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NEARBY

Shah, Modi to lead BJP's poll campaign in Delhi

NEW DELHI
BJP president Amit Shah on Sunday signalled that the campaign for the Delhi Assembly election will be held under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was addressing the party's booth-level workers here. Highlighting his involvement in the campaign, Mr. Shah said he would start group meetings and reach out to individual households.

CITY ► PAGE 3

Artists paint CP in protest against CAA, NRC

NEW DELHI
Artists gathered at Connaught Place to write slogans and paint the pavements to protest against the CAA and the NRC on Sunday. The artists wrote various slogans like "Hum Bhi Dekhenge", "Bol Ke Labh Azaad Hain Tere" and "Save the Constitution of India" in addition to "Reject CAA and NRC" near Gate 6 of the Rajiv Chowk metro station.

CITY ► PAGE 2

After denials, police admit they did open fire

NEW DELHI
Nearly three weeks after the police fired tear-gas shells in the city and thrashed students inside the Jamia Millia Islamia library, a senior police officer confirmed that they had opened fire during the anti-CAA protests here. He said a Special Investigation Team would probe all incidents of violence, including the use of firearms by the police.

CAPITAL ► PAGE 2

Bengal station collapse: one succumbs to injuries

KOLKATA
One of the two persons injured in a partial collapse of the Bardhaman railway station building in West Bengal succumbed to his injuries early on Sunday, said Minister Swapan Debnath. He said that the man, who suffered serious injuries when a chunk of concrete fell on his head, could not be saved despite efforts by doctors of Bardhaman Medical College Hospital.

NATION ► PAGE 9

EDUCATIONPLUS ► PAGES 18 & 19

Iraqi MPs vote to expel U.S. troops

Resolution comes amid mounting backlash against killing of Iranian Commander

REUTERS
BEIRUT

The Iraqi Parliament on Sunday called on the government to work to end all foreign troop presence in the country as the backlash grew against the killing of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis in a U.S. strike in Baghdad.

A resolution passed by a special session of Parliament said the government should cancel its request for assistance from a U.S.-led coalition. Parliament resolutions, unlike laws, are non-binding. But this one is likely to be heeded: Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi had earlier called on Parliament to end foreign troop presence as soon as possible.

Coalition halts action

The U.S.-led coalition battling the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria said it had halted most of its operations against the militants for now to focus on protecting coalition forces and bases, amid soaring tensions with Iran.

Since the killings, rival Shia political leaders have called for U.S. troops to be expelled in an unusual show of unity among factions. "There is no need for the presence of American forces after defeating Da'esh (the Is-



Paying their respects: People attending a funeral procession for Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani in Ahvaz, Iran, on Sunday. • REUTERS

lamic State)," said Ammar al-Shibli, a Shia lawmaker.

"We have our own armed forces which are capable of protecting the country," he told Reuters.

Around 5,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq, most of them in an advisory capacity. Many Iraqis, including opponents of Soleimani, have expressed anger at Washington for killing Soleimani and Muhandis on Iraqi soil and potentially dragging their country into another conflict.

INDIAN, IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTERS HOLD TALKS ► PAGE 12
ATTACK IN KENYA ► PAGE 14

President Trump warns Iran of attacks

President Donald Trump said the U.S. would hit dozens of targets in the Islamic Republic if it retaliated for the killing of the head of the Qods Force Qassem Soleimani in Iraq.

In a series of tweets, he said Iran "is talking very boldly about targeting certain USA assets".

The U.S. has identified

"52 Iranian sites", some of them "at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD."

"The USA wants no more threats!" Mr. Trump said.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 14

India condemns killing of Sikh youth in Pak.

Asks Imran Khan to ensure security of minorities after Peshawar murder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Sunday strongly condemned the murder of a Sikh citizen of Pakistan in Peshawar and urged the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan to stop attacks on religious minorities.

A statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) pointed to Islamabad's inaction in several cases of violence against Sikhs and urged Pakistan to punish the perpetrators.

"India strongly condemns the targeted killing of a minority Sikh community member in Peshawar that follows the recent despicable vandalism and desecration of the holy Gurudwara Sri Janam Asthan at Nankana Sahib. The Government of



Seeking action: Sikhs in Hyderabad staging a protest against the attack on Gurudwara Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. • K.V.S. GIRI

Pakistan should act in defence of their own minorities instead of preaching sermons about it to other countries," the MEA said.

The statement also highlighted the case of Sikh girl, Jagjit Kaur of Nankana Sahib,

who was allegedly abducted and forcibly married.

India's condemnation came soon after Ravinder Singh was killed by miscreants in Peshawar.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

It is against my vision: Imran

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said the vandalism at Gurdwara Nankana Sahib went against his "vision" and the government would not tolerate such acts. He said there was a "major difference between the condemnable Nankana incident and the ongoing attacks across India on Muslims and other minorities". "The former is against my vision & will find zero tolerance & protection from the govt incl police & judiciary (sic)," he tweeted.

Masked goons thrash students, staff in JNU

35 students and teachers injured during violence

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Scores of students, including JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh, and several teachers were beaten up on the JNU campus on Sunday evening.

Masked men and women, armed with sticks and stones, went around the campus, entering hostels, beating up students and teachers and smashing cars.

A video of a bleeding Ms. Ghosh was posted on Twitter. The JNUSU claimed in a statement that a large number of ABVP activists entered the campus with iron rods and singled out students' representatives.

Several teachers said ABVP activists had entered the campus and indulged in violence. "Female students have locked themselves up inside the girls' wing in Sabarmati Hostel. These attackers are roaming the corridors armed with rods and sticks... we are under attack," the JNUSU said, calling for help and sharing videos of the violence on campus.

"Professors who were trying to protect us have been beaten up. These are unknown ABVP goons, not all are students, they have covered their faces, and are moving towards the...West



Masked persons armed with sticks roaming around the JNU campus. • PTI

Gate. Stay alert. Make human chains. Protect each other," another tweet from the Union added.

Sources at AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospital said that over 35 students and teachers were treated for injuries sustained during the violence.

"You can judge how scary a situation it was from the videos and photos that are being shared. I was in my hostel room when people with their faces covered entered and started breaking things with sticks and metal rods. I did not recognise any of them but they were on a mission to spread fear," a BA student of the university said.

Ayesha Kidwai, a professor teaching at JNU, told *The Hindu* that one of her colleagues, Sucharita Sen, had been beaten up and suffered head injuries. "She is being treated at the trauma centre," Dr. Kidwai said.

Joint Commissioner of Police Anand Mohan said two groups of students had clashed on the campus, and the police were called in by the administration.

"We conducted a flag march. The situation is under control. The injured have been moved to AIIMS," Mr. Mohan said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12
SEE ALSO ► PAGE 2

219 infants died at two Gujarat civil hospitals in December

134 deaths in Rajkot alone and 85 in Ahmedabad

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

The number of infant deaths at the civil hospitals in Gujarat's Rajkot and Ahmedabad is markedly higher than over 100 deaths reported from the government hospital at Kota in Rajasthan.

The two hospitals in Gujarat have reported 219 deaths in December. In Rajkot alone, 134 infants died and 85 deaths were reported from Ahmedabad. In the last three months, 253 infants have died in the Ahmedabad hospital, Gujarat's largest.

"In December, 455 chil-



Worse outcomes: 1,235 infants died during 2019 at the Rajkot civil hospital. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dren were admitted and 85 lost their lives during treatment," Superintendent of Ahmedabad Civil Hospital G.S. Rathod said. At the Rajkot civil hospital, 1,235 infants died during 2019.

The highest number of newborn deaths in 2019 was

reported in December, and the second highest, 131, in October. According to Manish Mehta, head of Rajkot Civil Hospital, 269 children died in October, November and December.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Karnataka's Challakere to be ISRO's astronaut training hub

Plan ready for Space Flight Centre to come up at Chitradurga

MADHUMATHI D.S.
BENGALURU

India's world-class facility for training astronauts will come up not in the space headquarters in Bengaluru, nor in any glitzy metropolis. It will be established in three years at Challakere, a shrubby, arid oilseeds town on the Bengaluru-Pune NH4 in Chitradurga district of Karnataka.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has proposed a ₹ 2,700-crore master plan to create top infrastructure that will house its young Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC).

K. Sivan, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, told *The Hindu*,



A view of the area where ISRO and DRDO facilities will be set up at Challakere. • K. MURALI KUMAR

"Everything connected with events and planning of the HSP [Human Spaceflight Programme] will shift to our campus at Challakere. We want to establish a self-contained facility there so that in future, whatever training and activities we are now doing in Russia for the Gagan-

nyaan crew can all be done by us here." When ready, the 400-acre ISRO land at Challakere will be the single-stop consolidating infrastructure and activities related to space travellers.

The country pays a hefty, unnamed sum to use such facilities abroad. The first set of four astronaut candidates for the first Gaganyaan mission of 2022 are to train in Russia. The amount sought for the HSFC is over and above the ₹10,000-crore approved budget of Gaganyaan. Pending its approval, the centre may take 2-3 years at the earliest to be set up, but would come up after the first Indian crewed flight.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12

Our kin were framed in riots, say Lucknow residents

Police have arrested more than 1,200 people across U.P.

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A Lucknow court on Saturday granted bail to more than a dozen persons accused in the violence that took place in the city during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on December 19. However, many like Yasmin Siddiqui still await relief for her son Osama, 20, a third-year B.Com. student. He has been in jail for more than two weeks and his bail plea is expected to come up only on Monday.

Ms. Siddiqui is concerned about her son's well-being and anxious about his academic future. Osama has his exams on January 7 and 8 and is likely to miss them.

"He is anxious and wants

to return home. He is tense about the examination. He didn't get to study for so many days. They should understand our situation. It's about his future. He will waste a full year," she said.

Like the kin of several persons who were arrested for the violence, Osama's family claims he had nothing to do with the protests. Till 2 p.m. on December 19, he was playing with his friends in the lane outside his house, his family said, adding that they have CCTV footage to prove it.

After that, he was going to a stationery shop, unaware of the violence some distance away, Ms. Siddiqui said.

"Nobody from our locality had gone to the protest. He

must have moved further out and encountered the stampede. He ran and took shelter in someone's house. The protesters also ran into the same compound," she said, based on what he told her in jail.

"But since they were being chased by the police, many of the protesters escaped climbing over rooftops. But Osama sat quietly in one corner, hoping that the police would not touch him as he didn't do anything. But it was him the police caught," she said.

Osama is among more than 500 people in U.P. who have been issued notices to pay for damage to public and private property during the arson and vandalism.

NCP gets crucial Home, Finance portfolios

Ajit Pawar will also look after Planning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Five days after the Cabinet expansion, the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra on Sunday assigned portfolios, with senior NCP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar getting Finance and Planning.

The Home Ministry was allocated to his party colleague Anil Deshmukh.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will look after General Administration, IT, Information and Public Relations, Law & Judiciary.

While Mr. Thackeray will lead the Cabinet, the Sena has 11 Cabinet Ministers and three MoS. The NCP has the largest number of Ministers, with 12 Cabinet Ministers



Anil Deshmukh

and four MoS. The Congress has 10 Cabinet Ministers and two MoS.

"This is one of the most experienced Cabinets the State has ever got. There are no issues with any party," said Housing Minister from the NCP, Jitendra Awhad. The Congress attempt to get either the Agriculture or Rural Development departments from the Shiv Sena and the NCP respectively did not succeed.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12



(From left) A group of people protest outside the Delhi Police Headquarters; ABVP members and JNU students raise slogans against each other; policemen outside JNU main gate on Sunday evening.



■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

‘Students wanting registration beaten up by those opposing it’
Complaint filed, says JNU administration

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) administration on Sunday strongly condemned the violent incident that took place inside the campus.

Registrar of the university, Pramod Kumar, said since afternoon, the campus witnessed scuffles at the Schools as well as inside the hostel premises between the groups of students who wanted to stop the registration and those who wanted to register and continue their studies. “At 4.30 p.m., a group of students, who are against the registration process moved aggressively from the admin block and reached the hostels. The administration immediately contacted the police. However, by the time the police reached the university, the group of students opposing the registration beat up those who were in favour of it,” said Mr. Kumar.

He added that a few men

with their faces covered also entered the Periyar hostel rooms and attacked the students with sticks and rods. “It is unfortunate that a group of students with their violent means of protests is preventing thousands of non-agitating students from pursuing their academic activities,” he said, adding that the administration stands by every student who wants to continue their academic programmes peacefully.

“The JNU administration feels great pain and anguish for the students who have been injured in the incident. The university is always known for peaceful and democratic protests. The administration will not tolerate any form of violence on the campus. A complaint is being filed against the culprits,” a statement issued by the university read.

It also appealed to all the stakeholders of the university to maintain peace and not get provoked by any misinformation.

Faces covered, rods in hand, mob creates ruckus outside JNU gate

ABVP member says violence inside campus launched by ‘Leftists’; Yogendra Yadav attacked

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Several men with faces covered, who identified themselves as “nationalists and supporters of ABVP”, gathered outside the North Gate of Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday evening, holding sticks and rods, and raising “Bharat Mata ki Jai” slogans.

The group present there attacked activist Yogendra Yadav, while he was making an attempt to speak to the teachers.

“They [teachers] were telling me about the situation inside the campus when the police dragged me from there. All these goondas joined the police in assaulting me. This happened in front of the camera,” Mr. Yadav alleged.

Mob threatens scribes

Later, he was taken out of the area amid heavy police presence even as the mob



Activist Yogendra Yadav alleged that he was attacked by a mob and the police outside the campus. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

continued to heckle him. The mob also threatened journalists present at the spot among others.

Police stood guard

After reports of a mob on rampage, stone-pelting and violence from inside the campus, it was closed and the police stood guard at the university’s North Gate.

Meanwhile, all street lights leading up to the gate were disconnected, leaving the area in darkness.

Delhi Social Media Coordinator (ABVP) Anurag Gautam, a student of Delhi University, said people had gathered in support of injured ABVP students inside the campus, who he alleged had been at the receiving

end of “unprecedented violence and stone-pelting by Leftists”.

“Are they students or Naxalites?” he asked.

The mob also attacked an ambulance, carrying nine doctors, while it tried to enter the campus to provide medical assistance to the injured students. Some of the accused deflated the tyres of the vehicle.

‘Don’t click pictures’

The mob also asked individuals not to click pictures or take videos of the incident. They attacked those who refused to listen to them.

The ABVP supporters here blamed the “leftists” for the stone-pelting at Periyar hostel. The mob chanted “Vande Mataram”, “Jai Shree Ram”, “Delhi Police Zindabad”, “Desh ke gadaron ko goli maron salon ko”. Some of them even called the students “Naxalites”.

Doctors attacked by mob outside university campus

‘They surrounded ambulance, threw stones’

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

A group of nine doctors from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and other hospitals was attacked by a mob outside Jawaharlal Nehru University’s main entrance gate on Sunday night.

The doctors, who had come in an ambulance with medical supplies to help the injured students, were not allowed to enter the campus.

“Around 100 masked goons attacked our ambulance with stones and lathis when we tried to enter the campus,” said Praveen, a general surgeon at Maharishi Valmiki Hospital.

Another doctor, who had come on his own as a volunteer to treat the students, said: “The police remained a mute spectator while our ambulance was being surrounded and attacked by the mob.”

Dr. Praveen added that the mob broke a window of

The mob even tried to drag and pull one of the doctors out of the ambulance’s window

PRAVEEN
General surgeon, Maharishi Valmiki Hospital

the ambulance. “The mob even tried to drag and pull one of the doctors out of the ambulance’s window,” he said, pointing towards the doctor, who had received injuries.

A visibly rattled woman doctor in the group said, “The goons were wearing masks and helmets. I could smell that they were drunk. They even tried to take our mobile phones as we were taking videos.”

“There is no safety even for ambulance and doctors,” another doctor.

After some policemen intervened, the ambulance was allowed to leave the premises after half-an-hour, the doctors said.

After denials, police admit they did open fire on December 15

SIT to probe all incidents of violence, including use of firearms

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Nearly three weeks after the police fired tear-gas shells in the city and thrashed students inside the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) library, a senior officer confirmed that they had opened fire during the anti-CAA protests here.

Confirming reports in NDTV and The Indian Express, the police officer, who preferred not to go on record, said a Special Investigation Team (SIT) would probe all incidents of violence, including the use of firearms by the police.

Since the incident, the Delhi police had maintained that no gunshots were fired on protesters.

Even a protester undergoing treatment at Safdarjung Hospital is suspected to have received gunshot injury but later it was claimed that injury was from shards of tear-gas can-



Policemen fire tear gas during a stir by JMI students against the CAA in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

isters. In a video shot by a resident and uploaded on social media, three policemen were seen using a wall as a shield while stones were being pelted at them.

Two policemen pulled out their service pistols and fired three shots in the direction of the protesters and they ran away. The video was shot at Mathura

Road on December 15.

“We won’t be able to confirm it as the investigation is with SIT. If it was done, then it was an act of self-defence. No separate inquiry is required,” said the officer.

A senior officer who was at the spot, saw the policemen firing, had mentioned it in police diary.

Shaheen Bagh agitation: police put rumours to bed

‘We went there to resolve argument’

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Amidst reports that security personnel were trying to remove those protesting against the amended Citizenship Act from Shaheen Bagh, the police on Sunday clarified that they had gone to the area to resolve an argument, which had ensued between a group of protesters and shopkeepers.

The police said they make regular visits to the spot to ensure law and order remain intact. They said they were informed by one of the shopkeepers on Sunday that some protesters were not allowing them to open their showrooms.

On reaching the spot, the police saw that an argument had ensued between a few protesters and the shop owner over the issue.

“We tried to pacify them. After the dispute was resolved, the man opened his showroom and later the barricades were again put in place,” an officer said.



Protesters in Shaheen Bagh on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

A protester, Sajid Mojib, said the police had removed barricades and the locals to keep the stir in control in Shaheen Bagh.

“The rumours were that the police will launch a crackdown during 3 a.m.-8 a.m. at Shaheen Bagh. We will continue to protest peacefully and ready to face any kind of situation. For any mishap, the administration will be held responsible,” he said.

The protestors, including women, have been camping in Shaheen Bagh, near Jamia Millia Islamia for over 20 days now.

Artists paint CP pavements in protest against CAA, NRC



Artists during a protest against the CAA at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Police ask group raising slogans in support of the Act to disperse

ELISHA VERMANI
NEW DELHI

Several artists gathered at Connaught Place to write slogans and paint the pavements to protest against the amended Citizenship Act and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) on Sunday.

The artists wrote down various slogans like “Hum Bhi Dekhenge”, “Bol Ke Labh Azaad Hain Tere” and “Save the Constitution of India” in addition to “Reject CAA and NRC” near gate number 6 of Rajiv Chowk metro station.

They were joined by several passers-by who contributed by writing slogans

like “Secular India” and “Dharm Nishpeksh Bharat”.

A few erase words

A few of the passers-by asked others not to pay attention to these “gimmicks”. Some of them even began to erase the word “secular” written on the ground while chanting “Jai Shree Ram”. In response, the protesters sang the National Anthem and also protected their artworks.

The police present at the site also asked a group, raising slogans in support of CAA, to disperse.

A 56-year-old filmmaker,

Rahul Roy, one of the organisers of the event said: “It is important for people to express what they are feeling at this point of time.” A 22-year-old student of Ambedkar University, Jasmine Yadav, said: “We are against the kind of hatred and intolerance that the current government is pushing us forward to...this is a peaceful protest.”

Calling the CAA “inhuman” and “anti-India”, Zee-nat Nyazi (52), a social activist, said: “I have always believed that this country is for everyone. We have always stood with our arms open for everybody.”

Man held for raping toddler 15-month-old girl is said to be critical

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A 22-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly raping a 15-month-old girl in Sector 58 here, the police said on Sunday.

The toddler is undergoing treatment at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi and her condition is said to be critical.

The accused was arrested on Saturday under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

He was produced before the court on Sunday and sent to judicial custody.

He allegedly took the girl away from her mother on

the pretext of buying toys for her on Friday night. When she did not return home, the family began to look for her.

After a few hours, the accused came with the girl, who was bleeding, to drop her back. When the girl’s grandmother questioned him about her condition, he punched her on the face and tried to escape.

Locals protest

However, the neighbours nabbed him. Following the incident, the locals held a protest on Saturday, seeking exemplary punishment for the accused.

Man robbed of cash; 2 arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two men were arrested for allegedly robbing a man after offering him a lift near Gurugram’s Shankar Chowk, the police said on Sunday.

Alim Khan and Faizel were nabbed on Friday from Mahipalpur. The case came to the fore when a man complained that he was robbed off ₹8,000, mobile phone and other valuables by three to four men inside a cab. A manhunt is on for three others, said DCP (South-West) Devender Arya, adding that all items have been recovered.

Shah, Modi to lead BJP’s poll campaign in the Capital

BJP leader says he will start group meetings and reach out to households

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

Addressing Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) booth-level workers in the run-up to the Delhi Assembly elections here on Sunday, party president Amit Shah signalled a campaign to be run under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

BJP’s government will be formed in Delhi under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Mr. Shah.

Highlighting his involvement in the campaign, Mr. Shah told party workers that he, as their president, would start group meetings in the neighbourhoods of Delhi and reach out to individual households. He also appealed to the workers to do the same and said that the election was not only to be fought only through rallies and posters, but also through the outreach programme. He asked party workers to highlight the work carried out in the city by the Central government and to “expose the false promises” made by the Kejriwal government. Later in the evening, Mr. Shah, along with party working president J.P. Nadda, went door-to-door and kicked off the campaign.

Mr. Shah attacked the Kejriwal government on multiple fronts, saying that the Aam Admi Party (AAP) had managed to fool the people of Delhi once during the 2015 Assembly elections, but were wiped out in the subse-



Senior BJP leaders Amit Shah and J.P. Nadda at a rally of booth-level workers in New Delhi on Sunday. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

quent municipal and Lok Sabha elections.

Mr. Shah condemned the AAP government for spending public money on advertisements “congratulating” people for having begun various schemes. “What work have you [AAP government] completed in five years?” he asked.

He also attacked the Chief Minister for denying permission to prosecute JNU students in a sedition case, arguing that through this, the Kejriwal government was supporting the ‘tukde tukde gang’. Mr. Shah also said that various promises made by AAP, such as opening new schools, colleges and hospi-

tals had not materialised, adding that the State government did not allow various Central schemes such as the Ayushman Bharat Yojana to be implemented here. He alleged that nearly ₹10,000 crore funds had not been given to the municipal bodies in an attempt to “cripple” them.

Highlighting some of the works carried out by the Centre in Delhi, Mr. Shah said that the long-standing demand to regularise unauthorised colonies was being met by the government with registrations having been started. He said that the promise of allotting *pakka* houses to people living in

35,000 jhuggi jhopris was fulfilled by the Prime Minister, adding that surveys of up to 160 such JJ clusters had started. He went on to highlight the DDA’s land pooling policy.

Apart from this, he highlighted developmental works such as construction of parks, cycle tracks, extension of metro lines and spoke of developing a “Yamuna river front” along the lines of Sabarmati river front. With such a river front,

Mr. Shah added, the purvanchali people would not have to go anywhere else to carry out Chaath puja celebrations.

Other than abuse, nothing in speech: CM

‘If BJP has suggestions, AAP will implement it in next 5 years’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Reacting to Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s speech on Sunday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that Mr. Shah chose to “abuse” him instead of talking about development and pointing out shortcomings of the AAP-led government.

Mr. Shah had in his speech accused Mr. Kejriwal of “wasting” public money on advertisements and “misleading” people.

“I heard the entire speech of the Home Minister, Amit Shah ji. I thought he would point out the shortcomings of our work and talk about the development of Delhi. He did not say anything else except abusing me [sic],” Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

“If they [BJP] have suggestions for Delhi, then they should tell us and we will implement them in the next five years,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

Speaking at a town hall meeting in north-west Delhi where he was presenting a report card of his government’s five-year term, Mr. Kejriwal said that Delhi’s healthcare schemes are better than the Centre’s Ayushman Bharat Yojana.

“In Delhi, healthcare is completely free for all irrespective of rich or poor. Ayushman Bharat Yojana assures insurance for people, but those who own scooter, fridge, and cellphones and have an income of ₹10,000 are excluded. With these criteria applied, hardly anyone will be eligible for the scheme. Therefore, we have decided not to implement it,” Mr. Kerjiwal said. He ad-



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and others at the inauguration of a Mohalla Clinic. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ded that if the Delhi government wants, Ayushman Bharat can be implemented right away, adding that the scheme, however, will not simply work in Delhi.

The Chief Minister also said that earlier, people had to spend their entire savings or sell their properties to save their lives in case of any kind of serious illness but that the healthcare infrastructure in Delhi’s government hospitals has been significantly improved now. “People can avail of treatment, surgery and various tests free of cost. Delhi government provides support of up to ₹15 lakh for the treatment of severe illness at private hospitals in Delhi,” he said.

‘Fake registration’

He also hits out at the BJP government, saying that they were providing “fake registration” to people from unauthorised colonies. “How can a property be registered on agricultural land? You have to change the land use first. They said they are regularising the colonies, but instead of regularising them, they are providing registration of properties on agricultural

lands. The change in land use and mapping should be done first for the registration process to take place,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

He said that all was not well in today’s politics in the country and that there was a lot to change. “In the last five years, irrespective of manifold difficulties, we tried our best to ensure that people get the best from the government. There is an increasing trust between the people of Delhi and the Delhi government because they know that taxpayers’ money will not be wasted,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

New schemes

Responding to a question on what new schemes his government would reintroduce if voted back to power, he said that they would continue working with the same dedication.

“Cleaning up the Yamuna, cleaning up Delhi, redesigning roads, reducing air pollution, resolving traffic congestion and parking issues and providing 24-hour tap water facility to the people of Delhi are some of the key steps that we will take in the next five years,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

School for have-nots: a Delhi Police constable’s effort to educate 50 children

This makeshift school inside Red Fort battled many financial troubles to teach them good touch vs bad touch, and more life lessons

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Four years ago, a chance encounter between Sachin - an IAS aspirant - and a Delhi Police Constable changed the lives of several children of labourers working inside the Red Fort.

Mr. Singh has been running the makeshift school inside the fort for a few years now. He joined the police force 10 years ago on January 5. It was his third year in a Delhi University college when he cleared the examination after three attempts. His parents -Vasudev and Shashi - used to iron clothes for a living, he said, adding that he did the same till Class 11 before he started selling corn.

Importance of education

Growing up in a JJ Colony in Meera Bagh, he said, he understood the importance of education. Sharing an instance, he said once he and his siblings tried to watch TV at their neighbour’s house



Ankita Sharma, the first student of the makeshift school inside Red Fort, now teaches around 50-odd students. ■R.V. MOORTHY

when the latter shooed them away. The neighbours treated them differently because they didn’t “look educated”, he believes. Mr. Singh said when he met Sachin at Red Fort in 2016, he saw a reflection of his childhood.

On their first meet, Mr. Singh had asked Sachin to leave the premises as he thought the boy was a wanderer. He continued telling Sachin the same for the next three days until the latter broke down. “I asked him what was he doing inside the fort? He told me that he had

come from Maharashtra and was in the city to study for UPSC exams. He could not afford coaching classes so he was studying all by himself. He used to study here all day and would then go to a gurdwara nearby to sleep,” recalled the Constable.

Sachin cleared two written examinations that year but got stuck in the interview round. He then left, said Mr. Singh. After a few days, Mr. Singh called him when Sachin told him: “I won’t show you my face till I become an IAS”.

But before leaving the city,

Mr. Singh had made Sachin start a makeshift school to educate the needy. The Constable had told him that while studying, Sachin could also teach the children inside the monument.

Sachin’s first student was 16-year-old Ankita Sharma. She now is a teacher at this school, which is attended by labourers’ children from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. inside a temple in the Red Fort premises.

“The school had started with two-three kids. Then I went to the jhuggis and forced the labourers them to send the kids to the school. Most of these children go to schools in their villages but they are here for months. Therefore, it is important that they don’t spend their time in bad activities,” Mr. Singh said.

In the next four years, the open school managed to amass around 50-odd students.

Hurdles crossed

Running the school comes at

a cost. Mr. Singh, who has to take care of his own two children, has received flak from his wife for spending a chunk of his meagre salary on the education of many.

“Initially, she fought with me but later she understood. In 2018, because of finances, the school was also shut for 10-15 days but with some help, I started it again.”

The school provides the children with notebooks, pens and pencils. Out in the open courtyard, stands a green board against a temple wall, while the children sit on cloth sheets given to them by the school.

Mr. Singh has procured halogen lights over many years from the numerous events that Red Fort has been a venue for. Not only do they cover the school’s premises, but also the kids’ way back to their jhuggis.

“Their safety and security, especially of little girls, is very important,” he said. In running the school, senior police

officers have helped Mr. Singh time and again with stationary and money among other things.

