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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

AUGUST 12, 2018

DELHI
CITY EDITION
42 pages • ₹15.00

on Sunday



Home Ministry moves Cabinet for more seats in Sikkim Assembly
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NEARBY

Rebel Khaira takes aim at AAP central leadership

HOSHIARPUR

Rebel Aam Aadmi Party MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Saturday accused the party's central leadership of double standards. He questioned why his group's fight for autonomy was being regarded as "anti-party" activity, but senior AAP leaders could stage a sit-in protest at the Delhi L-G's office for their "rights".

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Giant exercise



Piecing it together: A labourer welding together sheets to build a pontoon for the Kumbh Mela, in Allahabad on Saturday. The mega event will be held between January 15 and March 4 next year. ▪ PTI

Tharoor gives Doklam report to govt.

Meets Sushma as Standing Committee's report could not be tabled in Parliament

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs Shashi Tharoor on Friday met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to resolve the stand-off over the panel's report on the Doklam crisis.

The panel failed to table the report in the just-concluded monsoon session, though it had met on August 7 and 9. At both meetings, sources said, BJP members had a series of objections and did not let the panel adopt the draft report.

'No objections'

According to sources, Mr. Tharoor submitted the report to the Ministry of External Affairs to give the government an opportunity to study it before tabling it in Parliament. "It seems that the ruling party has no objections with the recommendations of the panel but with the testimonies of MEA and Defence Ministry officials, which were candid and many of them unflattering towards the government," a Committee member said.

The report contains testimonies of former Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, present Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra and former Army chief General Deepak Kapoor (retd.). In parts, the testimonies from the MEA and the Defence Ministry contradict each other. Both sides, however, agreed that there was a build-up of Chinese troops at the other side of the border.

Sources told *The Hindu* that Mr. Tharoor had explained the entire situation to Ms. Swaraj. The MEA will study and, if need be, redact the "problematic" portions.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

Gone girls: the trafficked children of Yadadri

Temple town exposed as a hub of child prostitution

MARRI RAMU
B. PRADEEP
HYDERABAD/YADADRI

When child care workers found her, the nine-year-old girl lay at the doorsteps of a house in BC Colony of Yadagirigutta, weeping, bruises on her hands. A frantic call to 1098, the child helpline, in end-July sent a team of officials from the Women and Child welfare Department and the police rushing to this suburb, 50 km from Hyderabad.

The little girl reluctantly told the officials that her mother had beaten her up for indiscipline. The officials found this hard to believe, and closely questioned the woman, making her furious and abusive.

Racket unravelled

But the 'mother' soon admitted that she had bought the child for ₹ 1 lakh. And that there were more like her. Her confession blew the lid off the scandal in Yadadri, the famous temple town earlier known as Yadagirigutta, of trafficked children forced into prostitution. Based on the confession of the woman, Kamsani Kalyani, whom the police describe as a pimp, more houses were raided and 14 other girls rescued. The caller to 1098 had said it was disturbing to hear the cries of the girls frequently at night. "Men, mostly strangers, came at night," the caller said. Yes, that was true, Kalyani confessed.



House of horror: A sealed nursing home in Yadadri, where the police recovered 45 oxytocin ampoules, allegedly being administered to girls. ▪ SINGAM VENKATARAMANA

SUNDAY SPECIAL

She would make the child she had purchased watch customers have sex with her older victims. Kalyani did this to train the younger girls. If a girl resisted, she would end up battered and bruised. To make sure the girls began earning early, brothel operators even administered hormones to them.

During a raid at a nursing home a little distance from the colony, police said they seized 40 ampoules of oxytocin and arrested the doctor. They also nabbed 11 alleged traffickers in the town. Police said they found the operation of procuring girls, selling them to pimps and forcing them into prostitution had been going on in and around the temple town for long.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 10

BJP legislator from R.S. Pura backs Art. 35A

Mehbooba welcomes Bhagat's remarks

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

BJP MLA from R.S. Pura in Jammu, Gagan Bhagat, on Saturday expressed support to protect Article 35A, which grants special privileges to the State.

Mr. Bhagat's remarks immediately drew praise from former Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, while the BJP termed it "unfortunate".

"Instead of protecting peoples' interests, the BJP leadership is more concerned about winning the Lok Sabha elections, so the party is raising the demand for abrogation of Article 35A," Mr. Bhagat said. "No one can abrogate the Article which grants special privileges and rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Praising his remarks, Ms. Mufti tweeted: "Heartening to know that two MLAs from BJP, Rajesh Gupta followed by Dr Gagan have raised their voice in defence of Article 35 A. Defending the special status of J&K is not confined to a region or religion anymore. People of the state have realised its importance & sanctity."

The BJP's J&K unit said it would file a defamation suit against Ms. Mufti for "wrongly" attributing the remarks to Mr. Gupta.

Stating that Mr. Bhagat crossed the "Lakshman Rekha" by extending support to Article 35A, State BJP chief spokesperson Sunil Sethi said the party's disciplinary committee has already submitted a report for necessary action against him.

(With PTI inputs)

CBI searches Muzaffarpur shelter home

Takes son of main accused Brajesh Thakur into custody after questioning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

A team of Central Bureau of Investigation officials conducted searches for hours on Saturday at the Muzaffarpur shelter home, where 34 girls were allegedly sexually exploited, and took into custody the son of the main accused, Brajesh Thakur.

The CBI team interrogated Rahul Anand, whose father's NGO Sewa Sankalp Evam Vikas Samiti ran the State-funded shelter home, on the premises before detaining him.

The CBI officials, headed by Deputy Inspector General of Police Abhay Kumar, conducted the searches in the presence of magistrate Sheela Rani Gupta. Officials of Central Forensic Science Laboratory also accompanied the probe team.

The office of a local Hindi newspaper, *Pratah Kamal*, started by Thakur's father in 1982, located on the ground floor of the shelter home was also searched. Anand is the editor of the newspaper. The CBI officials were seen taking out a pile of files from the shelter home and making their digital record. A large number of policemen were present inside the premises, entry to which was blocked for everyone, including journalists.



Officers at the shelter home in Muzaffarpur on Saturday. ▪ PTI

Earlier, the shelter home was sealed by the district administration after Thakur was arrested along with nine others in June. All activities carried out by the CBI team were videorecorded.

Questions for Congress

Meanwhile, a photograph of senior State Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Akhilesh Singh with Thakur has gone viral on social media. Questioning the photograph, Janata Dal (United) leader Rajiv Ranjan Prasad asked, "Now what does the Congress have to say on this?"

State Congress working president Kaukab Quadri responded: "Since a lot of people come to meet politicians daily, there could photographs of them with anyone, but if any substantial proof of any partyman being involved in the case is there, the party leadership would definitely be informed and action will be taken."

Earlier in the day in Delhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav sought Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's resignation on "moral grounds" over the shelter home case. He raised 20 questions and asked Mr. Kumar to answer them within a week, otherwise "the RJD would start protests all across the State".

Inundated Kerala gets a break from rain

Toll touches 31; over 60,000 displaced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Despite a respite from rain and falling water levels in major dams, Kerala remained on alert on Saturday, with over 60,000 persons displaced in four districts. The Met Department has forecast heavy to very heavy rainfall in most places in Idukki, Ernakulam, Palakkad, Wayanad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts over the next three days, putting them on 'red alert.' The State government on Saturday put the death toll in the recent spell of rain at 31, with five persons said to be missing.



NDRF personnel rescuing flood-affected people in Wayanad on Saturday. ▪ PTI

513 relief camps

As many as 60,622 persons have been accommodated in 513 relief camps. Around 1,501 houses were partially damaged and another 101 destroyed. There was massive loss of crops and property, an official press note said. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced ex gratia of ₹4 lakh to the next of kin of those who had lost their lives in rain-related incidents.

RAJNATH TO VISIT KERALA TODAY ▸ PAGE 8

Shopian's children show the scars

Mock battles, wooden guns and ambush games are being uploaded to social media

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Children in parts of south Kashmir are playing a different kind of make-believe. They are uploading videos of themselves taking part in "ambushes" on social media, imitating militants and security forces. A few parade with toy guns carved out of wood, claiming to be slain militant Burhan Wani.

