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NEARBY



Delhi Cabinet clears CCTV project

NEW DELHI

Three years after it gave in-principle approval to the project, the Delhi Cabinet on Friday passed the proposal for installation of 1.4 lakh CCTV cameras at a cost of ₹571.40 crore.

DELHI METRO ▸ PAGE 1

Ground Zero

The Andaman's new colonisers

The Indian bull frog, a recent arrival from the mainland, is steadily occupying the island ecosystem and threatening the local economy with its exploding population. A report on the bizarre man-frog conflict in the Andaman islands.

OP-ED PAGE

DELHI METRO ▸ 6 PAGES

Heavy flooding puts Kerala in crisis

Red alert sounded in eight districts following rain warning; heavy discharge from Idukki; toll rises to 27

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Many parts of Kerala were grappling with a looming crisis on Friday as a heavy rainfall warning and tidal flooding alert looked set to compound the worsening flood situation in the State.

The State Disaster Management Authority issued a red alert for eight districts following a heavy rainfall warning by the weather office.

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services has also issued a tidal flooding alert for Kerala from August 11 to 15.

Evacuation planned

Idukki and Ernakulam districts were put on high alert and the administration began preparations to evacuate families in anticipation of a flood situation following the decision to raise the shutters of the Cheruthoni dam to release excess water from the Idukki reservoir.

Over 6,500 families were expected to be evacuated from the downstream areas of the Periyar river up to Aluva in Ernakulam.

Five people were reported dead in rain-related incidents on Friday, taking the toll to 27. More than 17,000 people across the State have been displaced by floods over two days since the monsoon rains intensified. Rescue teams, including units of the Army, the Navy and the National Disaster Response Force dug through soil and rubble in an attempt to save the victims of landslips. and officials began evacuation of families as swollen rivers breached banks and floodwaters surged through houses.

The Centre reached out to Kerala, offering a helping hand to tackle the situation.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh called up Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and assured him all help.

"Spoke to Kerala CM Shri Pinarayi Vijayan and discussed the prevailing flood situation in the State. I have assured all possible assistance from the Centre to the State government. The relief and rescue ops are going on. MHA is closely monitoring the flood situation," he later tweeted.

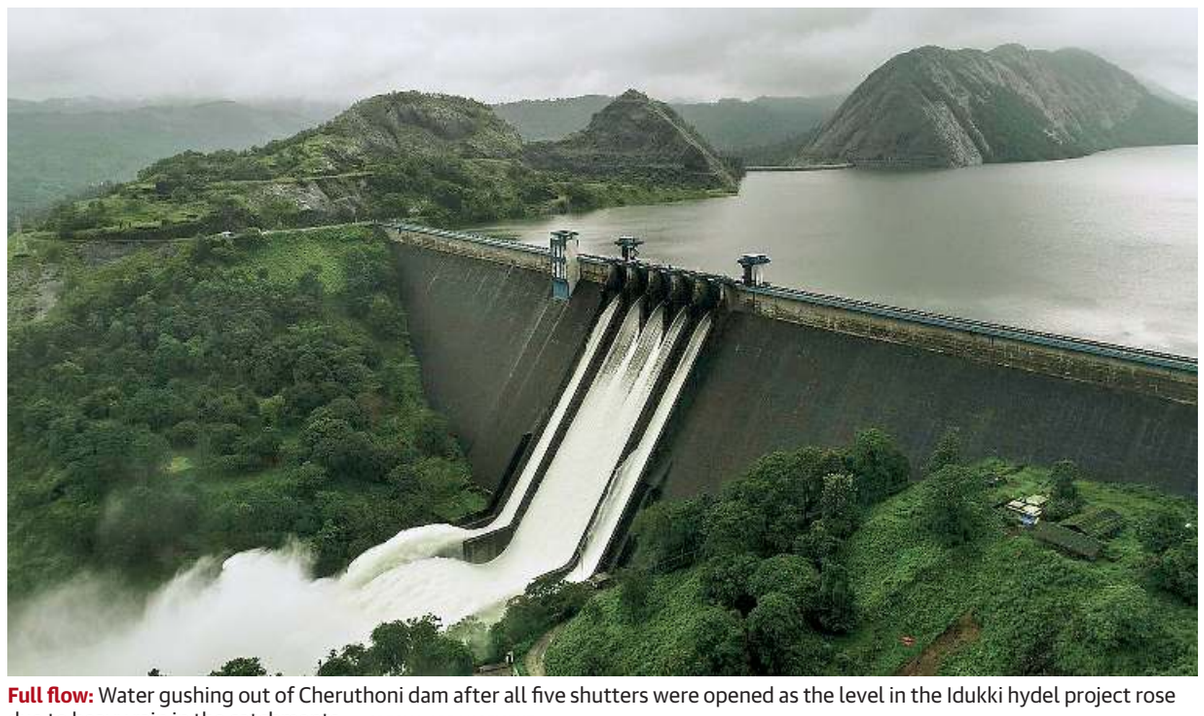
Aerial survey

The Chief Minister is scheduled to make an aerial survey of the flood-hit areas on Saturday.

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have offered assistance, with the Chief Ministers of these States donating ₹5 crore and ₹10 crore respectively for flood relief work.

Chief Secretary Tom Jose said units of the Army, the Navy and the NDRF were assisting the civilian administration in rescue work and restoration of roads blocked by landslips. "Things are well under control. The government is on top of the situation," he said at a press conference. The Air Force and the Coast Guard were on standby.

IDUKKI STILL ON ALERT; LANDSLIPS CONTINUE ▸ PAGE 4



Full flow: Water gushing out of Cheruthoni dam after all five shutters were opened as the level in the Idukki hydel project rose due to heavy rain in the catchments. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A-G lashes out at riots, intolerance

Highlights violence before SC Bench

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

In an uncharacteristic public criticism of growing violence, intolerance and rioting in the country, Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal told the Supreme Court on Friday that there was an incident of major rioting every week in the country.

Appearing before a three-judge Bench, led by CJI Dipak Misra, Mr. Venugopal pointed to how a certain "group" threatened to cut off the nose of actor Deepika Padukone for her portrayal of Queen Padmavati in the movie *Padmaavat*. He said the threat amounted to hate speech and criminal intimidation. "What has been done to that person [who threatened Ms. Padukone]?" Mr. Venugopal said. He referred to how the Kanwariyas had overturned cars in the capital. "It took five hours from Benares [Varanasi] to Allahabad. Half of the national highway was cordoned off because of them," Justice D.Y. Chandrachud remarked.

"There is an incident of major rioting every week, even by educated groups...The Marathas in Maharashtra, the SCs/STs... Nothing is done," Mr. Venugopal said.

> **There is an incident of major rioting every week, even by educated groups. The Marathas in Maharashtra, the SCs/STs... Nothing is done**
> – K.K. VENUGOPAL, Attorney-General



"What is to be done," CJI Misra asked Mr. Venugopal.

"Fix responsibility on someone! Once the responsibility is fixed on the Superintendent of Police of each district, the scenario will change. The courts can haul him up, ask him to show the videos of the incident, ask him how many FIRs have been filed," Mr. Venugopal said. "You cannot touch third-party property... for that matter, you cannot burn your own house... these happenings must stop," Chief Justice Misra observed orally.

The court was hearing a plea by the Kerala-based Kodungallur Film Society which said "common people think anarchy prevails" in the country.

'Rajiv case convicts can't be freed'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday accepted on record a communication from the Centre rejecting the Tamil Nadu government's proposal to release seven convicts undergoing life imprisonment in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

A Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi, Navin Sinha and K.M. Joseph received the letter dated April 2018.

The assassination was an act unparalleled in the annals of crime in this country, the Centre has told the T.N. government. "The brutal act brought the Indian democratic process to a grinding halt, in as much as the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in some States had to be postponed."

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Cong. ups the ante against Rafale deal

Opposition led by Sonia Gandhi stages protest, demands a JPC investigation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

On the last day of the monsoon session of Parliament, the Congress stepped up its offensive against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government over the Rafale deal, with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi leading a joint Opposition protest at the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex.

The decision to hold a protest followed a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party on Friday morning, chaired by Ms. Gandhi.

To be intensified

It was decided to scale up the campaign as one of the "biggest cases of corruption of the Modi government."

Ms. Gandhi, along with Opposition MPs, including Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Ambika Soni, and the CPI's D. Raja among others, staged the protest demanding a probe by a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) into the deal.

While the Rajya Sabha witnessed repeated adjournments over the issue, in the Lok Sabha the Congress members walked out after raising slogans demanding a JPC probe.

At a public meeting in Raipur, Congress president Rahul Gandhi called the deal the "biggest ever scam."

"The UPA government had readied the Rafale contract, according to which the price for each jet was approximately ₹540 crore. The contract was ready and Modi ji only had to take a decision. But, Modi ji goes to France and scraps the previous contract and the Defence Minister and other Cabinet Ministers do not know about it," Mr. Gandhi said.

In the Lok Sabha, Congress MPs trooped into the well of the House raising slogans and holding placards that read 'Modi's Rafale Gate' and 'Set up JPC.'

While leader of the Congress Mallikarjun Kharge called it a "scam worth thousands of crores," party colleague Sunil Jakhar surprised everyone with his proposal.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8



At the forefront: Sonia Gandhi leading a protest in Parliament for a JPC probe into the Rafale deal. ▪ SANDEEP SAXENA

Supreme Court admits CBI plea against Talwars

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday admitted the appeal filed by the CBI against the acquittal of Rajesh and Nupur Talwar in the murder of their teenage daughter, Aarushi, and domestic servant, Hemraj, in 2008.

Aarushi was found with her throat slit in her bedroom and Hemraj's body was found on the terrace of the dentist couple's home a day later.

Hemraj's wife Khumkala Banjade has already appealed against the acquittal by the Allahabad High Court and the Supreme Court has admitted it.

A Bench led by Justice Ranjan Gogoi tagged the CBI appeal with Ms. Banjade's. The CBI has said the High Court erred on many counts.

The High Court had cleared the Talwars of any guilt or involvement in the crimes. In a judgment delivered in October last year, it set aside the life sentence awarded to the couple by the CBI court at Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, in November 2013.

The Talwars had by then served four years of their life sentence in Ghaziabad's Dasna jail. Ms. Banjade filed her appeal against the Talwars' acquittal last December. The CBI appealed in March.

Explosives seized from Sanatan man

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Maharashta Anti-Terrorism Squad on Friday arrested three men for allegedly planning disruptive activities in the State.

They are Vaibav Raut, 40, and Sharad Kalaskar, 25, from Nallasopara, and Sudhanwa Gondhalekar, 39, from Pune. Explosives were seized from the house of Mr. Raut, an alleged member of the Sanatan Sanstha. An ATS officer said the accused were held after tracking two mobile numbers of people "involved" in the planning.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Runners to the rescue in Meghalaya bypoll

In Ranikor Assembly constituency, athletes will sprint to officials with messages

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The runners are back in Meghalaya in strength after more than a century – not to deliver letters like their predecessors, but to relay messages to and from polling booths.

Ranikor, in South West Khasi Hills district, is one of two Assembly constituencies where by-elections are scheduled for August 23. The other is South Tura in West Garo Hills district. Ranikor has hilly pockets that have no road or mobile phone connectivity. This prompted the Election Commission to go back to the era when the postal department employed runners to deliver mails. Mail runners became redundant after the advent of the railways in the 19th century, but continued to work in far-flung areas. They were immortalised by Bengali poet Sukanta Bhattacharya in the early 20th century, while Tamil actor-producer Ram Arun Castro played a mail runner in *Oattathoodhuvan-1854* (The Mail Runner) in 2015.



ILLUSTRATION: SATHEESH VELLINEZHI

Local athletes picked

"The district authorities identified 15 strong young people to transmit the messages, which in turn would be communicated to the returning officer and election officials," Frederick Roy Kharkongor, Chief Electoral Officer, said.

Mr. Kharkongor said there are five polling stations in Ranikor perched on remote hills. One has to walk over 45 km to reach the farthest stations. The poll messengers must walk briskly or run several times in a day.

The runners have thus been chosen from among youth who take part in local fitness contests.

"Each runner will be paid an honorarium on a par with polling officials. The decision to employ them was taken when ideas were discussed on how best to cover remote centres," Mr. Kharkongor said.

"Runners were chosen for the February Assembly polls too, but they were not really used because it was winter and mobile phone connectivity was better. "The connectivity is poor now due to rain. The area has historically produced the best sprinters in Meghalaya," he said.

The by-election to Ranikor, with 26,880 voters, was necessitated after five-time winner Martin M. Danggo of the Congress resigned in June.

South Tura fell vacant when NPP's Agatha Sangma resigned to help her brother and Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma get elected to the Assembly.

Six-year-old raped inside school

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by an electrician inside the school premises in New Delhi district, the police said on Friday. The accused has been arrested.

The victim is a Class II student of a government school in central Delhi.

DETAILS ▸ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

Rohtak killing: parents held

STAFF REPORTER
GURUGRAM

The police on Friday arrested the biological and foster parents of the minor girl, who was shot dead along with Haryana Police SI Narender Kumar in Rohtak on Wednesday, in connection with the murders.

DETAILS ▸ DELHI METRO PAGE 1

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DELHI Timings

SATURDAY, AUG. 11				
RISE	05:48	SET	19:04	
RISE	05:24	SET	19:12	
SUNDAY, AUG. 12				
RISE	05:49	SET	19:04	
RISE	06:33	SET	20:00	
MONDAY, AUG. 13				
RISE	05:49	SET	19:03	
RISE	07:41	SET	20:43	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	28
Safdarjang	36	28
Palam	35	28

Delhi Palam Today
34°C Moderate rain or thundershowers are expected. The sky will remain cloudy. Morning will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
33°C Light rain is likely. Light breeze is expected. The morning will be warm with a cloudy sky.

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HC notices on PIL against 'Gaurav Yatra'

Plea seeks to insulate govt. departments from party march

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court on Friday issued notices to the State government and BJP State president Madan Lal Saini on a public interest litigation raising questions over the expenses incurred on Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's ongoing 'Gaurav Yatra'. BJP president Amit Shah had flagged off the yatra from Charbhuja temple in Rajsamand on August 4.

The petition, moved by lawyer Vibhuti Bhushan Sharma, has contended that since the 'Gaurav Yatra' was an initiative of the ruling BJP ahead of the State Assembly elections, no orders could be issued to the government departments to make arrangements for the march.

The State government had ordered the Public Works Department on August 1 to make arrangements for setting up the stage, sound system and decoration for the yatra by inviting tenders for these works. The Information and Public Relations Department was also handed over the task of giving publicity to the yatra.



Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje at the 'Gaurav Yatra' in Sanwaliyaji near Chittorgarh on Friday. ▪ PTI

A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Pradeep Nandrajog asked the government counsel as to who was footing the bill for the yatra and issued notices to the respondents seeking their reply by August 16. The counsel representing the Chief Secretary and PWD informed the court that the impugned orders had since been withdrawn.

The writ petition has named the Chief Secretary, PWD Principal Secretary and Chief Engineer and Mr. Saini as respondents. It said the yatra could not be described as a part of the government's functioning, as the BJP itself had announced that its election campaign had started with the launch of the march.

Hooda accuses Haryana govt. of ignoring farmers

Policies of the BJP have ruined them, says the ex-CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Friday accused the ruling BJP government in the State of ignoring the interests of farmers and other sections of society.

"Farmers in the State are not even getting half the value for their crops that they got during the Congress regime. The policies of the BJP have ruined the farmers. Their claims to have implemented the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission report and that farmers were being given 50% profit is far from the truth," said Mr. Hooda at a press conference.

Mr. Hooda said the recently announced minimum support price for crops by the Centre was based only on part of the input costs, not comprehensive costs as suggested by the Swaminathan Commission. "Vegetable farmers are in distress as they have been forced to sell their produce at throwaway prices," he alleged.



Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda addressing supporters during a Jan Kranti Yatra. ▪ FILE PHOTO

'No jobs for youths'

The Congress leader alleged that the State government has also failed to deliver on its promise made to the youth. "The youth are not able to find employment under the current regime. The law and order situation has also worsened," he said.

"The BJP has failed to fulfil even a single promise that it made during the Assembly elections three and a half years ago. Farmers, government employees, traders and youth, all are suffering due to the anti-people policies of the BJP," he said.

Mr. Hooda said he would be launching the fifth phase of his 'Jan Kranti Yatra' from Mahendergarh on August 12.

Madrasas told to take out I-Day processions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Madarsa Board has asked 2,700 madrasas affiliated to it to organise "Paigam-e-Mohabbat" (message of love) processions on Independence Day.

"Madrasas have been asked to take out these processions in 50 out of 51 districts on Independence Day," Board chairman Syed Imad Uddin said. The initiative is aimed at encouraging inter-faith mingling, he said.

He has issued a directive that madrasas should hoist the national flag and merge the Paigam-e-Mohabbat event with Tiranga (the tricolour) rallies taken out by various organisations on August 15, he said.

If no such rallies are planned, madrasas in respective places should take out their own Paigam-e-Mohabbat procession, Mr. Imad Uddin said.

SC seeks U.P. govt.'s response

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the Uttar Pradesh government on a plea filed by jailed Dalit leader and Bhim Army founder Chandrashekhar Azad challenging his detention under stringent provisions of the National Security Act .

Azad alias Ravan is in jail after his arrest in June 2017 for his alleged role in the Saharanpur riots.

The NSA provisions were invoked against the leader almost six months after his arrest.

he PRB Act).

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Compensation enhanced for Kandhamal 'encounter' victims

Five villagers were killed in firing by security forces in July 2016 in the district

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Human Rights Commission has directed the State government to enhance compensation for the next of kin of five villagers killed in firing by security forces in Gumudumaha village of Kandhamal district.

Six human rights activists had moved the OHRC alleging that five innocent villagers had fallen to indiscriminate firing by security forces and it was a fake encounter.

Twelve persons were returning to the village in an autorickshaw after collecting their MGNREGS wages around 8 p.m. on July 8, 2016 when they came under heavy fire.

The petitioners had demanded ₹25 lakh each for family members of the deceased and ₹10 lakh to each injured and pleaded for stringent action against the security personnel involved in the firing.



A protest against the killing in Bhubaneswar . ▪ FILE PHOTO

"Every citizen has a fundamental right to live and personal liberty guaranteed under the Constitution is to be protected. Violation of human rights appears tell-tale in the facts and circumstances of this case," OHRC Acting Chairperson Justice B.K. Mishra said.

The OHRC observed that the poor tribals in the autorickshaw injured in the firing were left unattended by the paramilitary forces involved in combing operations.

"No immediate medical care and treatment was provided to the injured persons and there was inordinate delay. Had the persons, who sustained bullet injuries, been immediately rescued and shifted to the hospital, such a large number of casualties probably would not have occurred," the commission observed.

The commission recommended that the State government pay ₹2 lakh in addition to the ₹7 lakh sanctioned to each of the next of kin of the deceased. It also directed that the injured persons should be paid ₹50,000 over and above the ₹50,000 which has been paid to them.

The rights panel directed the government to pay the enhanced amount within two months.

Man held on paedophilia charge

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

A 65-year-old man allegedly involved in the sexual exploitation of an eight-year-old boy was arrested by the police in Berhampur on Friday. Identified as Kotni Suresh, the accused is a trader in plastic goods at Patara Street under the Badabazar police station limits.

When locals came to know about his alleged misdeed, he attempted suicide on July 26 by consuming phenyl and had to be admitted to a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. He was brought back to Berhampur and arrested, police sources said. On Friday, the accused was taken to MKCG Medical College and Hospital for tests. He was then produced in a court, where his bail plea was rejected.

Three-year RI for Odisha IAS officer

On charges of financial irregularities

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

A local vigilance court on Friday sentenced Vinod Kumar, a senior Odisha-cadre IAS officer, to three years of rigorous imprisonment in connection with a corruption case.

The Special Judge (Vigilance), Bhubaneswar, had on July 3 convicted Kumar, the former managing director of Odisha Rural Housing Development Corporation, and five others on charges of committing financial irregularities.

As five of the six convicts including the bureaucrat were not present, the court had issued non-bailable warrants against them.

Subsequently, Kumar moved the Orissa High Court seeking bail. While granting bail, the high court directed him to surrender before the trial court for hearing of sentences.

After the 1989-batch IAS officer and Purna Chandra Das, then executive director of ORHDC, surrendered before the vigilance court on Friday, it sentenced them to undergo rigorous imprisonment for three years and to pay a fine of ₹25,000 each for the offence under Section 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act and Sections 420 and 120B of the IPC.

Probe ordered into death of 5 workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHILLONG

The Meghalaya Human Rights Commission (MHRC) on Friday directed Chief Secretary Y. Tsering to institute a high-level inquiry into the electrocution of five men at North Garo Hills district, an official statement said.

Five labourers were killed last month when a cement-mixing machine at a road construction site came in touch with a low-lying high-tension wire at Miapara village of the district.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the case, the commission asked the Chief Secretary to carry out an investigation into the July 25 incident, the statement said.

Inquiry mooted

"A high-level inquiry needs to be conducted to unearth the actual truth about the incident. The investigation should be conducted by an officer not lower than the rank of secretary," commission Secretary Aldous Mawlong stated in the order, adding that the probe report should be submitted to MHRC in 45 days.

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IN BRIEF



E.P. Jayarajan set to return to Kerala Cabinet

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala CPI(M) leadership has decided to re-induct party Central committee member E.P. Jayarajan into the Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet, raising the possibility of his becoming the number two in the LDF government. The CPI(M) State committee took the formal decision to bring back Mr. Jayarajan, who had resigned over nepotism charges, at a meeting here on Friday.

GST on Haj pilgrimage unfortunate: A.P. CM

VIJAYAWADA

Describing the Goods and Services Tax on Haj as unfortunate, A.P. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu assured pilgrims that the State government would "fight with the Centre to do away with the GST". He flagged off five buses of the first batch of Haj pilgrims at Undavalli near here on Friday. He said 1,247 men and 1,101 women from the State were going on the Haj. Two month-old Lukhman of Anantapur and 77-year-old Sayyed Salimabi of Amaravati are among the Haj pilgrims.

Four ships under probe in ship-boat collision case

KOCHI

Four batches of surveyors are investigating the case in which a merchant vessel rammed a fishing boat Oceanic off Munambam on August 7. Three fishermen were killed in the collision and nine are still missing. Authorities are yet to identify the vessel. "These were the four ships in the vicinity of the fishing boat at the time of the accident. So, we have sent Mercantile Marine Department officials to examine each," Malini V. Shankar, Director General of Shipping, said.

Idukki still on alert; landslips continue

Four additional teams of the National Disaster Response Force airlifted from Guntur and Arakkonam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

As the flood situation worsened in Kerala on Friday, the Kakkayam dam site in Kozhikode was cut off after the approach road was washed away in the floods. Idukki district remained on alert following a series of landslips in the hilly areas. The Idukki District Collector imposed a ban on tourism activities and the movement of heavy goods vehicles till further notice. Landslips occurred at many places in Wayanad and Malappuram also.

Though the rains tapered off in the midlands, the looming threat of flash floods kept citizens on edge through the day. Emergency response teams were on standby and four additional teams of the National Disaster Response Force were airlifted from Guntur and Arakkonam to assist the Ernakulam district administration.

The government has also made arrangements for diversion of air traffic from the Nedumbassery airport in Ernakulam in the event of floodwaters entering the runway.

Revenue Minister E. Chandrasekharan who convened a review meeting at Aluva earlier in the day said the State government would apprise the Central team of the gravity of the situation and request emergency assistance to tide over the crisis.

Aerial survey

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who spoke to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday, is expected to undertake an aerial survey of Kerala's flood-affected districts on Sunday.

The Centre has assured the State of help in rescue and relief operations.







Monsoon woes: (Cockwise from top) Water from the Cheruthoni dam reaching the town in Idukki district; residents shifting their belongings at Shanguvaramedu in Palakkad and an aerial view of the flooded Aluva town, where the Periyar river is in spate, on Friday. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, K.K. MUSTAFAH & PTI

We averted a possible debacle: ISRO chairman

'Decision to recall GSAT-11 justified'

MADHUMATHI D.S.
BENGALURU

Indian Space Research Organisation could have faced a ₹1200-crore debacle in space had it not brought GSAT-11 back from the Guiana launch port in late April, its Chairman K. Sivan said on Friday.

Speaking for the first time on issues raised about the 5,700-kg high throughput satellite, he justified ISRO's unprecedented decision to recall the satellite midway between its reaching the French port and the launch.

Dr. Sivan said an apex committee of former chairmen and former space commission members collectively decided to bring GSAT-11 back to Bengaluru for a thorough check.

'A wise decision'

"There is ₹1,200 crore at stake as costs of the satellite and the launch, apart from India's reputation. We cannot afford to take risks in such a high profile mission. We did lose our place in the launch queue when we brought our satellite back. But it turned out to be a wise decision. GSAT-11 had the same set of power system configuration that two older satellites had. RISAT-1 died prematurely and GSAT-6A lost communication contact soon after launch on March 29 because of suspected power system failure, harnesses etc... We had just sent GSAT-11 [to Guiana] and no one was sure if the same issue was there in GSAT-11," he said.

Checks found that the provision or "margin" for the deployment of the solar



K. Sivan

panel was much smaller than was required. "Had it gone to space, the panel [which generates power for the 15-year life] would not have deployed in space. The satellite would be a failure."

