachchan on February 2.

The suspect, Jitendra Verma, suffered a bullet injury on his leg in a shootout while he was trying to escape, police said. They also claimed to have recovered a .32 pistol used in the murder from Verma's possession. On Friday, a local court sent the three "conspirators" in the murder case, including Bachchan's second wife Smriti Srivastava, her alleged lover Deependra Verma and driver Sanjeet Gautam, to jail. ENS

of the level of Secretary in the Union Home Ministry.

Meanwhile, the government has eased passport services in Punjab, with several new passport offices and Seva Kendras.

Supply from China hit, govt takes stock of crucial drug ingredients

recently approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for treatment of coronavirus infection. Amoxicillin, Cephalaxine used as common antibiotics to treat bacterial infection, Rifampicin used in tuberculosis regimen, and commonly used APIs like Paracetamol, Doxycycline, Gentamycin, Prednisolone, Meropenam are also on the list.

The province of Hubei, where novel coronavirus was first reported in December, is a major hub of API manufacturers, apart from two other provinces in China. Since January, Hubei remains in a state of lockdown to limit the spread of the virus.

Since a fortnight, domestic manufacturers said, imports of APIs from China have stopped. Prior to that too the supply was slow because of the Chinese New Year and holiday season during December.

"We received directions from the DCGI (Drug Controller General of India) on Thursday to inform about the quantity of APIs available with each local manufacturer. The process to reach out to manufacturers has begun," a Maharashtra FDA official said. Maharashtra has 885 drug manufacturers.

The government is also collecting data on overseas manufacturers of APIs, the quantity imported since 2018, as well as the production capacities of domestic manufacturers in case a scale-up is needed.

port, they would have to reduce import duty," Daara B Patel, secretary general, Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association (IDMA), said.

An official of a multinational pharmaceutical company pointed out that it was not easy to immediately scale up API manufacturing units in India.

China remains a major supplier of not just antibiotics but also Vitamin B12, B1, B6, and E to India. "Even in the past we had faced a spurt in prices, and for some time imports were stopped from China. For finished products we have a month's stock right now. But if the situation continues, we need to do something," said Patel.

According to Saktivel Selvaraj, Director, Health Economics, Financing and Policy Unit, Public Health Foundation of India, India was self-sufficient both in terms of APIs and drug formulations till the Nineties, but the cheaper rates offered by China pushed several to import APIs over the last 15 years.

"Coronavirus and its impact in India will be a worrisome factor. If domestic production, that accounts for 30 per cent of APIs, is unable to cope up, key medicine supply for malaria, tuberculosis, HIV, cancer and even diabetes may get hampered. National health schemes can get affected," Selvaraj said.

Pharmaceutical company Cipla Limited said there were reports of price rise of specific APIs after the coronavirus outbreak. "But we have sufficient store of necessary ingredients for the next couple of months. We are hopeful of the situation getting better and supplies evening out. The industry might have to prepare alternatives otherwise. As of now, the industry is yet to fully feel any major impact," Kedar Upadhye, Global CFO, Cipla Ltd, said.

Until Saturday, coronavirus had led to more than 700 deaths globally, almost all in China. Dr Sarada Devi, Head of the Microbiology Department in Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram, said currently for their stable patients, like the only three who have tested

positive for coronavirus in the country, only symptomatic treatment is being offered. "But we will need anti-retroviral drugs, mainly Ritonavir and Lopinavir, if patients develop chest infection. That is the recommendation from the ICMR," she said.

Once upon a time, a national ID project: It is complicated to establish citizenship

from May 2007 till it was finally closed on March 31, 2009.

A member of the committee of secretaries that monitored the pilot project told The Sunday Express that it found that "citizenship was a very complex and complicated issue". The committee found that the pilot raised problems of a "weak document base" for determining citizenship status of individuals in rural areas, especially for agricultural labourers, landless labourers, married females and individuals not present at their place of residence at the time of enumeration.

An amount of Rs 44.36 crore was sanctioned for the MNIC pilot project, which was abandoned without making public any results or data on its efficacy. The success rate of the pilot project, sources said, would still be less than 45%, even if certain residents who were not issued the MNICs, were included in the results.

A "Compendium of mission mode projects under NeGP" (National e-Governance Plan) said that one of the major learnings from the MNIC pilot project was that "determination of citizenship was a complicated and involved issue and may be tackled in a phased manner".

The UPA government had also tacitly acknowledged the outcome of the pilot project in 2011 when the then Minister of State (Home) Gurudas Kamat told Parliament that "the experi-

ence of the pilot project has revealed that the process of determination of citizenship is cumbersome, time-consuming and complex in nature. Document base is weak, especially in rural areas".

In July 2014, the NDA government told Parliament it "has decided to create National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) by verifying citizenship status of all persons in the National Population Register (NPR) and issue National Identity Cards to all the Citizens of India". Referring to the pilot project, it said that "Citizenship Act, 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 have already laid down the guidelines to be followed for determination of Citizenship status and which have been tested during the pilot project on Multi-purpose National Identity Card (MNIC)".

However, last Monday, it told Parliament that no decision had been taken so far to conduct an all-India NRC.

"We have seen the chaos caused by the NRC in Assam, which was mandated by the Supreme Court and required under the Assam Accord. The rules for citizenship in the MNIC pilot were different from what were given by the court in Assam, they were far more lenient in many ways, and still the results were not very encouraging," a retired bureaucrat who monitored the MNIC pilot told The Sunday Express.

The results of the MNIC pilot project, sources said, were seen to be behind the UPA government's decision to place plans for an all-India rollout of MNIC and NRC on a lower priority. NPR of all the 'usual residents' in the country was created in 2010, but no nationwide NRC was conducted. The NPR database was updated during 2015-16 all over India, except Assam and Meghalaya, to make a comprehensive resident database. The electronic database of more than 119 crore usual residents of the country has been created so far, which will be updated this year, with additional information.

The pilot project for MNIC

and NRC was conceived after the Citizenship Act was amended in 2003 under the Vajpayee government, following the report of the LK Advani-led Group of Ministers on National Security after the Kargil War. The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 had laid down the guidelines to be followed for determination of citizenship status, which were tested during the pilot project on MNIC.

The pilot project covered 24 sub-districts spread over Medak district in Andhra Pradesh, Karimnagar in Assam, North West Delhi, North Goa, Kachchh in Gujarat, Kathua in J&K, Karaikal in Puducherry, Jaisalmer in Rajasthan, West Tripura in Tripura, Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh, Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand, Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu and Murshidabad in West Bengal. Many of these areas were selected as they fell in the border areas and would test the efficacy of the MNIC project.

In the MNIC pilot project, after conducting a base-line survey for enumeration of population in the project area, integration of photographs and finger biometrics was done with personal data of persons above the age of 18. This was followed by verification and determination of citizenship status, either by production of certain documents or sworn affidavits by two citizens, which led to the issue of MNIC. The MNIC was issued free of cost to the citizens.

Una dist adopts 9 girls, gives them free nursing training; DC says time for 'beti aage badhao'

farmer, making ends meet is a struggle for the family.

Nikita Thakur, 17, of Sanghnai village is an orphan, with both parents dead, while Dehlan village's Praveen Kumari, 18, lost her mother to cancer after which her father abandoned her and her sister. "I wanted to join banking. But God had other plans," says Praveen, who stays with her grandparents.

Rajandeep Kaur, 18, of Sanoli village, was left similarly destitute after the death of her father to cancer and remarriage of her mother. Rajandeep, who couldn't afford to become a doctor given the expense, sees the nursing course as a godsend. "My dream is being fulfilled," she says.

Among the other girls selected is Amarpreet Kaur, 18, also from Sanoli village, whose father died in an accident and whose mother remains missing since, she says. "I wanted to join the Army, but now I want to continue this course," she says.

Ritika Sahota, 18, of Heeran Thara village, says that with both her parents dead, "things have started looking up after I joined this course".

Among the eldest of the women selected is Sheetal Bhatia, 20, of Dangoh village, whose father has been bedridden for two years. Her mother takes up work under MNREGA, barely sustaining the family, including a son and daughter who are in school. Her eyes welling up, Sheetal says she hopes she can get a good job after the course.

Deeksha Patial, 17, also an orphan, lives with her grandmother at Amb village, along with a sister and brother, both in school. Deeksha hopes to eventually do post-graduation in nursing as that would "guarantee a job". Rani talks about how the DC, apart from enrolling her for the course, also sanctioned her family Rs 25,000. "He is like my father," she says.



Voters line up to cast their votes for the assembly polls at Khajuri Khas, Saturday. Praveen Khanna

NEW DELHI, CM'S CONSTITUENCY, LAGS ON POLLING DAY

Turnout dips, strongholds give AAP hope

MALLICA JOSHI NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN THE last two Assembly polls that the Aam Aadmi Party contested in 2013 and 2015, the constituencies in the city — Deoli, Ambedkar Nagar, Seemapuri, Sangam Vihar — have shown the way for the party in terms of numbers and also voter percentages.

Considered the party's strongholds, these constituencies voted overwhelmingly for the then fledgling party in both elections. And this time, too, most have seen a healthy turnout as compared to other constituencies.

This, senior party members said, works in their advantage. "If we look at the population density, we are more comfortably placed to begin with as the poor have made it clear that they are with AAP. They are the first ones to have rejected BJP's divisive politics, and the voter turnout makes it clear. In the places where we are strong, people have turned up and voted for us," said a leader.

In Chhattarpur, which gave AAP its biggest win in 2015 with a winning margin of 47% votes, almost 63% people turned up to vote. At Deoli, this figure was 63.43%, and at Seemapuri it was 68%.

Most of these areas have concentrated pockets of unauthorised colonies, and a big loss from these areas could also be a signal for the BJP that its decision to give ownership rights to those with houses in these areas did not pay off.

The one stronghold where voting percentage dropped considerably is New Delhi, with a turnout of around 52%. Last year, the turnout in the area was 64%. AAP's candidate from New Delhi is Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, and the seat has become a VIP seat over the years, with Sheila Dikshit having contested from the area earlier. The area is home to government officials and prominent business families, with JJ colonies abutting these areas.

Kejriwal spent a considerable time campaigning in the area, on days addressing up to 35 meetings. His wife and daughter also campaigned for him in the New Delhi constituency.

In the areas where AAP lost in 2015 — Rohini, Vishwas Nagar and Mustafabad — the polling average was higher than the overall city average.

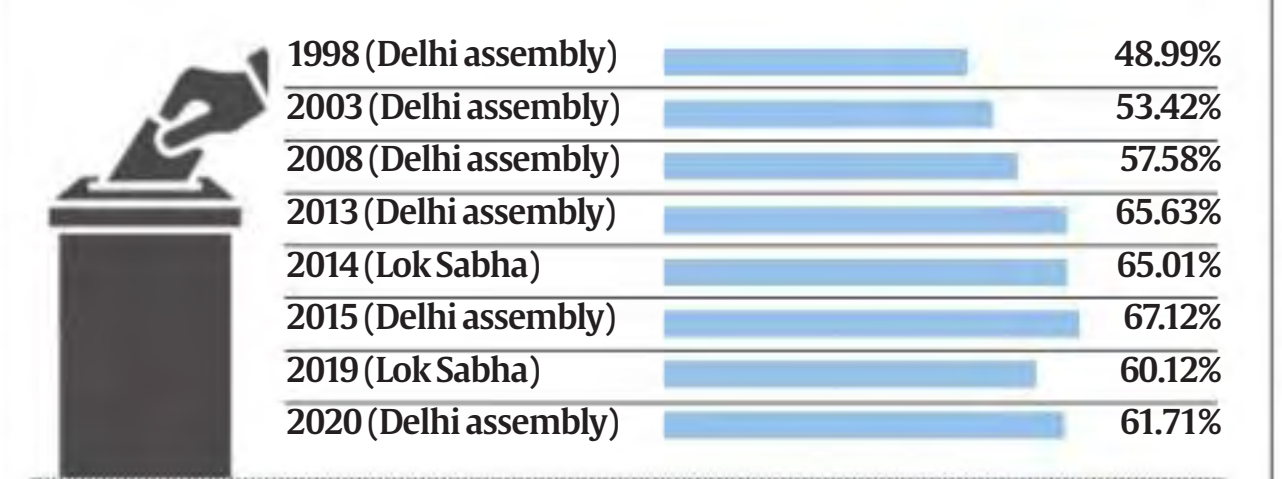
At Rohini, which has been BJP's Vijender Gupta's stronghold, over 63% turned out to vote. At Vishwas Nagar, from where BJP's OP Sharma won in 2015, the turnout was a little over 62%. At Mustafabad, which AAP lost by a thin margin of 6,000 votes in 2015, the turnout was 70.55% and is expected to cross the 2015 turnout of 70.65%.

Across the board, the voting percentage seems to have fallen as compared to the last time, whether in the five Assembly constituencies with the highest votes, or in those with the lowest.

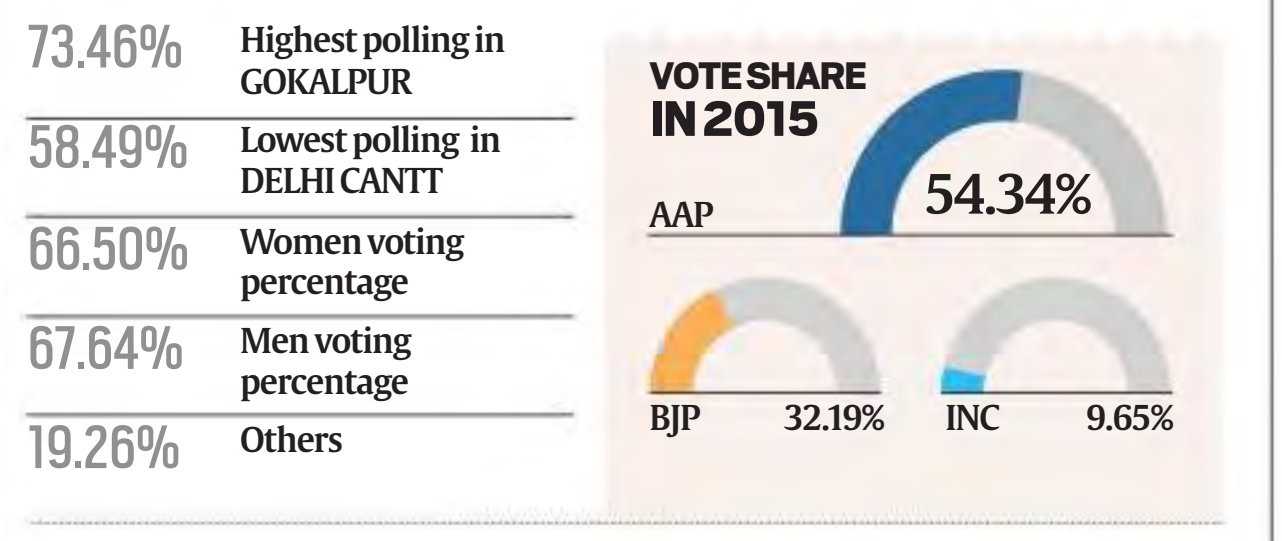
Seelampur, which had the highest estimated voter turnout of 71.4%, more or less maintained its voting percentage of 2015 (71.5%). Matia Mahal saw a drop from 72.89% in 2015 to an estimated 68.36% this year.

Among the lowest polling Assembly constituencies, Delhi Cantt saw an estimated voter turnout of 45.42% — the lowest among all. In 2015, 58.49% had voted from the constituency.

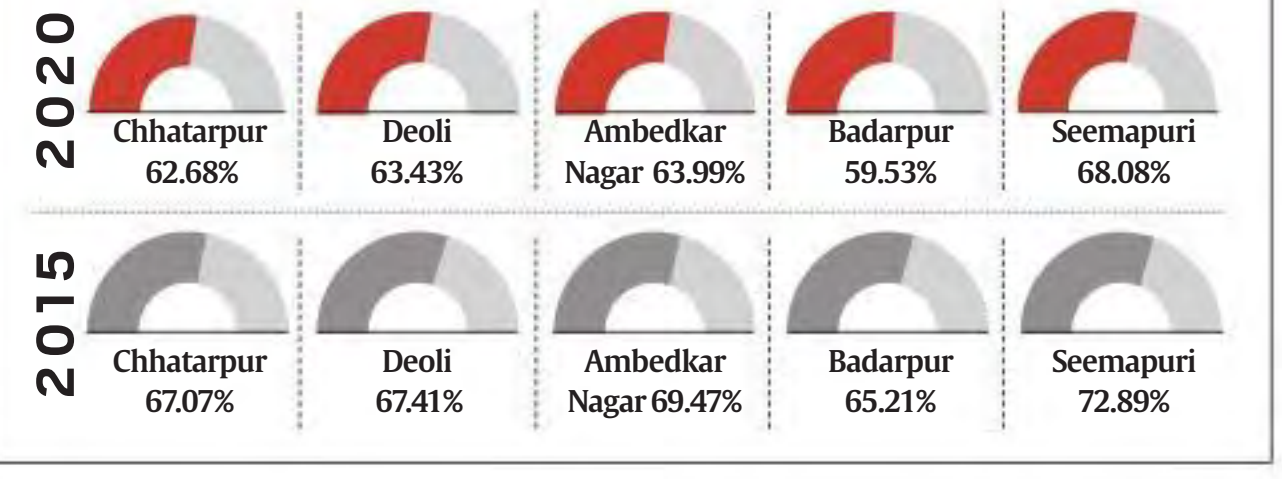
VOTER TURNOUT IN PREVIOUS POLLS



2015 ASSEMBLY ELECTION



POLLING PERCENTAGE IN AAP STRONGHOLDS (BASED ON 2015 VOTE MARGIN)



In CM's constituency, voters say his schemes reason for second chance

SOMYA LAKHANI NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

ON SATURDAY morning, at the picturesque polling booth inside the President's Estate, Delhi University student Anjana's 55-year-old father recalled the time he lost his job last year. "Unlikely help came in the form of free bus rides for women. At a time when I couldn't afford to pay for my daughter's bus fare, this scheme by the CM came... Welfare, development are the main muddas," he said, flaunting his inked finger. President Ram Nath Kovind had voted at his polling booth before 11 am — at a school inside the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

In the New Delhi constituency, which is incumbent Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's home ground, the government's report card seemed to resonate with the wide array of voters. At Modern School, Barakhamba Road, second-time voter Shrey Gupta (22) said, "I am voting for a party that is working for the city, not for itself. I am helping my father with his business of running private schools in North Delhi. While AAP is after private schools, which is bad for our business, it is doing good work for the city."

The Ashoka University alumnus, however, lamented that "air pollution was missing from the manifestos of all parties" and "whichever party comes to power must fix it".

Around 9.30 am, Kejriwal, and his wife and parents, cast their votes at a polling booth in Civil Lines.

The anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh,



Arvind Kejriwal with his family in Civil Lines on Saturday. Twitter

which was repeatedly mentioned in the bitter election campaign, was also a talking point on voting day. Smriti Bangari (28), who came to a polling booth in Barakhamba Road with her parents, said, "There was too much Hindu-Muslim talk this time. The Shaheen Bagh protest causes traffic jams, but the Muslim community will be impacted by the government's policies, so it's understandable."

At the polling booth in Janpath's Lady Irwin School, voter Hari Maya (45) said: "TV pe Hindu-Muslim sum ke tang ho gaye... We are voting for development."

Less than 50 metres from their house in Lodhi Estate, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, her husband Robert Vadra and their son Raihan — a first-time voter — cast their votes at a school.

At the NDMC Convention Centre, located in the middle of the mansions of posh Golf Links, residents were surprised by long queues at noon. A voter at Golf Links said, "The upper-middle class doesn't care for freebies, but those who work in our homes tell us Kejriwal's policies have impacted their lives, and that is all I needed to hear to decide my vote."

Free bus rides to CCTVs: What women want — and got

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

ON SATURDAY morning, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, in a tweet, appealed to women to vote in large numbers and to "discuss with men who it is right to vote for".

"Vote daalne zaroor jaaiye. Sabhi mahilao se khaas appeal — jaise aap ghar ki zimmedari uthati hai, waise hi mulk aur Delhi ki zimmedari bhi aapke kandho par hai. Aap sabhi mahilao vote daalne zaroor jaaye aur apne ghar ke purusho ko bhi le jaaye. Purusho se charcha zaroor kare ki kisse vote dena sahi rahega," he tweeted.

Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani hit out at him, saying: "Don't you consider women capable of deciding who to vote for on their own?"

However, AAP's stance has been that the CM's statement is based on the idea of women being more likely to support the party. "Women have, since the beginning, been the most loyal AAP supporters. We believe it is because they are the ones who manage the house budget, and they realise we have made lives easiest for them," Atishi,

who is also the AAP spokesperson, had told The Indian Express earlier.

The Indian Express spoke to women voters in different parts of Delhi about what issues they considered most important while voting. Providing free travel to women in public buses was arguably AAP's most talked about initiative to aid women's mobility and safety, and was mentioned by several women in different constituencies.

Saroj (45), a widow who travels every day from North East Delhi's Seemapuri to Badarpur, bordering Faridabad, for work, said on Saturday: "I make and serve food to sahebs there. I travel by bus and it used to cost me Rs 80-90 every day, and would amount to a few thousand rupees a month. The kind of relief that the removal of bus fares has given me is huge. I can support my two children better."

Bharti (24), a North Avenue resident, who holds a part-time job, said, "I am no fan of free bus rides as I think it should be subsidised for everyone. I do, however, appreciate the presence of bus marshals who have been deployed since 2019. They do make travelling safer."

Chandrakanta Sharma (55), a resident of Rohini Sector 15, also spoke of women's



Women wait outside a polling station in Uttam Nagar on Saturday. PTI

safety. "There is the issue of women's safety here, and across the country. The December 16 (gangrape) convicts have not been hanged yet... Bus rides have been made free for

women, which is a good step, and CCTV cameras have been installed here, which makes us feel a little secure. But those who want to commit crimes are doing it even in front of

CCTVs. So there's need for better education."

Education was also something that women were discussing on polling day. Araish (45), a resident of Chitli Qabar in Old Delhi, was all praise for the recently renovated schools in the area. "Some of the schools have been renovated and a few new schools have also come up in the area. Classrooms are well maintained and the quality of education has improved tremendously. We are voting for improved education system in the constituency," she said.

Among the women who voted were also those who have been protesting against the Citizenship Amendment Act in numerous 24x7 demonstrations across the city for several weeks. At Seelampur, women went in twos and threes to vote to ensure that the protest site did not become empty.

"I am voting for those who have worked well in the government in the last few years and given us relief by reducing our electricity and water bills. It is true that they have not stood by our protest strongly but I think the tide is in their favour, as opposed to the Congress's," said Dulehri (40), who is among the women who have been sitting in protest for over three weeks.

Gargi College students allege ruckus at fest

New Delhi: Students of Delhi University's Gargi College alleged that dozens of men broke into their college Thursday evening during their annual fest.

The alleged incident took place on the third day of Reverie, the annual festival at the women's college. A social media post by a student also alleged some students were molested by the intruders.

College authorities said no complaint has been registered. Sundaram Thakur, president of the students' union, said the alleged incident took place between 4 and 5 pm on February 6. She said entry to the event for men was restricted.

"We had given out passes to each student of the college and it was her discretion who could enter with her—male or female. We wanted to ensure we wouldn't have too many people. However, a huge crowd gathered at the gate that evening. They began pushing in such a way the gate broke... Over 200 outsiders broke into the college without passes. A lot of students are saying different things about what happened; it took some time to bring the situation under control," she said.

Acting principal Promila Kumar said: "No complaint has been filed. The event was open for boys studying in other DU colleges. We had police, commandos and bouncers on campus, and staff were also on duty. There was an arena in the campus meant only for girls. If they were outside that, it was their personal choice." ENS

BOTH AGED 26, WERE ABOUT TO BE FORMALLY INDUCTED

Cop shoots woman colleague in head, kills himself hours later

JIGNASA SINHA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

AFTER ALLEGEDLY killing a 26-year-old woman sub-inspector posted with Delhi Police, her batchmate, also 26, shot himself in Sonapat late Friday night.

According to police, Preeti Ahlawat, posted with Patparganj Industrial Area police station, was shot dead outside Rohini (East) Metro station around 9.30 pm Friday, when she was returning home from work.

Police then got in touch with his workplace and tracked his cell phone, eventually tracing him to Murthal on the highway.

Delhi Police then approached their counterparts in Sonapat, and a team was dispatched to look for him. "We took help from local police in Sonapat. Rathee's car was found at an isolated spot near Murthal around 2 am. The headlights and the engine were on and he was found in the driver's seat. When officers approached the vehicle, they found it was locked from inside. Rathee had shot himself. A service revolver



The victim Preeti Ahlawat, her batchmate Deepanshu Rathee; (right) the spot where Rathee allegedly shot Ahlawat near Rohini (East) Metro station. Express



was found in his right hand," Additional CP (Rohini) SD Mishra said.

Police said prima facie it appears that Ahlawat and Rathee were in a relationship, which ended a few months ago, but he was not willing to move on. However, police added that they will get a clearer picture after speaking to the victim's friends, family and colleagues.

Police alleged Rathee had been following Ahlawat for three days to identify her route and work timings. "On Friday evening, he waited for her to come out of the Metro station, followed her and shot her in the head at close range. He then walked back to his car," an officer said.

"When police scanned her phone, they discovered that Rathee had been calling and mes-

saging her constantly, but she had not been responding," a senior officer said. Three cartridges of 9 mm were found from the spot.

Ahlawat, a 2018 batch sub-inspector, lived with two of her batchmates in Rohini's Sector 8. "Her father is a retired BSF official and her mother is a teacher. When she left work around 8.30 pm, she was not in uniform. She got out of the Metro station around 9.30 pm, and walked around 50 metres when the incident took place. She was taken to a hospital, where she was declared dead on arrival," said a senior police officer.

The PCR call was made by a bystander, Umesh Prasad. He told The Indian Express, "I was walking in the park when I heard a gunshot. Initially, I thought someone had burst a cracker, but

then I heard another gunshot and ran outside. I saw a man with a pistol walking towards the Metro station. I tried to chase him but he disappeared into the crowd. I saw the woman lying on the ground with gunshot wounds on her head and blood all over her face. I called police and informed them."

An officer said, "We have informed the families and are trying to gather details about them from their friends and colleagues."

Rathi's family lives in Sonapat, and his father is a retired personnel from the Haryana Police.

Police said Ahlawat's post-mortem will be conducted on Sunday as her elder brother, who lives in New Zealand, will be here by then.

Victim would often deal with cases of crimes against women

JIGNASA SINHA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN THE 11 months Preeti Ahlawat (26) had been part of Delhi Police as a probationary sub-inspector, she had primarily looked into cases of crimes against women. On Friday night, while returning to her home in Rohini, Ahlawat was shot dead, allegedly Deepanshu Rathee, also a policeman.

"I wish she had told us she was troubled and that Rathee was following her. I wish she had filed a complaint. We would have taken action against him," said a

head constable from Patparganj Industrial Area police station, where Ahlawat was posted.

Rathee was Ahlawat's batchmate during their police training, which ended in 2018. He was posted as a probationary sub-inspector at Bhajanpura police station, and allegedly used his service revolver to kill Ahlawat and himself. Come March, the two would have been inducted as sub-inspectors in the force.

Ahlawat's friends remember her as "hardworking, fun and polite". "She mostly looked at sensitive cases of sexual harassment and would often go to courts or handle desk work. She was also

on election duty. Preeti was very fond of Hindi films and songs. She was cheerful but reserved," said the head-constable.

A police officer said, "After scanning call records, texts, and speaking to their batchmates, it appears they two were in a relationship, but called it off three months ago."

A senior police officer claimed, "Rathee kept accosting her but she had other plans. He was pressuring her to meet him."

Ahlawat is survived by her parents, who live in Rohtak, and her brother, who works in New Zealand as a software engineer.

Suspect's kin allege murder, say they wanted to get him married

SAKSHI DAYAL GURGAON, FEBRUARY 8

EVEN AS police maintained that sub-inspector Deepanshu Rathee's death appeared to be a case of suicide, his family claimed he had been murdered.

"We suspect this was a case of suicide. It can only be confirmed after the post-mortem. No FIR has been lodged yet," said DSP (Ganaur) Sandeep Kumar.

Rathee's father Dayanand, himself a retired sub-inspector with Haryana Police, however, alleged he was murdered. "The bullet wound is towards the back of

his neck. It is impossible for him to have shot himself from this angle. This is murder," he alleged.

Rathee (26) joined as an SI with Delhi Police in 2018, and was deployed at Bhajanpura police station. Before this, his father said he was deployed at the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) office in Chandigarh.

"When he got an offer from the Delhi Police in 2018, we urged him to take it since Delhi is closer to Sonapat, so we would be able to see him more often. He had a personal vehicle in Delhi, and would come here at least once a week to meet us," said his father, who lives in Sonapat.

The family spoke to Rathee for the last time on Friday afternoon, when he told them he would come to Sonapat that night. The next he heard of him was from police personnel, who alerted them about the discovery of his body at 2.12 am Saturday.

"We were going to go and see a girl for him to marry this morning. Instead, we are returning with his body," said Dayanand.

Asked if his son had ever mentioned the woman sub-inspector he is accused of killing, he said, "He never mentioned her to us. We know nothing about this. He sounded fine when we spoke to him on Friday."

OFFICE OF ADDL. CHIEF ENGINEER, PHED, REGION BHARATPUR Phone: 05644-221500, 222731, e-mail rj_acebha@nic.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR WORKS

1- Online Line tenders are hereby invited in Three-Cover system on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan for the following work on Rate contract Basis from the bidder, who must be one of the following entities to be eligible to participate:-

- Bidder must be either an indigenous manufacturer of SPV modules or manufacturer of submersible pump set or system integrator (having experience of providing, installation and commissioning of SPV panels & solar energy operated pumps for drinking water purpose). The bidder shall submit a declaration of the same as the case may be.
• Consortium of any one of the entities mentioned above with any civil contractor registered with CPWD, Postal, Telecom, Railways, MES, Other State governments/ Central government undertakings/ Organizations and having experience of standalone water treatment plants/RO Plants.
• The bidders who are black listed in any state would not be eligible to bid in PHED Rajasthan tender.

Consortium of more than two entities shall not be permissible. In case of consortium, consent of both the entities for forming a consortium shall be submitted on legal documents along with bid, without which the bid will be rejected. (Joint Bidding Agreement Format attached). Submission of bid (and award of contract, if any) shall be in the name of Lead member only. However, neither the lead member nor the other member of consortium shall be allowed to exit from the consortium at any stage. For prequalification, the lead member shall be required to fulfill any one of experience criteria of eligibility (i.e. either clause 4.3.1 or clause 4.3.2 of IIT, Vol-I) individually, while all other criteria of eligibility may be fulfilled either individually or jointly by the members of consortium. The bidders who are black listed in any state would not be eligible to bid in PHED Rajasthan tender.

Details of this tender notification can also be seen in NIT exhibited on web site www.dipronline.org. The tender document can be seen on website http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and http://sppp.rj.nic.in. Tender is to be submitted online in electronic format on website http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in as per schedule given below

2- GENERAL DETAIL OF WORKS:

Table with 3 columns: S.N., NIT No., Estimated Cost. Contains details for Work Description, Earnest money, Cost of Tender Documents, and Important Dates.

Note: In case, there is holiday on any of the date mentioned above, the activities assigned on that date shall be carried out on the next working day.