To some psychologists, this is evidence of stress-induced behaviour.

One study contends that a significant number of school children up to Class 8, in south Kashmir's Shopian district are showing signs of mental disorders induced by pervasive violence. It was published in the *Community Mental Health Journal* and Europe PubMed Central recently. Using a standardised questionnaire, the researchers studied 1,000 children in 12 schools in volatile Shopian.



Innocence lost: Exposed to violence, many children are displaying signs of trauma, psychologists say. ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

They then estimated problems among them, such as anxiety (8.5%), mood disorders (6.3%) and behavioural disorders (4.3%). The district has a population of 2,65,960. "The percentage of school children with mental disorders in Kashmir is more than in other States of India. The political conflict in the State and the lack of mental health facilities have given rise to higher prevalence," said Mohammad Altaf Paul, a psychologist.

Trauma manifests

The study was conducted in 2016 jointly by Mr. Paul and Waheeda Khan, professor and dean, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences, SGT University, Gurugram.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which follows a troubling event, was found in 1.3% of children and dissociative disorders in 1.2%. PTSD rose from 0.86% in 2015. It was still less than in Israel (5-8%), Palestine (23-70%) and in Iraq (10-30%).

Indian aid to SAARC nations falls

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India's financial assistance to SAARC neighbours declined considerably in the past five years, a reply by the government in Parliament this week showed.

The figures were revealed in the Lok Sabha in reply to a question on whether India had completed projects committed to countries in the neighbourhood. Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh submitted a chart of India's grant assistance, which have fallen from ₹5,928.6 crore in 2013-14 to ₹3,483.6 crore in 2017-18 for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka combined.

DETAILS ON ▸ PAGE 11

Disparity in Bru rehabilitation package, says Mizoram CM

'Those who have already returned deserve their fair share'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla has accused the Centre of coming up with an "uneven rehabilitation package" for two sets of Bru refugees.

In a meeting at the Congress office in State capital Aizawl, Mr. Thanhawla said the Ministry of Home Affairs had been denying a proper rehabilitation package to about 300 families of Brus who returned home to Mizoram from Tripura, while focussing on those who resisted repatriation.

More than 32,000 Bru or Reang tribal people fled Mizoram in 1997 after ethnic clashes and have been living in six transit camps in Kanchanpur area of Tripura for the last 21 years. There have been seven phases of repatriation, but many returned to the camps saying that conditions in Mizoram were not conducive for living.



Lal Thanhawla

Letter to Home Minister

"I have written a letter to Home Minister Rajnath Singh to look into the matter and arrange a similar package for the obedient Bru citizens who have already been repatriated. The uneven package could hamper the integrity of the Brus, and those who have already returned deserve their fair share," the CM said.

The 300 repatriated families have formed a forum to demand a rehabilitation package on a par with the one for those who are yet to return to Mizoram.

On July 3, the MHA, in a quadripartite agreement involving the Mizoram and Tripura governments and the Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum, offered a one-time financial assistance of ₹4 lakh to each displaced Bru family staying in Tripura camps at present, a house and free rations for two years.

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IN BRIEF



Police on foot patrolling in Lajpat Nagar

NEW DELHI

Ahead of Independence Day, Joint Commissioner of Police, Southern Range Devesh Srivastava undertook foot patrolling in the Lajpat Nagar. DCP Chinmoy Biswal and other senior officers of South-East district also joined the patrolling. The officers interacted with residents and public and discussed safety and security measures taken by the Delhi Police. STAFF REPORTER

BJP slams AAP govt. over waterlogging issue

NEW DELHI

Sending CM Arvind Kejriwal a list of 562 roads that he said gets waterlogged after "light rain", BJP national secretary R.P. Singh on Saturday alleged inaction on the part of the AAP government to prevent waterlogging. In his letter, Mr. Singh said it was surprising that the Delhi government had been issuing advertisements about control rooms set up for waterlogging complaints, while many roads are still getting flooded during light rain. He added that the government was on an "advertising spree" in order to mislead Delhiites. STAFF REPORTER

18-year-old student attacked over power bill

NEW DELHI

A dispute over rent left an 18-year-old student injured after he was allegedly attacked by a local resident of north Delhi's Timarpur on August 10. The injured youth, Shivam Pandey, lives as a tenant in Timarpur's Nehru Vihar. His complaint stated that he was discussing rent with his landlord when a neighbour allegedly abused him for not paying the electricity bill. STAFF REPORTER

Dispute holds up launch of common mobility card

Card will provide seamless connectivity between public buses and metro trains

JATIN ANAND
DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

A disagreement between the Transport Department officials and the Minister over the name and design of the common mobility card, intended to provide seamless connectivity between public buses and Delhi Metro trains, has allegedly put the brakes on the roll out of the eight-year-old initiative.

Promised in time for the Commonwealth Games of 2010, the delay in the project has, government sources said, been compounded further pushing its intended inauguration beyond mid-August.

Further delayed

"The project was expected to be rolled out around Independence Day but will now be delayed due to a disagreement between Transport Secretary Varsha Joshi and Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot over procedural norms that were not followed in choosing a private company to design the new common mobility card," a government official claimed.

Neither the Transport Department nor the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) were part of the process of the allotment of the designing contract to a company which intends to print its name and logo on these cards, the official alleged.

'Roll out on track'

"The service provider was chosen by the Minister without competitive bidding, which is against norms. Recently, the proposed engagement of cluster buses was also done without a tender," the official said.



Irrespective of the disagreement over design, given the multiplicity of departments involved, all Delhi Transport Corporation and cluster buses have been equipped with Electronic Ticketing Machines and we are thinking about launching the project very soon

KAILASH GAHLOT
Transport Minister

When asked for comment on the issue, Mr. Gahlot told *The Hindu* that while a disagreement had occurred in relation to the design of the new common card, the use of existing Delhi Metro cards on buses would be rolled out soon.

"Irrespective of the disagreement over design, given the multiplicity of departments involved, all Delhi Transport Corporation [DTC] and cluster buses have been equipped with Electronic Ticketing Machines [ETMs] and we are thinking about launching the project very soon," Mr. Gahlot said.

Meeting in July

The Minister added that the process of designing new cards, which the DMRC would need a month to print, could continue separately while existing Delhi Metro cards could be allowed on buses.

The Hindu has accessed the minutes of a meeting held at Mr. Gahlot's office on July 10, attended by him, Ms. Joshi and DMRC Managing Director Mangu Singh, other officials and representatives of the private company.

Deliberations on the name and the proposed tag line to be printed on these cards was on the agenda.

According to a government source present at the meeting, Ms. Joshi and Mr. Singh were presented ten potential designs for the proposed common mobility card and asked to choose one; which they did.

The government source said, the proposed name of the card was 'Yatri' and the tag line 'One Delhi One Ride' in both Hindi and English was also decided upon.

Procedural Oversight

After the meeting, the source said, officials in the Transport Department realised that "procedural norms had been overlooked" and even if the private company did the design work pro bono, its association with the card, especially in terms of a media campaign around it, could give it immense mileage.

"The company's logo would get a chance to be seen by over 60 lakh commuters who will use it in Delhi day in and out," argued another official.

The Department, a week later, wrote to Mr. Gahlot stating that Ms. Joshi was not in agreement with the decision taken in the July 10 meeting.

"In the instant case, the proposal has been initiated from the office of Hon'ble Minister (Transport) only and hence she was not aware about the background. It was also not discussed that the company is to be engaged by Transport Department," the communication stated further. The Department also maintained that there was a need to conduct a design competition as written in the General Financial Rules (GFR) issued by the Centre.

Delinked from design

As a result, a senior government official said, the proposed use of Metro cards on DTC and cluster buses and the design of the common card were "delinked" after the disagreement between the Minister and the department.

The company, according to the official, had also agreed to a non-disclosure agreement that would prevent it from publicising the same but the Department was not convinced.

Centre may prevent CCTV project implementation: CM

Proposal could face scrutiny, say senior govt. officials

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A day after the Delhi Cabinet approved an over ₹500-crore project to install CCTV cameras across the city, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday alleged that the Centre may try to prevent its implementation, using the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the Lieutenant-Governor.