At the school, the youngest is a 2-year-old and the oldest is a 15-year-old. They are taught alphabets, numbers and tables, the difference between good and bad touch, the importance of hygiene and the dangers of chewing tobacco.

Two boys and a girl - all aged between five and eight years - raised their hands in the class of 50, when Ankita asked: “How many of you have quit chewing tobacco?”

Six-year-old Pooja, who studies in Class IV in a school in her village in Ranchi, said she has learnt “ABCD, ginti [counting], *pahade* [tables], vowels in this school.” She had come to Delhi over a month ago and will return in the next 10 days.

Fourteen-year-old Sakshi is said to be among the brightest here. This is the only school that she attends and is proud

to have added fruits and vegetables to her vocabulary.

Two years ago, when Shah-nawaz Khan was all of three, his parents made him sit in the school, which he was not too fond of. However, he seems to love it now. Even though he doesn’t like studying too much, he sits here with due diligence - his notebook opened and pencil sharpened - looking at Ankita.

For Ankita, whose parents also reside in the jhuggis inside the monument, teaching these children started casually. Her mother used to teach kids.

She said her teacher in a private school once told her that teaching is a rewarding experience. A student of commerce, she either wants to become a mathematics teacher or a bank manager, she said.

When the class ended and the kids started to leave, Mr. Singh reminisced about the Delhi Police’s motto and said: “This is also Shanti Seva Nyaya for me.”

Overflowing sewage on National Highway-19 sparks safety concerns

Locals, commuters fume as complaints go unheard; authorities, Panchayat pass the buck

ASHOK KUMAR
FARIDABAD

For more than six months, sewage from Seekri village has been overflowing onto the service road and a stretch of the Delhi-Agra highway, causing a major nuisance to locals and motorists.

The authorities and the Panchayat, however, shift the blame on the matter. The flooded road hampers the movement of the vehicles, put the pedestrians to inconvenience, emanates foul smell, and also causes water-borne diseases and accidents on the National Highway.

Running a kiosk off the highway for over a decade, Majlis from Nuh, said the sewage from the village earlier flowed down a drain. However, the trouble began six months back when the highway was widened to six-lanes and a service road was constructed over the drain, he said.



The flooded road on Delhi-Agra highway near Seekri village. ■ASHOK KUMAR

Though pipelines have been laid under the service road to allow the sewage to reach the storm water drain along the highway, but the pipelines and the drain get frequently choked due to indiscriminate dumping of the garbage, including plastic waste, in an open *nallah* along the highway.

The small drains from the village fall into this *nallah*, which in turn is connected to the storm water drain with the pipelines. The choked pipelines and storm water

drain lead to overflow of the sewage to the service road and the Agra-Delhi carriage-way of the highway.

Dotted with vendors, kiosks and tea stalls, the *nallah*, close to the local market, remains full with garbage. A waste dumping site has also come up near the *nallah* and the garbage often ends up in it.

Local resident Ranjit, who also runs a makeshift kiosk, said he had complained to Sarpanch on several occasions but was told that it was

the responsibility of the highways authority. He said the highway authorities came to clear the water but not before it had entered their kiosks. The kiosk owners had put sandbags to prevent the water from entering their premises. Ranjit’s mother recalled that it was the worst near Rakshabandan festival and then Diwali, adding that the water was not cleared for the over a month this time around.

Breeding ground

The overflowed water has also affected his business, said Majlis. “Customers find it difficult to reach my shop due to water all around,” he said. Local villager Siddhu Khan said the stagnant sewage was a breeding ground for the mosquitoes and water-borne diseases. He suggested the *nallah* be covered and made *pucca*.

Prahlad, who runs an eggs-stall, said the water overflowing onto the high-

way led to frequent accidents. Not expecting sewage on the highway, the motorists, coming at a high speed, took sharp turn fearing potholes and met accidents. “A portion of the road is damaged due to constant water-logging and a truck overturned a month ago. The highway authorities then closed the right turn near the spot to the road passing through Seekri and connecting a dozen villages,” said Prahlad.

Auto-rickshaw driver Lal Singh said the road passing through Seekri connecting to other villages also remained waterlogged due to overflowing of sewage and crates had appeared on it. Sarpanch Anil Kumar alleged the drain to discharge the sewage was demolished by the agency that constructed the highway with a promise to make it again but did not do so. He said he was aware of the situation but the Panchayat did not have funds to make a

drain. He said he had made requests to the Block Development and Panchayat Officer and NHAI officials in this regard.

Delhi Agra Toll Road official P.K. Singh said the water-logging was caused due to the choking of the pipelines and the storm water drain. Mr. Singh said the Municipal Corporation of Faridabad had made drains in many villages along the highway to discharge sewage, but Seekri was outside the municipal limits causing the problem. He added the road was also damaged due to constant water-logging. NHAI, project director, Badarpur, Mohammad Safi told *The Hindu* that a notice was served to the Panchayat a month back to regularly clean the *nallah* to prevent the choking of the pipelines and the storm water drain. He added that a proposal for a drain to carry the sewage of the village was being considered as a lasting solution.

150 Mohalla Clinics inaugurated

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government inaugurated 150 Mohalla Clinics on Sunday taking the total number of such clinics in the Capital to 450. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, speaking at the inaugural function, said that it was for the first time that expansion of healthcare facilities on such a large scale was happening in the country.

“People of Delhi flagged off a new bandwagon of development in the previous elections. Now it runs at a speed of 100 km per hour. Don’t press brake; you should accelerate its speed to 200 km per hour”, Mr. Kejriwal said while making a pitch for the upcoming elections.

“When we came to power in 2015, we observed that there is no lack of big hospitals in Delhi. But for the common people, it was difficult to access these hospitals for the treatment of small illnesses. Due to this, these hospitals used to see a huge rush. So we realised that if we start smaller clinics, people can avail the services without having to travel a lot and that also reduced the rush in bigger hospitals in the city,” Mr. Kejriwal said.

The Chief Minister added that his government was not only building Mohalla Clinics for enhancing healthcare facilities, but also constructing world-class hospitals.

Will not implement NRC, CAA if voted to power: Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Sunday said that if it was elected to power in Delhi, it would not implement the National Population Register (NPR), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the amended Citizenship Act in its present form.

The State unit of the Congress said that the issue has been raised at the first meeting of the Manifesto Committee ahead of the Delhi Assembly election and it was decided that the party’s stand would be included in the manifesto.

Chairman of the Manifesto Committee, Ajay Maken, said that there was a huge difference in the NPR of 2010 and the one of 2020 as the Modi government at the Centre has added six new “illegal” questions and was in violation of Article 14 in the Constitution.

“The BJP has done an illegal act by dividing people. Details collected from the fresh questions included in the NPR are linked to the NRC, and are part of a conspiracy by the BJP-led Central government to push citizens’ list in the garb of the NPR,” Mr. Maken said.

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra alleged that the Centre was trying to divert people’s attention from issues like economic distress, price rise, unemployment, and using policies to divide the country on the basis of community and caste.

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THE HINDU



(Clockwise from top left) Homeless people sleeping on a pavement near Jama Masjid; a vendor waiting for customers at a makeshift shop in Old Delhi; people at a night shelter near Jama Masjid; patients taking a nap outside AIIMS; homeless people near AIIMS.



CITY TEAM
NEW DELHI

Past 10 p.m. on New Year's Day, Phoolkumari (22) covered herself in a blanket as she, along with her mother, were getting ready to sleep on the pavement outside AIIMS. She had undergone chemotherapy a few hours ago at the hospital. "Whatever I eat, I vomit... Due to weakness I feel colder," she said. The minimum temperature that night was 2.4 degrees celsius. The 22-year-old from Kaimur district in Bihar, a 12-year-old boy who had come from Uttar Pradesh for a check-up after being operated and a 50-year-old woman waiting for heart surgery were among those huddled up on the pavement outside the hospital on the cold January night. Over 100 others gave them company with flattened cardboard boxes doubling up as mattresses and a few with the luxury of plastic sheets as roofs. For those without a roof over their head, it was not only cold winter nights with single-digit temperatures that they had to deal with but also one of the coldest winters in over a century. The Capital recorded its coldest winter day with the maximum temperature falling to 9.4 degrees Celsius on December 30. December also saw 18 consecutive cold days and the MeT department has forecast a cold wave again after January 8.

Over occupancy
Finding shelter for those stranded in the city due to cancellations of trains due to fog or medical treatment is not an easy task. A Delhi government-run free temporary night shelter at gate number 2 of AIIMS with a capacity of 15 beds had 30 people for the night. The one on the opposite side with a capacity of 46 beds had 60 people by 10.45 p.m.

"People are sharing a bed and we were full last night also. Most of the tents [temporary night shelters] near AIIMS are full. They will find space in the ones a little away," said Ved Pal, caretaker of the second night shelter. Sooraj Kumar (12) and his father, who had come from Uttar

Rising against the odds

For those without a roof over their head, it was not only cold winter nights with single-digit temperatures that they had to deal with but also one of the coldest winters in over a century



Pradesh for a check-up and were sleeping next to Phoolkumari, said that they were not aware of the free night shelter. Many others were among those huddled up on the pavement in the open reiterated the same.

Free blankets

Anil Sharma, care taker of the tent at gate number 2 said that many sleep outside as they get free blankets which they then sell for a price. "Most of them stuff the blankets in sacks and sell it later. They would not come and stay in the tent even if we ask them to," he said.

The 12-year-old lifted a quilt they had got from their village to show the three blankets they got from people distributing them outside the hospital.

"About an hour ago someone came and asked us to sell the blanket we had got for a mere ₹100, but we did not give it," the boy said.

In over an hour spent in the area, at least three different groups had come to distribute blankets and some to distribute food, like the people who gave Phoolvati an apple. Some of them sleeping outside were seen tucking the blankets they had got under their belongings and rushing for another one.

To protect herself from the chilling weather, 11-year-old Sita was seen wearing an oversized brown sweater with a torn woolen bottom and a beanie cap. Sita and her mother Rajjo spend their day at the traffic light in east Delhi's Vivek Vihar; nights are spent outside a temple in the area. The father is a drunkard whose whereabouts the mother-daughter duo is unaware of.



"The last few days were very cold. An uncle gave me this sweater a few days ago. He was very nice," smiled Sita sitting next to a bonfire. Before she was

given a sweater, she managed with two undersized sweaters. Other who spend the day with Sita said that she is the chirpiest among the lot. She smiles



More than 100 people are sleeping outside AIIMS with flattened cardboard boxes doubling up as mattresses and a few with the luxury of plastic sheets as roofs. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

through adversity, they said. "Hamare liye kya hai... kabhi zadda thand to kabhi zadda garmi... kabhi paani ko taraste hain to kabhi kambal ko [What about us... we bear with extreme cold and extreme hot... in one season we crave for water and in another, a blanket]," they said.

The homeless people, said the nights are unbearable but blankets provided by temple officials and locals come in handy.

The bonfire of course helps.

Rohit (14) sells pens to motorists. His parents stay at a different red light in the area. They don't visit him often. Sometimes, he also cleans the cars' mirrors when the signal is red.

He recalled a night four days ago. "I had to beg people to give me something to wear on top of two thin sweaters I was wearing. No one helped. I had fought with one from the bunch so I didn't

ask them for help. I slept shivering."

For 24-year-old Rinku, who stays at a permanent night shelter at Sarai Kale Khan along with his wife and a three-month-old child, this has been a challenging winter. Rinku himself has been staying at the night shelter for the fourth consecutive year now and with the addition of a child he does want a better home for his family. However, even after doing a 12-hour shift at a local canteen, he still cannot afford a rented house.

"There are so many expenses. I want my family to have a home of their own, but that is not possible now. This time the winter is very cold, but the night shelter has been a blessing for us," said Rinku.

"We cook our own food here and get blankets and mattress at night. What else can we ask for," said Ricky, who hails from Revda district of Madhya Pradesh.

Around 9.30 p.m. on New Year day, 49-year-old Rajani and a couple of women and young boys were sitting around a bonfire at the entrance of the night shelter.

Livelihood issue

Rajni, whose husband worked as an engineer in the Railways, has been staying at the night shelter for the last eight months. Asked how she ended up staying at the place, Rajni said that she has been fighting a protracted battle against the Railways for pension after the death of her husband.

A resident of Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Rajni said she has been working as a maid at a house in Govindpuri to support her and her 27-year-old son who does the running around the Railways office for the pension.

This winter was particularly difficult for her as this was the first time that she has been forced to leave the comfort of her home and reside besides 60 to 70 people inside a single dorm in a new city.

"Everything else is fine. I have no issues on the facilities at the shelter. I hope to get back home soon as the pension work is almost complete," she said.

(With inputs from Soibam Rocky Singh, Nikhil M Babu and Hemani Bhandari)

‘Non-tribal communities can never claim to be indigenous’

Kochari samaj slams Assam govt. for destroying tribal history, culture

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Non-tribal communities living in Assam can never claim to be ‘khilonjia’ or indigenous, said the All-Assam Kochari Samaj that represents the earliest ethnic communities inhabiting the State.

Leaders of the samaj in a statement on Friday evening also slammed the Assam government and non-tribal people for destroying tribal history and cultures.

The Assam Sahitya Sabha and the All-Assam Students’ Union have panned the statement as “immature” and “politically-motivated” to undermine the ongoing movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The samaj’s statement assumes significance ahead of a report to be submitted by a 15-member panel enlisting

the communities that qualify to be called ‘khilonjia’ for implementing Clause 6 of the Assam Accord of 1985. This Clause prescribes land and constitutional rights only for the indigenous in Assam.

1881 census

The 1881 census recorded 19 groups within the Kochari classification but some got isolated from the parental stock. Today, it comprises communities such as Bodo, the largest plains tribe in the northeast, Deuri, Dimas, Rabha, Sonowal Kachari, Thengal Kachari and Tiwa. Large swathes of Assam are under autonomous or development councils specifically for these communities.

“Kochari kings began ruling areas under present-day Assam and beyond 1,500 years before the Mahabharata

era. But the non-tribal have pushed the tribal history aside despite the United Nations specifying that only the aborigines can be called indigenous,” said the statement signed by the organisation’s working president Manas Rabha, general secretary Pradip Sonowal and four others representing as may tribes.

The samaj claimed many traits representative of mainstream Assamese culture today were appropriated from the tribes. These include the floral ‘gamosa’, or cloth-towel, that has become a symbol of the anti-CAA protest.

The Kochari group also pointed out that the Ahoms, who came from Thailand some 800 years ago, were non-indigenous. The Ahoms are one of six communities demanding Scheduled Tribe

status, which the Kocharis enjoying ST status are opposed to.

‘Baseless claim’

Advising the Assamese to stop making the “baseless claim” of being indigenous or ‘bhumiputra’ (son-of-the-soil), the Kochari Samaj said they would otherwise seek justice from the Supreme Court and approach the U.N. besides the Centre.

“The views of the organisation are utterly immature. I appeal to their leaders to come to our office with facts and discuss for establishing their claims and specify the communities they consider non-tribal. We should refrain from comments that divide the indigenous communities,” said Paramanda Rajbongshi, former president of Assam Sahitya Sabha.

White blanket



A view of snow-covered Mechuka following heavy snowfall in Shi-Yomi district of Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday. PTI

Man arrested for posing as Maoist in Odisha

Releases nephew after extorting ₹2 lakh

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

A youth was arrested in Odisha’s Gajapati district for posing as a Maoist to kidnap his eight-year-old nephew for ransom.

The arrested kidnapper was identified as K. Chandra Rao (25), cousin of K. Dileswar Rao, the father of the kidnapped child. Both are residents of Paralakhemundi, district headquarters town of Gajapati district.

Demanded ₹20 lakh

The kidnapper initially demanded ₹20 lakh as ransom. But he released the child after extorting ₹2 lakh, said Bibekananda Swain, inspector in charge of Paralakhemundi police station Bibekananda Swain.

According to police sources, Chandra Rao was arrested on Saturday and ₹1,45,000 was seized from a new four wheeler he had recently bought. He had

paid up the remaining ₹55,000 of the ransom money as the first down payment of the vehicle, said Mr Swain.

The police have also seized the vehicle.

Kept him in Srikakulam

According to the police, on the morning of December 31, Chandra Rao had asked the child to come with him, and kept him at a village in adjoining Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh.

He then made calls from different mobile numbers posing as a Maoist leader to his cousin, the father of the child.

Police complaint

Police during his interaction with his parents after the release, the child said that he had spent the whole day with his uncle. This made the father suspicious, who filed a complaint at Paralakhemundi police station on January 3.

2 picnickers die after touching live wire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

Two picnickers, including a child, died while another was critically injured after coming in contact with a high-tension electric wire at Usthi in South 24 Parganas district on Sunday, police said.

Six-year-old Rezaul Mollah and 32-year old Guffar Mollah died on the spot after accidentally touching the hanging live wire on the rooftop of a three-storey private school building in the area, a police officer said.

Mofizul Mollah, the father of Rezaul and uncle of Guffar, was seriously injured as he tried to save the two, the police officer said.

Mofizul was referred to a Kolkata hospital and his condition was very critical, the officer said.

The three were part of a picnic party from nearby Mograhat area in the district.

Two killed in freak mishap in Odisha

Paddy-cutting machine fell on them

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALASORE (ODISHA)

Two persons were killed on Sunday when a heavy paddy-cutting machine fell on them at a village in Balasore district, the police said.

The men were trying to mount machine on a tractor after completion of

paddy-cutting operation at Khuada village, when it slipped and fell on them, they said.

Gopal Tudu (21) and Hamir Hansda (22) were taken to the district headquarters hospital at Balasore, where doctors declared them brought dead, hospital sources said.

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New Batch for 2021 Starts: 20th Jan
CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TOPPERS
2018: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2017: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2016: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2015: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2014: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2013: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2012: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2011: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2010: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2009: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2008: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2007: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2006: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2005: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2004: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2003: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2002: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2001: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 2000: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1999: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1998: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1997: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1996: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1995: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1994: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1993: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1992: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1991: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1990: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1989: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1988: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1987: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1986: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1985: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1984: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1983: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1982: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1981: Anshu Sahasrabudhe, 1980: Anshu 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IN BRIEF



Police inspect Lalu's ward at hospital

RANCHI
A team of senior police officers on Sunday inspected the ward where jailed Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad is undergoing treatment at the Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences. "It was a general inspection," said an officer. PTI

Navy kicks off 'Maha-Navy Connect'

MUMBAI
The Navy on Sunday launched a first-ever three-dimensional expedition to promote the heritage of India and spread awareness on coastal security among the sea-side communities in Maharashtra, said an official spokesperson. The expedition extends from Arnala Fort, the northernmost fort in Palghar district, built by the then Portuguese rulers, to Sindhudurg Fort.

Police officer charged with sexual harassment

GUWAHATI
An IPS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre, Gaurav Upadhyay, who is currently posted as SP in Karbi Anglong district, was charged with sexually assaulting a minor girl on December 31. A case was filed against him under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act on Friday, at Guwahati's all women's police station.

Puducherry CM 'quashes' Governor Bedi's order

PUDUCHERRY
Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy has issued an order declaring as "illegal" and "null and void" an order of Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi annulling the appointment of State Election Commissioner T.M. Balakrishnan. He also directed Chief Secretary Ashwani Kumar to ignore Ms. Bedi's earlier order.

NAL wants govt. push for Saras takeoff

It says Centre should buy at least 50-60 Saras Mk2 aircraft to make production commercially viable

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The government needs to be the "launch customer" to make Saras Mk2 commercially viable, the National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL), which has developed the first indigenous light transport aircraft, told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology.

The 19-seater aircraft, developed with a target cost of ₹50 crore, is at least 20-25% lower in cost than other aircraft in the similar category.

The aircraft has been in the making for long. The first prototype flew in 2004. But without the initial push from the government, the manufacturing capacity required for commercial production could not be set up, the NAL said.

On a five-day tour of ISRO



Taking wing: A Saras aircraft participating in the biennial AERO India show in February 2019. The 19-seater Mk2 will be the first indigenous light transport aircraft. • FILE PHOTO

facilities from December 25 to 30, the committee members visited the NAL on December 28 and were briefed about the aircraft. Later, NAL Director Jitendra J. Jadhav sent a report on the plan for commercial production. Committee chairperson and

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh forwarded the report to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu.

"Our job is to study and recommend. We cannot and should not step into the domain of the executive," Mr. Ramesh said, explaining why

he forwarded the report to Mr. Naidu.

Presently, the NAL has only one order from the Indian Air Force for 15 aircraft.

Connectivity plans

The NAL has been pitching Saras Mk-2 for the govern-

ment's UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik), since it has the capacity to operate in "ill-equipped", "semi-prepared" and "unpaved airstrips". The scheme, launched in October 2016, is aimed at linking areas that have no air connectivity.

The NAL has said in its report to Mr. Ramesh that the government should be the "launch customer", and place an order for at least 50-60 aircraft, which can be used for VIP services or tackling emergencies in times of natural calamities.

"With the firm commitment for procurement from the government, industries will come forward to set up manufacturing infrastructure. This will also push the growth of the micro, small and medium enterprises and allied service sector," Mr. Jadhav said in his report.

Army to sign MoU for 7.5 lakh AK-203 assault rifles

They will be manufactured by an Indo-Russian joint venture

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

The Army is likely to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a month for the procurement of over 7.5 lakh AK-203 assault rifles, which are to be manufactured locally by an India-Russia joint venture (JV), a Defence source said. The Defence Ministry has already floated a Request For Proposal for the supply of 6.71 lakh rifles.

"About 1 lakh rifles will come directly from Russia and the remaining will be manufactured by the JV in India. The MoU should be



About 1 lakh rifles will be manufactured in Russia and the remaining in India.

signed in a month," an official said.

The rifles will be manufactured by the Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited

(IRRPL) at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh. The facility is being set up by the Ordnance Factories Board from the Indian side, and Rosoboron Exports and Kalashnikov on the Russian side.

The Army has appointed Major General Sanjeev Senger as the Chief Executive Officer of IRRPL.

In addition to the AK-203, the Army recently began inducting the first batch of 10,000 SIG-716 assault rifles.

The force has been looking to replace the indigenous INSAS rifles, which are currently in use, with modern rifles.

CIC website inaccessible again outside India

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

While the website of the Central Information Commission (CIC) has been inaccessible in many countries since the beginning of the year, Chief Information Commissioner Sudhir Bhargava says there has been no policy decision to block the website outside India.

The CIC website, cic.gov.in, offers facilities to file appeals online, as well as a database of all appeals and decisions.

On Sunday, Indian citizens living in the United States, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Vietnam told *The Hindu* they could not access the site. RTI activist Commodore Lokesh Batra (retd),

currently in the U.S., said he had been unable to access the site when trying to file an appeal on New Year's Day, and had informed CIC officials as well as National Informatics Centre (NIC).

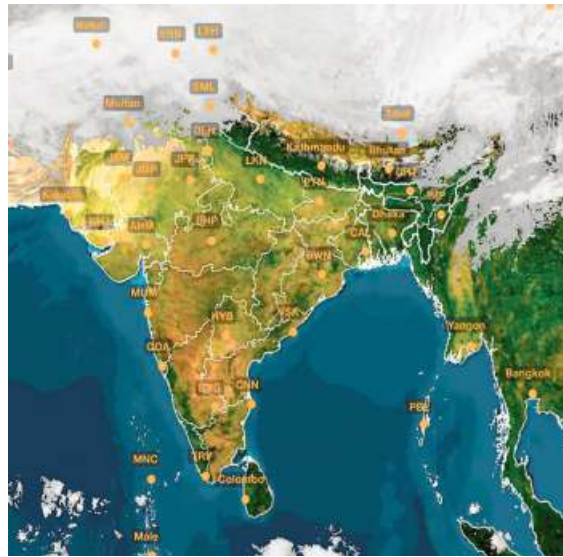
However, Mr Bhargava told *The Hindu*, "It is just a glitch," adding that no specific decision has been taken to make the website inaccessible outside India.

Commodore Batra says after a similar instance in August 2018, he had filed an RTI request seeking the reasons behind the denial.

The response had merely said: "Due to some unknown technical error, the access to the CIC website through some of the channels was not available."

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rain/snow likely in isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir; heavy rain likely at isolated places over south Tamil Nadu. Thunderstorm accompanied with hail and lightning likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana Chandigarh, Delhi and east Rajasthan.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	23.0...	13.0	Kozhikode	—	34.0...	25.0
Ahmedabad	—	25.0...	12.0	Kurnool	—	33.0...	22.0
Aizawl	—	—	—	Lucknow	—	21.0...	11.0
Allahabad	—	18.0...	10.0	Madurai	—	34.0...	23.0
Bengaluru	—	31.0...	19.0	Mangaluru	—	32.0...	20.0
Bhopal	—	20.0...	13.0	Mumbai	—	30.0...	16.0
Bhubaneswar	—	26.0...	13.0	Mysuru	—	32.0...	18.0
Chandigarh	—	18.0...	6.0	New Delhi	—	21.0...	7.0
Chennai	—	32.0...	25.0	Patna	—	18.0...	13.0
Coimbatore	—	33.0...	23.0	Port Blair	—	31.0...	26.0
Dehradun	8.8...	19.0...	4.0	Puducherry	—	31.0...	23.0
Gangtok	3.3...	8.0...	4.0	Pune	—	26.0...	12.0
Goa	—	30.0...	19.0	Raipur	0.5...	24.0...	15.0
Guwahati	—	—	—	Ranchi	—	—	20.0...
Hubballi	—	29.0...	17.0	Shillong	—	—	—
Hyderabad	—	—	—	Shimla	6.4...	10.0...	-1.0
Imphal	—	—	—	Srinagar	—	—	—
Jaipur	—	21.0...	10.0	Thiruvananthapuram	71.6...	32.0...	25.0
Kochi	—	33.0...	26.0	Tiruchi	—	33.0...	22.0
Kohima	—	—	—	Vijayawada	—	27.0...	22.0
Kolkata	—	21.0...	13.0	Visakhapatnam	—	27.0...	21.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing							Yesterday
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	
Ahmedabad.....	57	22	36	120	113	■	In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 460 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 42.
Bengaluru.....	11	55	19	97	104	■	
Chennai.....	5	18	96	34	—	■	
Delhi.....	—	206	80	395	336	■	
Hyderabad.....	3	66	44	166	126	■	
Kolkata.....	24	75	26	254	241	■	
Lucknow.....	8	33	92	242	—	■	
Mumbai.....	7	71	20	232	166	■	
Pune.....	68	26	79	188	130	■	
Visakhapatnam	11	23	44	27	43	■	

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

'Investors wary of uncertain tax administration in India'

Association flags existence of multiple tax regimes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Uncertainty in tax administration is one of the key threats to private investments in the country, the Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association said in a presentation made a Parliamentary panel on Finance on Friday.

The presentation accessed by *The Hindu* lists five major threats to private investors in the country. The first is "increased frictional costs on capital mobility, including dividend distribution tax, buy-back tax and so on, which diminishes returns prospects," the association noted. A similar demand was recently made by



India was at 63rd position for Ease of Doing Business across the world in 2019.

Association of National Exchanges Members of India.

The second point raised by the association is "uncertainty in tax administration". The association told the members that there are

multiple tax regimes within a single structure.

The group also pointed out that there is a "perception of India being unfriendly to foreign investors." While the government is busy patting its back for better "ease of doing business" rating, there is an "increasing risk perception about doing business in India", the group said.

India was on the 63rd rank in World Bank's list of countries rated on ease of doing business in 2019.

Finally, the association said that a slow down in growth has reduced opportunities. As per the latest data the GDP growth is down to 4.5%, a 26-quarter low.

One dead in Bengal station collapse

Another injured has suffered a fracture

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

One of the two persons injured in a partial collapse of the Bardhaman railway station building in West Bengal succumbed to his injuries early on Sunday, said Swapan Debnath, Minister in the State Cabinet.

He said that the man, who suffered serious injuries when a chunk of concrete fell on his head, could not be saved despite efforts by doctors of the Bardhaman Medical College Hospital.

A portion of the roof of the two-storey station building collapsed near the enquiry counter on Saturday evening.

The other injured person, who suffered a frac-



A part of the station's roof collapsed near the enquiry counter on Saturday.

ture in one of his legs, is being treated at the State-run hospital, where Railway doctors had also rushed on Saturday evening to provide necessary assistance, an Eastern Railway spokesperson said.

Centre bats for science outreach programmes

It moots Scientific Social Responsibility

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Importance of communication and outreach programmes was on the agenda on the third day of the 107th Indian Science Congress here on Sunday.

Akhilesh Gupta, adviser and head, Climate Change Programme, Department of Science and Technology, spoke about the Centre's policy on implementing scientific social responsibility (SSR).

Under the programme, researchers who are working on a science project funded by any of the Ministries under the Central government will have to undertake activities to popularise science and make it more accessible to the public.