Denies pressure

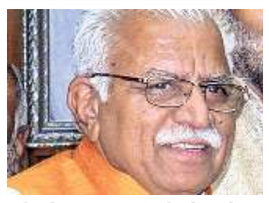
Contrary to a few reports, there was no pressure on ISRO nor were the two new launches a *quid pro quo* for taking GSAT-11 to space, he said. GSAT-31 and 30 would be signed this month only because launches with Arianespace must be committed four months before launch date that ISRO sought – before December 15 – he said.

The national space agency had envisioned that its two GSLV rockets would fully take over geostationary orbit launches and that GSAT-11 – its heaviest to date and most ambitious for digital communication – would be its last satellite to go outside India for a launch.

But early this year, it realised that upgrading a GSLV-Mk2 engine would need more time. The bigger Mark 3 was also not available in time. "We already knew that we have to look for outside launch again for these two satellites," Dr. Sivan said.

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IN BRIEF



Disclose assets in bank lockers: M.L. Khattar

CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has come up with a suggestion that disclosing of valuable assets kept in lockers of the banks be made mandatory. "... This would be consistent with Centre's drive to curb black money," he said.

HC extends bail period of Lalu Prasad till Aug. 20

RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday extended the provisional bail period of RJD chief Lalu Prasad, convicted in four fodder scam cases, till August 20 on medical grounds. The period was extended by Justice Apresh Kumar Singh. PTI

Bill to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce

NEW DELHI

The Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday seeks to strike down leprosy as a ground for seeking divorce. The bill was introduced by Minister of State for Law P.P. Chaudhary. PTI

Ministry may reconsider conducting NEET twice

NEW DELHI

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry may reconsider its decision to conduct medical entrance exam NEET twice a year, following recommendations from the Health Ministry. According to sources, the Health Ministry has raised concerns on conducting NEET twice a year. PTI

Naxals torch five empty trucks in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR

A group of Naxals allegedly set ablaze five empty trucks in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh early on Friday, police said. With this, Maoists have so far torched at least nine vehicles in the last three days in in Dantewada. PTI

Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve enters UNESCO list

11 Indian reserves now listed in World Network of Biosphere Reserves

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve (KBR) of Sikkim, the highest biosphere reserve in the country that includes the third highest mountain peak in the world, Kanchenjunga (8,586 m), has been included in the UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WHBR).

The decision was taken at the International Coordinating Council of Man and Biosphere Reserve Programme, UNESCO, in its 30th Session held at Palembang, Indonesia, last month, a press release by Ministry of Environment and Forest and Climate Change said.

With the inclusion of the KBR, one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1,220 m to 8,586 m above sea level, the number of biosphere reserves from the country included in World Network of Biosphere Reserves has increased to 11.

The last biosphere reserve to be included was the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve in Kerala in 2016. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve was the first reserve from the country to be included in the WNBR. India has 18 biospheres reserves, of which 11 have been included in the WNBR.



The Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain peak in the world. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Boost to research

C.S. Rao, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Sikkim, said the inclusion of the KBR in the UNESCO list will boost the unique ecosystem of Sikkim on two counts: collaborative research and tourism.

"This development will boost international research collaboration relating to flora, fauna and ecosystem of the KBR. Sikkim, with a population of about 6 lakh, gets15 lakh tourists annually. This will help us get more tourists," Mr. Rao said.

Explaining, the importance of the KBR for Sikkim, he said the biosphere reserve comprises 41% of the entire geographical area of the mountain State. "Of the 2,931 sq km area of the KBR, 1,784 sq km is the core area of the biosphere sphere, 835 sq km buffer area and 311 sq km comprises transition area between habitation and the biosphere reserve," Mr. Rao said.

The Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP), which comprises the core area of the KBR, was inscribed as India's first "Mixed World Heritage Site" on July 17, 2016. Eighty six per cent of the core lies in the Alpine zone and the remaining portions are located in the Himalayan wet temperate and sub tropical moist deciduous forest.

Biodiversity hotspot

The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve is one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots that has good species diversity with high levels of endemism, with many mountains, peaks, lakes, caves, rocks, stupas (shrines) and hot springs.

According to the Sikkim Forest Department, there are 4,500 species of flowering plants in the KBR, including 424 medicinal plants and 36 rhododendrons, 60 species of primulas and 11 varieties of oaks .

The biosphere reserve has also listed 362 species of ferns."Over 118 species of the large number of medicinal plants are found in Dzongu Valley in north Sikkim," a press statement of the PIB said.

Mr. Rao said that many species protected under the Wildlife Protection Act have their home in the KBR. This includes the Red Panda, Snow Leopard, Himalayan Black Beer and herbivores species of Musk deer, Great Tibetan Sheep, Blue Sheep, Boral and Barking Deer. Over 500 species and sub-species of birds, including high-altitude pheasants – Monal Pheasants, Tragopan Pheasants and Blood Pheasants (the State Bird) – are also found in the reserve.

Annie Zaidi wins *The Hindu* Playwright Award 2018

Citation praises work as 'subtle and hard-hitting'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Hindu Playwright Award 2018 went to Annie Zaidi for her play *Untitled-1*. The ₹2 lakh award for the best new unpublished and unperformed playscript in English was presented at the launch of the 14th edition of *The Hindu* Theatre Fest at the Taj Coromandel on Thursday.

The other shortlisted works included Sneh Sapru's *Hello Farmaaish* and Swetanshu Bora's *Guilt*, chosen by a panel of three judges from among the 60 entries received. The judges for this year's award were Ramu Ramanthan, playwright and director; Shernaz Patel, film and theatre actor; and visual artist and creative writer, Parvathi Nayar.



Actor-director Ratna Pathak Shah (right) giving away the award to Annie Zaidi in Chennai on Thursday ▪ R. RAGU

'Timeless'

The citation prepared by the judges for the winning play read: 'Annie Zaidi's *Untitled-1* is a deserving winner for its timeliness, its insight and especially for its gentle reminders about the distressing times that we have been through. Set in a dystopian future, it examines the metaphors in the stories we relate about ourselves, spun in a narrative web that is fashioned from the material of our times. Using allegory as storytelling, the play is both subtle and hard-hitting. The playwright lets the play speak for itself."

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Zaidi said that her play is not about these times but about all times. She said that freedom has always been a slippery slope and a hard-won concept. She said, "The meaning of freedom is subject to change. My dharma as a writer is to speak the truth the way I see it."

The award was presented by Ratna Pathak Shah, actor and director. "There is a pressing need to encourage and cultivate writing for plays in the country. I hope these plays will be performed soon because, really, the final test of a play is in its performance," said Ms. Pathak Shah.

Speaking on behalf of the panel of judges, Ms. Nayar said, "One of the things that this award does is reaffirm the fact that good writing is in the centre of a good play. The necessity of finding your voice is not just for theatre or the arts, it is essential for society as well."

'Celebrating culture'

R. Ravichander, Head of Business Development-South and Group President,Yes Bank, the Title Sponsor for the fest, said: "It is our responsibility to celebrate our culture, not only for the sake of its greatness. For our own sake and for the generations to come. Our tradition mandates it."

The Hindu's Editor Mukund Padmanabhan welcomed the gathering.

The other event partners include Girias, Fever FM, UBER, Zebronics, Taj Coromandel and Evam.

The Hindu Theatre Fest will begin on August 10 and will be held till August 12 at Sir Mutha Venkatasubbarao Concert Hall, and between August 16-19 at Museum Theatre. Tickets are available online (www.thehindu.com/theatre-fest/) and at the venue.

Statewise shelters proposed

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Union Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi has proposed the setting up of a single large facility for them in each State, which could be partially funded under the Nirbhaya scheme.

The meeting was held after cases of sexual abuse at shelter homes in Muzaffarpur in Bihar and Deoria in U.P. came to light.

Of the 12 MPs that are part of the committee, five attended the meeting. These included the Biju Janata Dal's Sarojini Hembrom, the AIADMK's R. Vanaroja, Trinamool Congress' Shanta Chhetri and BJP's Sampatiya Uikey and Riti Pathak.

"Instead of spreading our resources thin across various shelters, it was proposed that each State can set up a single institution, which will serve as a shelter for women in difficult situations and as an observation home for juveniles. The State governments will have to identify land for the purpose. These shelters can be partially funded under the Nirbhaya scheme meant for women's safety... ," said a source who participated in the meeting.

Air India salaries delayed yet again

Fifth month in a row, say pilots

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

It is 10 days past pay day at Air India, yet its employees continue to wait for their salaries. Relief is unlikely any time soon as the airline issued a notice on Friday informing staffers that pay cheques may take yet another week.

The notice was issued hours after one of the pilot's unions wrote to the Air India CMD, Pradeep Singh Kharola, asking why the airline had failed to even inform employees about the delay in salaries. The pilots say this is the fifth month in a row that the airline has failed to pay on time and they have now threatened to operate flights under protest.

"We regret to inform the delay in payment of salaries for the month of July 2018 due to circumstances beyond the control of the management. However, all efforts are being made to make the payment by next week," read a circular issued by Air India's General Manager (HR) Meenakshi Kashyap on Friday.



The pilots' association has said that salary delays lead to stress. ▪ REUTERS

In its letter, the Indian Commercial Pilot's Association (ICPA) wrote that the situation was leading to stress among employees.

"Financial uncertainty is a source of frustration, anxiety and stress, which result in undue fatigue, adversely impacting flight safety and the overall performance levels of employees," read the letter from ICPA. They also questioned whether the airline had enough money to conduct regular maintenance of aircraft.

Centre launches portal for scientific research, funding

Repository of research know-how

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

How does a budding math enthusiast figure out career prospects for pursuing mathematics in India? Which individual professors are blazing new trails in, say, climate change research here?

The Union science ministry's communication wing, Vigyan Prasar, has launched the India Science Technology and Innovation portal that can help with such queries.

Currently the portal can be queried for information about the organisations carrying out research, those funding them, international collaborations, the scientists involved in the research, the states in which they are being carried out, their achievements and impact.



▪ REPRESENTATIVE USE

Prime focus

There's also a compilation of technologies developed in India, the organisations that have developed these technologies, those that have funded them and the status of the technologies. "A major thrust of the portal is to reach out to students, researchers, scholars, scientists both from India and abroad, so that they can choose from the mine of fellowships, scholarships and funding and startup opportunities that India puts on their plate," says a note accompanying the portal.

The portal follows a launch this week of India Science (indiascience.in), an Internet-based science channel, to showcase the developments in science and technology in India.

Both the portal and the channel are part of a push by the Science Ministry to improve its public outreach. By next year, the Ministry hopes to offer science programmes on Doordarshan and eventually launch a dedicated science channel.

According to a roadmap prepared by the Union government, the Science Ministry proposes to spend ₹15 crore over five years to cover costs of portal development and updates.

https://www.visionias.net/ https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

Stooping to conquer

BJP exhibited its superior floor management in the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman's election

It was never going to be easy for the Bharatiya Janata Party to get a candidate of its choice elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. The ruling party and its allies fell short of a majority in the House. But what it lacked in numbers, the party made up in tact and ploy. First, in choosing a member of the Janata Dal (United), a friend-turned-foe-turned-friend, as the candidate, the BJP sent out the signal that it was willing to be more accommodative to parties that support it. Second, in reaching out to the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha, a party seeking to maintain equidistance between the Congress and the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi demonstrated a readiness to make peace without standing on prestige. Indeed, by proposing a JD(U) MP, Harivansh, for the post, the BJP found it easier to seek the support of other parties. Once the deal with the BJD was sealed, Congress candidate B.K. Hariprasad stood no chance. Mr. Hariprasad failed to win the support of MPs from parties such as the Peoples Democratic Party, which, though estranged from the BJP, is not keen on supporting the Congress. Whether the deal with the BJD will have significance beyond the election of the Deputy Chairman is not clear yet. With the BJP making rapid strides in Odisha, a BJP-BJD alliance is unlikely. However, it remains to be seen whether this influences floor coordination among Opposition parties during voting or while debating on policy issues. Until recently, the Opposition enjoyed the majority in the House and was able to stall legislation. This may change if the BJD sees a longer term interest in coordinating with the BJP on specific issues. In retrospect, the Congress might have missed a trick in not making the effort to win over the BJD and the Aam Aadmi Party.

Read together with the numbers from the recent no-confidence vote in the Lok Sabha, the one thing that this election confirms is that Opposition unity is still very much a work in progress. The BJP and the Congress may be the principal players at the national level, but they are nowhere close to being the two poles of the next Lok Sabha election. A few regional players such as the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, the Telugu Desam Party, and the BJD could well find themselves pitched against both the Congress and the BJP then. And if the Lok Sabha election results push the BJP's National Democratic Alliance well ahead of a Congress-led United Progressive Alliance, there is no saying which formation these parties will support. Therefore, the Congress will need to beat back the BJP in States where the two parties are locked in a head-to-head contest; otherwise, it will be difficult for it to stitch together an effective and successful pre-poll or post-poll alliance.

Endless war

The global community fails Yemen by not pressuring Saudi Arabia to cease the attacks

The attack on a bus in a crowded market in southern Yemen that killed at least 45 people, most of them children, is the latest atrocity in the military intervention led by Saudi Arabia that began over three years ago. During this period, Riyadh has paid little attention to growing international criticism of its use of excessive force in Yemen, which plunged the country, among the poorest in West Asia, into what the United Nations calls the world's most severe humanitarian crisis. The bus attack comes a week after Saudi war planes targeted the port city Hodeida, which is already under siege, killing at least 28 people and wounding dozens more. Since Saudi Arabia launched air strikes on Yemen's Shia Houthi rebels, who captured huge swathes of territory, including the capital Sanaa, the civilian toll has been particularly high. The Saudi-led coalition, backed by the U.S., targeted public infrastructure, killed thousands of civilians, displaced hundreds of thousands more and even laid siege to major cities, blocking food and aid supplies. With no functional government in place and the rebels fighting the Saudi invasion, Yemen's 28 million people have been practically abandoned by the world. In recent years, the country has had an unprecedented cholera outbreak that killed over 2,000 people. The health-care system has collapsed, millions of people have been cut off from regular access to clean water, and more than eight million people threatened by acute hunger.

Saudi Arabia has not been deterred by any of this. Nor has it come under any serious international pressure to halt its catastrophic campaign. Its response to the bus bombing has been callous: it said the attack was "a legitimate military action", and accused the rebels of using children as human shields. The Saudis say the Houthi rebels are backed by Iran, its regional rival; also that its campaign has been on behalf of the internationally recognised government of Yemen. Curiously, Yemeni President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi is nowhere to be seen; he is reported to be under house arrest in Riyadh. The military campaign has been a failure from a strategic point of view as well. After more than three years of relentless bombing, the rebels are still entrenched in their areas of influence, including Sanaa. It is high time the international community paid serious attention to the voices of the battered Yemenis. The U.S. continues to support this disastrous aggression, with other leading global powers failing to do anything more than condemn rights violations. The plight of Yemenis will get progressively worse unless enough pressure is brought to bear upon Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the *de facto* ruler of Saudi Arabia and the main architect of the Kingdom's aggressive foreign policy. He should stop the war and push for a negotiated settlement between the Yemeni government and the rebels.

The rise and rise of Boris Johnson

His popularity shows that the Trump playbook of pandering to prejudice is working across Europe



VIDYA RAM

Last year, during a visit to Myanmar, Britain's then Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, visited the Shwedagon Paya, one of Buddhism's most sacred sites, adopting the usual freestyle, somewhat awkward, bumbling tone he had become known for. As he rang ancient bell, he recited a fragment of Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Mandalay', including, "The temple bells they say/ Come you back you English soldier." The invocation of the colonial-era poem clearly caught the British Ambassador off guard: he was captured on camera firmly stopping Mr. Johnson from proceeding further with the recital, saying it was "not a good idea" and "not appropriate". While the remark did indeed provoke criticism at home and beyond, it was dismissed by many as yet another Boris "gaffe", one of many that he has clocked up over his political career.

History of gaffes

Mr. Johnson's time as Foreign Secretary was peppered with controversial moments, including his remarks on boosting the whisky trade between India and the U.K. during a visit to a British gurdwara. There was a "joke" about boosting British investment into Libya. "They have got a brilliant vision to turn Sirte, with the help of the municipality of Sirte, into the next Dubai... the only thing they've got to do is clear the dead bodies," he said in 2017. And there was a moment during a visit to New Zealand where he compared the traditional Maori greeting to a head butt that could be "misinterpreted in a pub in Glasgow".

It might be easy to dismiss some of these but there were others that had to be seen in a more serious light, such as his mis-characterisation of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, a British charity worker imprisoned in Iran, as "teaching journalists". His comments provoked an outcry at the time, going against her insistence she had simply been on holiday, and were seen as worsening her already abysmal plight in the country. Mr. Johnson's typical response to these controversies has been to offer a non-apology.

His early blunders, during his time as Mayor of London served to strengthen his image, particularly beyond Britain's shores, as the flamboyant, floppy-haired, Etonian given to faux-pas that wouldn't be out of place in a P.G. Wodehouse novel. His later ones were the subject of more serious scrutiny, including questions around his appropriateness as the head of Britain's Foreign Office at a time when its relations with the world outside Europe matter more than ever, but they have been by and large treated as blunders. Even at the time this was a rather naïve assumption given Mr. Johnson's background: Oxford-educated, he once edited the conservative magazine, *The Spectator*, and savvily sensed the direction of British politics by finally leaping into the Brexit camp after he had drafted two columns, each taking a different position on Brexit.

The latest outrage

Mr. Johnson's latest comments on the burka challenge suggest a much more methodological, deliberate approach. In the face of a public outcry - including criticism from Prime Minister Theresa May and calls for the party whip to be taken from him – he has stood firmly by his comments in *The Daily Telegraph* earlier this week. He described the burka as "oppressive and ridiculous" and compared women who wore them to "letter boxes". Subsequently, he has let it be known that he viewed the calls for an apology as "ridiculous", citing it as part of his effort to speak up for "liberal values". It is not the only time he has caused such offence: before he became London Mayor, he once used a racist slur to refer to the people the Queen would meet on her trips across the Commonwealth.



REUTERS

The latest comments come at a particularly difficult time for the ruling Conservative Party, already suffering from great ideological differences within its ranks particularly on Brexit and the immigration policy. While the Labour Party has faced criticism over its treatment of anti-Semitism within its ranks, the Conservatives have been accused of tolerating Islamophobia within theirs. Earlier this year, the Muslim Council of Britain used the instance of a meeting in Parliament attended by Tapan Ghosh, the leader of the Hindu Samhati, last year, to highlight a "wider problem" of Islamophobia within party – the room had been booked through the office of a Conservative MP. Mr. Johnson's latest comments have provoked anger from both Muslim and non-Muslim members of the Conservative Party, with one senior MP, Dominic Grieve, suggesting he would leave the party should the former become its leader. For its part, the party said it had launched a disciplinary investigation into Mr. Johnson's comments on the burka.

However, he has had many defenders too – a recent poll for Sky News found that up to 60% of the public did not view his comments as racist, and conservatives in both Britain and the U.S. have defended him. One Breitbart commentator suggested he needed to go "full Donald Trump". In fact when Mr. Trump became U.S. President, Mr. Johnson's congratulatory message was among the most effusive of senior politicians globally. "I am increasingly admiring of Donald Trump," Mr. Johnson remarked earlier this year, while Mr. Trump in turn suggested that Mr. Johnson would make a "great Prime Minister".

Mr. Johnson's prime ministerial aspirations are of course no secret. During his time as Foreign Secretary until his resignation in early July in protest against the direction of the government's Brexit policy, many of his actions were seen as attempts to undermine Ms. May: such as publishing a 4,000 word essay on his vision of Brexit just before a major speech by her. He is seen as a front-runner to replace her: in early August just before his comments on the burka but after his resignation, he came in as the most popular person to replace Ms. May in a poll by Conservative Home, suggesting his increasingly right-ward politics was striking a chord with the party membership. He is not the only one in his party to have benefited from its internalisation of increasingly right-wing policies, as has been seen with the rise of Jacob Rees-Mogg, the chair of the anti-Brexit European Research Group, whose particularly conservative vein of Conservatism (he opposes abortion under any circumstances as well as same sex marriage, and has boasted of never changing a diaper for any of his six children) has made him the unlikely figurehead of a young right-wing party movement dubbed "Mogg-mentum".

The nationalist arc

It would hardly come as a surprise that Steve Bannon, the former chairman of the alt-right Breitbart News and former adviser to Mr. Trump, has admitted to being in regular communications with Mr. Johnson. Mr. Bannon has spoken of his eagerness to build an anti-European Union, nationalist movement across Europe, and has described the British politician as one of the "most important persons on the world stage". Mr. Johnson's latest comments - and the outcry against him - will only serve to strengthen his appeal to the right.

What will happen to Mr. Johnson within the Conservative Party remains to be seen: disciplinary action could very well follow, which would help build his image as a "martyr" of the alt-right. One thing is clear though: his political days are far from over, as the Trump playbook of pandering to prejudice and division gains admirers in Europe.

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Best of friends, worthy rivals

Ambition could never completely destroy the friendship between Karunanidhi and MGR



R. KANNAN

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader M. Karunanidhi's touching eulogy, of December 24, 1987, to his "dear friend Dr. MGR" (M.G. Ramachandran) was both poignant and gracious. The two had been the best of friends and collaborators until they reached the pinnacle of fame, wealth and power. The high point of their cooperation came in 1969 when with his friend's support, Karunanidhi overtook the next in line, Era. Nedunchezhian, to succeed party founder C.N. Annadurai (Anna) as Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister and head of the party. In return, Karunanidhi ensured that MGR was made the party treasurer. However, from that point on, there would be a sense of unease.

Game of chess

They were no more the humble 23-year-old script writer who had discovered his hero in MGR, the handsome 30-year-old, or the struggling actor who had found his muse in Karunanidhi after 11 years of an uneventful film career. They were now the two major political forces in a party, the DMK, that was too small to accommodate both. The inevitable had to happen sooner or later.

Karunanidhi wanted to emerge out of the shadow of not only Anna but also MGR. The massive mandate in the 1971 general election set Karunanidhi free. Or so he thought. He had tried to put MGR in his place, which MGR would not forget. He flaunted his crowd-gathering capacity and at the party's meet in Madurai in May 1972, crowds began to disperse soon after his address scuppering the Chief Minister's speech. Each slight would make the other wary. So in October 1972, they ended their 27-year-old relationship. A game of political chess had begun.

Real life began to imitate screen life as MGR painted Karunanidhi the villain. MGR and his Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (later the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, or AIADMK) would grow from strength to strength. In the game of one-upmanship and vilification, Karunanidhi would compare MGR to Judas even as MGR painted Karunanidhi as a dark force.

In 1977, the roles reversed. Chief Minister since June 30, 1977, MGR invited Karunanidhi, the Leader of the Opposition, to the Independence Day ceremony. Importantly, he graciously noted that it was Karunanidhi who had made this possible for Chief Ministers. In the Assembly the camaraderie between the two was such that a DMK MLA even asked Karunanidhi to explain what was going on. The reply: they were not consulting the almanac for a merger. But that was exactly what was happening behind the scenes. Just days prior to being sworn in, MGR had sought a merger; talks began though an emissary. Yet by the end of October, the MGR administration pressed murder and conspiracy charges against Karunanidhi for the DMK's demonstration against Indira Gandhi on her visit to Madurai in 1977. Karunanidhi was interned for 40 days. Agitations by the DMK and arrests and internments by the administration marked 10 years of MGR's rule.

The relationship between the two leaders was unfathomable after a point. Karunanidhi saw the MGR administration as capable of no good while MGR appeared intent on erasing all traces of Karunanidhi. On September 18, 1977, he said the court would decide on the issue of Karunanidhi's statue on Anna Salai in Chennai (whether it posed a problem for traffic) while counselling his audience: "Do not do anything in anger." It became a bit absurd when a government order said that no public space or building should be named after a living person. 'Karunanidhi Maligai' was renamed even as some other names escaped change.

Sharp moves

Two no-confidence motions that were moved by the DMK in 1978-79 and a censure motion in 1979 tore into the MGR administration as being corrupt and inept. On April 14, a daily announced that MGR would star in the film, *Unnai Vidamatten* (You cannot get away from



THE HINDU PHOTO ARCHIVES

me). It was obvious who it was meant for. Yet on September 13, 1979, the two reached an agreement on a merger only for MGR to renege on it the next day. On November 3, 1979, Karunanidhi alleged in the Tamil Nadu Assembly that MGR was about to commit the "scandal of the century" by buying ships from Bulgaria. MGR replied that he would resign if there was proof that he had personally taken a bribe. Then in 1980, Karunandhi, just to unseat MGR, did the unthinkable. He came to an electoral understanding with Indira Gandhi, whose Emergency had caused much pain to him (party and his family). MGR's government was dismissed just as Karunanidhi's had been on January 31, 1976. But in the elections that followed, MGR, like his on-screen persona did, bounced back.

Karunanidhi, taking full advantage of the luxury of being in the opposition, painted MGR as being indifferent to the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils. MGR, on the other hand, took a personal liking to LTTE leader Prabhakaran – also because he had spurned Karunanidhi's invite to meet him.

But there were moments of tenderness. In February 1982, when 58-year-old Karunanidhi went on a 200 km march in protest against the MGR administration, a thoughtful MGR arranged for an ambulance. Then, on October 30, 1982, the two men showed up at a wedding at 6 a.m., holding each other's hands and displaying warmth. The Chief Minister even advised the bride and groom to learn from this – 'when to fight and when to put their arms around the other's shoulders and unite'. In the Assembly, when an AIADMK MLA referred to Karunanidhi as just "Karunanidhi", MGR cut him short and said, "Address him as Kalaignar. He was my leader."