In a tweet, Mr. Kejriwal said a senior BJP leader had informed him that the party's government in the Centre would not let the project be implemented. He said the BJP was working on two alternatives – having a "fake case" lodged by the CBI or getting the L-G to send the proposal to the President, citing a difference of opinion. He added that if the BJP prevented the project, the people of Delhi would not tolerate it.

BJP rejects charges

The BJP dismissed the allegation. Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Vijender Gupta, termed Mr. Kejriwal's allegations "ridiculous and laughable".



This allegation is a clear evidence that he is jittery and concerned about the lack of performance of his government. It is an attempt to mask the failures of the government after coming to power, and of the party in relation to the promises made before forming the government

VIJENDER GUPTA
Leader of the Opposition in Assembly

"This allegation is a clear evidence that he is jittery and concerned about the lack of performance of his government. It is an attempt to mask the failures of the government after coming to power, and of the party in relation to the promises made before forming the government," Mr. Gupta said.

Meanwhile, senior Delhi government officials said the proposal could face scrutiny based on the procedures followed or not. A senior official said that the tender for 1.4 lakh cameras was floated without administrative approval and expenditure finance, which are required under the General Financial Rules (GFR).

The project, which will cost ₹571.40 crore, was approved by the Cabinet on Friday. Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash had submitted a note saying that there had not been enough time between his office receiving the proposal and the Cabinet meeting for it to be sent to the L-G, the Chief Minister and Ministers, as required by the Transaction of Business Rules. The Cabinet rejected the Chief Secretary's note.

Parties play blame game over student's rape in school

AAP says BJP, L-G trying to stall efforts to improve law, order

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A day after news about the rape of a student inside a municipal primary school broke, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday hit out at the BJP, which through the Central government controls the Delhi Police, and the Lieutenant-Governor over the law and order situation in the city.

On Wednesday, a six-year-old girl was allegedly raped by an electrician inside a New Delhi Municipal Council school. The man was arrested on Thursday and sent to judicial custody on Friday, when the case was reported by the media.

Reacting to the case, AAP said the Delhi government was trying to improve law and order by installing 1.4 lakh CCTV cameras in the city, but the BJP and L-G Anil Baijal had been stalling the project. AAP national spokesperson Atishi Marlena said the BJP and the L-G were using some bureaucrats to obstruct the plan, which was passed by the Cabinet on Friday three years after the initial proposal.

"We want to ask the L-G, the BJP and the Chief Secretary why have they stalled the project for three years. Wherever we go, people and RWAs demand CCTV cameras," she said.

AAP MLA from Chandni Chowk Alka Lamba added that the proposal had been given in-principle approval by the Cabinet in 2015, but due to delaying tactics, it could only be passed now.

Delhi Cong. criticises

Meanwhile, the Delhi Congress hit out against the AAP and the BJP over the incident. At a press conference, Delhi Congress spokesperson and Delhi Pradesh Mahila Congress president Sharmistha Mukherjee said, "It is indeed a very shocking incident. The Congress party strongly condemns this."

She asked why there had not been a proper verification of the accused. Ms. Mukherjee said that the responsibility for ensuring protection for schoolchildren must lie with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal since the incident took place in his constituency. She demanded a social audit of all government schools in Delhi as well as a public portal for citizens to track progress on cases of sexual assault.

Ms. Mukherjee added, "No one wants to take responsibility. The Central government and the Delhi government keep blaming each other. The people of Delhi are suffering as a result."



Members of the Haryana State Commission for Women and district officials perform the last rites of the minor girl. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Rohtak honour killing: minor victim cremated

By women's panel, district administration

STAFF REPORTER
GURUGRAM

Members of the Haryana State Commission for Women and district administration officials on Saturday performed the last rites of the minor girl who was shot dead at point-blank range in a suspected case of honour killing in Rohtak earlier this week.

No one from her family came forward to claim the body. The minor who had eloped with a Dalit youth last year, was killed on Wednesday. A police officer who was escorting her was also killed in the attack.

All-India Democratic Women's Association, Haryana vice-president, Jagmati Sangwan was also present. She demanded enactment of strict law to prevent incidents of honour killing.

The girl's brother was also present during the cremation, said Ms. Sangwan.

Doctors overcome blood group barrier in transplant surgery

Patient was suffering from advanced cirrhosis

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi hospital has claimed to have overcome blood group mismatch (ABO incompatibility) and performed a successful liver transplant to save a patient suffering from cirrhosis.

ABO incompatibility between a donor and a recipient is generally considered a barrier to kidney or liver transplant. In this case, the patient's blood group was B, while the donor's was A. The 40-year-old patient was brought to the hospital with complaint of chronic liver disease. Diagnosed nearly five years ago, he was staring at certain death with life expectancy of less than a year.

"Diagnosed as advanced cirrhosis with poor prognosis, the family was desperately looking for liver transplant. Blood groups of all prospective donors were checked but were found incompatible. His wife was a prospective donor but her blood group was not a match. Despite ABO incompatibility, she was found to be an adequate donor. The barrier was successfully broken and the patient was saved," noted a release issued by B.L.K. Super Speciality Hospital.

We performed the first ABO-incompatible living donor liver transplant. We consider this a huge achievement

SANJAY SINGH NEGI
Senior consultant at B.L.K. Super Speciality Hospital

In cases of ABO incompatibility, experts said, patients usually have antibodies (proteins) which can destroy the transplanted organ. They said the risk is at higher level against all other blood groups except one's own since these antibodies can reject the transplanted organ. Removing antibodies, suppressing antibody-producing plasma cells and neutralising remaining antibodies are the biggest challenges.

Experts at the hospital broke the barrier and the patient was extubated on Day 1 post-surgery. As expected, the liver enzymes showed improvement and the patient was discharged on Day 19 post-surgery. The patient has been on regular OPD follow-ups and his liver function tests are normal.

Clinical vigilance

"Meticulous planning and constant clinical vigilance were instrumental in successfully overcoming the barrier of ABO incompatibility. We performed the first ABO-incompatible living donor liver transplant. We consider this a huge achievement. The surgical procedure required zero-error precision," said Sanjay Singh Negi, senior consultant and director, HPB Surgery & Liver Transplantation, B.L.K. Super Speciality Hospital.

AIIMS starts wellness clinics to tackle stress

To help medical professionals

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Long duty hours, coupled with the need to complete extensive academic work and deal with a hostile work environment where emergencies happen round-the-clock – medical students and doctors are constantly exposed to both mental and emotional trauma, states studies from across the world.

Acknowledging this, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has started a wellness clinic for its medical students and doctors. The clinic which will be operational for 12 hours a day from (8 a.m. to 8 p.m.) has two dedicated phone numbers which have been pressed in for service.

Suicide rate

"The wellness clinic is being run under the supervision of the AIIMS psychiatric department. The helpline has counsellors who will help the medical professionals deal with stress and emotional exhaustion and they will also identify those who need more than counselling intervention. This will ensure that those who need help are offered it at earliest," said a senior doctor who is part of the AIIMS Resident Doctors' Association (RDA).

The premier institute has seen at least one suicide/attempt every year. "To address the larger issue of dissatisfaction or stress among students and residents, which drives them to suicide, the institute has decided to open a wellness clinic. In-principle approval has been given for it," Aarti Vij, chief spokesperson of AIIMS said. The RDA stated students coming from rural areas need help with academic work and the new environment.

Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association has said that in the last few years the stress of students and practising doctors has taken a serious turn.

"Medical college in India experiences the highest level of stress than students in any other country. At the tender age of 18, the students are under tremendous pressure to understand, grasp, assimilate and utilise information about the complex human body and mind.Doctors are surrounded day and night by disease, distress, dangerous infections, demands from patients and death," said Dr. Ravi Wankhedkar of the IMA.

1 killed as SUV gets hit by a truck

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 29-year-old man died after he was hit by a truck near Ring Road in Lajpat Nagar on Saturday morning.

A PCR call was received at Lajpat Nagar police station at 3.50 a.m. regarding the accident.

Lost control

An SUV, which was coming from Ashram side, lost control and hit the divider. It then toppled and landed on the other side of the road and rammed into a truck.