Speaking at the Science Communicators' Meet, Mr. Gupta said they would draw

up a list of activities which could be taken up under the Scientific Social Responsibility programme, that was similar to Corporate Social Responsibility.

Part of outcome report

"This could range from going to colleges delivering lectures, writing an article in a magazine or doing something beyond the curriculum," he said.

The science outreach would be mandatory and researchers had to include this as part of their outcome report, he added.

Mr. Gupta said the move would not only bridge the gap between research institutes and the civilians, but also help scientists hone their communication skills.

"It will be implemented this year after a consultation meeting with all stakeholders," Mr. Gupta added.

Women scientists seek conducive workplaces

They want childcare facilities and safer laboratories

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Better childcare facilities, safer laboratories and more funding for research projects were some of the issues that women scientists and researchers batted for to make the work environment more conducive.

Several scientists spoke to *The Hindu*, on the sidelines of the Women's Science Congress, as part of the Indian Science Congress, about how institutions and the government can ensure that not only more women choose science, but they remain in their field instead of dropping out.

Shyamala Subba Reddy, Department of Horticulture, Professor, University of Agricultural Sciences, said: "There is a need for more supportive system on cam-



At the forefront: Tessy Thomas and Trilochan Mohapatra at the Women's Science Congress on Sunday. • SUDHAKARA JAIN

pus for young women. Having child care facilities and creches will make a significant difference in ensuring that more women remain in science and research."

Surekha Ramrao Gaikwad, Associate Professor of home science at SSSP College, Parbhani, spoke about the bureaucracy involved in getting approvals.

Men also have a huge role to play in the way our society inculcates women's aspirations, said Trilochan Mohapatra, Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, at the inauguration of the Congress.

Tessy Thomas, Director-General of Aeronautical Systems, Defence Research and Development Organisation, was present at the event.



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सीएसआईआर - केंद्रीय खाद्य प्रौद्योगिक अनुसंधान संस्थान, मैसूरु - 570 020, भारत

CSIR-CENTRAL FOOD TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, Govt. of India, New Delhi)

MYSURU - 570 020, INDIA

Advt. No. Rec.: 119/2019

Dt. 06.01.2020

RECRUITMENT OF SCIENTIFIC POSITIONS

Date of Commencement of Online Applications : 08.01.2020 (Wednesday) at 10:00 AM

Closing Date for Online Submission of Applications : 06.02.2020 (Thursday) at 05:00 PM

CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru, a constituent laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of S&T and Earth Sciences, Govt. of India, invites online applications from Indian citizens who are bright, highly motivated, enthusiastic and qualified Researchers / Professionals in order to contribute towards Nation's development by pursuing in-depth R&D in the diverse areas of Food Science & Technology to fill up the following scientific positions:

Designation	No. of Vacancies & Reservation	Pay Scale	**Age Limit
Scientist	25 [UR-11*, EWS-2, OBC(NCL)-6*, SC-4, ST-2] *{includes 1 post reserved for PwBd (OH)}	Level-11 (₹ 67,700-2,08,700)	32 Years
Senior Scientist	3 [UR-03]	Level-12 (₹ 78,800-2,09,200)	37 Years
Principal Scientist	3 [UR-03]	Level-13 (₹ 1,23,100- 2,15,900)	45 Years

****Upper age limit as on the last date of online application.**

For detailed advertisement and other information on online application, the interested eligible candidates may please visit official CFTRI website <https://www.cftri.res.in> under Recruitments or <https://www.recruitment.cftri.res.in> All further announcements / details pertaining to this process / updates / corrigendum / addendum etc., will be published / provided only on CFTRI official website <https://www.cftri.res.in> from time to time.

Sd/-
Administrative Officer



Life of science

The Science Congress needs new ideas, and not a mix of myth and pseudoscience

The Indian Science Congress (ISC) – its 107th edition is under way in Bengaluru – has served as a reminder of the status accorded to science and technology in the early years of the Indian republic. Though the formation of the congress pre-dates the Indian republic, it was the intellectual nursery of modern science in the country. Early ideas of how science and technology could aid the development of the new nation were incubated at this coming together of scientists. It is for this reason that the congress, normally held in the first week of January, is inaugurated by the Prime Minister. The years since have seen the nature of the congress change: from one where scientists, in the era of postal communication, congregated to exchange scientific ideas to one today where it has become a ‘science mela’. The prime purpose of the ISC now is to draw school and science college students to hear Nobel Laureates and Indian-origin scientists from abroad to lecture about their work and the future prospects of science. The other draws are science projects and innovations by schoolchildren and stalls showcasing scientific work being done in key national laboratories and institutions.

But there is an unmistakable decay, a choreographed ennui, that has set in. In recent years, the congress often makes news for becoming a forum for pseudoscience and less for interesting scientific ideas or demonstrations. Speakers – some holding distinguished positions in leading universities – have tended to mix mythology and science and publicise far-fetched assertions: that the Kauravas were born from stem-cell technology and the Vedas discussed avionics. While this has eroded the congress’s public image, the government itself does not seem too keen to vitalise it. The exhibits at several scientific laboratories are re-runs from old congresses, or from similar and past science fairs. Many laboratories showcase their work as ‘posters’ rather than actually showing demonstrations or working inventions. Several luminaries of India’s science establishments – the Principal Scientific Adviser, secretaries from several ministries, the chiefs of major organisations such as ISRO or the Department of Atomic Energy, who have been fixtures, or have at least had their organisation present a dedicated talk or session, were absent this year. It is inevitable that traditions change over time and the relative importance accorded to institutions wax and wane. However this must make way for inspiring new ideas, or new models of taking science to the public. A rising trend in science displays, at museums or exhibitions in many places, is to mix science and art as well as make interactive displays that encourage audience engagement. A rebirth, and not a creeping requiem, is what the congress needs.

Least surprise

The DMK remains the front runner in Tamil Nadu, but the AIADMK is fast catching up

The only surprise in the December 2019 elections to rural local bodies in Tamil Nadu was that there was no surprise. Held after eight years, the polls, which were due in October 2016, were relatively peaceful, with around 77% of voters – nearly two crore people – exercising their franchise in 27 of 36 districts to elect their representatives for village panchayats, panchayat unions and district panchayats. The results reaffirmed that much of the State’s political space continues to remain with the DMK and the ruling AIADMK. Some churn was thought possible in the light of the debate on the perceived vacuum in political leadership in the State. The DMK-led front – it won 38 of the 39 Lok Sabha seats last year – has retained its lead over its arch rival with a higher tally of wards in panchayat unions and district panchayats, the elections to which are on political lines. However, the fact that the AIADMK, an important ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party, has been able to bridge some of the gap with the DMK was also in keeping with the results in the Assembly by-elections in October last. Clearly, both parties have reasons to believe that their prospects in the 2021 Assembly polls are good. Though the ruling party appears to have regained much of its support base lost during the parliamentary polls – this being the first State-wide electoral contest in the last seven months – the reality that it finished behind its key adversary in the overall tally of the local bodies’ wards is a situation that will not be to the liking of its leadership; the perception is that the AIADMK is traditionally stronger in the rural areas. Finally, political mobilisation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, is believed to be a factor that influenced voters against the ruling party.

The State Election Commission (SEC), which conducted itself reasonably well with new measures such as the use of flying squads and closed circuit television sets, should stick to its plan of holding the polls to urban local bodies including the Greater Chennai Corporation and abide by the Supreme Court’s direction of completing the poll process for rural local bodies in the remaining nine districts within three months. It should note that the reason behind the Court granting more time is for carrying out fresh delimitation of wards in five new districts. The panel should also ensure that the poll process is always fair and credible. It would be in the fitness of things for the State government to assist the SEC in ensuring the early completion of the next round of polls. Any delay will not reflect well on the SEC and the ruling party. For the AIADMK, it will be an occasion for course correction. For the DMK, the message is that it cannot be complacent. It is the front runner, but the AIADMK is regaining momentum.

Scoring a foreign policy self-goal

The government’s political expediency over the Citizenship Act has landed India in an unenviable diplomatic spot today



HAPPYMON JACOB

The frightening fall of a great nation has begun. Once a leading light of inclusiveness, democracy, and a major pole of stability in the comity of nations, despite occasional failings, India today is embarrassingly at the centre of attention for bad behaviour. While the present government’s decisions on Jammu and Kashmir put the spotlight on New Delhi, the recently legislated Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, or CAA, 2019 pushed it over the edge. Not only has the Act deeply divided a communally sensitive country, its effect is bound to have long-term implications for India’s foreign policy. India’s global standing is ever more vulnerable today, and the chinks in India’s diplomatic armour have never been so evident.

The essence of the CAA

But before we weigh the foreign policy implications, let us understand the CAA for what it really is. Shorn of the deliberate confusion and politically-convenient rhetoric, the CAA is neither about refugees nor about illegal immigrants, as the government would like to claim; it is about the Muslims in India. If you are an Indian Muslim with incontrovertible domicile documents, it is a message for you. If you do not have the requisite documents and you are Muslim, this is where you should be scared about your future.

Let us be clear: If the objective is to provide refuge to the persecuted, what we need is a proper refugee law with legally sound standard operating procedures on a par with global standards, and without discrimination. If it is about illegal immigration, the as-

sumption – when one reads the CAA and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) together – that only Muslims can be illegal immigrants is a deeply problematic one.

Regional fallout

The present government’s zealous pursuit of the CAA citing human rights violations in the neighbourhood and illegal immigration from it is a foreign policy self-goal. Clearly, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could not have, if it were to derive domestic political utility from it, talked about illegal immigration to India without castigating Bangladesh, nor could it have pontificated about the human rights violations of non-Muslims in the region without pointing fingers at Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. It is such political expediency that has landed the government in an unenviable diplomatic spot today.

It would, however, be foolish of those of us who are outside the government to assume that the leadership did not foresee the negative fallout its policies and rhetoric on India’s relations with two of its best friends in the region, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, at a time when it does not have many friends in the neighbourhood.

But that is not the point. That the BJP leadership would have, most likely, foreseen the serious loss of diplomatic capital with these countries and yet gone ahead with its anti-neighbour rhetoric given its domestic political utility is what makes it singularly worrying. Put differently: the political bosses of the Indian government decided to sacrifice the country’s crucial foreign policy interests at the altar of domestic political contingencies.

This becomes a diplomatic double whammy given how India is already losing its traditional heft and influence in the region and at a time a China-led balance of power is emerging in the region. Once again, New Delhi is not unaware of it. On the contrary, South Block’s



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

foreign policy mandarins are wary of the Chinese state’s sure-footed engulfment of the neighbourhood. And yet, the political bosses have preferred domestic political gains over diplomatic benefits, relegating foreign policy to the whims of electoral outcomes.

That from a foreign policy point of view the CAA is short-sighted is obvious, and that it will adversely affect India’s regional influence and standing is an unavoidable outcome; what is shocking is that the political leadership does not seem bothered by it. That is what should worry us.

Reputational costs

From Kashmir to the NRC to the CAA – one reckless action after another – New Delhi seems to have finally exhausted the goodwill of the international community. In December, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called the CAA “fundamentally discriminatory” – something unheard of in recent memory. Again in December, the United States, arguably India’s best friend today, urged the country to “protect the rights of its religious minorities in keeping with India’s Constitution and democratic values”. The same month too, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) referred to CAA as not only “highly discriminatory and arbitrary” but also contrary to New Delhi’s “obligations under international human rights laws”.

New Delhi’s attempts to reach out to the international community, albeit selectively, while assiduously avoiding those critical of its policies, have not met with much success. When India’s External Affairs Minister pulled out of a meeting with senior members of the

Spotting an opportunity in changing fundamentals

Growing rivalry between the United States and China could spell a strategic moment for India



SUJAN R. CHINYOY

The “Phase One” trade deal between the United States and China gives both sides a reprieve, especially since the U.S. stayed its hand in not imposing additional tariffs worth \$160-billion in mid-December. But the rift runs deep. Beyond trade, the chasm is growing. A technology war has erupted in the areas of artificial intelligence, digital space and 5G. Tensions have risen following the U.S.’s passing of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 and the proposed Uighur Act.

The slowdown in the global economy is compounded by the U.S.-China trade war. As more sectors get drawn in, costs are rising and disrupting global supply chains.

Energy concerns

Slack demand for energy and surplus production mainly by the U.S. had lowered oil prices, which was good news for India, given its huge imports. Lower energy prices may help India address its current account deficit. It can also make India’s export sector more competitive. But oil prices have surged more than 4% following the U.S. air strike killing Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, Commander of the Qods Force. An outbreak of hostilities would send oil prices soaring. Unlike India, China continues to buy Iranian crude oil and

is its largest buyer. Reports suggest that China will invest \$280-billion in developing Iran’s oil, gas and petrochemicals sectors and even station Chinese security personnel to guard Chinese projects. Dependence on China prevents Iran from criticising China on its policies in Xinjiang. In tensions with the U.S., Iran sees in China a sympathiser.

India’s ramped up energy imports from the U.S. are likely to touch \$10-billion in 2019-2020. Meanwhile, China’s interest in Saudi Aramco’s initial public offering and interest in weakening the dollar in the global energy market has grown. It is forging closer ties with oil producers that are in the U.S.’s cross hairs on human rights and governance issues. This facilitates its naval presence in the western Indian Ocean, including the Strait of Hormuz.

On trade

According to a State Bank of India “Ecowrap” report of July 2019, India has scarcely benefited from U.S.-China trade. Of the \$35-billion dip in China’s exports to the U.S. market in the first half of 2019, about \$21-billion (or 62%) was diverted to other countries. The rest, \$14-billion, was made good largely by the U.S. producers. Going by a UN Conference on Trade and Development report of November 2019, additional exports from India to the U.S. market in the first half of the year due to trade diversion amounted to only \$755-million. U.S. tariffs on China seem to have made some other players such as Taiwan, Mexico, Vietnam and the European Union even more competitive.

China is facing a great shortage



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

of pork due to an outbreak of swine flu but India’s meat exports, primarily buffalo meat, reach China indirectly through Vietnam and the Philippines, adding to costs and reducing market share. Besides, India’s pork exports are meagre. China’s ambitious thrust on artificial intelligence, robotics, autonomous vehicles and space technologies has goaded the Donald Trump administration into action. With tensions rising after the blacklisting of Huawei Technologies by the U.S., the spectre of a high-tech war looms large.

The big three Chinese high-tech companies, Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent, together poured in \$5-billion in Indian startups in 2018. India could use this opportunity to try and force China to pry open its market to India’s IT and other tech exports. The U.S.-China high-tech war threatens India’s strategic autonomy. Yet India has decided to allow all network equipment makers, including Huawei, to participate in 5G spectrum trials. The outcome is far from clear.

As U.S.-China tensions drive supply chains out of China, India could emerge as an alternative destination with the right policies, as Vietnam has done.

Any impact on clean energy targets in China due to U.S. technology restrictions in the nuclear field could be a setback to efforts to reduce emissions and mitigate cli-

mate change in the entire region. Denial regimes often spur domestic research and development and if the development of India’s own missile programme during years of U.S. sanctions is anything to go by, China may yet succeed in riding out the storm on the technology front.

China claims that the U.S. is behind the disturbances in Hong Kong. There is no sign of the protests abating. If things turn uglier, India may have to cater to refugees of Indian origin.

Great power equations

India is a major power with great power ambitions and may even be an indispensable power in some respects. However, if India decides to shape its foreign policy based purely on domestic calculations, its indispensability and system-shaping abilities will take a serious

hit. A great power, among other things, is a state that is willing to live up to certain global expectations and has the ability and willingness to help with system maintenance.

Great powers have traditionally been supportive of India’s rise in the global order and have more or less stood by India in its pursuit of power and reputation. This is bound to change thanks to the government’s domestic preoccupations. While the Trump White House may be indulgent towards New Delhi, at least for now, the patience of the Washington establishment is fast running out. If there is a Democratic government in Washington DC next year, things might get harder for New Delhi. Moscow’s unequivocal support for New Delhi is now a thing of the past, and New Delhi’s fall from grace suits Beijing more than anyone.

Key regional issues

The situation in the South China Sea is weighted in favour of China given its *fait accompli* in occupying several man-made islands. India has no role in negotiating the “Code of Conduct” with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, though it is a participant in the “Quad” dialogue on broader issues in the Indo-Pacific. India reserves the right to sail and fly unimpeded through the South China Sea in accordance with the principles of freedom of navigation and overflight.

On connectivity, the U.S.’s position is helpful to India. Recently, the U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Alice G. Wells criticised the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which traverses Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, as eventually worsening Islamabad’s economic troubles. India is neither part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) nor the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. It is absent from the Indo-Pacific Business Forum created by the U.S., Japan and Australia

steer clear of the baits and pitfalls arising out of the situation. Traditionally, India and Iran have had a long history of love-hate relationship and the present situation could also lead to a new low. It would be wise for both nations to keep their heads still.

YOGANANDH T.,
Salem, Tamil Nadu

■ The U.S.’s misadventure can prove to be another strategic misstep by Washington in affairs of West Asia. This is nothing short of

When was the last time we heard a mention of rising India? When was the last time someone “seriously” argued that India should be part of the UNSC? Our sheen has come off and the world is beginning to see the ugly realities within.

Moreover, thanks to the heavy political fire-fighting that it needs to do on a daily basis on issues such as Kashmir, the NRC, and the CAA, much of New Delhi’s diplomatic capital is spent on doing precisely that. Its focus on crucial regional and global issues seems to be waning fast. With little talk of renegotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, no appetite to be part of the Afghan peace process, and disinterest in the Indian Ocean’s geopolitics, among others, the regime in New Delhi resembles a provincial capital today.

Meanwhile, the world is watching as we make a spectacle of ourselves.

Happymon Jacob teaches national security at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

as also from the Blue Dot network. A future challenge lies in India having to reconcile its own regional connectivity initiatives with the BRI projects that have mushroomed in the neighbourhood.

In the ideological battlefield, China’s economic success has emboldened it such that it challenges the liberal democracy model and offers an alternative developmental model based on its own system.

Overall, the military advances by China notwithstanding, U.S. defence spending far outstrips China’s budget. Its nuclear arsenal dwarfs that of China. With the creation of a U.S. Space Force as a separate arm under the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. will seek to increase its superiority in network-centric warfare. As China’s anxieties in the Asia-Pacific theatre grow, India may yet have to contend with a greater Chinese military presence on its periphery. The Western Theater Command created in 2016 is responsible for the border with India. It is the largest of China’s military regions, and the Tibet Military Command under it has been accorded a higher status than other provincial commands to widen its scope for combat preparedness.

U.S.-China rivalry coincides with an upward trajectory in India-U.S. relations. This is important for equilibrium and multipolarity in Asia, even as India and China try and build much-needed trust and cooperation.

Sujan R. Chinoy, a China-specialist and former Ambassador to Japan, is currently Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

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declaring war on Iran. In the times of a global economic slowdown, the mindless act of the big brother would lead the world community to the brink by affecting the supply and price of hydrocarbon fuels. The slain commander was instrumental in fighting against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. A strong retaliation from Iran is in offing. India too would have to bear the brunt.

D.V.G. SANKARARAO,
Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh

Safeguarding the idea of India

The nation’s current social and political predicament poses an existential challenge

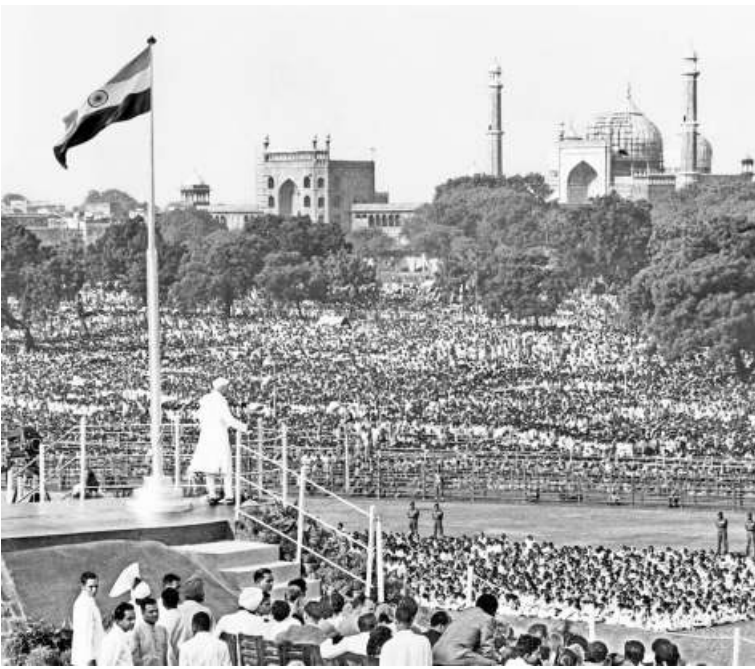


KAUSHIK BASU & NIRVIKAR SINGH

Ominous clouds have gathered over India, casting shadows of divisiveness and hate, threatening to undermine civil society and halt or even reverse economic progress. There is today a risk of going over a precipice beyond which there may not be a turning point.

As the new decade dawned, the two of us decided to get together to write not on problems of economic theory or some immediate policy challenge, as we did in the past, but on the nation’s social and political predicament, which poses an existential challenge. We have known each other for decades, and grown up in an India that was imperfect but seemed to possess an ideal of togetherness that created hope. We come from different backgrounds. One of us (as the reader may have guessed) is Bengali, one Punjabi; one of us is Hindu, one Sikh. What is common between us is a concern for human well-being and a belief in the fundamental importance of empathy, tolerance and compassion; the need to treat all human beings as equal; and to reach out to anybody in need – irrespective of religion, gender, and caste. We believe that judgments concerning what is morally good or fair must not depend on who is making the judgment or his or her religion or race. These are principles emphasised in the writings of John Rawls and go back to the Enlightenment philosophers. These are also principles that can be found in the writings of philosophers and religious thinkers on the Indian subcontinent. These are the moorings of the very idea of India.

India’s composite culture
This is the time to remember the spirit of Guru Nanak, which led Guru Arjan to write, “No one is my enemy, no one is a stranger, I am connected with all,” and Guru Gobind Singh to insist, “Recognise all of humanity as one.” This is the time to remember Rabindranath Tagore’s resonant verse: “Come Aryans, come non-Aryans, Hindus and Mussalmans/



Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru addressing the nation from the Red Fort, Delhi, on August 15, 1947. Since Independence, the country has stood out as a beacon of hope, committed to democracy and secularism. • WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Come today, Englishmen, come Christians/ Come Brahmin, cleansing your mind/ Join hands with all.” It is the sharp erosion in these basic moral tenets in India that concerns us. India has had a turbulent history since its independence on that momentous midnight of August 1947. There have been dark times and events that we should all be ashamed of. Following the end of the Second World War, many new nations were born as peoples and lands shook off their colonial shackles and declared independence. These nations began with idealism, embracing democracy and equality, but military coups and religious captures felled the ideals of one nation after another. But India stood out as a beacon of hope, committed to democracy, freedom of speech and secularism. From the mid-1990s, it also began to see rapid economic growth.

There are still many challenges to contend with. There is poverty and discrimination, there is corruption and a growing environmental challenge, and there is pollution that, if left unchecked, will damage the cognitive powers of future generations. We have to attend to these urgently. The steady progress of the economy since the mid-1990s was raising hope that we would take on these chal-

lenges head on. The divisiveness being advocated has, however, caused a setback. This is affecting trust and cooperation in the nation. For example, the use of the state machinery in Uttar Pradesh to seek “revenge,” and to promote the ring-fencing of people and silencing of voices is ethically unacceptable and doing great damage to India’s standing globally.

Trust improves economy
What is not always appreciated, but for which there is a lot of evidence, is that societal trust and a sense of belonging improves economic outcomes, including growth. Economists Yann Algan and Pierre Cahuc have used rigorous statistical analysis to show that higher levels of trust can cause national income to increase dramatically: Africa, with Sweden’s trust levels, would achieve six times its present per capita income. A recent study, published in *Harvard Business Review*, shows that if workers feel appreciated and have a sense of belonging to their company, they have a 56% higher job performance, there is a 50% drop in turnover risk, and a 75% reduction in sick days. “For a 10,000-person company, this would result in annual savings of more than \$52M”. One has to extrapolate this to a nation to get a

sense of how economically important this sense of belonging is. Even before the turmoil of 2019, India’s economy was already reeling, with industry, agriculture and exports all growing much slower than a decade earlier. But now, beyond the basic moral principles at stake, we argue that the promotion of hate and divisiveness is also hurting India’s economy. We are at risk of a major downward spiral.

A call to reject partisanship
We must make this a moment to pause and ask ourselves what we as individuals must do. We write this to appeal not just to the young students, scientists and Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Muslims who are already out there protesting against the doctrine of exclusion, but also to those who are preaching violence. We urge them to look into their own hearts, and drop their cudgels. We suggest to the police and functionaries of the state that to make people listen to and respect them, they must not just wield the baton, but also be bearers of ethical standards.

We take hope from the fact that so many students on our campuses understand this. We take hope from the fact that so many leading thinkers and scientists, unaffiliated to any political party, have begun to speak up. We take hope from the Sikhs who have refused to discriminate against other religious groups, from the Hindus who have stood with the Muslims and Christians to defend all minorities, to uphold India’s commitment to democracy and secularism.

We are not suggesting that if we stand together and pull back from the brink of the precipice, all our challenges will disappear. India is a lower-middle income economy, with a great deal of injustice, unfairness and suffering that will not vanish in haste. Yet, if we resolve to reject the partisanship that is being preached and then strive to take on the many challenges, there can be hope, the hope of pulling back from the brink and building a society and an economy that will be exemplary for not just its own people but for the world.

Kaushik Basu, former chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University; Nirvikar Singh is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Santa Cruz

Making hope possible, not despair convincing

If Faiz Ahmed Faiz can help restore democracy in Nepal, he can do so in India too



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

Is it possible to retain hope when charlatans dictate our terms of engagement with the world of the arts and ideas? This was the question I had to encounter during a documentary film festival in Chennai where I paraphrased the Welsh writer and academic Raymond Williams and said that the mission of journalism and documentaries “is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing”.

The participants of the film festival were concerned about many things, but they were particularly agitated about the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur’s decision to form a panel to examine whether the poem, “*Hum Dekhenge*”, by the celebrated poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz was indeed communal and hurt sentiments. This panel was formed after a temporary faculty member, Vashimant Sharma, and 16 others complained against the students for reciting the poem in support of the students of Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi. If an exemplary artist of the stature of Faiz can be shoehorned into a narrow communal jacket, many tend to believe that despair is the reality of the moment.

However, when the media highlighted the absurdity of the complaint, the management was forced to retract its original position. Talking to this newspaper, the IIT’s Deputy Director, Manindra Agrawal, said that the panel is not going to determine whether sentiments were hurt or not, but would only investigate if there was any “deliberate mischief”. This climbdown in the present environment of impunity is a testimony to the power of journalism as a site of hope rather than as a megaphone of despair.

The power of Urdu
My linguistic skills are restricted to just two languages, English and Tamil. I have no knowledge of Urdu. But I was moved by the power of Urdu verses not once but twice in 2005. I was based in Kathmandu when Nepal



was going through its worst political crisis, the royal coup. I watched as King Gyanendra dismissed the government and restored an absolute monarchy. He suspended the fundamental rights of Nepali citizens, including the freedom of opinion and expression, the freedom of the press and publications, the right to information, the right to constitutional remedy, and the right to property. Similar to what is happening in Kashmir now, a communication blackout was imposed across the country.

‘Speak’
This did not deter senior journalists in Nepal from assembling at the Yalamaya Kendra in Patan to formulate ways and means to keep the public informed of what was happening despite the draconian measures taken by the royalty. I was invited to join the deliberation and, unlike what is happening in India today, not seen as an alien poking his nose in the domestic affairs of a foreign country. Kanak Mani Dixit, a senior editor and regular contributor to this newspaper, invoked Faiz Ahmed Faiz in a moving manner. Armed with the brilliant multimedia production of Faiz’s major poems by the *Dawn* group of publications, Mr. Dixit rendered the poem “Bol (Speak)” and explained how Faiz made the blazing smithy a symbol of the freedom movement during colonial rule. Here is the English translation of the lines that moved me:

“Speak – your lips are free,
Speak – your tongue is still yours
Speak – your life is still yours
Look inside the smithy –
Leaping flames, red-hot iron.
Padlocks open their jaws.
Chains disintegrate.
Speak – there is little time
But it is enough
Before the body perishes
Before the tongue atrophies.
Speak – truth still lives.
Say what you have to say.”
In a year when the resistance cascaded into what Nepalese political historians call the Jan Andolan-II, another brilliant poem of Faiz, “Soldier’s elegy”, was used to create a space for reconciliation after a decade of civil war. If Faiz can help restore democracy in our neighbourhood, he can do so here too.