J. Jayalalithaa's induction into the party in June 1982 was a snub to Karunanidhi after his opposition to MGR's wish to bring her to the Madurai conference in 1972. Karunanidhi just ignored her.

When MGR took ill, on October 22, 1984, Karunanidhi penned the most moving of his over 4,000 missives, saying that prayer meant appeal and in that sense he, an atheist, would also pray for him to recover. Yet during the elections, the DMK wondered if MGR was alive. On MGR's return however, the political one-upmanship resumed. Ambition had helped a beautiful friendship blossom, flourish and wilt but could never destroy it completely.

R. Kannan is the deputy head of the UN Mission in Somalia's HirShabelle office. He is the biographer of Anna and MGR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

M. Karunanidhi

A reader ('Letters to the Editor', August 10) has hurriedly drawn the balance sheet of how parties in Tamil Nadu would fare, almost writing the epitaph of the ruling AIADMK. He seems to forget that the party belied all prophesies of doom after the passing of Jayalalithaa. As for the DMK's cadre-base being cited to suggest its certain capture of power in the future, one should not ignore the cadre strength of the AIADMK either. If cadre base alone were to guarantee electoral successes, the CPI(M) and the Congress should have been now ruling West Bengal and the Centre, respectively. Voters are far more intelligent than all political soothsayers.

M.K. Stalin is where he is now in the party only by virtue of dynastic advantage.

A bipolar polity has become a norm in almost all States and the Centre as well. Leaders of both Dravidian parties should also ask themselves whether they have really inherited leader Annadurai's most noble legacy – of being above board in matters of absolute public integrity.

SIVAMANI VASUDEVAN,
Chennai

■ DMK patriarch M. Karunanidhi was well known not only for his political acumen but also for his exquisite skills in the fields of cinema, theatre, the media and literature.

Equally criticised for nepotism, he has however left behind a long legacy. His die-hard attitude, perseverance, vision, political manoeuvring and skills of negotiation are what the younger generation of politicians would do well to study carefully.

N. VIJAI,
Coimbatore

■ Karunanidhi was without doubt an astute administrator and a prudent politician. His birthday celebrations, on June 3, were often occasions for him to give a patient hearing to those who came to wish him.

MANI NATARAAJAN,
Chennai

Top batsman

Acclaim of the batting prowess of Virat Kohli cannot be questioned given his distinguished records (Editorial, August 10). However, one cannot gloss over the prime attribute of a leader – his skill in winning matches for his side. A team's victory matters much more than personal milestones. Kohli's shift from spin to pace when Kevin Curran added a sizeable 40-odd runs with Rashid Ali for the ninth wicket was questionable and decided the outcome of the match. Also, preferring Dhawan to Pujara was not circumspect. Moreover, changing the batting order for the tail-enders in the second innings was not well thought out. What counts is his ability to win matches from now on, especially after the track record of his illustrious predecessor, M.S. Dhoni.

BELLUR S. DATTATRI,
Bengaluru

On mosques

Subramanian Swamy's rejoinder (Editorial page, "Questions of faith at Ayodhya", August 10) to my article, "The essentiality of mosques" (OpEd page, August 7), discusses everything except the points I made in my piece. I was not commenting on the Babri Masjid issue. My arguments were limited to the essentiality of mosques in Islam and I had given evidence from Islamic scriptures and Supreme Court judgments to support my case. Mr. Swamy does not have an answer to this except the claim that Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution do not guarantee Muslims an unfettered fundamental right to pray in a mosque. This assertion does not merit discussion unless it can be proved that praying in mosques is prejudicial to public order, morality or health.

A. FAIZUR RAHMAN,
Chennai

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation was incorporated in *1978* – and not in *the early 1960s* as given in the Editorials "A welcome retreat: withdrawing the FRDI Bill" (Aug. 10, 2018) and "Bail-in doubts – on financial resolution legislation" (Dec. 6, 2017).

With reference to the report, "Kudankulam second reactor stopped for inspection" (Aug. 3, 2018), a communication from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board clarified that the board did not mandate the shutdown of the second reactor at Kudankulam as reported. It was done for certain checks. Meanwhile, Unit I was shut down for refuelling and maintenance as mandated by it.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India.
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K. MURALI KUMAR

The Andamans' new colonisers

The Indian bull frog, a recent arrival from the mainland, is steadily occupying the islands' ecosystem and threatening the local economy. **Mohit M. Rao** reports on the bizarre man-frog conflict brewing in the islands

A narrow road bifurcates the hyper-green paddy fields of Webi village in Middle Andaman, in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A clear stream flows around the Webi, home to the Karen community, brought to these shores from Myanmar 93 years ago.

At dusk, as fading sunlight paints the surrounding hills in silhouette, the calls of cicadas, crickets and frogs rise in crescendo. In the cacophonic stillness, a centipede winds its way across the empty weathered road. And then, in the blink of an eye, it's gone, swallowed whole by a recent migrant to the island – the Indian bullfrog (*Hoplobatrachus tigerinus*).

Barely 10 cm long, this particular specimen is small. But the larger ones weigh at least half a kilo. The golden stripe on their backs and the glitter around their throats shine in the diffused light of a mobile phone. Less than 2 ft from the centipede-eater sits another frog. Next to that, one more, and another, and another... scores of frogs in varied sizes, basking in the warmth of the asphalt. Every now and then, one of them leaps toward the murky waters of the paddy fields. There is nothing froglike about the deep, guttural croaks of these prolific breeders. Rather, they sound more like a bull with a sore throat.

"It wasn't here even five years ago. Now they've taken over the village," says Nau Thaw Raytoo, a mother of four, who lives in a concrete-bamboo house with her children, their wives, and her six grandchildren. Her broken Hindi shifts to fluent, high-pitched Karen when instructing raucous kids.

Webi is just among the scores of villages in the islands where the amphibian has arrived in hordes. An unusual man-frog conflict is brewing. The voracious animal gulps down anything that would fit in its jaws: centipedes, leeches, native frogs, lizards, small snakes, and even chicks and ducklings, which are an important source of food for the islanders.

"I've seen them eat chicks, swallowing the head whole," says Raytoo, adding that of the 15 chicks hatched in the family's chicken coop this year, only three have survived. Balakishore, whose father is Ranchi (an overarching term for Jharkhand tribals who were settled here to clear the forests decades ago) and mother is Karen, has lost 50 ducklings to the frogs. When grown, each duck would have fetched at least ₹300 in the local market.

One invader, many names

In the villages carved out of the virgin Andaman forests, the amphibian invader has evoked both surprise ("where did they come from?") – and anxiety ("when will they go away?"). The bullfrog, found widely in mainland India and protected under Schedule IV of the Indian Wildlife Act 1972, is making the most of a free run that it's enjoying in the erstwhile penal colony.

> **This is an invasion. This kind of incursion into remote islands is not naturally possible in such a short time."**
>
> NITYA MOHANTY,
> Doctoral student, Centre for Invasion Biology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa

In the Andaman Islands, it can rain eight months of the year. The first rains in May are the signal for the bullfrogs to come out of the streams and agricultural ponds that have become their shelters. They breed by the hundreds, with each female able to lay between 3,500 and 20,000 eggs. Not all survive, but enough live to breed again, ensuring that the horde extends their range. With an average life span of seven years, and time to sexual maturity of 10-12 months, their population can dramatically shoot up in a very short time, which is precisely what happened once they landed in the islands.

"This is an invasion," says Nitya Mohanty, a doctoral student at the Centre for Invasion Biology at Stellenbosch University (South Africa). His research, done with the Andaman and Nicobar Environment Team, has been on invasive species – first on the chitals (spotted deer) that have established their herds in the Andamans, and now on the bullfrog invasion.

So far, the bullfrog has been found in six out of the eight major inhabited islands. In 2017, it was even found in Little Andaman, which is separated from the Greater Andaman Islands by more than 55 km of sea. "This kind of incursion into remote islands is not naturally possible in such a short time," says Mohanty.

The frog has acquired many names in the course of its journey through multicultural settlements of the island: *shona beng* ('Golden frog', for the prominent golden stripe) among the Bengali settlers; *haramendak* ('Green frog', for its olive-green skin) in Ranchi villages, where you could hear Oraon, Sadri or Munda being spoken; and *dey-phala* ('Green frog") in villages where the 2,500-odd Karen community stays. Whatever the name or language, the narrative of economic loss and ecological threat is a constant.

How they spread

Mohanty's team sought to define the contours of this "invasion" through interviews with locals. As early as 2001, the bullfrog had already established breeding populations in one village. By 2009, it had spread to seven villages. Since then, at least 53 villages have reported the bullfrog in worrying densities.

Like most contemporary tales in the archipelago, the bullfrog story may also have to do with the earthquake and the tsunami that devastated large parts of Andaman and Nicobar islands in 2004. Following the decline of natural fish stock, the local administration encouraged integrated farming, with aquaculture in agricultural ponds. There are now over 2,500 such ponds in the islands, most of them filled with stocks of exotic, fast-growing fish imported from the mainland.

The fishling stocks (mostly from Kolkata) released into some of these ponds were contaminated with bullfrog eggs and tadpoles. All fingers point at the local fisheries department, which has, however, dismissed these claims and accused private traders of having brought the invader to the islands.

Most villagers believe that the bullfrog's first hop into the islands was in Diglipur, in the northern tip of the Andamans, where its prolific spread first became a talking point. By 2011, it was spotted at Mayabunder in Middle Andaman, and by 2013, it was found in Wandoor, near the southern tip of the Andamans, around 300 km from Diglipur. While many were accidental releases, in some areas, it had been released by villagers as a fast-breeding cheap food.

Researchers Harikrishnan Surendran and Karthikeyan Vasudevan had been working in Wandoor since 2008, and were the first to report the presence of the bullfrog as an invasive in a scientific journal. "(The spread) is not surprising at all, given the high reproductive output of Indian bullfrogs and their association with agricultural areas... it was only a matter of time before they got introduced to other islands," says Surendran.

Nearly two years ago, while engaged in construction and repairs at a resort near Wandoor in South Andaman, M. Alazhagan, 35, saw a multitude of frogs thronging the swimming pool. Some, he says, had turned yellow, with blue globules on their throat – males decked up for the breeding season. He approached one, and it froze. He decided to take a selfie: him grinning in the foreground, with the frog posing meditatively in the background. "It looked so strange! So much bigger than the frogs we were used to seeing and so colourful," he recalls.



Swamped: The bullfrog is only the latest entrant in the Andamans' 150-year-old history of invasives. Picture shows Gannatabla, a village overrun by the bullfrog, at Diglipur in North Andaman. ▪ K. MURALI KUMAR

But fascination soon gave way to frustration. In North Wandoor village, located at the edge of the Lohabarrack Salt Water Crocodile Sanctuary, it isn't the crocs that villagers keep an eye on.

The tsunami had created salty channels in the area and rendered large tracts infertile. So, many had turned to creating agricultural ponds – to rear fish and also because they would serve as sources of freshwater when the rains filled it up. Shushil Mondal found that his pond had been taken over by frogs. "Earlier I could get 20 kg of fish whenever I spread the net. Now, I get only *shona beng*. There is no fish left now. It has eaten everything," he says.

The frogs pose a threat particularly to the livelihoods of landless labourers, such as Parimal Das and his family of eight. They had migrated to the Andamans from Kolkata nearly 20 years ago, and are now nomads, leasing land wherever it is available to grow vegetables. Agriculture in a rain-heavy, saline-rich soil is difficult, and free-range chickens are an important and steady source of income, with each fetching up to ₹600. "I've lost six chicks this year already. We had to build a *murghi ghar* (a wooden makeshift cage on stilts) to lock the chickens at night, but even then the frogs manage to squeeze through," he says.

On the other side of the Greater Andaman islands, the Andaman Trunk Road snakes its way through dense forests. Trees form a seemingly impenetrable canopy, creepers drape branches in a gown of broad leaves, and undergrowth form layers upon layers above the damp soil. Amidst the shades of green, the Andaman Crape Myrtle, a deciduous tree, bursts in bouquets of small lilac flowers.

Five kilometres of these forests separate Gannatabla village – a settlement of Jharkhand tribals – from the nearest village in North Andaman. The village is a clump of 50 houses and a series of rectangular paddy fields. There is no pond here where fish is cultured. The bullfrog, however, lurks in these fields and drinking water wells.

"We don't know how it has come here. Three years ago, we spotted it in the streams that come through the forests when we went fishing for *kala macchi* (black fish). Now the fish is hardly seen but the frog is everywhere," says 29-year-old Johnson Kirketa, suggesting that the bullfrog had crossed the forests through channels and streams.

> **They are just animals, and nature will find a way to live in harmony."**
>
> TARUN COOMAR,
> Principal Chief Conservator of Forests

Colonisers among the natives

Bullfrogs are found all over mainland India, but it is in the unique ecosystem of the islands that it becomes a major threat. Unlike the mainland, resources on the islands are scarce for big animals, while natural calamities are more frequent. The wildlife here has evolved in a miniature setting: there are no large herbivores (the largest is the Andaman wild pig) or large carnivores.

"Islands have fewer species, but their nature make them irreplaceable. They are found no where else in the world... This makes the entire food web in the islands very different from that of the mainland," says Vasudevan, senior principal scientist at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad.

The Zoological Survey of India has found that out of the 9,130 marine and terrestrial species discovered so far in the islands, 1,032 species (or 11.30%) are endemic (found only in the Andamans). In the constraints of land, this endemicity increases to nearly 25%, or 816 out of the 3,271 land species. These creatures had evolved to cope with natural disaster, but have little capacity to withstand rapid, human-induced impacts. "There is not much room for redundancy and refuges in these islands," says Vasudevan.

But the bullfrog is only the latest entrant in the Andamans' 150-year-old history of invasives, with alien species introduced in waves by the British, Japanese, and 'mainland' Indians having gradually colonised many parts of the island territory. These include the elephant(introduced for logging and later abandoned), chital, hog deer, and barking deer (all three for game meat).

In 2013, using satellite imagery, Rauf Ali from the Puducherry-based Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning found that forests with elephants and chitals had suffered significant degradation (Interview Island) compared to places where they were absent (Little Andaman). It's a one-two punch: elephants knock down trees and strip barks, while chitals prevent regeneration of forests by grazing on seedlings.

Invasives have come in all forms to the Andamans. The Japanese introduced the Giant African Snail, one of the 100 worst invasive species as described by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in the 1940s during their three-year occupation. It has now established itself as a major agricultural pest. Meanwhile, about 90% of the fish being bred in ponds are carps and other exotic fish which have even established natural breeding sites outside human-created ponds. Similarly, the islands are home to at least 592 introduced alien plant species, some indirectly pushing endemic plants to the fringe.

Away from the obvious economic impact, it is in the sounds of the night that one can perhaps gauge the ecological impact of the invasive bullfrog. Across infested villages, residents say sightings of native species of frogs have reduced. Full grown natives pale in size to even a young bullfrog. Water snakes, a common accompaniment for the paddy farmer, and centipedes are in decline.



But even more worrying signs were found in the gut of the frog. For months, Mohanty and his associates captured and "stomach flushed" contents out of 798 individuals belonging to two native species and the invasive bullfrog. From the gut of the bullfrog came out native frogs, the endemic Andaman blind snake, the endemic emerald gecko, skinks and others. "Adult bullfrogs pose a threat to small endemic vertebrates (from frogs to birds). Within frog species, it can have a two-pronged impact on the Limnonectes genus of frogs. Bullfrogs not only eat the native frogs, even their diets overlap, indicating a possibility of competition," he says.

It isn't just their size that works to their advantage. It's their appetite for meat, even at the tadpole stage. Bullfrog tadpoles are highly carnivorous, preying on other tadpoles (even native tadpoles) heavily.

Controlling invasives

In a few villages, the explosion in population from May onward sees a feast of bullfrogs: skin fried to a crisp, their legs boiled or fried. Here, a kilo (roughly three medium-sized frogs) is sold for ₹60 – the cheapest source of protein in the market. In other places, it is anger that has humans killing the frog. "Whenever I find it on the road, I beat it with a stick. If it jumps, I'll jump into the paddy field and chase it. One dead frog means one lesser mother laying thousands of eggs," says a villager in North Andaman, whose name has been withheld as killing bullfrogs is a criminal act under wildlife laws. In Wandoor, a family claims to have killed nearly 50 frogs in July.

However, these are mere dents in a burgeoning population. "It is difficult...I don't see a way to stop it. The government should think of something. Else, in five years, *poora basti bhar jayega* (the village will be filled with frogs)," says Krishna Singh, at Mohanpur village in North Andaman, who claims to have lost 30 chicks to the frog.

Murmurs of the conflict have started, with the issue being raised by local political representatives. "It really is a big menace. But we have to see how the population stabilises," says S. Dam Roy, Principal Scientist at the Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair, which operates the local agriculture helpline.

Stung by the inflow of invasives, and with the fear that more could come, it was in the serene, undulating plantations that form the CIARI headquarters that a plan was hatched five years ago to start a ₹40-crore bio-security laboratory for quarantine and research. The plan did not materialise.

Globally, invasive species, particularly in islands, are becoming the focus of numerous organisations. The Convention on Biological Diversity has said that invasives have contributed to 40% of all animal extinctions since the 17th century. The IUCN has formulated guidelines for managing invasives specifically in islands, largely involving data collection, community engagement, policy measures and management plans.

Far away from the concerns of scientific papers and environmentalists, in the government offices at Port Blair, there is little panic about invasives. "They are just animals, and nature will find a way to live in harmony," says Tarun Coomar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, who also holds the post of Environment Secretary in the relatively small administration governing the islands.

This confidence is not reflected among the villagers. While many are resigned to the invasion, some suggest commercial harvest for export to South-East Asia, for history has shown that animal populations crash when they have an economic value attached to them.

But for now, it is an unchecked invasion. "Bullfrogs have reached little Andaman, the next frontier is Nicobar. There are other islands they are yet to invade, and we must do everything to stop that. Signs at jetties about the adverse economic impact of bullfrogs and the need to check contamination of fish stocks could be useful," says Mohanty.

For millenia, the islands, now a Union Territory, were largely disconnected, literally and figuratively, from the mainland. In more ways than one, the landscape here resembles those in Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia than mainland India.

In ethos too, the disconnect remains. In government offices, officials caution outsiders (whose annual numbers touch 6.5 lakh, as compared to 3.9 lakh residents) to take it slow in the islands: "*Ye* mainland *nahi*, *yeh* Andaman *hai* (This is not the mainland, this is Andaman)." But it may not stay that way for long. As the croaks of the bull frog reverberate through the islands, their clamour assumes the urgency of a clarion call – to act before it is too late.

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FROM PAGE ONE

Centre says Rajiv case convicts can't be freed

The Tamil Nadu government had written to the Centre on March 2, 2016 proposing the remission. The Centre's response in April comes almost two years later and after a Supreme Court order to do so.

The Hindu had, on June 15, first reported the decision of President Ram Nath Kovind to reject Tamil Nadu's proposal.

In the two-page response, the Centre said it considered Tamil Nadu's proposal in consultation with the CBI.

The assassination was "brutal" and "in pursuance of a diabolical plot carefully considered and executed by a highly organised foreign terrorist organisation."

'Dangerous precedent'

It said the CBI, which investigated the case, was also opposed to releasing the convicts in the interest of justice. The case had already been reviewed in the highest forums of the judiciary and executive, all of them agreeing on the guilt of the convicts.

The Centre said 16 innocent lives were lost and many suffered grievous injuries in the "gruesome, inhuman, uncivilised and merciless" act. The assassination and the use of a woman as a human bomb showed "exceptional depravity."

'Global ramifications'

It explained to Tamil Nadu that setting the convicts free now would be a "dangerous precedent and lead to international ramifications" involving other such criminals in future.

The Tamil Nadu government had first proposed remission for the convicts in a letter dater February 19, 2014. This had spurred the Centre to move the Supreme Court. It triggered the question whether a State could unilaterally remit life sentence in a case investigated by a Central agency like the CBI.

Congress ups the ante against Rafale deal

"Madam, I want permission to present the replica of the Rafale on the table of the House. Please permit that. I can make a better Rafale than (an industrialist) who has no experience in manufacturing one," said Mr. Jakhar, holding a replica made of paper.

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned twice within minutes during the pre-lunch session amid protest by Congress members over their demand for a JPC probe.

Congress MP Anand Sharma had moved a motion under Rule 267 to suspend all business to discuss the Rafale deal.

"The Prime Minister even without consulting his own Cabinet went ahead and negotiated the deal to buy the aircraft at a higher cost," Mr. Sharma said.

The Congress, he said, will not rest till a Joint Parliamentary Committee is constituted to probe it.

Explosives seized from Sanatan man

The officer said, "We tracked the numbers to Mr. Raut and Mr. Kalaskar on Thursday night after three days of verification. Eight crude bombs were found in Mr. Raut's house, and incriminating documents, including instructional literature on the assembly of Improvised Explosive Devices, were found in Mr. Kalaskar's house."

The ATS searched a commercial space belonging to Mr. Raut in the same area and seized 12 crude bombs, two gelatin sticks, four electronic detonators, 22 non-electronic detonators, safety fuse wires, 150 gm of a white powder wrapped in a newspaper, two one-litre bottles labelled 'poison', 10 batteries, one six-volt battery, a cutter, a hacksaw blade, soldering equipment, three switches, two completed PCB circuits, one partially completed PCB circuit, six battery connectors, two battery containers, four relay switches, eight resistors, six transistors, lengths of wire, a multimeter, a pair of handgloves, adhesive solution and a partial hand-drawn diagram of a circuit on a sheet of paper.

Mr. Raut and Mr. Kalaskar's interrogation led the police to Mr. Gondhalekar in Pune. He was brought to Mumbai, and the three were placed under arrest and charged under the Explosive Substances Act, the Explosives Act, the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

Maratha protest: over 200 arrested in Pune, Aurangabad

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Over 200 people were arrested across Aurangabad and Pune in connection with the arson and vandalism during the bandh on August 9, which was called by the Maratha Kranti Morcha. The outfit's coordinators, however, disclaimed responsibility for the violence and dubbed it the handiwork of anti-social elements.

A total of 185 people, including five women, were arrested by the Bund Garden, Deccan, and the Kothrud police for indulging in stone-pelting and vandalism in Pune city. Some of them were later released on bail.

The Aurangabad police arrested 31 people. Mobs went on a rampage in Waluj MIDC, damaging nearly 60 processing plants and offices of big firms, including Siemens Ltd, Worckhardt Ltd, Endurance Technologies, and Sterlite Technologies.

Appalled by the violence in Waluj MIDC, an emergency meeting convened by the Chamber of Marathwada Industries and Agriculture (CMIA) decided it would not give jobs to those found guilty of vandalism.

"It was not the spontaneous outrage of any community. It was a carefully planned and premeditated attack in which around 250 people participated. The perpetrators smashed CCTV cameras, computers and office cabins. The industry as a collective and investors are agitated after the incident," Ram Bhogale, president, CMIA, told *The Hindu* from Aurangabad.

"What have the agitators gained by targeting the industry which is the primary source of employment in a region like Aurangabad?" he asked. CMIA sources said the canteen inside the Siemens compound was ransacked, while the cabin of the managing director of Endurance Technologies and several two-wheelers parked on the company premises were damaged.

Cong. scuttled talaq Bill: govt.

Sonia Gandhi reiterates that it should be sent to a Select Committee for scrutiny

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government on Friday alleged that the Congress was responsible for scuttling the triple talaq Bill in the Rajya Sabha, which now includes three crucial amendments such as providing for bail before the start of trial.

The Union Cabinet had approved the changes in the draft legislation on Thursday and planned to introduce it in the Rajya Sabha on the last day of the monsoon session. However, the Bill could not be taken up as the Chair said there was no consensus.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananthkumar later targeted Congress president Rahul Gandhi and his party, stating that they supported the proposed law in the Lok Sabha, but not in the Upper House.



Making a point: Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad speaking in the Rajya Sabha on the last day of the monsoon session on Friday. ▪ PTI

However, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi said her party's stand on the Bill was clear.

The Congress-led Opposition has been demanding that the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, be sent to a Select Committee for scrutiny. The government had earlier attempted to get the Bill passed during the budget session, after the Supreme Court on August 22 last year held the "triple talaq" practice unconstitutional.

The Lower House passed the Bill in December. However, amendments to the Bill, after being adopted by the Rajya Sabha, will have to be sent again to the Lok Sabha for clearance.

(*With agency inputs*)

Portion of PM's speech expunged

Word uttered by Athawale too removed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In an embarrassment for the government, a portion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulatory speech on Thursday to felicitate Janata Dal(U) MP Harivansh after his election as the Deputy Chairman was expunged on Friday by Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Remarks made by the Prime Minister are rarely expunged.

In a lighter vein, Mr. Modi, referring to the JD(U) candidate and Opposition nominee, Congress MP B.K. Hariprasad, said the election was between two "Haris". He then went on to take a swipe at Mr. Hariprasad, playing on his initials, which left the House in splits.

The Congress members though were not amused. The party was considering a privilege motion against the Prime Minister on the issue till Thursday but eventually the leadership, sources said, decided not to pursue it.

On Thursday, RJD MP Manoj Jha, flagging the PM's comments, said they were derogatory in direction and intent. He requested that



Narendra Modi

they be expunged.

The Chairman had told the House that he would look into the remarks and see if there was something objectionable.