Four persons, who sustained injuries in the incident, were rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre. One of them, identified as Dharmender (29), a resident of Sangam Vihar, was declared brought dead. The deceased was the occupant of the SUV, said DCP (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal.

The other two occupants of the SUV, Praveen Singhal and Kapil Panwar are still critical.

The truck driver, Hukum Dev Yadav, is in ICU.

During initial probe it was found that the SUV was being driven rashly. A case has been registered and investigation of the case is on.

'Ban on e-cigarettes to reduce safer choices for smokers'

Groups warn governments, say e-cigarettes are 95% less harmful compared to those containing tobacco

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Council for Harm Reduced Alternatives (CHRA), a national tobacco harm reduction organisation, and the Association of Vapers India (AVI), an advocacy group that represents e-cigarette users, have warned the Central and State governments about the consequences of banning e-cigarettes.

They said that a ban would deprive millions of smokers of safer choices and cause damage to public health.

The CHRA said it is unfortunate that the government is mulling banning e-cigarettes, "which are 95% less harmful compared to tobacco cigarettes", even as it promotes harm-reduction programmes in interventions on addiction and communicable diseases.



E-cigarettes also help smokers wean off the nicotine dependence. ▪ FILE PHOTO

'Regressive attempt'

"Harm reduction is a concept we apply in our everyday lives by opting for safer products, be it refined oil or less-polluting cars. In tobacco use, too, the lives of users can be positively impacted with harm-reduced alternatives. The government has so far relied on an emotional appeal to persuade tobacco users to kick the habit, but never offered an alternative beyond gums and patches, that have a very low success rate. An attempt to ban e-cigarettes is regressive given that the government's stated policy is to provide wider choices to consumers for all products and services, and not restrict them," said CHRA director Samrat Chowdhery.

'Premature idea'

Director of AVI Pratik Gupta said, "The idea of banning e-cigarettes is premature, given that no study has been conducted by our health organisations on the health impact of vaping. Meanwhile, multiple peer-reviewed scientific studies in the U.K. and elsewhere have convinced health experts and governments to encourage smokers to switch to vaping. The hurry to ban e-cigarettes is not understandable."

E-cigarettes are not only less harmful compared to tobacco cigarettes, but also help smokers wean off the nicotine dependence," he said.

"Besides, vaping poses far lower risk to bystanders than passive smoking. Regulatory permission for the use of e-cigarettes in developed countries like the U.S., E.U. and the U.K. has yielded positive results, with smoking rates falling in these countries in recent years," noted a release issued by the group.

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Man charred to death in car fire

Got trapped inside; police suspect car collided with another speeding vehicle

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was charred to death after his car caught fire near Ambedkar Nagar in the early hours of Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Sumit (23), a resident of Sonipat, Haryana. He was working as a driver for the past six months. The incident came to the fore after the Delhi Fire Service received a call at 1.48 a.m. The police said that an information was received at 1.50 a.m. regarding a road accident at BRT Road near Sheikh Sarai on Saturday.

The officers said they assumed that the car caught fire after colliding with another speeding vehicle. The vehicle, which was loaded with newspapers, caught fire immediately and started blazing.



The vehicle was loaded with newspapers and caught fire immediately. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The deceased was on his way to transport copies of a Hindi daily newspaper from its printing press in Noida for delivery at Gurugram on a routine basis, the police said.

Further investigation revealed that the car was found registered in the name of one Jaspreet Kaur resident of west Jyoti Nagar.

The driver of the car was trapped inside the vehicle and could not manage to come out and sustained severe burn injuries. When he was rushed to a Safdarjung hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, the police said.

Family members of the deceased have been informed. Further investigation is under way. A case under Section 279/304A of IPC has been registered at Ambedkar Nagar Police station.

International fake notes syndicate busted

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An international syndicate indulging in circulation of fake Indian currency notes in various parts of the country, including Delhi and adjoining States, has been busted, the police said on Saturday.

Fake notes worth ₹7.50 lakh in the denomination of ₹2,000 have been seized from the accused. Those were being routed in India from Bangladesh through Malda. The accused has been identified as Deepak Mandal (32) who hails from Malda, West Bengal.

"Texture and print on the notes are so good that it is difficult for a layman to identify them as fake, said DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwah. The accused had previously been involved in three similar cases and was convicted for six years.

Afghan held for smuggling

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

An Afghan man was arrested by the Customs officials at Delhi airport on Thursday for allegedly trying to smuggle into the country gold worth about ₹22 lakh, officials said on Saturday.

A statement issued by the Customs stated that the accused, aged 26, was intercepted on his arrival from Kandahar, Afghanistan. Three gold chains, valued at ₹21.87 lakh, were seized from him and he was arrested.

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'Inspect mosques for noise levels at random'

NGT tells DPCC, CPCB; asks police to ensure order is obeyed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to conduct joint inspections of mosques in east Delhi to ascertain if they are violating prescribed noise levels.

Directing the DCP (East) to ensure that steps are taken towards compliance of orders, a Bench headed by NGT chairperson Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "We also direct the CPCB and the DPCC to conduct joint inspections on random basis at intervals to ascertain whether there is violation of law and if so, take penal action in terms of the legal provisions, CPCB will be the nodal agency."

> **We direct the CPCB and the DPCC to conduct joint inspections at intervals to ascertain whether there is violation of law and if so, take penal action...**
>
> ADARSH KUMAR GOEL
> NGT chairperson

The directions came while the green panel was hearing a plea moved by NGO Akhand Bharat Morcha that alleged that some mosques in the area were not complying with the prescribed decibel levels.

Report sought

The CPCB has also been asked to file a compliance report within two months.

Earlier, the green panel had disposed the plea after taking into account the State government's submission that regular inspections would be carried out.

In September 2017, the NGT had noted that the DPCC and State government would conduct inspection to check the noise level from different masjids mentioned in the application and that if the noise levels were found to be exceeding the prescribed decibel, action would be taken.

'Muslims being barred from celebrating I-Day'

Alleges dargah management body

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Anjuman-e-Haideri (AEH), the management body of a dargah near Jor Bagh, on Saturday alleged that the police were "barring Muslims from celebrating" Independence Day.

AEH general secretary Bahadur Abbas Naqvi alleged that despite obtaining permission from the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), the police have refused to grant consent.

However, the Delhi Police said that following previous orders of the Delhi High Court, status quo will be maintained.

"No person will be allowed to trespass the area restricted by the court. Except that particular land which has been barricaded, people are allowed to hoist the flag anywhere they want" said a senior police officer.

Mr. Naqvi however maintained that the area barricaded is not disputed land and demanded access to the area. "This conspiracy had happened last year as well and the chairman of the National Minorities Commission had to step in. The police not only have refused to accept the NDMC letter granting permission, but also threatened our representatives," he said.

"They (Centre) want to project Muslims as anti-national. We appeal to PM Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to intervene and allow us to celebrate the Independence Day," said Mr. Naqvi.

Eight injured in road accident

Truck hits eight vehicles after its brakes fail; driver on the run

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A driver sustained injuries after his car was crushed between a truck and a bus and seven other people were injured after a truck rammed a total of eight vehicles on the Ring Road near north Delhi's Pitampura on Saturday afternoon, the police said.



A car was crushed by the offending truck and a bus which the truck had hit. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The truck driver who fled immediately after the accident has been identified as Pushpender, a resident of Kannauj in U.P. His helper Vinay Kumar Singh has been detained.

DCP (north-west) Aslam Khan said the driver, identified as Puneet Jain, miraculously escaped any fatal injury. Puneet and other victims have been hospitalised. They are all expected to survive, the police said.

The police attributed the involvement of so many vehicles in the accident to the truck's brake failure. "These vehicles were travelling down the slope because of which the momentum was high and damage was major," said Ms. Khan.

The police suspect there could be more people with minor injuries.

Ms. Khan said the truck was carrying metal sheets, loaded from outer Delhi's Mundka, and was being driven to Kanpur. The accident happened around 3 p.m. while the truck was being driven down the slope on the carriageway opposite Haiderpur metro station.

The police said that after the truck's brakes failed, it rolled down the slope for over 100 metres. "It hit a bus immediately after the brake failure," said Ms. Khan. A search for the absconding driver is on.