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED 3rd FLOOR, RRDA BUILDING, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND. Ph: +91 651 2225878 e-mail: juidcolimited@gmail.com

Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Ltd. CIN No. U40108JH2013SGC001702 OFFICE OF THE General Manager Cum Chief Engineer Electric Supply Area, Dhanbad, Combined Building Pin- 826001

CANCELLATION OF NIT

Due to some unavoidable condition the NIT No. -217 & 218, /PR/JBVL/19-20 For Appointment of Service Agency for engaging and managing Urja Mitras (Meter Readers) for Operationalization of Android Based Smart dedicated handheld device (With in-built Printer) Photo Spot Energy Billing & collection system for LT consumers (except HT & EHT consumers) in all Electric Supply Division of Electric Supply Circle, Dhanbad & Chas under Electric Supply Area, Dhanbad is hereby cancelled.

PR No. 223221 Sd/- GM-cum-CE, ESA, Dhanbad

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EMPANELMENT OF VENDORS FOR NCERT PUBLICATION

Dedicated Book Sellers interested for empanelment as 'Vendors' for the distribution of NCERT Publications, may apply by 19.02.2020. Firms who have already applied need not apply again. For details, please visit NCERT website www.ncert.nic.in.

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WESTERN RAILWAY-BHAVNAGAR DIVISION

CONTRACT OF LEASING OUT OF SLRS No.: C 78/1/36/SLR/2019/08 date: 05.02.2020. The Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Western Railway, Bhavnagar Para invites sealed tender for the Contract of Leasing out SLRs "separately" compartment wise of the following Trains for a period of five years or more.

Table with columns: Sr. No., Train No., Station, Detail of Compartment to be leased out, Space for leasing, Reserve Price Per Trip Per 42.8 Tonne SLR (Rs.). Lists various train routes and leasing details.

1. EMD: ₹10000/- Per 42.8 tonne SLR. 2. Closing date and time of e-tender sealing: 12.03.2020 at 15:00hrs. 3. Opening date and time of e-tender: 12.03.2020 at 15:30hrs. 169

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED 3rd FLOOR, RRDA BUILDING, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND. Ph: +91 651 2243203, e-mail: juidcolimited@gmail.com

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

Martyrs of CISF on 09th February



CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of these brave-hearts. On this day, they laid down their lives at the altar of duty while fighting with LWE outfits. Their Courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to them for their noblest deeds.

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER Public Health Engineering Department Region Office Pratap Nagar, Dadabari, Kota (Rajasthan) Telephone No. 0744-2503651 Fax Number 0744-2501551 Email: rj_aceko@yahoo.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

UBN No. PHE 1920 wsob 07924 Online tenders are hereby invited on behalf of the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan for the following work on Single Responsibility Turnkey Basis (Design, Build, Operate & Maintain) from eligible enlisted "AA" class contractors of PHED, Rajasthan and meeting eligibility criteria.

2. GENERAL DETAIL OF WORKS: S.N., NIT No, 08/2019-20 1 Work Description EXECUTION OF THE WORK FOR CONVERSION OF P&T SCHEME TO PIPED SCHEME DANTA TEHSIL SHAHABAD DISTRICT BARAN INCLUDING DEFECT LIABILITY PERIOD OF 12 MONTHS AND O&M PERIOD OF 36 MONTHS

Table with 3 columns: S.N., NIT No, Description. Lists estimated cost, earnest money, and other tender details.

"SAVE WATER - SAVE LIFE" Sd/- Rakesh Kumar Additional Chief Engineer PHED, Region, Kota

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED 3rd FLOOR, RRDA BUILDING, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND. Ph: +91 651 2243203, e-mail: juidcolimited@gmail.com

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER E-Tender Notice No.: Com54-AMN-ROU-MC-20, dated 05.02.2020. Divisional Commercial Manager (TC & PA), Chakradharpur Division, S.E. Railway for and on behalf of the President of India invites tender for the following work: Name of Work: Integrated mechanized cleaning & upkeep of Rourkela Railway station premises for four years. Departmental Value: ₹ 6,02,27,936.78. Cost of Tender Form: ₹s. 10,000/- Earnest Money: ₹ 4,51,100/- Date & Time for Closing of tender: 27.02.2020 at 12.30 hrs. Website particulars: www.ireps.gov.in N.B: Manual tender will not be accepted. Contractor to submit online tender at www.ireps.gov.in (PR-1337)

JHARKHAND BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LTD (CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001702) ELECTRIC SUPPLY AREA, RANCHI Regd. Office: KUSAI COLONY, DORANDA, RANCHI Telephone: -0651-2490550/2490670 & Email: gm_rncjsb@yahoo.com https://www.jbvlvnl.co.in

Tender Cancellation Notice

Due to some unavoidable reasons NIT No. 165/PR/JBVL/19-20, 166/PR/JBVL/19-20, 167/PR/JBVL/19-20, 168/PR/JBVL/19-20, 169/PR/JBVL/19-20, 170/PR/JBVL/19-20, 171/PR/JBVL/19-20 and 172/PR/JBVL/2019-20 for the work of preventive & routine breakdown maintenance of 33/11 KV PSS and 33 LV lines at Electric supply Circle, Ranchi and preventive & routine breakdown Maintenance of 11 KV lines, 11/0.4 KV DSS, LT lines and Disposal of Fuse calls at different division under Electric Supply Circle, Ranchi under O&M Head is hereby cancelled.

वैद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते Sd/- General Manager-Cum-Chief Engineer Electric Supply Area, Ranchi PR No. 221178 PR 225034 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd.(19-20/D)

Jharkhand Bijli Vitran Nigam Limited (JBVNL) (CIN: U40108JH2013SGC001702) ELECTRIC SUPPLY AREA, RANCHI Regd. Office: KUSAI COLONY, DORANDA, RANCHI Telephone: -0651-2490550/2490670 & Email: gm_rncjsb@yahoo.com https://www.jbvlvnl.co.in

Tender Cancellation Notice

Due to some unavoidable reasons NIT No. 188/PR/JBVL/19-20 and 189/PR/JBVL/19-20, for the appointment of Service Agency for Engaging and Managing Urja Mitras (Meter Readers) for Operationalization of Android Based Smart Dedicated Handheld Device (with in Built Printer) photo spot Energy Billing and collection system under Electric Supply Circle, Ranchi and Gumla under O&M Head is hereby cancelled.

वैद्ययाऽमृतमश्नुते Sd/- General Manager-Cum-Chief Engineer Electric Supply Area, Ranchi PR No. 221242 PR 225036 (Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd) 19-20 (D)

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION, JAL "O" PARIMAL BHAWAN, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR - 751001, ODISHA Tel: 0674-2395734, Fax: 0674-2394946, e-mail: cerwssodisha@gmail.com

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) BID IDENTIFICATION NO. EIC/RWSS/47/2019-20 No. 1027 Date: 07.02.2020

- 1 The Engineer-In-Chief, RWSS, Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha invite tenders in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only for "Execution of Mega PWS Project to Badapada & Papermetla GPs including 5 years O&M under Chittrakonda Block of Malkangiri District, Odisha" on turn-key basis.
2 Nature of work : Execution of Mega PWS Project to Badapada & Papermetla GPs including 5 years O&M under Chittrakonda Block of Malkangiri District, Odisha" on turn-key basis.
3 Estimated Cost : Rs. 1686.35 lakhs.
4 Cost of Bid Document : Rs. 10,000/- (Non-refundable).
5 Class of Contractor : Super Class.
6 Availability of Bid Documents in the portal for Online Bidding : From 11:00 AM of 14.02.2020 to 5:00 PM of 16.03.2020.
7 Date of opening of Bid in Online : 2003.2020 at 11:00 AM
8 Name & address of officer inviting Bid : Engineer-in-Chief, RWSS Jal "O" Parimal Bhawan, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar, Ph: 0674-2395734/ 0674-2531533 e-mail: cerwssodisha@gmail.com
9 The bidders have to participate in ONLINE Bidding only for which the bidder must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class II or Class III. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal http://tendersorissa.gov.in



MEANWHILE



A man and his family members show up to vote before his wedding, at Shakarpur, Saturday. Anil Sharma

AAP tells volunteers to keep guard at EVM strong rooms

New Delhi: With exit polls predicting a comfortable majority for the Aam Aadmi Party, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal met I-PAC's Prashant Kishor and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh Saturday evening. Subsequently, a message was sent out to the party's volunteers to be on guard outside the strong rooms where the EVMs will be stored till counting day. Later, Singh and AAP Delhi in-charge Gopal Rai also put out short video clips alleging irregularities relating to the storing of the EVMs. ENS

Man dies of cardiac arrest at poll booth

New Delhi: Waiting to cast his vote in West Delhi's Hari Nagar, a 60-year-old man died after he suffered a cardiac arrest. The incident took place around 10 am. Police said the man was taken to DDU Hospital but was declared dead on arrival by doctors. Meanwhile, a polling officer died on duty at a polling station in Babarpur after complaining of heart problems, officials said. The officer, Udhham Singh, was a teacher, they said. ENS

Myanmar delegation gets hands-on poll experience

New Delhi: A Myanmarese delegation of senior officials Saturday got hands-on experience about the Indian electoral process as they observed the different phases of the high-stakes Delhi Assembly polls, the Delhi CEO said. PTI

Locked up

New Delhi: At Munirka, a young college student in his 20s locked his father inside the house, knowing he would be voting for the BJP, a decision not appreciated by him. He said he was inspired by his friend in Palam, who had done the same to his parents. ENS



Women click a selfie after casting their vote, Saturday. Tashi Tobgyal

VOTER TURNOUT IN OKHLA AT 58.83%

Shaheen Bagh takes a break, votes to make itself count

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE MICROPHONES had fallen quiet, the stage lay empty. There were no speeches, songs, sloganeering or poetry. The story of the 56th day of the marathon Shaheen Bagh protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) lay in its silence. And away from its now-iconic tent.

It was the lanes and bylanes of the neighbourhood, on the banks of the Yamuna, that pulsed with life on Saturday, as women and men, young and old, stepped out in large numbers to vote. The queues spilled out of the two polling centres in the area, housed in the Abul Kalam Azad Boys Public School and the Shaheen Public School.

Estimated voting percentage from the Okhla constituency, under which Shaheen Bagh falls, is 58.83% — a slight dip from 60.73% in the 2015 polls.

"Log poch rahe hain dharme ka koi asar pada ya nahi. The point is just like the protests, voting is our right," pointed out Shama Parveen, a local resident and a regular at the sit-in.

With the anti-CAA protests about to complete two months in the area, the concept of 'adhikar' (rights) dominates every other discussion at Shaheen Bagh, witness to endless sessions on citizenship and nationhood.

"You ask why more people are voting this time? I have a counter-question. Have you seen so many Muslims on the street before? When did you last see women occupying a

road?" said Jameela, when asked about the visibly large turnout.

Under the tent, occupied mostly by farmers from Punjab during the day, the organisers went around requesting people not to interact with the media and refrain from political discussions.

But politics flowed, inexorably, in the corner shops, outside showrooms with downed shutters, on the lanes leading to the polling centres, all under the hawk-eye vigil of a large contingent of security personnel.

Shaheen Bagh falls under the Okhla assembly constituency, one of the six minority-dominated seats in the national capital, where the Congress hoped to make inroads riding on the unrest against CAA and proposed NRC and AAP's "strategic silence".

Outside Shaheen Public School stood Anas Siddiqui, Naem Roshan and Fahad. While Siddiqui wore an AAP cap, Roshan and Fahad sported Congress tops. "Vote ektarfa hua hai. Amanatullah Khan (AAP) is set to register a huge victory. There is no split in Muslim votes. Aap dekh lena 11 tareekh ko," said Siddiqui (32), a civil contractor.

Roshan and Fahad's responses, however, were more telling. "No one can deny that Amanatullah Khan has delivered," Fahad (28), a software developer, said.

Roshan put up a mild resistance, only to concede that the AAP had a clear edge. "But power has gone to their (AAP's) head. This is why one needs some opposition presence," he said, pointing to how Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal avoided visiting Shaheen Bagh or the Jamia protests. "This is exactly what the BJP

wanted," retorted Siddiqui, echoing the argument made by the AAP chief himself in speeches and interviews over the last few weeks, justifying his absence.

At the polling centre inside Jamia Millia Islamia, where voting took time owing to limited number of EVMs, the views were no different, with families quietly walking in and out of the booths, having voted for "progress and development".

By afternoon, men in motorbikes could be seen going around the neighbourhood announcing that Amanatullah Khan is set to return "with a margin bigger than 2015", when he had defeated BJP's Braham Singh, his closest rival, by over 65,000 votes.

This time, the Congress fielded Parvez Hashmi while BJP repeated Singh. The voices on the ground, however, had made up their minds long before voting day.

"Humare liye toh Kejriwal hi hai. My child goes to the government school and I have seen work happening there. We are tenants but the impact of free water and power cannot be discounted. These things matter for the poor. And why will I not vote for someone who is better placed to defeat the BJP?" said Nazem (27), a homemaker, returning to the tent after getting inked.

As evening descended, the focus lights at the protest tent flickered back to life, the crowd grew in size. The locals bid goodbye to several batches of the Sikh farmers, who prepared to leave for Moga, their hometown.

But the stage remained unoccupied, the microphones silent. The voting centres were still occupied.

Education, jobs, safety for women — what first-timers voted for

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

SHRUTI MISHRA, a 19-year-old Delhi University student, has witnessed the Aam Aadmi Party's education pitch playing out in front of her as she is a product of a Delhi government school. With this experience in hand, the first-time voter cast her vote in Munirka Saturday. "The classes now have CCTVs, broken furniture is fixed immediately and schools are cleaner than before. These are important issues that matter," she said.

On Saturday, at least 1.11 lakh voters were added to the electoral rolls, including incumbent Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's son Pulkit, Congress leader Ajay Maken's son Aujaswi, and AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's son Raihan.

After casting his vote at a Civil Lines polling booth, Kejriwal tweeted a photo of his wife, son and parents with a caption: "Voted along with my family, including my first-time voter son. Urge all young voters to come out to vote. Your participation strengthens democracy."

While mobbed by cameramen, Raihan, who was flanked by his parents, said, "I have voted for development," while Maken's son Aujaswi said, "Ever since I got the voter's slip, I have been feeling excited. I have been telling everyone to come out and cast their vote, irrespective of which party they are going to vote for. It is our right and all must exercise it."

For Gen-Z, education reforms by AAP remained the number one issue this election. For Sana (20), who studies at DU's Zakir Hussain College, and Farheen (20), who has a clerical job at a private school, the changes at their alma maters in North East Delhi's Seemapuri are defining factors. "When we visit our schools now, we feel really good seeing the changes. The system is working, there is more discipline, teachers are more regular. We will vote on the basis of this," said Sana.

The government's CCTV push in colonies, as a measure to ensure "security and safety", too has found takers among first-time voters. Archie Kanojia, a Civil Lines resident, said, "I want a government that can provide a safe environment for women, better policing and more CCTVs."

Another first-time voter at a polling booth in East Delhi's Vishwas Nagar said, "There are no CCTVs in our colony despite the government introducing them across the city. That's because our incumbent MLA is from the BJP. There are a lot of snatching cases here and people have to invest their own money in safety. It's not fair."



Anil Sharma



(from top) Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's son Raihan; Ajay Maken's son Aujaswi; Civil Lines resident Archie Kanojia

The job market too made it to conversations among first-time voters. Suhail (21), who fixes cable wires for a living in North East Delhi's Brahmmpuri, said, "I am a labourer and will vote for those who provide relief to the poor. Gareebo ko bas thoda sukoon chahiye."

Deepak (21), another first-time voter from Kasturba Nagar, said, "Despite job promises, not much has been done, but the development work being carried out at the local level has given us hope."

At Jama Masjid, voters say stop 'Hindu-Muslim'

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

IN OLD Delhi, several people who have been silently protesting at Jama Masjid for over a month said they voted for "development".

Sitting on the stairs outside the mosque were Hadiq Bari (45), his wife Nazma (41) and their 11-year-old son, holding a placard that had a few lines from the Constitution. The family, which lives in Chitli Qabar, said they voted "in national interest".

"Jo mulq ke liye acha hai, jo sheher ke liye acha hai aur jo hamare ilaake ke liye acha hai, humne use vote diya hai. I come here every day after 4 pm and sit till 6 pm," said Nazma.

Vikas Kainjal, a resident of Kala Mahal, said, "Shaheen Bagh is not even an issue to discuss. Leaders should talk about unemployment and the economic slowdown. People are without jobs and leaders are busy talking Hindu-Muslim. We have voted for a government that will work towards development."

Several voters in Chandni Chowk constituency said they had education and healthcare on top of their minds when they voted. The fight in the constituency is a triangular one between sitting MLA Alka Lamba, who quit AAP to join Congress last year, Parlad Singh Sawhney, an AAP member who was previously with Congress, and



Hadiq Bari (45), his wife Nazma (41) and their 11-year-old son at the Jama Masjid protest, Saturday. Express

BJP's Suman Kumar Gupta. In the 2015 Assembly polls, Lamba had a vote share of 49.35%, BJP's Gupta bagged 24.79% votes, and Congress's Sawhney polled 24.07% votes.

Asked whether the issue around CAA and the proposed NRC played a role while voting, Farhid Sheikh (42) said, "Humne bijli-paani par vote diya hai. The elections are for Delhi."

Bitter end to bitter campaign as BJP keeps up attack, CM hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

EVEN AS the polls came to a close Saturday, there seemed to be no end to BJP's Shaheen Bagh pitch, with MP Parvesh Saheb Singh tweeting that if people have formed long queues in the locality and loudly proclaimed that they are voting for AAP, then the people of Delhi should also come out of their homes and vote for a nationalist party.

Sharing a video message, Singh said, "Today, media channels are saying the same thing I have been saying for a while. People at Shaheen Bagh, Jamia and Seelampur — of a particular community — are shouting that they will vote for AAP."

He alleged the AAP has been arranging biryani for Shaheen Bagh protesters, and as

a quid pro quo, they are voting for the party.

BJP's Model Town candidate Kapil Mishra tweeted if "they" can vote as one, so can "we".

Sharing a video of CM Arvind Kejriwal visiting the Hanuman temple on the eve of the polls, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari tweeted, "See the truth of political Hanuman bhakt Kejriwal, he took off his shoes and used the same hand to hurl a garland of flowers at God."

Kejriwal hit back, saying ever since he read the Hanuman Chalisa, BJP leaders had been making fun of him. "Yesterday, I went to the Hanuman temple. Today, a BJP leader says that because of me going there, the temple has become impure. What kind of politics is this? God is of everyone. May God bless everyone, even the people of BJP," he tweeted.

RSS functionary Ram Lal said those shouting "kagaz nahin dikhayenge" slogans would be defeated in the Assembly polls.



NOT TOO OLD TO VOTE

The city's oldest voter, 110-year-old Kalitara Mandal, at CR Park. Tashi Tobgyal

MANY SAY WATER SUPPLY HAS IMPROVED

Roads dug up, sewer lines a mess: Rural Delhi has development on mind

SHIVAM PATEL & ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE CENTRE of Bankner village in Narela constituency was bustling with activity around noon Saturday, with party members busy checking voter lists on stalls set along the side of the road as a crowd surrounded them. A few metres ahead, families and groups of women stepped out of a municipal school and a Delhi government school after voting.

"We are all labourers in my family. Netas come and go in the village and we keep making requests to them, but nothing changes here. Although everything is more or less fine, we need jobs. Our children are educated

but they are sitting at home," said Roshini (56) a resident of Bankner.

The problems faced by residents at this village is not too dissimilar to those in other rural belts in outer regions of North West Delhi. Most people in these areas said they voted keeping in mind these problems and for parties that will help solve them.

Sunil Locham (21) said, "Most roads in the village are either dug up or filled with pot-holes. There was a plan for a Metro line to reach here as well but it never took off. There are also no hospitals here, we go to Rohini or Jahangirpuri for treatment."

Water supply was an issue in Bankner until a few months ago, locals said, but has been solved now. Similarly in Ghevra village, which



falls under the Mundka constituency, piped water supply would come for half an hour every third day, but has become regular since August last year, said Poonam (37), a resident.

The big problem here, though, is that there is either an incomplete or improper sewage system. Lalit Rana (26) a resident said, "Sewage from the village goes to two ponds here, which is then transported somewhere else through a pipeline. But even then, we can see that there has been development. Our big problem with the water supply is now over."

At West Delhi's Najafgarh, Saturday. The constituency saw mixed support for AAP and BJP. Express

Villages in West Delhi's Najafgarh throw up a more complex picture and a mixed support base for both AAP and BJP, with the latter largely getting votes for national issues and the narrative put forward by its leaders on the anti-citizenship law protests.

Raj Kumar (64), a farmer from Dariyapur Khurd, said, "Kejriwal is doing a lot of work for the poor in health, education, water and electricity. When our crops were damaged by hail, the AAP government gave Rs 14,000 compensation."

In Dhansa village, Ram Kumar (55), who works in a printing press, said, "Najafgarh dam has not been built. No one has done any work here... The BJP has been raising important issues such as Shaheen Bagh, Jamia (protests)..."

Amid jobs debate, 3 BJP members, Cong MP push private member's Bills on unemployment allowance

HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

AMID A debate between the BJP and the Opposition over the intensity of economic slowdown and the situation on the jobs front, four MPs, three of them from BJP, are pushing private member's Bills on unemployment doles.

There were three such Bills in the previous Lok Sabha. These MPs have given notices for these to introduce their Bills in Lok Sabha. These were listed for introduction on Friday but could not be introduced since the House was adjourned before taking up private member's business.

While BJP's Gadchiroli-Chimur MP Ashok Mahadeorao Nete has piloted the Unemployment Allowance Bill, 2019, which seeks to provide an allowance to all unemployed people, the party's South Delhi MP Ramesh Bidhuri has pushed the Unemployed Post-Graduates Bill, 2019, demanding financial assistance for unemployed postgrad-

uates. BJP's Jalgaon MP, Unmesh Bhaiyyasaheb Patil, has piloted a Bill aimed at creating gainful employment opportunities and payment of unemployment allowance. The Unemployed Youth (Allowance and Employment Opportunities) Bill, 2019, was also listed to be introduced. Congress member from Tiruchirappalli, Su Thirunavukkarasari, has also demanded doles for unemployed youths through his own Unemployment Allowance Bill, which proposes allowance until gainful employment is provided to those eligible.

Nete told The Sunday Express, "Those who are educated, unemployed and have not got permanent employment - those wandering and going on the wrong path - such educated unemployed youths should be given a stipend of Rs 3,000 per month till they get permanent employment."

EXPLAINED Private member's Bill rarely made law THESE BILLS are ways for MPs to draw attention to an issue, but they rarely become law. Only 14 private member's Bills have become laws since Independence. The last time a private member's Bill was passed by Parliament was in 1970.

Rajinikanth set to launch party in April

PMK likely to join alliance, 'talks on' with some other leaders

ARUN JANARDHANAN CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 8



Rajinikanth

Asked about his Bill in December last year, Bidhuri had said unemployment had existed for the last 30-40 years and unemployed youths should get a monthly amount of Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000 so that they do not become a burden on their families.

While Satav had demanded payment of unemployment allowance till gainful employment was provided, Dube's Bill aims at eradication of unemployment among youths by granting right to work to every eligible youth and payment of unemployment allowance who lost their jobs.

SHIVAJI RAO Gaekwad, alias Rajinikanth, 69, waited 22 years to announce his entry into politics after giving a call against then Chief Minister Jayalalitha in 1996. And more than two years after he made that announcement on December 31, 2017, top players in Rajini Makkal Mandram, an outfit launched by the actor, and his close aides confirm that the party will be launched in April.

While the name has not been announced, a top office-bearer of Rajini Makkal Mandram said the launch could be any time after April 14. Many believe Rajinikanth leans towards the BJP politically and is influenced by Chennai-based RSS leader S Gurumurthy. Tamiluruvi Manian is believed to play the role of a political strategist and mentor for the actor in routine affairs.

Manian, who is holding talks with some leaders from other parties, refused to reveal names but said PMK, an ally of AIADMK and NDA in Tamil Nadu, will be with Rajinikanth, and that "more parties are waiting". "There will be a rainbow alliance - like the one I had built for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls for NDA with the support of PMK, Vijayakanth's DMDK and Vaiko's MDMK, which bagged nearly 19 per cent votes," he said.

BJP leader felicitates cab driver who took poet to police on 'suspicion'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

MUMBAI BJP chief Mangal Prabhat Lodha Saturday felicitated an Uber driver for being an "alert citizen" and taking a passenger to a police station after he overheard a phone conversation about the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests.

"He (Singh) did the duty of being an alert citizen. Uber did wrong by barring him from driving the cab," Lodha said. Uber driver Rohit Singh had drove Jaipur poet-activist Bappaditya Sarkar to the Santacruz police station on February 5 night and accused him of "talking about burning the country", identifying himself as a "communist", and saying that "he will make the entire country a Shaheen Bagh". Sarkar was questioned by police for over two hours before being "asked to go" as there was no cognizable offence.

Must work for empowering Hindus to work in India, says Bhaiyyaji Joshi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PANAJI, FEBRUARY 8

RSS GENERAL secretary Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi on Saturday said that anyone who wants to work in India will have to work for empowering Hindus, as India and Hindus are not different. Speaking at Vishwaguru Bharat, a two-day RSS conclave, Joshi said, "We have been witness to this civilisation, this civilisation which is over 1,000 years old, to the rise and fall of India. If India is still living, the reason is Hindus. India cannot be separated from Hindus. At the core of this nation is Hindus, and whoever wants to work in this country, he will work in the Hindu community."

He said India has always been spoken of becoming a superpower by 2020. Over the years, he said this was a belief and a much-awaited event mostly spread through word-of-mouth by believers. "I equate the word Power with Rajya (nation). If one doesn't even have Bharat in their imagination or behaviour then how are we to become a superpower?" he said. Joshi stressed on the "idea of Bharat" and also evoked the writings of Max Muller and Allama Iqbal, saying, "They wrote about the idea of India in their works and it is apt to read them again today."

DRAFT NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH IRRIGATION CUM PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT TENDER NOTICE

Telephone No.: 0177-2620591 E-mail: kasumptidivision@gmail.com Fax No.: 0177-2620591 Website: https://hptenders.gov.in

Online bids on item rate/Lump sum basis are invited by the Executive Engineer, I&PH Division No-1 Shimla-9, (Himachal Pradesh) on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, in electronic tendering system in three covers for the under mentioned work for the contractors/firms of appropriate class enlisted with Himachal Pradesh I&PH Department, Central/ State Govt. Departments or Govt. undertakings.

Name of Work: Providing water from SainjKhad to leftout villages/ Panchayats viz. Shakrah, Devnagar, Okhroo, Totu, Chailli etc. in Tehsil and Distt. Shimla. HP. (SH: C/O RCC Storage tank KheelChoura 95000 ltrs.cap. at Node No.2, Storage tank at Banooti 460000 ltrs.cap.Node No.8, Storage tank at Kaihathi 150000 ltrs.cap.at Node.No.38/1, Storage tank Ghandal 100000 ltrs.cap. at Node No.16, Storage tank at Bashol 10000 ltrs. cap. at Node No.20, Storage tank at 16 Mile 30000 ltrs. cap. at Node No.124/2, Storage tank at Sanog 50000 ltrs. cap. at Node No.44/2, Storage tank at Makridhar 30000 ltrs.cap. at Node No.13/2, Storage tank at Tangish 10000 ltrs. cap.at Node No.139/3, Storage tank 25000 ltrs. cap. at Sub-Divisional Office at Ghanahatti at Node No.53, Providing laying and jointing of distribution system of various dia in trenches complete, Providing& Installation of house hold tap connection, Providing and laying of Rising Main and S/E of pumping machineries)

Estimated Cost : Rs. 15,73,99,996/- Earnest Money : Rs. 5,00,000/- Cost of Tender document : Rs. 2,500/- Time Limit : 18 Months.

Schedule of tendering :-

Table with 2 columns: Item No. and Description. Rows include Site Visit, Pre Bid Meeting date, Bid Submission start date, Bid Submission end date, Tender documents, Opening of Eligibility criteria, Opening of Technical Bid, Opening of Financial bid.

Terms & Conditions:- (1) The e-tender documents shall be uploaded online in three covers: Cover-1 shall contain scanned copies of "eligibility information" Cover-2 shall contain "Technical Bid" on the prescribed form. Cover-3 shall contain "Financial Bid" on prescribed form PART-I

1. For works equal to or above INR 2.00 crore as per followings:- (i) Average Annual financial turn over during the last 3 years ending 31st March of the previous financial year, should be at least 30% of the estimated cost.

(ii) Experience of having successfully completed/commissioned similar works during last 7 years ending last day of the month previous to the one in which application are invited should be either of the following; (a) Three similar completed/commissioned works costing not less than the amount equal to 40% of the estimated cost.

(b) Two similar completed/commissioned works costing not less than the amount equal to 50% of the estimated cost. OR (c) One similar completed/commissioned works costing not less than the amount equal to 80% of the estimated cost. 2. Definition of "Similar works" shall be as under:- (a) In case integrated/composite projects similar work means "water related project" which include at least two of the following components. (i) Head works / percolation well/tube well (ii) Pumping system including all electric and mechanical components (iii) Water treatment plant (iv) Piping work or water conveyance system/drainage system (v) Water storage/ retaining structures.

(b) In case of non-integrated projects with only one or more than one of the components, listed in (a) above the similar work should be defined as per the nature of the components of the project by the NIT approving authority. (c) For irrigation schemes the water treatment plant ((a) iii above) shall be substituted by pre setting tank / desludging tank. 3. Requirements of the experience certificate : To demonstrate experience of the similar work as per eligibility criteria, the bidder/contractor shall submit the certificate of completion or commissioning of project/work (completed work should not be less than 90%) As the case may be, issued by any officer not below than rank of Executive Engineer. The tender inviting authority may also asked for the award letters or related agreements to corroborate the experience certificate submitted by the bidder/ contractor. (vii) Joint venture is not allowed.

(A) Cover-2: (i) "Technical Bid" containing scanned copy of Pump Characteristics curves inpdf format indicating Horse Power required at duty point, +10% and -15% of total head, Pump efficiency and power consumed duly signed by the authorized person for all stages. The technical bid will be evaluated before the approval of tender by the competent authority and only most suitable pump shall be considered for the approval. In this folder the contractor shall give specification & make, model and capacity or rating etc., of pump set and accessories offered, but only of those mentioned in BOQ. No rates shall be entered there. (ii) Plan and flow diagram of WTP as per site conditions.

PART-III Cover-3 shall contain financial bid which will be opened at a later date to be notified separately. 2. The Contractor will have to submit the proof of registration EPF under Employees Provident & Miscellaneous Provision Act., 1952 within one month after acceptance of tender by competent authority and before award of work. Failure to observe this condition shall render the tender of the contractor liable to summary rejection.

3. In case, tender opening day is a holiday, the tenders shall be opened on next working day at the same time. 4. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days. 5. Any queries/clarifications regarding tender can be obtained on e-mail of the Executive Engineer under e-mail address i.ekasumptidivision@gmail.com

6. No additional condition should be inserted with the BOQ. Conditional BOQ shall be rejected and the tender shall not be considered. Executive Engineer I&PH Division, No-1, Shimla. 171 009. 4593/H.P.