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Theatre of the absurd

It is ironical that a poem denouncing Islamic fundamentalism should be condemned as anti-Hindu

MOHAMMED AYOOB

IIT-Kanpur’s decision to set up an investigation committee in response to complaints that the reading of Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poem, “*Hum dekhenge* (We are sure to witness)”, at an anti-Citizenship Amedment Act rally on December 17 was an anti-national and anti-Hindu act is nothing short of a theatre of the absurd. The complaints registered by a temporary faculty member and 16 others demonstrate their ignorance of Urdu literary idiom, poetic metaphors, Faiz’s political views, and, above all, the context in which the poem was written.

Against injustice
Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) was arguably the greatest Urdu poet of his generation. The fact that he was a Pakistani national was purely an accident of birth. He was a native of Lahore, which fell to Pakistan’s share. Additionally, Lahore had become a major centre of Urdu literature as well as progressive thought when he was growing up in pre-independence India and it was but natural that Faiz would find the literary and cultural atmosphere in that city conducive for the flowering of his poetic talent.

Faiz was a part of the All-India Progressive Writers’ Association established in 1936. The goal of the association was to promote equality and social justice, and many of its leading lights belonged to the Communist movement. The ideals of social equality and opposition to injustice and authoritarian rule inspired much of Faiz’s poetry.

His famous poem “*Mujh se pehli si mohabbat mere mehboob na maang*” (My beloved do not demand from me the earlier intensity of love) is a classic embodying his quest for social justice. In it, Faiz tells his imaginary beloved not to expect the same intensity of love from him that existed earlier, now that he has become aware of the oppression inflicted on his people by an age-old system based on inequality and injustice. Consequently, he implies, his passion for his beloved is bound to be diluted because a major part of his energies has to be diverted to fighting oppression and injustice.

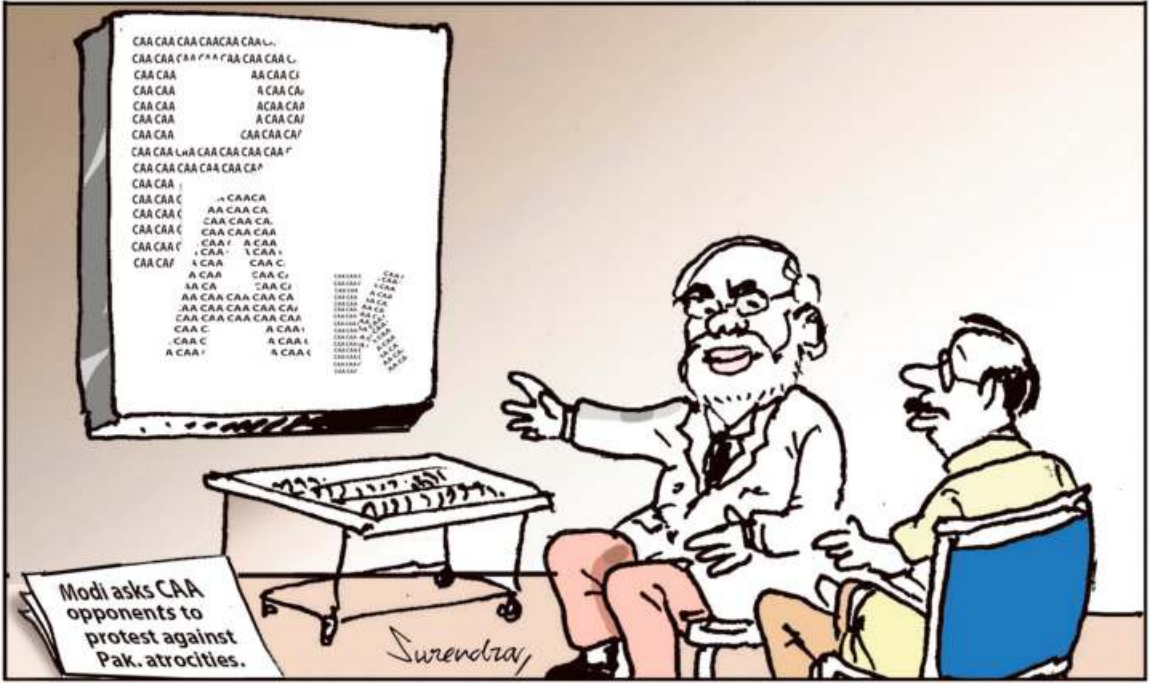
Faiz’s anguish when Partition ac-

companied independence was embodied in his poem “*Subh-e Azadi* (The dawn of independence)”. It begins with the couplet, “*Yeh daagh daagh ujaalaa, yeh shab gazidaa seher; Woh intezaar tha jiska, yeh woh seher to nahin* (This blemished light infused with the darkness of night; Surely, this isn’t the dawn we waited for so eagerly)”. This political statement cannot be surpassed in its intensity of feeling by political speeches denouncing Partition.

A clarion call
Faiz spent a few years in Pakistani jails in the 1950s for his revolutionary views and produced an anthology of poems titled *Zindan Nama* (Prison Musings) while incarcerated. He had to go into self-imposed exile from 1979 to 1982 because of persecution under the Zia-ul-Haq regime. His poem, “*Hum dekhenge*”, written in 1979 was a clarion call for resistance against Zia’s authoritarian and fundamentalist rule. Written for a predominantly Muslim audience it effectively used Islamic imagery to denounce the fundamentalism and authoritarianism that had become the hallmark of the regime. It uses the allegory of judgment day when all false gods (authoritarian rulers) will be overthrown and all thrones and crowns will be destroyed (“*sab taaj uchhale jayenge; sab takht giraye jayenge*”) in order to project a democratic and egalitarian future for the world.

It is ironical that a poem condemning authoritarianism and Islamic fundamentalism should be denounced as being anti-Hindu and anti-Indian. It demonstrates the cultural philistinism of those making the charge and their total lack of understanding of the poem’s context. “*Hum dekhenge*” was written to inspire the masses not only in Pakistan but everywhere to take their destiny in their own hands and overthrow authoritarian and bigoted rulers. For, as Faiz posits, the day is bound to come when dictators who behave like gods will be toppled and the will of the people will prevail.

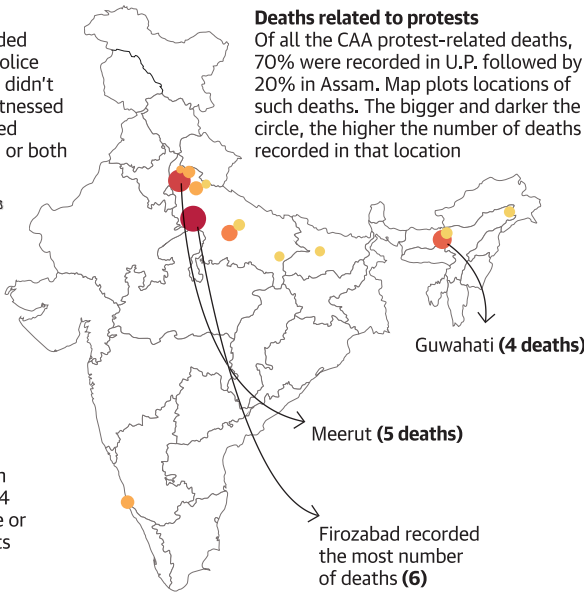
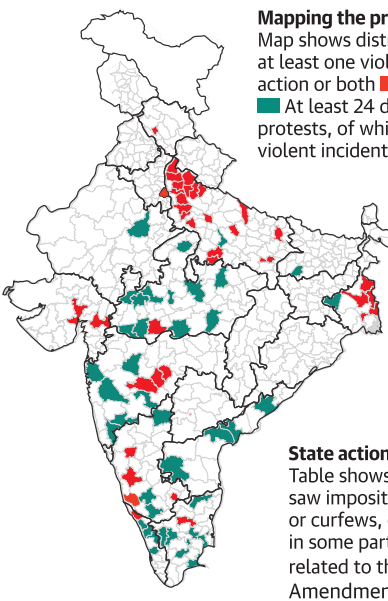
Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University



DATA POINT

One nation, many protests

Protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) occurred in at least* 94 districts across 14 States. Close to 48% of protests recorded at least one violent incident or police action such as detention/lathi charge or both. Deaths of at least 31 people were related to the violence that ensued during the protests. By **Sumant Sen** and **Naresh Singaravelu**



State	Region	Curfew/Section 144
Assam	Guwahati	Curfew
Assam	Dibrugarh	Curfew
Delhi	Red Fort	Section 144
Gujarat	Full State	Section 144

Karnataka	Full State	Section 144
M.P.	43 out of 52 districts	Section 144
M.P.	Jabalpur	Curfew
Meghalaya	Shillong	Curfew
U.P.	Full State	Section 144

***Note:** The data for both location of protests and deaths that occurred in the ensuing violence were collected from news reported by The Hindu and PTI

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 6, 1970

Suggestion to limit poll contests

A proposal was made at the conference of the Chief Electoral Officers to-day [January 5, Bombay] that in any election to the Lok Sabha or to a Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly), a person should not be allowed to stand as a candidate from more than two constituencies. It was also suggested that an employer should give on the polling day at least three hours’ leave of absence to every employee to enable him to cast his vote. Any failure on the part of the employer would be an offence under the law. Similarly, if any employee avails himself of the leave granted to him, but does not intentionally exercise his franchise, he will also be liable for punishment. Another subject discussed was the use of vehicles for carrying voters to and from polling stations. A proposal was made that on the polling day, no vehicle should ply in any polling area till the close of the poll except under a permit obtained from the Returning Officer or some other specified officers. Some doubts were expressed by some Chief Electoral Officers that a stringent provision like this might cause some practical difficulties and inconvenience in big cities.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 6, 1920.

More Secret History.

London, January 2. – In further letters from the Ex-Kaiser to the Ex-Tsar dated September 26th and October 25th, 1895 published in the “Morning Post”, the former indulges in a diatribe against the French, whom he accused of Chauvinism and imperialism, remarking: “God knows I have done all in my power to preserve European peace, but if France goes on violating all the rules of peace one fine day, Dearest Nisky, you will find yourself nолens volens embroiled in the most horrible war Europe has ever seen. If you are allied with the French, keep the damned rascals in order. The curse of God has stricken that people for ever.” The Ex-Kaiser referring to the British Foreign policy says: – “The British seem to have some idea or other of changing their policy in the Mediterranean, for two days ago Malet paying a farewell visit to our Foreign Office used the most blustering words about Germany behaving badly to England in Africa saying England would not stand it any longer and that after buying off the French by concessions in Egypt they were at liberty to look after us. He was even so undiplomatic as to utter the word war, saying even that England would not shrink from making war upon me if we did not knock in Africa.”

FROM PAGE ONE

NCP gets crucial Home, Finance portfolios

While the Congress demand for extra portfolios was the reason for the delay, the internal dispute in the NCP on who should get Home slowed down the process.

Ultimately NCP chief Sharad Pawar chose Mr. Deshmukh from Katol constituency stressing on the need to expand the party in the Vidarbha region.

The Chief Minister, who after taking charge last month, had said that he would not like to be confined to the four walls of his office but prefer to reach out to the people, has decided not to keep any of the key ministries with him.

This is for the first time in two decades that the CM will not be holding charge of the Urban Development Department (UDD). Sena's Ek nath Shinde will be the UD minister, along with Public Works (Public Undertaking).

According to sources, the Sena chief wants to follow the Delhi model set by Arvind Kejriwal. His son and first-time MLA Aaditya Thackeray has been given charge of the environment, tourism and protocol departments.

Senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat has got the revenue ministry, while his party colleague and former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan got the Public Works Department (PWD), excluding public undertakings.

Senior Shiv Sena leader Subhash Desai has got industries and mineral departments, while party leader Anil Parab got the transport and parliamentary affairs departments. The delay in portfolio allocation led to opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders suggesting that the MVA government 'auction' the Cabinet berths.

219 infant deaths at two Gujarat hospitals in Dec.

The increase in infant deaths in December was mainly due to more referral patients coming with serious ailments.

As soon as the matter surfaced in the media and on social media, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, who is from Rajkot, refused to respond and walked off when journalists asked him about the deaths.

The Opposition Congress criticised him for being evasive. "The Chief Minister is from Rajkot where healthcare has collapsed. He shamelessly runs away from journalists," said Congress State president Amit Chavda.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, who also holds the Health portfolio, said infant mortality rate was decreasing, and now stands at 30 deaths per 1,000 newborns. "Every year, 12 lakh infants

are born. Of these, 30 of every 1,000 infants die owing to malnutrition and premature delivery or because the mothers are unable to reach hospital in time." Mr. Patel argued that there was no dearth of facilities at government hospitals or health centres.

Officials said the Rajkot hospital caters to the needs of several districts, so the number there is higher. Also, the number of deliveries goes up in November and December.

Among the factors are the shortage of medical staff at government hospitals and the collapse of primary healthcare services.

But officials maintain that the reasons include premature delivery, low birth weight, infection and asphyxiation among infants referred to government hospitals.

India condemns killing of Sikh youth in Pak.

In a social media message, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, said: "Shocked and anguished over killing of Sikh youth Ravinder Singh in Pakistan coming on heels of Nanka-

Challakere to be ISRO's astronaut training hub

HSP work is split across various centres such as the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram and the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru. The Institute of Aerospace Medicine of the Air Force has been roped in for their selection and basic and final training in Bengaluru.

Challakere will also host work related to crew and service modules of the spacecraft that carries the astronauts.

Such full-fledged facilities, Dr. Sivan said, were needed as the HSP was not a one-time affair. "We are going to have a sustained HSP and will need a large number of facilities for training [future] astronauts."

The HSFC, formally announced in January 2019, works from a temporary place at the ISRO headquarters, Antariksh Bhavan.

S. Unnikrishnan Nair has been named its Founder-Director and R. Hutton the project director of Gaganyaan. The centre is tasked with pursuing human space missions, complete mission planning, developing engineering systems for survival and safe return of the crew and selecting and training astronauts.

The ISRO planned to add a quarantine facility at the second launch pad (SLP) in the Sriharikota space port. Dr. Sivan said it would ensure that astronauts who were about to enter the spacecraft before the launch stayed unexposed.

Masked goons thrash students, staff in JNU

Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav was also roughed up outside the JNU campus by a mob just as he was addressing the media. "You can see what is happening to me outside, just imagine what must be going on inside the campus," he was heard saying. *The Hindu* reporters were able to verify that the crowd, which roughed up Mr. Yadav, in-

Fascists afraid of students: Rahul

Universities should remain places of learning and education, says BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Political parties across the spectrum condemned the violent attack on the students and teachers of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) on Sunday, with most of the Opposition leaders blaming the ruling dispensation for the violence.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi tweeted with the hash tag #SOSJNU. "The brutal attack on JNU students & teachers by masked thugs, that has left many seriously injured, is shocking. The fascists in control of our nation, are afraid of the voices of our brave students. Today's violence in JNU is a reflection of that fear," Mr. Gandhi said on Twitter.

The BJP hit back at the Opposition and accused it of politicising campuses. "We strongly condemn the violence on JNU campus. This is a desperate attempt by forces of anarchy, who are determined to use students as cannon fodder, create unrest to shore up their shrinking political footprint. Universities should remain places of learning and education," the



JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh was injured in the attack on the campus. •PTI

BJP's official handle tweeted. CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, who has been a former president of the JNU students' union, alleged that the violence on the campus was part of the Hindutva agenda of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

'Planned attack'
"Reports coming from JNU point to a collusion between the administration and goons of ABVP to inflict violence on students and teachers. It is a planned attack by those in power, which is afraid of the resistance provided by JNU to its Hindutva

agenda," Mr. Yechury tweeted.

"Masked attackers entered JNU while law enforcers stood by. This video is what RSS/BJP want to convert India to. They will not be allowed to succeed," he added and tagged the video that showed the JNU Students Union president badly bleeding.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, both of whom were former JNU students, condemned the attack. "Horrific images from JNU – the place I know & remember was one for fierce debates & opinions but never violence. I unequivocally condemn the events of today. This govt, regardless of what has been said the past few weeks, wants universities to be safe spaces for all students," Ms. Sitharaman said.

"Have seen pictures of what is happening in #JNU. Condemn the violence unequivocally. This is completely against the tradition and culture of the university," Mr. Jaishankar tweeted.

Former Union Minister P. Chidambaram questioned the role of the police in allowing the violence. "What we are seeing on live TV is shocking and horrifying. Masked men enter JNU hostels and attack students. What is the police doing? Where is the Police Commissioner? If it is happening on live TV, it is an act of impunity and can only happen with the support of the government. This is beyond belief," said Mr. Chidambaram in a statement.

Condemning the attack, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said a Trinamool delegation will visit JNU to express solidarity with the students. "We strongly condemn brutality unleashed agst students/teachers in JNU. No words enough to describe such heinous acts. A shame on our democracy," she said.

Former Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav blamed the BJP for the violence. "Masked men attacking teachers and students in JNU shows the low to which the government will stoop in order to rule through fear. The ABVP are acting like the storm troopers of the BJP," he said.



Mayhem on campus: An image released by a JNUSU office-bearer of a damaged section of the campus. •PTI

HRD Ministry seeks report on violence

Alumni in govt. service flay violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Human Resource Development Ministry has asked the Registrar of the Jawaharlal Nehru University to send an immediate detailed report on the current situation on campus, HRD Secretary Amit Khare told *The Hindu* on Sunday evening.

"Definitely, it is a serious matter. I am speaking with the Vice-Chancellor. We have called for an immediate detailed report from the Registrar," said Mr. Khare, just before boarding a flight from Bhopal to re-

turn to Delhi in light of the attacks on the JNU campus.

His predecessor R. Subrahmanyam, now Social Justice Secretary, condemned the violence in strong terms on Twitter. "#JNUViolence completely unacceptable and shameful. I condemn the violence is no uncertain terms and demand immediate action against the hoodligans," he tweeted.

Mr. Subrahmanyam, an alumnus of JNU himself, was transferred out of the HRD Ministry last month in the wake of massive JNU protests on Delhi roads.

Stone-throwing scales a peak in J&K in 2019

RTI reply says there was a spike in numbers after the special status was withdrawn in August

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The number of stone-throwing incidents in Jammu and Kashmir rose in 2019 from the figures recorded in 2017 and 2018, according to data provided by the Union Home Ministry in response to a Right to Information (RTI) Act application.

Till November 30, 2019, as many as 1,996 such incidents had been reported.

In the whole of 2017 and 2018, however, the numbers stood at 1,412 and 1,458, respectively.

Post-August spike
There was a spike in the number after August – the month when J&K's special status was revoked witnessed 658 incidents, the highest in the year. July saw just 26.

J&K has been placed under unprecedented restrictions and a communication blockade since August 5, when Home Minister Amit Shah moved two Bills in the Rajya Sabha to revoke its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and bifurcate the State into Union Territories.

On November 19, while

Rising violence

The number of terrorist incidents in Jammu and Kashmir increased after it was placed under lockdown since August 5, according to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Between January and July 2019, 282 such incidents were reported, while 309 incidents were reported between August and November

Months	Terrorist Incidents	Stone pelting incidents	Ceasefire violations	Security forces Killed	Injured	Militants Killed	Arrested
Jan.	45	56	216	3	16	17	7
Feb.	32	103	251	50	27	23	10
March	39	79	275	6	22	22	15
Apr.	51	224	240	2	8	11	6
May	56	257	238	2	6	28	6
June	38	58	190	11	28	24	2
July	21	26	314	2	0	6	16
Aug.	50	658	323	2	3	5	8
Sept.	152	248	308	1	9	7	18
Oct.	97	203	398	0	11	9	10
Nov.	10	84	333	1	8	5	11

SOURCE: MHA RESPONSE TO AN RTI FILED BY JAMMU RESIDENT ROHIT CHOUDHARY

responding to a question by Kanakmal Katara, MP, on the number of stone-throwing incidents reported after Article 370 was diluted, the Home Ministry informed the Lok Sabha that from January 1 to November 15, 2019, the police had registered 551 cases "relating to stone pelting/law & order", of which 190 cases were registered after August 5.

In response to an RTI petition filed by the Jammu resident Rohit Choudhary, the Ministry said the number of incidents of terrorist violence from January to November 2019 stood at 591, with the highest of 152 in September.

The Ministry informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply on December 3 that "the incidents of terrorist

violence have declined after August 5."

"During the 115-day period, from August 5 till November 27, there have been 88 such incidents as compared with 106 such incidents from April 12 till August 4," the Ministry said in a written reply.

The RTI reply shows that from January to July, the number of incidents of terror-

ist violence stood at 282, while 309 incidents were reported from August to November.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah told the television channel ABP News last week that the situation was "under control" in the Union Territory and routine activities were going on.

Ceasefire violations
The RTI reply also said that 3,086 ceasefire violations or firing from Pakistan's side had been reported along the Line of Control (LoC), with the highest of 398 recorded in October.

There had been a drop in the number of militants killed, from 131 killed from January to July to 26 from August to November.

The number of militants arrested stood at 109, with 47 held from August to November.

Nearly 43,000 Central armed police personnel were deployed in J&K in the run-up to August 5, with the force strength surpassing the deployment seen in the 1990s.

Nearly 7,000 personnel were pulled out in December.

Jaishankar discusses Gulf with Iran, Oman, U.S.

Talks come after Soleimani's killing

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Sunday spoke to his counterparts in Iran, Oman, the United States and the United Arab Emirates regarding the escalating tension in the Gulf. The exchanges were a part of the international consultations among various stakeholders that began soon after Iran's Major General Qassem Soleimani was killed in an American drone attack in Baghdad.

'India concerned'
"Just concluded a conversation with Foreign Minister Javad Zarif of Iran. Noted that developments have taken a very serious turn. India remains deeply concerned about the levels of tension," said Mr. Jaishankar in a social media message.

Sunday's exchanges were the first since Maj. Gen. Soleimani was assassinated on January 3. India had described the slain military figure as a "senior Iranian leader" saying peace, stability and security in the Gulf as of "utmost importance" to the country. The Indian



S. Jaishankar

position is borne out of the fact that the Gulf region hosts nearly seven million Indian citizens. That apart India is partnering the port of Chabahar in Iran. Any conflict with Iran will adversely affect India's investments in Chabahar.

Late on Sunday evening, Mr. Jaishankar sent out a series of social media messages informing that he had telephonic conversation also with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Oman's Foreign Minister Yusuf Alawi, and Abdullah Bin Zayed of the UAE. "Had a telephonic discussion with Secretary of State Pompeo on the evolving situation in the Gulf region. Highlighted India's stakes and concerns," said the Indian Minister in his message.

BJP holding meetings for Budget inputs

Suggestions will be passed on to FM

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

In a first of its kind exercise, the BJP has been holding a series of meetings with 11 groups of stakeholders, on the expectations from, and suggestions for, the Union Budget.

Suggestions that have been conveyed to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will also be released as a background paper after the last of the meetings is wound up on January 14.

Gopal Krishna Agarwal, BJP spokesperson and head of the economic cell, started this exercise on December 19, with five sectoral meetings done and six to follow.

"We have invited stakeholders from agriculture, trade, the automobile industry and pharmaceuticals, and economists who work with banks for separate meetings and discussed specific issues related to those sectors," he said.

"For example, in agriculture, the meeting focussed on supply chain issues, input costs, and crop information, with traders and small manufacturers on the issues related to the Goods and



Nirmala Sitharaman

Services Tax (GST), the indirect taxes and implementation issues, and with the automobile sector, the discussion hovered over industry cycle, electric vehicles and consumer demand," he said.

Mr. Agarwal said the suggestions of these sectors had already been passed on to the Finance Minister, and a background paper is being prepared for an overview of the exercise.

"Our last meeting will be with economists of banks on the larger picture of the economy," he said.

While Ms. Sitharaman has been holding meetings as part of the budget exercise, Mr. Agarwal says this is a first such attempt by the BJP as far as the budget is concerned.

Sahara: U.K. Sinha lauds former Finance Ministers

Ex-SEBI chief credits them for action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI


Crediting three successive Finance Ministers – Pranab Mukherjee, P. Chidambaram and the late Arun Jaitley – for SEBI's strong action against the Sahara Group, the market regulator's former chief U.K. Sinha has said the three leaders stood their ground and did not interfere in the matter despite repeated attempts by vested interests.

Mr. Sinha also praised former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his sound advice on how to balance the multiple roles of the Securities and Exchange

Board of India (SEBI), and applauded PM Modi for being a "very inquisitive" leader and always being firm in his belief that no person big or small should be spared for any wrongdoing.

The SEBI had ordered Sahara India Real Estate Corporation Ltd (SIRECL) and Sahara Housing Investment Corporation Ltd (SHICL) in 2011 to refund the money raised from investors through certain bonds known as Optionally Fully Convertible Bonds (OFCBs).

The net amount raised by the two companies was more than ₹24,000 crore from over 3 crore investors.



1 year old Mayanila is diagnosed with B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and she urgently requires **Rs. 6,00,000/-** towards Chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Please help her for a lasting change and a healthy life. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch/D.D / NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. (Please do not mention patient's name on the cheque).

All Correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordal Apartments, O.No. 13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-22137401 / 28235324. Email ID: womenswelfarefund@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfarefund.org

WWS

Rahul, Priyanka instigating riots: Shah

Union Home Minister says Oppn. leaders are misleading people on the features of the Citizenship Act

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
Union Home Minister and BJP president Amit Shah on Sunday accused Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of instigating “riots” by “misleading” people on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Mr. Shah said minorities in the country had nothing to fear as the Act did not have any provision to take away anyone’s citizenship. “I want to tell brothers and sisters from the minority communities that none of them can lose their citizenship because the CAA has no provision about taking it away,” Mr. Shah said.

At a meeting of party workers in Delhi, Mr. Shah



Leading the way: Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a door-to-door campaign on CAA in New Delhi on Sunday. •PTI

attacked Pakistan for “terrorising” Sikhs as he referred to the attack on Gurdwara Nankana Sahib by a violent mob and asked Opposition leaders to open their eyes to atrocities against minorities in the neighbouring country.

“This is an answer to all those opposing the CAA. Tell me if these Sikhs who were attacked the other day in Gurdwara Nankana Sahib will not come to India, then

where they will go” he asked.

The BJP president directed party workers to reach out to every household in Delhi about the features of the Act, which, he said, was an attempt to give citizenship to Dalit and Sikh refugees who had come from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Opposition leaders were spreading a pack of lies over the CAA, he said.

Mr. Shah attacked Mr. Kejriwal and the Congress leaders, terming them “anti-Dalits” for opposing the Act.

“Prime minister came out with CAA. It was approved by the Cabinet and Parliament passed it. (Arvind) Kejriwal misled people, the Congress, especially Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi, instigated riots by misleading people. Do you want

a government in Delhi which incites riots for politics,” he asked.

Mr. Shah claimed that Ms. Vadra had extended her support to rioters by saying that she would visit the houses of those who carried out riots.

‘Not a Netflix number’
Mr. Shah asked people to give missed calls to a toll free number put out by the BJP to show their support for the CAA. He slammed rumours that the number belonged to Netflix, a streaming service.

The number has run into controversy after it was found that several Twitter accounts were advertising it as a means to get free subscriptions on Netflix and to chat with “lonely women”, among other scams.

(With PTI inputs)

Creating awareness



Reaching out: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh campaigning in support of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as part of the Jan Jagran Abhiyan in Lucknow on Sunday. •PTI

Vijayvargiya booked for ‘threatening’ govt. officials in Madhya Pradesh

The BJP was protesting against an anti-encroachment drive

STAFF REPORTER
BHOPAL
The Madhya Pradesh police have registered a case against BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, an MP, and around 350 party workers after he was purportedly seen in a video threatening to set “entire Indore on fire” while staging a sit-in on Friday.

As the workers protested outside the Indore Divisional Commissioner’s house against the anti-mafia drive of the government, Mr. Vijayvargiya told an official, “We will not tolerate this. There are Sangh [RSS] leaders present here. Otherwise, we would have set the entire Indore on fire.”

Several leaders of the right-wing group, including its chief Mohan Bhagwat, were in the city for an internal meeting.



Kailash Vijayvargiya. •FILE PHOTO

The police registered a case, including against Indore MP Shankar Lalwani, on Saturday night based on complaints of government officials, said Jyoti Umath, City Superintendent of Police, Sanyogitaganj. “Initially a case for disobedience to order promulgated by public servant was registered. Hours later, four more counts were added. No ar-

rests have been made so far,” she said.

The case was registered under Sections 188 [Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant], 143 [unlawful assembly], 149 [Every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object], 153 [Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot] and 506 [Punishment for criminal intimidation] of the Indian Penal Code.

The BJP was protesting against the State government’s anti-encroachment drive, which, it alleges, was targeting only structures owned by its workers. On Friday, the party leaders had invited senior civic officials to raise the issue with them, but when only junior officials turned up, it riled Mr. Vijayvargiya.