Court acquits 4 in dowry death case

Says allegations against accused are vague, unsubstantiated

NIRNIMESH KUMAR
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted four persons in a dowry death case, saying that "the allegation of subjecting the victim to cruelty was vague and could not be substantiated".

Acquitting the accused persons, including the husband of the victim, Additional Sessions Judge Kuldeep Narayan at the Tis Hazari Courts said: "It is clear from the testimonies of the parents and the sister that all the allegations about harassment or cruelty on the part of the accused persons remained vague in nature and could not be substantiated."

"There is no direct evidence available on record to establish that any of the accused persons subjected the deceased to cruelty. The prosecution failed to establish the essential ingredients of the offence punishable under IPC Section 498A [harassing a married woman for dowry] against the accused," the Judge said.

The complaint lodged by the victim's mother stated that her daughter had married Rohit in 2013. Just 10 to 12 days after the marriage, her husband, father-in-law Ramesh Kumar, mother-in-law Shashi, sister-in-law Monika and brother-in-law Amit started harassing her for dowry. They had demanded a car from her, she alleged.

The woman had committed suicide by hanging from the ceiling at her parents' house allegedly due to harassment for dowry.

"Accused persons namely Rohit Kumar, Ramesh Kumar, Shashi and Amit are acquitted of the charge qua commission of offences punishable under IPC Section 304B [dowry death] /498A/34 IPC. Offence under IPC Section 306 [abetting the commission of suicide] is not made out against any of the accused," the Judge said while acquitting them.

Monika was a minor, therefore, charge sheet against her was filed before the Juvenile Justice Board.

The accused in their statements had said that they had been implicated in the case.

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IN BRIEF



RS Deputy Chairman calls on Nitish

PATNA

The newly-elected Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh on Saturday called on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at his official residence here. According to a release issued by the Chief Minister's office, Mr. Kumar accorded a warm welcome to Mr. Harivansh and presented him with a bouquet. PTI

BJP leader among 3 killed in U.P. road mishap

BANDA

Three persons, including a BJP leader, were killed in Hamirpur district on Saturday when their vehicle collided with a private bus, police said. At least 24 people sustained injuries in the accident. Shailendra Shukla (49) was regional vice-president of BJP's Kanpur-Bundelkhand region. PTI

Rebel Khaira takes aim at AAP central leadership

Draws a parallel between his fight for autonomy and that of the Delhi govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HOSHIARPUR

Rebel Aam Aadmi Party Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Saturday accused the party's central leadership of having double standards, questioning why his group's fight for autonomy is being regarded as "anti-party" activity saying when senior leaders could stage a sit-in protest at the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor's office for their "rights".



AAP leader Sukhpal Singh Khaira. ▪ FILE PHOTO

'Not scared by threats'

Mr. Khaira, who is leading a group of dissident AAP MLAs, said his group will not be scared by "threats" from the party leadership and was committed to the resolutions passed on August 2 during a "volunteers' convention" in Bathinda.

"On one side, our Delhi leaders say that Delhi (government) should get more rights. They had even staged a dharna at L-G's office. What were they demanding? They were demanding more rights and autonomy. But when we demand the same autonomy, we get to hear that action will be taken for indiscipline and anti-party activity. Is it not double standards," asked Khaira while addressing a volunteers' convention in Garhshankar organised by local AAP MLA Jai Krishan Singh Rori.

"We are not going back from our resolutions passed in Bathinda. If they try to browbeat us with the threat of removing us as MLAs, then we are not going to take it," he said.

Addressing the gathering, Kharar MLA Kanwar Sandhu ascribed the AAP's defeat in Assembly polls to wrong distribution of tickets.

"Despite a strong wave in AAP's favour, the party faced the defeat. There are several reasons for that defeat. One of the reasons was that wrong distribution of tickets," he said.

Mr. Sandhu said he was also asked to fight from Garhshankar seat. "But I insisted on fighting from Kharar seat as I have no base in Garhshankar," he said.

The Kharar MLA also claimed that nobody in the party bothered to find out the causes behind the defeat in polls.

Spate of meetings

Earlier, Mr. Khaira said they would hold a conference at Issru in Ludhiana on August 15. Then volunteers' convention will be held in Faridkot on August 22 followed by similar events on August 25 in Gurdaspur and September 2 in Moga.

Other dissident MLAs including Nazar Singh Manshahia (Mansa), Master Baldev (Jaitu) were also present.

Some AAP activists protested with black flags against Mr. Khaira when he was passing through Garhshankar, accusing him of trying to divide the party.

Congress for 27% job quota to backwards in Haryana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Senior Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala on Saturday assured the backward sections in Haryana that his party, if voted to power in the Assembly elections due next year, would provide them 27% reservation in the State government's gazetted posts.

"The Congress government will provide 27% reservation to backward class communities in the State government's gazetted posts," said Mr. Surjewala, addressing a 'Backward Classes Sammelan' in Hisar.

"We will also provide ₹500 crore per annum soft loans to unemployed backward class youth at 4% interest," he added.

The national spokesman and communications incharge of the Congress said that his party had always worked for increased quota for the backward classes in the State. He added that the Congress will set up different boards for clay art, hair art, wooden arts and metal art under the aegis of the Haryana Backward Classes and Economically Weaker Sections Kalyan Nigam, which would work to enhance employment avenues for lesser educated backward class youth.

Hitting out at the present government in Haryana, Mr. Surjewala said that the BJP had made big promises before the elections but none of them have been fulfilled. He accused the BJP government of betraying and duping the poor, the backward class and people belonging to other deprived sections.

He criticised the BJP government at the Centre and in Haryana for their "anti-people policies".

Will not allow abattoirs: Rawat

CM promises to cancel licences issued by previous regime

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Saturday that his government will not allow opening of abattoirs in the State and will cancel licences for those issued by the previous regime.



Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat. ▪

Special police squads

Reiterating his government's commitment to cow conservation, Mr. Rawat said Uttarakhand is the first State where special police squads have been raised in Dehradun, Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar districts to stop cow slaughter and cow trafficking.

"We will not allow opening slaughterhouses in the State. Those issued by previous governments will be cancelled," the Chief Minister said at a function held here to mark signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with a U.S. firm to produce sex-sorted semen to increase the population of cows.

About the cow conservation Act brought by the B.C. Khanduri government, of which he was a part, Mr. Rawat said he read in a newspaper that a licence for setting up an abattoir had been issued by the previous government in 2016 in Manglaur.

"I immediately called the District Magistrate asking him to cancel the licence or any such permission granted in the past. We will not allow cow slaughter under any circumstance. There will be no licence for setting up slaughterhouses in the State," the Chief Minister said.

Gangster involved in attack on singer held

Second arrest made in Parmish case

CHANDIGARH
IANS

The Punjab police on Saturday arrested another member of the Dilpreet-Rinda gang who was allegedly involved in the attack on well-known Punjabi singer Parmish Verma in April.

This is the second big arrest by the State police in just over a month, since Dilpreet Baba (Dilpreet Singh Dahal), who had also threatened the singer on Facebook, was nabbed on July 9.

Wanted by the police of three States, Akash, a 21-year-old sharpshooter of the gang, was nabbed after a nine-kilometre chase that ended in an exchange of fire in Singhpura area of Rupnagar district, around 40 km from here.

A foreign-made pistol and bullets were recovered from his possession, a police spokesman said.

A resident of Nanded Sahib, Maharashtra, Akash was wanted in five cases of murder and 13 cases of dacoity, robbery and the Arms Act, by the police of Maharashtra, Haryana and Punjab.

"In the world of organised crime since age of 17, Akash had been in Punjab for the past few months," the spokesman said.

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Odisha's revenue jumps by 33%

Mining royalty, vehicle taxes show highest increase till July end this fiscal

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's revenue collection has jumped by 33% to ₹13,015 crore till July end this fiscal compared to ₹9,807 crore during the corresponding period last year.

The revenue from the State's own tax sources during the current fiscal has grown by 27% with total collection of ₹9,536 crore, and the revenue from non-tax sources has grown by 51% with a total collection of ₹3,479 crore, according to a statement issued by the State government.