Classifieds

- PERSONAL I, AVDRESH KUMAR SHARMA S/O Shri Hem Chand Sharma, R/o 1449/132, 3rd floor, B-Block, Durga Puri, Delhi-110093, have changed my name for all future purposes. 0040531100-2 I, Manish Rawat S/O Hoshiyer Singh R/o D-2/104 Shiv Durga Vihar Lakkarapur, Surajkund Faridabad, Haryana-121009. my father's name has been wrongly written in Central Board of Secondary Examination 2011-13 (10th Certificate) as Hs Rawat instead of Hoshiyer Singh. My Father's correct name is Hoshiyer Singh. 0040530964-8 I, Ashima Shanker D/o Suresh Kumar Gupta W/o Vinay Shanker R/o C 101 Pushpanjali Delhi Shankarpur East Delhi, Delhi 110092, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ashima Shanker. 0070697260-1 I, Babalpreet Singh S/o Gurmukh Singh R/o V.P.O Haripur Khalsa Phillaur Jalandhar Punjab-144410, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Babalpreet Singh Bath. 0070697262-1 I, Reetika Khanna, R/o H.No-3933, street-hospital wali, Urdu Bazar, jama Masjid, Delhi-110006, have changed my minor daughter's name AYRA JAVED to AYRA KHANNA Dob is 03-12-2014 vide affidavit dated 29-01-2020 for all future purposes. 0050162129-1 I, Kamar Singh Gumbra S/o Sh. Amar Singh R/o 46/C/3, Railway Colony, Chhoti More Sarai, Chandni Chowk, Delhi-110006 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Kamal Singh Gumbra for all purpose. 0070697336-1 I, Indu Bala D/o Surain Charles W/o Ashok Kumar Gupta R/o 5, Triveni Appts, West Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi 110034, have changed my name to Indu Bala Gupta I 0070697321-1 I, Drishiti Puliani D/o Sh. Mahesh Puliani, Zone H.No.31, Suvudha Kunj, Zone H/5, Pitampura, North West Delhi - 110034, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Noor Puliani. 0070697325-1 I, Dablu Kumar Singh S/o Mani Mohan Singh R/o Village-Ramnagar kurmipara, Post Office- Mihijam, PS- Mihijam, Dist-Jamtar, Jharkhand- 815354, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Dinesh Kumar Singh. 0070697261-1 I, Ashok Kumar Bawa S/o Diwan Chand Bawa R/o B-81, Galaxy Apartments, Sector-43, Gurugram, Haryana-122009, have changed my name to Ashok Bawa for all, future purposes. 0040531100-1 I, Suresh Singh Bisht S/O Chander Singh Bisht, R/O-RZA-279, Gali No.6, Jai Vihar Ph-1, Najafgarh-Nanglo Road, ND-43, Have Changed My Name To Suresh Kumar, For All Purposes. 0040530989-3 I, Tanzeela Qureshi D/o Ishaque Qureshi W/o Najib Mahfouz Muneem R/o Flat No.12, Pocket-E, Mayur Vihar Phase 2, Delhi - 110091, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Tanzeela Najib Muneem. 0070697263-1 I, Vishwajeet Kumar S/O Ramanuj Prasad R/o 203, Tower-15, Exotica Dreamville, Plot No.01/A, Sector-16C, 0040531087-1 I, Sriyata Nair R/o 1043/D, B-6, Choice Apartments Ward No:8, Mehrauli, New Delhi - 110030 have changed my name to N. Sriyata Nair (Nethiyan Sriyata Nair) 0040531099-1 I, Adarsh Rishiraj D/o Diwan Chand Bawa R/o B-81, Galaxy Apartments, Sector-43, Gurugram, Haryana-122009, have changed my name to Adarsh Bawa for all, future purposes.

MATRIMONIAL B. Some fair khatribos 5'11/ 30Y/ 22Lac /BTECH/MBA- Finance/working as AVP financial sector Mumbai- cast-nobar @9837068577 0050161380-1 SIKH/PUNJABI Punjabi: Suitable match for 1989 born 6'2" clean shave Sikh Boy. Completed B-Tech in Pune and M.S in Germany. Presently working in Germany (PR available), Ph: 8788095850, +91-7672655959 0050161941-1 OTHERS Wanted Saini Sikh match for Oct.93 born, 5'-3", M.Tech(CSE) girl, from Chandigarh. Mobile: 7889142639 0050161841-1 SM4 V. Fair b'ful NM, 5'3"-72-83 9:30 PM, Giddarbaha (Punjab), M. Phil, Govt. Teacher, 8LPA Delhi bsd b'ness family WA 9711970600 chhabra4marriage@gmail.com 0040529863-1 PUBLIC NOTICE

WESTERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice (SURVEY & CONSTRUCTION) TRANSPORTATION OF P.WAY MATERIAL

Table with 5 columns: S.No, Particulars, Date of Issue, Cost of tender form, EMD, Last date of Submission of tender form.

1. The tender document can be purchased only online from above web site after making online payment. 2. Approx cost Rs.25 crore. Any change in the tender will be uploaded in www.mptenders.gov.in and www.mpdah.gov.in

G-22662/2020 एक अच्छा इंसान हर संजीव की मित्र होता है - रूपडिपिता महाका यधी

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, ALIGARH CIRCLE, P.W.D., ALIGARH

Very Short Term Notice inviting E-Tender

Table with 11 columns: Sl. No, District, Name of work, Estimated cost, Bid security, Cost of document, Time of completion, Address of Executive Engineer, Address of Superintending Engineer, Address of Chief Engineer, Category of Contractor.

2. Time allowed for completion is including Rainy Season. 3. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website http://tender.up.nic.in from 08-02-2020 to 15-02-2020 till 12.00 PM. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of http://tender.up.nic.in on or before 12:00 PM on 15-02-2020. Technical Bid received online will be opened on 17-02-2020 at 12:00 PM

4. The prospective bidders who do not possess Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) must get the same issued from approved agencies before submission of bids. 5. Contractor should Quote their rates without G.S.T. which shall be paid extra as per applicable at the time of payment. Sd/ (Sudhir Kumar) Executive Engineer Provincial Division, P.W.D., Kasganj Sd/ (R. K. Mishra) SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ALIGARH CIRCLE, P.W.D., ALIGARH

UPID-148625 DATE- 07/02/2020 WWW.UPGGOV.NIC.IN

15 students stranded in China reach Kochi

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
FEBRUARY 8

FIFTEEN KERALA STUDENTS, who were stranded in China in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak, reached Kochi on Friday midnight. None of them have shown any symptoms of the infection, and have been allowed to return home after their samples were collected.

Ernakulam District Collector A Suhas said the decision to send the students home was taken as they did not show any symptoms. However, they would be under observation at home for the next 28 days. The students as well as their parents were briefed about the situation.

The students, from Dali University in China's Yunnan province, were to take a flight from Kunming airport to Singapore, from where they were to fly to Thiruvananthapuram. However,

due to the coronavirus outbreak, the students were not allowed to fly to Singapore, leaving them stranded at Kunming airport.

They could also not go back to Dali University.

Later, following the intervention of the Indian Embassy, the students managed to fly to Bangkok, Thailand, and later to Kochi. On reaching Kochi airport, they were shifted to five sterilised ambulances, which transited them to a medical college.

As on Saturday evening, 3,144 persons in Kerala with recent travel history from China are under observation, including 45 in isolation at hospitals.

An official communication from the state Health Department said 330 samples have been sent to National Institute of Virology, Pune, for testing, of which 288 have reported negative for the virus. Of 70 persons who returned from Wuhan, the test results have been negative for 66 and one result is pending.

Call for women to assemble at Lucknow protest site today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 8

THE WOMEN agitators at the Ghanta Ghar in old Lucknow have given a call for women across the state to assemble in Lucknow on Sunday in protest against the CAA, NRC and NPR.

The Ghanta Ghar Coordination Committee, which is one of the main organisers of the sit-in, on Friday held a press conference and gave a call for women from different districts to assemble on Sunday. "It is not a march. We have asked women from across the state to come for the protest on Sunday which is also Ravidas Jayanti. There will be no march... It will be similar to how we have been protesting till now which has been peaceful," said Erum Rizvi, a homemaker who is part of the committee.

However, there seemed to be a rift among the groups participating in the women-led indefinite sit-in, which began on January 17, as it entered Day 22 on Saturday, with a section of protesters and another committee not supporting the call for Sunday.

Sumaiyya Rana, who is the daughter of poet Munnawar Rana, and has been booked for rioting and other charges after the sit-in, said that she will not take part in the protest on Sunday. "How can we call others when the police and administration have not assisted us in any way? If we make such a call, then a situation may arise and anything can happen like on December 19," said Rana, who is part of the Ghanta Ghar Steering Committee. "Some women are conspiring so that the protest ends," she said.

DCP (West) Arun Kumar Srivastava said police have been deployed to keep the situation under control.

Punjab: 2 dead, 11 injured as crackers go off during religious procession

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
TARN TARAN, FEBRUARY 8

TWO PEOPLE died and at least 11 were injured on Saturday following a blast in explosive material being used for celebratory fireworks during a religious procession in Punjab's Tarn Taran district.

During 'nagar kirtan' (religious procession) near Pahuwind village of Tarn Taran, crackers were being burst by people, the police said. The explosion is suspected to have taken place when sparks from the crackers landed on a tractor-trolley where the fireworks were stacked, officials said.

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has ordered a magisterial probe into the incident.

Tarn Taran Deputy Commissioner Pardeep Sabharwal said, "Two deaths have been confirmed so far. Eleven persons are injured. All the injured people have been ad-



The incident took place near Pahuwind village of Tarn Taran.

mitted at the civil hospital and Guru Nanak Super Specialty Hospital (both in Tarn Taran)."

The deceased were identified as Gurpreet Singh (12) and Manpreet Singh (18). Both were from Pahuwind village in Tarn Taran.

Gurkirat Singh (16),

Gursimran Singh, Gumoor Singh (17), Harnoor Singh (15), Niravdeep Singh (18) — all from Pahuwind village — Ajay Pal Singh of Mari Udhoke, Gursharan Singh Mari Megha, Dawinderbir Singh and Sarabjot Singh of Palasaur and Anmolpreet Singh and Paramjot Singh of

Bhikhiwind were among the injured, the police said.

The religious procession was planned as part of the martyrdom day of Baba Deep Singh. It was suspended after the blast.

The police have registered a case against unidentified persons under Explosives Act.

Deputy SP Iqbal Singh said: "There were explosive material (fireworks) in the mini-trolley, which was being towed by a tractor. Many youngsters and children were sitting on the trolley and the tractor. Somehow the explosive material caught fire and exploded. Two of them (sitting in the tractor-trolley) died on the spot. The others were rushed to hospital. All the injured are out of danger."

DSP Singh said police have collected samples of the explosives and sent it for investigation. "The explosive material is suspected to be potassium. We will check whether it was acquired legally," he said.

J&K ex-minister booked under PSA, 2 NC leaders freed

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 8

ADAY after four senior leaders, including two former Chief Ministers, were booked under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA), the J&K administration on Saturday slapped the PSA against another top mainstream political leader.

The administration also released two National Conference leaders from detention.

PDP leader and former minister Naem Akhtar was on Saturday shifted to a house in the high-security Gupkar neighbourhood of Srinagar after being booked under PSA. A close confidant of PDP president and former CM Mehbooba Mufti, Akhtar was arrested on August 5, on the day Jammu and Kashmir's special status was revoked and the state bifurcated into Union Territories.

A heart patient, Akhtar was lodged in Srinagar's MLA hostel along with several other mainstream political leaders. He is the fifth mainstream politician to be booked under the Public Safety Act in the last two days. Akhtar was earlier under preventive detention. "Yes, he (Akhtar) has been booked under PSA," a senior police officer told *The Sunday Express*. "He has been shifted from the MLA hostel and has been lodged in a bungalow at Gupkar."

Meanwhile, the J&K administration released two National Conference leaders after six



Senior PDP leader Naem Akhtar

months. Former legislator and senior National Conference leader Mubarak Gul and former CM Omar Abdullah's political advisor Tanveer Sadiq were released from the MLA hostel on Saturday.

Only six mainstream political leaders are now lodged in Srinagar's MLA hostel. These include bureaucrat-turned-politician Shah Faesal, who was detained at the New Delhi airport when he was going abroad. He was instead sent to Srinagar where he was arrested.

The administration on Thursday booked former CMs Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah under the PSA. Two senior political leaders — National Conference General Secretary Ali Mohammad Sagor and PDP's senior leader and Mufti's uncle Sartaj Madni — were also booked under the law.

Akhtar has been shifted to the same house at Gupkar where Sagor and Madni have been lodged.

Gujarat: Probe into Pak tag on birth certificate

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 8

THE AHMEDABAD Municipal Corporation (AMC) has initiated an inquiry into the issuance of a birth certificate where the address of the newborn's parents who live in Vatva area is mentioned as "Pakistan railway crossing".

Issued on October 8, 2018 for the baby who was born on October 1, 2018 at AMC-run VS Hospital, the certificate mentions 'Pakistan railway crossing' as the address for both the certificate holder and his parents.

The parents alleged that they have been making futile attempts to get it corrected. "We got the birth certificate when my daughter-in-law was discharged from the hospital. We did not notice the error at that time... we

have been trying to get it corrected but have not been able to," said the baby's grandfather.

On Saturday, the matter was brought to the notice of Congress Behrampura corporator Badruddin Shaikh. "It is surprising that the doctor, who had signed the certificate, issued it before even looking at it. The officials must know that there is no area called Pakistan in Ahmedabad. The officials responsible for the error should be suspended," said Shaikh.

Dr Bhavin Joshi, additional medical officer health, said, "We are trying to find out who is responsible for the error." He said the medical superintendent (MS) of VS hospital, Dr Manish Patel, has been asked to head the inquiry. Joshi denied allegations that the authorities were not rectifying the error.

300 BOOKED Notice to 50 women protesters in Mumbai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

SINCE WEDNESDAY, the police have issued notices to around 50 anti-CAA protesters at the women-led sit-in at Nagpada under sections 111 (magistrate order against any person who is likely to commit a breach of peace) and 149 (illegal assembly) of the CrPc.

The police said the notices have been issued to warn the protesters not to disrupt peace and harmony. It says if they fail to oblige, they may be arrested.

This comes a day after the police booked 300 women participating in the indefinite protest since January 26 against the CAA, the NRC and the NPR.

On Friday, an FIR was lodged

by the Nagpada Police against the protesters after the BMC allegedly complained that it was unable to carry out repairs on Morland Road due to the protest. The protesters have been booked under Section 431 (mischief by injury to public road, bridge, river or channel) of the IPC and Mumbai Municipal Corporation Act, 1888.

On Saturday, the crowd had thinned at the site. Ruhi Ansari, a protester, said despite the police attempting to make them leave, many women have refused to move. Farishtey Ansari, another protester, said the police threatened her to either sign the notice or get detained.

DCP Abhinash Kumar said, "Some women have refused to take the notice, we will take further legal action against them..."



SCUFFLE OVER CAA AT BOOK FAIR

Five people were detained at the International Kolkata Book Fair on Saturday. A scuffle broke out between anti-CAA protesters and BJP supporters when party leader Rahul Sinha visited some of the stalls. Members of Left-backed student outfits, including AISA and SFI, and activists supported Sinha and raised slogans against CAA and NRC. Partha Paul

BJP Muslim councillor quits over CAA

Bhopal: The BJP's only councillor in the party-ruled Indore Municipal Corporation, Usman Patel, on Saturday resigned from primary membership of the party over the CAA, calling it discriminatory against one community.

Patel was elected from Muslim-dominated Khajrana ward for the second time on the BJP's symbol. Accusing the party of practicing politics of hatred, he said the CAA and NRC are against the Constitution and the Muslim community.

Patel said he had joined the saffron party inspired by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but the party has "changed its values — it (now) practices politics of hatred."

Hundreds of members of the BJP's minority cell have resigned over last few weeks. **ENS**

Goa Archbishop: NRC will victimise underprivileged, CAA against secular fabric

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, FEBRUARY 8

GOA Archbishop Filipe Néri Ferrão has asked the government to abstain from implementing the "divisive and discriminatory" NRC as it will "result in direct victimisation of the underprivileged classes" and create a vacuum with citizens becoming stateless. Ferrão asked the government to "listen to the voice of millions in India, to stop quashing the right to dissent and, above all, to immediately and unconditionally revoke the CAA and desist from implementing the NRC and the NPR."

"The very fact that the CAA uses religion goes against the

secular fabric of the country. It goes against the spirit and heritage of our land which, since times immemorial, has been a welcoming home to all, founded on the belief that the whole world is one big family. Such exercises will result in a direct victimisation of the underprivileged classes, particularly the Dalits, the Adivasis, the migrant labourers, the nomadic communities and the countless undocumented people, who, after having been recognised as worthy citizens and voters for more than 70 years in this great nation, will suddenly run the risk of becoming stateless and candidates for detention camps in their teeming millions," Ferrão said in a statement issued by the Church.

Police question 2 journalists over JKLF statement

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 8

J&K POLICE have summoned for questioning two journalists for publishing and circulating a statement of the banned Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) which called for a shutdown in the Valley on February 9 and 11.

Naseer Ahmad Ganie, who works for the *Outlook* magazine and Haroon Nabi, who works for local news gathering agency CNS, were called for questioning on Saturday.

While Nabiseer's organisation had published the statement, Nabi said that he posted about the strike call on a CNS WhatsApp group. JKLF had sent a statement to media houses in the Valley.

While February 9 marks the anniversary of the hanging of Afzal Guru, February 11 is the anniversary of the hanging of JKLF founder Maqbool Bhat.

Nabi said he was asked by the

police about the source of the message. "I had copied the same (details about the strike) after it was posted by a journalist. They asked me about the source and from where I got it," he said.

A group of senior journalists, including representatives of the Kashmir Press Club, met Kashmir IGP Vijay Kumar over the issue on Saturday evening. KPC said such "summoning of journalists" has become routine. "It is definitely harassment. On and off, journalists have been summoned by the police for their stories," said KPC general secretary Ishfaq Tantry.

"There was no harassment but a journalist was called for questioning. I cannot talk over the phone. If you have interest, you can come to meet me in my office," IGP Kumar said before disconnecting the call.

In a statement on Saturday, J&K Police said that they have registered a case against JKLF for "attempts to incite violence and disturb law and order situation in the Valley."

1st National Camp of Tribal & Folk Painters

10 to 15 February, 2020

Netarhat, Latehar, Jharkhand

Painting is a primitive art that was evolved by humans to express their emotions through cave paintings. Originated in the walls of caves, this art expressed itself through paintings on earthwall, clothes and then on to canvas.

Aloof from the splendid world of contemporary modern painting, tribals and folk artists from Kerala to Himachal Pradesh from times immemorial have adorned the landscape of this country through the colorful manifestation of their surroundings in their paintings.

In the very first of its kind, tribals and folk artists from across the country will assemble at Netarhat, popularly known as 'The Queen of Hills' from 10th to 15th of February 2020 to showcase their art under the auspices of Dr. Ramdayal Munda Tribal Welfare Research Institute, Government of Jharkhand. It is going to be a maiden event, in which artists of various forms of paintings like Mural of Kerala, Pithora of Gujarat, Phad of Rajasthan, Shaura of Odisha, Tanaka of Laddakh, Kangra art and Pahari of Himachal Pradesh, Pattachitra of Bengal, Madhubani of Bihar, painting art forms of Tamilnadu, Karnataka will get a fortunate opportunity to interact with those of Sohrai, Kohbar, Jadopatiya, Patkar, etc. of Jharkhand. It is bound to be a historical and unprecedented event.

Please come and drench yourselves in the magic of colors in the backdrop of Queen of hills, Netarhat, Jharkhand and grace the occasion with your kind presence.

with the collaboration of:

Directorate of Tourism and Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.
Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Jharkhand

Organizer:

Dr. Ramdayal Munda Tribal Welfare Research Institute
Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Minority and Backward Class Welfare Department.
Government of Jharkhand

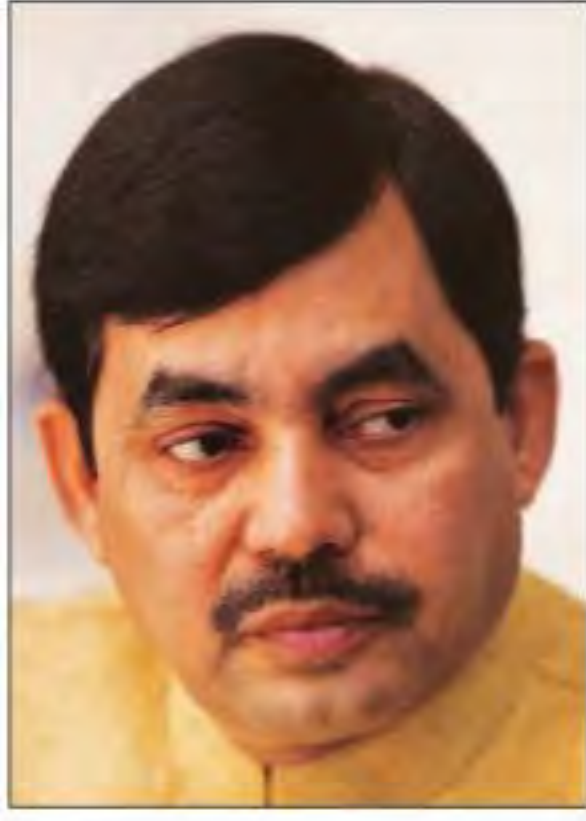
Directorate of Tourism and Jharkhand Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.
Department of Tourism, Art Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Jharkhand

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Sd/- 31/01/2020
DIG (Adm) Dte.

dayp 1911/11/0471/1920

“The PM said dress (of protesters), how is that Hindu-Muslim?... He meant to say those behind violence, they cover, wear masks... A perception has been created that BJP only has a Shahnawaz, Naqvi”



WHY SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN

The national spokesperson of the BJP, Syed Shahnawaz Hussain has been its rare Muslim voice for a long time, explaining and defending the party's positions on issues. His defence of the party's ideological issues has often drawn attention. As the Modi-led government attempts to allay fears and apprehension over the controversial

Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Hussain is playing a key role in the BJP's outreach to the minority community. A former Union minister — he was one of the youngest in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee cabinet — Hussain would play a role as the BJP begins preparations for the crucial Assembly elections in Bihar, due later this year



“The word secularism has affected Muslims the most. In the name of secularism, people change parties. They say they are leaving the BJP because secularism is in danger. When it suits them, they return to the fold”

SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN: There is a protest on at Shaheen Bagh, behind it are *Asif bhai* (Asif Mollah Khan), *Amanatullah bhai* (AAP Okhla candidate Amanatullah Khan), *Arvind bhai* (Arvind Kejriwal), *Rahul bhai* (Rahul Gandhi)... We have been saying since the beginning that the Citizenship (Amendment) Act won't take away anyone's citizenship, but give citizenship to minorities being persecuted in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. I am ready to concede that we never anticipated that this issue could even lead to an agitation... However, wherever agitation is happening, it is being led by people who could not defeat Narendra Modi in elections, or make him unpopular... Yes, the NRC (National Register of Citizens) was held in Assam as per the Assam Accord, but if a Bangladeshi goes to another state, it still remains essential to identify him or her... Rumours are being spread about citizenship being taken away. When the Prime Minister said from Ramlila Maidan (Delhi) that those Muslims whose ancestors were born here have nothing to fear, the matter should have ended there... I have placed what is happening before the PM, Home Minister, senior BJP leaders, and we are trying to counter the misconception...

The situation for Muslims in the country is very good. In fact, I would say, India is the best country for Muslims in the world. I keep repeating that for Indian Muslims, *Bharat se achha desh, Hindu se achha dost, aur Narendra Modi se achha neta nahin mil sakta* (there is no better country than India, no better friend than a Hindu, and no better leader than Modi).

LIZ MATHEW: How much do you think Shaheen Bagh helped the BJP in the Delhi polls?

You should ask those who organised the protest, who hoped to gain from it. The protest has nothing to do with me or my party. They first got the people to sit there, organised them, and then stayed behind the scene. It is the AAP and Congress's doing. A local issue has been made into a national and international issue. Asif Khan and Amanatullah Khan have done this just to win the Okhla seat (which covers Shaheen Bagh)... What do we tell the protesters? Amit Shahji clearly explained the matter to the Congress's lawyer leaders like P Chidambaram, Kapil Sibal in Parliament...

LIZ MATHEW: So you think the concerns of Shaheen Bagh protesters have no substance?

Not at all. In Parliament, both those in favour and those opposed to the Act participated in discussions. Amit Shahji gave explanation for each and every line. The Congress itself says in Parliament that its government sent back 71,000 Bangladeshis, and then taunts us, asking how many have we sent back. This law does not apply to the 130 crore Indians, it only fulfils Mahatma Gandhi's promise, what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jawaharlal Nehru had said. It was also a part of the Nehru-Liaquat pact (the 1950 pact between India and Pakistan over refugees). We included Afghanistan in the CAA because earlier a lot of people came from there... More than 500 Muslims who came from Pakistan have been given citizenship by the Modi government. The Citizenship Act, 1955, exists anyway. We give citizenship under it, whether it is to someone who is married in Pakistan or asks for it, be it Adnan Sami, Salma Agha... Fear is being spread among Muslims, that they have to prove their citizenship, that they would be sent to detention centres. *Darane ki zaroorat nahin hai, na darne ki zaroorat hai* (there is no need to spread such fear, neither is there any reason to fear)... Who is asking for documents? People who are literate have resources and the papers already. Those who don't, they already get gas cylinder, Ayushman Bharat benefits, widow pension.

LIZ MATHEW: But how do you explain the speeches of BJP leaders throughout the Delhi poll campaign, pitting the contest as that between those who back Shaheen Bagh and those who back, for example, surgical strikes, and slogans like 'shoot the traitors'?

That is why I keep referring to the PM's reassurance to Indian Muslims. The Home Minister (Amit Shah) said in Bengaluru and Lucknow that India is as much of the country's Muslims as it is his. There is less discussion about such things... On the other hand, slogans like *'Desh ke gaddaron ko'* — I only heard Anurag Thakur (MoS, Finance) saying this part, he didn't say *goli or maaro*...

LIZ MATHEW: Earlier, the slogan was raised by BJP candidate Kapil Mishra.

I am part of the BJP Central Election Committee, which has 10 members. I sit with them for hours. I have full confidence

‘No talk in party or Cabinet on NRC... Modiji is a global leader. Why would he want such conflict?’

BJP spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain asserts the protest in Shaheen Bagh is backed by the Opposition, says the Centre has given citizenship to more than 500 Muslims from Pakistan since 2014, and argues it is wrong to say that there are no Muslims with the BJP



BJP national spokesperson Syed Shahnawaz Hussain with Associate Editor Liz Mathew in *The Indian Express* newsroom. Abhinav Saha

in my party. There is nothing that suggests this in either the PM's words or heart... The BJP is a big party with 13-14 crore members. Often there can be statements which we have to disown, like what Anant Kumar Hegde (BJP MP from Karnataka) said. It has been made clear that no insult to *Bapu* (Mahatma Gandhi) will be tolerated.

RAVISH TIWARI: If Jats or Marathas protest, Bills are introduced and attempts are made to talk to them. But this government seems to not care that Muslims have been sitting on the road for over a month, in peak winter... Aren't they a part of this country?

Absolutely. In our opinion, it is clear, those who didn't love this country, those who accepted Partition on the basis of religion, they went to Pakistan. Those who chose to stay behind, there is no doubt on their patriotism. However, it is a very innocent community. Politics has been played with them and they have been incited. The Jat, Meena, Gujjar protests were for reservations, not against a law that has been introduced... If someone is sitting on agitation due to rumours, what is the point of discussion? Neither the PM nor the Home Minister or the Defence Minister speak of things in terms of Hindu-Muslim. However, all three have spoken and clarified that Indian Muslims have nothing to fear.

RAVISH TIWARI: Why is the government asking for details of parents' date and place of birth in the new National Population Register (NPR)?

The NPR is a means to collect information such as who is poor, who is ailing, who couldn't be looked after by the government... When the Congress brought the NPR, it was secular, and when we introduced it, it is communal! Amit Shahji has said that if you don't want to give any information, don't... When the same information is asked for in a passport, no one has any problem...

SHALINI LANGER: Amit Shah has said the government will bring in an NRC.

That was in the context of Assam... We have been underlining the difference between refugees and infiltrators for a long time, that we will help those being persecuted in name of religion. Is there anybody coming from Pakistan seeking citizenship, except those coming illegally whom the BSF deals with?... Why this insistence by AAP or the Congress that we include Muslims in the CAA?... Will they ask next that we remove the Army, BSF etc, from the border, make it *Akhand Bharat*?... No objections were raised when the Congress took in people from Uganda, Indira Gandhi did so too in 1971. Is it Modi's crime that he

wiped tears of those who have been waiting for citizenship for long?... There was no crime in either abrogating Article 370 or bringing in the CAA...

VIJAY KUMAR JHA: You say AAP or Congress leaders are behind Shaheen Bagh. Does the Union government have any proof of this? And if yes, why does it not take action against them?

What action can one take against those organising protests? They are just spreading rumours, fear, showing pictures of detention centres, using small children. There is talk of killing Modiji and Amit Shahji. Poison is being spread about them. This is wrong. If there is any incident of genuine harassment of Muslims, I will go and meet them.

VIJAY KUMAR JHA: But shouldn't those spreading rumours, like you are saying, also be identified? The BJP government in Karnataka has even taken action over a play on the CAA staged in a primary school.

Everyone can see what is happening. Kanhaiya Kumar is going around the country, persuading people, spreading fear. (Asaduddin) Owaisi *sahab* is an old expert at this. He sees that this may be his chance to woo Muslims over to the AIMIM by inciting them. Everyone is dreaming, everyone sees himself as a leader of Muslims. At the time of Partition, even Abul Kalam Azad was abused because he stood on the side of truth. It's the same situation today... We are exposing those behind the protests politically, going door-to-door. And if, according to Kejriwal and Rahul Gandhi, this protest (Shaheen Bagh) is justified, why haven't they gone there? Mani Shankar Aiyar, Shashi Tharoor can go there, so can those who call themselves Urban Naxals with pride.

VIJAY KUMAR JHA: Why was there a need to bring in the CAA since, like you

said, the government still retains the right to decide citizenship. And why specify the minorities covered by it?

We just wanted to specify in the Act those who were religious minorities in the respective countries, or it would have meant their specification would apply... *Bharat kya dharamshala hai, ki kahin pe bhi kuchch hoga to hum unko nagarikta de denge* (Is Bharat a shelter home that we take in just about anyone and give them citizenship)? We have enough poor, including among Muslims...

AAKASH JOSHI: Do the PM's statements like protesters can be identified from their dress, or tagging of people as Urban Naxals, help?

Look at the incidents at JNU. The people who indulged in violence were wearing masks so that police wouldn't be able to identify them. The PM's remarks were not intended at the Muslim community... Those behind violence, their clothes are different.

VANDITA MISHRA: But, please specify, how do protesters dress differently?

The PM said dress, how does that become Hindu-Muslim?... Is there any difference now between what Hindus wear and what Muslims do?... Everyone wears jeans and shirts. What the PM meant to say was that those behind the violence, they cover their faces... You know, we are the biggest party, and have Muslims too in large numbers. But a perception has been created that the BJP only has a Shahnawaz, a Naqvi (Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi).

MONOJIT MAJUMDAR: The CAA applies to only those who came to India till December 31, 2014. The government has been around since then. Why is it picking and choosing minorities for special concessions now?

We are with the people whose religi-

ous freedom is threatened in Pakistan and Bangladesh; Afghanistan had a strong number, who came long ago. Even if they face problems now, we raise the issue, with them and their envoys... Plus, we are here to help, we will decide as per situation.

LIZ MATHEW: What about the accusation that the CAA is directed at the coming Bengal and Bihar Assembly polls?

We don't see anything through the prism of elections. We work for the country, and this Act was our commitment.

SHALINI LANGER: Assam is seeing huge protests against the CAA too. What is the misconception there?

There are two types of misconceptions there. The NRC was brought as per the Assam Accord and was monitored by the Supreme Court. The errors that crept into it are being addressed, including concerns of the people who have been left out. The PM too said this at the Ramlila Maidan. However, the Opposition in Assam tried to mislead the people. We clarified their doubts in Parliament too. There is no problem in Assam now. We have also signed the Bodo Accord. Assam is united.