Mr. Hariprasad said it was unfortunate that the Prime Minister had lowered the dignity of the House. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said the remarks were shameful. "I think it becomes a massive shame for this country when the PM uses unparliamentary expressions in any House of Parliament," Mr. Tharoor said. The Chairman also expunged a word uttered by Union Minister Ramdas Athawale during the felicitation speeches.

Mr. Hariprasad lost the Deputy Chairman election to Mr. Harivansh by a margin of 24 votes.

Women's group backs amendments to talaq Bill

Rights body says changes in consonance with its demands

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

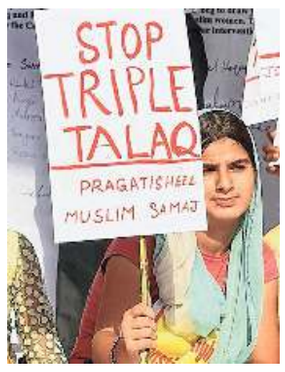
The Muslim women's rights group spearheading the movement against instant divorce has welcomed the amendments to the triple talaq Bill, and urged MPs cutting across party lines to ensure its passage in Parliament.

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved three amendments to the Bill. It now allows an accused to seek bail before trial. An FIR can be lodged only at the insistence of the wife or her blood relations or those who become her relatives by virtue of marriage. The offence can be compoundable with both parties having the liberty to withdraw the case.

The pronouncement of 'talaq' thrice in quick succession will invite a jail term of three years under the original Bill.

'Will work together'

"We appreciate the efforts of the Cabinet to respond to the concerns of Muslim women. We are hopeful that the government and the Opposition will work together to bring about this law," read a statement issued by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA). The NGO was made party to the triple talaq case before the Supreme Court last year.



A file photo of activists protesting against triple talaq at Jantar Mantar. ▪ PTI

The women's rights group said that the changes made to the proposed law are in consonance with their demands and therefore they hoped that the move will "put to rest all opposition to the bill and the law will become reality soon".

The BMMA said that they had appealed that efforts should be made to reconcile the two parties before finalising a divorce, which has been made possible by making the offence of triple talaq compoundable.

Elaborate procedure

The NGO has demanded that the government lay down an elaborate procedure for divorce based on the talaq-e-ehsan method which involves reconciliation, mediation and dialogue between the husband and wife over a minimum period of 90 days. It has also sought that the wife's right to maintenance, guardianship of children as well as right to reside in her marital home be protected during the divorce process.

The amendments to the Bill were, however, not introduced in the Rajya Sabha on the last day of monsoon session.

The amended Bill is now expected to be placed in the Upper House in the winter session and once it is passed there it will have to go back to the Lok Sabha for approval of the amendments as the original Bill had already been passed by the Lower House.

A productive session for Lok Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The curtains came down on the monsoon session of Parliament on Friday, with government managers claiming this to be one of the most productive ones for the Lok Sabha since 2000.

Provisional data released by the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry show the session had 17 sittings and the Lok Sabha conducted business for over 112 hours and passed 20 of the 21 Bills tabled by the government. Time lost due to interruptions was eight hours and 26 minutes, while the Lok Sabha sat an extra 20 hours and 43 minutes in the conduct of business.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar expressed his satisfaction over the way both Houses functioned.

"Despite being adjourned for a day to mourn the passing of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, the House functioned 20 hours more than the allotted time," he said.

"One day was devoted to the discussion on the no-confidence motion and the government achieved a long-pending dream of passing the Bill for giving justice to the SC/ST brethren against atrocities and the OBC Bill," he said.

Two MPs bring private Bill against lynching

Tharoor denied permission to table the legislation in the Lok Sabha; Tulsi tables his in Rajya Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the government which is still consulting stakeholders to cast a law against lynching, Shashi Tharoor, Lok Sabha member of the Congress, and K.T.S. Tulsi, a nominated Rajya Sabha member, introduced a private member's Bill in Parliament on Friday.

"We are anxious to share the provisions of this Bill in order to pre-empt the possibility of the government coming up with a weaker Bill," Mr. Tharoor told press-persons later. "If public consciousness is raised as to what can go into anti-lynching Bill, then our feeling is that the government will have no choice but to take these provisions into account."



Shashi Tharoor

Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan did not allow Mr. Tharoor to table the Bill in the Lok Sabha, arguing that law and order was a State subject and it was not for the Lok Sabha to debate it. Mr. Tulsi's Bill was tabled in the Rajya Sabha.

Striking terror

A special law was needed to deal with lynching, though most of the crimes were covered by the Indian Penal Code, Mr. Tulsi said. "Lynching is a crime without motive, it is not a private dispute between the two parties. In fact, the victims are unknown. The object of these crimes is to strike terror in society. To strike terror by killing people most mercilessly like rats." Lynching was more dangerous than terrorism and just as there was a special law to tackle terrorism, lynching needed one too," Mr Tulsi said.

The Bill introduced by the two gives a detailed definition of what constitutes lynching.

It suggests that the minimum punishment should be seven-year jail term and the highest, life imprisonment, depending on the gravity of the offence. It has provisions to deal with "creation of a hostile environment". They include incidents where a Minister felicitates a lynching accused.

Protecting witnesses

"The Bill also talks about protecting the victim and witnesses. If witnesses are not protected, then nobody will come forward and the courts will not be able to arrive at the truth," Mr. Tulsi explained.

Mr. Tulsi and Mr. Tharoor said the government was trying to shirk responsibility by claiming law and order was a State subject.

The two will send their draft to Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

For BJD, Congress is main rival in Odisha

Hence, it backed NDA candidate in the election for the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The Biju Janata Dal's support for the NDA's candidate in Thursday's election of the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson has clarified two things with regard to politics in Odisha: the party looks at the Congress as its main rival, and any Opposition unity under the Congress will not be acceptable to the BJD.

"The question of whether the BJD would have agreed to support the Opposition's candidate is largely moot,



Naveen Patnaik

since the larger political situation had never favoured that outcome. After the NDA decided to project Harivansh of the Janata Dal (United), the decision was easier as BJD leader and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has a good equation with Nitish Kumar," said a senior source in the party in Bhubaneswar.

Larger message

The source said it was a decision taken in the context of that one election, with the larger message about State rivalries. "There are at least seven Lok Sabha constituencies in the coastal areas [the BJD's stronghold], where the Congress is putting up a tough fight. On the other hand, the BJP is absent from the coast, most of its support is based in western Odisha," the source said.

"The party grew from its Opposition to the Congress, and the Congress remains our main rival," a senior BJD MP said.

Post-poll affair

Party men also dismissed talk of an electoral understanding with the BJP, the former ally. The BJD, they said, would fight all Assembly and Lok Sabha seats (the two elections are held simultaneously in the State). "Any understanding and tie-up will be a post-poll affair," said an MP in New Delhi.

For long, the BJD has maintained equidistance from the two national parties.

Clarity on who is its main threat in the State has allowed it to remain a force there. "Why should anything change," the source said.

Rajya Sabha adjourned over Rafale deal row

SP protests over Deoria sex abuse

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned over the Congress protests over the Rafale deal and the Samajwadi Party's protest over incidents of sexual abuse at a shelter home in Uttar Pradesh.

Congress MP Anand Sharma had moved a motion under Rule 267 to suspend all business to discuss the Rafale deal. The Congress has been demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the aircraft deal.

Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad criticised the government, saying that the Opposition "did not get time to initiate a single short-duration discussion or calling attention motion".

Newly elected Deputy Chairman Harivansh, who was in the chair, did not allow debate on either issue and adjourned the House.



Ghulam Nabi Azad

Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, who chaired the proceedings post-adjournment, criticised the Opposition, saying it should get its priorities right. "There are many important issues that we must discuss like the death of over 20 persons in Kerala floods," Mr. Naidu said.

'Confer Bharat Ratna on Karunanidhi'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and DMK patriarch, M. Karunanidhi, should be honoured with the Bharat Ratna as a tribute to his outstanding and exemplary work, DMK MP Tiruchi Siva said on Friday in the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Siva said Karunanidhi had been the tallest leader of the country and a Dravidian stalwart who, in the course of 80 years in public life, fought for the cause of the downtrodden, the backward and the suppressed people. "He was an outstanding orator, a prolific writer, a novelist, a short-story writer, a philosopher, a philanthropist and also a dramatist. He was an actor and also wrote scripts for 80 movies," Mr. Siva said.

Speaking at length about the achievements of Karunanidhi as Chief Minister, Mr. Siva said: "He fought for equal rights for women in ancestral property, widows' rehabilitation and established slum clearance board and many other boards for the unorganised sector and even for transgenders. He brought about revolutionary reforms."

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IN BRIEF



Dalai Lama apologises for Jinnah remark

BENGALURU

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama on Friday apologised for his remark that India and Pakistan would have remained united had Muhammad Ali Jinnah been made the Prime Minister. "It created some controversy... It's something wrong... I apologise," he said on the sidelines of an event.

Rape case filed against Union Minister

GUWAHATI

A woman from Nagaon in Assam has filed a police complaint against Union Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain, accusing him of raping her. He represents the BJP from the Nagaon Lok Sabha seat. "A case was filed on August 2," Nagaon SP Shankar Brata Raimedhi said. It was filed under IPC sections on rape, cheating and criminal intimidation, the police said.

For four million, another chance to make it to NRC

Distribution of claim and correction forms begins

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Some 2,500 Nagarik Seva Kendras (NSKs) in Assam began issuing claim, objection and correction forms on Friday for people excluded from the complete draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) published on July 30.

NRC officials could not specify how many forms were collected, but they expect the pace of collecting forms to pick up within a week.



Part of the process: People whose names were left out from the draft NRC wait to collect forms to file appeals at Mayong, 45 km east of Guwahati, on Friday. ▪ AP

'Insufficient evidence'

Nearly 40 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants had been left out of the complete draft because of the lack of sufficient documentary evidence of their citizenship, officials said. They can reapply through the claims form, while those whose names have been misspelt can use the correction form.

The objection form is for those who suspect the nationality of a person and feel he or she does not deserve to be on the final, error-free NRC.

Assam Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the government had completed only 30% of the work related to the NRC.

"Preparation of the NRC will take a long time, and by the time it is completed, people's perception about it may change. People should not come to any final conclusion at this juncture, when only 30% work is done," he said at a function in Agartala on Friday. "People whose names are missing from the NRC can apply again with valid documents. Then there are the courts to file objections later. There is no need to panic or create unrest," Mr. Sarma said.

He advised tribal political parties in Tripura, such as the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura, an ally of the ruling BJP, to wait for the "expensive" Assam exercise to be completed successfully before demanding the NRC for their State.

Hindi handicap

The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) has asked the NRC authorities to designate officers who can read Hindi and Urdu documents submitted by applicants at the Kendras. "Hundreds of Hindi-speaking people from central and northern India could not find a place in the final draft as they had submitted documents either in Hindi or Urdu," APCC spokesperson Gauravv Somani said.

Intellectuals to protest exclusion of Indians

STAFF REPORTER
KOLKATA

A section of intellectuals and prominent civil society members considered close to the Trinamool Congress will take to the streets here in protest against the alleged exclusion of Indian citizens from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam. The announcement was made by a group of painters, poets and academics here on Friday.

"We condemn the exclusion of genuine Indians from the NRC. We are considering not only protests but also a visit to Assam," Shuvaprasanna, painter, told presspersons. He accused the BJP of being ignorant of Bengali sentiments, and said the group would announce its future course of action within 15 days.

Subodh Sarkar, poet, described the situation in Assam at present as "worse than that in Gujarat during the 2002 riots".

"I don't support infiltration. But removal of Indian citizens from the NRC on flimsy grounds is unacceptable. We condemn such inhuman and illegal acts," Mr. Sarkar said. He lauded Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's stand on the issue.

Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay, novelist, said that though infiltration in Assam was a "cause for concern in West Bengal", it was wrong to remove Indians from the NRC and label them as infiltrators. He did not attend the media conference but issued a written statement.

Kalyan Rudra, river scientist and West Bengal Pollution Control Board Chairperson, described the NRC operations as "suspicious".

SC to hear issue of fake voters

Kamal Nath says lakhs of false entries made in electoral rolls in Madhya Pradesh

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee president Kamal Nath told the Supreme Court on Friday that lakhs of voters have been found to be fake in the run-up to the State's Assembly elections due in December 2018, and only a small portion of VVPAT (voter verifiable paper audit trail) units have arrived so far.



Kamal Nath

In an urgent mentioning, a three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra heard advocate Varun K. Chopra representing the senior Congress leader. The court decided to examine the petition, in which both the Election Commission of India and the State poll body are arraigned as respondents.

"Election Commission is the watchdog of free and fair elections and is duty-bound to circumvent the pressure and ascertain that the ensuing elections are free from any impediments, in order to uphold the democratic sanctity and fundamental rights of the voter," the petition settled by senior advocate Vivek Tankha said.

The petition said senior leaders from MP had submitted a detailed representation in June 2018 to the Commission highlighting the inclusion of "60 lakh duplicate, repeat, multiple, illegal, invalid and false entries/voters in the electoral rolls of Madhya Pradesh for Assembly elections, 2018." It contended that the poll bodies had dropped over 24 lakh voters from the list published in January 2018.

EVM mock drill

The petition pointed to a press note issued by the Election Commission of India on July 25 which "accepted that only 5.88 lakh units out of requisite total of 16.15 lakh units have been delivered till date and that there was delay in manufacturing and procuring VVPAT machines".

It said mock polls were done on only five per cent of EVMs and VVPATs in a constituency. "It is imperative that at least 50% of EVMs and VVPATs are brought under the purview of mock poll to reduce the margin of error and increase the trust of the electorate...," Mr. Nath said.

Rahul sets up panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In an attempt to project a united face in election-bound Madhya Pradesh, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday established a 32-member poll committee.

The committee, headed by Kamal Nath, includes Jyotiraditya Scindia, Digvijaya Singh, Leader of the Opposition Ajay Singh, and former Union Ministers Suresh Pachouri and Kanti Lal Bhuria.

Mr. Gandhi will launch the campaign in Rajasthan in Jaipur on Saturday.

Centre issues new order on cantt. roads

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry issued a fresh statement on Friday on the closure of cantonment roads, reiterating most of what it had said in its previous orders. The statement left many in the Army wondering if their concerns had been ignored.

In the carefully worded statement, the Ministry said it had come to a decision after consultations with all stakeholders, including the Army chief.

In case of roads which the Local Military Authorities considered necessary to close, "due process as laid down under Cantonment Act, 2006 and the orders issued by the Ministry dated May 28, 2018 will be followed", it said. An Army officer said there was no "significant relaxation" and their demands seemed to have been ignored.

Pakistan hopes to host SAARC summit

Imran Khan meets Indian High Commissioner

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Pakistan is likely to boost its role in SAARC under the Imran Khan government which will assume charge soon. An indication on this came at the first meeting between the newly elected leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Ajay Bisaria, Indian High Commissioner, on Friday.



Imran Khan

"Khan *Sahab* expressed the hope that the SAARC Summit would be held soon in Islamabad. The Indian High Commissioner said post the phone call from Mr. [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi to Mr. Khan, there was a new optimism in India that relations would move forward positively," said Shirin Mazari, who is expected to be the next Defence Minister of Pakistan, on social media.

The summit-level meeting of the group had been uncertain since bilateral ties between India and Pakistan created a hurdle. An official source said Indian participation in the summit would ensure a visit by Prime Mr. Modi to Pakistan. .

Ms. Mazari said bilateral issues such as Kashmir were discussed at Friday's meeting.

Mr. Bisaria gifted a cricket bat signed by the players of the present Indian team to Mr. Khan. A press statement issued by the Indian High Commission said Mr. Bisaria raised the need to stop cross-border terrorism, during the meeting that lasted 30 minutes.

Raja, Kanimozhi get time to file replies

CBI challenges acquittal in 2G case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday granted more time to former Telecom Minister A. Raja, DMK MP Kanimozhi and others to file their replies to a CBI petition against their acquittal by a special CBI court in the 2G spectrum allocation case.



A. Raja

Justice Najmi Waziri gave the direction after some of the accused sought more time. The court listed the case for further hearing on October 9.

The CBI contended that the special court did not appreciate the evidence it had put forward to establish the alleged irregularities. The trail of the alleged bribe money was not considered. Even irregularities in the implementation of the first come, first served policy of spectrum allocation was not taken into account.

The Enforcement Directorate, which too moved the High Court against the acquittals, said the special court had not appreciated the facts and evidence.

On December 21 last year, the court dismissed all charges and acquitted the accused, saying the CBI had not produced any evidence to establish "any criminality in the acts allegedly committed by the accused persons relating to fixation of cut-off date, manipulation of first come, first served policy, allocation of spectrum to dual technology applicants ... and transfer of ₹200 crore to Kalaignar TV (P) Ltd. as illegal gratification".

Ahead of pro-Khalistan rally, U.K. bats for right to protest

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Citizens in the United Kingdom have the right to peaceful protest, said the spokesperson of the U.K. High Commission to India.

The response from the U.K. authorities came a day after India said the pro-Khalistan rally planned in London on August 12 aims to undermine the country's territorial integrity.

The spokesperson said the British police had all necessary powers to deal with any concerns regarding the rally. "People in the U.K. have a right to protest and to demonstrate their views, provided they act within the law. Should a protest contravene the law, the police have comprehensive powers to deal with activities that spread hate or deliberately raise tensions through violence or public disorder. This does not negate the right to peaceful protest," said a U.K. diplomatic source.

On Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs said the proposed rally, which will be held three days before Independence Day celebrations in India, is being organised by separatists.

Online referendum

The London rally is expected to push the idea of an online referendum in 2020 largely among the diaspora Sikhs seeking the creation of the free state of Khalistan.

On Friday, a large protest was organised by the Anti-Terrorist Front outside the U.K. High Commission here against the rally and the referendum.

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U.S. cuts training for Pak. military

Officials in Islamabad warn the move will push them to look to China or Russia for training

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump's administration has quietly started cutting scores of Pakistani officers from coveted training and educational programmes that have been a hallmark of bilateral military relations for more than a decade, U.S. officials say.

The move, which has not been previously reported, is one of the first known impacts from Mr. Trump's decision this year to suspend U.S. security assistance to Pakistan to compel it to crack down on Islamic militants.

The Pentagon and the Pakistani military did not comment directly on the decision or the internal deliberations, but officials from both countries privately criticised the move.

U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said they were worried the decision could undermine a key trust-building measure. Pakistani officials warned it could push their military to further look to China or Russia for leadership training.



Under pressure: The suspension of Pakistani officers from the IMET programme in U.S. will leave 66 seats vacant. ▪ REUTERS

The effective suspension of Pakistan from the U.S. government's International Military Education and Training programme (IMET) will close off places that had been set aside for 66 Pakistani officers this year, a State Department spokesperson said. The places will either be unfilled or given to officers from other countries.

Dan Feldman, a former U.S. special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, called the move "very short-sighted and myopic". "This will have lasting negative impacts limiting the bilateral relationship well into the future," Mr. Feldman said.

Long term dividends

The State Department spokesperson, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the IMET cancellations were valued at $2.41 million so far. At least two other programmes have also been affected, the spokesperson said.

It is unclear precisely what level of military cooperation still continues outside the IMET programme, beyond the top level contacts between U.S. and Pakistani military leaders.

The U.S. military has traditionally sought to shield such educational programmes from political tensions, arguing that the ties built by bringing foreign military officers to the U.S pay long-term dividends.

For example, the U.S. Army's War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which would normally have two Pakistani military officers per year, boasts graduates including Lieutenant General Naveed Mukhtar, the current director-general of Pakistan' powerful spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI).

The War College, the U.S. Army's premier school for foreign officers, says it has hosted 37 participants from Pakistan over the past several decades. It will have no Pakistani students in the upcoming academic year, a spokeswoman said.

Pakistan has also been removed from programmes at the U.S. Naval War College, Naval Staff College and courses including cyber security studies.

Trump doubles steel and aluminium tariffs on Turkey

Says U.S. relations with Ankara are not good at this time

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he had doubled steel and aluminium tariffs on Turkey, adding to the pressure on the nation's troubled economy amid a diplomatic row with Washington.

"I have just authorised a doubling of Tariffs on Steel and Aluminium with respect to Turkey as their currency, the Turkish Lira, slides rapidly downward against our very strong Dollar!" Mr. Trump said on Twitter. "Our relations with Turkey are not good at this time!"

His announcement came as Turkey's embattled lira hit new record lows against the U.S. dollar and euro, losing nearly 9% in value as strains with America showed no sign of abating and fears grew over the exposure of European banks.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

However, the White House later clarified that Mr. Trump's announcement "authorised the preparation of documents" to raise the tariffs. That means it will likely take some time to implement. Washington imposed the metals tariffs on national security grounds, claiming the glut of steel and aluminium harmed U.S. companies and the economy. It is unclear how that would justify higher tariffs on Turkey but not other countries. Turkey remains at loggerheads with the U.S. over the detention of American pastor Andrew Brunson and a host of other issues.

Direction of economy

Meanwhile, markets are deeply concerned over the direction of economic policy under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with inflation at nearly 16%, but the central bank reluctant to raise rates in response.

Mr. Erdogan on Friday called on Turks to support their struggling currency. "We will not lose the economic war," he said. "If you have dollars, euros or gold under your pillow, go to banks to exchange them for Turkish lira. It is a national fight."

ELSEWHERE



'Imran to be sworn in as Pak. PM on August 18'

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's World Cup cricket hero Imran Khan will be sworn in as Prime Minister on August 18, his party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf said on Friday, announcing it has the numbers to form a coalition government in the nuclear-armed nation. AFP

Russian PM warns U.S. against more sanctions

MOSCOW

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev warned on Friday that if the U.S. followed through with threats to impose further economic sanctions, it would be seen as a "declaration of economic war". AFP

'Nearly 30 dead in heavy bombing on north Syria'

BEIRUT

Heavy bombardment killed nearly 30 civilians across northern Syria on Friday, a monitor said, in some of the fiercest shelling of rebel-held areas there in months. The air strikes targeted the key opposition-held Idlib and a rebel town in Aleppo. AFP

U.K. asked to take a new approach to immigration

Industry body wants Britain to scrap immigration targets

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

Pressure for the U.K. to further shake up its immigration policies grew as the Confederation of British Industry published a report, calling for a "new approach".

It asked the government to scrap immigration targets, leave Britain "open enough" to grow the economy and enable businesses to access talent at all skills levels. It also suggested that trade deals with countries such as India and Australia would be easier to forge if Britain reviewed its approach to visas, and brought migration policy to the trade discussion table.

Britain's needs were "more complex" than only ensuring that the U.K. can attract the "brightest and the best", said Josh Hardie, the CBI's deputy director, referring to a phrase repeatedly used by the government in defence of the existing system. "Housebuilding needs architects for design, labourers to dig foundations and electricians to finish the job... this is no longer a theoretical debate, it's about the future of our nation."



ISTOCK/GETTYIMAGES

Right signals

He called on the government to send the right signals and put "migration on the table" in trade talks both with the EU and other nations, where "it is clear existing visa restrictions inhibit trade and foreign direct investment".

India has repeatedly raised concerns about Britain's unwillingness to ease visa restrictions for professionals, students and others. In particular, Britain's decision to exclude India from a relaxation of visa norms for students provoked criticism from India, raising bilateral tensions.

The report was also supported by industry-specific groups, including U.K. Hospitality, Food and Drink Federation and TechUK. Staying at the forefront of developments in the fast evolving global tech sector required access to "niche digital skill sets from a global pool of talent," the report said.

Among its specific recommendations are reforming the Tier 2 visa route – the main work route for those coming to the U.K., including from India – to ensure that employers could "access the range of skills that they need" and scrapping the annual number of Tier 2 visas issued.

The government recently took doctors and nurses out of the annual limit, but with EU workers leaving the U.K. in larger numbers, the demand for Tier 2 visas has risen, leaving businesses unable to hire the talent they needed.

Four killed in Canada shooting

Two police officers among those dead in Fredericton attack, one suspect arrested

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
OTTAWA

Two police officers were among four people killed on Friday in a shooting in eastern Canada and a suspect has been arrested, authorities said.

Authorities in the city of Fredericton initially urged people in the Brookside neighborhood, where residents reported waking to the sounds of dozens of shots, to remain in their homes, describing it as an "active incident" on Twitter.

Around an hour after giving first word of the killings, a second and then a third message from police said: "At this time, we can confirm that we have one suspect in custody" and "of the four people killed in this morning's shootings on Brookside Drive, two were Fredericton police officers."



On alert: Emergency vehicles seen at the Brookside Drive area in Fredericton, on Friday. ▪ KEV BOURQUE/REUTERS

Then came word that the threat had been neutralised, the lockdown was lifted and the police cordon was shrunk to a few blocks: "We can confirm that there is no further threat to the public, and lockdowns are not required at this time."

The circumstances of the shooting in the capital of New Brunswick province, home to about 60,000 people, were not immediately clear.

"Awful news coming out of Fredericton," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a Twitter message.

"My heart goes out to everyone affected by this morning's shooting. We're following the situation closely," he said.

Half a million Venezuelans fleeing crisis enter Ecuador

Quito declares a state of migration emergency

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

More than half a million Venezuelans have crossed into Ecuador this year, the UN said on Friday, after Quito declared a state of migration emergency triggered by the crisis engulfing Venezuela.

Colombia and Brazil, which share borders with Venezuela, have borne the brunt of the regional humanitarian emergency brought on by the near total collapse of the Venezuelan economy.