"The revenue generation from mining royalty and vehicle taxes has shown highest increase of around 72% and 42% respectively. The total collection from mining royalty has been around ₹3,039 crore against last year's collection of ₹1,769 crore till July end. Similarly, the revenue collection from vehicle tax has grown from ₹404 crore to ₹571 crore during the same period," it said

Fund collection

As far as the District Mineral Fund collection is concerned, Odisha has generated ₹5,013 crore up to July. "So far, 8,163 projects in the sectors of physical infrastructure, irrigation, energy, watershed, afforestation and others have been sanctioned under the fund. Around ₹3,047 crore has already been allotted against these projects," a government source said.

Youth held for raping 10-year-old

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

A 19-year-old youth was arrested in Odisha's Malkangiri district on Saturday for raping a 10-year-old girl. Police sources said that the accused is a second-year college student.

The victim, who suffered severe injuries, is undergoing treatment at the district hospital.

Chumki Behera, activist of NGO Childline, said the Class IV student will be counselled after she recovers from the physical and mental trauma.

The police said that the victim had gone to her uncle's home on Thursday. The accused is the neighbour of the uncle.

On Friday, the girl was alone in the house. The youth allegedly lured the victim to his house and raped her, said the police. The victim suffered grievous injuries during the sexual assault.

The youth was arrested after the victim's uncle and parents filed a complaint at the Malkangiri police station.

Mob torches liquor shop

Man's body found lying nearby

CORRESPONDENT
CUTTACK

An irate mob, comprising mostly women from the neighbouring Sweepers' Colony, allegedly ransacked and burnt a country liquor shop located in Ward No. 17 of Choudwar Municipality, about 15 km from here, on Saturday morning.

The mob reportedly went berserk after finding the body of a local youth lying in a pool of blood near a canal, five km away from the liquor shop.

The police said a man named Ashok Naik (30) and his acquaintance from the colony had gone to the liquor joint on Friday evening. When Ashok did not return home late in the night, his family members searched for him. His body was found lying near the Dhumabati canal.

Believing that Ashok's murder had something to do with the liquor shop, the colony residents rushed to it and set it on fire after ransacking it.

The police said a murder case has been registered and investigations are on.

Another body found

In another incident, the Mangalabag police of the city retrieved the body of another youth lying in a pool of blood near the tuberculosis ward of the SCB Medical College and Hospital on Saturday morning.

The police had suspected it to be a murder case after seeing a liquor bottle and some belongings strewn near the body. However, an autopsy led doctors to believe that it was a case of suicide.

Rape case a conspiracy: MoS

Truth will be revealed soon: Rajen Gohain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Union Minister Rajen Gohain said on Saturday that accusations and conspiracies are "plotted" against him whenever he is about to contest elections, a day after the Assam police registered a case against him for allegedly raping a woman.

Police had on Friday said that an investigation was under way in the case which was registered against the Minister on August 2 after receiving a complaint at the Nagaon police station.

"Every time I am about to contest elections, such conspiracies are plotted against me. This happened in 2016 and 2011 as well. Now, again this has started. Investigation is under way. The truth will be revealed soon," Mr. Gohain, the Minister of State for Railways, said at his residence here.



Rajen Gohain ▪ PTI

Mr. Gohain, an MP representing the Nagaon Lok Sabha constituency, was referring to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Complaints filed

The Minister has also filed complaints of blackmailing against the woman and her family members, his Officer on Special Duty, Sanjiv Goswami, had said on Friday, claiming that the case against the Minister has been withdrawn.

Asked if the case has been withdrawn, Nagaon police station in-charge Ananta Das said the woman had pleaded to withdraw the case in court but the case still stands. "We will do our own investigation," he said.

Two teenaged girls found dead in Balasore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALASORE

Two teenaged girls were found dead in a house in Odisha's Balasore district but the cause of their death is yet to be known, the police said on Saturday.

The girls, both friends, were identified as Priyanka Das of Biripada village and Laxmipriya Das of nearby Tentei under the jurisdiction of Soro police station. Both were Class X students in a nearby high school, they said.

Priyanka had gone to Laxmipriya's house on Friday to study together for a school examination.

Both the girls were in a motionless state when Laxmipriya's mother entered the room late on Friday night after which the family members raised an alarm and took them to hospital where they were declared "brought dead".

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IN BRIEF



Flights to West Asia from Tirupati soon

TIRUPATI

With the presence of a sizeable population travelling to various countries in the West Asia, the airport authorities are planning to kick-start their international operations by attracting low-cost airlines from the Tirupati International Airport to the West Asia by January 2019.

Mid-sea collision: ship to be inspected again

KOCHI

Authorities are embarking on an inspection of oil tanker *mv Desh Shakti*, suspected to be involved in a mid-sea collision with a fishing vessel off Kochi on August 7, in which three fishermen were killed and nine went missing. Preliminary inspection had failed to establish its involvement in the collision. On Saturday, a trawler recovered a body, believed to be one of the missing fishermen.

Tobacco farmers want to attend WHO event

MYSURU

Tobacco farmers have urged the Centre to include their representatives in the delegation attending the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Conference of Parties, organised by the World Health Organisation at Geneva in October.

BJP MP demands CBI probe into PDA scam

VIJAYAWADA

BJP MP G.V.L. Narasimha Rao has written to Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan seeking his direction for a special audit by the CAG and a CBI inquiry into the alleged embezzlement of huge sums from the Personal Deposit Accounts in A.P. He said the scandal involved ₹53,039 crore of public money and it became evident from the CAG report on the State Finances for 2016-17.



In spate: A culvert at Thadiyampadi was washed away with the release of water from the Idukki dam. About 35 families living along Periyar river banks in the area have been evacuated. ▪ H. VIBHU

Army deployed in 6 districts

Rajnath to visit Kerala today; CM Pinarayi announces relief for flood affected

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to reach Kochi on Sunday morning for an aerial survey of the flood-ravaged areas of Idukki and Ernakulam in Kerala. He will also hold talks with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Ministers and State officials.

Army personnel have been deployed in Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Idukki and Ernakulam districts. Two AN32 aircraft are on call at the Sulur airbase and personnel of the Navy have been located at Wayanad and Kochi to meet any emergency.

Earlier on Saturday, Mr. Vijayan conducted an aerial survey of the flood-ravaged districts and visited relief camps and announced relief for kin of those who had lost their life in rain-related incidents. He also announced ₹4 lakh to those who had lost their homes and ₹10 lakh to those who had lost both their homes and land.

The Chief Minister called upon all government agencies to remain vigilant in view of the heavy rainfall warning. The State, he said, has a long haul ahead given the magnitude of the devastation caused by the rain and called for support from all quarters.

There was, however, some relief with the water levels in reservoirs falling through the day. At 8 p.m., the level at the Idukki reservoir was 2,400.26 ft, against the full reservoir level (FRL) of 2,403 ft.

2 fishermen killed

Two fishermen were killed and four others injured when high waves caused their boat to capsize off the Munduthura coast, near Anchuthengu, a coastal town 40 km north of Thiruvananthapuram, early on Saturday. The police said the accident occurred when the men encountered a huge wave, roughly 50 metres off the Munduthura coast, where they had gone fishing.

Release adequate funds, Rahul urges PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release sufficient funds to the Kerala government to help respond to the floods and restore critical infrastructure in the State.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Gandhi said the torrential rain, floods and wide-scale landslips had left behind a trail of destruction across Kerala.

"I request you to release sufficient funds immediately to the State government, to enable the State to respond effectively, and work towards restoring critical infrastructure," Mr. Gandhi said.

Mr. Gandhi also urged Congress workers in the rain-battered State to help those in need.

One dead, road links cut after A.P. rain

STAFF REPORTER
KAKINADA/VIJAYAWADA

The heavy rain that lashed the Agency area of East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday snapped road connectivity between several tribal hamlets.

Rivulets were flowing over the bridges across the four mandals that had been merged into the district.

Traffic disrupted

Water was flowing at alarmingly high levels at Annavaram, Adavi Venkanna Gudem, and Venkampalem hamlets of V.R. Puram mandal. Vehicular traffic came to a standstill between V.R. Puram and Chintooru.