NPR order divides Bihar ruling allies

JD(U) leaders pan Sushil Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA
The Bihar government on December 18 issued the notification to begin the first phase of the National Population Register (NPR) exercise from May 15 to June 28, much before Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi announced it on Saturday.

On Sunday, Janata Dal(U) national general secretary and spokesperson Pawan K. Verma wrote a two-page letter to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and expressed “surprise” over Mr. Modi’s “unilateral” announcement.

Earlier, on Saturday, Mr. Modi, while making the announcement, said “no government has the courage to stop the NPR exercise in their respective States”.

However, soon after Mr. Modi’s announcement, senior JD(U) leader and his Cabinet colleague Shyam Rajak said he had no information about any such decision and “Mr. Modi may have made such an announcement in his personal capacity.”

‘Principled stand’
In his letter, Mr. Verma asked the Chief Minister to take a “principled stand” against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the NPR.

“Reject the nefarious agenda to divide India and create a great deal of unnecessary social turbulence,” wrote Mr. Verma, adding that “the CAA-NRC combine is a direct attempt to divide Hindus and Muslims and to create social instability. You have always stood for a secular India, where there is peace, respect and goodwill among all its communities.”



PAWAN K. VERMA
JD(U) spokesperson
Reject the nefarious agenda to divide India and create a great deal of unnecessary social turbulence

But, JD(U) leader and party spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan told journalists in Patna, “The Bihar government has categorically said that it will not implement NRC in the State but since Union Home Minister Amit Shah has stated that NPR data won’t be used for the NRC, the JD(U) doesn’t have a problem with the NPR exercise in Bihar.”

Other JD(U) leaders too said the government had taken the decision to begin the NPR process from May 15 and “now there should not be any further discussion on it.”

Meanwhile, State BJP leaders like Mr. Modi and State party president Sanjay Jaiswal on Sunday began the Jan Jagran Abhiyan (awareness campaign) about the CAA in Patna and West Champaran. They visited households in those areas and briefed residents about the Act.

Party sources also told *The Hindu* that Mr. Shah is likely to visit Vaishali on January 16 to address people about the CAA.

Cyrus Mistry backs out of battle for helming Tata Sons

‘Will pursue options to protect minority shareholder rights’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI
Cyrus Mistry, the ousted chairman of Tata Sons, will not pursue the executive chairmanship of the corporate group or directorship of other Tata firms despite the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) ruling in his favour.

In a statement on Sunday, Mr. Mistry said, “I intend to make it clear that despite the NCLAT order in my favour, I will not be pursuing the executive chairmanship of Tata Sons, or directorship of TCS, Tata Teleservices or Tata Industries. I will, however, vigorously pursue all options to protect our rights as a minority shareholder, including that of resuming the 30-year history of a seat at the Board of Tata Sons of TCS, Tata Teleservices or Tata Industries.”



Cyrus Mistry

the hearing in the Supreme Court, profess an interpretation of “corporate democracy as being one of brute majoritarianism with no rights for minority stakeholders,” the statement said.

The statement added that the question is whether the oppressive actions of a majority, that stifles minority shareholders, is outside judicial oversight.

The statement said, globally, and in India, “Company Law has evolved to protect the rights of minority shareholders and strengthen corporate governance. The Companies Act 2013, has considerably strengthened the statutory protections accorded to minority shareholders from oppressive conduct of the majority

shareholders.” Mr. Mistry stressed that for “corporate democracy” to be strengthened, all stakeholders must operate within the ambit of law and statutory protections.

‘Time to introspect’
He said the relationship between the Tata Group and the Shapoorji Pallonji Group spanned several decades and was built on common agreement and mutual faith. Former Tata leaders had worked together with the minority partner to create value for all stakeholders.

“In the last three years, both in conduct and in their statements to the world at large, the Tata Group’s leadership has shown scant respect for the rights of minority shareholders. It is time the Group’s management introspects and reflects on its conduct as it embarks on future actions,” he said.

“As an 18.37% shareholder, it is in our own interest to ensure the Group’s long-term success. My family, although a minority partner, has been a guardian of the Tata Group for over five decades. This legal fight has never been about me,” Mr. Mistry said.

‘CAA humiliates Muslims’

Govt. has violated basic structure of the Constitution: Sinha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
Ahead of the 22-day *yatra* in protest against the amended Citizenship Act and the proposed National Population Register, former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha said on Sunday that the deliberate exclusion of the Muslim community from the legislation was to “humiliate” them.

“Many like me feel that by discriminating on the basis of religion the government has violated the basic structure of the Constitution. And



Yashwant Sinha

the omission of the Muslim community from the legislation has been done to humiliate them,” Mr. Sinha said.

Mr. Sinha said if the go-

vernment’s intentions were right they would have included the Rohingya community who had been forced to flee Myanmar.

“The basic purpose of the government is to keep the nation and the people involved in this communal debate and not talk about the more basic issues of economy,”

On the NRC, Mr. Sinha said the government was trying to create confusion with its double-speak. “The government has been lying repeatedly,” Mr. Sinha said.

‘Won’t engage with ‘tukde tukde’ gang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday said the government will not talk to those who raise slogans of Azadi and are part of the ‘tukde tukde’ gang. “... Such voices and views which talk about dividing the country are not acceptable,” he said at a programme on the CAA organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

India faces a year of tough trade talks

After RCEP walkout, govt. to focus on renegotiating FTAs, bilateral deals in 2020

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI
After walking out of negotiations on the 16-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement, the government said it would renegotiate its existing free trade agreements (FTA) and redouble its efforts to conclude other trade negotiations. The task is likely to swamp negotiators of both the Commerce and Industries and External Affairs Ministries in 2020.

To begin with, the RCEP walkout is not cast in stone yet, as the other 15 countries, including 10 ASEAN members and their FTA partners China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Korea, will complete legal reviews by June and are only expected to sign the deal in November 2020.

In the interim, many countries, most notably Japan, Australia and even Chi-



Piyush Goyal

na, have said they would be keen to work with India to convince the government to rejoin the RCEP.

While the RCEP is being wrapped up, India’s long-pending negotiations with Australia for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), as well as Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal’s plans to reopen the existing FTAs with ASEAN, Japan and South Korea will have to take a back seat.

The next big trade focus for the government will be

during the EU-India summit expected in March, when Mr. Modi is expected to travel to Brussels, to meet the new European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen, and discuss restarting EU-India Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) talks. However, this is easier said than done, given that the talks that began in 2007 and stalled in 2013 over tariff issues, have not been resumed despite several efforts.

Bridging gap with U.S.
Finally, the two Ministries will focus on closing talks with U.S. Trade Representatives. In 2019, President Trump rescinded India’s GSP special status for exporters, which has led to more bitterness over the issue. Mr. Modi and Mr. Trump discussed the trade issues on two occasions when they met in 2019, but negotiators have been unable to forge

any kind of deal, despite visits by Mr. Goyal to the U.S.

In the New Year, both sides hope a package of smaller agreements can be announced, but a free trade agreement could be several years away, as it hasn’t even been discussed officially yet.

Dedicated team
Given all the challenges, the government is actively considering a sharper and leaner trade negotiating team that merges the best strengths of Commerce Ministry officials and External Affairs diplomats, on the lines of countries with a consolidated Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

With the world being carved up into regional trading blocs and India’s only regional Bloc, for SAARC nations (SAFTA) stalled, the odds of concluding more bilateral trading agreements will be that much harder in 2020.

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited by the Airport Director, AAI, Trichy Intl Airport from the leading firms or persons having good experience in the business activity, for the commercial contracts (1) Airport Canteen at City side (existing running location) of Trichy Intl Airport and (2) Meet & Greet services and Paid Portage Services at Trichy Intl Airport, to be submitted through NIC CPPPE E-Tendering Portal at www.etenders.gov.in.
Last date of submission of tenders is scheduled on 24.01.2020 by 1500 hrs via NIC CPPPE E-Tendering Portal at www.etenders.gov.in.
For Eligibility criteria and further details visit our web site: www.aai.aero (or) www.airportsindia.org and NIC CPPPE E-Tendering Portal at www.etenders.gov.in.
If any, the same will be published in AAI website and NIC CPPPE E-Tendering Portal only.

AAI CARGO LOGISTICS AND ALLIED SERVICES COMPANY LIMITED
E-TENDER NOTICE
Tender ID: 2019_AAICL_37030_1
AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Ltd invites item tender rates through the E-Tendering portal by Regional Manager AAICLAS Chennai on behalf of Chairman, AAICLAS from Interested Agencies for the work of “Replacement of existing ETV I, FMC & CMC of ETV I & II with associated equipments at Integrated Air Cargo Complex Meenambakkam, Chennai.” at an estimated cost Rs. 8,30,88,250/- (excluding GST, Custom Duty & PFESI for FMC work) with period of completion 9 Months for Capital work 2 years for FMC & 5 years for CMC after DLP of 2 years for ETV I and 2 years for ETV II. Last date and time of submission of e-bid document is 10.02.2020 upto 11.00 hrs. For detailed information log on to CPPPE e-Procurement portal reference: <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app> or www.aai.aero Further clarification / corrigendum if any will be notified through e-procurement portal at <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>
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ई-निविदा सूचना सं बीएसएससी / सीएमजी / सिवि / 11/2019-20 दिनांक 03.01.2020
E-Tender Notice No.VSSC/CMG/CIVIL/11/2019-20 Dt.03.01.2020

ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए संक्षिप्त सूचना / **BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

1. भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से, **संमिश्र श्रेणी** के अतिव निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा ऑनलाइन मद-दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। / On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following work under **composite category**.

क्र.सं./Sl.No.	विवरण / Description	व्योरे / Details
1.	कार्य का शीर्षक / Title of work	इन्सलेक, बीएसएससी, दुबू का ईधन कक्ष प्रयोगशाला के लिए भवन का निर्माण (सिविल, पीएच तथा वैद्युत कार्य)। / Construction of Building for Fuel Cell Laboratory at INSTEC, VSSC, Thumba (Civil, PH & Electrical works)
2.	निविदा में दी गई अनुमानित लागत / Estimate cost put to tender	कुल / Total - ₹ 1190.20 लाख / Lakhs प/अ) सिविल तथा पीएच कार्य / Civil & PH works - ₹ 929.75 लाख / Lakhs बी/ब) वैद्युत कार्य / Electrical works - ₹ 260.45 लाख / Lakhs
3.	कार्य पूरा होने की तिथि/ Period of completion	14 (चौदह / Fourteen) महीने/ months
4.	ग्यारना जमा राशि (ईएमडी) / Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	₹ 21.90,200/-
5.	अवधि जिसके दौरान निविदा दस्तावेज को डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है/ Period during which the tender document can be downloaded.	से/From 06.01.2020, 10.00 बजे / Hrs. तक / to 20.01.2020, 23.00 बजे / Hrs.
6.	बोली स्पष्टीकरण / Bid clarifications.	से/From 06.01.2020, 10.00 बजे / Hrs. तक / to 21.01.2020, 16.00 बजे / Hrs.
7.	निविदा पाने की अंतिम तिथि व समय / Last date and time for receipt of tenders.	को तक / Up to 22.01.2020, 14.30 बजे / Hrs.
8.	निविदा खोलने की अंतिम तिथि व समय / Due date and time of opening of tenders	को / On 23.01.2020, 15.00 बजे / Hrs.

II. योजना मानक तथा अन्य व्योरे को पाने के लिए दृष्टक निविदाकार ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए विस्तृत सूचना (ई-एनआईटी) का अवलोकन करें, जिसे www.tenderwizad.com/ISRO से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। / Interested tenderers may please refer detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender (E-NIT) for eligibility criteria and other details, which can be downloaded from Website: www.tenderwizad.com/ISRO

ग्रुप निदेशक, सीएमजी, बीएसएससी / Group Director, CMG, VSSC

U.S. will target 52 sites if Iran retaliates: Trump

U.S. President ups the ante as mourners across the country pay their respects to Soleimani after his body reached home

REUTERS
DUBAI
President Donald Trump warned on Saturday that the U.S. would hit dozens of targets in the Islamic Republic if it retaliates for the killing of the head of Iran's elite Quds Force, Qassem Soleimani, in Iraq.

Showing no signs of seeking to reduce tensions raised by the strike on Friday that he ordered, the U.S. President issued a stern threat to Iran on Twitter.

Mr. Trump wrote in a series of tweets that Iran "is talking very boldly about targeting certain USA assets" to avenge Soleimani's death. Mr. Trump said the U.S. has identified "52 Iranian sites" and that some were "at a very high level & important to Iran & the Iranian culture, and those targets, and Iran itself, WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD."

"The USA wants no more threats!" Mr. Trump said, adding that the 52 targets represented the 52 Americans, who were held hostage in Iran after being seized at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979.

Raised concerns
Mr. Trump's suggestion that the U.S. could strike targets of importance to Iranian culture raised eyebrows.
Colin Kahl, a former Obama administration national security official, wrote on Twitter that he found it "hard to believe the Pentagon would provide Trump targeting options that include Iranian cultural sites. Trump may not care about the laws of war, but DoD (Department of Defense) planners and lawyers do... and targeting cultural sites is war crime."

Downplaying the comments, the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has de-



Tension escalates: A large crowd surrounding the coffin of slain top commander Qassem Soleimani during the funeral procession in southwestern city of Ahvaz, Iran, on Sunday. •AP

nied that Mr. Trump said he would target Iranian cultural sites if Tehran retaliates against the killing of Soleimani.

"President Trump didn't say he'd go after a cultural site – read what he said," Mr. Pompeo told Fox News.

Former Vice-President Joe Biden and other Democrats criticised Mr. Trump's tweets, with some including U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren saying the President was threatening to commit a war crime. "The more the walls close in on this guy, the more irrational he becomes," said Mr. Biden.

Meanwhile, the body of Soleimani was returned to Iran on Sunday, the official IRIB news agency reported.

While many Iranians have rallied in to show grief over the death of Soleimani, regarded as the country's second most powerful figure after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, others

worry his death might push the country to war with a superpower.

Soleimani's body was flown to the city of Ahvaz in southwest Iran.

IRIB posted a video clip of a casket wrapped in an Iranian flag being unloaded from a plane as a military band played.

Thousands of mourners marched through the streets of Ahvaz, beating their chests in live footage aired on state TV. Soleimani's casket was driven amidst the large crowds on the back of a truck.

Mourning in Iraq
The body of Iranian-backed Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who was killed in the attack with Soleimani, was also flown to Ahvaz, according to IRIB.

Tens of thousands of people marched in Iraq on Saturday to mourn Soleimani and al-Muhandis, chanting

"Death to America".

Iranian parliamentarians also chanted "Death to America" in a parliamentary session shown on state TV on Sunday.

Oman has called on the U.S. and Iran to seek dialogue to ease tensions, Oman News Agency reported on Sunday.
Oman, which maintains friendly ties with both the U.S. and Iran, has previously been a go-between for the two countries.

Iran summoned the Swiss envoy representing U.S. interests in Tehran on Sunday to protest against Mr. Trump saying Washington would target Iranian sites if Tehran attacks Americans or U.S. assets.

On Saturday evening, a rocket fell inside Baghdad's Green Zone near the U.S. Embassy, another hit the nearby Jadriya neighbourhood and two more were fired at the Balad air base.

Donald Trump is just a terrorist in a suit: Tehran

REUTERS
DUBAI
Iran condemned Donald Trump on Sunday as a "terrorist in a suit" after the U.S. President threatened to hit 52 Iranian sites hard if Tehran attacks Americans or U.S. assets in retaliation for the killing of military commander Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad.

As the two countries assailed each other in a war of words, the European Union, Britain and Oman urged both to make efforts to defuse the crisis. Heightened fears of war drove Gulf stocks sharply lower on Sunday.

"Like ISIS, Like Hitler, Like Genghis! They all hate cultures. Trump is a terrorist in a suit. He will learn history very soon that NO-

BODY can defeat 'the Great Iranian Nation & Culture'," Information and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi tweeted.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell urged Iran's Foreign Minister to work to de-escalate the situation and invited him to Brussels to discuss ways of preserving 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Iran has said it will decide about its next step to further roll back its commitments to the nuclear containment deal, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi was quoted as saying.

Iran's Army chief, Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, said the U.S. lacked courage for military confrontation with Iran.

Iran dumps nuclear pact, says it won't respect limits

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN
Iran's state television reported that the country will no longer abide by any of the limits set under the nuclear deal signed with six major powers in 2015.

The station cited a government spokesman as saying Iran would not respect any limits set in the pact on the number of uranium enrichment centrifuges it could use, which meant there would be no limits on its enrichment capacity, the level to which uranium could be enriched, or Iran's nuclear research and deve-

lopment. These would from now on be based on Iran's technical needs.

It did not elaborate on what levels it would immediately reach in its programme.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations watchdog observing Iran's programme, could not be immediately reached for comment.

However, Iran said that its cooperation with the IAEA "will continue as before." The statement said Iran's steps could be reversed if Washington lifted its sanctions on Tehran.

Military base used by U.S. forces in Kenya attacked

'Aircraft, choppers & vehicles destroyed'



A file photo of U.S. troops at Camp Simba in Kenya. •AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NAIROBI

Jihadists from Somalia's Al-Shabaab group on Sunday stormed a military base used by U.S. forces in Kenya's coastal Lamu region, destroying several aircraft and military vehicles, according to Kenyan police and army officials.

Attackers breached heavy security at Camp Simba at dawn but were repelled and four jihadists were killed, said Army spokesman Colonel Paul Njuguna.

Al-Shabaab has launched regular cross-border raids since Kenya sent troops into Somalia in 2011 as part of an African Union force protecting the internationally backed government – which the jihadists have been trying to overthrow for more than a decade.

The Lamu region, which includes popular tourist beach destination Lamu Island, lies close to the Somali frontier and has suffered frequent attacks, often carried out with roadside bombs.

Njuguna said "an attempt was made to breach security at Manda Air Strip" at 5:30am but it was repulsed.

"Four terrorists' bodies have so far been found. The airstrip is safe," he said, adding that a fire had broken

out but had since been dealt with.

Kenya's Inspector General of Police Hilary Mutiyambai said officers were "on high alert" after the attack.

An internal police report seen by AFP said two aircraft, two American helicopters and "multiple American vehicles" were destroyed at the airstrip. The type of aircraft involved was not immediately clear.

US military officials confirmed the attack and said U.S. and Kenyan forces had repelled the Al-Shabaab fighters.

"Working alongside our Kenyan partners, the airfield is cleared and still in the process of being fully secured," said the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in a statement.

The nearby civilian airport at Manda Bay, which brings tourists visiting Lamu Island – a UNESCO World Heritage Site – was closed for several hours after the incident, according to the civil aviation authority.

Al-Shabaab said in a statement it had "successfully stormed the heavily fortified military base and have now taken effective control of part of the base".

AFRICOM accused Al-Shabaab of lying in order to create false headlines.

ELSEWHERE



6 German tourists killed by drunken driver in Italy

ROME
A drunken driver speeding on a mountain road plowed into a group of young German tourists in northern Italy early on Sunday, killing six people and injuring 11 others, Italian authorities said. The deadly crash occurred in a village of Valle Aurina, northeast of Bolzano in the Alto Adige region, shortly after 1 a.m. as the Germans gathered near their tour bus. They were between the ages of 20 and 25. The largely German-speaking autonomous region, with its ski resorts in the Dolomites, of northern Italy is popular with German tourists. •AP

Bangladesh orders arrest of 'fugitive' former Chief Justice

Justice Sinha and 10 others face charges of embezzlement

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

A Bangladesh court ordered the arrest on Sunday of former Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others on charges alleging they embezzled nearly half a million dollars, a prosecutor said.

"All of them are fugitives from justice," prosecutor Khurshid Alam Khan said, adding that Mr. Sinha was accused of embezzling money and laundering it from one bank account to another.

Justice Sinha headed the South Asian nation's Supreme Court for a landmark



Surendra Kumar Sinha

verdict on judicial independence that went against the government, but fled Bangladesh in late 2017 amid allegations he had been forced to step aside.

Opposition groups and rights activists said the departure of Justice Sinha was

a blow to the credibility of the judiciary in the Muslim-majority country. Justice Sinha, 68, now lives in North America.

He was the first Hindu to be made Chief Justice of the officially secular Muslim-majority nation of 168 million.

Justice Sinha's departure came after a rare statement from the Supreme Court in October 2017 said other judges had accused him of graft and refused to sit with him on the top bench.

Just months earlier, Justice Sinha had led the SC in a decision that scrapped Parliament's power to sack top judges.

Dozens held after protest in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Petrol bombs were hurled at a Hong Kong police station and dozens of people were arrested on Sunday following a march against so-called parallel trading near the Chinese border.

The Democratic Party said about 10,000 people marched peacefully in Sheung Shui district, but violence erupted after police ordered protesters to disperse.

The marchers were protesting against parallel trading, which sees thousands of mainlanders cross the border every day to bulk-buy goods such as infant formula to sell at a profit in China.

Cambodia building collapse kills 36 people, injures 23

The seven-storey guesthouse was under construction

REUTERS
PHNOM PENH

Thirty-six people were killed and 23 more injured when a tourist guesthouse under construction in Cambodia collapsed, trapping workers under rubble, officials said on Sunday.

Officials said rescue operations ended two days after the seven-storey concrete building collapsed on Friday in the coastal town of Kep, about 160 km southwest of the capital Phnom Penh.

The 36 dead included six children and 14 women, officials said in a statement that did not detail why children were at the site.



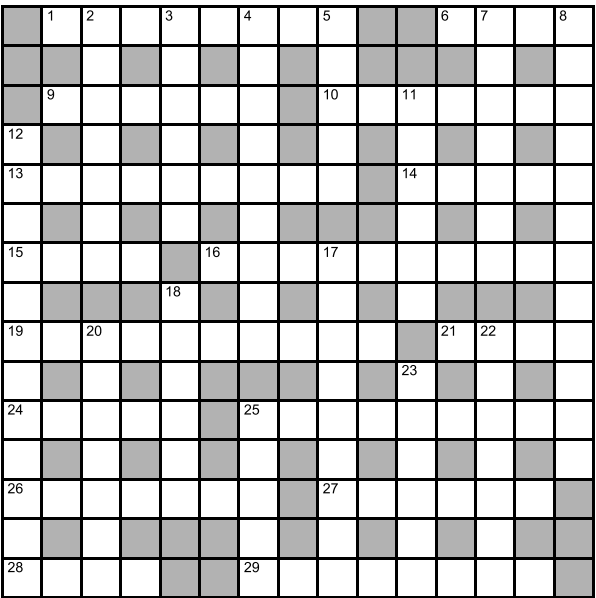
Mountain of rubble: Rescue personnel working at the site in Kep, where a building collapsed, on Sunday. •AFP

Kep Governor Ken Satha said that the owners of the building, a Cambodian couple, had been detained for questioning.

However, Prime Minister Hun Sen defended the government response and said that no officials in Kep province would be fired.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12825

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

■ ACROSS

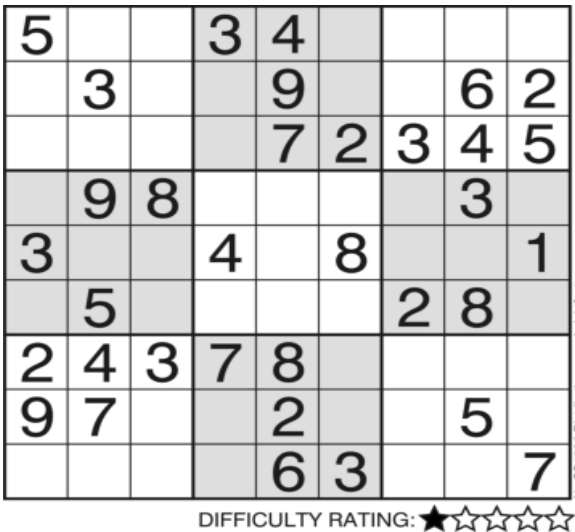
- 1 Most clever statutes put out (8)
- 6 Do without short mast (4)
- 9 Killer necklace? (6)
- 10 Scattered coal priced with certain limits relative to heat (7)
- 13 A farm harvest by loose soil in old building (9)

(set by Gridman)

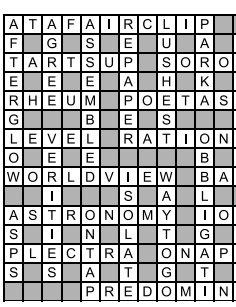
- 14 Plea from principal I bickered with (5)
 - 15 Belted out – it's no good! (4)
 - 16 What a newly wed couple did before moving (3,2,5)
 - 19 Somehow bear speech starting late in a deviancy (10)
 - 21 Information Bureau section's gone over one bloomer (4)
 - 24 Government order by the bell? No, it is a famous no-show (5)
 - 25 Ohio poll I conducted with ordinary people (3,6)
 - 26 One may throw it in a fit (7)
 - 27 Kind of game in MP town, we hear (6)
 - 28 Teacher back with trick finally to take a chance (4)
 - 29 Reveal information about bird that's appropriating (8)
- #### ■ DOWN
- 2 Certain African has risen for a magnificent stripping (7)
 - 3 Scruffy man leaves, neglected (6)

- 4 Ron let men in a whirl for registration (9)
- 5 Amasses beheaded nails (5)
- 7 Neighbourhood is an almost clean place (7)
- 8 Set's in a state of administration after financial failure (12)
- 11 Hate the combination of two articles by incomplete bunch (6)
- 12 Charge for fellow's sound of merriment (12)
- 17 Murder of animal reared in old city – that is getting detectives in (9)
- 18 About to assess Rajasthan leader's depression (6)
- 20 Dispatching son to the South for finales (7)
- 22 Swell dance by silly person stripped (7)
- 23 Rogue head of clan dismissed to circular niche (6)
- 25 It's hard on some dilapidated residences (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12824



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Similarity to Brahman

The jivatma is not the doer of actions; it is the three gunas that cause us to act, says Lord Krishna, in the Bhagavad Gita. The atma does not inherently know grief or anger. These arise because of qualities like rajas and tamas. And his contact with prakrti is what brings him into contact with the gunas, because they are inherent in prakrti, said Valayapet Ramachariar, in a discourse. This is similar to a good man transforming into a bad one, when he falls into bad company. Even sattva guna is binding, because it makes us desire happiness and knowledge all the time. It thereby binds us to samsara. We have to, therefore, move beyond the three gunas. However, through sattva guna, we are born into families that have atma jnana, and gradually we too progress to a state where we can attain liberation.

The Lord says that the person who knows that the three gunas are the karta, that is the doers of actions, will attain His state. This is not to be taken as the jivatma merging with the Brahman. It means that the jivatma attains qualities like Ananda. Like Him, we too will not know hunger, or thirst. Like Him we too will not experience ageing. Our thoughts will be pure. Our actions will be pure. What we will have will be His svabhava, His qualities. But we do not merge with Him. Similarity to the Brahman, but not identity with the Brahman is what is to be understood here. Before one can attain liberation, one must first transcend the three gunas. Arjuna then wants to know what a person is like when he has transcended the gunas. And he also wants to know how the gunas can be transcended. The Lord replies that to obtain knowledge of atma svarUpa, we should neither like nor dislike the illumination caused by sattva, or actions caused by rajas or wrong knowledge caused by tamas.

ASK US

K. NITYA KALYANI

Life cover as a job-seeker

Q. I am 26 years old and live with my mother (47), brother (18) and sister (23). I lost my dad a year ago and I am still studying for my civil services examinations. Our source of income now is my dad's pension and he has not bought any life insurance plan for us. Which plan will be suitable for us?

RISHIKESH NAMDEO THORVE

A. I assume you are referring to family pension after your father passed away. Without an independent source of income, you will not be able to buy a life insurance policy as the concept of insured value is based on the economic value of your life. You could try to buy a policy based on the assets you own, but insurance companies will need to know you have the income flow to keep paying premiums.

As for your family members, you can buy insurance on their lives if their death will set you back financially. This is called insurable interest. You should also be able to quantify that loss, which determines the sum assured. And again, your ability to keep paying premiums.

Once you start earning, you can buy a policy on your life and make your family members beneficiaries thus securing their future.

Higher health cover for seniors

Q. My wife and I have a joint health policy. It has ₹2.5 lakh cover for hospitalisation and ₹5 lakh for personal accident (PA) for me and ₹3 lakh and ₹5 lakh respectively for my wife.

I am 73 years old and she is 72. Given our age, companies are unwilling to enhance the cover. My son has been taking health insurance cover of ₹2 lakh for each of us through his employer.

Can we have the benefit of the combined amount offered under both the policies if the hospitalisation bill exceeds the limits of one of the policies? If so, how do I make the claim.

Alternatively, do you suggest we take a new policy with higher cover from any insurance company, provided they agree, considering our age?

If the total premium is more than ₹50,000, can both of us claim tax benefits, each up to ₹50,000?