RAVISH TIWARI: Educated Muslims are coming out on the streets in Delhi and Bihar. They can't all be fools. What have you done to win over their confidence?

That is why I am here, to interact with them through your newspaper. The PM, the Home Minister are all addressing the issue... I have spoken about the NRC in my party, there is no such thing... I am on several forums, where all kinds of issues are discussed. And as a BJP spokesperson, I am among the first to be briefed on issues. I am fully briefed that there has been no discussion at the level of the party or Cabinet on the NRC... Modiji is a global leader. Why would he want such conflict within the country?... I keep reassuring the Muslim community that I am not a showpiece in the government. I put forward their concerns, and the response that I have got from the government, I am trying to convey that.

VANDITA MISHRA: Since the Ayodhya verdict, Section 144 has been imposed across Uttar Pradesh. People are being detained, driven underground.

I have cordial relations with the UP Chief Minister... When I met him, Yogji said that the violence was orchestrated by Urban Naxals, the PFI (People's Front of India), *tukde-tukde* gang, the SP, BSP and Congress. The common Muslim did not support the violence. A separate team has been formed to probe cases against innocent people who were arrested. They are being released after investigation.

TABEEN MATJEE: Today, Muslims feel threatened because there is no clarity on what documents are required... A youth recently opened fire at protesters in Jamia... Why don't top BJP leaders openly condemn the shooting or the violence in Jamia, JNU and AMU?

People who are against India are plotting a big conspiracy. The Home Minister condemned it in the strongest terms. But nobody talks about his or the PM's statements. As far as documents are concerned, nothing is required. If a man says he has lost his documents in a flood or fire... he will not be immediately asked to leave the country... Under the CAA, we haven't asked for papers from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Despite this, why is this ruckus being created?... Suppose, if there was no CAA, what would have happened? Would they feel threatened?... There is nothing to worry because the Act grants citizenship... A fictitious narrative is being peddled... People are being intimidated with the help of the Assam NRC.

VANDITA MISHRA: So, why don't you include Muslims in the CAA?

Should we include Hafiz Saeed too?... Then all Pakistani Muslims will say they are being harassed by (PM) Imran Khan and they will come here. Let's also include all Baluchis and Mohajirs... Not even a single Muslim who came from Pakistan to India is asking for citizenship because they landed here surreptitiously...

SHYAMLAL YADAV: You have worked with Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Modi. Who do you think is more secular? Also, having been a minister in the Vajpayee government, don't you think you should be a part of Modi Cabinet?

Both love their country. The word secularism has affected Muslims the most. In the name of secularism, people change their parties. They say they are leaving the BJP because secularism is in danger. When it suits them, they return to the fold. Take Mamata Banerjee... I am a member of the BJP's Central Election Committee and involved with the party organisation. I am the BJP's official spokesperson... Even Amit Shahji joined the government after working for five years in the party... For us, both party and government constitute power.

LIZ MATHEW: When you came here last time, you severely criticised Nitish Kumar. What's your view on him now?

At the time, they (the JD-U) were not in alliance with us. The Kauravas and Pandavas were brothers, but in the battlefield they were against each other... The one-time bitterness has made our ties sweeter and stronger...



9 SUNDAY STORY



THE LAST time the BJP had a government in Delhi, Red Line buses with their 'killer' tag were still the norm, there was no Metro in Delhi, and the year was 1998.

In 2013, the party thought its political *vamvas* from the Capital, and all it implied in terms of its optics, was about to end, with the Congress fighting 15 years of anti-incumbency, nursing wounds from the Lok Sabha election battering earlier that year, and its much-liked Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit ailing and sidelined.

What followed was a rarity in Indian elections — especially Delhi, where polls have always been a Congress vs BJP stage. The fledgling Aam Aadmi Party, born just a year earlier from an anti-corruption movement, sneaked past both the parties, winning 28 out of the 70 seats. The Congress, that had taken the brunt of the AAP's attack in the run-up to the elections, lent it support to keep the BJP out. When that government fell within 49 days, as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal resigned in what the party said was a "principled decision" over the Delhi Assembly not passing the Jan Lokpal Bill, the AAP returned to power in February 2015 with an astounding 67 seats.

Much water has flowed under the bridge since. The BJP won all the seven seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Delhi, the AAP's national ambitions have had a reality check, and the Congress is out of the picture even after having fallen back on Dikshit's legacy in a desperate bid to save its face. However, there is another change, slow but steady, that makes this a battle that could decide the country's politics. The AAP has dug its heels in, seeking to make the Capital campaign about performance, and showcasing its undeniable work in the field of education and health. The BJP is no longer talking of *vikas* but, to uproot the 51-year-old Kejriwal, has resorted to its time-tested Hindutva strategy, with the added sting of the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act, led by a battery of top leaders.

The February 11 results may well decide which of those two strands wins out — and which could be a model adopted by the two parties and others going forward.

AAP: Kejriwal all the way

It tried out several slogans — from '*Achhe beete paanch saal, lage raho Kejriwal*', to '*Mera vote AAP ko, seedha Kejriwal ko*', and '*Achhe honge paanch saal, Dilli main toh Kejriwal*'. But each only underlined that for the AAP, the USP remains CM Kejriwal.

Ram Kirpal Singh, 47, a resident of Govindpuri, whose house is barely 500 metres from the office of AAP candidate Atishi, herself a visible party face, says he doesn't really care about the nominee. "A woman is contesting this time. I don't remember her name, but it doesn't matter. We are voting for Kejriwal," he says.

Always the party's face, having forged the AAP out of an anti-corruption movement with Anna Hazare, Kejriwal is now its undisputed leader. This is partly because of the series of fallouts with other AAP leaders. Between 2012 and 2017, among senior leaders to leave AAP were Prashant Bhushan and Yogendra Yadav, once the top three in the party with Kejriwal. Kumar Vishwas is virtually out too though he remains in the party's highest decision-making body, the Political Affairs Committee.

His detractors allege Kejriwal works like a "dictator". "He told people they were where they were because of him. When he is angry, he is extremely harsh," says a party member, not wishing to be named, though adding that Kejriwal was not entirely wrong. "It is because of him that unknown people who would have never joined politics or won were sent to the Vidhan Sabha."

It is this promise that the AAP still holds, despite five years in power, that lies at the centre of its appeal. Those looking for an alternative to the BJP, including earlier Congress voters, continue to stand with the AAP. While the Congress showed a brief blink in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, finishing ahead of the AAP in vote share, it is seen to have decisively lost its core support base of unauthorised colonies and *jhuggi-jhopdi* clusters to the AAP now.

Over the past year, the AAP has assiduously worked on road construction and sewer-laying projects in unauthorised colonies, consolidating that support. The Supreme Court decision that gave its government more autonomy allowed the party to come out with policies aimed at the lower middle class, such as power subsidy and free bus ride for women, helping it put the 2019 setback behind.

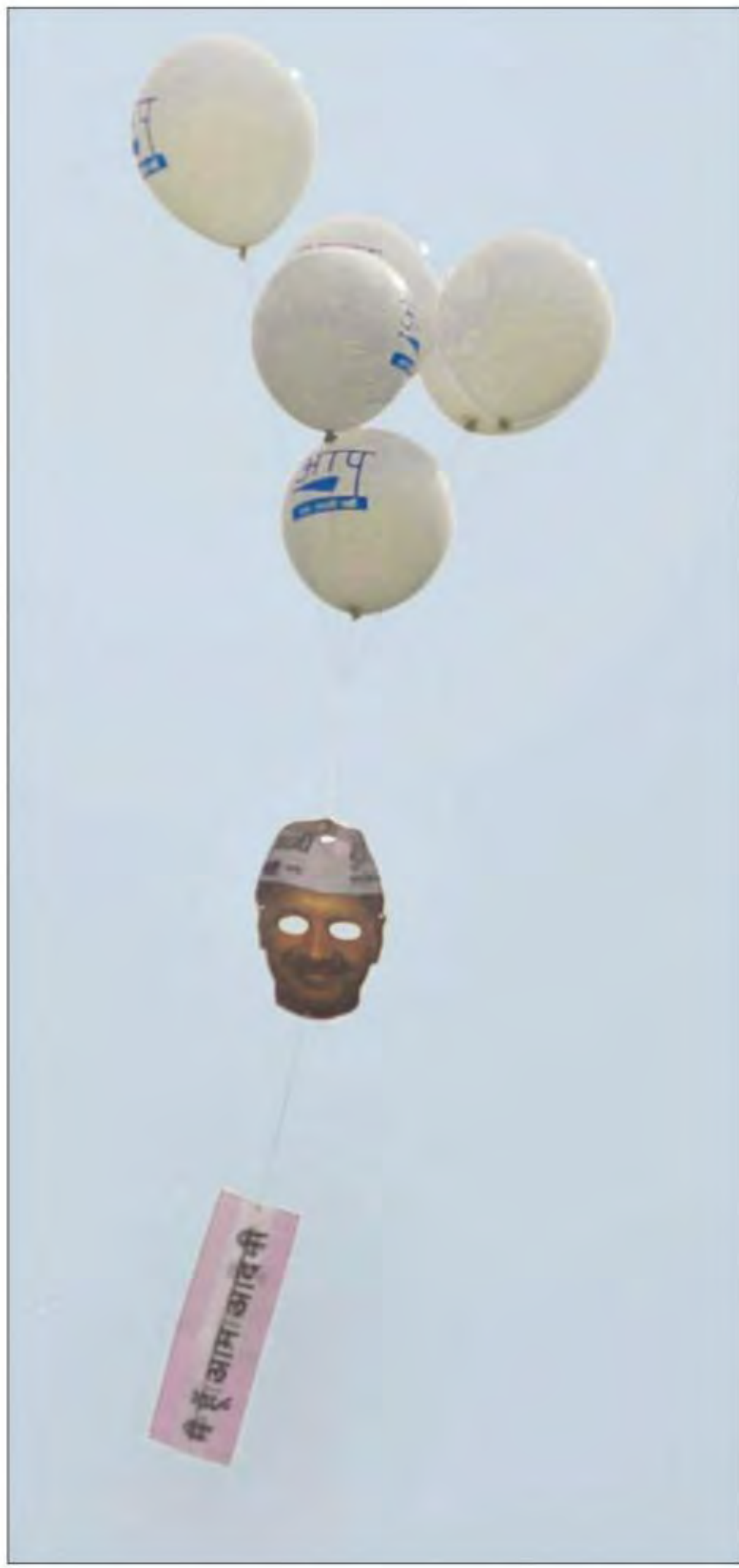
The AAP also designed a campaign markedly different from 2015 this time. Where Kejriwal addressed rallies and *nukkad sabhas* in 2015, the focus now was on policy and governance-related issues through townhalls on TV channels and road shows, where he did not speak. Between April and December, Kejriwal addressed at least one press conference every two weeks.

Says AAP campaign director Pankaj Gupta, "In 2015, we did not have a lot of work to show. This time, our pitch was work and the campaign bore that stamp."

Roping in I-PAC's Prashant Kishor helped the party put more feet on the ground, especially at a time when the BJP brought ground-level volunteers to Delhi from other states. Kishor's team helped the AAP plan a more direct messaging strategy of keeping Kejriwal at the forefront.

Party members believe they started out strong in December. Says a senior leader, "We were in control of the narrative, well before the polls were announced."

The BJP stepping up its game since then, and making it about the CAA, is the reason



At an AAP rally on Jan 20, before Arvind Kejriwal filed his nomination; (right) Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vijay Sankalp rally in Dwarka on Feb 4. Praveen Khanna



EXPLAINED E.

A two-way contest

THIS TIME, the Delhi Assembly elections are about the survival of a young party versus a referendum on the Centre's policies. The BJP, which pushed its entire leadership into the campaign, made the election entirely about national issues such as the CAA and abrogation of Article 370. For the AAP, centred entirely around the popularity of Arvind Kejriwal, a loss could make survival difficult.

As for the Congress, which ruled Delhi between 1998 and 2013, it has slipped out of conversations, except among a few long-time supporters.

which stands to lose the most in case of a defeat. "For us, every election is different. For Kejriwal, it is a matter of do-or-die."

But there are other reasons the results are important for the BJP. Many leaders admit in private that one reason the party won all the three Delhi corporations in 2017 was its sweep in the preceding Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections. This win came despite the BJP facing 10 years of anti-incumbency and accusations of corruption in the corporations.

A victory in Delhi now would mean the BJP will go into the Bihar polls with more bargaining power against partner JD(U). As per a survey by the CSDS, the Purvanchali population from eastern India is dominant in about 16 of the Capital's 70 Assembly seats. Making up over 30 per cent of Delhi's population, what this electorate thinks in the Capital is expected to have ripples at their homes back in Bihar.

CSDS Director Kumar says that should it win Delhi, the BJP could even attempt going it alone in Bihar. "They would want a situation where all the three parties (the BJP, RJD and JD-U) go alone in Bihar."

A loss, on the other hand, he says, "means that the JD(U) will start flexing its muscles and demand more seats."

Another BJP leader says that with the AAP's massive footprint in the state, a defeated BJP might not be able to retain its hold on the corporations either. One glaring omission is the failure of the Delhi civic bodies to improve infrastructure in its schools, even as the AAP makes education the showpiece of its government; the continuing problems with sanitation; and the failure to ensure bigger corporation budgets despite the purse-strings being with the Centre.

With the BJP going into the elections without a chief minister face, despite frequent taunts by the AAP, a loss — after setbacks in Jharkhand, Maharashtra and the need for a coalition in Haryana — could underline the chink in the party's armour of depending solely on Narendra Modi's face to win. Its slogan for the Capital was '*Dilli Chale Modi ke Saath*'.

Tiwari, the Delhi BJP chief and one of the CM contenders, denies the results in other states mean much. "In Maharashtra we won but were backstabbed by our partner, Haryana we won, Jharkhand too an alliance with the AJSU would have meant victory," he says.

The CSDS's Kumar too cautions against seeing a Kejriwal win as a setback for Modi. "There would be many who like Modi but would vote for Kejriwal in the state. They might not like Shaheen Bagh but would vote for the AAP's Mohalla Clinic."

That could be one reason why Shah has shouldered the BJP's campaign in Delhi, apart from the fact that a win coming from behind would go a long way towards erasing the perception that the Home Minister is more of a party manager than a campaigner. "I think they anticipate that Delhi might slip out of their hands so they strategically brought Shah to the forefront," Kumar says.

As for the Congress, its campaign has been still-born. In a limbo after Dikshit passed away, it identified BJP import Kirti Azad as Delhi unit chief, only to replace him with Subhash Chopra after old party hands objected.

The party would be happy if it can even take its vote share above 15 per cent, and win a couple of seats. But, as exit polls handed out another blank for the Congress, it was staring at needing a fresh revamp for a fighting chance even in the 2022 municipal polls.

In private, this Opposition vacuum is another source of wariness among BJP leaders, as this could leave the field ripe for the AAP if it wins. "If Arvind Kejriwal wins a second term, he will change his strategy, again start abusing PM Modi and might even attempt to stitch a third front along with Prashant Kishor, who has good terms with several regional parties and has even worked with the Congress," says a leader.

Apart from the AAP, Kishor's election management firm has worked earlier with CMs Amarinder Singh in Punjab, Nitish Kumar in Bihar, YSR Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh, and Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal, as well as Akhilesh Yadav in Uttar Pradesh. Recently, it struck a deal with the DMK, which is strongly placed for the next Tamil Nadu elections.

Swaraj India head Yogendra Yadav says that should the BJP win after spreading "poison" as it did in Delhi, "we are at a very tough time as a country". "If they win, they will say people are endorsing their view on the CAA, but if they lose, then the opposite will also be true, that people of Delhi refuse to see Shaheen Bagh as enemy."

Face-off, masks off

Much more than 70 seats are at stake in the Delhi Assembly polls that just ended. For AAP, the Feb 11 results will show if its gambit of seeking a mandate on its govt's work has paid off; for BJP, if Modi name, Hindutva plank prove stronger than CAA discontent. MALLICA JOSHI & ABHINAV RAJPUT report

there is a whiff of uncertainty now about what will happen come February 11. Admits the party leader, "We knew the BJP would try something, but hadn't expected its blitzkrieg. When we conducted internal polls in December, people barely discussed the BJP. Only the core voters said they would vote for the party since they had always done that."

As the BJP kept raising questions about the anti-CAA protests, making it a nationalists vs traitors debate, even accused Kejriwal of being a terrorist, the AAP tried not to be drawn in and to stay on message.

In an interview to *The Indian Express*, the CM said the BJP was raising Shaheen Bagh as it had no work to show, including in the Delhi corporations it has governed for 12 years.

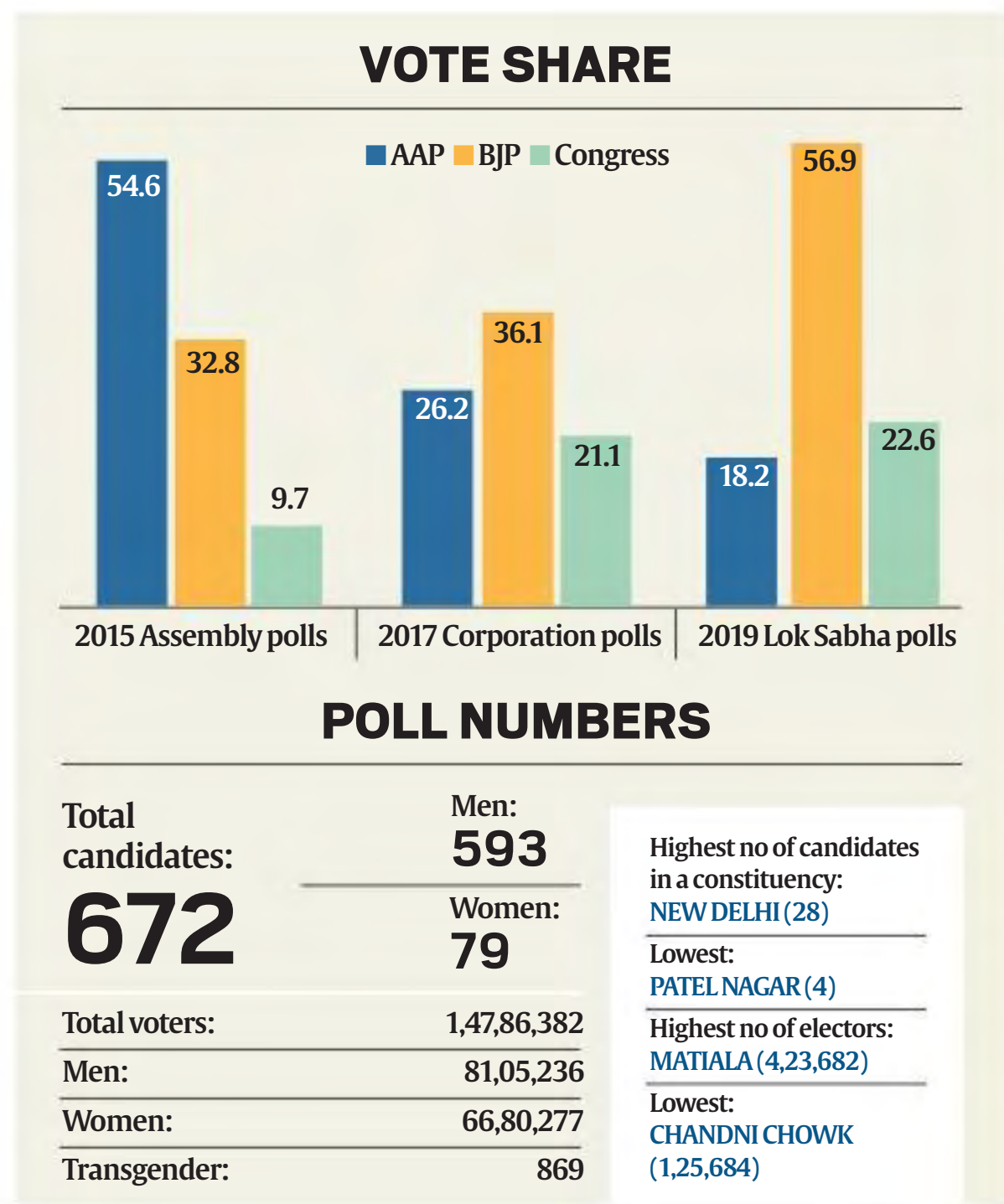
Several party leaders, including Kejriwal, argue the AAP has created a new idiom for voters, giving them the option of choosing work over all else. "It is a new kind of politics of schools, hospitals, power and water. No one has ever spoken about it," Kejriwal told *The Indian Express* in the interview.

AAP leaders also kept off from supporting the agitation sensing a negative reaction from majority voters over Shaheen Bagh. Kejriwal said repeatedly that people have the right to protest but not cause inconvenience, exhorting the Delhi Police, that comes under the Centre, to remove the protesters.

But, with Kejriwal combining this with a repetitive underlining of his Hindu belief, there was criticism over his silence. Defending this, a senior AAP leader says, "We can't fight on the BJP's turf of communal politics. The party was working on bringing out a more human, personal face of Kejriwal, and that includes details about his religion. It is different from how the BJP pitches itself."

Having promised to be the real party with a difference, the AAP also drew criticism this time for going the way of other parties and talking in hundreds of leaders who came from a different political leaning, including from the BJP, Congress, JD(U) and BSP. Nine people given tickets this time had joined the AAP only a few hours or days before.

Says an AAP leader, "When you bring in people like Shoaib Iqbal (who was earlier an MLA from the Congress and then the JD-U), and Vinay Mishra (son of former West Delhi MP Congress MP Mahabal Mishra), to expect they will remain with the AAP if the party loses is naive. I don't believe anyone in the



party thinks so either, but the stakes are so high that winnability was a key factor in distributing tickets."

But, as the result day approaches, the biggest fear that plagues a Kejriwal-centric AAP is can it remain together in the face of a loss. The Punjab example is not very encouraging. Having emerged as the main opposition party there fighting its first Assembly election in the state, as well as getting four Lok Sabha seats in 2014, the AAP crumbled there under a series of splits.

Party leaders admit that this is their toughest election — more than 2013 or 2015, with the novelty factor having evaporated under the harsh light of five years in power. Sanjay Kumar, political analyst and

Director, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), says the AAP can't afford a loss. "It would mean end of the party. Slowly, the AAP will start disintegrating," he warns.

"It's simple. Without him, there is no reason for many people to stay in the party," says a 28-year-old volunteer.

On Saturday, as almost all the exit polls predicted an AAP win, Deputy CM and Kejriwal confidant Manish Sisodia said, "It is clear we are winning and the BJP's divisive campaign has failed. The question of fighting for survival does not arise."

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh too called such a development "*kaalpanik* (imaginary)". "On one side, there is work and on the other there is Hindu-Muslim issue."

BJP: CAA on lips, eye on Bihar

Addressing booth-level BJP workers at a packed IGI Stadium in New Delhi on January 5, a month before the Assembly polls, Home Minister Amit Shah cautioned them not to be over-dependent on big rallies but go door-to-door. Later that evening, at one such small meeting in Lajpat Nagar, Shah himself distributed pamphlets in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

What was lost in the small print the next day was the sign that Shah, the BJP's trump card, was set to take over charge of another tough electoral battle for the party. In the days that followed, the BJP would hold 6,577 public meetings, including road shows, 52 by Shah, 41 by national president J P Nadda, 12 by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and many others by the party's 200 MPs and 50 current and former ministers as it rolled out its heavy artillery against a resurgent Aam Aadmi Party.

In contrast, in the 2015 Assembly elections, Shah had held three-four big rallies and six to seven workers' meetings in Delhi. BJP leader Praveen Shankar Kapoor, who oversaw that poll for the party, also lists other ministers and senior leaders who canvassed, like Ravi Shankar Prasad, Nirmala Sitharaman, Arun Jaitley and Ram Lal.

Still, there is no denying the scale of the BJP's involvement now — apart from the shrillness of its campaign — indicating the importance for the party of Delhi, a half-state that sends just seven MPs to the Lok Sabha. The BJP has been out of power in Delhi now since 1998, and the February 8 elections came in the wake of several state poll setbacks. However, there is a bigger, overarching reason: the first polls after the CAA was passed, the Delhi elections are seen by many as a mandate on the Act, amidst growing protests across the country.

With exit polls predicting an AAP win, BJP Rajya Sabha MP and national vice-president Vinay Sahasrabudhe denies that what is at stake is the CAA. "A win in Delhi might underline that the silent majority supports the Act, but it was part of the BJP's manifesto in 2019 too and the results then were already a kind of referendum on it," he says. "It is not something we did one fine morning, there were enough deliberations (in Parliament)."

Asserting that they would win, BJP president Manoj Tiwari argues that it is AAP

10 **BIG PICTURE****THE
FLU**

With India reporting three positive cases of the novel coronavirus, all in Kerala, and the government evacuating over 600 people from China last week, THE SUNDAY EXPRESS on how the state is leaning back on its Nipah experience to tackle the latest outbreak — from screening every passenger to setting up a state-level control room and a rapid response team. Over 4,000 km away, in China's Hubei and nearby provinces, life in lockdown is a series of do's and don'ts — followed by a spray of disinfectant on clothes

KERALA
3 positive cases in country, all from state; 3,144 people under observation

SHAJU PHILIP

The 22-year-old, a medical student at a university in Wuhan, China, is home in Malappuram and, as usual, the focus of everyone's attention. Only this time, it's edgy. Twice a day he gets a call from the local government hospital, inquiring if he has fever or sore throat. A few times in the day, his mother serves him food wearing a mask. The rest of the time he is on his smartphone.

The 22-year-old has been under a 28-day quarantine at his home in Kerala's Malappuram district ever since he came back on January 22 from Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei province and the epicentre of a virulent outbreak of the novel coronavirus (nCoV) that has, as of February 8, claimed at least 723 lives and infected 34,600 people in China.

The 22-year-old is one of the 3,144 people under observation in Kerala, which has reported three positive cases of coronavirus, so far the only confirmed cases of the virus in India. "I am feeling perfectly fine. But the person who calls from the hospital says that if I develop any symptoms, the local primary health centre will send an ambulance over. The health inspector has told me that I should not voluntarily move out," he says over the phone.

"I watch the news on my mobile phone. I am also in touch with friends from Wuhan who are under observation," he says, adding, "I recently got a message from the state health department calling me a hero for surrendering my freedom for the safety of society."

For Kerala, the virus is a fresh challenge after the deadly Nipah outbreak of 2018 and 2019 that had claimed 17 lives, all in 2018. The state has been on vigil since January 17, when the Centre sounded an alert for coronavirus. By January 30, the figure of those under observation had touched 1,053. Within the next five days, with the three positive cases being reported, Kerala declared a state 'calamity'. At 418, Malappuram district has the highest number of persons under observation for suspected coronavirus in India.

To tackle the challenge, the state health department has fallen back on its past experience in managing the Nipah outbreak and put in place a multi-level mechanism for surveillance and control of the infection.

"We have an excellent system at various levels to monitor those exposed to the infection. We have activated the emergency system which was in operation during the Nipah days," says Dr Mohanann Kunnummal, vice chancellor of Kerala University of Health Sciences.

By the third week of January, when the Union government sounded an nCoV alert, the health department set up a state-level control room and a rapid response team which were directly linked to the 14 district medical offices. Isolation units were prepared in all the six medical colleges and 14 district medical colleges. "The most critical aspect of reigning in the virus was zeroing in on persons with suspected exposure to the virus in China and isolating them," says Dr Amar Fettele, the state health department's nodal officer for Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

The control room started by first obtaining a list of passengers from China who had disembarked at the state's international airports, and tracked them down. Initially, only passengers at Kochi International Airport were screened, but the exercise was soon extended to the other three international airports — Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur — in the state. Even domestic passengers who had landed at international terminals in other states and moved to Kerala — were screened.

Simultaneously, a screening exercise was initiated at the grassroots level. Junior public health inspectors, public health nurses and ASHA workers kept a tab on those who had returned from abroad. A list of those suspected to have caught the flu was sent to the control room, which, in turn, sent a list of people to be monitored at all district medical offices. Thereafter, each person on the list was assigned to a primary or family health centre.

"At the primary health centre, the medical superintendent had the staff ensure that the patients are strictly following the quarantine guidelines. These centres also have to mail two reports, one in the morning and another in the evening, to the state control room everyday via the district medical officer," explains Dr Vijayasee, the medical officer in Kozhikode district, where 378 persons are under observation (as on February 8).

Since those who left China before the Indian government's evacuation exercise began in Kerala, it was fairly



Outside an isolation unit at the Government Medical College, Thrissur, where one of the three positive coronavirus cases has been reported. Anoop K Venu

straightforward for the state health department officials to prepare a list of those with Chinese travel history. "As the list was compiled quickly, all of them were put under instant observation. While many of these people voluntarily reported to the department and went into isolation at homes, we had to track down another section of people who had returned from China but were unsure about what to do next," says Dr Fettele.

After the health department received information about the positive tests, the next step was to prepare a list of those who had come in contact with infected patients. These people were categorised into two sections — high- and low-risk. Those in the high risk were persons who had spent long hours with the confirmed cases, or those who had had any fluid contact with them.

The Nipah virus was confined to Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. This time, while the three confirmed cases are from Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kasaragod, those under observation hail from districts across the state," said an official.

So far, Kerala has deployed over 100 experts and officials, including doctors, at the state-level control room. The team has been further split into 18 committees, each with a

specific task — managing the treatment of the positive cases, collecting samples and their dispatch, community-level volunteers for supporting those in isolation, and a psychological support team for those under home quarantine, among other duties. Apart from a state-level medical board, three separate medical boards have been instituted in the three districts that has reported the positive cases of coronavirus.

"We have also set up a call centre to address the public's doubts about the infection. We have received 9,000 calls so far," said an official. Also, 7,515 elected representatives in local self-governing bodies and 14,177 Kudumbashree (the poverty eradication and women empowerment programme of the state government) volunteers have been trained on public health issues as part of a capacity-building exercise by the state health department.

Since February 3, the control room has also been helping those in quarantine with tele-counselling. "So far, we have not received any complaints of mental trauma. Most people in quarantine only had doubts about the infection," says Dr Maya Peethambaran, nodal officer for tele-counselling in Alappuzha district.

CHINA
723 deaths, over 34,000 infections

SOWMIYA ASHOK

NINGNING THINKS of them as 'DIY' slogans. From 8 am to 5 pm, a loudspeaker outside her parents' home in a closely packed apartment compound in Shiyan in northwestern Hubei hollers at the community: "If you have one peck of rice, don't go anywhere crowded; if you have one sprig of onion, don't hang at the market; if you have one piece of meat, don't show your face at the supermarket; if you have a breath of air, stay home and guard the ranch."

Like the rest of Hubei province, Shiyan, a prefecture-level city about a seven-hour drive from Wuhan, is under lockdown. For the 300 families confined to their apartments, "these slogans sound like cheesy poems on a loop," says Ningning, a 26-year-old who studies in Beijing. Like millions of people in China, she too was part of what is seen as the world's largest annual migration — a trip home for the Chinese New Year. But from 1 am on January 25, Shiyan went quiet.

The lockdown has brought life to a halt for the over 50 million residents of Hubei, who are now following a series of instructions — stay indoors, wash hands with soap regularly, wear a mask while stepping out, and nominate family members for grocery runs, among others. With authorities racing against time to build two hospitals, gyms and exhibition centres in the region are being converted into make-shift isolation wards.

According to Chinese health authorities, as of February 8, the virus has claimed at least 723 lives and infected 34,600 people in China. Twenty-four other countries have confirmed at least 266 infections in all. On January 30, the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak a global emergency.