But with the crisis deepening, the "influx is now accelerating" into Ecuador and beyond, with some people making arduous weeks-long journeys on foot before finding a place to settle, the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said in Geneva.

"Since the beginning of the year, some 5,47,000 Venezuelans have entered Ecuador through the Colombian border," UNHCR said, noting that most have continued onwards to Peru and Chile.

"Many run out of resources to continue their journey and, left destitute, are forced to live rough in public parks and resort to begging... in order to meet their daily needs," the agency added.

The UNHCR said Ecuador's state of emergency declaration would help mobilise more resources.

Caracas's diplomatic isolation has intensified, with the country in the grip of staggering hyperinflation, shortages of food and medicine.

Yemen air strike: UNSC seeks probe

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DAHYAN

The UN Security Council on Friday called for a "credible" probe after an air strike by a Saudi-led coalition killed at least 29 children in northern Yemen.

The coalition itself, following calls from the UN and U.S., announced an investigation into Thursday's strike.

The Council met behind closed doors on Friday to discuss the attack, at the request of five countries which are non-permanent members.

Trump attacks NFL protesters

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump called on Friday for NFL players who kneeled during the national anthem to be suspended without pay, renewing his attack on the protesting athletes.

Mr. Trump, who triggered an uproar last year after condemning players protesting social injustice, lashed out again after two Miami Dolphins players took a knee during a preseason game on Thursday.

"The NFL players are at it again – taking a knee when they should be standing proudly for the National Anthem," Mr. Trump wrote on Twitter. "A football game, that fans are paying soooo much money to watch and enjoy, is no place to protest. Most of that money goes to the players anyway.



In protest: Malcolm Jenkins, of the Philadelphia Eagles, raises his fist during the national anthem. ▪ AFP

"Find another way to protest. Stand proudly for your National Anthem or be Suspended Without Pay!"

Mr. Trump's salvo came after Miami players Kenny Stills and Albert Wilson took a knee during a rendition of *The Star-Spangled Banner* on Thursday.

In a separate protest, Philadelphia Eagles players Malcolm Jenkins and De'Vante Bausby raised their fists during the playing of the song before their game against the Pittsburgh Steelers. Political analysts have predicted Mr. Trump would seek to keep the issue alive to energise supporters ahead of November's crucial mid-term elections, framing protesters as unpatriotic and disrespectful to the military.

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MARKET WATCH

	10-08-2018	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,869	-0.41
US Dollar	68.83	-0.21
Gold	30520	-0.13
Brent oil	72.82	0.83

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	379.30	1.30
Asian Paints	1418.60	1.25
Axis Bank	615.50	-5.55
Bajaj Auto	2629.70	-28.90
Bajaj Finserv	7083.85	8.75
Bajaj Finance	2808.45	-21.70
Bharti Airtel	369.80	2.75
BPCL	401.60	12.65
Cipla	621.05	1.90
Coal India	275.80	-4.30
Dr Reddys Lab	2214.30	-23.40
Eicher Motors	28997.70	1558.95
GAIL (India)	362.95	-12.60
Grasim Ind	971.35	-26.00
HCL Tech	966.00	9.35
HDFC	1974.30	4.35
HDFC Bank	2114.45	-4.05
Hero MotoCorp	3319.40	38.05
Hindalco	222.70	-4.75
HPCL	286.15	5.70
Hind Unilever	1752.70	-1.50
Indiabulls HFL	1324.90	-24.60
ICICI Bank	328.60	-4.40
IndusInd Bank	1979.50	-5.55
Bharti Infratel	289.90	-3.35
Infosys	1385.45	5.50
Indian OilCorp	166.35	0.95
ITC	304.80	2.30
Kotak Bank	1285.50	8.25
L&T	1264.65	-20.05
Lupin	809.45	-13.40
M&M	945.95	12.75
Maurti Suzuki	9148.25	2.20
NTPC	159.55	-1.15
ONGC	169.25	0.35
PowerGrid Corp	190.55	-2.05
Reliance Ind	1204.20	-13.75
State Bank	304.45	-12.95
Sun Pharma	554.00	-17.45
Tata Motors	250.10	-7.75
Tata Steel	576.70	-9.25
TCS	1993.10	18.75
Tech Mahindra	645.95	-0.25
Titan	920.10	4.80
UltraTech Cement	4246.20	-64.60
UPL	636.60	-1.15
Vedanta	223.70	-6.90
Wipro	278.85	0.15
YES Bank	382.85	1.80
Zee Entertainment	516.90	-6.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 10

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	68.63	68.95
Euro	78.64	79.01
British Pound	87.60	88.01
Japanese Yen (100)	61.84	62.13
Chinese Yuan	10.02	10.06
Swiss Franc	69.02	69.34
Singapore Dollar	50.07	50.31
Canadian Dollar	52.42	52.68
Malaysian Ringitt	16.79	16.90

Source:Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

August 10 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	41.1	(41.3)
22 ct gold (1 g)	2823	(2822)

IIP surges to five-month high of 7%

'Increase aided by pickup in investment demand, part-spurred by a rise in government expenditure'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Growth in industrial activity picked up to a five-month high of 7% in June, driven by an across-the-board acceleration in growth rates including in sectors such as manufacturing, electricity, infrastructure, and capital and consumer goods, according to official data released on Friday.

The Index of Industrial Production registered a growth rate of 7% in June, rising from 3.93% in May. Within this, the manufacturing sector grew 6.9% in June, an increase from 3.66% in May.



Rays of hope: Strong recovery in manufacturing and consumer durables is encouraging, says ICICI Bank's B. Prasanna. ▪ AFP

'Credit, exports rise'

"There is a pickup in investment demand overall," D.K. Srivastava, chief policy advisor at EY India said. "This is partly driven by an increase in government expenditure. The stimulus by the government on the current and capital sides and a pickup in private investment has led to industrial growth. This is shown by a pickup in other indicators as well, such as credit data and exports."

The primary goods segment within the IIP registered a growth rate of 9.28% in June, up from 5.74% in May. Capital goods witnessed a similar acceleration in growth rates, coming in at 9.62% in June up from 6.92% in the previous month. The infrastructure sector showed strong growth of 8.53% in June, up from 7.42% in May.

"The strong recovery in manufacturing and consumer durables is particularly encouraging as is the continued strength in infrastructure and construction sector," B. Prasanna, group executive and head, global markets group, ICICI Bank, said in a note.

"This is in tandem with credit growth in the construction sector at around 8% during the last 12 months."

'Weak non-durables'

"However, we are slightly concerned with the weakness in consumer non-durables, though this could reverse on the back of normal monsoons and government support aiding rural income as we go ahead," Mr. Prasanna added. Consumer goods saw growth accelerating to 5.92% in June from 1.57% in May.

Within this, consumer durables witnessed a strong surge, registering a growth rate of 13.1% in June, up from 6.39% in May.

Consumer non-durables, however, grew only 0.47% in June, although this reversed the contraction of 2.06% witnessed in the previous month. "The encouraging news is the jump in the production of capital goods and infrastructure and construction goods," Chandrajit Banerjee, director general of CII said in a note.

"Even on a low base of last year, this could be the reflection of the positive investment trend, in sectors such as roads, railways and affordable housing."

SBI posts ₹4,876 cr. loss; slippages shrink

Provides ₹7,098 crore for MTM losses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, reported a ₹4,876 crore loss for the quarter ended June due to provision for investment depreciation as the bank chose to not avail the regulatory dispensation of spreading mark-to-market losses over four quarters.

SBI, which posted a profit of ₹2,006 crore in the year-earlier period, had reported a ₹7,718 crore loss in the January-March quarter.

The bank made a provision of ₹7,098 crore for investment depreciation while earnings included a write-back of taxes of ₹2,379 crore. Operating profit rose marginally to ₹11,973 crore during the reporting period.



Rajnish Kumar

Coverage ratio improves

Fresh slippages were sharply lower in the quarter at ₹9,984 crore, compared with ₹33,670 crore in the preceding quarter and ₹26,249 crore a year earlier.

The bank also improved its provision coverage ratio to 53.38%. It was 50.38% in the quarter ended March and 42.7% a year earlier.

"Fresh slippages are within our guidance... The provision coverage ratio will improve further in the coming quarter," Rajnish Kumar, chairman, SBI, said in the post-earnings media interaction.

While slippages from corporate borrowers were only ₹3,000 crore, agriculture, small and medium enterprises and retail loans contributed to the maximum slippages.

"Slippages in agriculture came from only two States, Maharashtra and Karnataka," Mr. Kumar said. While farmers had been reluctant to pay their dues in Karnataka as there was a pre-election promise of a loan waiver (which was eventually kept), in Maharashtra, a waiver was announced a year back, the full payment for which was yet to come.

Non-performing asset ratios improved sequentially with gross NPA ratio slipping to 10.69% compared with 10.91% in the previous quarter, but higher than the 9.97% posted a year earlier.

The bank reported a 23.8% rise in net interest income to ₹21,798 crore, mainly due to resolution of stressed assets referred for bankruptcy proceedings.

As a result, domestic net interest margin for the quarter also swelled to 2.95% from 2.67% a quarter earlier and 2.5% a year earlier. Mr. Kumar said NIM would stabilise at about 2.8%.

Loan growth

While domestic advances grew 7.2%, overseas loan growth shrank 4.4% mainly as a result of the Reserve Bank of India's decision to ban letters of undertaking for buyers' credit.

In the U.K., SBI has carved out a subsidiary so that loans extended by the arm do not accrue to SBI's books.

Mr. Kumar said the bank was looking at 10% loan growth in the current fiscal.

PV sales dip for first time in 9 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle (PV) sales declined for the first time in nine months, on account of a high base last year when sales had spiked due to the GST roll-out across the country.

According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, domestic passenger vehicle sales fell to 2,90,960 units last month from 2,99,066 units a year earlier. "Despite this drop, we are satisfied with the situation as we believe all the industry segments are on a growth path," SIAM Deputy Director General Sugato Sen said. PV sales had last dropped marginally in October.

HDFC Bank Sukthankar's surprise resignation sparks 'Axis' speculation

Was seen as successor to Aditya Puri after being elevated as Deputy MD in 2017

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In a surprise move, HDFC Bank's deputy managing director Paresh Sukthankar has decided to put in his papers, ending a 24-year-long career in the second-largest private sector lender.

Mr. Sukthankar was elevated to the deputy managing director's post in 2017 from an executive director's post, a move that was seen as grooming him to succeed the bank's managing director Aditya Puri, who is due to retire in October 2020.

"We hereby inform you that Mr. Paresh Sukthankar has tendered his resignation as Deputy Managing Director, to be effective 90 days from the close of business hours of today," HDFC Bank said in a filing to the exchanges on Friday.



Paresh Sukthankar

"The board of the bank places on record its sincere appreciation for the contribution made by Mr. Sukthankar in his long association with the bank and wishes him the very best in his future endeavours," it added.

Key role

Mr. Sukthankar has been with HDFC Bank since its inception in 1994 and was instrumental in transforming HDFC Bank into a leading financial institution. Prior to HDFC Bank, he was with Citibank for nine years.

He has done his Masters in Management Studies (MMS) from Jamnalal Bajaj Institute (Mumbai) and the Advanced Management Program (AMP) from the Harvard Business School.

Mr. Sukthankar's resignation triggered industry speculation that he may be set to join rival Axis Bank as managing director and chief executive officer. Axis Bank's MD & CEO Shikha Sharma has decided to step down from December 31 and the bank's board has shortlisted three candidates and have sent them, in order of preference, to the Reserve Bank India (RBI) for approval.

Axis Bank has not disclosed the names of the three candidates.

Jet shares plunge 8.4% to 3-year low

There is panic among investors after the results were deferred, says analyst

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Jet Airways plunged 8.4% to a more than three-year low on Friday after an overnight decision by the board to defer the announcement of its quarterly results exacerbated investor concerns about the airline's financial health.

The shares, which hit a 52-week low of ₹261.60 intraday, ended the day at ₹276.40 on the BSE, its lowest close since June 2015.

"There is panic among the company's investors," said Ambareesh Baliga, an independent stock analyst. "Having problems in accounting is a serious issue... Investors were worried about the cash-crunch situation and now the accounting issue has aggravated the situation," he said.

"People have witnessed the Kingfisher Airlines saga. Jet Airways is not like Kingfisher, but the accounting issue has been taken seriously. Now the company must



come clean and address all concerns," he added.

BSE seeks clarity

The BSE on Friday sought more clarity from the company on its decision to defer announcement of the financial results for the quarter.

"It is observed that the disclosure lacks certain information required to be disclosed to the exchange," BSE wrote to the company.

"What are the matters pending for closure of unaudited financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2018, of the company, on account of which the results were not recommended by the Audit Committee to the board?" the BSE asked.

Jet Airways said in a statement that the Audit Committee had on Thursday met ahead of the board meeting with all the duly appointed members participating in both the meetings.

"Since the management and the auditors informed the Audit Committee that they needed more time to finalise the accounts, the Audit Committee, on their request, agreed to accord them further time to finalise the accounts and directed that the finalised accounts be placed before the Audit Committee thereafter," a Jet Airways spokesperson said.

The airline said this was not the first instance in corporate India that a quarterly result had been deferred.

Separately, State Bank of India clarified to *The Hindu* that the airline had been regular in its loan repayments to the bank and that the account remained 'standard'.

SEBI looks into Jet's decision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Regulator SEBI is looking into Jet Airways' deferring the announcement of June quarter results following reservations expressed by the airline's audit committee, sources said. SEBI, they added, was concerned about possible lapses in disclosure norms and corporate governance.

'India to triple ethanol production by 2022'

Aim is to reduce oil import bill by ₹12,000 crore, says Prime Minister Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India will triple its ethanol production over the next four years till 2022 and this will save ₹12,000 crore in the country's oil import bill, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, which is being celebrated as World Biofuels Day.

The Prime Minister also blamed the previous government for not encouraging the production and adoption of ethanol, saying his government has planned 12 biofuel refineries in the country at an investment of ₹10,000 crore. "The ethanol blending programme was started during the Vajpayee government," Mr. Modi said. "But previous governments



Higher capacity: The Centre has planned 12 biofuel refineries at an investment of ₹10,000 crore. ▪ CH. VIJAYA BHASKAR

did not take the ethanol programme seriously. Now we will produce 450 crore litres of ethanol in the next four years from the existing 141 crore litres. This will result in an import savings of ₹12,000 crore." The government will achieve 10% ethanol blending in petrol by 2022 and is aiming to double it to 20%," Mr. Modi added.

However, the government's biofuel policy has come under some criticism, with Kalikesh Singh Deo, Member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas saying the policy itself needs revisiting.

'Abysmal levels'

"India needs to adopt a holistic approach to meet the consistent targets of ethanol blending, which this government has been maintaining at abysmal levels (2% currently as per the policy document itself)," Mr. Deo said in a note.

"There is a plan to set up 12 modern refineries for generating advanced biofuel. The plans announced by the government have been repeated in one form or other since 2014, with little or no success," he added.

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IN BRIEF



L&T bags Hyderabad airport expansion order

HYDERABAD

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd. has awarded contracts to Larsen & Toubro and Megawide Construction Corporation to carry out expansion worth ₹3,028 crore and ₹980 crore, respectively. The work is related to expansion of the terminal building and airside infrastructure. PTI

Take Solutions net rises 52%, revenue up 32%

CHENNAI

Life sciences services provider Take Solutions posted a 52% growth in standalone net profit for the quarter ended June 30, to ₹54.16 crore, aided by a buoyant order book conversion, economies of scale and process automation. Revenue rose 32% to ₹467.54 crore. "We are well positioned to be a half a billion-dollar enterprise by 2021," said H.R. Srinivasan, vice chairman and MD.

Tata Tele Maharashtra may raise ₹20,000 cr.

NEW DELHI

Debt-ridden telecom firm Tata Teleservices Maharashtra on Friday received its board's approval to raise additional funds of ₹20,000 crore through debt instruments. "The board of directors of the company at its meeting held on August 10, 2018, has approved raising of additional funds up to an aggregate amount of ₹20,000 crore," Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) said in a regulatory note. PTI

Hindalco Q1 net profit doubles

Macro environment is supportive, higher input costs notwithstanding, says MD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Hindalco Industries Ltd., a unit of the Aditya Birla group, more than doubled its net profit for the quarter ended June to ₹734 crore, from a year earlier, helped by lower finance costs.

Revenue for the quarter was ₹10,670 crore. The aluminium maker achieved the highest-ever quarterly earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda) of ₹1,951 crore, which grew 17% on the back of 'supportive macro environment, better operations and higher by-product realisation in the copper business'.



Tight ship: Hindalco ran a good operation and kept a tight control on costs, says Satish Pai. ▪ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

Interest expense drops

This was despite increase in the input costs, mainly for coal and furnace oil. Interest expense declined by 23% to ₹464 crore, mainly on account of repricing of long-term project loans and repayments made in the last year. "The macro economic environment in the quarter was good," Satish Pai, MD, Hindalco, said in an interview. "We ran a good operation and kept tight control on costs. This helped us double the net profit," he added.

Mr. Pai said barring a threat from massive imports, the demand situation looked promising and the company would fare better in the coming quarters.

During the quarter, the company's aluminium revenue stood at ₹5,667 crore. Ebitda was ₹1,531 crore in the first quarter, rising 35% on the back of better realisations and stable plant operations.

Revenue from the copper segment stood at ₹5,006 crore in the quarter, compared with ₹5,403 crore in the year earlier period.

The business was impacted by lower volumes on account of a planned maintenance shutdown in the quarter at one of the smelters.

Novelis buoyed by prices

Novelis's revenue grew 16% to $3.1 billion, spurred by higher average aluminium prices, higher shipments and a better product mix.

The total shipments of flat rolled products rose 2% to 797 Kt. The key growth stimulants were higher automotive sheet shipments, operating efficiencies, with higher recycled contents and better cost management, the company said.

Net income at the Novelis business rose 36% to $137 million in the quarter.

Bosch net jumps 42%; sales ride on mobility solutions

Will continue investments in capex, R&D, new markets: MD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Bosch Ltd., a supplier of technology and services, announced on Friday net profit rose 42.4% to ₹431 crore in the first quarter ended June 30, 2018, compared with the same period a year earlier.

"We will continue to make considerable upfront investments – in the form of capital expenditure, high spending on R&D and opening new markets," said Soumitra Bhattacharya, managing director at the Indian unit of Germany's Bosch group.

"The remaining financial year will see Bosch making significant innovative additions to the Indian automotive industry," Mr. Bhattacharya said.

Revenue increased 21.3% to ₹3,212 crore as Bosch's mobility solutions business sector grew 20.5%.



Powering ahead: Mobility sales were driven by the powertrain solutions division which grew 26.5%. ▪ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

Domestic sales climb

Domestic sales increased 21.7%, while exports registered a growth of 7.4%, the company said in a statement. The mobility solutions business was driven by the powertrain solutions business division which grew 26.5%. Powertrain solutions' domestic sales increased 28.2%, outperforming the domestic automotive market, which posted a growth of 24.6% in the same period.

"Bosch is transforming into an end-to-end technology and IoT services provider," Mr. Bhattacharya said.

Ashok Leyland wins double-decker EV deal

U.K. arm to supply 31 buses to London

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) said its subsidiary Optare Plc has bagged an order from Transport for London (TfL) for 31 electric double-decker buses.

The Optare Metrodecker electric double-decker buses, to be bought by Metroline, will be added to the London fleet next summer.

The order, which was recently announced by London Mayor Sadiq Khan at a national air quality summit, will help form the largest electric double-decker bus fleet in Europe, ALL said.



Optare, along with active involvement from Ashok Leyland's engineering team, was at the forefront of e-mobility evolution, according to Ashok Leyland MD Vinod K. Dasari. "It proved that it has the technology prowess that is expected from one of the most challenging markets like the U.K," he said.

Godrej, U.K.'s GKN Aerospace sign pact for helicopter tanks

'Godrej to set up unit for manufacturing rubber fuel tanks'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Godrej Aerospace, a unit of Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd., has signed an agreement with U.K.-based GKN Aerospace, a premier aerospace supplier, for the manufacture of specialised helicopter fuel tanks.

Godrej Aerospace would set up a manufacturing facility for the production of these fuel tanks, the company said in a statement.

'Aiming to be key player'

"This partnership will help establish Godrej Aerospace as one of the key players in the market," said Surendra Vaidya, executive vice president and business head, Godrej Aerospace.



The rubber fuel tanks are an important consideration in the design and safety of helicopters offering crash resistance and puncture tolerance, as well as overall weight reduction.

They follow stringent product requirements in terms of weight, material used, processes and manufacturing skills, according to the statement.

Neel Ghai, group head of supply chain, special products group, GKN Aerospace, said the partnership "will help keep us at the forefront of this technology."

Godrej Aerospace has been manufacturing and supplying systems for aircraft applications for more than 10 years, the company added in the statement.

Apollo Hospitals net surges 71% to ₹60.2 cr.

Firm aims to improve margins to 23%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd. reported standalone net profit jumped 71% from a year earlier to ₹60.16 crore in the quarter ended June 30, as its pharmacy and healthcare businesses posted healthy growth.

"The capex is behind us," said Krishnan Akhileswaran, CFO. "Going forward, depreciation and interest will remain at the same level and operating profit would increase."

Volume growth

Revenue rose 16% to ₹1,910.39 crore, aided by 20% growth in the pharmacy business and a volume driven 12% rise in healthcare. Revenue from new hospitals grew 23%, and at existing hospitals by 10%.



Apollo Hospitals aims to "continue on this trajectory to further improve margins to 23% over the next few quarters," said chairman Prathap C. Reddy.

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India succumbs to swing after hide-and-seek with weather

Anderson, the wrecker-in-chief with five victims; Woakes chips in with two wickets, including that of Kohli, as England bowls out the visitors for a paltry 107

INDIA IN ENGLAND

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
LONDON

Forecasting the weather in Britain, they say, is fairly simple: predict sunshine and showers and you can never be wrong. There was a bit of one and a lot of the other at Lord's on Friday.

There was also no shortage of action. James Anderson – hard to face on flat tracks but a nightmare in amiable conditions – took five for 20 as India was bowled out for 107 on the second day of the second Test.

First the rain was a nuisance, coming and going, making for the kind of stop-start cricket that can never do batting sides any good. India lost the toss and duly suffered, slipping to 15 for three, with just over eight overs bowled by tea-time.

Then the sun came out and India suffered some more as England's pace attack swung the ball around corners. Only 35.2 overs have been bowled in the match but the home side will believe that a result is still a possibility.

No hesitation

At the toss on the second morning – day one's washout was the first at the ground in 17 years – Joe Root had little hesitation putting India in. Look up and not down at Lord's is the old adage, and the England captain would've been pleased by what he saw overhead.

Woakes was preferred over Moeen Ali while India dropped Shikhar Dhawan for Cheteshwar Pujara and Umesh Yadav for Kuldeep Yadav.

Anderson struck five balls in, packing off M. Vijay with a devilish away-swinger. The ball was angled in from the Pavilion End; as Vijay prepared to play a flick through the on-side, it curled away late to clip off-stump.

It took India 22 balls to score its first run, K.L. Rahul – promoted to open – driving Stuart Broad through the covers.

Rahul did not do a great deal wrong a little later when he pushed forward to a delivery from Anderson; but the ball moved just enough to take the outside edge and the Karnataka batsman was gone for eight.

The rain came down a minute later, forcing an early lunch and a two-hour break.

When play resumed, there was time for just 10 deliveries before it started to drizzle. Cheteshwar Pujara and Kohli sprinted off, only to be recalled by the umpires because the rain had stopped.

It was perhaps obvious, from the dark clouds in the corner, that it was going to pour soon but Aleem Dar and Marais Erasmus felt a restart was in order.

Poor running

India had nothing to gain but everything to lose from what was clearly going to be a short passage of play. And it took all of two balls before a third wicket fell, a result of some poor running between the wickets.

Pujara was run out yet again, left stranded two-thirds of the way down the pitch after Kohli changed his mind. Surely enough, the rain arrived, this time truly heavy.

It wasn't until some three hours later that play recommenced. Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane seemed briefly at ease before Woakes came on.

The all-rounder has been troubled by injury of late but he was in his element here, with his superb wrist-position and his whippy action.

He troubled India's batsmen at once. Kohli edged one that Jos Buttler missed at second slip but was out next ball, caught by the same fielder. Woakes' delivery had swung late and Kohli, trying to work the ball through leg, nicked off.

From that point, it was an unedifying procession. Hardik Pandya edged Woakes behind twice in two balls; he was dropped first time but not the second.

Dinesh Karthik was consumed by a wild in-ducker from Sam Curran, Rahane turned inside-out by Anderson, and Kuldeep trapped in front by the same bowler.

Ishant Sharma soon became Anderson's 99th wicket at Lord's. He rejoiced; India has much to think about.

SCOREBOARD

India – 1st innings: M. Vijay b Anderson 0 *(5b)*, K.L. Rahul c Bairstow b Anderson 8 *(14b, 2x4)*, Cheteshwar Pujara run out 1 *(25b)*, Virat Kohli c Buttler b Woakes 23 *(57b, 2x4)*, Ajinkya Rahane c Cook b Anderson 18 *(44b, 2x4)*, Hardik Pandya c Buttler b Woakes 11 *(10b, 2x4)*, Dinesh Karthik b Curran 1 *(3b)*, R. Ashwin lbw b Broad 29 *(38b, 4x4)*, Kuldeep Yadav lbw b Anderson 0 *(11b)*, Mohammed Shami (not out) 10 *(3b, 2x4)*, Ishant Sharma lbw b Anderson 0 *(3b)*; Extras (lb-5, nb-1): 6; Total (in 35.2 overs): 107.

Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Vijay, 0.5 overs), 2-10 (Rahul, 6.1), 3-15 (Pujara, 8.3), 4-49 (Kohli, 21.4), 5-61 (Hardik, 23.3), 6-62 (Karthik, 24.2), 7-84 (Rahane, 29.4), 8-96 (Kuldeep, 33.6), 9-96 (Ashwin, 34.2).

England bowling: Anderson 13.2-5-20-5, Broad 10-2-37-1, Woakes 6-2-19-2, Curran 6-0-26-1.

Toss: England.



Pegged back: M. Vijay is done in by a beauty from James Anderson in the first over. ▪ GARETH COPLEY/GETTY IMAGES

All is not lost yet: Rahane

'England used the conditions really well'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LONDON

India may have been bowled out for 107 on the second day of the Lord's Test but Ajinkya Rahane feels all is not lost yet. "You never know, the match can still be interesting if we get them out early and bat well in the second innings," he said.

"We need to believe; belief is important. There's a long way to go in this match. You never know, the series can still be 1-1 at the end of this match."

Conditions were hard for batting, Rahane stated. "You won't get conditions more challenging than that, with the Dukes ball and Jimmy Anderson bowling well. He didn't bowl one short; he was just there and thereabouts, that 4 and 5m length. If you play out three maidens, get ready to face three more. It's all about patience," he said.

The start-stop nature of the day's play did not help, Rahane felt. "It's not easy when it's start-stop but there are no excuses at the highest level. England bowled well; they used the conditions really well. I'd like to give credit to them."



Over the moon: James Anderson made the ball talk to finish with a five-for. ▪ AFP

Rahane was asked about Cheteshwar Pujara's run-out.

"That definitely hurts, even Pujara will be disappointed," he said. "You've got to accept your mistakes; acceptance is key. When there's a run-out, just before the weather comes in, definitely as a team you feel really bad."

We built up the pressure: Anderson

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LONDON

James Anderson was thrilled with the conditions on offer on the second day of the Lord's Test. "I would have been so disappointed if I had messed up today; they were ideal conditions," he said.

"We didn't think it would do that much; the pitch was dry, with some green grass on top. It's rare that we've had days like that. You're licking your lips and trying to show off your skills. We didn't let them get away."

India's batsmen had not been especially poor, Anderson felt. "If we bowl like that, in those conditions we're going to bowl most teams in the world out. We didn't give them a single bad ball. We built up the pressure. I don't think it's just the Indian batsmen."

Anderson said he had enjoyed his battle with Kohli. "I've really enjoyed the contest between myself and him. He's No. 1 for a reason; you saw how he played at Edgbaston. Unfortunately I've not got him yet but I'll try."

England demands something more special: Gavaskar

'Footwork and patience to see off the new ball is key'

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

Sunil Gavaskar played 16 Tests in England from 1971 at an average of a little over 40.

At the Sony Pictures Network India studio on Friday, the batting maestro, while fielding a few questions from *The Hindu*, said nobody could be prepared for English conditions, like in Birmingham and at Lord's on the second day. *Excerpts:*

Demands on an opening pair in England: England demands something more special than say Australia, South Africa or the West Indies. The ball doesn't move as much in Australia and the West Indies; in the air and off the surface.

So England demands a lot more of footwork, patience to see off the new ball when it's really swinging and seaming. Like in any grade of cricket you will get a delivery that can be scored off. But, generally one has to be a bit more watchful.

Good old Vasu (Vasu Paranjape) used to say, 'give the first half-an-hour to the bowlers, then the next five hours are yours'.



Sunil Gavaskar. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Is India prepared for the conditions: June and July were almost like India, hot. Even on Tuesday, before this Test, it was really hot. You can never be prepared for such conditions; particularly players from the sub-continent, who are used to playing without jumpers, without being encumbered by sweaters and all that.

That's why I keep saying you must keep playing red-ball matches which gives a an idea of playing first class bowlers in England, some of whom might be striving to catch the eye of the selectors.

Kohli's challenge in choosing a Test XI: Generally you pick the guys who are in form, some of whom you know have done well before. Cheteshwar Pujara was left out of the first Test. His form in England was not great, while K.L. Rahul had done well. I believe that in the first Test you play in these countries, you go in with six batsmen because it's your batting which struggles in the first couple of Tests.

So, you give yourself that extra cushion of an additional batsman. There is no guarantee that he's going to score runs. Then you have R. Ashwin, Dinesh Karthik – MSD used to bat at No. 7.

You cannot expect runs from 9, 10 and 11. At best they can hang around... like they did with Virat. He was marvellous the way he farmed the strike in Birmingham.

'Virat has been brilliant'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Virat Kohli's batting in the first Test at Edgbaston that revealed his skill and temperament to deal with the England seamers, especially Jimmy Anderson, has evoked praise from Sunil Gavaskar.

Kohli let off twice, proceeded to score 149 in the first innings and 51 in the second.

Gavaskar, who has been commentating on the Test series from the SPN India studio in Malad here, said: "He has been brilliant... the adjustment he has made in bat speed. In 2014 he was feeling for deliveries outside the off-stump, now he is waiting for the ball and not pushing at it.

"But the way he has made that adjustment has been brilliant. That's the reason he was able to get those big runs."

Jaiswal stars for India

Colts script a memorable series win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MORATUWA

Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal struck an unbeaten hundred as India U-19 cruised to an eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka to win the five-match one day series 3-2 here on Friday.

Batting first, India restricted Sri Lanka to a modest 212 for nine in 50 overs after a collective effort from the Indian bowlers.

The visitors then knocked off the runs in 42.4 overs, courtesy Jaiswal, who hit eight fours and three sixes.

The team, coached by W.V. Raman, needs to be lauded as it came back in the series after trailing 1-2.

The scores:

Sri Lanka U-19 212 for nine in 50 overs (Madhushka Fernando 95, Keshawa Fernando 56, Mohit Jangra two for 30) lost to India U-19 214 for two in 42.4 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 114 n.o.). India U-19 won by eight wickets to take the series 3-2.



On a high: The India under-19 boys posted a comprehensive victory in the final one-dayer. ▪ COURTESY BCCI TWITTER

Vihari stands tall, remains unbeaten on 138

Bawane contributes 80 as India-A finishes the opening day at an imposing 322 for four

SA-A IN INDIA

S. DIPAK RAGAV
BENGALURU

The pattern of the opening day's play in the second 'Test' between India-A and South Africa-A here at the Alur ground ticked every cliche written about what an ideal day for cricket should be.

It was an overcast morning session with heavy cloud cover and cool breeze blowing aiding the fast bowlers, before brightening up post lunch and easing out for the batters.

Put in to bat, India A finished on 322 for four, with G. Hanuma Vihari standing tall with an unbeaten 138. He was supported by Ankeet Bawane's useful knock of 80 after the host was reduced to 80 for three in the first session.

It was the best type of 'English' conditions one could find in the country at this time of the year and it was a good chance for the stars from the first' Test', Mayank Agarwal and Prithvi Shaw to show what they can do.

However the openers perished poking outside the off-stump. Agarwal was dismissed in the first over off Duanne Olivier caught at slip for a duck while Shaw after edging twice through slips ran out luck giving an easy one to the keeper off Anrich Nortje.

Vihari and skipper Shreyas Iyer then came together for a 62-run partnership for the third wicket that was interrupted by bad light for about 10 minutes. Shreyas was the aggressor picking quick boundaries, a couple off the pads to fine leg to get going, before peppering the cover and straight boundaries.

After play resumed, Shreyas chased a wide one off left-arm spinner Senrun Muthuswamy edging to first slip minutes before lunch.

Post lunch, Vihari and Bawane steadied things as the conditions eased out and the duo were rarely bothered by the bowling attack that lacked bite once the new ball tapered off.



In control: Hanuma Vihari steadied things and picked up pace as the conditions eased out. ▪ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

The experienced Vihari yet again played second fiddle to the young Bawane who was more freewheeling in his approach going for his shots once he got his eye in. Vihari picked up his pace after 70 with a flurry of boundaries that took him quickly into the 90s with cover drives and pulls.

Once he got his hundred, Bawane too stepped up lofting the spinners but enthusiasm got the better of him and was stumped to off-spinner Dane Piedt.

Bawane said, "I am really disappointed that I missed out on a hundred. I wanted to accelerate and get to my hundred before the second new ball and just lost my concentration. But a knock like this in tough conditions always feels special."

The scores:

India-A: Prithvi Shaw c Second b Nortje 16, Mayank Agarwal c Hamza b Olivier, G Hanuma Vihari (batting) 138, Shreyas Iyer c Van Der Dussen b Muthusamy 39, Ankeet Bawane st Second b Piedt 80, K.S. Bharat (batting) 30; Extras (nb-6, w-2, b-7, lb-4): 19; Total (for four wkts. in 90 overs): 322.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-18, 3-80, 4-257

South Africa-A bowling: Olivier 18-3-54-1, Nortje 17-4-56-1, Nabe 10-2-46-0, Pretorius 17-1-58-0, Muthusamy 12-2-51-1, Piedt 16-0-46-1.

Toss: South Africa-A.

Smriti storm rattles Thunder



Smriti.

SPORTS BUREAU
TAUNTON

Smriti Mandhana's sensational run continued as she hammered 49 off just 25 balls with seven fours and two sixes to set up Western Storm's 76-run win over Lancashire Thunder in their Kia Super League (KSL) match here on Thursday.

She added 66 for the second wicket with Heather Knight (76).

The scores: Western Storm 185 for 4 (Smriti Mandhana 49, Heather Knight 76, Stafanie Taylor 51 n.o.) bt Lancashire Thunder 109 in 18.2 overs (Nicholas three for 11).

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India expected to rule the roost

The firm favourite could face some resistance from South Korea and Iran

COUNTDOWN

ASHWIN ACHAL

The six-nation Kabaddi Masters men's tournament, held in Dubai a little over a month ago, was viewed as an ideal preparation for the Asian Games.

India, South Korea, Iran and Pakistan were the Asian nations which competed in Dubai, and the event was a chance for the sides to size up their rivals ahead of the continental mega-event.

The results followed a familiar script. Heavy favourite India dominated proceedings, winning all of its six matches to emerge victorious. The Ajay Thakur-led side whipped Pakistan and Kenya twice each in the group stage, before taking out South Korea and Iran in the semifinal and final respectively.

In the summit clash against Iran, India came out with a point to prove. There was extra bite in the tackles, and there were plenty of over-the-top celebrations. So much so that at the post-match press conference, Iran coach Gholamreza Mazandarani accused the Indian team of not playing in the right spirit.

The Indians, meanwhile, managed to well and truly quash all those who questioned their heavyweight status.

With Pakistan suffering a big dip in recent form, India can expect its biggest challenge to come from South Korea and Iran at Jakarta.

The athletic South Koreans are renowned for their quick sideways movements on the court, while Iran is respected for being tough tacklers. The others in the Jakarta field – the likes of host Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Japan – will pose little or no threat to the more established sides.

All said and done, only an off-day can prevent the Indian men from taking their eighth straight gold medal.

Match-winning raiders

In Ajay Thakur, Manu Goyat, Rahul Chaudhari, Pardeep Narwal and Rohit Kumar, the unit has five match-winning raiders. The defence is held firm by Mohit Chhillar and Girish Ernak. Deepak Hooda and Sandeep Narwal are all-rounders of repute. Weaknesses are few, if not completely absent.

The Indian women's team has been similarly dominant. Iran is the other main contender, but the Western Asian nation is yet to conquer the Indian peak.

In the 2017 Asian kabaddi championships, India remained unbeaten and claimed the trophy with a win over host Iran in the final. India has also won the two gold medals on offer since women's kabaddi made its Asian Games debut in 2010.

All-rounder Sakshi Kumari can get the job on both halves of the court, and Sonali Shingate is one of the best attackers going around.

The Indian team, and women's kabaddi in general, suffers from a lack of exposure.

The women do not feature in the ProKabaddi League (PKL), and international tournaments are few and far between. Any ring rust must be quickly erased, as the chance to grab the spotlight at a big event does not come too often.



Formidable unit: India has the firepower to win its eighth straight kabaddi title. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Sports Ministry and IOA organise official send-off

Event marked by a lot of support and some sparring



Matter of pride: Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore told the athletes that it was a great honour to represent India at the Games. ▪ VIVEK TRIPATHI

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

It was an official send-off function for the Asian Games here on Friday, hosted by the Indian Olympic Association and supported by the Sports Ministry. Despite a tenuous relationship, the two highest sports administration bodies have maintained a modicum of unanimity on the public stage.

It wasn't any different this time. While both IOA officials and Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore praised the other for "unstinted support" and "acknowledgement of roles" in providing facilities, it was accompanied by some sparring as well.

"The sports ministry has been very helpful. They generally say no the first time but agree to our requests the second time," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta quipped, evoking laughter from those gathered and wry smiles from those on stage including IOA president Narinder Batra and India's chef-de-mission Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh besides Rathore.

Chopra to be flag-bearer

- Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will be India's flag-bearer at the opening ceremony on Aug. 18
- The 20-year-old is the reigning Commonwealth Games champion and junior world record-holder

He wasn't done. "Any NSF that has any requests or issues can take it up with the minister here, he won't say no," he said. "I hope the ministry will continue to be supportive and clear our complete contingent for the Games soon, maybe within an hour of this function getting over," he added.

"I would also ask the stakeholders to announce cash incentives, if any, for the athletes to further incentivise their performances," he insisted.

The occasion saw Rathore remind the athletes – a handful were present including shooters Anish Bhanwala and Sanjeev Rajput, hockey players Sardar Singh and Savita Punia – that their identities were subservient to that of the nation.

"It is a matter of great pride that you are representing the country and you have earned this privilege. When you take part in the Games, you lose your individual identity and your identity there is just 'India'. It is a big responsibility, whatever you do on and off the field," he said.

Assuring the IOA he said, "I congratulate the IOA and the NSFs for preparing these athletes. We have to work collectively, nobody can work alone. Regarding the selection process, we will leave it to the IOA and NSFs. We will pay due respect to what the IOA has recommended."

Batra hoped for more medals from the 800-plus contingent that includes 572 athletes in 36 sports. The original IOA list had 541 names but the constant chopping, changing and addition following a host of court cases saw the numbers go up. Interestingly, the later entries are yet to be accepted by the organisers.

Big Heart clinches Leading Stud Cup`

BENGALURU: Big Heart (Zervan up) won the Leading Stud Cup, the main event of the concluding day's races held here on Friday (August 10). The winner is owned by Dr. Suresh Chintamaneni & Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy and trained by Prasanna Kumar.

LEADING INDIVIDUAL OWNER: M/s. Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd. Earned stake money of ₹1,62,50,652.

LEADING JOINT OWNER: M/s. Villoo Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd, M/s. Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd, Mr. Rajesh Narredu and Mr. Sanjay Kumar Shinde. Earned stake money of ₹47,68,913.

CHAMPION TRAINER: Mr. Prasanna Kumar - saddled 15 winners.

CHAMPION JOCKEY: Trevor - having ridden 29 winners.

CHAMPION INDIAN JOCKEY CLAIMING ALLOWANCE: Antony - having ridden six winners and six second.

HORSE OF THE SEASON: Dancing Dragon - 3 winners and 1 second, out of 4 starts.

CHAMPION HORSE: Sir Cecil - Earned stake money of ₹1,91,13,388.

LEADING STUD FARM: M/s. Dashmesh Stud - bred 17 winners.

1 **CHAMPION JOCKEY CUP** (1,200m), rated 00 to 20: **SILKEN STRIKER** (Anjar) 1, Ultimate Power (Darshan) 2, Helios (Rajesh K) 3 and Moon Blink (Kiran Rai) 4. 5-1/2, 5 and 3/4. 1m 14.57s. ₹54 (w), 18, 19 and 16 (p), SHP: ₹52, THP: ₹47, FP: ₹688, Q: ₹194, Trinella: ₹3,368 and ₹1,064, Exacta: ₹13,780 and ₹5,100. Favourite: Helios. Owners: Skambha Equine Enterprises Pvt Ltd rep by. Mr. Martin John Tower & Mr. John Thomas D. Trainer: Irfaan Ghatala.

2 **TOTALIZATOR CUP** (1,100m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms): **WINGS OF DESIRE** (Trevor) 1, Alpha (Arshad) 2, No Opinion (Dhanu Singh) 3 and My Lexicon (Vaibhav) 4. Not run: Armin, Akita Pro and Bond Of Trust. 3/4, 4-3/4 and 8-1/2. 1m 07.49s. ₹20 (w), 10, 10 and 13 (p), SHP: ₹22, THP: ₹19, FP: ₹26, Q: ₹12, Trinella: ₹32 and ₹27, Exacta: ₹40 and ₹27. Favourite: Alpha. Owner: Mr. Aditya Thackersey. Trainer: S. Britto.

3 **LEADING OWNER CUP** (1,600m), rated 30 to 50: **PELUCHE** (Trevor) 1, Gerontocrat (Antony) 2, Indian Pharaoh (Sandesh) 3 and Casey (Vinod Shinde) 4. Nose, 2-1/2 and Nose. 1m 39.86s. ₹23 (w), 12, 15 and 12 (p), SHP: ₹37, THP: ₹44, FP: ₹122, Q: ₹66, Trinella: ₹161 and ₹86, Exacta: ₹2,437 and ₹2,136. Favourite: Peluche. Owners: M.R. Stud Farms Pvt Ltd rep by. Mr. N. Chandrashekar Rai & Manjri Horse Breed Farm Pvt Ltd rep by. Mr & Mrs. S.P. Mistry. Trainer: Neil Darashah.

4 **LEADING STUD CUP** (1,400m), rated 60 & above: **BIG HEART** (Zervan) 1, Automatic (A. Qureshi) 2, Courage (Vinod Shinde) 3 and Big Sur (Trevor) 4. 2-1/2, 2-1/2 and Hd. 1m 25.84s. ₹28 (w), 14, 18 and 17 (p), SHP: ₹48, THP: ₹50, FP: ₹115, Q: ₹85, Trinella: ₹507 and ₹198, Exacta: ₹1,104 and ₹339. Favourite: Big Heart. Owners: Dr. Suresh Chintamaneni & Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

5 **LEADING TIPSTER CUP** (1,600m), rated 00 to 20: **ALEEF** (Samson) 1, Kings Kid (Sai Kiran) 2, Amazing Angel (Trevor) 3 and Perfect Prince (Rayan) 4. Hd, 3 and 3/4. 1m 42.07s. ₹65 (w), 19, 18 and 16 (p), SHP: ₹64, THP: ₹58, FP: ₹349, Q: ₹165, Trinella: ₹1,000 and ₹304, Exacta: ₹8,430 and ₹4,336. Favourite: Amazing Angel. Owner: Mr. A. Wajid. Trainer: Mahmood Khan.

6 **CHAMPION TRAINER CUP** (1,400m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms): **SECRETIVE FORCE** (Srinath) 1, Ciel Etoile (Trevor) 2, Foi Et Amour (Sandesh) 3 and Star Man (R. Marshall) 4. Not run: Arrogance. 6-1/2, 1 and 2-3/4. 1m 27.48s. ₹22 (w), 11, 11 and 16 (p), SHP: ₹30, THP: ₹37, FP: ₹36, Q: ₹19, Trinella: ₹100 and ₹60, Exacta: ₹1,722 and ₹1,979. Favourite: Secretive Force. Owner: Ms. Ameeta Mehra. Trainer: Darius.

7 **GOOD-BYE STAKES** (1,200m), rated 15 to 35: **EYE SIGN** (Md. Feroz) 1, Tio Rico (Antony) 2, Girl With Pearl (Vinod Shinde) 3 and Another Rainbow (Raja Rao) 4. 1-3/4, 3 and 2. 1m 15.18s. ₹231 (w), 55, 12 and 15 (p), SHP: ₹36, THP: ₹47, FP: ₹450, Q: ₹261, Trinella: ₹660 and ₹354, Exacta: ₹22,269 and ₹23,859. Favourite: Tio Rico. Owner: Mr. Deepak Kumar Premnath. Trainer: G. Sandhu.

Jackpot: ₹55,162 (11 tkts); Runner up: ₹406 (641 tkts); Treble (i): ₹229 (88 tkts); (ii): ₹4,731 (six tkts).

Reliving Abhinav Bindra's 'golden hour'

Even a decade later, his Olympic gold at Beijing remains a moment unmatched

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Today is the 10th anniversary of Abhinav Bindra's Olympic gold in Beijing. Indian sport has moved forward over the last decade, but the moment remains unmatched.

Some of us who were lucky to be present at the shooting range on August 11, 2008, in China, have distinct memories of the tension before the final, and the overwhelming flow of emotions after the triumph.

"Not again" was the first thought when one noticed a ridiculously low score by Bindra on the first "sighting" shot, as the shooters were getting ready for the climax.

Bindra was trailing the leader by two points in the qualification, in those days when the qualification score was carried forward to the final.

In Athens, a dodgy wooden flooring had robbed him of an Olympic medal in 2004, when he was shooting at his very best, but returned poor scores in the final. Not again was a thought triggered in the knowledge of that background.



Heady days: Abhinav Bindra shows off his Olympic men's 10m air rifle gold in this August 14, 2008, file photo. ▪ REUTERS

Scores to settle

Bindra had many scores to settle but the score on the computer, at the moment of reckoning, was devastating in Beijing.

It was bone chilling for those who understood the gravity of the situation with a 4, mocking at the dreams, on the monitor.

It was here that Bindra pulled himself up to show his supreme quality. He tuned the misbehaving rifle in moments and stayed focused on the target, forgetting that it was an Olympic final! Years of perfection took over, to put Bindra on autopilot. The Athens experience helped him stay detached from the results.

Bindra closed the show with a near-perfect 10.8 last shot to leave the defending champion Zhu Qinan of China 0.8 point behind, and in a flood of tears.

"The gold medal was a great moment, but in sport yesterday never counts!," Bindra responded from Vienna on Friday, when congratulated on the golden anniversary.

Having moved on and having been entrusted with the responsibility of being a member of the Athletes Commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) a day earlier, Bindra said he did not like to dwell in the past.

"I don't live in the past, but I do hope that the achievement continues to inspire Indian athletes and propel them to win their own gold medals," Bindra said.

A champion of rare calibre, Abhinav Bindra will continue to contribute to the growth of world sports, even though his heart yearns for Indian sport to spring to life in a robust fashion.

For sure, he is the man for the moment, then and now!

Saina out of top 10, Srikanth eighth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Owing to their poor run of form at the World Championships, Saina Nehwal dropped out of the top 10 while K. Srikanth slipped two places to eighth in the latest BWF rankings. Saina lost a place to be 11th.

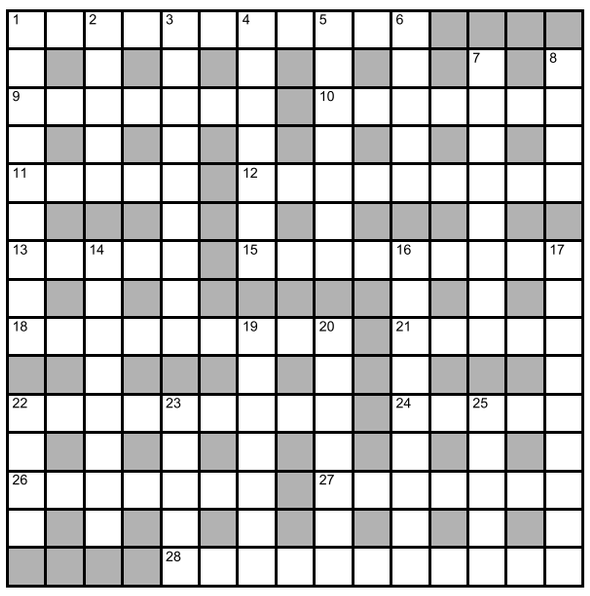
P.V. Sindhu, who clinched her second successive silver at the event, retained her third spot. H.S. Prannoy, who also lost in the second round at Nanjing, remained 11th.

A quarterfinal finish at the World Championships saw B Sai Praneeth move up two spots to 24th, while Sameer Verma dropped two places to 21.