M. AJAYA KUMAR

A. Hospitalisation policies are indemnity policies which means you can make claims only against actual expenses as evidenced by the bills. So, you can choose the policy you want to make the claim under and then, for the excess amount, make the claim under the other policy.

As for higher coverage, please opt for it if you can get it. Here are some more efficient and less costly options.

Maintain one of your two policies as your basic hospitalisation cover. For additional cover, replace your second hospitalisation policy with a top-up or super top-up policy. This will cost less for the same sum assured. You can read about this in greater detail in Cover Note published in the May 5, 2019 edition of The Hindu. (https://www.thehindu.com/business/Industry/want-extra-cover-on-your-policy/article27035752.ece).

Ensure that your current benefits, like having completed your waiting period for pre-existing conditions, stay intact. You should be able to appeal to the logic of your insurance company and talk them into it!

You can supplement this with a critical illness policy and/or a major surgery policy. These are benefit policies, meaning you can make a claim for the sum assured on the occurrence of the insured peril (the diagnosis of the illness or requirement for surgery) with no reference to actual expenses.

You can also claim under your hospitalisation policy against bills for actual expenses.

Income tax benefits are only for the first insured. In this case it is ₹30,000 as both of you are senior citizens. The ₹50,000 deduction you mention is only if dependent, senior citizen parents are covered under the same policy.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Shut the door on six home loan myths

Applicants often fall prey to misconceptions and end up making wrong choices while selecting loan options

RATAN CHAUDHARY

Just like any other financial product, there are numerous myths and misconceptions circling around home loans. Home loan applicants often fall prey to these myths and end up making wrong choices while selecting loan options. Here is list of the most prevalent home loans myths that you need to be aware of.

Shorter tenure good

Shorter home loan tenure will always have lower interest cost than longer tenure loan, assuming that their interest rates are equal. However, such tenures would also attract higher EMI vis-a-vis loan with longer tenure.

This can have negative impact on your financial health if it leaves you with little room to invest for other crucial financial goals. Such aggressive repayment tenures without insufficient buffer can also cause you to default on EMIs during financial emergencies. This might have long-term negative consequences on your credit score and your future loan eligibility.

Lowest interest rate

Home loan interest rate is just one of the several factors to be considered while choosing a lender. The other important factors include LTV (loan-to-value) ratio, processing fee and

loan tenure.

For example, a lender extending lowest interest rate may require you to opt for a lower LTV ratio, which means that you will need to put in higher down payment money.

Some lenders also charge lower interest rate for borrowers availing loans for longer tenure. Similarly, lenders offering lowest interest rate may charge you higher pro-

cessing fee and other charges. Hence, take a more holistic view while comparing various loan offers instead of limiting it to interest rates.

Good credit score

guarantees loan approval Credit score is one of the several factors used for evaluating loan applicant's creditworthiness. Other major factors include your age, monthly income, employer profile, job stability, existing EMI commit-

ments, location, property title, etc. Each of these play a crucial role in assessing your credit profile. Failure to meet any of these criterion will lead to rejection of your home loan application.

Penalty for prepayment

The Reserve Bank of India has barred banks, NBFCs and HFCs from penalising pre-payment or foreclosure of floating rate loans. This has made all floating rate home loan borrowers free to make pre-payment or foreclose loans without incurring any prepayment penalties. Even in case of fixed rate home loans, many lenders do not charge pre-payment charges if it is made from the borrower's own source of funds.

Fixed better than floating

With home loan interest rates recording consistent decline over the last one year, many home loan applicants consider fixed-rate home loans to be a better option to do away with interest rate volatility. However, very few lenders offer fixed rate home loans for the entire tenure.

Those who do, usually charge higher interest rate for fixed rate home loans to reduce their own interest rate risk. What most lenders usually offer are mixed rate home loans whose rates remain fixed for a

pre-specified period, say for the first 2, 3 or 5 years of the loan tenure.

After the end of that period, floating rates become applicable. Even the interest rate charged during fixed rate period is higher than interest rate for floating rate home loans at the time of loan sanction.

Direct loan application better

Most home loan applicants reach out to multiple lenders to shop for best loan rates and other features. However, every time one makes direct loan application with a bank or an HFC, the lender will contact credit bureaus to fetch your credit report and evaluate your creditworthiness. Such lender-initiated enquiry is considered as hard enquiry and each of them will reduce your credit score by a few points. Multiple loan applications will reduce your credit score multiple times, which might adversely impact your loan eligibility. Instead, visit online financial marketplace to compare various home loan offers available on your credit score, monthly income, job profile and other eligibility parameters. While these marketplaces, too, will fetch your credit score, it is considered as soft enquiry and hence, would not impact your credit score.

(The author is head of home loans, Paisabazaar.com)

Setting the financial milestones for New Year

While bank FDs and recurring deposits are popular among investing goals in 2020, gold and realty are also on the radar

BAVADHARINI K.S.

With New Year upon us, many would like to hit the reset button and start on a clean slate - be it joining a gym, starting a diet programme or taking a vacation. Better financial decisions will definitely be one among them.

It could be as small as maintaining an expense account or starting a SIP with a mutual fund to buying a property. I reached out to a few people to find out what they have promised themselves on the financial front. Here is what they said:

Bank deposits popular

Unsurprisingly, most of the financial resolutions for 2020 are to increase savings. While there are various investment options available, including mutual funds, equity/debt investments and gold, most people that I spoke to prefer to park their money in banks as fixed deposits (FDs) and recurring deposits (RDs).

Twenty-five-year-old Shiva, who started his working career two years ago, says "I get to save nearly 40% of my income every month in RDs. This year, I want to make a FD for two to three years"

Similarly Srilakshmi Indrase-

nan, a 28-year-old entrepreneur, says "I ensure that I save ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 every month in RDs. For 2020, I want to make FDs whenever I get bulk payments" Further, Srilakshmi also wants to learn about investing in stock market and mutual funds this year.

But 26-year-old student Prashanth, prefers post office fixed deposits for savings. "Bank returns are very low, so I prefer post office deposits. Nearly 50% of the money I get every month goes to post office deposit schemes. I intend to continue the same this year too."

Swathi C.S., who has taken a break from work, says "Over 80% of the amount meant for savings goes to RD but this year I would like to make a FD too" Though she has SIP in mutual funds running, she would rather make FDs as the risks are lower. Anjana, another home maker, too, feels the same way. "It is easy to liquidate FD than a mutual fund I feel and for this year, I would definitely

make a minimum of two FDs of over ₹50,000 each"

However, senior citizens like Sundar Ram M. says "For me, nearly 90% of my monthly income goes to FDs and other debt instruments. I will continue to do the same this year instead of exploring new investment avenues." Sundaraman does have minor exposure, less than 2%, in equity shares to 'try his luck.'

Remember, while bank deposits are safer than stock markets or mutual fund investments which are subject to the risk of capital erosion, it is also not the best way to save, especially for the young.

Also, bank FD/RD rates today are nothing to write home about. To maximise returns, investors need to lock-in when the rates are high.

On the other hand, investing regularly through SIPs in mutual funds over a long-term of 10 years or more, can minimise the risk as well as fetch good returns. Also, on the debt side, investors can consider other instru-

ments such as PPF, NSC, etc apart from RDs and FDs. Thus, a mix of equity and debt instruments, according to each one's risk appetite, is ideal. For senior citizens though, FDs are a good way to earn regular income as also to preserve capital.

Gold and real estate

Many want to bet on the yellow metal in the New Year given the price appreciation last year. Also, Indians have always had an affinity for gold, particularly in the form of jewellery. So, people like Swathi consider it to be a good investment. She says "I pay around ₹3,500 per month to a jeweller so that I can buy an ornament at the end of the period for my wedding anniversary" This is something she wants to continue every year.

While jewellers' schemes - where you pay for 11 months and the jeweller pays for one month - appear attractive, it is not a secure investment as there have been examples of fly-by-night operators disappearing

with investors' money. The recent incident of Goodwin Jewellers defaulting hundreds of individuals' money is a good example of how unsafe such investments are. It is better to invest gold in other ways, including sovereign gold bonds or as gold ETFs. Vinothraj prefers gold ETFs over gold jewellery. He says, "Stock market seems overheated now, so I have started with investments in gold ETFs and will continue investing this year too." Vinothraj has 5-10% of his portfolio in gold.

Since house property prices in certain regions are correcting, some people are willing to consider real estate as an investment option. Srilakshmi, for one, has started saving towards down payment for a property buy in the near to medium term.

Other goals

For many, taking a long vacation every year has become mandatory and accordingly, some have started saving for that as well.

Take Swathi, for



Swathi C.S.



Srilakshmi Indrasenan



Sundar Ram M.



Prashanth R.



Vinothraj J.

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"True! Money can't buy everything! Especially our money!"

Life insurance term plan premium

Age: 30 Years, Sum insured- Rs. 1 crore, Cover upto- 70 Years

Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover	Annual premium (Rs.) (Male)
Aditya Birla Capital	Ultima Term	85	10,270
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Aviva Life Insurance	iTerm Smart	80	9,007
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	99	8010
Bharti AXA	Flexi Term Plan	85	9,440
Canara HSBC OBC Life	iSelect Term Plan	80	9,491
DHFL Pramerica Life	Flexi e-Term	75	9,403
Edelweiss Tokio Life	Zindagi+ Term Insurance Plan	80	9,309
Exide Life	Smart Term Plan	75	12,411*
Future Generali	Flexi Online Term Plan	75	9,427
HDFC Life	Click2Protect 3D Plus	100	12,478
ICICI Prudential	iProtect Smart	99	12,502
IDBI Federal Life	iSurance Flexi Term	80	12,402
India First Life	e-Term Plan	80	8,260
Kotak Life	Kotak e-Term Plan	75	9,558
Max Life	Online Term Plan Plus	85	10,148
PNB Met Life	Mera Term Plan	99	10,148
Reliance Nippon Life	Digi Term	80	11,012
SBI Life	eShield	80	15,070
TATA AIA Life	Sampoorna Raksha	100	9,912

*Exide coverage upto 60 yrs for age 30 yrs

Source: www.policybazaar.com

Health insurance premium

Insurer name	Key features	Plan names	Premium (Rs.)
Religare Health	Day Care Treatments Family Floater option Health Checkups Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage	NCB Super Premium Care Care with unlimited recharge	8,675 7,887 8,478
Max Bupa Health	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Alternate Medicine	NCB Super Premium with UAR Health Companion Go Active	9,267 9,862 11,747
Star Health	Family Floater option Restoration of cover Wellness Benefits	Medi Classic Star Comprehensive	9,661 11,476
Apollo Munich Health	Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility	Optima Restore Easy Health Individual Standard Easy Health Individual Exclusive Easy Health Individual Premium Energy Gold Energy Silver Energy Gold with Co pay Energy Silver with Co pay Health wallet	11,024 9,613 12,067 14,945 20,036 14,136 17,216 11,316 22,908
HDFC Ergo General	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	My-health Suraksha Gold Smart	13,886
Aditya Birla Health	Day Care Treatments Restoration of cover Family Floater Option	Activ assure Diamond Activ Health Enhance Activ Health Enhance (Diabetes) Activ Health Enhance (Asthma) Activ Health Enhance (Hypertension) Activ assure Diamond with Super NCB Activ assure Diamond with Unlimited Reload Activ assure Diamond with Super NCB and Unlimited Reload	7,938 9,801 38,148 16,818 32,616 8,732 8,494 9,287
Royal Sundaram General	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Lifeline supreme	7,936
Manipal Cigna Health	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Alternate Medicine Family Floater Option	ProHealth - Protect ProHealth - Plus	8,979 10,119
Digit Healthcare Plus	Hospital Room Eligibility Day Care Treatments Share Claim Payments	Option 1 - Maxima Restore Super Option 2 - Early Cover Option 3 - Super care	8,861 7,985 7,541
Liberty General	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility	Elite Basic Supreme	10,777 9,579 11,337
Bajaj Allianz General	Hospital Room Eligibility Wellness Benefits Family Floater Option	Individual Health Guard Health Ensure	11,569 7,642
Universal Somo General	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Complete Healthcare Insurance Privilege	12,241
Raheja QBE	Hospitalization at Home Restoration of Cover Hospital Room Eligibility Day Care Treatments	Health QuBE Basic Health QuBE SuperSaver Health QuBE Comprehensive Edelweiss Health Insurance- Gold (Health 241 Add-on)	4,711 3,820 5,511 10,398
Edelweiss General	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Edelweiss Health Insurance- Gold (Health 241 Add-on) Edelweiss Health Insurance Gold	8,318
Oriental	Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home	Individual Mediclaim Policy	12,080

For a 30-year-old male, non-smoker, for sum insured of Rs.10 lakh living in a metro city

Source: www.policybazaar.com

New year, new you

How to take back control of what you eat, so 2020 becomes a year that helps you adopt better food habits

RUJUTA DIWEKAR

Hello dear readers, wishing you a happy new year. How are you feeling today? Did you sleep well last night? Have you been complying with your exercise plans? Do you have sweet cravings post meals?

How many of us consider the above factors as a reflection of our health? But that's what they are – surrogate measures of metabolic health – your hormonal health, cholesterol levels, kidney and liver function, gut health, and much more. However, the public health narrative is almost always about losing weight. Often, at the cost of health gain.

This is why we started the 12-week fitness project in the beginning of 2018. It was to reinforce common sense and put control back in the individual's hands as far as health goes. More than 1.25 lakh people from over 40 countries participated and saw improvements in metabolic health parameters, inch loss from their waists and developed a better relationship with food.

Most importantly, the culturally compliant food and lifestyle modifications were sustainable, as most participants continued following them. It's 2020, climate change is a reality, and we need to go back to eating practices that were good for both people and the planet.

What follows is a cheat sheet to essential learnings from the 12-week fitness project, a fast-track version that will help you reset yourself in 10 days. It is uncomplicated, inexpensive, and more importantly, it's easy.

It is independent of influencers, gadgets and the weighing scale – and is about improving health and losing weight as a consequence. Repeat that after me. Because that is exactly how metabolism works and not the other way around.

Most importantly, I promise you,

that if you follow this eating plan for the next 10 days, you will report better sleep, less bloating, more energy, and be on the path to losing those inches in a sustainable manner.

Meal plan

1. Eat a banana or any other fresh fruit first thing in the morning. Or soaked almonds or soaked raisins. You can have a traditional home-cooked breakfast (*idli, dosa, poha*) about 45 minutes to an hour after this.

Why: Fitness is built one step at a time by small but daily actions. The body rewards consistency over anything else.

2. Add ghee to every meal – do this gradually if this is a new habit. So, add ghee to one meal first, then gradually increase. Put in as much as enhances the taste of the food and does not mask it. Also take into account the food item: Rice-*dal, roti*-



VEGAN OR KETO?

Recently, a headline declared that research has now proven that eating meat is not dangerous to health and that all these years we have been misled. They had looked at the same data as the studies which said limit meat intake and found their results to be statistically irrelevant. The keto community felt vindicated. On the other hand, the vegan community had lots to cheer about too. The documentary *The Game Changers* was successfully converting once hard-core meat eaters to plant-based diets. Virat Kohli even tweeted how he felt much better being a vegetarian athlete.

It's really not about meat but eating it in a sustainable manner without it taking a toll on our body or the planet. So, if you are from a traditional meat-eating community, go back to the practice of eating meat sometimes, two to three times a week max and with rice or *bhakri* and *sabzis*, just like your grandmom taught you to. And if you are a vegetarian, don't worry about protein, just eat your *dals* and pulses with rice and *bhakis* and *sabzis*, just like your grandmom taught you to.

vegetable will need lower quantities; *puran poli, dal baati* will need more.

Why: Ghee is the ultimate Indian superfood. It is a fat that breaks down other fats, is excellent for digestion, keeps joints healthy and skin glowing. Ghee also reduces sweet cravings.

3. Have a mid-morning snack. You

can have a fresh fruit or a home-made *laddoo* or *barfi* (traditionally made as per season, with limited quantities of jaggery). Or a seasonal/home-made drink, such as coconut water, buttermilk, *nannari*, *nimbu* sherbet (with not more than 1 tsp sugar).

Why: The Ayurvedic wisdom behind including these drinks during the day was to stoke the appetite, ease digestion and boost the immune system. They introduce diversity to your diet, allowing you to celebrate the season, eating roots, flowers and leaves.

4. The 4-6 pm meal is your most important meal of the day. Plan this as carefully as you would your lunch or dinner. You could eat a *chapati* with ghee and jaggery. Or choose between *poha, upma, dosa, egg-toast, murukku* or home-made coconut, gram or *gond laddoo*. If you have early dinners, then just have some groundnuts with jaggery.

Why: I always tell my clients that the key to losing weight lies in what

they eat between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m., a time when most of us are the most hungry and also the most careless in our eating. By eating something wholesome in the evening, you can eat a light dinner. This is the make-or-break meal, this decides whether you will have long-lasting fitness or whether it will fizzle out in the next couple of weeks.

5. For dinner, eat rice with *sambar, rasam* or *dal* and any vegetable you want to add. For the rice, pick hand-pounded or single-polished rice, instead of brown rice for your everyday use.

Why: This is easy to digest, and a complete meal. Rice and *dal* also improves sleep quality. It is suitable for people of all kinds of constitutions according to Ayurveda (*vata, pitta* and *kapha doshas*).

Rujuta Diwekar's The 12-week Fitness Project is published by Juggernaut Books

Do consult a physician before beginning any diet, especially if you have a medical condition

RESEARCH MATTERS



Eat well now, see better later

Unhealthy dietary patterns may not lead to just obesity and heart disease. There may also be a link to age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a recent study in the *British Journal of Ophthalmology*, has found. AMD impacts the retina with age, blurring central vision. The incidence of late AMD was three times higher in those whose diets included a high intake of processed and red meat, fried food, dessert, eggs, refined grains, high-fat dairy, and sugar-sweetened beverages. Previous research has suggested that a high dose of antioxidants may slow the progression of AMD.

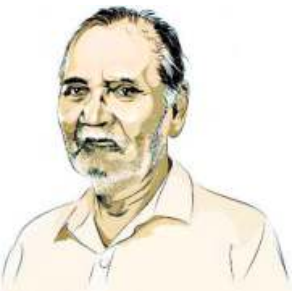
Beware of the health food blogger

The refined-sugar-free recipes of health food bloggers were nutritionally analysed in relation to their sugar and fat content. The researchers found that 80% of the recipes of the four bloggers picked "contained more fat than a Mars bar and 70% contained more fat than a popular online cake recipe, while 25% of the recipes contained over half of the recommended daily sugar intake as advised by the SACN (the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition) and the WHO (the World Health Organization)." The researchers concluded that while the platform was useful, the recipes did not conform with dietary guidelines.

DOWN MEMORY LANE

The Parsi link with Delhi

The community's association with the city dates back to Akbar's time, culminating in the establishment of the Anjuman, a repository of its culture



R. V. SMITH

The Parsis have a certain mystique about them. I realised this when I met Bapsyano Pavry, the only Indian Marchioness who had married the Marquess of Winchester. The interview took place when she was on her way to Tehran to meet the Shah of Iran, Mohd Reza Pahlavi, in 1967 to plead with him for the restoration of the Parsi fire temples. Most of these were demolished with the advent of Islam.

The Parsi origins go back to the Iranians who ruled as early as 3000 B.C. though the religion propagated by the prophet Zarathushtra flourished in Iran until the defeat of the Sassanian King Yazdegard III by the Arabs at the battle of Nahavand in 641 A.D. The community was persecuted and fled to India, settling down in Gujarat, from where they made their way to Bombay and other areas, coming to north India some 500 years ago, though some think it was much earlier.

The Parsi association with Delhi dates back to the time of Akbar, when Dastur Meherji-rana of Navsari, the spiritual

leader, impressed the emperor with his piety and knowledge. Thereafter, other learned Parsi where invited to Akbar's capital, Fatehpur Sikri, where they took part in religious discourses with Hindu, Jain, Muslim and Christian scholars.

It can be conjectured that Parsi buildings must have been in existence at Agra and Delhi even in those times, but no trace of them remains now. However, an inscription bears testimony to the fact that the site of the old *aramagh* (cemetery) in Delhi was acquired by Jamsetjee Cavesjee Jussawala in 1869. This link in the Parsi connection with the Capital grew with the formation of the Parsi Anjuman in 1925. In 1913 there were hardly 30 or 40 Parsis in Delhi; there are now about a 1,000.

Just as one leaves Delhi Gate and enters Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, a signboard with the words 'Delhi Parsi Anjuman' greets the eyes. Behind the board in a compound are the Muhgusi Parsi Dharamshala, or rest house; and the Bhiwandiwall (community) Hall, located within the premises of the Anjuman. It also houses books on Zoroastrianism, its history and culture, and the Kaikhushuru Palonji Katrak Dar-e-Meher or Fire Temple.

There are three kinds of temples: Atash Benram, Atash Adarm, Agvary or Dar-e-Meher. There's also the Atash Dadgah or the house-



Repository of history The facade of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman

SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAKAR

hold fire in every Parsi home. The first fire temple in India was consecrated in 790 A.D. at Sanjan from the *alat* (instruments) brought by the Parsis from Khorasan. Hence, the importance of Delhi's only Fire Temple.

Every day when the liturgy is performed at the Fire Temple, the names and deeds of the great saints and kings of Iran are remembered. As the early morning breeze blows in from the Yamuna, the beautiful dawn prayer *Hosh-Baam* is recited. The opening lines, "Through Asha most high, Asha most pure", seem to merge with the first rays of the sun, for it is the sanctity of light that the temple personifies.

In a way it reflects the glory of Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity. Ahura means Lord, and Mazda, the wise or one full of light – the first and the last. Along with Ahura Mazda there are six other Ahuras, explains a Parsi worshipper at the temple. These are his six angles, who are also known as the six cardinal virtues, through whom only Ahura Mazda can be worshipped. This is borne out by the *Avesta*, the sacred scriptures and the Gathas.

The importance of the Fire Temple can be gauged from the fact that Parsis prefer to put their dead bodies in

the Towers of Silence so that birds devour them. To bury them would be to defile the earth; burning would pollute the fire, the most sacred of all elements. The fire in the Atash Temple is never extinguished, reveals the worshipper. It is considered regal, with a crown hanging over the cauldron, three feet in diameter and four feet high. The fire in it is fed by a priest five times a day and on special occasions with wood.

In places like Delhi and Agra (where there is no Tower of Silence), Parsis have *aramagh*s, in which the dead are laid to rest. These places are named after their heroes like Rustam, Sohrab and the grey-eyed Zal, whose names are also recited every morning when the Parsi prayers are held with great solemnity and the strict participation of only community members.

Incidentally, Bapsyano's marriage was a disaster. William Paulat never consummated it. He had an affair with the James Bond creator Ian Fleming's mother, and the British aristocracy did not take kindly to her either. The Marchioness died in 1995, at the age of 93, in Bombay, where her father, Khurshidji Pavry, had been Head Priest.

The writer is a veteran chronicler of Delhi

Art from the heart

Five artisans from Bangladesh highlight the craftsmanship of Nakshi Kantha on garments, at the Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar

MADHUR TANKHA

Shwettaj Jahan's stall in Dilli Haat, has a green fan made of bamboo and intricately woven with thread. It looks like a craft from the Northeast of India, but the jewellery designer clarifies that it is the work of a Rohingya refugee. "The girl who worked on this was able to get the desired result as her hands are soft," she says. Shwettaj, who has in the past gifted a sari to Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, trained a group in design and weaving at a workshop. She helped them make trinkets, bracelets and fans that appeal to an urban audience.

"I am finally showcasing what they make there. We are facing a humanitarian crisis right now. My intent was to provide them with livelihood opportunities. I got funds from the United Nations," says this young designer, whose grandfather hailed from West Bengal, before they migrated to what is now Bangladesh. Her assistant Mohammad Arhan, though lives in Daryaganj.

This is the 34th edition of the fortnight long Dastkari Haat Crafts Bazaar at Dilli Haat that commenced on Friday. This year, Jaya Jaitly, president of Dastkari Haat Samiti, has



Dedicated to the cause (Top) Shwettaj Jahan works with Rohingya artisans; Tahira Begum with fish motifs in the background

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

invited Bangladesh, carrying on the tradition of showcasing a neighbouring country's craft tradition, in a bid to foster people to people contact.

In focus is the craftsmanship of Nakshi Kantha, a traditional Bengali tradition that involved stitching discarded pieces of cloth and bits of old clothes to make quilts. "In earlier times, when Bengali women got married they would do Nakshi Kantha on a razai. Even in those days, they were recycling, using torn pieces to make one piece," says Veena Sikri, convener of the South Asia Women's Network and former professor at Jamia Millia Islamia, who was invited as a guest on the first day, when artisans were introduced. She explains that Kantha is the stitch, while Nakshi refers to the motifs: fish, lotus, elephants and wild flowers. "In our part (West Bengal),

there are more floral patterns, whereas there (Bangladesh) the fish is the dominant motif," she explains. At Dilli Haat, there are bedsheets, scarves and saris, some with contemporary geometric patterns, others with traditional motifs.

Tahira Begum, a middle-aged artisan shows the contours of the Hilsa on one of the bedsheets. She's measured the distance between each fish using one handspan.

"It's such painstaking work that four artisans have to be involved to complete one bedsheets, with just the leaf motif," she says. On January 14th, prototypes of bamboo baskets, recycled jewellery, hand bags with Nakshi Kantha – jointly created by Indian and Bangladeshi artisans – will be on display.

At Dilli Haat, Aurobindo Marg; opposite the INA Market, on until January 15



Flip your calendar, it's Veganuary

This January movement encourages people to go vegan for 31 days. So should you sign up?

SWETA AKUNDI

When Sangeeta Bahl summited Mount Everest in 2018 at the age of 54, to become the oldest Indian woman to do so, it was a matter of great joy. One nagging desire remained, however: the next summit she would peak, she vowed, would be as a vegan. In July last year, she came close to fulfilling that wish. Although she was beaten by the weather before she could climb to the peak, Sangeeta spent 21 days on Mt McKinley in Alaska as a vegan and can't wait to do it all over again. "My message is that it is possible to stay strong and get all the proteins you need from a plant-based diet. Mountaineering is no easy task, and if I can do that while consuming

seeds, nuts and legumes, then the idea that vegans are weak is quite a fallacy," she says, adding her digestion has improved and she feels more active than before. That is the reason Sangeeta is the face of Veganuary, a month-long movement that encourages people to go vegan for 31 days, in January. It was started in 2014 in UK by Matthew Glover and Jane Land, gaining momentum each year with support from celebrities such as Joaquin Phoenix, Paul McCartney and Evanna Lynch. The idea is that for something to become habit-forming, it needs 21 days. Having spread to 179 countries so far, this is the second time it's being celebrated in India. This year, The Vegan Samoooh, a collective of vegan activists, is organising it.

What is Veganuary? Outreach is the major focus of Veganuary, and just as important is changing the image of who a vegan is. "The issue is vegans are today looked upon as part of a cult," says Akshita Kuk-

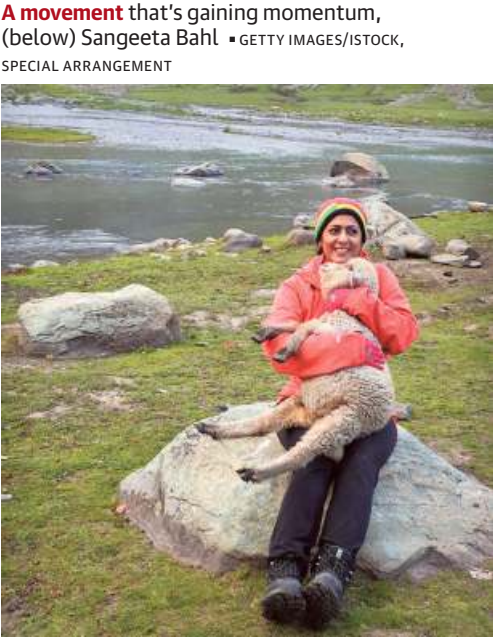


reja, part of The Vegan Samoooh, who is organising inclusive potlucks and parties to recolour that perspective. "We want people to realise that vegans can have fun. It's not all about protesting, though that is a big part of it." Under Veganuary, she and her team organised a vegan-themed eco-conscious New Year's party in Delhi. "We also wanted to bring together vegans and zero-waste activists through this," she says. A significant portion of people registering for Ve-

ganuary are those worried about the impact of dairy and meat industries on climate change. Much like how Veganuary is celebrated all over the world, in India too, The Vegan Samoooh has teamed up with over 60 establishments, cosmetics and restaurants in seven cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune and Goa, to offer discounts on vegan products. Recently, Akshita also organised a trip to an animal sanctuary in Delhi, where a vegan buffet was held, and at the same time, people could interact with rescue chicken, goats and cows. All this, she says, is an attempt to be inclusive, build a community, and get rid of the 'elite' tag. "The idea is that people make the connection between veganism and ethics themselves," she says, adding that they'd like to change the image of vegans being pushy people.