Among those forced to stay indoors in Wuhan is Monika Sethuraman, a PhD scholar in international relations at the Central China Normal University in Wuhan. From late December, the 31-year-old had been poring over virus-related articles, after first reading about it in a Chinese blog. "By the last week of January, I still saw very little news about it in the

Indian media. I was worried, lots of Indians had left the town before the lockdown," she says.

As the virus outbreak grew, the first batch of 324 Indian students were evacuated from Wuhan on February 1. One of the evacuees captured the journey in a five-minute video titled 'Indians evacuation on silent roads of China', set to the soundtrack of *Miss Everything* by Mindme and uploaded it on YouTube. The next day, a video of students wearing masks and dancing to Punjabi music from their quarantine camp in Manesar, Haryana, went viral.

For weeks, says Sethuraman, she remained confused over whether to stay or leave. "I was sniffing a bit and felt confused over what to do, whether it was safe to travel... There were reports that the virus could be transmitted through faecal material, what if the public toilets are unclean? I just decided to stay," she says over WeChat, a popular Chinese messaging app, from Wuhan.

Among those who, as Sethuraman says, left just before the lockdown was a 25-year-old medical student from Delhi. He travelled with two of the three stu-

dent from Kerala who tested positive for the coronavirus. "We were doing our internship at a hospital in Wuhan in January when a patient with coronavirus was admitted. All foreign students were told to stay away though it wasn't certain at the time of human-to-human transmission was confirmed," he says over the phone from South Delhi.

When word got out that a lockdown was imminent on January 24, he and a group of 12 students left town immediately. "We took a train from Wuhan to Kunming, and then from there we flew to Kolkata. I then took a train to Delhi," he says. A journey of roughly 48 hours in all.

Back in China, as the virus rapidly spread out of Wuhan, many kept a watch on those coming from Hubei — a Chinese identity card starting with the digits '42' indicates Hubei residency. In the weeks following the outbreak, many residents of the province have been subjected to unsolicited phone calls from strangers inquiring if they are running a fever.

Earlier this week, four Chinese cities, including Hangzhou and Taizhou in the eastern province of Zhejiang (about 800 km from Wuhan), restricted movement of its residents. The APF reported that landlords in some parts of the province were also forbidden from renting property to people from "severely affected areas such as Hubei" if they had



(Top) Patients at an exhibition centre that has been converted into a temporary hospital in Wuhan; at Roshchino Airport outside Tyumen, Russia, medical teams prepare to receive passengers arriving from Wuhan. AP/Reuters

travelled to their hometowns recently.

In Zhengzhou in Henan province, over 500 km from Wuhan, an Indian doctor explains the restrictions on residents.

"People in my apartment block are allowed to step out for only five hours each morning: 6 am to 11 am. We border Hubei province and we are under 'red alert'," he says. "Everywhere they check our temperature, when we leave the apartment, at

the supermarket, on our way back. When I come back home, I have to show the apartment security team my passport and briefly pass through a room that sprays disinfectant on me to kill any germs on my clothes," he adds.

Since January 31, the 25-year-old doctor, who has been in China for seven years, has not been allowed to visit the hospital he works at. "I step out of my room to use

nCoV IN NUMBERS**31,481**

Total cases confirmed

31,211

Cases confirmed in China (4,821 severe)

637

Deaths in China

270

confirmed cases outside China (across 24 countries)

1

Death outside China

Situation Report, World Health Organisation (till Feb 7)

INDIA**3**

positive cases (all from Kerala)

647

Indian evacuees under quarantine in NCR

6,599

passengers tracked across 29 States/UTs Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Rajya Sabha (till Feb 7)

2,826

people under observation in Kerala (till Feb 6)

SARS OUTBREAK

(November 2002-July 2003)

8,098

cases reported (across 26 countries)

750

deaths reported

Assistant Professor Rajiv Ranjan, adding, "In Shanghai, there is a rationing system for masks, to avoid hoarding. The first batch of masks will be handed out from February 2 to 11. A household can register in their society using their *hukou* (household registration) or passport, and five masks per family for 2.5 kuai will be handed out."

A British national who was visiting a friend in Hubei for the Chinese New Year says smaller towns have been dealing with the health crisis in a much calmer manner, unlike big cities which have been alarmed with real-time news reports. "In villages, local authorities have been using gongs and loudspeakers to disseminate information because people may not read the news."

While most Chinese cities wear dystopian looks, online, people seem to have found ways to amuse themselves. Videos of bored people reading books on statistics to their cats, making masks out of orange peels, dressing up as dragons, and playing indoor badminton have flooded the Internet.

"A Chinese man went to a public square in France wearing a mask and held a placard that read 'I am a human, I am not a virus.' And then French people are seen hugging him," says Ranjan, recalling a video shared on a WeChat group to address the prejudice against Chinese people abroad after the outbreak.

While most took to the Internet to kill time, Cui Xiaohui, a professor at Wuhan University's Big Data and Cloud Computing Lab, decided to use it to build an online platform to connect hospitals in need of medical supplies and those wanting to donate them. Using WeChat to organise 40 students, who sat alone in their apartments plugged into their laptops, Cui built 'Luoying Shanlian' that connected donors to 800 hospitals across China. "It is designed for smart phones. We send you a link and both donors and hospitals can submit contact information and details of what they have or need," he says. In the first two hours of its launch on February 1, the platform saw 100,000 clicks.

For the Chinese, the year of the rat was meant to be auspicious, and as the country struggles to deal with the public health emergency, Lin Yin, a 35-year-old university professor from Foshan city in Guangdong province, is hopeful. "This Spring festival, my father suffered a stroke and now there is misfortune for my country... But we shall overcome this and help each other out," he says.

Back in Wuhan, Sethuraman now spends her days volunteering at her university's disease control centre, serving food and sharing information and reminders in various dormitory groups. "During nights I do my temp papers," she says. "Apart from that I am trying to stay updated about the virus. I have no idea how this is going to end."



At ICMR-NIV (left), Director Dr Priya Abraham counts sourcing quality reagents from overseas to conduct tests as among the centre's early challenges. Pavan Khengre

At key testing centre in Pune, 604 samples checked so far

Video conference with labs to multiple tests for nCoV samples — National Institute of Virology isn't taking any chances

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS

IT'S A busy day at the Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) in Pune. At the institute's influenza centre, Director Dr Priya Abraham takes a quick round of the cordoned-off specimen processing room that holds a highly secure biosafety cabinet. It is here that the processing of nasal and throat swab samples, including of those suspected to be infected with the 2019 novel coronavirus (nCoV), is underway.

Between January 24 and February 7, 604 samples have been tested at the institute that is at the centre of the country's efforts to deal with the nCoV outbreak. So far, three of these samples have tested positive. Across the country, over 1,300 samples have been tested at 14 other virus research diagnostic laboratories (VRDLs), including those at the apex ICMR-NIV lab.

"Around mid-December, we started following reported cases of mysterious pneumonia in China. Even before nCoV hit the headlines, we had formed an outbreak response group of ICMR-NIV doctors trained in community health (epidemiologists). As the numbers increased in China, we proactively ordered primers, probes and controls from Hong Kong and Berlin, where laboratories to test for nCoV globally were first set up. There were many challenges, including sourcing international quality reagents from overseas to get the tests rolling," says Dr Abraham.

The samples arrive at the centre in a three-layered packing in a virus transport medium from across the country, and are handled carefully in the biosafety cabinet by technologists in protective gear. The samples are then separated into small portions and carefully labelled. They are then sent to another unit where nucleic acid extraction followed by the real-time polymerase chain reaction tests are conducted to detect whether the sample is positive or negative for nCoV. Every sample is checked for, besides nCoV, 18 other respiratory viruses, a process which takes about four hours.

If a sample tests positive for nCoV, it goes through three different types of real-time tests — a screening assay and two confirmatory assays — and finally undergoes genome sequencing. The positive sample, along with other negative samples, is sent to the Bio Safety Level-4 laboratory at

ICMR-NIV's Pashan centre on the outskirts of Pune, where another team of scientists conduct tests on them. "We ensure that results of both laboratories are concordant, and then we match them with our results again. We have to be really sure when a sample is declared positive," says Dr Abraham.

After monitoring the tests, Dr Abraham joins a video conference with Dr Nivedita Gupta, senior scientist at ICMR, experts at the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED), Kolkata, and all the India Institute of Medical

Sciences, New Delhi, along with other laboratories. Through the daily video conferencing exercise, scientists at ICMR-NIV discuss how to handle the samples and run the nCoV assays with other labs.

"A total of 106 Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL) have been functional and 13 have been strategically placed near international airports, and are empowered to test samples at the primary level for nCoV," explains Dr R Ganagakekhar, the national epidemiology chief at ICMR, who is in Pune to monitor the exercise. The VRDLs then report the results of the assays done to the Pune centre, which has been providing the standard operating procedures and personal protective equipment where needed.

As the ICMR-NIV team responds to technical queries during the video conference, Dr Balram Bhargava, ICMR chief and director general, joins in to check if the situation is under control.

With the WHO declaring the nCoV outbreak a global health emergency, the security at the ICMR's apex laboratory has also been tightened, and samples are expected any time, during the day or at night. "Dedicated team work, commitment and inter-dependency among all units has led to a successful response to the outbreak," says Dr Bhargava.



SUNDAY PROFILE

NAJMA AKHTAR

When a V-C stands out

First woman head of Jamia, Najma Akhtar now holds the distinction of being the rare V-C to speak out against police action on campus in recent times — even as protests over the Dec 15 violence in Jamia became an issue in Delhi polls. She talks about being surprised by anti-CAA protests and finding her feet

ARANYA SHANKAR

WHEN NAJMA AKHTAR was appointed Jamia Millia Islamia's Vice-Chancellor in April last year, the buzz around the university's first woman V-C was also about her perceived proximity to the RSS — and, therefore, the ruling establishment.

However, in the recent protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as well as the heavy-handedness with which the government and the Delhi Police have handled students, she has stood out for being almost the lone university head to raise her voice. Her stand rang out particularly loud as the BJP made its Delhi Assembly poll pitch all about the Shaheen Bagh protest — which was sparked off by police action on the Jamia campus on December 15.

If the lasting image of her April 2019 appointment was a photo of RSS National Executive member Indresh Kumar blessing her, the picture that did the rounds after the Jamia violence was Akhtar dropping in to meet her injured students. A comparison was drawn with JNU Vice-Chancellor M Jagadeesh Kumar, his failure to make any such reconciliatory gesture, and the continuing imbroglio at that university.

In a rare interview (she says she gets "tongue-tied"), Akhtar told *The Sunday Express* that the anti-CAA protests at Jamia had come as a surprise. "India did not expect it. The CAA was unexpected, and the reaction to it too. It was a totally new reaction both from the people and the government."

However, Akhtar has many detractors still, who accuse her of not doing enough post-December 15, and doing what she did only under student pressure. In his statement after

he was shot at by a gun-toting miscreant near Jamia on January 30, Shadab Farooq said, "The Jamia administration and V-C too should be blamed for what happened. Had they taken action against police brutality at earlier events, this might not have happened."

Born into a prominent Uttar Pradesh family, the 67-year-old Akhtar's brother is former IAS officer Jawed Usmani, who was considered very close to the Samajwadi Party and is now Chief Information Commissioner of the state. Her late husband, Akhtar Majeed, was professor with Aligarh Muslim University's Political Science Department.

An alumni of AMU and a PhD (Education) from Kurukshetra University, Akhtar served as Controller of Examinations at AMU in the early Nineties — her first administrative post — and as Head of the Department of Educational Administration at NIEPA for 15 years before coming to Jamia.

The Muslim Rashtriya Manch (MRM), an outfit patronised by RSS leader Indresh Kumar, admits recommending her name for Jamia V-C. Its chief convenor, Mohammad Afzal, told *The Sunday Express*. "Akhtar has never been a member or activist of the MRM. But the fact is that four-five professors approached the MRM for Jamia vice-chancellorship, and while all were eligible, we found her candidature most appropriate."

Sources in the RSS add that Akhtar was picked as she was considered aligned to neither the Congress nor Left. He says that after 2014, as the Narendra Modi government looked around to fill V-C posts at institutes which had always had Muslim heads, their challenge was to find a "nationalist", who was "not controlled by Congress people or Left parties". Consequently, several scholars and academics approached Indresh Kumar, seen as the only one well-connected to Muslims among the RSS leadership.

Soon after her appointment, a former AMU Students' Union president alleged there was "institutionalised corruption" during her tenure as Controller of Examinations.

Speaking to *The Sunday Express*, Akhtar insists she is "apolitical". Denying the allegations of corruption, she says AMU was her "training ground". "That was also 30 years ago. I was 30 years younger," she says, with a smile.

That said, she denies her actions post the police action at Jamia are reflective of lessons learnt from the administrative mishandling of violent situations at JNU or AMU. "I don't take lessons, every university is different," Akhtar says.

Soon after police entered the campus, vandalised the library and beat up students on the night of December 15, Akhtar had put out a video message saying she stood with her students and criticising police. The next day, she had called a press conference where, surrounded by senior officials, she had reiterated that police entry and action were without permission and condemnable.

According to Akhtar, what helped her was that she had a good team in place. "When I came in, the support system in the sense of people in the administration was missing. I'm a team player, so I built my team. The teachers were also very cooperative."

In the 10 months she has been V-C, Akhtar has made roughly 150 promotions and over 60 fresh appointments. She has also got UGC sanction for four new departments, and has talked of bringing in more women students.

Says a faculty member, "We have to admit that at least she has had a much more responsive attitude, even if it's under student pressure. That way we are much better off than teachers and students of JNU and AMU. But students expected her to do more."

For example, the students ask why Akhtar did not follow up on Jamia's police complaint.

It was only after a *gherao* of the V-C's office on January 13, nearly a month after the incident, that the university said it would move court to get an FIR registered.

Arguing that much of what Akhtar did was optics, under their pressure, Laraib Neyazi, a student of gender studies, says, "After the December 13 incident when police lobbed tear gas shells, *lathicharged* and detained students during a protest, she didn't meet any student... She also didn't say anything about the police action that day. If she had, December 15 would have never happened."

Contesting this, Ahmed Azeem, Jamia PRO, says Akhtar wanted to visit students after the December 13 incident but couldn't do so as the road outside the university was blocked and due to health issues. "She is unable to climb stairs, and most of those students stayed on upper floors at hostels. We didn't think it would be right to ask them to meet her, so it took some time. After 15th, we made an attempt to visit hospitals the very next day, but either roads were blocked or the hospital didn't respond to our requests."

A private person, Akhtar admits to hardly having any friends and says her life outside office revolves around her twin grandsons, born just before she took over as V-C. "They are my stress busters. When I enter home, I become a grandmother," she laughs.

Akhtar stays with her son, an interaction designer who creates web user interfaces, and his wife, who works at the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Akhtar's daughter is settled in the US.

Students continuing the anti-CAA protests are preparing for what will happen after Saturday's elections. "The administration has been supportive, but the real test is after the Delhi polls. Right now it suits the Centre to let the protests continue so that they can milk them," says a student, who does not wish to be identified.

Not denying this, a faculty member notes that it wouldn't be right to blame Akhtar alone though. "The university administration and V-Cs are not as autonomous as they used to be. You are answerable to the government now in a way that was never before. So that also clips the wings of the V-C."

Meanwhile, even as the Shaheen Bagh protest continues, a day before Delhi went to polls, Akhtar managed to convince students to shift their agitation, on since December 15, from Jamia Gate No. 7 as the previous spot was within 100 metres of a polling location.

Asked whether she would allow students to continue the protest, Akhtar says, "There are students protesting outside gates of many universities all over the country. My students will move when students from all the other gates move."

WITH INPUTS BY SHYAMLAL YADAV

TAKE 5

FACES ON THE FRINGES OF NEWS

The story of some experiments with Gandhi

LAST YEAR, on October 2, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced at a function in Bhopal that busts of Mahatma Gandhi would be installed at all government colleges in the state. On January 10, the Higher Education Department issued detailed instructions, including on the design and the size of the *stambh* (pedestal) and the platform, and said all four sides of the pedestal must carry information on key events surrounding Gandhi's life.

The department also asked for the busts to be installed before January 26, but a week before the deadline, it realised there were many mistakes in the text that was to be inscribed on the pedestal. A fresh circular was issued on January 21, leaving

the college managements in a spot.

While at several places the busts have either not been installed or unveiled, in places where they were, it turned out that no one statue looked like the other.

In a government college in Rewa, students protested saying their Gandhi looked more like Ben Kingsley, the British actor who played the Mahatma in the 1982 biopic *Gandhi*. Calling it an insult to Gandhi, they forced the college management to order a replacement of the bust.

Two other colleges in the district too got Gandhis who bore an unmistakable resemblance to the actor, but they are so far okay with their Gandhi.

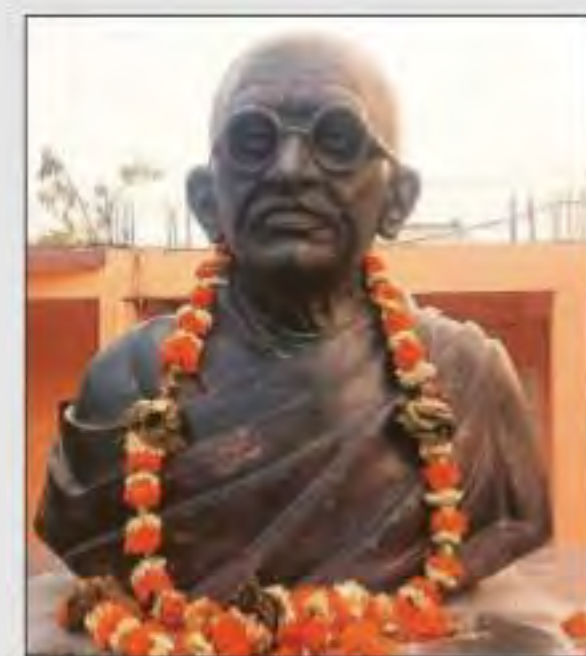
Five of the Gandhis:



BHOPAL
GOVERNMENT MOTILAL
VIGYAN MAHAVIDYALAYA



GUNA
GOVERNMENT
POST-GRADUATE COLLEGE



HARIDWAR
GOVERNMENT SWAMI
VIVEKANAND COLLEGE



JABALPUR
GOVERNMENT SCIENCE
COLLEGE



MANDASAUR
GOVERNMENT
POST-GRADUATE
COLLEGE

'Next violence in Uttar Pradesh will be over joblessness'

Amid Citizenship (Amendment) Act fears, a BJP MLA's plan to settle refugees in Kawal, epicentre of 2013 Uttar Pradesh riots, leaves questions on all sides

AMITAVA CHAKRABORTY

THE EPICENTRE of the 2013 communal riots, Kawal in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district has barely managed to put the cracks forced open by the violence behind. Now, the village is viewing with trepidation the offer by its MLA, Vikram Saini, to facilitate settlement of 25 Hindu Pakistani refugee families in the village as a counter to the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Sitting in the courtyard of his two-storey home — one of the biggest in Kawal — Saini, the BJP MLA from Khatauli, who faces an attempt-to-murder charge in the 2013 riots case, says, "I want to do this in national interest. The 25 families include seven who are already living in Muzaffarnagar. I want five big houses where these families can be settled. If such land cannot be found, I'll donate own. We are planning to build two-bedroom houses with toilets."

While the CAA rules are yet to be framed, UP has begun preparing a tentative list of refugees in the state who will be entitled for citizenship under the Act, subject to verification of documents. At least 32,000 refugees

have been identified by the government across 21 districts, including Muzaffarnagar.

Most of the houses in Kawal, a village of about 10,800 people as per the 2011 Census, are brick-and-tile structures.

Pankaj Saini, who has been a *shiksha mitra* for the last few years and hopes to be appointed a permanent government teacher "one day", voices the concern of most in the village when he says, "How does the government plan to provide livelihood to the refugees? The next violence in the state will be due to joblessness and the government's faulty employment generation policies."

With no factories in the vicinity, a majority of Kawal's residents are engaged in agriculture, mainly sugarcane farming. There is a government school, till Class 8, with more than 360 students squeezed into six rooms. Since 2013, two of the rooms have been taken up by security personnel who are posted round the clock here. There are nine teachers.

To complete schooling, children must travel at least 6 km to Jansath tehsil, the administrative block town. At 70.61 per cent though, Kawal's literacy rate is higher than that of the state (67.68 per cent).

Ashwini Kumar, a PhD in Environmental

Sciences and Engineering, is a role model for most in Kawal. Home on leave, Ashwini says he doesn't see a problem with the CAA per se, as "we must only allow legal residents in the country". However, he adds, "The government is not even able to provide us employment, how will it give jobs to the refugees? I work at a university in Dhanbad. I want to return. But what option do I have?"

The MLA's proposal has also caused the lingering animosity since 2013 to resurface. Muslims comprise approximately 59.77 per cent of the population of Jansath tehsil, and are in a majority in Kawal too. Although the incident that led to the 2013 riots is still debated, one of the versions is that it was set off by a Hindu Jat girl being harassed by a Muslim youth at Kawal.

With thousands displaced in the riots, including from Kawal, Muslims are concentrated in ghettos in the village. They mostly work as farm labourers or run small shops.

Savita Rani, the in-charge of the primary section of the government school, says, "Our village has never witnessed Hindu-Muslim violence except in 2013. We have no problem if refugees are settled here."

Dismissing protests against the CAA, Pankaj



Since 2013 riots, police are stationed at local government school. Amitava Chakraborty

says, "It's good that Muslims are out (of the Act). They are not in a minority in Pakistan and Bangladesh (the government reasons the Act is about persecuted minorities in the two countries, plus Afghanistan). And more importantly, it's not only about being in a minority. The Parsis and Jains are also minority groups, look how developed their communities are."

Ashwini butts in to argue that Muslims are responsible for their own plight. "They only want to increase population and support Pakistan in cricket matches. But then, if you tell them to go to Pakistan, they won't."

About a minute's walk from the primary school, the rumours and allegations have had their effect. Muslims have been lining up at the shop of 35-year-old Pradeep Kumar, which

offers services such as filling up of online forms for domicile and caste certificates, Aadhaar and ration cards. "Since the citizenship law was passed, my work has increased over 90 per cent," Pradeep says, showing the affidavit of a 65-year-old man who has applied for a birth certificate. "From where will the authorities find the birth certificate of someone born on December 10, 1955?" he adds.

Soaking in the sun outside his small shop that sells everything from *charpoy*s to cookers on the main Jansath Road, Rahis Ahmad Siddique, 52, who has lived all his life in Kawal, admits they are worried. "We welcome the statement of our MLA. We will help the Hindu refugees who will be settled here however we can. But there was no need for a new cit-

izenship law. There is no need for anyone to go to Pakistan. Some people are residing illegally, but to throw them out, why hassle all of us? The government has issued us Aadhaar, PAN and ration cards and has all our details. Yet, it asks us for proof. We had no problems with *notebandi*, the GST or any other policies. But was a new citizenship law needed?"

Sitting beside him, old friend Mausam Ali, a land-owning farmer, says he too has all the necessary documents such as Aadhaar, land deeds. "I will be able to prove my citizenship. But many Muslims don't have such documents, like my younger brother. That doesn't mean he is not Indian. He was born in front of my eyes." As a result, "fear" doesn't leave them, the friends admit. "We don't know what will happen."

A few metres from Pradeep's shop, labourer Rajpal Singh is bitter about being forced to work as a labourer even at the age of 45. "A good pension is what I need. A man becomes minister for a day and gets pension for life. I have been working decades." However, he welcomes Pakistani Hindus settling in Kawal. "Many people say the influx will be a burden. *Par kuchch toh yahan se bhi jayenge. Eka aayega toh dus jayenge bhi* (However, some illegal immigrants will leave from here too. If one refugee comes, 10 will go too)."

He quickly adds, "But I don't want Muslims to leave, only those who do not belong to this land."

But what is the evidence of one belonging to this land, Siddique wonders. Going inside his shop to cater to customers, the 52-year-old stops to narrate all the times he has saved cows injured in road accidents. "Like yesterday morning, I saw a cow on the edge of the road bleeding. I pulled it aside and called a doctor. I bore the cost of the treatment," he says.

Across THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM
Website: pchidambaram.in
Twitter @Pchidambaram_IN

Government is clueless and timid

BUDGET 2020-21 was presented on February 1, 2020. It made the headlines and was the subject of editorials on February 2 but, on the next day, it practically vanished from the front pages of newspapers and from television channels. It was like a movie that bombed on the first day.

The BJP, the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister have to blame themselves. They cannot blame the Chief Economic Adviser (who gave some sound advice in the Economic Survey) or the economists and the businesspersons who met the PM for pre-Budget consultations. There were many ideas on the table. Reflecting the buzz in the markets, I had, in my column of January 26, listed 10 things that the FM could do in the Budget.

If the FM did not heed the advice of the CEA or the economists or yield to the demands of businesspersons, it was because of the following reasons:

1. The government is in denial

The government has not accepted that demonetisation and a flawed GST were monumental mistakes that killed MSMEs and destroyed jobs. It has not acknowledged that the slowdown is due to declining exports, instability in the financial sector, inadequate credit supply, lower household savings and reduced consumption, collapse of mining and manufacturing, and pervasive uncertainty and fear. Unfortunately, the FM made no reference in her speech to these negative features of the economy.

2. The government's assessment of the state of the economy is hopelessly wrong

The government believes that the slowdown of the economy is due to cyclical factors and the upturn will happen if they do more of the same — scrounge for money, put more money into on-going programmes, and announce new programmes. If the causes of the slowdown are more structural than cyclical — as many economists believe — the government has virtually foreclosed the options it had to revive the economy.

3. The government's ideological pre-dispositions are obsolete and revival

The government believes in outdated philosophies like protectionism, import substitution, a 'strong' rupee etc. It does not believe in the multiple benefits of external trade and seems to have given up the effort to find ways to boost exports. It has embraced the retrograde idea of increasing import tariffs. It also appears reluctant to let the rupee find a more realistic level. Given these pre-dispositions, the government finds itself short of solutions.

4. The government is unwilling to reverse measures that have deepened the distrust between the government and business

The government has criminalised many economic laws. It has conferred extraordinary powers on even the lowest-rung officers of the tax-collecting de-

partments and the investigating agencies. Tax collection has become tax terrorism (remember V G Siddhartha). The process of contesting or paying the taxes that are demanded — the process itself — has become the ultimate harassment. The Charter of Rights of Taxpayers promised by the FM has provoked a cynical reaction — why doesn't the government simply withdraw the *carte blanche* given to the authorities and agencies?

5. The government has proved itself to be an incompetent manager

From demonetisation to GST, from *Swachh Bharat Mission* to electrification of homes, from *Ujjwala Yojana* to *UDAY*, every programme has serious shortcomings. Unfortunately, the government lives in an echo chamber and hears only adulatory responses. Hence, while humongous amounts of money have been spent on these programmes, the outcomes have been unsatisfactory. The administrative machinery lacks the capacity to improve the implementation or report the true outcomes.

Therefore, there is no surprise that the FM settled for a lacklustre Budget, modest nominal growth of GDP and misplaced optimism about tax revenues. While nominal GDP is estimated to grow at 10 per cent, gross tax revenues are estimated to grow at 12 per cent — an unlikely outcome. Further, the estimated revenues were distributed among a number of programmes — good and bad — as a result of which there was little scope to allocate more funds to programmes that

would have ensured that more money reached the hands of the poor quickly. Funds have been unspent in the current year or slashed in the next year for MGN-REGA, the Mid-day Meal Scheme, food subsidy, PM Kisan Samman etc. I do not foresee a rise in rural incomes/wages or household consumption.

The so-called tax concession given to the income tax payer in the lower brackets has cluttered the tax structure and created confusion. The estimated benefit of Rs 40,000 crore is not certain and, any way, too small to be impactful.

Nor is there any incentive that will boost private investment. The abolition of DDT has merely shifted the burden of the tax from the company to the shareholders. Besides, when capacity utilisation in manufacturing is at about 70 per cent (thermal power generation is at about 55 per cent of installed capacity), there is little scope for new investment.

In sum, the FM has not addressed the needs of a demand-constrained and investment-starved economy. Nor has she appreciated the multiplier effect of boosting exports. She was compelled to rely on one engine — government expenditure — but that engine too is short of fuel and the spectre of fiscal instability looms over the government. She has also ignored the two most pressing issues — massive unemployment and closure of MSMEs.

Faced with the most severe challenges to the economy in recent years, the self-proclaimed strong and decisive government has proved to be clueless and timid.

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH
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Delhi's worst election campaign

NEVER HAS an election campaign in Delhi been as ugly as the one just ended. Never have senior ministers of the government of India spent so much time on what is essentially a municipal election. Never before have we seen so open an attempt to make it an election to divide Hindus and Muslims.

Despite the ugliness and venom that defined the BJP's campaign, early opinion polls indicate that it is unlikely to win Delhi. It deserves to lose. I speak as someone who has spent more than half a lifetime in this city and who cherishes its syncretic culture.

It horrified me to hear senior BJP leaders like Yogi Adityanath make the word 'biryani' a term of abuse and to hear other BJP leaders speak of this election as a choice between 'India and Pakistan'. Horrified to hear a minister in the government of India urge his audience to 'shoot traitors' and to hear Home Minister Amit Shah say at a public rally that he wanted voters to press so hard on the 'button' that registered their vote that it would send a shock all the way to Shaheen Bagh.

Had he bothered instead to actually go and talk to the women in Shaheen Bagh, he would have discovered that they are not Pakistanis or traitors. All they want from him is an assurance that he will not implement, as he has threatened more than once, a nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Sadly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, instead of controlling his troops, has actually encouraged them. Last week in the Lok Sabha, he accused opposition leaders of spreading lies about the new citizenship law. And, during the campaign for Delhi, he said much too often that he saw in the Shaheen Bagh protest a sinister attempt to spread anarchy in India.

If he examines the protests without prejudice, he will discover that the protesters have genuine fears that if an NRC is held, they will be unable to produce the documents that prove that they are Indian. He may also discover that their fears have been exacerbated by the sort of speeches that were made by BJP leaders during the election campaign for Delhi.

As a 'Dilliwali', what the campaign brought home to me with brutal clarity was that India's new ruling elite has not yet begun to understand Delhi. In their obsession with 'Lootyens' and Khan Market, our new leaders have not noticed that it is in this city that Urdu was born. It is this city that is the capital of the Ganga-Jamuni culture this new elite so despises. Some of the greatest Urdu poets were born in this city as well as some of the greatest Hindi writers. And, it was out of this linguistic harmony that the language of Delhi became Hindustani.

This uniquely Delhi culture needs to be cherished, not torn to shreds by making Hindus believe that the women protesting in Shaheen Bagh are leading a jihad against India. BJP leaders have gone so far as to say that these women are 'rapists' and that, if protests like these continue, then Delhi will once more come under 'Mughal Raj'.

This kind of talk is not just dangerous but 'anti-national' in the truest sense of that awful term. The Mughals did indeed rule India once, Muslim invaders did indeed commit terrible acts of brutality in Delhi, but it is also true that from those centuries of Muslim rule was born a culture that was syncretic. These syncretic ties exist not just in Delhi, they are woven into the fabric of north Indian culture.

This is why Delhi survived Partition and the influx of refugees who came to this city from the Punjab, bringing with them tales of unspeakable horror. My father's family was among those refugees and not once did I hear them speak with hatred or bitterness about what had happened to them. The only time I can remember my grandmother speaking about Partition was after I became a journalist and was asked to interview her for a story I was writing.

It was then that she told me that she had been fortunate to get on a train from Lahore to Amritsar at the time that was not attacked. All the other trains that day brought only corpses. She never spoke of this again to me because the pain was too deep.