The mixed doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy made a massive jump of 12 places to be at a career-best ranking of 28th position. Satwik and Chirag Shetty also improved a couple of places to No. 23 in the men's doubles rankings.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12393

(set by Gridman)



ACROSS

1 You once were caught in secret delight – it's a fancy (4,7)

9 Crow: knave brings bundle back (7)

10 Nice tax reform not quite correct (7)

11 With regret – miserable lads sorry in the extreme (5)

12 Mean person's mother in Dutch port (9)

13 Get used to one tricky run with ultimate fortitude (5)

15 Green site developed in reserve (9)

18 Interest perked up about one complaint (9)

21 Recorded: a learning method by speech (5)

22 Committed reserve detectives drawn back to engage in exploit (9)

24 More courageous casino patron (5)

26 Fruit, a necessity a son retrieved (7)

27 Tiny holes in most of fruit hoarded in South Arcot (7)

28 European country said to be foolishly inapt in makeup (11)

DOWN

1 Unfairness suppressed right within one French city (9)

2 Not all fortune I declared initially is clear (5)

3 Dry debate about child's toy (5,4)

4 Forward subject for a report on hospital sections (7)

5 Good germ fighter to shine (7)

6 One's header for an essay (5)

7 Son endlessly gained and appropriated for Californian city (3,5)

8 Cut off leaf holder (4)

14 Adept out and determined to be current (2-2-4)

16 Place for discussion sewn up by half-grim publishing house (9)

17 A brine mixture made by worker is intoxicating (9)

19 Measure speed of bird? (7)

20 Cruel folks dump a wicked god with a little temerity among saints (7)

22 Break in race (4)

23 Held on to Chennai's top organ (5)

25 Two notes about a beach (5)

SUDOKU

			4					
2	7	6	9			4		3
8			2				7	
		4				8	2	7
				7				
7	6	8				9		
	1				9			5
3		7			4	1	8	6
					1			

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12392

S	A	C	R	E	D		P	R	A	C	T	I	C	E
A		R		V		A		O		O		N		A
L	O	U	D	E	S	T		M	I	N	U	T	E	S
E		E		N		R		E		N		E		I
S	O	L	U	T	I	O	N		D	E	G	R	E	E
M				S		C		F		C		P		R
A	G	E	S		M	I	N	I	A	T	U	R	E	
N		N		D		O		E		S		E		F
	S	E	R	I	O	U	S	L	Y		S	T	A	R
A		R		S		S		D		C				I
D	I	G	I	T	S		E	S	C	A	P	I	N	G
H		E		R		S		M		N		D		H
E	X	T	R	E	M	E		A	N	C	I	E	N	T
R		I		S		E		N		E		A		E
E	X	C	U	S	I	N	G		P	R	I	S	O	N

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

4	2	7	3	8	6	5	9	1
6	9	1	5	4	2	3	8	7
3	5	8	9	1	7	2	4	6
5	8	3	2	7	4	1	6	9
2	6	4	1	5	9	7	3	8
7	1	9	6	3	8	4	5	2
8	7	5	4	6	1	9	2	3
1	3	2	8	9	5	6	7	4
9	4	6	7	2	3	8	1	5

FAITH

Plight of the soul

Whatever birth a soul takes, human, animal or insect, it involves a painful process right from the period of gestation in the womb followed by birth, growth and death. It may take many births for the soul to understand that apart from the physical body that is taken and shed in every birth, it journeys with its subtle body through the spheres, earth, hell or heaven, to reap the benefits of past actions.

Kapila's message in the Bhagavata Purana captures the ironical plight of the soul who, as a ten month old foetus in the mother's womb, is endowed with all this jnana, and also knows that it will be surely lost at birth, pointed out Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse. The foetus is disgusted by repeated entry into the mother's womb and prays to the Lord not to send it to the world, where it will have to face misery that is far greater than the misery in the womb. It has a clear perception of the past birth and wants to avoid fresh actions that become the basis of future births.

Though this memory of the past is present in the foetus, it is erased by the sway of the Lord's Maya when by the force of wind and by the natural course of circumstances the full grown foetus is pushed out of the womb. Automatically losing this wisdom, it gives in to worldly attachments as it passes through the experiences of infancy, boyhood, youth and old age. The values of truth, purity, compassion, wisdom, prosperity, forbearance, control of mind and senses are overtaken by infatuation and bondage of the evils of samsara.

Kapila's advice is that the soul can get liberated from this cycle by knowing its true nature as distinct from all else and by staying devoted to the Lord, and by offering the all the fruits of one's actions at His feet.

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TV PICKS

England vs India: Second Test, day 3, 3.30 p.m.; Sony Six, Sony Ten 3 (SD & HD).
Golf: PGA Championship, 7 p.m., Sony Ten Golf HD.

IN BRIEF



Ullrich held over assault: police

FRANKFURT

Former Tour de France winner Jan Ullrich was arrested early on Friday for allegedly assaulting a prostitute in Frankfurt, police said. "He is in police custody," a police spokesman said, adding that the German national "was under the influence of alcohol and drugs". AFP



Leicester extends Vardy deal

LONDON

Leicester City tied down England striker Jamie Vardy to a new four-year contract on Thursday after bolstering its defensive options with the signings of Croatian Filip Benkovic and Turkish international Caglar Soyuncu. Leicester also resisted interest from Manchester United for Harry Maguire. AFP

Tsitsipas sends Djokovic packing

TORONTO

Stefanos Tsitsipas shocked Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-3 to reach the Rogers Cup quarterfinals on Friday.
Important results (third round): **At Toronto**: Grigor Dimitrov bt Frances Tiafoe 7-6(1), 3-6, 7-6(4); Kevin Anderson bt Ilya Ivashka 7-5, 6-3; Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-3; Alexander Zverev bt Daniil Medvedev 6-3, 6-2; Marin Cilic bt Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-2; Robin Haase bt Denis Shapovalov 7-5, 6-2; Karen Khachanov bt John Isner 7-6(5), 7-6(1); Rafael Nadal bt Stan Wawrinka 7-5, 7-6(4).
At Montreal: Ashleigh Barty bt Alize Cornet 7-6(3), 6-4; Anastasija Sevastova bt Julia Goerges 6-3, 7-6(2); Sloane Stephens bt Carla Suarez Navarro 6-2, 7-5; Simona Halep bt Venus Williams 6-2, 6-2; Caroline Garcia bt Maria Sharapova 6-3, 6-2; Kiki Bertens bt Petra Kvitova 6-3, 6-2; Elina Svitolina bt Johanna Konta 6-3, 6-4; Elise Mertens bt Aryna Sabalenka 2-6, 7-6(1), 6-0.

Boonma flies on 10 birdies

Jyoti Randhawa just about manages to make the cut; Jeev exits

TAKE MASTERS

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

A scintillating 10-under second round propelled Danthai Boonma to the sole lead in the TAKE Solutions Masters golf tournament, at KGA here on Friday. Boonma had a flawless day at the office, carding 10 birdies in a bogey-free round. His putting, in particular, was outstanding.

The Thailand professional started with an incredible seven straight birdies, which forced the rest of the field to play catch up. He could have extended his birdie streak further, if not for a near miss putt on the par-3 eighth hole.

Boonma, who competed in the prestigious Open Championship last month, said, "I forgot to bring my Buddhist pendant necklace this morning. It's my lucky charm, so I went back to the hotel to take it just 20 minutes before my tee-time. Thankfully, the hotel is right next to the course."



Outstanding: Danthai Boonma had a flawless day to go atop the leaderboard. ▪ K. MURALI KUMAR

The elated 22-year-old added, "Today was amazing. This is the first time I've ever shot a 10-under-par in my life. It's also the first time I've started a round with seven birdies."

Boonma (15-under 127) is five shots ahead of the tied-second duo of Argentinian Miguel Carballo and Australian Maverick Antcliff.

India's S. Chikkarangappa (9-under 133 overall) moved up to fourth with a fine seven-under 64. S.S.P. Chawrasia also climbed up the leaderboard, to fifth, after a six-under 65.

Chawrasia nearly did not make it to the tournament, as his mother recently fell seriously ill with high sugar, and had to be admitted in a hospital. "She is doing better now, but she is still in the ICU. I tried to focus on my game, but every now and then, my mind wandered and I thought about my mother," Chawrasia, a six-time winner on the Asian Tour, said.

Jyoti Randhawa (one-under 141) only just managed to make the cut, while another seasoned Indian campaigner, Jeev Milkha Singh (one-over 143), exited the tournament.

The scores (top-nine): 127: Danthai Boonma (Tha) (66, 61); **132:** Maverick Antcliff (Aus) (67, 65), Miguel Carballo (Arg) (66, 66); **133:** S. Chikkarangappa (69, 64); **134:** S.S.P. Chawrasia (69, 65); **135:** Viraj Madappa (70, 65), Y. Suradit (Tha) (66, 69); **136:** Honey Baisoya (70, 66), Khalin Joshi (67, 69), Anura Rohana (SL) (67, 69), Thammanoon Sriroj (Tha) (62, 74), Jake McLeod (Aus) (67, 69), Mathew Killen (Aus) (68, 68).

Jayaram, Mithun move into the semifinals

Get past spirited opponents

VIETNAM OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HO CHI MINH CITY

Ajay Jayaram and Mithun Manjunath put in the hard yards to progress to the semifinals with contrasting wins at the $75,000 Vietnam Open Super Tour 100 tournament here on Friday.

Former World No. 13 Jayaram, who is on a comeback trail after recovering from a hamstring injury, produced a spirited performance to outlast Canada's Sheng Xiaodong 26-24, 21-17 in a thrilling contest.

The 30-year-old Indian, who had reached the final of the 2015 Korea Super Series, will next face seventh-seeded Japanese Yu Igarashi.

Jayaram surged to a 5-0 lead early on but blew the lead as Xiaodong reeled off seven straight points.

The latter enjoyed a 17-14 lead at one stage and also had two game points.

However, Jayaram kept fighting and eventually nosed ahead even as the Canadian shuttler squandered game point opportunities twice.

In the second, Xiaodong was leading 7-3 but Jayaram stormed back to make it 11-8. The Indian continued to pull ahead, managing to stave off a spirited challenge from his rival.

In another match, young shuttler Mithun saw off China's Zhou Zeqi 17-21, 21-19, 21-11 after a hard-fought battle that lasted 56 minutes.

The 20-year-old, a semifinalist at the Russian Open, will square off against Indonesia's Shesar Hiren Rhustavito.

Rituparna bows out

It was curtains for former National champion Rituparna Das as she lost 19-21, 14-21 to Thailand's Phittayaporn Chaiwan in the quarterfinals.

Woodland shoots 64 to seize lead

Woods and McIlroy grind to par

PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ST. LOUIS

Gary Woodland, who has never cracked the top-10 in 27 Major starts, fired a six-under par 64 on Thursday to grab a one-stroke lead over fellow American Rickie Fowler after the opening round of the 100th PGA Championship.

On a day when Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy grinded out level par, unlikely Woodland, who snapped a five-year PGA victory drought by winning in February at Phoenix, unleashed the best putting round of his career at Bellerive Country Club.

"When I see putts go in, that just gets me going," Woodland said.

"It's really starting to click. I thought I was putting well. It was nice to see them go in."

World No. 44 Woodland, whose best Major finishes have been shares of 12th at the 2011 PGA and 2016 British Open, sank seven birdie putts in 10 holes to pass Fowler, who matched the best Major round of his career with a 65.



Gary Woodland. ▪ AFP

Ninth-ranked Fowler, twice a top-five finisher in every Major, is without a win to show for it, having finished second at the Masters in April.

"I always have hope. It's not something I necessarily worry about," Fowler said.

"Keep putting ourselves in position, get in contention. We'll just keep beating down that door."

Woodland, 34, opened with a bogey but closed the front nine with back-to-back birdies then sank a 44-foot birdie putt at the par-4 11th and added 23-foot birdie putts at 12 and the par-3 16th.

DDCA refutes dissenting voice and its allegations

Says its EC has taken all decisions unanimously

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi and District Cricket Association president Rajat Sharma has taken a serious view of the voices of dissent in the newly elected Executive Committee of the association.

In an obvious reference to director Sanjay Bhardwaj, a former First Class cricketer, Sharma has said , "One individual member of the EC is trying to question the decisions taken by the DDCA EC.

" We would like to put on record that the EC has taken all decisions unanimously for the welfare of cricket in Delhi.

"The voice of dissent is a result of vested interests and personal favours not being allowed by the EC."

The press release, sent by the EC collectively barring two members, said, "We take pleasure in informing you that as the new Executive Committee of the DDCA completes one month in office, we have, for the betterment of cricket in Delhi, taken the following steps:

1. Appointed a Cricket Committee comprising of international players of repute who have contributed greatly to Indian cricket. Members of the Cricket Committee are Virender Sehwag, Aakash Chopra and Rahul Sanghvi.

Ombudsman

2. Appointed Ombudsman cum ethics officer for the DDCA. We are fortunate to have Hon'ble Justice Badr Durrez Ahmed, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir as our Ombudsman.

3. Have appointed a team of experienced professionals with impeccable record to manage the day to day affairs of the DDCA. CEO Ravi Kant Chopra is former Director General of Defence Estates, Ministry of Defence. CFO, P.C. Vaish has been the Chairman & Managing Director of National Textile Corporation Ltd., G.R. Saxena, COO was Senior Vice President HR & Administration at The Indian Express Pvt. Ltd. and General Manager Cricket Operations, Mr. Devender Negi, retired Lt. Colonel, looking after sports development in the Indian Army, he has been looking after Strategic Operations & Planning of Indian Premier League (IPL)."

4. Selection process of selectors, coaches, managers and physios has been completed in a very professional and transparent manner independently by the cricket committee.

"We would here like to appraise you that certain negative elements with vested interests in the DDCA are trying to spread lies about our executive committee and making futile efforts of showing rifts within the executive."

Held back

The DDCA, however, has held back the announcement of the coaches for different teams after having picked the selectors.

Meanwhile, Bhardwaj has called a press conference on Saturday claiming to "expose" the working of the EC.

Pranjala and Rutuja prevail in final



Champs: Y. Pranjala and Rutuja Bhosale won the women's doubles title in the ITF tennis tournament in Thailand.

SPORTS BUREAU
NONTHABURI

Third-seeded Indian duo of Y. Pranjala and Rutuja Bhosale shocked top-seeded pair of Naiktha Bains of Australia and Barbora Stefkova of Czech Republic 2-6, 6-0, [10-6] in the women's doubles final of the ITF $25,000 tennis tournament.
The results: $100,000 Challenger men, Aptos, USA: Doubles (quarterfinals): Marc Polmans & Max Purcell (Aus) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja 7-6(5), 6-2.
$25,000 ITF men, Jakarta, Indonesia: Singles (semifinals): Niki Poonacha bt Jeremy Beale (Aus) 7-6(4), 6-0.
Doubles (semifinals): Justin Barki & Christopher Rungkat (Ina) bt S.D. Prajwal Dev & Mohit Mayur 6-2, 6-2.
$15,000 ITF men, Sintra, Portugal: Singles (quarterfinals): Tiago Cacao (Por) bt Terence Das 6-0, 6-3.
$60,000 ITF women, Jinan, China: Singles (quarterfinals): Wang Yafan (Chn) bt Ankita Raina 7-6(2), 6-4. **Doubles (semifinals):** Shu-Ying Hsieh (Tpe) & Lu Jing Jing (Chn) bt Anastasia Gasanova (Rus) & Ankita Raina 6-4, 6-7(5), [10-5].
$25,000 ITF women, Nonthaburi, Thailand: Singles (semifinals): Wang Xiyu (Chn) bt Y. Pranjala 6-3, 2-6, 6-2.
Doubles (final): Rutuja Bhosale & Y. Pranjala bt Naiktha Bains (Aus) & Barbora Stefkova (Cze) 2-6, 6-0, [10-6].

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Eight storylines to keep an eye on this Premier League season

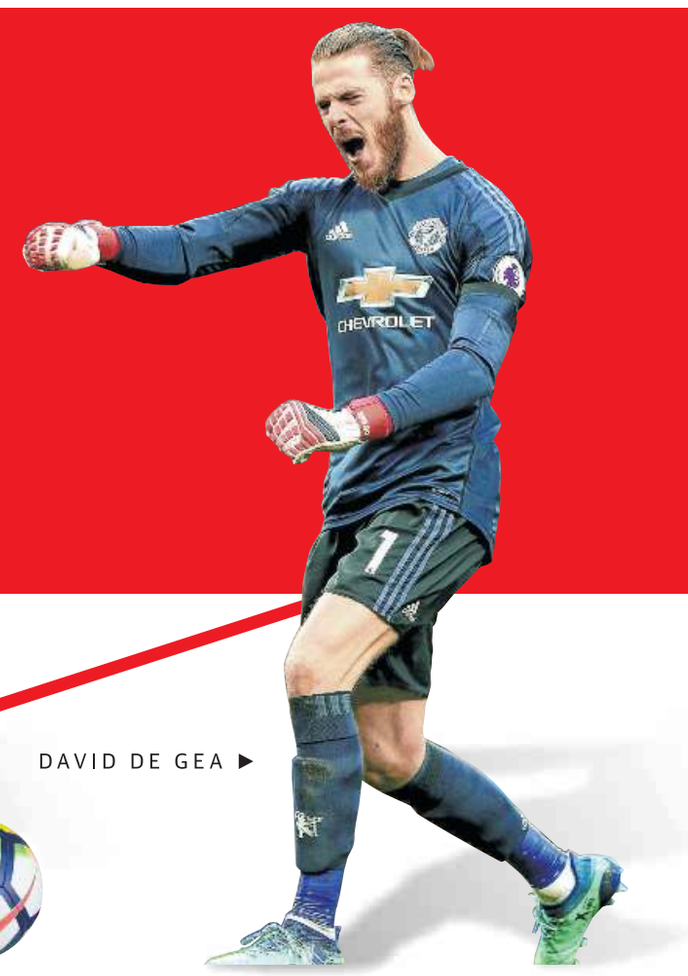
Europe's toughest domestic football competition kicks off this weekend. There will be no shortage of narrative arcs over the next 10 months



◄ KEVIN DE BRUYNE



MOHAMED SALAH ►



DAVID DE GEA ►

01

Guardiola's quest to animate a City rerun

No team has defended the Premier League crown since Manchester United won its third in a row in 2009. "We have won two titles and both times when we came back there was an edge missing," Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany said this March. "That is why it is so difficult to retain titles. Only special teams can do it and we have to become that special team this time."

City certainly has one base covered: a special coach. Under Pep Guardiola, the club swaggered to the 2017-18 championship, playing breathtaking, progressive football. His players seemed to have understood his methods, and the result was unmistakable: 100 points, 32 wins, 106 goals, Premier League records all.

Guardiola's challenge will be harder in his third season. Opposition teams, having studied City's play, will have evolved solutions. But the Spaniard is a master of staying ahead of the curve. It will be fascinating to see what he devises.

City seems satisfied with its squad, expensively assembled last season. The only major acquisition is Riyad Mahrez from Leicester City, another line-breaking dribbler recruited to demolish the buses rival teams invariably park.

02

Finally, a proper title tilt from Liverpool

Since its triumph in 1990 — then the Division 1 championship, not yet the Premier League — Liverpool hasn't got its hands on the most coveted trophy in English football. The club has finished second four times in 28 seasons, even coming within three points of the title in 2013-14, thanks to a red-hot Luis Suarez.

But for the first time in a very long while, there is genuine excitement at Anfield that the squad has the depth of quality needed to mount a sustained campaign.

Under Jurgen Klopp, the Reds have proven an explosive attacking threat — a nightmare for top sides — but there has been the sense that they can be overrun in midfield and exploited in defence.

Liverpool has spent big to address these issues: the costliest defender and goalkeeper at that time (Virgil van Dijk and Alisson), a steely defensive midfielder (Fabinho), and a dynamic, elusive central midfielder (Naby Keita).

On paper, Liverpool looks City's strongest challenger; indeed, Klopp's side has already beaten Guardiola's thrice this year, once in the Premier League and twice in Europe. If Mohamed Salah can reprise his 2017-18 form, the Reds will be in with a sniff. No wonder Klopp said, "I am really looking forward to the season."

03

Mourinho and the famous 'third season syndrome'

Coaches have a sell-by date, and critics of Jose Mourinho — especially those who detest his success — hug themselves in delight when his regime begins to unravel. This has happened thrice before, twice at Chelsea and once at Real Madrid, each time after a triumphant second season.

The mood sours, Mourinho is sullen when addressing the press and says things no club owner wants to hear. The players grow tired of his intense management style. What was 'special' becomes 'toxic'.

All of these signs have been in evidence at Old Trafford (except for a trophy-filled second season). Mourinho's issues with Paul Pogba remain while his criticism of Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial last season was damaging. Manchester United's pre-season had more drama: Mourinho lashed out at the club's owners for the lack of transfer activity, derided his youth players and disparaged others for not cutting short their post-World Cup vacation.

He even went so far as to say he "fears" a difficult season. Another meltdown will be riveting — as will an unexpected revival, bucking all odds.

WORD PLAY

Skyhook

● **What is it?** It's a variant of the hook shot in basketball. The hoopster, often a big man playing the post, throws the ball with a sweeping, upward motion. It differs from the jump-shot in its one-handedness; the other arm is used to create space between the shooter and defender.

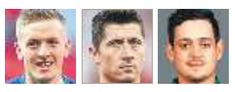
● **How did it come to be?** When the 7'2" Kareem Abdul-Jabbar sank the most graceful of hook shots, from a greater distance and with a higher arc than others, Milwaukee Bucks announcer Eddie Doucette was moved to declare, "The hook was so high it was coming out of the sky".



● **Why is it so rare?** Although very effective, it needs a lot of skill. Sprung off one leg and one arm, it challenges players to find their balance and finesse the ball just right. The great Kareem made it his signature shot, but very few have managed to emulate him.

● **Not to be confused with** The mechanical device supposedly used to operate the Great Glass Elevator in *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*, the Roald Dahl book for children. Kareem's version seemed straight out of a fantasy novel, so it's an easy mistake to make.

ON THE BOX



■ **Premier League:** SAT: Newcastle v Tottenham, 4.45 P.M.; Huddersfield v Chelsea, 7.15 P.M.; Wolverhampton Wanderers v Everton, 10 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD. Fulham v Crystal Palace, 7.15 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD. SUN: Liverpool v West Ham, 5.45 P.M.; Arsenal v Manchester City, 8.20 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & HD. Southampton v Burnley, 5.45 P.M.; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD.

■ **German Super Cup:** SUN: 12 A.M. (MIDNIGHT, MON), Bayern Munich v Frankfurt; STAR SPORTS SELECT 2 & HD.

■ **Cricket:** SUN: Sri Lanka v South Africa, 5th ODI, 2.30 P.M.; SONY ESPN & HD.

■ **Rogers Cup Tennis:** SAT: Quarterfinals, 4 A.M.; SONY ESPN & HD. SUN: Semifinals, 12.30 A.M., 5.30 A.M.; Final, 1.30 A.M. (MON); SONY ESPN & HD.



STACKING UP



ICC Test Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	India	29	3,634	125
2	South Africa	35	3,712	106
3	Australia	33	3,499	106
4	New Zealand	23	2,354	102
5	England	39	3,772	97
6	Sri Lanka	38	3,668	97
7	Pakistan	21	1,853	88
8	West Indies	29	2,235	77
9	Bangladesh	19	1,268	67
10	Zimbabwe	8	12	2

ODI Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	England	51	6,470	127
2	India	48	5,819	121
3	South Africa	37	4,221	114
4	New Zealand	41	4,602	112
5	Pakistan	37	3,844	104
6	Australia	37	3,699	100
7	Bangladesh	27	2,477	92
8	Sri Lanka	46	3,492	76
9	West Indies	32	2,217	69
10	Afghanistan	28	1,758	63

T20I Rankings

#	TEAM	M	PTS	RATE
1	Pakistan	30	3,972	132
2	India	37	4,601	124
3	Australia	21	2,570	122
4	England	21	2,448	117
5	New Zealand	22	2,542	116
6	South Africa	18	2,058	114
7	West Indies	21	2,219	106
8	Afghanistan	25	2,287	91
9	Sri Lanka	27	2,287	85
10	Bangladesh	27	2,066	77



Biggest Movers ►

Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	EVENTS	POINTS
1	Dustin Johnson (USA)	34	43	463.3
2	Justin Thomas (USA)	25	50	474.3
3	Justin Rose (ENG)	37	44	388.43
4	Brooks Koepka (USA)	28	42	330.59
5	Rory McIlroy (NIR)	29	42	309.34



Andrew Putnam (USA)
Rank 90 ▲ 48 spots



Kevin Chappell (USA)
Rank 53 ▼ 5 spots

Top Indian: Shubhankar Sharma (Rank 89)

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	EVENTS	POINTS
1	Ariya Jutanugarn (THA)	22	58	467.41
2	So Yeon Ryu (KOR)	28	47	356.16
3	Inbee Park (KOR)	29	33	258.74
4	Sung Hyun Park (KOR)	24	51	369.42
5	Lexi Thompson (USA)	23	41	266.59



Pornanong Phatlum (THA)
Rank 46 ▲ 51 spots



Gerina Piller (USA)
Rank 96 ▼ 9 spots

Top Indian: Aditi Ashok (Rank 85)



F1 Standings

#	DRIVER	TEAM	POINTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	213
2	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	189
3	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari	146
4	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	132
5	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull	118
6	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	105
7	Nico Hulkenberg	Renault	52
8	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	45
9	Fernando Alonso	McLaren	44
10	Sergio Perez	Force India	30
11	Carlos Sainz	Renault	30
12	Esteban Ocon	Force India	29
13	Pierre Gasly	Toro Rosso	26
14	Romain Grosjean	Haas	21
15	Charles Leclerc	Sauber	13
16	Stoffel Vandoorne	McLaren	8
17	Marcus Ericsson	Sauber	5
18	Lance Stroll	Williams	4
19	Brendon Hartley	Toro Rosso	2
20	Sergey Sirotkin	Williams	0



Men's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Viktor Axelsen (DEN)	24	83,754	11
2	Shi Yuqi (CHN)	22	80,722	15
3	Lee Chong Wei (MAS)	35	77,383	13
4	Kento Momota (JPN)	23	73,907	13
5	Son Wan Ho (KOR)	30	68,812	17

Top Indians ►



K. Srikanth
Rank 8



H.S. Prannoy
Rank 11

Women's Top Five

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Tai Tzu Ying (TPE)	24	96,817	14
2	Akane Yamaguchi (JPN)	21	87,743	16
3	P.V. Sindhu (IND)	23	84,214	16
4	Ratchanok Intanon (THA)	23	77,307	16
5	Chen Yufei (CHN)	20	73,689	16

India's next best ►



Saina Nehwal
Rank 11



J. Vaishnavi Reddy
Rank 50



ATP Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Rafael Nadal	32	9,310	14
2	Roger Federer	37	7,080	18
3	Alexander Zverev	21	5,665	22
4	Juan Martin del Potro	29	5,455	20
5	Grigor Dimitrov	27	4,610	21
6	Kevin Anderson	32	4,355	20
7	Marin Cilic	29	3,905	18
8	Dominic Thiem	24	3,665	26
9	John Isner	33	3,490	23
10	Novak Djokovic	31	3,355	16
11	David Goffin	27	3,120	24
12	Diego Schwartzman	25	2,470	26
13	Pablo Carreno Busta	27	2,290	25
14	Fabio Fognini	31	2,190	24
15	Roberto Bautista Agut	30	2,000	25
16	Kyle Edmund	23	1,950	23
17	Nick Kyrgios	23	1,935	20
18	Lucas Pouille	24	1,870	24
19	Jack Sock	25	1,850	22
20	Borna Coric	21	1,745	22

WTA Rankings

#	PLAYER	AGE	POINTS	EVENTS
1	Simona Halep	26	7,511	16
2	Caroline Wozniacki	28	6,660	20
3	Sloane Stephens	25	5,492	18
4	Angelique Kerber	30	5,305	21
5	Elina Svitolina	23	5,020	18
6	Caroline Garcia	24	4,680	21
7	Garbine Muguruza	24	4,535	21
8	Petra Kvitova	28	4,505	21
9	Karolina Pliskova	26	4,485	20
10	Julia Goerges	29	3,900	22
11	Jelena Ostapenko	21	3,787	21
12	Daria Kasatkina	21	3,525	26
13	Madison Keys	23	3,127	17
14	Venus Williams	38	2,901	15
15	Elise Mertens	22	2,830	23
16	Ashleigh Barty	22	2,555	20
17	Naomi Osaka	20	2,350	21
18	Kiki Bertens	26	2,231	24
19	Anastasija Sevastova	28	2,165	23
20	Mihaela Buzarnescu	30	2,068	33

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Short take: The opening weekend's main-event

Unai Emery's first challenge in charge of Arsenal is a daunting one: a match-up against defending champion Manchester City at the Emirates on Sunday. Emery's 10 previous meetings with Pep Guardiola — Valencia vs. Barcelona — have had interesting tactical plots, but Guardiola and his stronger side have prevailed more often than not (six wins, four draws). There's mutual admiration between the two. Emery has gushed about how Guardiola's positional ideas have broadened and deepened the understanding of football. The City boss has, in turn, called his opposite number "a top, top manager". There are plenty of unknowns going into Sunday — the home crowd's response to Emery, the standard of both teams after the holidays — but by the end of 90 minutes, there will be a little more clarity.