30 days or more? How sustainable is it though? Ontario resident Dev Vajaria explains how he could not keep up with his vegan lifestyle when he would visit India, "because of the limited availability of dairy substitutes like soy and almond milk." But things are changing – in terms of 2019 participation numbers for Veganuary, India was the third country, after the UK and USA, and Mumbai the fifth city. Akshita points out that many Indian dishes are vegan by default, whether it's *rajma-chawal* up North or *idli, dosa* and *upma* in the South. She says that

some people see veganism as a western concept. "But a big part of The Vegan Samoooh is to go back to our Indian roots of *shak-ahar* (plant-based diet)." This year, the movement has had a growth spurt among the health-conscious, thanks to the Netflix documentary *The Game Changers*. A report by Veganuary UK says that globally nearly 49% of the participants listed health as a reason to go vegan. Founder of Bengaluru-based Right Living, dietitian Anupama Menon, says it is about making sure you have both complete and incomplete proteins. The latter is available in vegan products, but eggs, fish, dairy and meat is a rich source for the former. "Incomplete proteins are basically those that are lacking in some amino acids. Rice for instance, misses out on lysine. So you need to have it with *dal*, to get the complete protein." Similarly, you need to find replacements for other nutrients such as iron, calcium and Vitamin B12. She reminds us though that shifting to being vegan means giving up food groups that your body is used to, a shift it is likely to resist. It is important then, to pay attention to your gut health. If you have food allergies because of which you can't eat peas, quinoa, certain legumes, almonds, gluten or certain oils, by going vegan you will be further limiting your nutrient sources. "If it has to become a sustainable lifestyle, you have to know if it is working for you as an individual, no matter what the studies on plant-based diets say."



A movement that's gaining momentum, (below) Sangeeta Bahl ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Q&A

Does every headache have to be related to some eye problem? My daughter is in Class XII and of late has been complaining of a headache. She has her Board exams coming up and I feel she's stressed and anxious. Could that be the reason? Do I need to get her eyes examined immediately or can it wait for a few more months?



■ It is possible the stress associated with a very demanding examination system is the cause of such 'stress'-related headaches, not uncommon in this age group. Rarely does intense reading and work strain the ocular accommodation tissues, aggravating or manifesting a latent refractive error, causing a headache. Migraine, or vascular headache is also common in girls of this age. The lack of proper rest, an imbalanced diet, the poor intake of fluids, can all exaggerate the headache. Though very uncommon, some brain-related conditions can be a cause. Although your daughter is unlikely to have any serious eye disease, we recommend seeing an eye doctor, who will be able to exclude these possibilities and suggest simple remedies. Since it does not take long for a complete eye examination, do prioritise an immediate visit to the eye doctor, so that the entire family is stress-free to face the examination. Please discourage analgesic tablets and caffeine-containing

beverages, which is treatment worse than the disease itself. **Does the prolonged use of eye drops for tired or dry eyes cause any side effects I should know of?** ■ Most mild to moderate dry eyes are treated by tear substitutes. When these drugs are used without preservatives even for prolonged periods, they do not cause adverse effects. Your eye doctor may prescribe cyclosporine or mild topical steroids if dry eyes are associated with inflammation. These drugs need to be discontinued once inflammation subsides and are not to be used for a long period of time without medical supervision. **I had a baby two months ago. My husband works abroad and has not visited us yet. I live with my in-laws, am stressed out and have been terribly sleep deprived. I experience pain on my upper eyelids a lot. Does it indicate bad health of the eye?** ■ Sleep deprivation and stress are probably contributing factors and upper lid pain need not necessarily indicate bad health. However, sleep deprivation can contribute to dryness or eye surface abnormalities due to the lack of lubricating function of the eye lids. This causes roughness of the eyes and pain or discomfort. You could undergo a routine eye evaluation by an eye doctor when time permits and have him prescribe preservative-free tear substitutes for relief. Until then, gentle massaging over closed lids or cold compresses over closed eye lids can provide comfort. Though rare inflammation of the lids, styes, could also be a cause of upper lid pain. Dr R Krishnadas is Senior Medical Consultant, Glaucoma Services, Aravind Eye Care System, Madurai *Nothing in this column is intended to be, and is not, a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please seek independent advice from a licensed practitioner if you have questions regarding a medical condition. Email at mp_health@thehindu.co.in*

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



WUMO



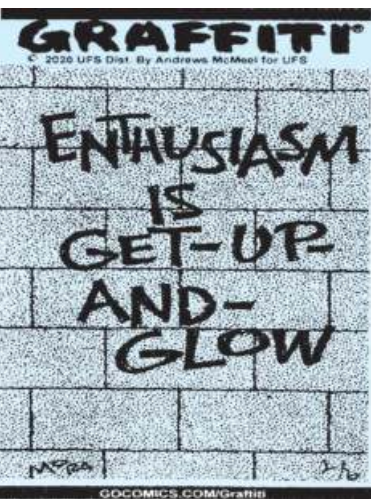
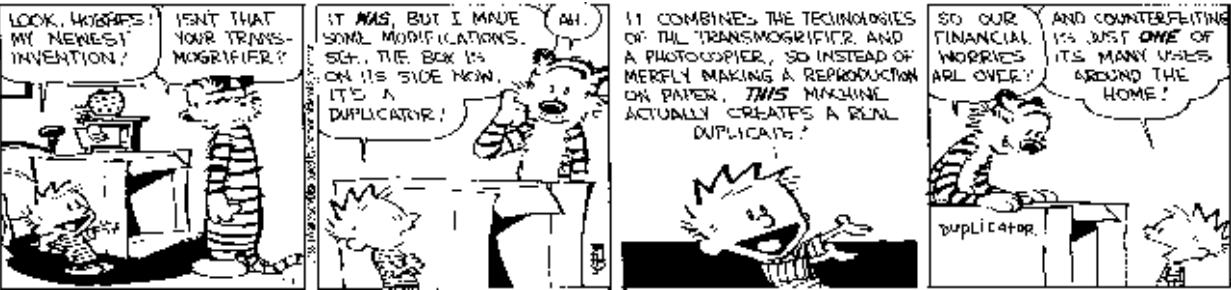
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



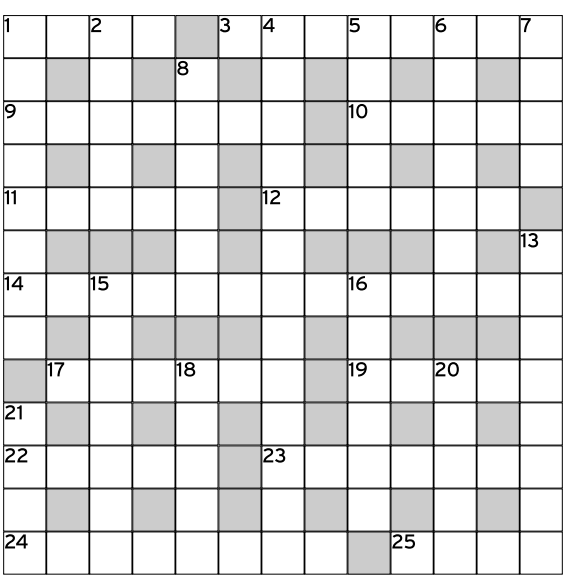
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13269



- Across
- 1 Dreadful (4)
 - 3 Overshadowed (8)
 - 9 Unfavourable (7)
 - 10 Talk show group (5)
 - 11 Abatement (3-2)
 - 12 Allotted amount (6)
 - 14 Hong Kong airline (6, 7)
 - 17 Medical facility (6)
 - 19 Achieve great things (2, 3)
 - 22 Spare tyre location? (5)
- 23 Peeved (2, 1, 4)
- 24 Spanish cheese – come hang (anag) (8)
- 25 Boxing match signal (4)
- Down
- 1 Stalemate (8)
 - 2 Metal fastener (5)
 - 4 Selecting only the best (6-7)
 - 5 Provision of data (5)
 - 6 Farewell celebration

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GET THE EDGE

A ND-NDE

With the rise in popularity of podcasts and audio books, how do they fare when compared with the printed medium?



Gargi has to endure a two-hour commute to college each way. As she has to board a bus, the metro and then walk for 15 minutes each way, she prefers to listen to audio books instead of reading them. This way, her hands are free and she can even listen while standing in an overcrowded bus. She is grateful she is majoring in English because most of the books on her reading list are easily available in the audio format unlike textbooks in other subjects. Moreover, she is really pleased that she saves time.

With audio books and podcasts gaining popularity vis-à-vis printed or e-books, students may benefit from understanding the pros and cons of each medium. In an article in *The New York Times*, cognitive psychologist, Daniel Willingham compares the two media and



Umpteen studies have pointed out that humans are poor multitaskers. When our attention is thus fragmented, our comprehension is likely to be compromised.

concludes that each has its own pluses. Knowing how the two formats stack up against each other in different contexts can help readers or listeners pick the one that best meets their needs.

Audio scores over the print format when it comes to prosodic cues, that includes pitch, tone and tempo. Statements like “I simply love it here” can be interpreted as a genuine praise or as mockery depending on the tone employed. While

tone can be conveyed auditorily, it’s harder in print and the reader usually relies on contextual cues. So, do audio books aid comprehension as compared to print?

Put to test
The answer is not so straightforward. In one study, researchers compared performance of students on a science quiz. Half the participants heard the material on a podcast while the other half read a printed version. Even though both groups spent the same amount of time with the study material, the print group outperformed the audio group.

Willingham points out that the content was fairly dense and hard to grasp. What do we readers typically

do when we encounter difficult subject matter? Typically, we pause and slow down our reading and may even re-read bits to clarify our understanding. While going back and forth is easy to do with print, the audio format doesn’t easily lend itself to this type of comprehension monitoring.

Additionally, in print, the text can be divided with headings and subheadings and keywords and concepts may be bolded to highlight them. These organisational markers are not available in the auditory format. However, Willingham wagers that as people get more used to audio books, their comprehension in this format may increase with practice.

When we listen to audio

books, we may engage in other tasks like driving or cooking. However, umpteen studies have pointed out that humans are poor multitaskers. When our attention is thus fragmented, our comprehension is likely to be compromised. Willingham says that you will get the “gist, not subtleties.” So, while audio books may entertain us on long commutes, they may not replace reading in the conventional sense just yet.

Thus, based on your purpose and what you wish to derive from your reading experience, choose your medium wisely.

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Take care, folks!

While student life gives you cherishable memories, it can also impact one’s health



If I may ask, what was your New Year’s resolution? Or perhaps, you are among those who has discarded this tradition of making promises to oneself that begins with the big lift of good intention and ends with the slow slide of regret? I have reached the age of forgetting, where I can happily blame unkept resolutions on the erosion of short-term memory. So at this point, almost a week into the new year, if such a thought existed, it has conveniently slipped out of remembering range.

However, one of the advantages of reaching this point in life is that one can dispense advice freely (and unashamedly) to those who will listen, and even to those who won’t, confident in the belief that one has acquired at least some measure of clarity over the years.

Self-care
So what advice can I pull out of my rather worn backpack at the start off this year? What new resolution can I ask you to consider, having myself given up on the practice of resolving a long time ago? Well, here is

one that I think will stand you in good stead: resolve to take better care of yourself and your health – physical, emotional, mental.

Perhaps that sounds self-evident. After all, isn’t self-interest the guiding principle of life, for most? Self-care, however, while being in one’s interest, is quite different from self-interest. When you are young, you get caught up in many activities that are driven by passion, curiosity and ambition, as well as the appetite for adventure and learning. You are eager to feed your body, mind and soul with all manner of exciting things, experimenting and exploring to the fullest – and no doubt, that’s the best part of being a student, and being young.

Little wonder then, that you occasionally go to class sleepy, having survived several nights on a few hours of rest, or that you are distracted by mid-morning hunger pangs, having had no time for breakfast or having overdosed on instant noodles and multiple mugs of tea the previous night. A few days of this can be great fun, but more than that can show on you over time. Some of the downs come from the indifferent quality of food and

less-than-perfect hygiene in hostels, but a fair contribution also comes from simple disregard for that aspect of life, that most young people think is an old person’s concern: health. But, and this is not backed by citable evidence but by simple observation, I find that my campus clinic is more often visited by students than by the older faculty.

Balancing act
So, even as you participate in all the excitement that college and particularly, hostel life can offer, do be mindful of your well-being. Balance out the fast food days with some good food days, making sure you always have a bottle of water at hand. Even as you stretch out the days and nights in conversation and hard work, find a few times a week when you get a full night’s sleep. Even as you gather many fair-weather friends to laugh with, make sure you have at least one or two you can cry with as well. And even as you sharpen your mind with deep conversations, learn to pay attention to the signals of your own body and psyche.

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ETCETERA
MoU signed

Birmingham City University has collaborated with a Mumbai-based Ronkel Media Education Institute, which will help their students gain real-world experience by working on motion picture productions. It will also provide opportunities to study aspects of the media, arts and entertainment overseas as part of exchange study programmes.

Learning easy

London Learning Centre, Delhi, in collaboration with Ansar University, Gurugram, has launched a certificate programme for adults between 18 and 32 years with additional learning needs. The one-year programme is set to commence today at the Ansar University campus in Gurugram. The course will focus on aspects such as employability, social communication and language skills. Admissions are open. For details, contact 98184 82996.

Building leadership skills

The International Institute of Sports Management (IISM) has announced the IISM Edge programme, which aims to develop leadership skills and teach the ‘Art of Losing’ and dealing with failure. The duration of the course is nine months, beginning from February and classes will be conducted on weekends. Edge will delve into topics such as critical thinking, active and passive listening, conflict management, time and stress management, and so on. Admissions are now open. <https://iismedge.com/>

NIRF RANKING - METHODOLOGY NEEDS REVIEW

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Mail id: asish.bhattacharyya@gmail.com

In 2016, the federal government introduced National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), which publishes ranking of HEIs in India. NIRF ranking will complete five years of its existence in 2020. It is high time to review whether it provides information on relative academic quality of HEIs operating in different domains.

The stated objective of the NIRF ranking is to galvanise Indian institutions towards a competitive environment and to communicate the quality of scholarship of the faculty and students and the student-caring culture of the institutions.

NIRF awards score out of 100 marks for ranking B-schools. It uses the following parameters:

Student strength (6 per cent weight), faculty-student ratio (9 per cent weight), ratio of faculty with Ph.D. (3 per cent weight), faculty experience (3 per cent weight), expenditure per student (9 per cent weight), publications per faculty (12 per cent weight), citation per paper (6 per cent weight), citations in top 25 percentile (6 per cent weight), earnings from consultancy etc. per faculty member (6 per cent weight), percentage of students placed (8 per cent weight), percentage of students completed the programme (4 per cent weight), median salary in campus placement (8 per cent weight), outreach and inclusivity (10 per cent weight), and stakeholders’ perception (10 percent weight).

QS BRICKS ranking uses the following eight parameters: academic reputation based on the QS survey of academics (30 per cent weight), employer perception based on the QS survey of graduate employers (20 per cent weight), faculty-student ratio (20 per cent weight), percentage of faculty with a Ph.D. (10 per cent weight), paper per faculty (10 per cent weight), citations per paper (5 per cent weight), international faculty (2.5 per cent weight), and international students (2.5 per cent weight).

B-school’s reputation depends on the respect for its faculty members in the academic community for their scholarship, and the quality of teaching and grooming process, which is captured by recruiters’ perception. NIRF assigns 10 per cent weight to the combined perception of peers and recruiters, which is quite low. NIRF should consider increasing the weight.

NIRF uses input per student and placement data as a proxies for measuring teaching quality. Placement data fails to capture the outcome in an environment in which obsolescence of skills and knowledge is fast and skills required for new jobs is not known. In this environment, reputed B-schools like IMTG aim to create a drive among students for life-long learning, blossom students’ creativity and develop skills for ‘unlearning-learning-relearning’, in addition to providing skills and knowledge for the immediate job. Teaching outcome can be measured by the performance of graduates employed for at least three to four years, which is not captured by the placement data. Therefore, placement data cannot be used as a proxy for measuring the teaching quality.

QS uses faculty-student ratio (20 per cent weight) as a proxy for measuring teaching commitment and student support. NIRF assigns only 9 per cent weight to faculty-student ratio. It uses other measures - student strength, faculty experience, expenditure per student, in addition to faculty-student ratio, as

proxies for student-support. It is difficult to establish the correlation between those three parameters and teaching quality. For example, increase in expenditure per student does not necessarily increase the students’ learning experience. Similarly, it is not clear how the teaching quality is impacted by the student strength in the B-school. There is an inherent problem in calculating expenditure per student. Moreover, B-schools submit total expenditure incurred during the year, which forms the basis for calculating expenditure per student. This gives undue advantage to those B-schools which offer large number of educational programmes, in addition to PGDM/MBA. This distorts the ranking.

QS uses the ratio of faculty with a Ph.D. (10 per cent weight) as a proxy for measuring the ability of the institution to attract quality faculty. NIRF assigns 3 per cent weight, which is quite low.

NIRF assigns too much weight (20 per cent) on campus placement, which fails to capture the teaching quality in the current business environment. Moreover use of ‘median salary’ as a parameter distorts the ranking, as the same depends on the batch size and therefore, is not comparable among various B-schools.

One significant shortcoming of NIRF ranking is that in calculating the faculty-student ratio and resources available per student, it considers the sanctioned and approved intake and not the actual intake. Similarly, in calculating the research paper per faculty member, it considers the number of faculty members required based on the sanctioned intake, assuming faculty-student ratio of 1:15. Roughly, parameters carrying 48 per cent weight are measured using the sanctioned intake. Use of sanctioned intake (and not actual intake) for calculating values of parameters distorts the relative ranking based on the faculty and student scholarship. Perhaps, the assumption behind using the sanctioned intake is that seats in a B-school remain unfilled only because of the lack of interest among students to pursue their education in that B-school. That assumption is not correct for B-schools like IMTG, which is the most sought after B-schools in India.

B-schools like IMTG prefer to retain sanctioned seats in excess of the target intake for future expansion, as AICTE does not sanction additional seats to an existing B-school if, its existing sanctioned intake is 300 or more. AICTE should be liberal in sanctioning additional seats to B-schools in order to reduce the gap between sanctioned intake and actual intake. B-schools will be confident that it will get approval for additional seats if they present their case before AICTE with conviction. AICTE should close B-schools that produce unemployable graduates in order to improve effectiveness of its regulatory and oversight functions.

NIRF does not disclose the exact formulas for calculating scores even after publishing the ranking. NIRF should publish the formulas for the sake of transparency and to help B-schools to check back their own score and improve their performance.

NIRF should review the methodology. NIRF and NBA deserve praise for completing the huge task well in time for consecutive four years. However, the initiative will go waste if the ranking loses credibility among the wider stakeholder groups.



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A ND-NDE

Mohun Bagan in cruise control

Jumps to the top of the table; Real Kashmir fails to fire



No trouble: Mohun Bagan's players, in white, made light of the conditions and Real Kashmir's home advantage in a dominant display on Sunday. **PTI**

I-LEAGUE

UTHRA GANESAN
SRINAGAR

The stands were full and noisy, the queues outside the TRC Turf Ground stretching far and everyone waiting for Real Kashmir FC to get going on Sunday.

It never did. Barring a few isolated attempts at the goal and some desperate shooting and heading, the local favourite in its second home game appeared collectively off-colour against a better-prepared Mohun Bagan. It went down 2-0 for its first loss this year even as the visitor, after complaining about the conditions, the artificial turf and even the practice time, completed a dominant victory to top the I-League table with 10 points from five games.

RKFC so far had managed to get off to good starts this season, stumbling in the second half but managing to get away with draws in its first two games before winning the previous outing

against champion Chennai City FC. On Sunday, the team seemed to have left its plans back in the hotel.

Busy and clueless

Bagan began well, attacking early on and creating quite a few chances but couldn't find a break-through. Between them, Joseba Beitia in the middle and Ashutosh Mehta on the right, kept the RKFC defence busy and clueless. In fact, almost every attack that Bagan mounted had the imprint of one of them.

Despite physical superiority, RKFC appeared lost for possession and space. An on-field scuffle early on did not help matters. Papa Babacar Diawara, Bagan's new Senegalese signing playing his first game, came close to putting it ahead in the 17th minute but, with only the RKFC goalkeeper to beat in front of an empty goal, hit wide.

Kallum Higginbotham was the only RKFC player who appeared to find a way

to push the ball forward but could only find Mason Robertson out of position. When he was in position, Mason ended up heading wide. Danish Farooq was off-target upfront and Subhash Singh had an off-day at the back, Mehta outflanking him at will.

The second half was far more balanced. Coach David Robertson clearly had made himself heard during the break. There were more co-ordinated attempts from RKFC, more passes upfront and more breaking through the middle.

The game opened up and Bazie Armand had the best chance for RKFC in the 50th minute but sent the ball sailing over.

Deadlock broken

Gnohere Krizo came off the bench and tried to leverage his height but found a match in Bagan defender and compatriot Daniel Cyrus. It finally took a Mehta throw-in, headed by Cyrus and volleyed into the net by Beitia to

break the deadlock in the 71st minute.

Three minutes later, substitute P.M. Britto put through Nongdamba Naorem for the team's second goal. RKFC kept trying to pull one back but there appeared no sense of urgency and a complete absence of planning in its shooting.

Robertson later admitted that Bagan managed to fend off the early attacks that RKFC is known for. He added that while his team did grow in the game, Bagan always controlled the proceedings.

The host next plays Punjab FC here in what is likely to be a grudge match after the latter refused to travel last season. It would also be a chance for Robertson's boys to put Sunday's disappointment behind.

The results:

At Srinagar: Real Kashmir FC 0 lost to Mohun Bagan 2 (Joseba Beitia 71, Nongdamba Naorem 74).

At Vasco: Arrows 1 (Vikram Pratap 42) drew with Neroca FC 1 (Meitei 24).

Kashmir grows on Robertson

UTHRA GANESAN
SRINAGAR

For three years, David Robertson has been coming to Srinagar as coach of Real Kashmir. It was like jumping into something completely "raw and unique", he says, coming from the rarefied environs of the English and Scottish Premier Leagues.

Since that first visit in January 2017, when he almost quit and went back, the stays have only become longer to the extent of it becoming a "second home" for the Scot-sman.

"Everything was strange but the owners, Shamim and Sandeep, convinced me to come back and I am glad they did. From a few weeks to a couple of months to almost eight months this time,

it has been increasing and now when I go back, I miss Kashmir," Robertson said in an interaction here.

From winning the Second Division I-League to finishing third in the top flight last season, RKFC has gone from being underdog to contender in just three years. A lot of credit for that, the players feel, goes to the coach who brings a lot of positivity.

Handling turbulence

That positivity, Robertson admitted, was important when it came to handling the players during their recent outings amidst the communication clampdown.

"We had just arrived in Kolkata (for Durand Cup) and weren't sure of how the local players were going to



David Robertson.
NISSAR AHMAD

get there. For the first time in their lives they couldn't contact their homes. They didn't know when they would go back and needed support. I know the Indian culture is of coaches being tough on players but I had to be different and let them know the coach had their back," Robertson explained.

Ankita gears up for season in Australia

Hopes to play all Grand Slams and break into the top 100

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Ankita Raina is off to Australia, to compete in the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Bendigo, and prepare well for the Australian Open in Melbourne.

The country's No. 1 woman singles player, the 26-year-old Ankita, ranked 180 in singles and 170 in doubles, is keen to lift the profile of Indian tennis.

"I hope in future, we take tennis to the next level the way our badminton players have done," she said, when contacted.

It may take some doing and a lot of time to match the spread and progress of Indian badminton, but Ankita is focused on her job, to improve upon the last season.

"I am very happy with what I could do last season. I think it has been one of the best years so far, even though winning the Asian Games medal in 2018 was very special. Last year had its



Ankita Raina.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

own highlights. I think, playing all the four Grand Slams and winning against Grand Slam champion and finalist, Samantha Stosur and Sabine Lisicki is still fresh in my memory," said Ankita.

She has simple goals for the season.

"The goal this year is to play the main draw of all the

four Grand Slams and eventually break into the top 100 in WTA rankings," she said.

Support team

To that end, Ankita has been able to strengthen her team. Yes, she will have a team for the Australian Open.

"I have a good support team this time at the Australian Open. I am grateful that after all these years of struggle of travelling alone, I can finally travel with my team. Coach Hemant sir and Ketan sir, hitting partner, are travelling with me," she said.

Hemant Bendrey has been guiding Ankita for many years while Ketan Dhumal will ensure that she is well prepared for her matches.

Even as she is thankful for the support and guidance, Ankita believes that she needs to believe in herself and her game to get to the next level.

She had closed the season nicely in the professional circuit by winning the singles

title in the \$25,000 event in Solapur.

"Honestly, in the last couple of weeks, I am feeling that it is very close and everything just needs to come together, to click in any of the big events. Now that I have gained all the experience in the pro circuit, I feel one just needs to stay positive regardless of the results and keep working," she said.

Ankita is understandably elated about Sania Mirza returning to the professional circuit after the birth of her son, and into the Indian Fed Cup team.

"Our chances of qualifying in the Fed Cup this time look very high, considering the doubles will be stronger with Sania's come back. She comes with the aura. Everyone is inspired by her. So, her presence will give us an added advantage. Last couple of times, it wasn't easy for us when we were not able to clinch the decider doubles," Ankita recalled.

Soosairaj — a lethal weapon in ATK's armoury

ISL

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

Michael Soosairaj's cartwheel celebration behind the Mumbai City FC goalpost, following his first and ATK FC's second goal in the 2-0 win on Saturday, revealed a lot about the freedom given to the players by chief coach Antonio Habas to express themselves. Coming off the bench in the 34th as replacement for midfielder Pronay Halder, who had scored the opening goal, the 25-year-old showcased his skill with a quality goal.

Talking into the television cameras at the Mumbai Football Arena, Soosairaj was asked about any advice from Habas when the substitution decision was taken. "The coach asked me to focus on my game. He told me my role was to defend, but gave me

the clearance to do what I wanted when I had the ball in front. I scored, we won the match and I am delighted." The win took his team to the top of the ISL table.

Cut, bend, curl

The goal may have been a move played thousands of times in his mind, visualising what he would do with the ball at his feet and having time in the goalmouth to execute the plan. The cartwheel celebration was as instinctive as his scoop to the right corner, turning his body in time to ensure the ball travelled the distance. "I always used to try this in practice. I cut it (the ball), bent it and curled it. It is my favourite style."

There was no way for MCFC captain and custodian Amrinder Singh to read his rival's mind, the next best thing possible was to react,



King Michael! Soosairaj was in the zone as he beat Mumbai City goalkeeper Amrinder Singh hands down. **SPORTZPICS/ISL**

flinging himself across to get his hands behind the ball. However, the ball looped beyond blocking range and lodged gently in the net. The

home team players around Soosairaj were trying to comprehend what had happened even as the goalscorer ran into space behind the post and

took off in celebration.

Since switching from Chennai City FC in the I-League and Jamshedpur FC in the ISL, the midfielder has found a place in 11 games so far this season and has scored twice. He is shaping into another big weapon in an ATK strike force that is sharp and skilful.

The coach focused on what went right on a night of celebration for the travelling ATK fans.

"I am happy with the performance and discipline. I will admit Mumbai (City) had opportunities to score goals in the second 45 minutes, but we created chances as well." Converting the opportunities is what separated ATK from MCFC. Modou Sougu, Mohammed Larbi, Diego Carlos got within sight of target for the hosts, fired wide or into Arindam Bhattacharja under the bar.

All set for KIUG launch

The Games will be held from Feb. 22 to March 1

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

Bhubaneswar is all set to host the first edition of the Khelo India University Games (KIUG) from February 22 to March 1, 2020. The KIIT University will be venue for the event which will feature around 4,000 athletes from 80-100 universities.

The games, organised by the Government of Odisha in association with the Sports Authority of India, Association of Indian Universities, National Sports Federation and Indian Olympic Association (IOA), will witness competitions in 17 disciplines: individual events - archery, athletics, boxing, fencing, judo, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling; Team events: badminton, basketball, football, hockey, table tennis, tennis, volleyball,



Behera. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

rugby and kabaddi.

Odisha has hosted a bunch of big-ticket events in the past few years, including the 2017 Asian athletics championships, 2018 men's hockey World Cup, 2019 Commonwealth table tennis championships and the Hockey Olympic Qualifiers in November 2019.

Ahead of the launch event

on Monday, Odisha's Minister of Sports and Youth Services Tusharkanti Behera said the KIUG will provide a perfect platform for the young athletes to gain National recognition.

"It is an event of a massive scale involving youth and we expect a seamless and successful execution. We are confident that the participants will demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship and return to their States as ambassadors for KIUG and Odisha. We also feel that the athletes who shine here will get a chance to elevate their careers to the next level through recognition and thereby better access to guidance and training," Behera told *The Hindu*.