It is very deep for a lot of Delhi's citizens, but as Vidya Naipaul once said, "The past has to be seen to be dead; or the past will kill."

It is tragic that this campaign for Delhi was about things that happened in the long dead past and not as it should have been, about Delhi's future. This was entirely because of the tone of the BJP's campaign. Losing Delhi will be just punishment for this shameless attempt to divide and rule.

Prejudice persists, waiting for Ambedkar's dream

Dalitality
SURAJ YENGDE

Twitter @Surajyengde



LOOKING AT the worrying social health of India, one wonders if it is ready and willing to share space with fellow citizens who it considers the wretched Others.

The othering is not limited to estrangement but graduates to violence, exclusion and repeated oppression. Newer strategies are plotted 24x7 by the upper castes to form a para-structure in order to remove them from positions of power which they see as their privilege.

A person with dominant caste roots already carries a privilege of thousands of years. Added to that, various institutions that exist cater to their needs. This results in an archetype that is naturalised as pan-India, with a language, food, culture and social set-up that actually discounts the everydayness of a majority of India that comprises the Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims as well as backward classes.

India is a Brahminical State, notwithstanding its secular nature. The entire system favours the twice-born savarnas, mostly Brahmins who occupy the highest position by default in all the major sectors, controlling wealth and power.

If Brahmins and other savarnas enjoy these ill-gotten privileges without much question, why do they indulge in the sadistic act of forcing psychological and physical pain upon powerless subjects who they see as their serfs?

Almost every Brahminical festival or celebration is anti-Dalit, and to an extent anti-Adivasi. The *asuras* (demons) occupy a special place, whether it is Ravana or Mahishasur, while the *devas* are fair-skinned Aryans.

Imagine living in a country where one worries constantly about one's immediate security and safety. Handicapped by these immediate threats, the Dalits are unable to rise to their full potential. Raising a child for the Dalits under such circumstances is mortifying.

So, what are the ways that the Dalits can be safe and secure enough to enjoy the fruits of a Constitution that guarantees them freedom?

If hatred is such, one needs to ask if

this country is even equipped to consider the Dalits as fellow, equal citizens? Babasaheb Ambedkar himself was highly sceptical of the social and economic inequalities which persist, warning that these would engender serious problems.

This scepticism led him to suggest several methods for Dalit security.

Ambedkar concluded that the Indian habitat was a dangerous place for the Dalits. He mooted separate settlements as one solution, which would bind the Dalits together and make them economically autonomous.

Social divisions might operate in these settlements too, and there is a fear that this might see a repeat of the experiences of the Bantus in Africa. Separate settlements ended up depriving them of basic infrastructure.

However, such fears present only an incomplete picture, as such settlements would ensure that the Dalits are not subordinated, nor merely secondary Hindus. For, I argue that Hindu India is not mentally prepared to grant equal citizenship to everyone. It lives in the fear of Others. There may be cascades of generational violence should the Dalits start replying in equal fervour.

However, can the rest of India survive without them? Who will do the filthy work it has made it the sole privilege of these untouchables? Drafting Ambedkar into the Constituent Assembly was hence a good gamble. It made the Dalits nationalists in a country where no one else actually stands to defend their rights.

In recently published research, Amit Thorat and Omkar Joshi say untouchability is still an everyday reality for the Dalits, with 20 per cent of urban and 30 per cent of rural India accepting that they practise it. The numbers may be far more as the information collected by the research was voluntary, with much reluctance seen in urban areas to provide answers. Half of India openly accepted acts of caste criminality.

In the same research, on almost all aspects of untouchability, the Brahmins led from the front.

Ambedkar's desires are yet to be fulfilled as his people continue to live his worst fears.

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History HEADLINE

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ON JANUARY 27, the 3rd Bodo Peace Accord in the form of Bodoland Territorial Region was signed, effectively ending insurgency that has lasted years.

In the late 19th and early 20th Century, Bodos and other native communities in Brahmaputra Valley witnessed large-scale in-migration from the then East Bengal and the Central Indian Chota Nagpur region. A British administrator, Sir Edward Gait, predicted in his book *A History of Assam* that the extinction of the Bodo community was just a matter of time.

It is around this time that a socio-political-religious leader, Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, started mobilising Bodos and other plains tribes to reclaim their ethnic and linguistic identity. In 1928-29, a Bodo delegation led by Brahma submitted a memorandum to the visiting Simon Commission, demanding a Bodo Regiment in the British (Indian) Army; reservation of seats in Assam's Provincial Council and local bodies; and the right of Bodos to enlist separately as Bodo in the electoral roll and Census. Many of demands were later conceded through the Government of India Act 1935.

In 1935, the Assam Tribal League won many seats and supported the Gopinath Bordoloi-led Indian National Congress government in Assam. In 1948, through the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, tribal land was sought to be protected by creating a separate Tribal Belt and Block, a move that led to the merger of the Assam Tribal League with the Congress.

In 1952, two powerful socio-cultural-literary bodies, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS) and All Assam Tribal Sangha, moved in to fill the political vacuum amongst the Bodos. While in 1963 the BSS managed to get Bodo language introduced as a medium of instruction in schools, the Tribal Sangha stuck to political demands. In the 1960s, with India witnessing the creation of separate states on linguistic and ethnic lines, the Bodos remained hopeful of a state. But while most of the hill districts of Assam were created to safeguard hill tribes, the Bodos, one of the largest tribal groups of India numbering more than four million, were once again forced to take up political demands.

In 1967, the Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and All Bodo Students Union (ABSU) were formed, seeking a separate state by the name of 'Udayachal' for the plains tribes.

Around the same time, the BSS

Bodo accord follows a series of betrayals



NDFB cadres in Kokrajhar, Assam, celebrate signing of recent Bodo Accord. AP

launched a mass movement seeking that the Assamese script be replaced with the Roman script. The Assam government tried to crush this movement, imprisoning thousands. In 1973, 17 people were killed when police fired on protesters.

This planted the seeds of Bodo militancy. In 1986, with Bodofa Upendra Nath Brahma as president, the ABSU decided to take over the movement for a separate state and called it Bodoland. A mass movement was started on March 2, 1987, which was countered by the Assam Gana Parishad government, then flush with the success of the Assam Accord of 1985.

In 1986, the first Bodo militant outfit, the Bodo Security Force (BSF), was born, followed by the Bodo Volunteer Force two years later. In 1989, a riot in Gohpur area between the Assamese and Bodos led to killing of 550 Bodos while over 75,000 fled to Arunachal Pradesh. This fuelled the divide between the Assamese and Bodos. With law and order collapsing, the Centre deployed the Army across Assam.

On May 1, 1990, ABSU president Brahma died and it started talks with the Government, leading to the first peace accord on February 20, 1993, and a Bodoland Autonomous Council (BAC). However, when not even one of its clauses was implemented by Assam, a section of the ABSU leaders went underground to form the Bodo Liberation Tigers (BLT), one of the most ferocious militant groups of our time. In the meantime, the BSF, with camps in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar, renamed itself the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB).

What followed were gun battles, killings, kidnappings, extortion. All the Bodo areas were brought under AFSPA.

At the time of the 1999 Kargil War, responding to a plea by then home minister L K Advani, the BLT declared a ceasefire, facilitating safe passage for the Army through the Siliguri Corridor that connects Northeast to mainland India. Finally, on February 10, 2003, the Bodoland Territorial Council Accord was signed, facilitating Bodoland Territorial Area Districts. It covered Baksa, Chirang, Kokrajhar and Udalguri districts of Assam.

In 2004, a Suspension of Operation Agreement was signed between the NDFB and the government.

With little emerging out of the negotiations, a section of the NDFB broke the Agreement, and carried out attacks across Assam. Gobinda Basumatary went on to form the NDFB(P), even as a large number of cadres remained with the parent organisation led by Ranjan Daimary.

Daimary led from his hideouts in Bangladesh until he was arrested in 2010, after which NDFB too declared a ceasefire. But again nothing emerged from the peace negotiations. Finally, thanks to protests by the ABSU, the Central and state governments started negotiating with all factions. It was this that eventually led to the signing of the 3rd Bodo Peace Accord, with all four factions of the NDFB surrendering on January 30 in Guwahati.

The writer works with the North East Research & Social Work Networking, a voluntary organisation based in Assam

Out of MY MIND

MEGHNA DESAI



INDIA IS a democracy but also has a political culture obsessed with legal technicalities. Few other countries have citizens who talk about their Constitution with such respect (though often not with knowledge) as Indians do. Currently the debate on Citizenship (Amendment) Act illustrates this. In my view whatever you may think of the CAA, it is hard to call it unconstitutional. It does not concern Indian citizens but refugees. The people opposing it suspect that it will be used in a discriminating way during the National Register of Citizens/National Population Register exercises. This is a conjecture

Govt needs to talk to the protesters

which may yet turn out to be true but then it will be difficult to pin down where the violation of the Constitution occurs.

But India has another older tradition which is foundational for its democracy. This is the tradition established by Mohandas Gandhi during the non-cooperation movement — of law-abiding violation of the Law. Gandhiji practised open defiance of the law, accepting the consequent punishment. This implicitly accepted that the law was (in terms of the Colonial Rule) valid. Even so, it flouted rules of natural justice. Hence civil non-violent resistance was the weapon used.

Does this recounting of old history have any relevance today? Once again, a

large though uncoordinated mass resistance movement across the country is defying the law. It grew up spontaneously after the police incursion on the Jamia Millia Islamia University campus for whatever reason. The spread of the movement especially after the Shaheen Bagh occupation has been spectacular. It may suit the government to blame one or the other opposition parties for having organised it. But we know that none of them has the imagination or the ability to organise any popular movement on this scale. What is more, wherever they are in power, their attitude to any dissent is to unleash their vigilante gangs or police. The ability to tolerate difference is largely absent from the culture of Indian political

parties whenever they are in power. The CPM had Nandigram and the Congress the 1984 Sikh pogrom.

Because this is a political phenomenon not led by opposition political parties, there is a curious lack of response from the government. Maybe it is the Delhi elections which are making a direct approach difficult. But something is needed to break the tension.

Ideally, there should be dialogue between the government, including the BJP/RSS leaders, and the demonstrating groups. But the demonstrators are unorganised. The leaders of the political opposition parties are not leading the movement but commenting from the sidelines. This requires someone whom all sides can

trust to orchestrate the dialogue. As of now there is no one who can do it except Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but he has not been willing to engage with the citizens. He sees it as an opportunity to attack the opposition parties. This attributes more power and influence to the opposition parties than they really have. They are rivals for votes at elections but irrelevant to the issue at hand.

It would be easy for the government to reject dialogue with "law-breakers", to use police and other security forces to get its way. Lives would be lost needlessly to prove the point that the government is within its power to restrain those breaking the law. It never works, protests will continue.

The Time Keepers

What bound three of India's eminent medievalists together? Friendship and a respect for scholarship and diversity, says TCA Raghavan in his new book

KAUSHIK DASGUPTA

THE DISCIPLINE of history is confronted by a paradox today. On one hand, there seems to be a renewed interest in the past, testified by the publication of biographies of personalities who lived a few centuries ago. Though written, by and large, for the non-academic audience, such literature can stand scrutiny and the test of historical methods. Cinema, too, has drawn on themes and episodes in history, though its fidelity to research remains questionable. It seems to feed into the other aspect of the paradox – the evocation of history in ideological battles. Of course, the past has rarely been a territory unaffected by the predilections of the present. But a difference ought to be made between professionals trained in the nuances of the discipline and those who trace genealogies of plastic surgery to elephant deities or reduce personalities of yore to communally-loaded caricatures.

The three protagonists of the work under review would have found this situation interesting. TCA Raghavan's *History Men* is about a trio with a commitment to writing history with the conviction that the study of the past had a value in itself. It's about the friendship between three medievalists, two of them rather well-known and closer in years, Jadunath Sarkar and GS Sardesai, and the lesser-known and younger Raghuraj Singh. It was friendship that began, rather appropriately, in the quest for sources of the past.

Sarkar, whose felicity with Persian sources was well-known in the early years of the 20th century, received a suggestion from his colleague, Gopal Rao Deodhar, that a knowledge of Maratha sources would be useful for his research. He was directed to Sardesai with the suggestion that the association would prove mutually beneficial: to Sarkar for Maratha documents and to Sardesai for Mughal and Persian sources. The two corresponded first in 1904 and met in 1909. The five-decade long friendship between the 'Mughal' and the 'Maratha' was important in locating new sources and enriching the knowledge of the late 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

The third figure in this triad is Maharajkumar Raghuraj Singh, "scion and heir to the small princely state of Sitamau in Central India". The heir to a princely state, wanting to conduct serious historical research, writes Raghavan, was unusual for the times. Singh became Sarkar's student in the 1920s and the relationship turned to friendship after the Rajput scion submitted his thesis to the Agra University, 'Malwa in Transition or a Century of Anarchy (1698-1766)'. Through his mentor, he was drawn to Sardesai and became an equal participant in the endeavours of his seniors – Singh, committed to the widest dissemination of history, wrote in Hindi, and founded a public library. For historiography, this association meant the enlivening of the Mughal, Maratha and Rajput interface during a time of immense political flux in the country.

The pursuits of the trio inevitably linked with a particularly fraught aspect of Indian historiography. They wrote at a time when history was beginning to get caught up in ideological positions. Sarkar's understanding of Aurangzeb's bigotry has come to be regarded as the forebearer of communal history. But the historian's unequivocal fidelity to his sources has been acknowledged by even his most trenchant critics. "National history," he wrote in a letter to Rajendra Prasad, "like every other history of the name and deserving to endure must be true as regards the facts and reasonable in the interpretation of them. It will be national not in the sense that it will try to suppress or whitewash everything in our

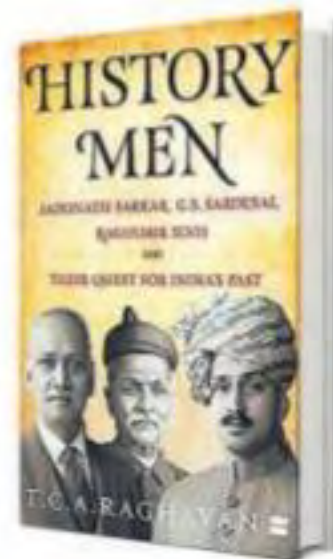


Jadunath Sarkar and Raghuraj Singh in a photo from December 1937. Courtesy: HarperCollins

country's past which must be disgraceful, but because it will admit them, and, at the same time, point out that there were other and nobler aspects in that stage of our nation's evolution, which offset the former."

But Sarkar's unrelenting pursuit of facts could be deemed "politically incorrect" in his times and his assessment of Aurangzeb was viewed as divisive and negative. It seems that the reception made Sarkar bitter towards a large section of his professional community. He avoided the Indian History Congress, though he was invited to it on more than one occasion – in fact, he was once elected president *in absentia*, a post which he spurned. Sardesai and Singh, in contrast, delivered presidential lectures to the History Congress. Sarkar, in fact, on one occasion, was rather caustic about Sardesai's optimism about the History Congress's ability to bring the Jaipur royal archives to the light of the day.

There were other instances when these historians differed. Singh's views on the Marathas in Malwa, for example, was at dif-



HISTORY MEN
JADUNATH SARKAR, G S SARDESAI AND RAGHURAJ SINGH AND THEIR QUEST FOR INDIA'S PAST
TCA RAGHAVAN
HarperCollins
427 pages
₹ 800

ference with that of Sardesai's. The Maratha expansion, he argued, was because of their superior military force rather than any sense of religious affinity with the Rajputs. "What is interesting," writes Raghavan, is "how on account of these different perspectives, the same manuscript source was read differently by the two historians – an excellent introduction of an essential feature of history writing".

With history writing rightly forsaking its Rankean approach to political history, the works of the trio were overtaken by social and economic histories. Interestingly, this seems to have exonerated Sarkar, at least implicitly, of communal inclinations – his fault, instead, was emphasising too much on the frailties of personalities. With Sardesai and Singh, he shared a single-minded pursuit of facts. The *History Men* animates this quest. It showcases three historians cooperating, debating and disagreeing in order to hone their craft – that's something that should be salutary to today's conversations about the past as well.

CHAPTER 1, LINE 1

"Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941."
—*The Bluest Eye* (1970), Toni Morrison



Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Express Archive

The Road to Change

Shortly after the lynching of Pehlu Khan, Tavleen Singh was granted an audience with the Prime Minister, and found him somewhat changed

TAVLEEN SINGH

ALMOST EXACTLY a year earlier I had been granted an audience with Narendra Modi. I had gone to present him with a copy of my book *India's Broken Trust* that had just been published. It was only because of this that I was granted an audience. It was the first private conversation I had with him after he became Prime Minister. We met in that same room with glass walls looking onto manicured lawns in which I had last met him with a group of journalists. He looked serene, well groomed and had about him an aura of

power that I had not noticed in the days before he became Prime Minister. There was also a new coldness in his manner. He seemed to have forgotten how to smile and in his eyes was a messianic glitter as if talking to a mere mortal required effort.

As always, our conversation was uninterrupted by aides or phones. We talked about a lot of things, perhaps because this was not an official interview. He told me that he was unable to understand how to deal with the media, making it clear that the media had always treated him unfairly. When he was Chief Minister, he said, a journalist had criticised him for wearing designer glasses and expensive watches. He was hurt by the criticism. So he sent him to the shop in Ahmedabad where he had bought his glasses for many years so that he could see that they cost no more than a few hundred rupees. And shown him that he wore a simple Indian watch. He even sent him to the tailor who had stitched his clothes for years. He did this, he said, in the hope that the journalist would write that he had been wrong about these things. He never did.

...We moved from his personal grievances against the media to the economy. I got the impression that he was worried that it seemed to be moving more slowly than he had expected and that foreign investors were not lining up at India's gates with bags bursting with money. With a really gloomy expression on his face he told me that he had made a mistake by not ordering a white paper on the state of the economy he had inherited. Things were much, much worse than he had believed. He did not say this in so many words but sort of admitted that he had papered over the extent of damage to the economy in the hope that investors would come from foreign lands to support his Make in India programme...

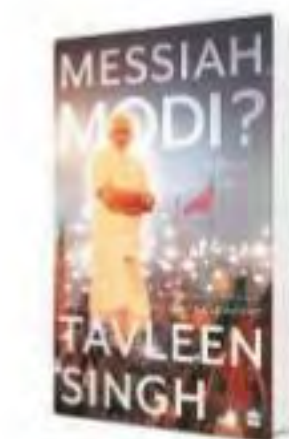
He did most of the talking but at some point I managed to ask him why he had spoken so rarely against the lynchings. He said, "The thing is that something terrible hap-

pens almost every day in this country, so if I started to talk about these things I would do almost nothing else." It was a disheartening response. But I continued to support him in my column [in *The Indian Express*] because I still believed that he was capable of changing India's economic direction in a way that would bring real prosperity... I supported him also because I believed that most Delhi journalists, later known as 'the Lutyens cabal', had been less than fair to him. They had allowed Sonia Gandhi and her son to get away with every stupidity but had been trying to prove from the day Modi became Prime Minister that he was a monster who was bent on

destroying the 'idea of India'...

So when Modi complained about the media's unfairness he had a point. At a personal level I continued to support him because having always lived in Lutyens' Delhi and consorted with the ruling class, it made me happy that someone who did not belong to this English-speaking, colonised elite group had become Prime Minister. I continued to support him because I believed that this colonial elite class, to which I myself belonged, had not done well by India. We had continued to treat India as a colony in much the same way as the British had. Just as they had built for themselves summer resorts in the hills to escape the brutal heat of Indian summers and cantonments in our cities in which only they lived and clubs in which 'dogs and Indians' were forbidden, we had built our own India within India...

We built a private India Club into which the real India rarely entered, except in the form of mosquitoes which brought dreadful diseases like dengue and malaria to remind us of the cesspool that lay outside. And there were the flies which were a terrible nuisance at our garden parties and in our drawing rooms before air-conditioning solved at least this indoor problem. When the roots of democracy grew deeper and stronger and brought to Parliament semi-literate peasant politicians, we allowed them into our charmed circle so we could mock them privately. We loved peasant leaders like Lal Prasad Yadav and Mulayam Singh Yadav because they confirmed to us that on our benign watch real democracy had reached India's grassroots. Modi was another thing altogether. A phenomenon we did not understand at all, and something that threatened our charmed way of life. I, who was sick of the corrupt, colonial elite among whom I had spent most of my life, welcomed the idea of a man who might give ordinary Indians the chance to live a halfway decent sort of life. Sadly, once he became Prime Minister, he seemed to forget this promise of 'parivartan'.



MESSIAH MODI?
TAVLEEN SINGH
HarperCollins India
293 pages
₹ 699

LOOKOUT NOTICE

AMERICAN DIRT, by Jeanine Cummins (Hachette): Touted as one of the biggest books of 2020, *American Dirt*, which follows the travails of a Mexican woman and her son escaping to the United States after a drug cartel massacre, has run into all kinds of trouble.

The book, generously blurbed by Ann Patchett and Stephen King, and marketed as a tribute to the thousands of faceless migrants who die trying to reach a safe

haven, has raised concerns not just about the appropriation of Latinx culture but also plagiarism. In the face of stringent criticism and purported security threats, it has led the publisher to cancel the author's mega 40-city promotional tour. The publisher also acknowledged their "deep inadequacies in how we... address issues of representation, both in the books we publish and in the teams that work on them."

A Shift in the Water

The significant rise of Chinese influence in the islands of the Indian Ocean

JABIN T JACOB

IN *The Costliest Pearl*, Bertil Lintner covers a largely ignored and complicated part of the globe – the islands of the Indian Ocean, from the tiny to the largest. In easy, readable prose, he covers the history, domestic politics and foreign policies of these islands while addressing the gradual but significant rise of Chinese influence in the region.

Lintner has a dim view about the consequences of this rise. While the evidence for such a view remains somewhat thin in the book, his pessimism is well grounded, given his decades of experience as a journalist covering Asia. And, there is absolutely no question that China's somewhat accommodative positions vis-à-vis its East Asian neighbours since the launch of its economic reforms in 1978 were nothing but a holding action that lulled the latter into a false sense of security that the Chinese political system and foreign policies had changed fundamentally from the days of its empire

and then of Mao.

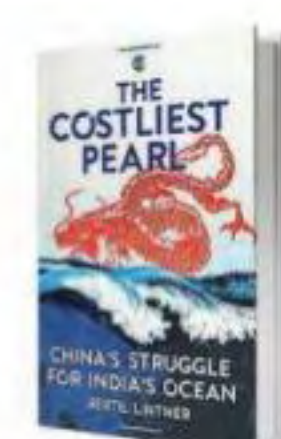
China – like other powers that have dominated the international system – seeks hegemony and the Indian Ocean is an increasingly crucial area of operations for it to achieve this end. The book covers Djibouti, Mauritius, Seychelles, the Maldives, Myanmar, as well as a host of island territories in Indian, French and Australian possession – the attention to France is particularly noteworthy, given how little attention its interests in the Indian Ocean have received in India until quite recently.

While China's ingress into the Indian Ocean is focused on the economic, it is also supported by outreach at the people-to-people level, including to ethnic Chinese communities in these islands, no matter how small. It is interesting to note the growing friction in Madagascar, for example, between older Chinese migrants who have lived generations on the island as Malagasy and newer Chinese immigrants who the former criticise for only being interested in earning money and "tarnish[ing] the gen-

eral image of the Chinese community". Lintner says these "sentiments are unlikely to change the tide of history" but this also suggests that China's ability to insert itself into the politics of Indian Ocean nations will be neither smooth nor easy. However, as the history of India's own ties to polities in the Indian Ocean show, it has not been easy for New Delhi either.

Were it to come down to a question of knowledge of the history, politics, economy, and foreign policies of individual countries of the region as well as the ability to engage them diplomatically, economically and militarily, China's significant and growing lead over India in the allocation of human and financial resources for these tasks will eventually undercut whatever advantages of geography India possesses. India's diplomatic corps is seldom afflicted by doubts about its own capacity, but its military attachés in the Indian Ocean region, who are sometimes accredited to even more countries than their civilian compatriots, have watched with alarm both China's rise and India's inability to either respond quickly or to keep its promises. For Indian strategists, Lintner's book will serve as a constant, often painful, reminder of this reality.

Beijing itself has become increasingly confident about projecting both its military presence and interests in the Indian Ocean. While its military base in Djibouti is the



THE COSTLIEST PEARL:
CHINA'S STRUGGLE FOR INDIA'S OCEAN
BERTIL LINTNER
Context
325 pages
₹ 699

most obvious manifestation, there is a longer history of the Chinese offering weapons and training for military personnel to practically every island and coastal nation in the Indian Ocean from the Comoros to the Seychelles to Myanmar.

The book is peppered with interesting trivia – North Koreans in charge of presidential security in Madagascar and the Seychelles, for example – and there are, at least, a few ideas for movies based on the strange turns of history and political skull-

duggery that Lintner recounts.

One could argue with the author's view that the Indian Ocean is the most likely site of a "misstep" leading to conflict but his conclusion that a "utopian 'power-sharing' agreement" between the US and China (quoting Australian scholar, Hugh White) is unlikely to prevent war as much as a Cold War type "balance of terror" would, is unquestionably correct.

The problem, however, with China's current rise is also what is referred to as maritime "gray zone" operations – its ability to push the envelope just short of the redlines of adversaries, whether big or small, such that the latter do not find kinetic responses feasible for a variety of reasons. And yet, over time, China's opponents also find, as in the case of its occupation and militarisation of South China Sea, that the situation has changed drastically against their interests. China's Belt and Road Initiative investments, political interventions, military diplomacy and active involvement in diaspora associations all count as forms of gray zone operations of a kind in the Indian Ocean.

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TOP OF THE WORLD



Ali Khamenei

IRAN

'Need to increase military might to prevent war'

Dubai: Iran should increase its military might to prevent a war, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told a gathering of air force commanders on Saturday, dismissing the US sanctions on the country as "criminal act". "We should be strong to prevent any war against the county. Being weak will encourage our enemies to attack Iran," Khamenei, Iran's top authority, said. "Since the revolution their (US's) aim was to stop us from having a strong military and a strong air force ... but look at us now. We even build planes. We have transformed their pressure to opportunity," Khamenei said.

PAKISTAN

Court defers verdict against Hafiz Saeed

Lahore: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court Saturday deferred its verdict against Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed in two terror financing cases on his "request" and adjourned the hearing till Tuesday. Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta had last week reserved the verdict against Saeed in two terror financing cases for Saturday. "The ATC judge on Saturday took up the application of Hafiz Saeed requesting the court to club all four terror financing cases against him and announce the verdict after the trial is completed," a court official told PTI.

WEST BANK

Protester killed amid unrest over Mideast plan

Jerusalem: A Palestinian protester was shot dead in the West Bank on Friday as Palestinian and US leaders blamed each other for violence that erupted after President Donald Trump unveiled a Middle East Peace plan that Palestinians rejected as one sided. Protesters and Israeli security forces have repeatedly clashed since the peace proposals were unveiled by Trump, with Israel's prime minister at his side. Friday's killing raised the Palestinian death toll to four. More than a dozen Israelis have been wounded in car-rammings and shooting attacks since the Trump proposal.

U.S. WOMAN, JAPANESE MAN DEAD; CORONAVIRUS CASES AT 34,598

Virus outbreak claims first foreign casualties in China, toll rises to 723

Three more test positive on board quarantined ship off coast of Japan

AGENCIES BEIJING, FEBRUARY 8

AN AMERICAN woman and a Japanese man became the first foreigners to have died from the new coronavirus in China as the death toll jumped to 723 in the country with the confirmed cases soaring to 34,598, health officials said on Saturday.

The American citizen died in Wuhan, the US embassy here said on Saturday, the first confirmed foreign death from the outbreak. "We can confirm that a 60-year-old US citizen diagnosed with coronavirus died at Jinyintang hospital in Wuhan, China on February 6," a US embassy spokesman said.

"We offer sincerest condolences to the family for their loss," Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post quoted the spokesman as saying.

The New York Times reported that the person was a woman and had underlying health conditions, citing two people familiar with the matter.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said earlier that 19 foreign nationals in China have been confirmed to have contracted the virus and undergoing treatment

in hospitals. Two of them were discharged after recovery, the ministry said without disclosing details. Earlier reports said that four Pakistanis and two Australians contracted the virus.

Though the US woman is officially stated to be the first foreigner to have died due to the coronavirus, a Japanese man hospitalised in Wuhan with pneumonia has also died, the Japan's foreign ministry announced in Tokyo.

The Ministry citing Chinese medical authorities said on Saturday the man in his 60s, was possibly infected with the coronavirus but due to difficulties in diagnosing the disease his death had been attributed to viral pneumonia. His cause of death was given as viral pneumonia, it added. The man is potentially the first Japanese to have died from coronavirus, it said.

Meanwhile, a central government inspection group has arrived in Wuhan to thoroughly investigate issues related to Dr Li Wenliang, the whistleblower who was admonished by police last month when he flagged the coronavirus in his special media.

The inspection team would probe the issues related to Li, an ophthalmologist with the



Workers in protective suits ride on a truck carrying medical supplies to a hospital in Hubei province. AP

Central Hospital of Wuhan, who passed away early Friday after being infected with the novel coronavirus, official media reported.

Cruise ship testing

Three more people on a cruise ship off Japan have tested positive for the new coronavirus, bringing the number aboard to 64, the government said Saturday, with passengers facing a two-week quarantine.

The latest confirmation came

a day after an additional 41 passengers were found to have contracted the virus.

Japanese authorities have so far tested about 280 people on board the Diamond Princess, which was quarantined after a former passenger who disembarked in Hong Kong last month was diagnosed with the virus.

Test results from six more people were released on Saturday, with three of them confirmed infected, the health ministry said.

IN ITS FIGHT, CHINA TURNS TO AI, DATA

Beijing is turning to a familiar set of tools to find and prevent potential infections: data tracking and artificial intelligence

Several tech firms have developed apps to help people check if they have taken the same flight or train as confirmed patients, scraping data from lists published by the state media

Use big data tech to track, screen priority (cases), and effectively forecast development of the epidemic in real time, China's National Health Commission (NHC) said in a release

In Beijing, a system developed by Chinese search giant Baidu screens travellers at Qinghe railway station using infrared and face detection technology

If someone has a body temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius or above, the system sets off an alarm — prompting a secondary check by station staff.

STANDOFF CONTINUES AT SHOPPING MALL

Thai soldier kills 17, takes hostages; broadcasts attack on Facebook

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BANGKOK, FEBRUARY 8

A THAI soldier remained holed up in a shopping mall Saturday after gunning down at least 17 people, emergency services said, in an attack relayed through Facebook posts.

The attack in the northeastern city of Nakhon Ratchasima began late in the afternoon at an army barracks, police told AFP.

Three people were killed — among them at least one soldier — when Sergeant-Major Jakrapanth Thommas opened fire. "He stole an army vehicle and drove into the town centre," police Lieutenant-Colonel Mongkol Kuptasiri.

Local media reported the gunman seized weapons from the army arsenal before embarking on a shooting spree in the centre of the town. In a fast-moving incident, authorities could not confirm local media reports the gunman had taken up to 16 hostages.

There were "17 deaths, 14 wounded" late Saturday, said an unnamed spokesperson from Bangkok's Erawan Center — the dispatch centre for emergency services across the country.

Video and photos circulating online relayed panicked scenes on a main road in the city — which is better known as Korat. People fled while at least one fire roared and



A screenshot of a video shot outside the mall. Reuters

what appeared to be the sound of automatic gunfire filled the air.

The gunman also posted photos of himself and wrote several posts on his Facebook page including "should I surrender" and "no one can escape death".