There was a steady increase in the water levels in the Sabari river, and the officials working in the Agency mandals were on high alert. In West Godavari district, one person was electrocuted when a power line snapped and fell on him and another sustained injuries when a tree fell on him.

Officials cautioned

There was heavy rainfall also in many parts of Krishna district in the last 48 hours, following which the district administration sounded an alert.

Several mandals received good rainfall and many rivulets were in spate since Friday night. Heavy rain was reported in Tiruvuru, Nuzvid, Vijayawada rural, A. Konduru, Jaggaiahpeta, and other mandals. Crops and seed beds were inundated in many villages, and officials were cautioned of more rain in the catchment areas in Telangana.



Son of the soil: CM H.D. Kumaraswamy transplanting seedlings in Mandya district. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A day of sowing for Kumaraswamy

To spend a day in a month with farmers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SEETHAPURA

Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Saturday sought to refurbish his image as a son of the soil by transplanting seedlings in slushy paddy fields at Seethapura in the Pandavapura taluk of Mandya district, a strong support base for the Janata Dal-Secular.

The event, organised by party leaders, in particular Minor Irrigation Minister C.S. Puttaraju, had Mr. Kumaraswamy transplanting saplings, after which a group of agricultural labourers took over the task.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Kumaraswamy said he would launch a programme under which he would spend one day in a month with farmers in all districts. "I will hold 30 such programmes across the State in 30 months. I will also visit or stay with villagers in their hamlets for a full day in every district," he said.

He said the government would give "good news" to the people by the Ganesha Chaturthi festival, but sought some time to solve the problems of farmers and all citizens, in general. Mr. Kumaraswamy appealed to farmers to not commit suicide. He also promised to revive the Mysugar Mill and the Pandavapura Sahakari Sakkare Kharkhane sugar mill.

Drug for TB rolled out in Telangana

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD

Bedaquiline, a drug that can significantly reduce the treatment time of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis, was rolled out in Telangana on Saturday.

The drug is made available only to the Centre, which in turn rations it to the States.

It is not available for private purchase as its use requires close monitoring and also because of concerns of drug-resistance by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacterium that causes the disease.

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IN BRIEF



Man held over fake FB profile of acharya

NOIDA

Mohammad Zishan, a resident of Saharanpur who allegedly created a fake Facebook account of Acharya Balkrishna (in photo) of the Patanjali Group and engaged in "vulgar conversations" with people using the account, was arrested here on Saturday, police said. PTI

Student of government school raped in U.P.

BAHRAICH

A 13-year-old girl of a state-run residential school in Uttar Pradesh was raped on Thursday by a youngster, who has been arrested, the police said on Saturday. The youth was arrested late on Friday after a complaint was lodged by the girl's parents, said Superintendent of Police Sabharaj Singh. PTI

Rights activist arrested on fresh charges

CHENNAI

Rights activist and May 17 Movement coordinator Thirumurugan Gandhi was remanded in yet another case, booked against him in 2017, by adding a sedition charge. On Friday, a Metropolitan Magistrate had declined to remand him in a case booked by the Cyber Crime Cell for sharing the video of his speech on the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in Thoothukudi. However, the police arrested him soon, in connection with a procession he took out to garland a Periyar statue in 2017.

Woman held for killing six-month-old son

THANE

A 25-year-old woman from Bhiwandi in Thane district allegedly killed her six-month-old son as she was fed up with his constant crying due to ill-health, the police said on Saturday. The woman, Kalpana Gaikar, murdered the boy by drowning him in a nullah in Dhapsipada village in Bhiwandi and tried to pass it off as an accident, Thane district rural police said. The woman was arrested on Saturday. a case of murder has been registered against her, the police said. PTI

Genetic 'barcodes' reveal three frogs unreported in India

Technique also points to smaller distribution of the ornate narrow-mouthed frog, which may require a protection programme

AATHIRA PERINCHERY
KOCHI



Making their presence felt: (from left) Mukhlesur's narrow-mouthed frog, Mymensingh narrow-mouthed frog, Nilphamari narrow-mouthed frog and ornate narrow-mouthed frog. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Barcodes are not used in supermarkets alone. Each species can be recognised by its unique genetic 'barcode' and using this method, a team of scientists has identified three frog species not recorded in India before.

The researchers also found that the ornate narrow-mouthed frog – thought to be widely-distributed in Asia – is seen only in peninsular India and Sri Lanka.

The findings were published this week in the international journal *Mitochondrial DNA Part B*, by a team that included scientists from Delhi University (DU) and the Wildlife Institute of India. It was the complex taxonomy of the ornate narrow-mouthed frog – it was first described in 1841 – that prompted the team to study it further.

They collected 62 of these frogs across India and analysed their genetic data using DNA barcoding. They compared this with available genetic data from across south Asia.

Complex taxonomy

Unravelling complex taxonomy, the team found that India is home to not just the ornate narrow-mouthed frog but also the Nilphamari, Mymensingh and Mukhlesur's narrow-mouthed frogs (seen in other south Asian countries).

The team reported Bangladesh's Mukhlesur's narrow-mouthed frog, for instance, from Mizoram. The nocturnal Nilphamari narrow-mouthed frog, seen in Bangladesh and Nepal, has been recorded in the Western Ghats (Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra), the Eastern Ghats (Andhra Pradesh and Odisha) and central, east and northeastern India. Most narrow-mouthed frogs seen in northeastern India are Mymensingh narrow-mouthed frogs.

The study reveals that the ornate narrow-mouthed frog is present only in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. However, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) currently classifies the species as "Least Concern" based on the outdated information that it is widespread. This could be a "major concern", said S. D. Biju, of Delhi University, who led the study. "An assessment of threats that this species might be facing in its currently restricted range could show it to be data deficient or even threatened, thereby requiring conservation attention," he said.

Status review

The study would "enable IUCN to review the conservation status of this group of frogs across South Asia at the earliest opportunity", said Neil Cox, manager of the biodiversity assessment unit, IUCN. "Species informations are outdated for India and Sri Lanka and we are awaiting funding to begin reassessments." These findings also increase India's frog species tally to 400.



Coming apart: The under-construction flyover that collapsed in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday. ▪ PTI

Three injured as U.P. flyover collapses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Three labourers were injured after a portion of an under-construction flyover collapsed in the Basti district of eastern Uttar Pradesh on Saturday.

The flyover is located on National Highway 28 near the Phutaiyya crossing.

As per the district administration, a slab of the flyover collapsed between 7 a.m. and 7.30 a.m.

Major tragedy averted

A major tragedy was averted as not many people were around. Only three persons were present at the site at the time of the incident, the district administration said.

While one person, who was on duty in the night shift, was injured and rescued from the debris, the other two were provided preventive and precautionary treatment, District Magistrate Raj Shekhar said.

The police identified the injured as Dharmendra, Suresh Rai and Pradeep. The injured were taken to the district hospital.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered swift action and proper treatment of the injured.

Lankan Navy arrests 27 Indian fishermen

Families urge officials to secure their release

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
RAMANATHAPURAM

After a month-long gap, the Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 27 country boat fishermen, including 22 from the coastal village of Nambuthalai in the district, along with their four vessels, for illegally fishing in the country's waters.

The arrested persons, who had set out for fishing in *vallams* (country boats) on Friday morning from Shenbagamagadevi jetty in Pudukottai district, were fishing in the high seas in the northern Palk Bay in the evening when the Sri Lankan Navy apprehended them, according to reports received here.

This is the first time this fishing season – which began on June 15 – that the Sri Lankan Navy has apprehended country boat fishermen, who use gillnet for fishing, unlike mechanised boat fishermen, who use the 'destructive' trawlers.



Family members of the fishermen at the collectorate in Ramanathapuram.

Sri Lankan Navy had arrested four fishermen from Rameswaram on July 8.

The Sri Lankan Navy, on its website, said the fishermen were, after medical examination, handed over to the Jaffna Assistant Director of Fisheries through the Sri Lankan Coast Guard for further action.

They were reportedly held in the office of the Fisheries Department till late on Saturday evening.

The fishermen, who had been fishing *kooral meen* (sturgeon or croaker) for its high-value fish maw or air bladder, may have strayed into Sri Lankan waters in the northern Palk Bay for want of more catch, sources said.