The Khelo India University Games 2020 will be telecast on Doordarshan.

'Australian Open delay valid if smoke haze worsens'

Bushfires continue to blaze across large sections of the southeast

REUTERS
SYDNEY

World No. 2 Novak Djokovic said he was concerned that smoke might cause some problems at the Australian Open later this month as bushfires continued to blaze across large sections of the southeast on Sunday.

Hundreds of fires in New South Wales and Victoria have killed at least 24 people and destroyed more than 5.25 million hectares (13 million acres) of land over the last few months.

Smoke from the blazes has also resulted in hazardous conditions in Sydney, where the final rounds of the inaugural ATP Cup will take place next weekend, and Melbourne, where the year's first tennis Grand Slam gets underway on Jan. 20.

Seven-time Australian Open champion Djokovic, who is playing in the ATP



Not ideal: Djokovic is worried about the smoke haze affecting the first Grand Slam of the year. **GETTY IMAGES**

Cup, said he hoped the crisis would "dissipate" soon but that an action plan would be needed to avoid any impact on the health of players if it did not.

"If it continues same way and if the quality of air is affected in Melbourne or Syd-

ney, I think Tennis Australia probably will be forced to create some rules about it," he told a Brisbane news conference in the early hours of Sunday morning.

"It's tough for them because ... there's a lot of different things involved. But

health concern is a health concern for me and for anybody."

Disruptions

The smoke has so far caused the most disruption to the sporting calendar in Canberra, where a Twenty20 cricket match was abandoned on Dec. 21 when conditions became too hazardous to continue.

An ATP Challenger/ITF Futures tennis tournament scheduled for next week in the capital was moved to Bendigo, while on Sunday the city's ACT Brumbies rugby team announced they would be moving their pre-season training camp to Newcastle.

The twice Super Rugby champion made the decision after their training ground at the University of Canberra was closed indefinitely "due to hazardous air quality".

'On the right path for Slam glory'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISBANE

Elina Svitolina believes the progress she made in 2019 will help her achieve her ultimate goal of becoming the first Ukrainian woman to win a Grand Slam singles title.

Speaking ahead of the season-opening Brisbane International, the 25-year-old insisted she was ready to take the next step after promising so much over the past five years.

Svitolina has long been touted as a future Major champion, but despite reaching a career-high World ranking of three and winning 13 titles on the WTA tour, until 2019 she had never reached the semifinal stage at a Grand Slam.

However, last year she made the semifinals at both Wimbledon and the US Open and she said this showed she was on the right path.

"Making semifinals definitely brought me the belief



One step further: Svitolina has long been touted as a future Major champion, but only reached the semifinal stage of a Slam in 2019. **GETTY IMAGES**

that I could take one step further," she said.

"I had the chance to play on the biggest stages and that gave me lots of confidence at that particular point."

Svitolina had a mixed year in 2019. Although she also made the decider at November's WTA Finals, where she fell to World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty, she also failed to win a title for the first time since

2012.

"I think maybe 2019 was tough because there were more sad moments, I would say. But also, it's tough to really understand what's going on because the year is very long," she said.

"You have to lose almost every single week, so you have to take lots of positives somehow, and that's, I think, what I learned from the past

year — that you have to stay really positive in even bad moments and try to move forward."

Svitolina has brought former men's number eight Marcos Baghdatis onto her coaching team to assist Andrew Bettles in a bid to give her game an extra dimension.

"As an ex-player, he sees the game from his point and it's something different that I was looking for to add to my game," Svitolina said.

"For sure we improved massively with Andy for the past years I've been working with him and he knows me very, very well.

"(But) for me it's important to add the small things that can improve my game and that's what I'm looking for."

Svitolina, who won the Brisbane title in 2018, will open her 2020 campaign against American Danielle Collins.

TV PICKS

Senior women's T20: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 10.45 a.m.
Ranji trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.15 p.m.
NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m. & 8.30 a.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 1 & ESPN (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m., 7.30 p.m. & 10.30 p.m.
BBL: Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD), 1.30 p.m.
Australia v New Zealand: 3rd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 a.m.
South Africa v England: 2nd Test, 2 p.m.

IN BRIEF



'Fourth-decade' Carter makes NBA history
LOS ANGELES
Evergreen Vince Carter (42) made NBA history when he became the first player to compete in the league in four different decades in Atlanta Hawks' 116-111 victory over Indiana Pacers. He was drafted in 1998 by Toronto Raptors. **AFP**

Akanksha in main draw

SPORTS BUREAU CHANDIGARH
Akanksha Nitture outplayed top seed Karina Rizvanova of Kazakhstan 6-2, 6-0 to make the girls' main draw of the ITF grade-3 junior tennis tournament at the CLTA Complex on Sunday.
The results (qualifying event, third and final round):
Boys: Arnav Pathange bt Heerak Vohra 6-2, 6-0; Sushant Dabas bt Aman Dahiya 7-6 (4), 6-2; Nikita Sidorov (Kaz) bt Sukhpreet Singh Jhoje 6-4, 4-6, [10-6]; Karan Singh bt Yuvan Nandal 5-7, 6-3, [10-5].
Girls: Akanksha Nitture bt Karina Rizvanova (Kaz) 6-2, 6-0; Kanika Sivaraman bt Kavya Khirwar 6-2, 6-2; Lakshanya Vishwanath bt Hannah Nagpal 6-0, 6-2; Harleen Kaur Dhand bt Anjali Maheshkumar 6-2, 6-4.

Narendra, Komal and Jyothi win

SPORTS BUREAU MOODBIDRI
Mangalore's Narendra Prathap Singh, S.S. Pune's Komal Jagadale and Acharya Nagarjuna's Y. Jyothi picked up their second golds in the 80th National inter-university athletics championships here on Sunday.
The results: Men: 5000m: 1. Narendra Prathap Singh (Mangalore) 14:17.77s [**MR**, OR: 14:19.39]; 2. Adesh (Mangalore) 14:30.02; 3. Tadvli Kisan (SS Pune) 14:36.77.**110m hurdles:** 1. Elden Noronha (Mumbai) 14.26s; 2. Debarjun Murmu (Mangalore) 14.40; 3. Ronald Babu (MG, Kottayam) 14.55.
3000m steeple chase: 1. Atul Poonia (Maharaja Ganga Singh, Bikaner) 9:20.03s; 2. Prince Raj Mishra (Lakshmbai National IPE, Gwalior) 9:25.21; 3. Sumit Kumar (Panjab, Chandigarh) 9:28.00.
Women: 5000m: 1. Komal Jagadale (SS Pune) 17:04.13s; 2. K.M. Jyoti (Panjab) 17:04.92; 3. Seema (Punjabi, Patiala) 17:08.03.
100m hurdles: 1. Y. Jyothi (Acharya Nagarjuna, Guntur) 13.03s [**MR**, OR: 13.72]; 3. Sapna Kumari (Vinoba Bhawe, Hazaribag) 13.23; 3. Aparna Roy (Kerala) 13.55.
Javelin: 1. N. Hemamalini (Madras) 48.81m; 2. Monika (Chaudhary Devi Lal, Sirsa) 46.27; 3. Manpreet Kaur (GND, Amritsar) 45.67.
Shot put: 1. Kiran Baliyan (Chaudhary Charan Singh, Meerut) 15.69m; 2. Poorna Raorane (Mumbai) 14.45; 3. Sriшти Vig (Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Rohilkhand, Bareilly) 14.32.
Heptathlon: 1. Sonu Kumari (Lovely Professional, Baghwar) 4640 pts; 2. Rimpy Dabas (Mangalore) 4565; 3. Mariya Thomas (MG, Kottayam) 4492.
Mixed 4x400m relay: 1. Calicut (3:24.65s); 2. Mahatma Gandhi, Kottayam (3:27.94); 3. Punjabi, Patiala (3:28.18).

Delhi snatches crucial first-innings lead

Punjab in a spot of bother, having lost four second-innings wickets

RAKESH RAO
MOHALI

Sunday proved to be an off-day for Punjab and a productive one for Delhi.
The visiting team snatched a slender, but significant 26-run first innings lead and then reduced the host to 44 for four before dark clouds forced a premature end to the third day's play of the Ranji Trophy match at the PCA Stadium here.

Rain forecast

Punjab, just 18 ahead with six wickets in hand, is sure to pray for more intervention from the weather on Monday, when the forecast is for rain after 11 a.m.

In any case, this depleted Delhi side will either get three points for first-innings lead in a drawn encounter or force an outright win, worth a minimum of six points.

Resuming at 266 for four, Delhi surpassed Punjab's 313 with three wickets in hand. Nitish Rana (92, 12x4), like skipper Dhruv Shorey on Saturday, missed a well-deserved century but contributions from Jonty Sidhu (41, 7x4) and Lalit Yadav (39, 6x4) ensured Delhi delivered a psychological blow.

Rana paid the price for playing away from his body and the resultant inside-edge was taken by the wicketkeeper. Sidhu, after looking good for a big knock, was foxed by Arshdeep.

At this stage, Delhi was trailing by 39 runs with four



Rubbing it in: Simarjeet Singh pegged Punjab back, picking up two of the four wickets to fall. ■FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

wickets in hand.
Lalit and Kunwar Bidhuri soothed Delhi's nerves by adding 31 runs before the latter was caught by the lone slip. Soon, Delhi overhauled Punjab's tally when Lalit sent the ball past the point-boundary. Eventually, the 26-run lead was handy for Delhi but the fall of early wickets made it look more than a handful for Punjab.

Like in the first innings, Shubman Gill was caught behind but looked clearly unhappy. Fortunately, he did not confront the umpire, Mo-

hammad Rafi, like he did on Friday though he did have a word with the Delhi fielders before leaving the ground. Replays confirmed Gill had edged the ball.

Sanvir Singh, the other opener, failed again. The flamboyant Gurkeerat Mann holed out at long-off and Anmolpreet Singh was bowled off the fifth delivery he faced.

Now in-form skipper Manddeep Singh, a couple of reliable batsmen and weather stand between Delhi and a possible win on Monday.
The scores:

Punjab — 1st innings: 313.

Delhi — 1st innings: Anuj Rawat c Malhotra b Baltej O, Kunal Chandela c Malhotra b Sanvir 31, Dhruv Shorey c Markande b Pandove 96, Nitish Rana c Malhotra b Baltej 92, Simarjeet Singh lbw b Markande 1, Jonty Sidhu b Arshdeep 41, Lalit Yadav c Malhotra b Arshdeep 39, Kunwar Bidhuri c Lumba b Arshdeep 17, Subodh Bhati lbw b Markande 6, Vikas Mishra b Markande 3, Tejas Baroka (not out) 6; Extras (b-3, lb-3, w-1): 7. Total (in 115.5 overs): 339.

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-64, 3-186, 4-195, 5-257, 6-274, 7-305, 8-330, 9-330.

Punjab bowling: Baltej 25-3-74-2, Arshdeep 26-5-73-3, Sanvir 18-8-40-1, Markande 26.5-4-77-3, Pandove 11-1-37-1, Gurkeerat 9-1-32-0.

Punjab — 2nd innings: Shubman Gill c Rawat b Bhati 4, Sanvir Singh c Rawat b Simarjeet 11, Gurkeerat Mann c Bhati b Simarjeet 15, Mandeeep Singh (batting) 8, Anmolpreet Singh b Bidhuri O, Sharad Lumba (batting) 6; Total (for 4 wkts. in 13 overs): 44.

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-20, 3-37, 4-37.

Delhi bowling: Bhati 5-0-18-1, Simarjeet 6-0-21-2, Bidhuri 1-0-2-1, Mishra 1-0-3-0.

Vijay Shankar — as tough as they come



The guide: Vijay Shankar says that he has learnt a lot from Prasanna. ■AKHILESH KUMAR

RAYAN ROZARIO
KANPUR

Vijay Shankar has seen freak injuries trouble him regularly, but has battled them all with courage, grit and determination. It probably is this remarkable ability to never give up that has made the selectors hand over the captain's armband to him this Ranji season.

“At times, I have [wondered] why God is so harsh on me. It was probably to test me and make me the stronger person that I am today,” he told *The Hindu* in an exclusive chat.

Appreciative of the good times

Lying on the recovery table at frequent intervals can break hearts and careers, but in Vijay Shankar's case it has made him appreciate the good times and make the most of them.

More than anything, he felt that being out of the game was what hurt him the most. “I must have missed a year or so of First Class cricket through injuries. It's a long period, but I have always kept that away and made it a point to come back.”

“I learnt it all from R. Prasanna (current assistant coach). I have seen him play those important knocks early on in my career and I sought his guidance — though the Tamil Nadu squad had some big names in the list,” said Vijay, whose journey with the State squad began eight years ago.

“The other players did outstanding things, but I must admit that it was Prasanna's special contribution

that had an impact on me,” he added.

Vijay Shankar, who has hit five hundreds and 15 half-centuries and averages 46, said he always put the team ahead of himself. “I could have got more 100s, but in many of those matches, I had to bat with the tailenders and try and steer the team home.

“Even last year, when I came straight from New Zealand, I reached at 3.30 in the morning and played the match against Punjab. Tamil Nadu was on the back foot at 50 for four, if I remember right, and I got a 75. Against New Zealand, I chipped in a 45 when the team was struggling at 18 for four.

“These knocks gave me more satisfaction than a century. They are memorable to me and that's why I got to play a few more games for India.”

About the way he likes to go about his business, Vijay Shankar said: “I am one who always wants to make my presence felt. I can change a game even with my fielding and I have done that several times,” he said.

‘Will not change’

He revealed that there were quite a few who had advised him to change his style.

“I will not, because it has given me so much happiness. People may come up with lots of ideas, but my muscle memory is tuned to this. But, if my coach (S. Balaji) feels I need to do something, I may think about it,” he said.

Tough times never last but the tough ones do, as Vijay Shankar keeps proving time and again.

Smashing Blue completes a hat-trick

HYDERABAD: R.H. Sequeira-trained Smashing Blue, ridden by Akshay Kumar, completed a hat-trick by winning the Beyerly Turk Million, the chief event of the races held here on Sunday (Jan. 5). The winner is owned by Mr. Prabhakar Reddy & Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy. Both Akshay and trainer Sequeira scored a treble each.

1. UMRAOLAL GUPTA MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II) (Terms): **COMMITTED WARRIOR** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Belle Springs (I. Chisty) 2, Chuckit (Dashrath Singh) 3 and Look Of Love (P. Trevor) 4. 3/4, 2-1/2 and 1. Im 12.10s. ₹7 (w), 5, 8 and 14 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 24, Q: 27, Tla: 201. Favourite: Committed Warrior. Owners: Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy, Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

2. SUNNY BLOSSOM PLATE (Div. II), (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **KATE** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Explosive (Ashhad Asbar) 2, Red Snapper (Jitendra Singh) 3 and Spunric (B.R. Kumar) 4. 8, 1-1/2 and nk. Im 23.79. ₹8 (w), 6, 9 and 9 (p), SHP: 19, FP: 34, Q: 31, Tla: 149. Favourite: Kate. Owners: M/s. Five Stars Shipping Co. Pvt. Ltd. rep. by M/s. K.N. Dhunjibhoy & Z.K. Dhunjibhoy. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

3. SRI A.S. KRISHNA MEMORIAL CUP (1,600m), 5-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **STAR-STAR** (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Dandy Man (I. Chisty) 2, On My Way (Dashrath Singh) 3 and Balius (Akshay Kumar) 4. 3/4, nk and 2-3/4. Im 38.10s. ₹69 (w), 17, 7 and 17 (p), SHP: 23, FP: 576, Q: 202, Tla: 6,140. Favourite: Balius.

Owners: Ms. Viveka Kumari Idar & Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

4. BYERLY TURK MILLION (1,200m), fillies 3-y-o only (Terms): **SMASHING BLUE** (Akshay Kumar) 1, Akashima (Mukesh Kumar) 2, Southern Princess (Nathan Evans) 3 and Bedford (P. Trevor) 4. Hd, 2-1/4 and 3-1/4. Im 11.46s. ₹11 (w), 5, 9 and 5 (p), SHP: 30, FP: 90, Q: 67, Tla: 234. Favourite: Southern Princess. Owners: Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy & Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

5. TELANGANA AND ANDHRA SUB AREA TROPHY (1,100m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): **HAPPY TOGETHER** (Jitendra Singh) 1, Yours Forever (P. Trevor) 2, Rahil (Ashhad Asbar) 3 and Giethorn (Deepak Singh) 4. Nk, 3 and 1/2. Im 4.73s. ₹87 (w), 13, 6 and 12 (p), SHP: 18, FP: 302, Q: 81, Tla: 1,497. Favourite: Yours Forever. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust rep. by Mr. A.C. Muthiah. Trainer: Satheesh.

6. SUNNY BLOSSOM PLATE (Div. II), (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): **APOLLO** (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Spiritual (P. Trevor) 2, Ice Warrior (Nakhat Singh) 3 and Maxwell (Kuldeep Singh) 4. 4-1/2, shd and 1/2. Im 25.45s. ₹12 (w), 5, 9 and 10 (p), SHP: 26, FP: 52, Q: 35, Tla: 237. Favourite: Apollo. Owners: Mr. Tekula Chandra Reddy & Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey. Trainer: M. Srinivas Reddy.

Jkt: ₹28,267 (11 tkts), Runner-up: 3,919 (34 tkts), Mini Jkt: 19,461 (three tkts), Tr (i): 550 (73 tkts), (ii): 1,303 (64 tkts).

Blasters blow away Hyderabad

ISL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

Kerala Blasters, trailing by a goal, bounced back to thrash Hyderabad FC 5-1 in their ISL match at the Nehru Stadium here on Sunday.

Captain Bartholomew Ogbeche scored twice in the stunning win and the result helped the Kerala side climb from ninth to seventh with 11 points from 11 games.

It was Blasters' second victory in this edition and it ended more than a 75-day wait — the first had come in the season-opener.

Hyderabad remained last with five points from 11. **The result:** Kerala Blasters FC 5 (Bartholomew Ogbeche 33 & 75, Vlatko Drobavov 39, Messi Bouli 45, Seityasen Singh 59) bt Hyderabad FC 1 (Deyvison da Silva 14).

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISBANE

A “near-death” experience off the coast of the Turks and Caicos Islands has given reigning Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka a new perspective heading into the 2020 season.

An upbeat Osaka told reporters ahead of the season-opening Brisbane International that she had tried to have a bit of fun and experience new things during the off-season, which meant her “first vacation ever.”

“It was really fun — my sister was there. She made me paddleboard, and then the current took us and I almost died,” a smiling Osaka said.

Osaka said she and her sister had been in shallow waters but she noticed a current had taken them away from the shore.

Can't swim well

“I'm like, how far out are you trying to take us, because it's

HYDERABAD: Paso Robles, who is in rousing form, may complete a classic double in the Golconda Oaks (2,400m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Monday (Jan. 6).

1. RACE CLUB PLATE (1,100m), 3-y-o only (should have ran at least once and placed 2nd or 3rd not eligible), (Cat. II), (Terms), 1.10 p.m.: 1. Astronaut (I) Ajeeth Kumar 55, 2. Detonator (2) Ashhad Asbar 55, 3. Grand Finale (8) A.A. Vikrant 55, 4. Just Incredible (4) B.R. Kumar 55, 5. Bulls Ace (10) N. Rawal 53.5, 6. City Of Fusion (6) Mukesh Kumar 53.5, 7. Classy Dame (7) Koushik 53.5, 8. Ice Berry (3) Nakhat Singh 53.5, 9. Lacrosse (5) Akshay Kumar 53.5.10. Lady Of War (II) G. Nareesh 53.5 and 11. Turf Winner (9) I. Chisty 53.5.

2. LACROSSE, 2. ASTRONAUT, 3. JUST INCREDIBLE

2. MALAKPET PLATE (Div. I), (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1.40: 1. Loch Stella (9) Nakhat Singh 60, 2. Shivalki Valley (3) Rohit Kumar 59.5, 3. Safra (4) N. Rawal 59, 4. Kimberly Cruise (8) Surya Prakash 57, 5. Flying Queen (2) Irvan Singh 53.5, 6. Hashtag (6) Afroz Khan 53.5, 7. Sree Sree Sree (5) Abhay Singh 52.5, 8. Tremendous Desire (10) Ajeeth Kumar 52.5, 9. Jo Malone (7) Dashrath Singh 51 and 10. Halo Princess (I) G. Nareesh 50.5.

3. SHIVALIK VALLEY, 2. LOCH STELLA, 3. JO MALONE

3. ANMOL RATAN PLATE (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 2.10: 1. One One One (6) Anmol 60, 2. Rapid Fire (8) Abhay Singh 58.5, 3. Lightning Fin (4) Surya Prakash 57, 4. Crim-

RANJI SCORES, ROUND 4, DAY 3

GROUP A
At Hyderabad: Kerala 164 & 204/7 in 78 overs (Rohan Prem 44, Vishnu Vinod 44) vs Hyderabad 228 in 76.5 overs (K. Sunanth 111 n.o., Sandeep Warrier 5/68).
Mohali: Punjab 313 & 44/4 in 13 overs vs Delhi 339 in 115.5 overs (Dhruv Shorey 96, Nitish Rana 92, Jonty Sidhu 41).
Jaipur: Rajasthan 151 & 243/8 in 95.2 overs (Yash Kothari 41, Ashok Menaria 79, Rajesh Bishnoi 49) vs Andhra 257.
Kolkata: Gujarat 169/7 in 65 overs (Priyank Panchal 40, Akash Deep 4/43) vs Bengal.

GROUP B
Vadodara: Baroda 201 & 98 bt Railways 99 & 101 in 25 overs (Lukman Meriwala 6/25).
Points: Baroda: 6 (12), Railways: 0 (10).

Dharamshala: Himachal 175 & 176/3 in 57 overs (Akash Vashist 74 batting, Ankit Kalsi 75 batting) vs Madhya Pradesh 427/9 decl. in 122.4 overs (Rameez Khan 192, Venkatesh Iyer 55, Gautam Raghuvanshi 64, Pankaj Jaiswal 4/106).
Mumbai: Mumbai 194 & 149 in 50 overs (Sarfraz Khan 71 n.o., Prateek Jain 4/11) lost to Karnataka 218 & 129/5 in 24.3 overs (Devdutt Padikkal 50, Shashank Attarde 4/52). **Karnataka 6 (16), Mumbai 0 (6).**

Kanpur: Tamil Nadu 180 in 63.4 overs (V. Ganga Sridhar, Raju 45, L. Suryaparakash 51, Ankit Rajpoot 4/60, Saurabh Kumar 5/44) vs Uttar Pradesh 170/9 in 66 overs (Mohammad Saif 77).
Group C
Ranchi: Jharkhand 259 & 103/4 in 28 overs vs Jammu & Kashmir 441 in 87.4 overs (Suryansh Raina 76, Shubham Pundir 56, Abdul Samad 128, Abid Mush-taq 50 n.o.).

New Delhi: Maharashtra 44 & 147 in 48.1 overs (Naushad

Shaikh 41, Diwesh Pathania 5/49, Sachidanand Pandey 5/56) lost to Services 285. Services 7 (14), Maharashtra 0 (3).

Dehradun: Assam 294 bt Uttarakhand 121 in 42 overs (Mayank Mishra 52, Ranjeet Mali 6/24) & 83 in 35.2 overs (Unmukt Chand 41, Ranjeet Mali 4/27, Mukhtar Hussain 6/15). **Assam 7 (11), Uttarakhand 0 (0).**

Raipur: Haryana 123 & 258 in 72.4 overs (Ankit Kumar 41, Shivam Chauhan 42, Nitin Saini 55, Veer Pratap Singh 4/49) vs Chhattisgarh 119 & 33/3 in 13 overs.

Agartala: Tripura 288/6 decl. in 82 overs (Samrat Singha 65, Milind Kumar 105 n.o., Manisankar Muringish 72) vs Odisha 5/0 in 4 overs. **Toss:** Odisha.



PLATE
Patna: Mizoram 378 & 68 in 31.4 overs (K.B. Pawan 46, Abhijeet Saket 7/12) lost to Bihar 262 in 66 overs (Babul Kumar 85, MD Rahmatullah 58, Taruwar Iyer 55, Gautam Raghuvanshi 64, Pankaj Jaiswal 4/106).

Kohli 5/78, Bobby Zothersanga 4/92 & 188/4 in 32.4 overs (Indrajit Kumar 98 n.o., Babul Kumar 61). Bihar 6 (8), Mizoram 0 (3).
Porvorim: Manipur 106 & 88 in 42.4 overs (Amit Verma 6/52) lost to Goa 553/5 decl. Goa 7 (23), Manipur 0 (12).

Mangalodi: Meghalaya 65 & 63 in 26 overs (Vinay Kumar 5/27, Ashith Rajiv 4/5, incl. a hat-trick) lost to Pondicherry 80 & 49/5 in 12.3 overs. **Pondicherry 6 (27), Meghalaya 0 (6).**

Sovima: Chandigarh 400/6 decl. in 70.3 overs (Arslan Khan 87, Manan Vohra 121, Raman Bishnoi 100, Bipul Sharma 50 n.o., Nagaho Chishi 5/80) vs Nagaland.

Bhubaneswar: Sikkim 274/6 in 68 overs (Yunachal Singh 118 batting) vs Arunachal Pradesh. **Toss:** Arunachal Pradesh.

Paso Robles, in rousing form, may complete classic double

son Fire (I) B.R. Kumar 55, 5. Heavy Gan Wait (10) Afroz Khan 54, 6. Linewiler (II) G. Nareesh 54, 7. Royal Green (3) Irvan Singh 53.5, 8. Avantiika (9) B.R. Kumar 53, 9. Kingswood (2) Ashhad Asbar 52.5, 10. Marvel Princess (5) Santosh Raj 52.5 and 11. Tokyo Jam (7) Akshay Kumar 52.5.

1. LIGHTNING FIN, 2. RAPID FIRE, 3. TOKYO JAM

4. DYNAMIC DANCER PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.45: 1. Gorgeous Lady (8) Akshay Kumar 60, 2. Hurricane (II) Abhay Singh 60, 3. Ta Ta (10) Gaddam 60, 4. Soul Empress (6) Irvan Singh 59, 5. Desert Moon (7) Kuldeep Singh 58, 6. Story Teller (I) Jitendra Singh 56.5, 7. Brush The Sky (4) Ajeeth Kumar 55.5, 8. Alexander-thegreat (9) Mukesh Kumar 54.5, 9. Semira (2) Aneel 54.5, 10. Secretary (12) Dashrath Singh 52, 11. Patron Saint (3) Santosh Raj 51 and 12. Invasion (5) Ajit Singh 50.5.

1. GORGEOUS LADY, 2. SOUL EMPRESS, 3. HURRICANE

5. RAJA SITHARAM BHUPAL OF DOMAKUPA SAMASTHAN MEMORIAL CUP (1,400m), 4-y-o & over (Cat. II), (Terms), 3.15: 1. Titus (8) Deepak Singh 61.5, 2. Magical Skill (3) B.R. Kumar 59.5, 3. Nayadeep (II) Irvan Singh 59.5, 4. Be Sure (4) Nakhat Singh 58, 5. Champion Bull (6) G. Nareesh 57.5, 6. Victory Parade (5) Akshay Kumar 57.5, 7. Air Strike (7) Mukesh Kumar 54.5 and 8. Rikki Tikki Tavi (2) Gaddam 54.5.

1. VICTORY PARADE, 2. RIKKI TIKKI TAVI, 3. NAYADEEP

6. MALAKPET PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.45: 1. Mystery

(9) Suraj Narreddy 60, 2. Incredible (1) Akshay Kumar 59.5, 3. Wah Ms Zara (3) Ashhad Asbar 58, 4. Aliston (4) I. Chisty 57, 5. Star Racer (7) Mukesh Kumar 55.5, 6. Bar Et Law (6) Koushik 53.5, 7. Sweet Brandy (8) Afroz Khan 53, 8. Tammana (5) Dashrath Singh 52 and 9. Speed Warrior (2) C.P. Bopanna 51.

1. INCREDULOUS, 2. MYSTERY, 3. BAR ET LAW

7. GOLCONDA OAKS (2,400m), fillies 4-y-o only (Terms), 4.15: 1. Artistry (4) Akshay Kumar 57, 2. Cape Kidnappers (I) P. Trevor 57, 3. Flamboyant Lady (3) Nakhat Singh 57, 4. Nekhbet (5) Leigh Roche 57 and 5. Paso Robles (2) Suraj Narreddy 57.

1. PASO ROBLES, 2. CAPE KIDNAPPERS

8. DYNAMIC DANCER PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.45: 1. Humaghar (5) Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. Royal Dynamite (II) Ajit Singh 60, 3. Human Touch (10) Akshay Kumar 59