In one Facebook video — since deleted — the assailant, wearing an army helmet, filmed from an open jeep saying, "I'm tired... I can't pull my finger anymore" and making a trigger symbol with his hand. There were also photos of a man in a ski mask holding up a pistol.

"The gunman used a machine gun and shot innocent victims resulting in many injured and dead," spokesman Krissana Pattanacharoen told AFP, adding that the standing toll was "more than 10." The defence ministry said forces have sealed off the Terminal 21 shopping centre but have yet to capture the suspect.

Definitely not prepared for outbreak: Africa scrambles to take precautions

ASSOCIATED PRESS LUSAKA, FEBRUARY 8

AT A Chinese-run hospital in Zambia, some employees watched as people who recently returned from China showed up with coughs but were not placed in isolation. A doctor tending to those patients has stopped coming to work, and health workers have been ordered not to speak publicly about the virus.

The virus that has spread through much of China has yet to be confirmed in Africa, but global health authorities are in-



In Kitwe, Zambia. AP

creasingly worried about the threat to the continent where an estimated 1 million Chinese now live, as some health work-

ers on the ground warn they are not ready to handle an outbreak.

Countries are racing to take precautions as hundreds of travellers arrive from China every day. Safeguards include stronger surveillance at ports of entry and improved quarantine and testing measures across Africa, home to 1.2 billion people and some of the world's weakest systems for detecting and treating disease.

But the effort has been complicated by a critical shortage of testing kits and numerous illnesses that display symptoms similar to the flu-like virus.

"The problem is, even if it's mild, it can paralyse the whole community," said Dr Michel Yao, emergency operations manager in Africa for the World Health Organization.

"We're definitely not prepared. If we had a couple of cases, it would spread very quickly," physiotherapist Fundi Sinkala said.

"We're doing the best we can with what resources we have." The Sino-Zambia Friendship Hospital has taken precautions, including checking temperatures with infrared thermometers and establishing isolation areas.

Pak court rules marriage with underage girl valid as she had 1st menstrual cycle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KARACHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE PARENTS of a 14-year-old Pakistani Christian girl, who was abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and married off to her abductor, will approach the Supreme Court after a lower court ruled that marriage with an underage girl is valid as per the Sharia law if she has had her first menstrual cycle.

Huma was 14 when she was abducted in October last year and forced to marry her abductor Abdul Jabbar after being converted to Islam, according to her parents Younis and Nagheena Masih.

Their counsel Tabassum Yousof on Friday said they would seek justice from the Supreme Court after the Sindh High Court, as per the Sharia law, said earlier this week that even if the girl, Huma, was found to be underage, the marriage between her and her alleged abductor, Jabbar, would be valid as she has already had her first menstrual cycle.

"The girl's parents were convinced that the police investigating officer was supporting Abdul Jabbar and his family. They also fear test results of Huma's age could be falsified and she might be sent with her husband," the lawyer said.

Trump begins post-acquittal purge by firing impeachment witnesses

NEW YORK TIMES WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 8

PRESIDENT TRUMP wasted little time on Friday opening a campaign of retribution against those he blames for his impeachment, firing two of the most prominent witnesses in the House inquiry against him barely 48 hours after being acquitted by the Senate.

Emboldened by his victory and determined to strike back, Trump ordered Gordon D Sondland, the founder of a hotel chain who donated \$1 million to the president's inaugural committee, recalled from his post as the ambassador to the European Union on the same day that Lt



President Donald Trump at the White House. AP

Col Alexander S Vindman, a decorated Iraq war veteran on the National Security Council staff, was marched out of the White House by security guards.

The ousters of Sondland and Colonel Vindman — along with Vindman's brother, Lt Col Yevgeny Vindman, an Army officer who also worked on the National Security Council staff — may only presage a broader effort

to even accounts with the president's perceived enemies. In the two days since his acquittal in the Senate, Trump has railed about those who stood against him, calling them "evil," "corrupt" and "crooked," while his press secretary declared that those who hurt the president "should pay for" it.

Trump attacked Vindman in a tweet on Saturday. "Fake News @CNN & MSDNC keep talking about Lt. Col. Vindman as though I should think only how wonderful he was," Trump wrote. "Actually, I don't know him, never spoke to him, or met him (I don't believe!) but, he was very insubordinate, reported contents of my 'perfect calls' incorrectly." "In other words, 'OUT'."

JAMES OLIPHANT & MICHAEL MARTINA MANCHESTER, FEBRUARY 8

DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL contenders Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg, the top finishers in Iowa's first nominating contest, faced a barrage of criticism on Friday from rivals who said they did not have what it takes to beat Republican Donald Trump in November.

In a heated debate in New Hampshire just four days before the state's pivotal primary, their Democratic rivals questioned whether Sanders' democratic socialist views and Buttigieg's relative lack of experience and lack of support with African-Americans and Latinos made them too much of a risk for the November 3 election.

Sanders, 78, a US senator and leader of the party's progressive wing, and Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, finished in a virtual dead heat in Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses earlier this week.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, the one-time national front-runner who finished a disappointing fourth in Iowa, delivered his most aggressive performance yet. He said Trump would have an easy time ripping into Sanders in a general election campaign, and Sanders would drag down other Democratic candi-

EXPLAINED Pivotal ballot, more intensity

AFTER confusion around the Iowa primary, the debate in New Hampshire was a sign of increasing intensity. While some candidates such as Sanders and Buttigieg fended off attacks after emerging in the lead, Biden sought to recover his with renewed energy, while others sought to make their mark. While such intensity is normal in the primaries, some have voiced concern about ensuring that the Democrat voter base is consolidated against Trump, and not divided internally.

dates in federal and state races.

Biden and candidate Amy Klobuchar also questioned whether Buttigieg had enough experience to face off with Trump. Buttigieg said the Washington insider experience of some rivals was no longer what was needed, and it was time to "turn the page" on Washington politics. REUTERS

'A BULLET IS RESERVED FOR YOU', READ ONE OF NUMEROUS THREATS

A onetime 'refugee child', now a justice minister, takes on Austria's far right

KATRIN BENNHOLD VIENNA, FEBRUARY 8

ALMA ZADIC is nervous about standing too close to the row of large windows in her office. Since becoming Austria's justice minister, the threats have been relentless. "A bullet is reserved for you," read a recent one. Hours after being sworn in last month, Zadic was given police protection.

A daughter of Bosnian refugees and member of the progressive Green Party, Zadic went into politics three years ago with a clear goal: to fight an ascendant far right.

Now, she is charged with defending policies that were codedesigned by the far right in previous years to effectively keep people like her parents out of the country.

That, in a nutshell, is the moral dilemma facing Austria's liberal pro-refugee Greens in joining forces with the conservatives of Chancellor Sebastian Kurz. The Greens have replaced the far-right Freedom Party as junior partners in government and get to put climate change on the political agenda. But they are also becoming complicit in Kurz's hard-right immigration policy.

No one personifies this

Faustian pact more starkly than Zadic, Austria's first minister with a migrant background. ("A migrant foreground," she corrects me. "It is the first thing about me that people see.")

Her story is in many ways a modern day fairy tale: A refugee girl excels at school, rises fast in her career, is elected to Parliament and becomes a senior member of the Cabinet at 35. But what has made Zadic a hero to many has turned her into a target for others. "Now foreigners get ministerial posts. Austria's Downfall," scoffed one Twitter post.

"Why don't we just put a ter-



A Syrian refugee from Damascus, is welcomed with bubbles upon her arrival in Vienna. NYT/File

rorist in charge of Homeland Security?" another sneered.

The price of going into government was high, both personally and politically. Zadic admitted in an interview one recent evening. But the price of not going into government — of ceding the field to the far right again — would have been much higher, she insists. "It makes a difference who is in government," Zadic said.

Zadic knows this firsthand. She was a teenager in 2000, when the Freedom Party first joined a conservative government under the charismatic and anti-Semitic firebrand Jörg

Haider. Other European capitals froze diplomatic ties with Vienna, while her parents, both engineers, feared they might be deported. "I was still young, but I could feel it," she recalled. "I know my parents worried and had concrete fears about what would happen to us."

Critics warn that the Greens risk becoming a fig leaf for Kurz's hard right agenda. In the governing program, a modest carbon tax on airplane tickets and subsidies for public transport side by side with a headscarf ban for girls up to 14, deportation centers and a controversial new form of "security

detention" for asylum-seekers.

As for Zadic, even friends feel conflicted. "She has a mission impossible," said Stephanie Krisper, a lawmaker from centrist party Neos. For Zadic it is more complicated than that. "In opposition we could have written the most beautiful idealistic proposals, and they would have gone nowhere," she said.

Kurz won 37% of the votes, the Greens only 14, she noted. Between the ballots cast for Kurz's party and the Freedom Party, Austria still has a conservative majority. "We will do our best," she said. NYT

16 ECONOMY

INSURANCE FIRMS ARE SIGNIFICANT INSTITUTIONAL INVESTORS IN MANY LISTED COS

IRDAI asks insurers to play active role in corporate governance of investee firms

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

AT A time when defaults, fund diversions and mismanagements have rocked the corporate sector, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) asked insurers to play an active role in ensuring high level of corporate governance standards in listed companies in which they have investments.

Insurance companies, especially Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), are significant institutional investors in listed companies and the investments are held by them as custodians of policyholders' funds. "The state of governance of the investee companies is an important aspect and insurance companies must ensure that investee companies maintain corporate governance standards at high level," IRDAI said in its revised guidelines on stewardship code for insurers in India.

"Insurance companies should play an active role in the general meetings of investee companies and engage with the managements at a greater level to improve their governance," it said. "This will result in informed decisions by the parties and improve the return on investments of insurers, which will ultimately benefit policyholders," IRDAI said. LIC alone invests around Rs 50,000 crore in listed companies every year. Four public sector general insurers, GIC Re

EXPLAINED

E. Puts onus on insurers holding notable stake

THE REGULATOR'S new guidelines follow mismanagement and poor corporate governance standards in several listed companies, especially in the financial sector, even though insurers hold significant stakes in such firms. The collapse of IL&FS and DHFL are two examples of institutional neglect. Institutions have either remained mute spectators or supported shady and weak promoters at annual general meetings where resolutions come up for shareholders' nod.

and private insurers are also major investors in listed companies.

The regulator's new guidelines follow mismanagement and poor corporate governance standards in several listed companies, especially in the financial sector, even though insurers hold significant stakes in such firms. The collapse of IL&FS and DHFL are two examples of institutional neglect. Institutions have either remained mute spectators or supported shady and weak promoters at annual general meetings where resolutions come up for shareholders' nod.

IRDAI had conducted a special training programme for independent directors in insurance companies at the National Insurance Academy, Pune.

As per the code for stewardship of the IRDAI, an insurer should have a board-approved stewardship policy, which should identify

and define the stewardship responsibilities that the insurer wishes to undertake and how the policy intends to fulfill the responsibilities to enhance the wealth of its policyholders who are ultimate beneficiaries.

In its revised guidelines, IRDAI said all the insurers need to review and update their existing stewardship policy within three months from the date of issue of the same and the updated stewardship policy needs to be approved by the board of directors. "The updated policy should be disclosed on the website within 30 days of approval by the board by all insurers, alongside the public disclosures," it said.

The IRDAI code says insurers may decide their own engagement strategy and the stewardship policy should clearly set out the criteria/circumstances in which they will actively intervene.

"The policy should provide for regular assessment of the outcomes of intervention by the insurer. Intervention should be considered regardless of whether an active or a passive investment policy is followed," it said.

The regulator said compulsory voting is required if the insurer's holding of the paid-up capital of investee company (in percentage) is 3 per cent or above in the case of insurers with assets under management of up to Rs 2.5 lakh crore and 5 per cent and above for insurers with AUM above Rs 2.50 lakh crore. Circumstances for intervention may include, but not limited to, poor financial performance of the company, corporate governance related practices, remuneration, strategy, environmental, social and governance risks, leadership issues and litigations.

"The mechanisms for intervention may include meetings, discussions with the management for constructive resolution of the issue and in case of escalation thereof, meetings with the boards, collaboration with other investors and voting against decisions," it said.

Various levels of intervention and circumstances in which escalation is required may be identified and disclosed in the stewardship policy. This may also include interaction with the companies through the insurance councils in case of any industry-level issues. Investment committee of the insurer has to consider which mech-

anism to be opted and escalation of matters in specified cases, the code says. As per the revised code, insurers should exercise their independent judgement with regard to voting decisions on resolutions and should not automatically support the proposals of the board of the investee firm.

IRDAI said insurers should have mechanisms for regular monitoring of their investee firms in respect of their performance, leadership effectiveness, succession planning, corporate governance, reporting and other parameters they consider important. "Insurers may or may not wish to have more participation through nominations on the board for active involvement with the investee companies. An insurer who may be willing to have nominations on the board of an investee company should indicate in its stewardship statement the willingness to do so and the mechanism by which this could be done," it said.

It said stewardship activities include monitoring and engaging with investee companies on matters such as strategy, performance of risk, capital structure, and corporate governance, including culture and remuneration. The policy should address all the aspects relating to stewardship activity like managing conflict of interest, training of personnel, monitoring of investee companies, intervention in investee companies, collaboration with other institutional investors and voting activities.

INTERVIEW WITH SHAILESH CHANDRA

'EVs are imminent as they are a better promise than the internal combustion engine'

THE AUTO Expo witnessed divergent positions taken by car manufacturers on electric cars. While some maintained that customers are still not ready for electric cars as acquisition cost remains high and a charging infrastructure is not there, SHAILESH CHANDRA, president, electric mobility business & corporate strategy at Tata Motors, tells ANIL SASI & SANDEEP SINGH electric vehicle future is imminent and he would go with an aggressive portfolio of products. Stating the only thing holding back is charging infrastructure, he said if that happens in two years, people will start buying. Edited excerpts:



Shailesh Chandra, president, electric mobility business & corporate strategy, Tata Motors

There is a broader feeling that tempo on electric cars is not picking up. How do you see it?

If you want to come to the general conclusion, you will see that electric seems to be the theme, apart from the connected theme and safety theme, as emissions and safety are the two driving reasons for disruptions in the auto sector. I would say there is more electric but also remember that two years back, the government came with Vision 2030 and every OEM wanted to give the message that they are with the government.

Two years down the line, you have lesser OEMs participating and one of the factors is downturn. There have been exits from the market. All those people who have shown electric vehicles would want to show that they are aligned with the government's plan. Some OEMs would say that we want to be early movers in this major transition, which may not happen tomorrow, but will happen eventually and we would like to be seen as doing it.

While you sound very optimistic, there are some in the industry who are apprehensive and say that there is no demand for EVs?

I am seeing the glass half full and somebody is seeing it as half empty. It is strategic posture. I think it is imminent as electric vehicle by nature is a much better promise than the internal combustion engine car. If you have an EV product that comes at Rs 1 lakh incremental price over its petrol/diesel equivalent, where in

four years you can save Rs 2 lakh in running cost and it gives a superior performance and much better warranty terms; what else would you expect in an SUV.

Today, what is holding them back is the absence of charging stations. Once that happens, there will be a great degree of comfort and people will start buying that. I think it is a very plausible scenario. So, we want to go with an aggressive portfolio of products in the personal segment. This would ensure that increasingly we get more and more penetration of electric vehicles.

Do you think we will have a reliable charging infrastructure over the next two years?

I think it should come in the next two years. Tata Power has committed to putting up 650 charging points and they are committed with us. I think that because of the FAME subsidy available over the next two years on chargers it should come up. There are states that are also promoting for a certain number of chargers that will be subsidised on top of what the Centre is offering.

So, in two years' time, I would imagine that there will be a critical mass of charging stations and also there will be promising products like Nexon EV that will come from other OEMs, too.

How much of the EESL market has helped electrification?

EESL was a big help to anchor our effort in the electrification to start with. We all know it has not

done 10,000 vehicles and EESL had also mentioned that they have done a certain quantity and not more than that. We had never planned our electrification journey based on government orders, but it was more symbolic. Government use will always be symbolic and not a business case for any OEM. It has to come from fleet and the personal segment and these two segments are our key focus.

But, yes, we are pretty happy with EESL as it helped us build and anchor the effort of electrification in the country. Real electrification started with that tender only. The whole ecosystem players started talking and engaging basis that tender. So, although volume-wise one could say it has not worked, but it has triggered.

How do you see the fleet and personal segment growing?

For a fleet segment, the use case requires a running of 150 km-170 km a day and so you need to make a car that delivers that, and we came with a very specific car in October 2019, which did a 213-km range. It has been a big success in segments where electric vehicle has been adopted in fleet. If they need 200 km, I would give that and not 500-km range because that would disturb their cost of ownership. So, you neither can go overboard on the range nor can go under as that will hamper their revenue opportunity. As of now, our plan on the fleet segment is working and we hope that we can continue our dominant position.

The personal segment is a bigger bet for us. As it holds bigger promise, our aspiration will be more on that side because this is the segment where there will be more transformation. Fleet is only 10-15 per cent of the industry and so it will hit a limit very soon. Therefore, we need to bring more choices for the personal segment. In the past 5-6 months, few choices have come, some of them are CKD options that are very high price point. I would say the first real product is Nexon in the personal segment because people can start thinking of electric. If we are able to offer an EV where its price is not significantly higher in comparison to a petrol or diesel equivalent, then all you need is some charging infrastructure.

BRIEFLY

'Software errors doomed Boeing capsule test'

Washington: Multiple software issues and a poor radio link doomed a test flight of Boeing's crew capsule late last year, NASA said Friday, revealing for the first time a glitch that could have destroyed the spaceship on its re-entry. The Starliner's December 20 mission, an uncrewed test flight, was ended early when it failed to engage its thrusters on time, due to a previously reported faulty timer. NASA said in a statement Friday that the problem arose because it incorrectly pulled time from its Atlas V launch rocket, creating an 11-hour mismatch.

'Virus-hit cos to issue bonds to refinance debt'

Beijing: High-quality Chinese companies affected by the coronavirus outbreak will be allowed to issue bonds to refinance debts due in 2020, the country's state planner said on Saturday. Small firms affected by the epidemic are encouraged to issue bonds to improve their liquidity, the National Development and Reform Commission said on its website, adding companies should also sell bonds to fund virus control and prevention. REUTERS

Govt working to achieve 8% growth: FM

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 8

UNION FINANCE Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said the Centre is working towards the goal of achieving 8 per cent growth rate, riding on the measures announced in the recent Budget. The macroeconomy is strong, evident from the fact that foreign exchange reserves are at their highest and FDI is keeping a steady momentum, she said in an interaction with economists, industry leaders and trade bodies in Chennai.

The equity, bond and currency markets have done well after the Budget presentation. She said the Budget, which proposed to boost the income of Indians and their purchasing power, will act as catalyst to revive domestic economic growth. "Even though there are discussions on whether the economic growth has come down to 5 per cent or 6 per cent from 8 per



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Chennai Saturday. PTI

cent, our base is strong. If not, will the foreign exchange reserve be at the current level? It is higher than ever. Similarly, foreign direct investment is high. If the govern-

ment's work is being criticised with a good intention to improve performance, it is good, and we will return to a growth of 8 per cent," she said. Sitharaman said importers finding difficulty in clearing goods from various ports due to non-arrival of documents because of coronavirus may approach the finance ministry with details for redressal.

On the grievance that banks are still hesitant to lend to small businesses, she said if banks are denying loans without reason to MSMEs, complainants are welcome to send their complaints by mail to a special centre, which will be announced soon. A copy of it should be sent to the concerned bank manager, she said, adding the Centre is taking steps to plug loopholes in GST mop-up. FE

'Smartphone market rises 8% in 2019'

About 152.5 million smartphones were shipped in India in 2019 registering a "modest" 8 per cent growth over last year, IDC said

India's smartphone market to see modest single-digit growth in 2020 as well

TOTAL
A total of 36.9 million smartphone units were shipped in the fourth quarter of 2019, registering 5.5 per cent year-on-year growth, but a 20.8 per cent sequential decline

THE LEADERS

■ For 2020, IDC said the Indian smartphone market is expected to see "modest single-digit growth" in the year

■ According to the IDC data, the overall mobile phone market, with annual shipments of 282.9 million units, declined 12.3 per cent year-on-year in 2019 due to fewer 4G feature phones.

■ Xiaomi registered annual shipments of 43.6 million units in 2019, the highest-ever smartphone shipments made by any brand in a year, with a growth of 9.2 per cent y-o-y and cornered 28.6 per cent market share

■ Samsung followed in the tally with 20.3 per cent share and Vivo (15.6 per cent)

SINGLE-DIGIT GROWTH

■ The online growth momentum continued through the year with a record share of 41.7 per cent in 2019, growing by 18.4 per cent y-o-y annually due to deep discounts, cashback offers, buyback/exchange schemes, and complete protection offers clubbed with attractive financing schemes like no-cost EMI across major model line-ups and brands

■ Average selling prices of smartphones rose 2.8 per cent y-o-y to \$163 (about Rs 11,600)

■ THE SUB-\$200 segment still accounted for 79 per cent of the market
Source: IDC/PTI

Mnuchin sees US GDP growth less than 3% in 2020

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 8

US TREASURY Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Friday he expects 2020 US gross domestic product growth to be less than 3 per cent, partly due to problems at Boeing Co, which halted production of its 737 MAX planes over safety issues.

"I think our projections have been reduced because of Boeing and in other impacts, so it will be lower. I think we would have hit 3 per cent but again, Boeing has had a big impact on our exports

being the largest exporter," Mnuchin said in an interview on Fox Business Network.

"I think that could be 50 basis points," if not more, he said. "There is no question that the virus will have some impact on global growth and some impact on the U.S.," Mnuchin said, referring to the coronavirus outbreak originating in China.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said on Friday that President Donald Trump's administration does not expect the coronavirus will have a major effect on the US economy.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Shanghai to help Tesla resume production

REUTERS
SHANGHAI, FEBRUARY 8

USELECTRIC carmaker Tesla's factory in China's financial hub of Shanghai will resume production on Feb. 10 with assistance to help it cope with a spreading epidemic of coronavirus, a Shanghai government official said on Saturday.

Many factories across China shut in late January for the Lunar New Year holiday that was originally due to end on Jan. 30 but which was extended in a bid to contain the spread of the new flu-like virus that has killed more than 700 people.

Tesla warned on Jan. 30 that it would see a 1-1.5 week delay in

'China blocks Foxconn proposal to restart factories over virus worries'

Bengaluru: Chinese authorities have blocked a plan by Apple supplier Foxconn to resume production in China from Monday, the Nikkei business daily reported Saturday, amid concerns about the spread of the new coronavirus.

The ramp-up of Shanghai-built Model 3 cars as a result of the epidemic, which has severely disrupted communications and supply chains across China.

Tesla Vice President Tao Lin

Public health experts carried out inspections at Foxconn's factories in Shenzhen and told the firm its factories had a "high risk of coronavirus infection", making them unsuitable for an output restart, the newspaper said, citing four people. REUTERS

said this week that production would restart on Feb. 10 and that car deliveries from the plant would be temporarily delayed.

"In view of the practical difficulties key manufacturing firms

including Tesla have faced in resuming production, we will coordinate to make all efforts to help companies resume production as soon as possible," Shanghai municipal government spokesman Xu Wei said.

The \$2 billion Shanghai factory is Tesla's first outside the United States and was built with support from local authorities. It started production in October and began deliveries last month.

The Shanghai government said Saturday it would ask banks to extend loans with preferential rates to small companies and exempt firms in hard-hit sectors like hospitality from value-added tax, among other measures to prop up businesses during the epidemic.

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

DRAWING LESSONS from the alleged role of auditors and their failure to flag irregularities at companies such as Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS), the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has floated a consultation paper seeking industry comments on various aspects of auditing as a profession.

"In most of the cases, the auditor appears to be hand in glove with the management and therefore the questions on their independence and accountability have arisen. In order to plug the aforesaid scenarios/instances, the ministry is of the view that the existing regulatory provisions relating to audit and auditors in Companies Act, 2013 and its rules along with Standard

THE CONSULTATION PAPER SAID THERE IS A NEED TO OVERCOME THE THREAT OF 'ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION OF AUDIT' BY THE BIG FOUR

of Auditing need to be reviewed," the MCA said. The consultation paper, which details five major threats, said there is a need to overcome the threat of "economic concentration of audit" by the Big Four, and therefore "there is a need to build capacity of home grown Indian firms who may need to be at par with global organizations in terms of audit procedures, audit tools, manpower capacity to audit large organisations".

The MCA has sought views from other government departments, regulatory agencies, and

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

THE CONSULTATION PAPER SAID THERE IS A NEED TO OVERCOME THE THREAT OF 'ECONOMIC CONCENTRATION OF AUDIT' BY THE BIG FOUR

others in general on how to amend the existing laws that would enhance the independence of auditing firm and make sure they are also held accountable for any misdeeds. The comments have to be submitted by February 28.

"Though auditor is appointed by the shareholders, effective power of their appointment and dismissal lies with the management. Hence, time and again, audit independence has been questioned, as to whether the auditor is really doing justice to the interest of shareholders and is staying true to the audit profession," the Ministry said in the consultation paper.

Apart from this, the fresh consultation paper has sought views on five threats it has identified, namely self-interest, self-review, advocacy, familiarity and, intimidation, and how to tackle them.

The MCA has sought views from other government departments, regulatory agencies, and

M&M net in Q3 falls 73% to ₹380 cr on back of poor sales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 8

MAHINDRA & Mahindra (M&M) on Saturday reported a 73 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 380 crore for December quarter 2019 due to sluggish vehicle sales. The company had posted a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs 1,396 crore for the same quarter last fiscal, M&M said in a statement.

"The results of Q3 F2020 includes a net loss on account of exceptional and one-off items of Rs 554 crore as compared to a net gain on account of exceptional and one-off items of Rs 519 crore in Q3 F2019," it said.

Its revenue also moderated to Rs 12,120 crore in the latest quarter, as against Rs 12,893 crore in the

Anand Mahindra to continue till Nov next year

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra on Saturday said Anand Mahindra has acceded to the request of the board to continue as executive chairman till November next year. As per Sebi guidelines, he had to step down from his executive role from April 1, 2020. PTI

same period last fiscal, it said. Vehicle sales in Q3 stood at 1,23,353 units as against 1,33,508 units in the same period last fiscal, a decline of 8 per cent, it said.

BRIDGE

If you know what to do on this hand, you are a resourceful card player. Dealer South, both vulnerable. NORTH AKJ73 AQ2 95 953 SOUTH 62 KJ3 AKQ 108762 SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST IC Pass Pass INT Pass INT Pass Pass Pass

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2254

CROSSWORD puzzle grid with 10 numbered squares. QUICK CLUES: ACROSS 1. Leaders of governments (5,9) 10. Trig. function (5) 11. Fashionably (9) 12. Confused medley (7) 13. Suppress completely; silence (7) 14. Derive (5) 16. Commotion (9) 17. Unexpected repercussion (9) 20. Larder of cosmetics (5) 22. Take in again or allow to enter again (7) 25. Proposed (7) 27. Flatters or praises rather falsely? (7,2) 28. "Nert Gyn" dramatist (5) 29. Consideration (14) DOWN 2. Raise from the dead (9) 3. Variety of coffee (5) 4. To the utmost degree; principally? (4,2,3) 5. English poet who became a Princeton professor (5) 6. Increase vital energy (9) 7. Merman or Waters (5) 8. Stop me pouring (3,4) 9. A fog containing particles of ice (3-3) 15. City in central Bavaria (9) 17. Off the cuff (9) 18. Concerns (9) 19. One skilled in feats of agility and balance? (7) 21. Conclusion (6) 23. ___ turf: type of synthetic surface for playing hockey? (5) 24. Idiot box in the house? (2,3) 26. Pretend (5)

If it's your Birthday

Sunday February 9 Look to the future with hope in your heart. You are set for a share of emotional warmth and domestic contentment. Monday February 10 It's time to scotch the rumours that you are being lazy and self-indulgent. Tuesday February 11 One last burst of enthusiasm helps you push forward with new plans. Wednesday February 12 Important improvements at work and at home are signified by planetary alignments. Thursday February 13 Skilful organisation is the answer if there are conflicting calls on your time. Friday February 14 Your stars are still supremely sociable but during the course of the next month a number of changes take place. Saturday February 15 You should be in your element today, happy that the world is on your side.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Your planets should mark the end of one phase. LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) This week brings a major upheaval that is much closer. TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) The week's planets are extremely important in terms of your personal relationships. GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) In a sense, many of your astrological patterns raise the question of finance. CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Ultimately, although you realise that advancement in your career can only be achieved through unwavering dedication. LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) Your ambitions are due to take off when the Sun, Moon and Jupiter all extend their dynamic presence to positive areas of your life. VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) Romantic feelings often overwhelm you when least expected. PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) Venus' more than helpful alignments should smooth the way in and lay any bad feeling to rest.

Solutions to 2253

QUICK CLUES ACROSS: 9 As a matter of fact, 10 Scooped, 12 Binoculars, 13 Juridical, 14 Elixir, 15 Mantoux, 18 Dislike, 21 Sull, 23 Primarily, 25 Hibachi, 26 Skilful, 29 Punctuation mark. DOWN: 1 Hans, 2 Saga, 3 Lapped up, 4 Italic, 5 Dribbled, 6 Effuse, 7 Daquiri, 8 Steerage, 11 Ceuta, 15 Missague, 16 Notabene, 17 Reprisal, 19 Stations, 20 Kullu, 22 Locate, 24 Instil, 27 Flax, 28 Loki. CRYPTOIC CLUES ACROSS: 9 Well backed horse, 10 Popadum, 12 Locales, 13 Casuarina, 14 Sinai, 15 Jewish, 18 Lambast, 21 Drips, 23 Anhydrous, 25 Parsing, 26 Back off, 29 Restoration play. DOWN: 1 Swap, 2 Flop, 3 Abu Dhabi, 4 Scamp, 5 Keelhaul, 6 Chicks, 7 Sri Lanka, 8 Tee-shirt, 11 Oracle, 15 Jodhpurs, 16 Waitress, 17 Headgear, 19 Medicine, 20 Staff, 22 Saigon, 24 Hurbis, 27 Oily, 28 Fays.

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH Pass 3NT Pass Pass Pass Pass Pass

JUMBLER WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue. Our happiness depends on ___ all the way. Sophocles (6) CINIO IORRRM CORDS EEPRTW

SUDOKU 4114

Difficulty Level 5s Instructions: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes. Difficulty Level: 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4114

Solved Sudoku grid: 8 9 7 3 5 6 1 4 2 / 5 2 1 9 8 4 7 3 6 / 6 3 4 1 2 7 8 5 9 / 9 8 3 7 4 1 2 6 5 / 7 5 6 2 9 8 4 1 3 / 4 1 2 6 3 5 9 8 7 / 3 4 9 8 6 2 5 7 1 / 1 6 8 5 7 9 3 2 4 / 2 7 5 4 1 3 6 9 8

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MANDI SOUTH CAMPUS, KAMAND-175075, DISTRICT - MANDI, HIMACHAL PRADESH, INDIA. Notice: Inviting Tender's for supply & installation of "Electrical Machine Lab Items".