04

Chelsea's tryst with Sarri-ball

Chelsea can be credited with a lot of things — particularly over the last 14 years, when it has been the Premier League's joint-most successful side with five titles (United has five, too). But not even the most ardent admirers of the London club will make the case that it has played beautiful football. It has had eye-catching players, sure, but the club is invested in winning, not in the idea of football as art.

This is set to change with the arrival of Sarri-ball — the attractive, quick-moving, technical style Maurizio Sarri made popular at Napoli. "My goal is to have fun and be competitive," Sarri has said. "Ours is not a sport, but a game, and anybody who plays a game starts doing that when they are young because it is fun. The child in us must be nurtured because this often makes us the best."

A far cry, indeed, from the ways of Mourinho and Antonio Conte. But Sarri has his hands full. A tactical overhaul in a new country with a squad unsettled by the transfer window and in need of a prolific goal-scorer is challenging to say the least.

05

Life after Wenger at Arsenal

North London changed forever when a certain Frenchman announced he was leaving. For 22 years, Arsene Wenger, for all practical purposes, was Arsenal. His departure was felt acutely — even by those who said it was time he left.

The club's greatest manager — along with the visionary Herbert Chapman, who made Arsenal a dominant force in the 1930s, revolutionised tactics and championed floodlit football and jersey numbers — Wenger had three distinct periods.

Early Wenger was about unrestrained success: three Premier League titles (including the Invincibles season), four FA Cups and four Community Shields. Then came the move to Emirates Stadium and a tightening of the belt: *Le Professeur* had to manage on a shoestring budget and make the Champions League every season to keep Arsenal afloat. And finally, a return to trophies (three FA Cups and Community Shields in five years) as the debt was all but paid off and top talent could be bought again.

But pressure mounted in this final period, as Arsenal wasn't seen to be competing for the Premier League. The fan-base divided, and Wenger had no option but to move on.

The club appears to have handled the transition adeptly, hiring some of Europe's finest administrative staff and a world-class coach in Unai Emery. But as the post-Ferguson era at United has shown, vacuums take time filling.

06

Tottenham's Wenger years under Pochettino

As much as Spurs fans hate being compared with Arsenal, they find themselves where their North London neighbours were in 2005: servicing the debt of a new stadium. Fortunately, Tottenham is perhaps better placed. There's more television money in the game these days and Mauricio Pochettino has shown he can put out world-beating teams by developing the players he has at his disposal.

Besides, Harry Kane, one of Europe's finest sharp-shooters, will stay and play: a 25-goal-a-season guarantee papers over many cracks.

Spurs will need all of Pochettino's tactical ingenuity to keep up with their bigger-spending rivals, but it will be no easy task. There's frustration about the dearth of transfers, something Gunner fans from 10 years ago can relate to.

There's also unrest over the scarcity of trophies. Arsenal went trophy-less from 2006 to 2013, but there was light either side of this tunnel. Pochettino is yet to win a trophy of any denomination while Spurs have a mere two League Cups in the last 25 years. A triumph in any of the four competitions Tottenham is in will be something to behold.

07

The never-ending possession debate

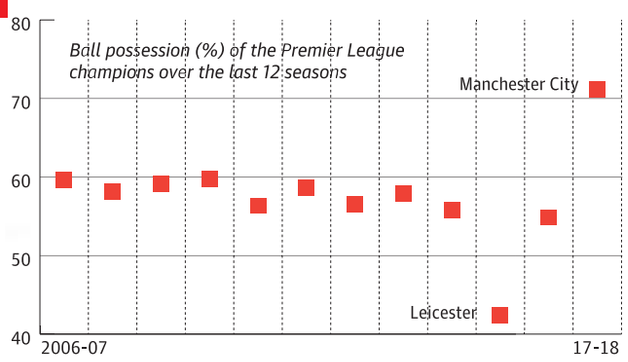
Every season, at least one gormless expert pronounces that possession isn't all it's cracked up to be — that all this tippy-tappy stuff doesn't wash in England — and that champion teams are counter-attacking units that have less of the ball.

There's plenty wrong with all of these claims. Possession, as Guardiola among others have pointed out, is a means to the end, not an end in itself; it's also an excellent defensive ploy: you can't score when I have the ball.

Besides, a possession-rich team can still be ruthless on counters: Wenger's Arsenal at the turn of the millennium and Pellegrini's City, to name just two, were comfortable with the ball but also deadly on the break.

But the least intelligent of the claims, because it's so easy to cross-check the numbers, is that champion sides have less of the ball. Over the last 12 seasons, only Leicester (42.4%) had less than 55% possession. The other outlier is Guardiola's City (71.2%). All other champions had between 55 and 60% of the ball.

What will the numbers say this season? And will the experts blither on regardless?



08

An underdog uprising

Leicester and Burnley have shown over the last three seasons that it's possible to dream in an unforgiving, dog-eat-dog world.

Six top clubs may be fighting for four Champions League spots and the scramble to avoid the drop in the bottom half is particularly poignant, but there's still room for a bolter that comes out of nowhere.

Although Leicester's fairytale run all the way to the trophy is unlikely to be replicated, the excitement of an uncelebrated side punching well above its weight remains one of the warmest feelings in sport.

The fortunes of Wolverhampton Wanderers, Cardiff City and Fulham — the three promoted clubs — will be followed; if any of them pulls down a giant, the tremors will be felt.

Manuel Pellegrini's West Ham, which has positioned itself as a resurgent club with its signings, and Rafael Benitez's Newcastle, which followed its promotion with a solid 10th-place finish, will fancy their chances of causing a stir or two.

GAME THEORY

Long-tenured No. 1s

Simona Halep has completed her 40th week as the highest-ranked player on the WTA tour. This puts her 11th on the all-time list. Who has spent the most time at the top?

MOST WEEKS AT NO. 1

	Player	Weeks
1	Steffi Graf	**377**
2	Martina Navratilova	**332**
3	Serena Williams	**319**
4	Chris Evert	**260**
5	Martina Hingis	**209**
6	Monica Seles	**178**
7	Justine Henin	**117**
8	Lindsay Davenport	**98**
9	Caroline Wozniacki	**71**
10	Victoria Azarenka	**51**

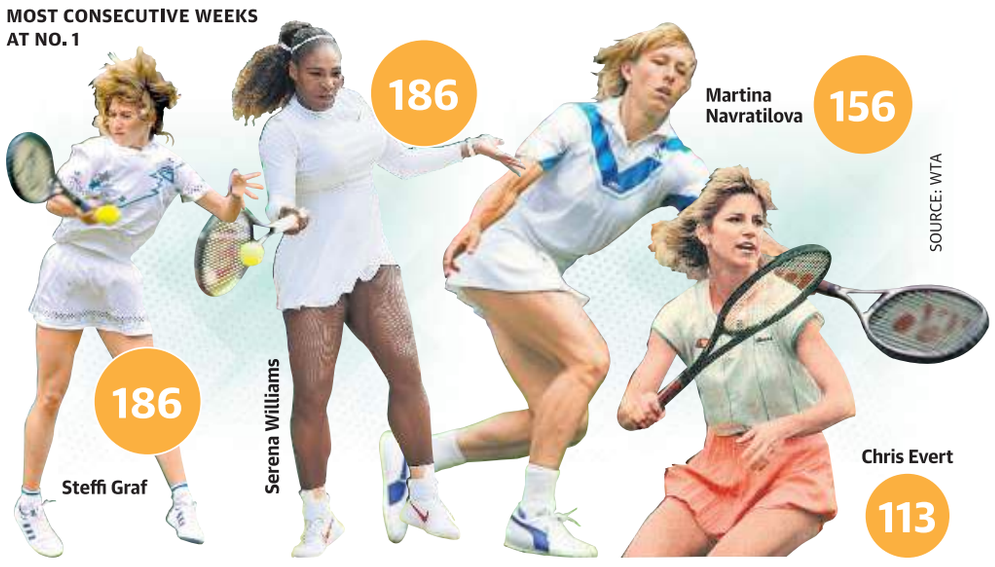


Halep is one of just seven players to have been ranked No. 1 before winning a Grand Slam. Kim Clijsters, Amelie Mauresmo, Jelena Jankovic, Dinara Safina, Caroline Wozniacki and Karolina Pliskova are the others

- The Romanian ended her drought at Roland Garros this year; Safina, Jankovic and Pliskova are now the only players from that group without a Major title

- *In all, 25 players have reached the highest singles ranking since the WTA began putting out its computerised list in November 1975*

MOST CONSECUTIVE WEEKS AT NO. 1



PICTURE THIS



MATTHIAS HANGST/GETTY IMAGES

Over hurdles and into pits

Athletics on the whole is fairly straightforward. Except for the quirky steeplechase.

The discipline's roots lie in the United Kingdom, where people raced each other from the steeple of one town's church (picked for its high visibility) to another's. On the way, they would often have to jump over little walls and small rivers.

The obscure walls were replaced by hurdles (wider and more stable than the ones used in the hurdles races) and the streams by water pits.

Athletes normally have to clear a distance of 3000m which includes 28 barriers and seven water jumps.

Because of the nature of the race, the track is never a perfect 400m: the water jumps are pushed inside or outside the turn to modify the course.

It is a fun event to watch, but a devil to compete in. It requires ridiculous stamina — even the best athletes can't consistently jump clean over the hurdles.

Qatar's Saif Saaeed Shaheen holds the men's World Record (7:53.63 in 2004). Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech awaits the ratification of her 8:44.32.

https://www.visionias.net/ https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

IN BRIEF



New Zealand to ban single-use plastic bags

WELLINGTON

New Zealand became the latest country on Friday to outlaw single-use plastic shopping bags, with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern saying they will be phased out over the next year as a "meaningful step" towards reducing pollution. "We need to be far smarter in the way we manage waste and this is a good start," she said. AFP



Poetic algorithm creates Shakespeare-like sonnets

TORONTO

Can artificial intelligence (AI) write sonnets as good as the Bard? A poetry writing algorithm developed by scientists was able to fool people trying to distinguish between human- and bot-written verses nearly 50% of the time. However, experts could still easily identify machine-generated poetry, researchers said. PTI



Curie voted history's most influential woman

LONDON

Nobel prize-winning scientist Marie Curie was the most influential woman in history, the BBC found in a poll. Readers of BBC *History* magazine ranked Polish-born Curie at the top of a list of 100 women who changed the world, for her role in treating cancer. REUTERS

Assam-born artist going places with truck art

Lata Upadhyaya's work is a metaphor for the contribution of migrants to the vibrancy of British culture and society

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

An Assam-born British artist has tweaked the common Indian truck art to showcase on wheels the contribution of migrants to the British society.

Inspired by the "moving art on Indian highways", Lata Upadhyaya began working on her white transport van a few months ago. The mix of Indian art forms, Chinese motifs, and European designs took the van to Firstsite, a leading contemporary art gallery and part of the Tate Plus network of galleries near London.

The decorated van is now travelling across England, and is scheduled to move from Harlow to Birmingham and Nottingham. Such has been the response to 'Transit: The Identity of a White Van' that Ms. Upadhyaya's exhibition calendar is booked for two years.





Horn OK please: Lata Upadhyaya, right, with her van decorated in Indian-style truck art. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The work was commissioned by Arts Council England, which has supported Ms. Upadhyaya in developing her work over the last five years.

Embedded meaning

"I have used my white van, a very common goods transporter in these parts, to reflect the role and contribution that migrants have made to the British society," Ms. Upadhyaya, 46, told *The Hindu* from London.

Daughter of Nandlal Upadhyaya – a pioneer of Assam's dairy cooperative movement, Ms. Upadhyaya is from Jagiroad, about 60 km east of Guwahati.

"My work reflects upon my own life and experience of migrating from the East to the West. Transit brings together my origins in India and my life in Britain; the white van represented a blank canvas, a British symbol as well as a lack of identity. I wanted the white van to take on a new British identity, one that represents all of the people that live here, all the different communities and celebrates what being British and living in Britain means," she said.

According to Firstsite director Sally Shaw, Ms. Upadhyaya's installation "builds upon the gallery's ongoing examination of identity". In decorating the ubiquitous white transit van in the manner of Indian truck art, while also mixing in various other national symbols, such as the Chinese dragon, "Lata has metamorphosed a functional vehicle into an artwork that reflects the cultural vibrancy of contemporary Britain," she said.

Rickshaw ride

A specialist in contemporary sculpture with a Masters from the Slade School of Fine Art in London, Ms. Upadhyaya is also famed for her 2016 project called '6,919 km: the Journey of a Rickshaw'.

She had transformed a rickshaw with brightly-coloured depictions of Indian and U.K. culture to celebrate its journey from Meerut in Uttar Pradesh to the U.K.

"The rickshaw is doing the gallery rounds and is also being driven about," she said.

Humidifier may ease sleep apnoea

REUTERS

People with sleep apnoea, a common night-time breathing disorder, are more likely to stick with treatment that keeps their airways open at night when they use a built-in humidifier, a Swedish study suggests.

Apnea that isn't properly treated has been linked with excessive daytime sleepiness, heart attacks and heart failure.

Often, patients are prescribed treatment with masks connected to a machine that provides continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) that splints the airway open with an airstream so the upper airway can't collapse during sleep.

Patients who used CPAP machines with built-in humidifiers were 43% less likely to discontinue treatment, researchers reported in *Sleep Medicine*.

Boost for research in musculoskeletal radiology

Chennai meet aims to further collaborations between experts

RAMYA KANNAN
CHENNAI

The Musculoskeletal Society of India (MSS) is making a concerted move to identify and propose advanced learning fellowships at centres of excellence in the country, after securing the requisite permission from the Medical Council of India.

Representatives of the organising committee of AMS 2018, the annual conference of the MSS, being held in Chennai between August 9 and 12, revealed their plans for an aggressive course of action to spread awareness about the growing significance of musculoskeletal radiology and expand the scope of learning for those already in the specialisation.

The conference will also double as the venue for the annual scientific meeting of the Asian Musculoskeletal Society (AMS).

James Griffith, secretary, AMS, and professor of radiology, Hong Kong University, said the idea was to look at long-term collaborations. "The initial interactions will hopefully lead on to more elaborate exchanges between practitioners in India and others across the world."

There is a wealth of clinical information and expertise available in India which the others hope to benefit from, especially in diseases such as tuberculosis and leprosy, just as participants from India can run their queries by others in the network. A video lecture a week will also be made available free to participants.

Precise imaging

Currently, healthcare is highly dependent on radiology and imaging, N. Chidambaranathan, organising chairperson, AMS 2018, said. The virtual explosion in imaging technology makes detailed visualisation of the specific pathology in a patient possible and this gives the clinician tremendous confidence to manage treatment.

Murali Sundaram, professor of radiology, Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine, who was among the initial members of the premier International Skeletal Society, added: "Earlier the images produced only gross morphological changes, but with better resolutions, it is now possible to have access to images that will show exactly where the problem is and what it is. You see it, you don't have to infer it. We now help a range of specialists –rheumatologists, tumour and orthopaedic surgeons, emergency rooms, trauma specialists, and sports medicine – make better decisions regarding treatment with accurate diagnosis."

Has technology made the radiologist's job easier? "Far from it! We are looking at many images per patient. Becomes very time-consuming, but allows for greater precision. Today to operate on some one with a soft tissue tumour without first going in for an MRI would be medical negligence," Prof. Sundaram explained.

Support for surgeons

Jayaraj Govindaraj, organising chairperson, AMS 2018, said, "Clinicians will be able to have a clear display of whether the condition is operable or not. The percentage of surgeons opening up and then coming out because they realised the condition was inoperable is coming down drastically."

The challenge, however, he said, is to make sure that certain investigations are customised for a cost-conscious society.

Chess prodigy gets leave to remain in U.K.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

A nine-year-old Indian chess genius on Friday won his battle to stay in the U.K. after the expiry of his father's work visa as the Home Office made an exception in the case due to the boy's "exceptional talent".

Shreyas Royal has won a series of chess championships and is ranked number four in the world in his age category

His father Jitendra Singh's IT-related visa was set to expire next month when the family was expected to return to India. A number of British MPs had intervened in the case to urge U.K. Home Secretary Sajid Javid to make an exception in Shreyas' case due to his exceptional talent.



Shreyas Royal

"They [Home Office] just e-mailed me and told me they had considered my case and we are allowed to extend our leave to remain on Tier 2 general route," his father told the *Guardian*. "We are very happy and Shreyas is very happy. He jumped up on the sofa when he heard the news. I want to thank all those who helped and supported us," he said.

Federation delighted

The news was also welcomed by the English Chess Federation (ECF), which has been campaigning for the boy to stay on in the U.K. and hone his talent. ECF president Dominic Lawson said: "We... are delighted that our efforts to persuade the government to recognise Shreyas Royal's exceptional talents have borne fruit."

In a joint letter to the Home Secretary last week, Opposition Labour MPs Rachel Reeves and Matthew Pennycook said the U.K. would lose an "exceptional talent" if Shreyas was to leave.

Encouraging talent

Their letter said: "The U.K. should always encourage the world's brightest, most talented people to work and make their lives here. Shreyas is recognised by the English Chess Federation as the country's greatest chess prospect in a generation."

Shreyas, who was born in India, moved to the U.K. aged three with parents Jitendra and Anju Singh from Bengaluru six years ago. His father was offered a fixed-term contract under the intra-country transfer (ICT) route as an IT project manager with the Tata Group in the company's U.K. office.

The only way he could have extended his visa for a further four years was if he earned £120,000 a year. Shreyas' parents said their son should be considered a national asset.

After the public support that Shreyas received, U.K. authorities have said the family can submit an application to extend their stay in the U.K.

Bulgarian choir back with a modern twist

All-women group puts out new album

AGENCE-FRANCE PRESSE
VARNA

Thirty years ago, an all-female folk choir set up in Bulgaria became the darling of Western audiences with its tradition-steeped a cappella singing, before the fall of communism threatened its survival.

With fans like George Harrison, David Bowie and Kate Bush, The Mystery Of The Bulgarian Voices ensemble conquered the international charts during the Cold War at a time when world music was beginning to gain popularity.

Now the Grammy-winning choir from Sofia is back, with their embroidered blouses and floral hair styles plus a contemporary twist, having teamed up with Australian-born Lisa Gerrard of the music group, Dead Can Dance. The choir's new album – its first studio production in two decades – in collaboration with Ms. Gerrard was released in May in Bulgaria and deemed by *Rolling Stone* magazine's online edition as among the "10 New Albums to Stream Now".

Ms. Gerrard said her task on the album, entitled *BooCheeMish* – after a local shrub that blossoms between rocks – was "to bring them (the choir) into the moment without corrupting their tradition".

The choir's signature vocal style is made up of layered polyphonic harmonies, created by different combinations of voices, a sound once described as something between a call to prayer and The Beach Boys.

"This genuine open singing that comes from the throat, the larynx, is not something that you can teach, you must be born with this," choir master Dora Hristova said.

Different ages

Many of the two dozen women, aged 20 to 70, in the choir have inherited their singing skills from their parents.

"My mother Nadezhda Hvojneva was a soloist for the choir for 40 years, and we used to perform side by side," said 50-year-old singer Elichka Krastanova.

But the end of communism brought turbulent times for the choir, leading to their sacking by the state broadcaster in 1997. The singers were forced to take other jobs, most as music teachers, to make ends meet.

"We survived only thanks to the many invitations for concerts that came from abroad and the necessity to keep up our level and not disappoint the audience," choir master Ms. Hristova said.



Dressing up: Bulgaria's folk choir 'The Mystery of the Bulgarian Voices' preparing backstage. ▪ AFP

Hungry jumbo



Shrinking habitat: Locals and forest officials chase away a wild elephant at Baragoan in Guwahati on Thursday. The elephant, which came down from Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary in search of food, was later tranquilised. ▪ AFP

China's new online cosmetics stars are men

With gender norms changing, companies selling make-up are happy to pay Internet ambassadors to reach more people

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

When Jiang Cheng first tried a bit of concealer during his first year of university in China it gave him self-confidence and he was instantly hooked.

Now he is among hundreds of Chinese men sharing beauty tips online and cashing in on the booming male cosmetics industry.

"I found that putting on make-up is actually quite easy," the 24-year-old said as he gently brushed his face with some foundation.

"Women may not fully grasp the concept of male make-up. If a girl puts on my make-up, they may not be able to achieve the effect that I really want," Mr. Jiang said.

Every weekend, Mr. Jiang spends a couple of hours in front of his iPhone at his cozy makeshift studio in Beijing trying on the latest balms and blush for hundreds of live viewers, who can simultaneously buy the products he reviews.

"This colour is not that outrageous that men can't wear it safely even in a conservative environment," he explains to his fans.

Online beauty stars form an enormous industry in China, with internet celebrities known as "wang hong", or online stars, blurring the line between entertainment and e-commerce.



Jiang Cheng recording at his home in Beijing. ▪ AFP

Live-streaming platforms

Companies like Alibaba and JD.com have launched live-streaming platforms that allow viewers to purchase on the go while watching videos. And cosmetics brands pay big money for online celebrities, almost always female, to review their new products. But now the market and gender norms are changing, with cosmetics no longer seen as exclusively for women and male celebrities showing that it is okay for men to dab on a bit of blush.

Mr. Jiang says a firm that manages bloggers pays him around 5,000 yuan (₹50,000) per month to feature products from cosmetics companies.

The male beauty market is expected to grow 15.2% in the next five years in China compared to an 11% global increase over the same period, according to research firm Euromonitor.

Increasingly, foreign firms like La Mer and Aesop work with video bloggers such as Lan Haoyi, known as Lan Pu Lan online, to promote their products to his nearly 1.4 million followers.

'Will become a norm'

The 27-year-old spends up to 10,000 yuan a month on beauty products. "We're seeing more men in the media wearing make-up. This will naturally become the norm," Mr. Lan said.

Despite what appears to be social progress in many of the country's cosmopolitan cities, the video blogger says he still receives hate messages and criticism for appearing in smoky red eyeshadow.

"'Why would a man look like that? Why does a man need to wear make-up?' These are some of messages I get," Mr. Lan says, adding he has been called a "sissy" and other slurs.

For Mr. Jiang, the fear of being ridiculed by his own parents stops him from picking up the make-up brush in front of them.

"I don't want to have conflict with my parents. We don't see eye to eye, our values and concepts of life are different.

"I'm not saying that they don't think me putting on make-up is bad or what, but they are just unable to accept the daily make-up routine for a man," he says.

But Mo Fei, the executive director for Chetti Rouge, a Chinese cosmetics company targeting men exclusively, says that will change over time.

"There will be more and more men who take more care in how they look and the demands will increase. Men in the East are more accepting," Mr. Mo says.