MAHARASHTRA METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD. (A joint venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of Maharashtra) PUNE METRO RAIL PROJECT. Tender Notice No. P10&M-01/2020 Dt. 08.02.2020

Project Implementation Unit (Slope, Bridge & Irrigation) Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project-Additional Financing (UDRP-AF) Letter No. 1982 /Nivida Prakashan/2019 Date 07/02/2020 NOTICE FOR NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

VEER SURENDRA SAI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, BURLA Po., Burla Engineering College, Dist. Sambalpur, Odisha, 768018, Website: www.vssut.ac.in

INSTITUTE OF MATHEMATICS & APPLICATIONS (Established by the Govt. of Odisha) Andharua, Bhubaneswar-751029 Advertisement for the post of Director

Karnataka Veterinary, Animal & Fisheries Sciences University, Bidar E-PROCUREMENT MODE 15 Days Short Term Tender Notification No. R/TPC/KVAFSU/eProc-51/2019-20/5738 Dt. 22.01.2020

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER NATIONAL HIGHWAYS, BLOCK-D, NIRMAN BHAWAN, NIGAM VIHAR, SHIMLA-171002 Notice Inviting Bid

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP) ISRO TELEMETRY TRACKING AND COMMAND NETWORK (ISTRAC) BRIEF E-TENDER NOTICE

18 SPORTSLINE



INSTA HITS

Tai Tzu-Ying is at her candid best when chirping unprompted on *Instagram*. The picture-sharing platform is an unfiltered window into the daily life — thrills and poignant pauses — of the enigmatic shuttler. We tease out a few strands of translated posts to glean what her life off-court tends to be.

The private world of a world-beater

Tai Tzu-Ying is badminton's most charming star, with her dazzling game and merry personality. A contender for the Olympic gold, the Chinese Taipei shuttler though is more than the sum total of her trick shots. Shivani Naik tries to understand what the grinning girl is up to next door.

HERE'S a surfeit of talented women looming on Tai Tzu-Ying's horizon as the Tokyo Olympics approach — the Carolinas and Sindhus, Chen Yufei and Nozomi Okuhara. Tai is one of a staggering six contenders for the Tokyo gold, and you'd reckon finding the zigzagging way out of that intimidating maze with a giant stride would be topmost on the World No. 2's mind at the start of 2020.

She's thinking instead of unhurried times, of small steps in small walks taken in a neighbourhood park with her 90-year-old grandmother back in Chinese Taipei. When the wandering whirlpool of high-intensity badminton — all that high-profile winning and losing — gets too much, and she is home in Taiwan, Tai sets off on her slow walks with her granny.

"My best childhood memories from home in Kaohsiung are of my grandmother. She is 90 years old now, but both of us still spend a lot of time together. She is my closest friend and confidante," the 24-year-old reveals on a day she's restless in India, having arrived for the Premier Badminton League, and can't stop talking about her granny.

Asian shuttlers lead extremely insular lives revolving around the sport, and the little time away from the sport is devoted to social networking — *Instagram* and whatever other platforms are the rage in the East Asian world. Tai grew up prodded by a shuttle-crazy father, learnt her famous trick shots from her mirthful dozen uncles who sparred with her, has a coach who keeps an eagle eye on every step she takes, and a physio who added power to her famed deception. Crowding her mind space further with the sport is the constant pressure of beating the Chinese rivals, besides the other top contenders in women's singles. And then time slows down for the world's most mesmerising shuttler when she thinks of the oasis called her grandmother.

"Any time I'm not playing, training or travelling, she and me would sit and watch sports together. We also go to the park close to her home quite often for short walks," she says.

Downtown Kaohsiung is an artist's haunt, where creativity has blossomed in its riotously colourful street art, and has its quaint hillocks and markets and streams. Tai played a lot of badminton with her family — father Tai Nan-Kai, a cop and later firefighter, and mother Hu Jung, an earnest recreational shuttler. Never too fond of studies, she would choose badminton in third grade and change multiple schools to find the perfect training. Her sister quickly linked up to form the support system around her as she hit international headlines at age 16.

She remained the shy woman, finding her full flourish in her myriad strokes but not quite an aggressive go-getter at the beginning — something that reflected in her game. She'd skip the World Championships in 2017 as World No. 1 to play in the University Games, even as she swung wildly between two extremes: some days she looked utterly unbeatable owing to her alchemy of strokes. On others she was so error-prone, rivals knew just when to bully her out of court.

Kaohsiung has its famous Penghu Bridge — a spot popular for family pictures in pre-selfie years. A toddler Tai would stand there with the imposing bridge arching above her and her posing sister, and cover her face with both hands just when the camera clicked. Almost shy of fame even back then, her expansive, expressive game was where she came into her own.

She has a tight-knit system besides her granny with her mother and an elder sister whose fashion advice she loves to disruptively subvert, but who keeps things light at home with impromptu karaokes and photo sessions where they spoof supermodels on the ramp for a riotous collection of parody pictures.

Sport wasn't always the regimented torture that it morphs into when chasing Olympics. "Childhood memories are always special. I spent a lot of time with my parents and we would play lot of games as a family which was great fun. We'd play for hours on



TO EAT or not to eat seems to be the international shuttler's constant dilemma. Post-training meals are a big part of her social media updates. There's speech bubbles of her wondering if anyone can finish an entire pizza by themselves in Paris, of her qualifying that the giant black "hamburg(er)" ain't as massive as it looks and her convincing a doubtful restaurant manager that she can polish off an entire seafood platter. Perhaps her most homesick musings are not about some comforting broth bowl from home. They are surprisingly about something called Jane's Milk — bubble tea milk.



AND THEN there's her attempt at juxtaposing herself next to her father's picture. "Because I am not a professional P-picture (a photo stock app), it is so funny," she disclaims first up. "Still decided to post this for everyone — Then I just took a look and found that I am about the same age as Dad at the time! I'm 25 and 26 now, and Dad was 27 — Is Dad too old or am I too young? Or am I actually feeling good about us looking similar?" she muses.

A ROOM WALL back in her house is completely covered with paper cuttings of her triumphs and another lined with trophies. But a keepsake that she's mightily attached to seems to be a commemorative 99-year Sports Elite Awards Yoyo Card. Yoyo cards are integrated circuit transport

holidays and after my father came back from work."

Her coach Lai Jian-cheng — one of the youngest ex-players-turned-mentors — is often roped in for lemonade-drinking group contests and photo sessions where the tone is decidedly burlesque. On the court though, neither betrays a grin, as the earlier goofy Tai



TAI CAN boast of badminton's coolest six pack and envy-inducing deltoids and trapezius — the sculpted muscles recorded on Insta, including a sheepish admission that her arm muscles are disastrous in comparison. But it's not all lifting weights. While it's common in the badminton universe to put up eye-popping gym workouts (Ratchanok and Sindhu had rocked those last year), Tai

Tzu had two interesting training drills: One's called 'flash disk training' where running backwards, she dodges small training cones flung at her at waist length (where a shuttle might land) to improve reflexes. She also trained with gymnastics coaches Chen Zhiyu and Zheng Jijie, tumbling into a foam pit after a back flip. "The feeling of a somersault is so cool!" she'd say.

25, we have been friends for 10 years." An Olympic gold contender, preparing to take public transport, once she's done with her career.

Pictures credit: Tai Tzu Instagram: @tai_tzuying



SHE HAS been World No. 1 for 72 weeks and finished two seasons amongst badminton's highest earners in women's singles. Her sponsors VICTOR have paid her the highest compliment bringing out miniature TTY dolls that travel around the world ahead of her and get photographed against iconic venues at the host cities, like the Eiffel Tower. "This recognition is high. The hidden version (lego doll) appears randomly at places and is more handsome than me. I heard that this product is expected to be launched in pop-up stores," she posts.



SHE invents not just outrageous shots, but entire games with training mates. Crossing what is a chest-length broad wall on the street once, she gets three others along with her to synchronise jumping onto the wall from standing position — imagine a high jumper flopping back except to finish sitting on the wall, plonked. "I often invent various small games and ask everyone to play with me. Training is complete today," she declares.



stylish player out of her easygoing play. Four World Championships and one Olympics have seen her go out before the semifinals and Sindhu's been the one denying her twice, despite Tai holding an 11-5 win-loss edge over her. Though the 25-year-old would return the favour at the 2018 Asian Games, where she claims to be one mistake away

TTRICKERY

What you need to sit down and see in Tai Tzu-Ying's game, that'll leave you 'sitting' and 'seeing', wanting more:



FOREHAND FLICK

When Tai lunges in a blaze to the net with the racquet ramrod straight, you expect her to tap the shuttle straight forward. But she flicks it cross from the forehand without any perceivable change in grip and no intimation in body language. What's breathtaking is the long-second-stretching hold of the shuttle where Tai seems to hit a Pause button on her forehand, time stills down, the shuttle is frozen mid-air, and the twist in the tale...no tap, it's a Flick!

CHANGE OF PACE

Jose Mourinho's temper can go from 1 to 10 in two seconds. Tai can go from breezy lobs to whiplashing-bonkers fast within a rally in two shots. It's startling, it's effective, it boggles opponents.

SIMPLICITY

For someone oozing deception, mixing chess instincts with dance's cha cha cha on court, Tai has an amazing ability to stick to basics through it all. What helps her pull off her heists while keeping clean lines of footwork and hand movements are her reflexes, of course. But most times it's her anticipation. She can read the returns accurately and capitalise on them. It's down to her selection of shots — playing the right shot at the right time.

from losing to Sindhu's imposing game. "Sindhu is tall and very fast. At the Asiad, I did nothing different, just played my usual game. But I had to be at the top of my game as Sindhu was very tough to beat. One mistake and the match was gone. I am happy that I could win the first badminton gold for my country."

Her other troubler-in-chief is Rio champ Carolina Marin. "She is very, very fast and that creates lot of pressure. I have mostly tried to control the pace of the game with deception but her pace is so fast that one tends to make mistakes. Then she (Marin) just snatches away the match."

Her India sojourn in the PBL is as much about the humongous Rs 77 lakh that Bengaluru Raptors shelled out as about searching for a tiny piece of the jigsaw in her game. "She's short, for which she catches up with her talent and trickery. But she knows she needs to adapt or it's tough (against Sindhu and Marin). So she's done the smart thing to come here and figure a few things out," says Raptors coach Arvind Bhat.

Tai is accompanied by her coach Lai Jian-Cheng, who walked up to Bhat on Day 2 and told him the duo welcomed inputs during matches. "He doesn't mind sitting back and has urged her to learn as much as she can from Indian coaches. Very few top players are receptive to the ideas of other coaches. But she is keen to learn and adapt," Bhat explains.

Like Marin who was part of the first Bangalore franchise, Tai too wears her celebrity tag lightly and is not aloof from her teammates, though not much of a speech-giver during team meetings. Franchise badminton is one rigmarole of competing, training, eating, sleeping and travel. "I don't fret about points gone past. I just get on with the game," she explains her approach.

The ripped abs happened along the way. "It is very tough to grow a six-pack; I didn't make any conscious efforts but I take my fitness regime very seriously as I spend two hours daily in the gym training."

She refuses to elaborate on her rivalry with the Chinese biggies — Chen Yufei notably, calling them "just another game". She adores her Taiwanese roots though — a nice piping hot rice bowl, Jay Chou's music and healthcare advances in her country. She's looking for the biggest global title in Tokyo, staying firmly rooted to her land even as she weighs retirement post Tokyo after two decades of back-breaking training that can tire the bones. And then, like always, she'll go on serene strolls with her grandmum.

BRIEFLY

India beat Australia, stay alive in tri-series

Melbourne: Smriti Mandhana struck a sublime half-century as India finally produced a good batting display to record a seven-wicket win over Australia on Saturday, keeping their hopes alive for a place in the final of the women's T20 tri-series. Australia posted 173 for 5 courtesy a 57-ball 93 from Ashleigh Gardner and Meg Lanning's 22-ball 37 after India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur elected to field at the Junction Oval. India then overhauled the target in 19.4 overs, largely due to opener Shafali Verma's 49 off 28 balls and Mandhana's 55 off 48 balls. India moved to the second position in the table, behind England. The winner of the final league match between Australia and England on Sunday will decide the finalists for February 12. **BRIEF SCORES:** India women 177 for three in 19.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 55, Shafali Verma 49; Megan Schutt 1/26) beat Australia women: 173 for five in 20 overs (Ashleigh Gardner 93; Deepti Sharma 2/27) by seven wickets

Babar, Shan tons power Pak to 342/3

Rawalpindi: Babar Azam and Shan Masood continued to prosper in home conditions with fluent centuries as Pakistan took firm control of the first test against Bangladesh on Saturday. Pakistan moved to a solid 342-3 on day two for an overall lead of 109 runs with seven wickets still in hand after Bangladesh was dismissed for 233 in the first innings. Babar made a career-best unbeaten 143 off 192 balls with 19 fours and a six by stumps as Bangladesh paid a heavy price for dropping Pakistan's top batsman on only 2. Babar shared two century stands that included a 137-run unbroken fourth wicket partnership with Asad Shafiq, who was not out on 60 with eight fours as both batsmen denied Bangladesh success in the last session. Opening batsman Shan scored 100 for his second successive test century after the lefthander also made a hundred against Sri Lanka at Karachi in December. **BRIEF SCORES:** At stumps Day 2 Pakistan 342 for 3 (Babar 143*, Shafiq 60*, Jayed 2-66) trail Bangladesh 233 (Mithun 63, Afridi 4-53) by 27 runs.

Steyn in SA squad for England T20s

Cape Town: Dale Steyn has received a recall to South Africa's Twenty20 international squad for the three-match series against England next week, a sign he is in the selectors' thoughts for the World Cup in Australia later in the year. The experienced Steyn has not played for South Africa since March 2019, but has fully recovered from a shoulder injury and recently featured for the Melbourne Stars in Australia's domestic Big Bash league. South Africa have rested Faf du Plessis and Kagiso Rabada, while there is no return yet for AB de Villiers, who has made himself available for the World Cup that runs from Oct. 18-Nov. 15. There are also maiden call-ups for batsman, Pite van Biljon, 33, and seamer Sisanda Magala, 29, though the bowler must pass a fitness test first. The first T20 against England will be staged in East London on Wednesday, before matches in Durban (Feb. 14) and Pretoria (Feb. 16). **AGENCIES**

On road to final, theplas and rest assured

Homely meals or smart scheduling, no detail was left to chance as India planned assault on U-19 summit with Dravid in charge

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

THE BANGLADESH colts stand between India Under-19 and a second straight junior cricket World Cup title. And the credit, to a large extent, must go to a meticulous system overseen personally by National Cricket Academy chief Rahul Dravid, designed to continue Indian dominance at the age-group level. While Dravid monitored the workload management of players along with U-19 coach Paras Mhambrey, manager Anil Patel ensured Indian meals for the team in distant Potchefstroom. Dravid also sent across a video on the eve of the final to motivate the players.

But all this came at the end of two years of serious planning by Dravid — be it organising series, monitoring players' progress, or speaking to BCCI to get a tournament approved. Under Dravid, a clear roadmap was drawn and nothing was left to chance, with every minute detail taken care of.

Between 2018 and 2020, post Prithvi Shaw's team clinching the under-19 title in New Zealand, the team played more than 40 games on the road to the World Cup. Such was the planning that to adjust to the conditions, the Indian team went to South Africa in the last week of December 2019 to play a series against South Africa. By the time the colts played their first game in this World Cup, they were bolstered with the experience of having played three bilateral series against South Africa, and four quadrangular tournaments.

Mhambrey heaps credit on Dravid for the planning. "His role has been very important and the system he created is superb. For instance, we had Anant Datte (Strength and conditioning coach) and Arun Dubey (Physio) who monitored each player's workload the entire year. They collected data on overs bowled and runs scored and spoke to the players. If they felt there was a danger of players breaking down, they would flag it to Dravid and he'd call that player to NCA for strengthening," Mhambrey told *The Indian Express*.

Constant monitoring

Once the players returned to their states, NCA didn't have much control on them but they were monitored and continuously spoken to. Dravid has been the one point contact for selectors, trainers, physios and coaches. The former India captain even went to South Africa when the boys played against the hosts. A small video of the team's journey since the England tour was played for the squad, with Dravid adding the final words.

"He shared his experience before going back to India. He sent a small video too during the game against Pakistan. When he speaks, everyone listens, such is his stature. Credit should also go to selectors that picked a good team," the former Mumbai captain added. By the time the Indians are back home, they would have stayed in South Africa for 55 days. Getting home-cooked Indian food was considered essential. It was here that the Indian junior team manager Patel chipped in by getting an Indian family based in Potchefstroom to cook meals for the team. Patel says he understood this requirement from Day One. Seven members in the team are vegetarian and to ensure home sickness didn't set in, a daily meal was arranged.

"One of my nephew's friends stays in Potchefstroom, so initially I requested them to pack 300 *theplas* which I distributed 10 each to the entire team. Later, I requested if we can get a meal for everyone, and they straightaway said yes. How long can these players eat pizzas and burgers? There's no Indian restaurant either. Sometimes, even I cooked here and making tea was my responsibility. We also went sight-seeing and had



Between 2018 and 2020, post Prithvi Shaw's team clinching the under-19 title in New Zealand, the team played more than 40 games in the run up to the World Cup.



(Dravid's) role has been very important and the system he created is superb... We had Anant Datte (Strength and conditioning coach), Arun Dubey (Physio) who monitored each player's workload the entire year... If they felt there was a danger of players breaking down, they would flag it to Dravid and he'd call that player to NCA for strengthening."

PARAS MHAMBREY,
UNDER-19 COACH ON TEAM MANAGEMENT'S ROLE

team bonding sessions to ensure players were relaxed," Patel said. The Indian team had to skip the morning practice session on Saturday due to rain. So even if all plans are firmed up on paper, negotiating the elements might well be the last challenge flung at them. **LIVE:** India v Bangladesh U-19 World Cup final on Star Sports 3 and Hotstar 1:30pm onwards

'Not everyone will play for India or be part of a World Cup team'

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 8

ON THE eve of their final against Bangladesh, India coach Paras Mhambrey wants his boys to approach the game like any other. India has had a superb run in the ICC under-19 World Cup in South Africa and The Indian Express spoke to Mhambrey on the hype ahead of the title clash and what lies ahead for these players post the tournament. Excerpts:

What will you tell the boys who are one game away from the title?

Thankfully our big hype game is over vs Pakistan. We want to take this like any other game. Everyone here has worked hard to reach this day, to be in the final of the World Cup. Everyone here has been working together for the past one-and-a-half years to reach here. We want to experience this, let the boys enjoy it. Life ahead will be more challenging.

How did you deal with the hype?

There was a lot of talk going around then and it's natural that people will talk about it wherever we go. Especially with regard to the Pakistan game. Be it friends, family, social media, no one could run away from it. The importance of the game made it more special. We all said that we'll treat it as any other game. Not think too much and keep our focus on the

process. Same is with the final, we will have to treat this game as any other game. The players experienced the India vs Pakistan game atmosphere. It's once in a lifetime, and that too in a World Cup. We don't want players to play with emotion. The support staff ensured not to hype up this game, and even (Rahul) Dravid sent a small video before the game. One can't play cricket with emotion.

You must be pleased with the way the team played on the road to the final?

Of course. I thought, 250 would have been a good target in the last game. The chase looked easy but it wasn't. Credit should go to both the openers who made it look so easy. At the same time, a lot of hard work has gone in, in terms of fitness, planning and scheduling. The boys came into the World Cup with decent preparation and a lot of credit should go to Dravid.

Post Sunday, all these boys will move into the men's world. Did the management speak to players about what lies ahead?

We always do, we make them realise what lies ahead. The best person to speak to them is Dravid, everyone listens to him. We have touched upon hard realities and what lies ahead post under-19. The challenges players will face once they go from here. Not everyone will play for India and not everyone will be part of a World Cup team. Under-19 is not the end of the world, players can still represent the na-

tional team if they do well in domestic cricket. We discussed this at length.

When did you guys decide this will be the core group?

We played so many matches in these last two years so, more or less, we had identified who could be our core team. Some players we got through the U-19 Challengers Series, but credit should go to the selection committee for picking the right combination.

Are you happy with the talent these boys have showcased?

Every boy who has made it to the team is talented and I think we have talent in plenty. It's hard to pinpoint but we have a serious bunch of talent in India. I hope everyone will prosper going from here.

Is the job like a teacher in a school where players come and pass on? As a coach, do you or these boys get emotional?

It's the reality and we all face it. Again, a new batch will come in and we will spend time with them for the next two years. We try to pass on as much learning as we can, and our job is to help these boys. We have close bonds and that's the beauty of it. I'm still in touch with players who won the Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand. They will go from here to different levels of infrastructure back in their states and will learn and I hope many will do well.

Kiwis clip visitors' wings, seal series

TUSHAR BHADURI
FEBRUARY 8

IT'S AT20 World Cup year, and India seemed to be auditioning for it in a 50-over contest on Saturday. What else could explain the tearing hurry shown by several of the batsmen when the target — 274 — hardly warranted such a gung-ho approach!

Prithvi Shaw, KL Rahul, Kedar Jadhav and Shreyas Iyer would look back at their shot selection when a more circumspect approach was the need of the hour. If one or more of them had taken upon themselves the task of seeing the team through, the 22-run difference between the sides could well have been breached and everyone would be going to Mount Maunganui with the series still up for grabs. With no Rohit Sharma for support, Virat Kohli was always the big wicket for the Kiwis and once Tim Southee got through the defence of the Indian captain with some canny planning and precise execution, it was always an uphill task for the visitors. That the match at Eden Park was in the balance till the penultimate over was largely due to the efforts of Ravindra Jadeja, who fancies the Black Caps attack (remember the World Cup semifinal), and an entirely unexpected source.

At 153/7 at the start of the 32nd over, with more than 120 runs to get, India could well have gone down by more than a 100 runs. All the specialist batsmen had gone back and even Jadeja was finding it difficult to hit the ball off the square. Navdeep Saini's first few balls, too, didn't inspire much confidence as he played and missed often and went for frequent wild swings. But the Delhi youngster, who has caught the eye with his raw pace, seemed to either miss the ball completely or make a clean connection. He gradually started to gain in confidence and Jadeja, who had thought about farming the strike at one stage, started trusting Saini more as the partnership grew in substance. When the asking rate, which was never



Navdeep Saini (45) either totally missed the ball or made a clean connection. AP

a concern for most of the chase, got up to nine and tens, it was the junior partner who took a chance. A slashed six over point brought the Indian dressing room to life, but it were three boundaries in one Colin de Grandhomme over that took the cake. A hit over long-off was followed by a glide for four between point and short-third man. The piece de resistance was Saini getting down on one knee and scooping the ball past short fine-leg. He hit another audacious shot into the terraces before impetuosity got the better of him.

Top crumbles

The New Zealand seamers got useful movement in the evening and exposed a few Indian techniques. The openers — Mayank Agarwal and Prithvi Shaw — were dismissed as they failed to show the required discipline. Kohli went in a way reminiscent of the 2018 Cape Town Test dismissal to Vernon Philander. Southee took him across his stumps with away-going deliveries with a packed off-side field, before finding the gap between bat and pad with a cross-seamer as the skipper tried his trademark flick.

Southee, who has had a tour to forget so far, was far from fully fit and only played as Mitchell Santner was even worse off, gave a lion-hearted performance for his team.

That the hosts reached 273 was a minor miracle in itself. Martin Guptill came to the party for once and New Zealand were well placed at 142/1 in the 27th over before a collapse — which otherwise would have been the target remaining just outside India's grasp. **BRIEF SCORES:** NZ 273 for 8 (Guptill 79, Taylor 73*, Jadeja 1-35) beat India (Jadeja 55, Iyer 52, Saini 45, Southee 2-41) by 22 runs

'Keepers the key as India defeat world champions Belgium in Pro League

MIHIR VASAVDA
FEBRUARY 8

The last 10 seconds played out the same way as the first 10: with Belgium taking a shot at the Indian goal. And on both occasions, they were denied; towards the end by PR Sreejesh, and in the opening seconds by Krishan Pathak.

It was, in a way, fitting that India's goalkeepers — who played alternate quarters — had the first and last say in Saturday's FIH Pro League encounter. For, they were the sole reason India notched up a win over the world champions and world number 1 side. The otherworldly performances by Pathak and Sreejesh guided India to a 2-1 upset over Belgium, a team they hadn't defeated in the previous 10 matches.

Coaches and players of most teams have insisted that the scoreline in this season's Pro League hardly matters. But in a match where a relentless Belgium routinely exposed India's defence, chief coach Graham Reid's biggest take-away from Saturday's win would be the performance of his goalkeepers; especially Pathak, because Sreejesh has routinely pulled off such performances over the last decade. Till Saturday, Pathak's only real involvement in national colours was as dubious as it was meme-worthy. It came in the Azlan Shah Cup final last year, when South Korea's Lee Nam-yong scored one of the most audacious goals we'll ever see in hockey — in a one-on-one scenario, lifting the ball with his stick and dinking it over the stonky goalie, who stood there helpless and embarrassed.

That goal, despite the attacker's brilliance, only added to the growing chorus against Pathak. He was among the handful few from the 2016 Junior World Cup-winning squad

On Saturday, the 22-year-old Pathak withstood a barrage of Belgian shots in the first and third quarters, pulling off some stunning saves. In the second and fourth quarters, it was Sreejesh who continued to frustrate the Belgians.

who graduated to the senior team. But his place has always been under scrutiny, with many feeling he has not justified his position as Sreejesh's understudy. And after an average weekend against the Netherlands last month, it wouldn't have been a surprise if Pathak's place in the squad became untenable if he had another poor outing. It was in this context that Pathak started Saturday's Pro League match against the top-ranked side in Bhubaneswar. And in the face of pressure, the Nepalese-origin, Kapurthala-born goalkeeper produced his best performance for the national team so far as India maintained their 100 per cent record in the competition.

Allies in the goal

It was a victory made possible solely by the goalkeepers. Sreejesh has orchestrated far too many jailbreaks in the last decade, but it's often been on his own. On Saturday, Pathak was his able ally. The 22-year-old withstood a barrage of Belgian shots in the first and third quarters, pulling off some stunning saves. In the second and fourth quarters, it was Sreejesh who continued to frustrate the Belgians. One would be hard-pressed to think the

last time both Indian goalkeepers were in such inspired form, especially against a top-quality opponent like Belgium, who arguably have the most potent attack in world hockey right now.

In the 29 matches Belgium played in 2019, they scored 103 goals. The world champions have continued to score at the same average — roughly four goals a match — in the New Year as well. In the four matches they played before Saturday's game against India, they scored 15, including four against the mighty Australians in Sydney a fortnight ago.

On any other day, Belgium would have scored four or five goals in the first half, given they had 13 shots on goal. That tally nearly doubled by full time, but apart from the one time via a penalty corner in the third quarter, Belgium were unable to beat the Indian goalkeepers.

Sreejesh, who has grown in confidence in the last 12 months after a below-par 2018, once again showed why he is the best player in the Indian team at the moment. Because of his commanding presence, India look a more secure unit when he is around. He barks out instructions, organises the defence and makes sure players do not drift out of position while continuing to set high standards in goal with his fearless rushing and ability to cover angles.

Pathak is half of Sreejesh's size and an introvert. But on Saturday, he showed why selectors, coaches and even his teammates have pleaded his case for the last 18 months. He threw himself around and was not afraid to commit himself.

It would concern Reid that India's defence was split open by Belgium so easily and so often. He has less than 24 hours to sort that out. Else, India will hope for a similar performance from Pathak and Sreejesh.

From Belarus with love

Gerasimov wins two matches inside 24 hours to make maiden ATP final

SHAHID JUDGE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 8

THE MERCURY dropped on centre court, as the clock neared one in the morning. The Balewadi Tennis Stadium floodlights were still on, the handful of fans braving the cold grabbed onto every ounce of heat their woollens would allow.

Meanwhile, down on the blue hard court, Egor Gerasimov was blistering his way through a three-set thriller. Less than 20 hours later, the Belarusian was back on court for the biggest match of his career so far.

It was the second semifinal of the Tata Open Maharashtra, India's only ATP event. Only once in his career had Gerasimov reached this far in a tour-level competition – at St. Petersburg last year. Now he had a chance to go one better, and fatigue wasn't going to stop him.

After all, he used up two years of his career recovering from a serious injury.

On Saturday, he came up against the crafty and tenacious James Duckworth. But no matter how many times the Australian would try to mix up play – putting in some slices and chops in between rallies – Gerasimov was there to clobber home a powerful groundstroke of his own. The pressure from the East European was immense



Egor Gerasimov beat Australia's James Duckworth 7-6 (2) 6-4 at the Tata Open Maharashtra on Saturday. Daniel Stephen.

as he played a near-flawless first-set tie-breaker, and in the second set, got the only break when it mattered most to register a 7-6 (2), 6-4 win.

"I'm really happy with this, with the game. I played pretty well," says the 27-year-old. "This is my first final in the ATP. I've been dreaming about this for a long time."

Indeed, it has been a long time coming for the world no. 90. In fact, he's been having many 'firsts' in his career only in the last two years. In 2018, at Los Cabos in Mexico, he won his first-ever ATP tour main-draw match, beating mercurial

Australian Bernard Tomic. Last year at the US Open, he qualified for the main draw of a Grand Slam for the first time in 14 attempts. But the man from Minsk has also spent nearly a year out of action because of a slipped disc.

Recovery road

"I could not play for two years consistently because of the surgeries I had to have," he explains. "I lost half a year (because of the operations) and then another in recovering. But I was waiting for this (getting to the final). I never gave up even during the injuries. I always wanted to get as high as

possible in the rankings."

He's at a career-high ranking at the moment, but may go up to 71 when the chart is updated on Monday. And with that, he's slowly taking strides towards becoming the next big thing from Belarus after former world no. 18 Max Mirnyi.

"People at home have been looking for someone like him to come up, especially since the girls (two-time Grand Slam champion Victoria Azarenka and current world no. 13 Aryna Sabalenka) have been doing well," he says. "But now, I'm back and have confidence in my game. I'm going to improve more and more."

'Fast food' celebration

On Sunday, he will take on former world no. 35 Jiri Vesely, who himself has been struggling with injuries and bad form in the last few months. But Gerasimov has had the more convincing run to the final compared to his upcoming Czech opponent, who beat second seed Ricardas Berankis in three tie-break sets on Saturday evening.

And the man whose 'guilty pleasure' is fast food – according to his ATP profile – already has a plan on how to celebrate if he wins.

"Who doesn't like fast food?" chuckles Gerasimov. "If I win, for sure I'll go to a McDonald's in my hometown."

Everton leap into Champions League spot race

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON, FEBRUARY 8

EVERTON MOVED up to seventh and within five points of the Premier League top four as their resurgence under Carlo Ancelotti continued with a 3-1 win over Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Bernard, Richarlison and Dominic Calvert-Lewin scored the goals for the Toffees, who

have won five and drawn two of eight league games since the Italian took charge in December.

At the other end of the table, Palace are looking over their shoulders at the relegation zone.

Roy Hodgson's men still have a six-point lead over the bottom three, but have not won in eight games and just once in the league since early December.

Bernard gave the hosts a deserved first half lead with a

thumping finish from Theo Walcott's cross to the back post.

However, Palace were gifted a route back into the game six minutes into the second half thanks to another error from Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford.

The England number one's place at Euro 2020 is under debate and he let Christian Benteke's shot slip underneath his body as the Belgian striker

registered his first goal of the season.

Just as Everton were wobbling, though, a moment of magic from Richarlison swung the game back in their favour seven minutes later.

The Brazilian stormed onto Calvert-Lewin's flick-on to carry the ball from just inside the Palace half and past Gary Cahill before placing his shot into the far corner.



TACKLING THE SLOWDOWN: DOES THE BUDGET HAVE A GAMEPLAN?

with

Prachi Mishra

Managing Director, Global Macro Research, Goldman Sachs

in conversation with

P Vaidyanathan Iyer

Executive Editor, National Affairs, The Indian Express

From slowing investments and falling demand to job losses, Budget 2020-21 comes at a time when the nation is facing a serious economic crisis. In this edition of Explained, join us in a discussion with Prachi Mishra as she analyses Budget 2020-21. And decodes its prospects for the Indian economy.

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