Protesting against the arrests and demanding the immediate release of the fishermen, their family members, accompanied by members of the fishing fraternity, visited the Collectorate here and urged the officials to take up the issue with the Union and State governments.

IMA hunts for people offering 'magic remedies'

Campaign launched following a demand from the intelligence wing of the Kerala police

A.S. JAYANTH
KOZHIKODE

A senior official in the Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau approached a 'nattuvaidyan' in Thiruvananthapuram a couple of years ago to seek a lasting remedy for back pain. He was given a powder to be administered with liquor, which the 'vaidyan' claimed would "solve his problems forever." The official passed out soon after he drank the 'medicine.'

Doctors later found that his heart had almost stopped functioning and the blood circulation to the brain had been blocked. It took around a month of treatment to bring him back to normal life.

With incidents of even high-profile people falling prey to unscientific practices on the rise, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) is compiling the details of those using modern diagnostic tools and prescribing modern medicine without a basic degree in medicine.

Details being collected

A list of people offering 'magical cure' too is being collected. Named 'Operation Magic Hunt,' the launch of the campaign follows a demand from the intelligence wing of the Kerala Police.

N. Sulphi, secretary, IMA Kerala chapter, told *The Hindu* that they had collected the details of over 500 such people from across the State.

The IMA had asked 30,000 of its members spread across 100 branches in the State to chip in with information.

Members of the public could send in information to operationmagichunt@gmail.com or imaksb@yahoo.com.

"It is illegal even to carry advertisements and features of people offering magic remedies. The police could take action as per the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954," Dr. Sulphi said.

MLA held on way to 'jal samadhi'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RAJKOT

A Gujarat Congress legislator, on his way to take 'jal samadhi' in the Bhadar river in Rajkot district, was on Saturday detained along with seven other MLAs of his party, Patidar leader Hardik Patel and others at Bhukhi village, the police said.

Lalit Vasoya, who represents the Dhoraji Assembly constituency, was proceeding to take 'jal samadhi' (suicide by drowning) to protest against textile dyeing units polluting the Bhadar river with untreated effluents.

On suspicion of being thief, man lynched in U.P.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUZAFFARNAGAR

A man was lynched in Bijopur here by a group of villagers on the suspicion of being a thief, the police said on Saturday.

The incident took place on Friday evening. A case of murder has been registered against several people. Two persons were arrested, Station House Officer, Chapar, Subhash Rathore said.

The deceased was identified as Kapil Tyagi.

His family, along with others, staged a protest at the Chapar police station, demanding more arrests.

Live streaming of nuptials to counter kidnapping claim

Couple elope and record marriage on Facebook



ILLUSTRATION: SEBASTIAN FRANCIS

S. BHUVANESHWARI
TUMAKURU

Most newly-weds turn to social media platforms to document picture-perfect highlights of their wedding ceremony, reception, and even their honeymoon. However, one couple who got married against their parents' wishes, used Facebook to document their "proof of consent".

Worried that their families would file a police complaint claiming that the bride had been kidnapped and forced into marriage, Anjana, 19, and Kiran, 25, who live in Madhugiri, Tumakuru, uploaded a video of their nuptials and a statement that theirs was a true union.

The two had been dating for a few years, and decided to elope after Anjana's father threatened to file a police complaint against Kiran. In the video clip, Anjana – a first-year B.Com student – said that her father, who is a leader of the Madhugiri unit of the Janata Dal (Secular), disapproved of their relationship.

"My father forced me to sign a complaint form against Kiran, and insisted that I accompany him to Madhugiri police station," she said in the video. "I did not want to go to the police station and file a complaint against my boyfriend. So I ran away from my house on Thursday around 4.30 p.m.," she said.

The couple got married at a Shiva temple on Friday. They recorded the ritual live on Facebook, and also spoke about their love for each other. They hoped that the video would serve as proof, should their parents register a case of kidnapping.

However, the girl's father went ahead and registered a missing person's complaint with the Madhugiri police.

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

FROM PAGE ONE

Tharoor gives Doklam report to government

The panel however, would take the final call on the amendments suggested by the government.

The report could be discarded if it is not submitted before the panel's term expires on August 31. If the report was not submitted before its term ends, then the report could easily be binned. Congress president Rahul Gandhi is also a panel member.

In the last two consecutive meetings, the report could not be adopted because of protests from the BJP members. The members in a meeting on August 7 first complained that they got the copy of the draft report too late and did not have enough time to give it a thorough reading.

In the second meeting on August 9, the lone BJP MP Sharad Tripathi, left the meeting mid way citing 'lack of qorum'.

The military face off at Doklam between India and China started on June 16, 2017, when a Chinese road construction party tried to build a road in the Doklam region and was stopped by Indian troops.





Fight is on: Amit Shah and BJP's West Bengal president Dilip Ghosh in Kolkata; in Jaipur, Rahul Gandhi is flanked by RPCC president Sachin Pilot and AICC general secretary Ashok Gehlot. ▪ PTI

Amit Shah, Rahul Gandhi pull no punches

In Kolkata, BJP chief flays Cong. president, Mamata over NRC

STAFF REPORTER
KOLKATA

BJP president Amit Shah said here on Saturday that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's opposition to the update of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam would have no impact on the exercise, and the process would be completed in a judicious manner.

"Mamata*di*, the NRC will not stop at your opposition. You can oppose, Congress party's leader Rahul Gandhi can oppose, but our commitment is to complete the process of NRC in Assam in a judicious manner," he said at a Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha meeting.

Mr. Shah accused the Trinamool Congress chairperson of creating confusion about the NRC in West Bengal. He referred to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, brought by the BJP-led government, and said it had the provision to provide citizenship to Hindus, Buddhists and Christians who had come from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. "The Government of India will ensure that asylum seekers are allowed to stay in the country," he said.

Mr. Shah recalled Ms. Banerjee's opposition to "illegal infiltration" in 2005, and alleged that she had taken a U-turn as the "infiltrators" were now voting for the Trinamool Congress.

"Mamata*ji*, you will have to make your stand clear before the people of the State, whether you are for infiltrators or for national security," he said.

Unlike the State leadership of the party, which has been claiming that the BJP will initiate a similar process of NRC in West Bengal if it comes to power, the BJP president did not make any such claims. However, he alleged that the way infiltration is taking place, "West Bengal will turn into West Bangladesh". He gave a call to "uproot" the Trinamool Congress from power.

Observing that the people of the State had "given a chance to the Congress, the communists and the Trinamool Congress," he urged them to give an opportunity to the BJP.

Trinamool says NRC is not a Bengal-only issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Saturday responded to allegations by BJP president Amit Shah earlier in the day, saying "communal politics will not be accepted in Bengal".

"NRC is not an issue of Bengal only – it includes Rajasthan, Punjab, Bihar, Assam, Gurkhas, tribals, marginalised people.. our slogan is save Indian citizens," Trinamool Congress spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Derek O' Brien told presspersons.

He said Mr. Shah did not understand the culture and ethnicity of Bengal. The party described his rally as "another flop show".

Congress president keeps his focus on Rafale, corruption

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "corruption in the Rafale deal", saying the NDA government had agreed to pay ₹1,600 crore an aircraft against the ₹540 crore in the now-abrogated deal with Dassault of France reached by the UPA regime.

Addressing a meeting of Congress workers here, Mr. Gandhi said Mr. Modi had taken "his friend" – Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani – with him to France despite the latter having no experience in the defence sector.

"Mr. Ambani's company was formed just a week before the deal, while the price of the Rafale aircraft was increased by three times," he said.

"Mr. Modi has clearly indulged in corruption and theft. The entire country will see this in the near future," Mr. Gandhi said. AICC general secretaries Ashok Gehlot and Avinash Pande, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress president Sachin Pilot and thousands of party workers were present. Mr. Gandhi said that when he raised the issue of Rafale deal and corruption in Parliament, Mr. Modi did not spare even a minute to answer the questions in his long speech.

> **Mr. Modi has clearly indulged in corruption and theft. The entire country will see this in the near future**

On jobs for youth

While the original plan to let the state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. assemble 108 aircraft would have got jobs for the youth, Mr. Modi had snatched the opportunity from them through the renewed deal, he said.

He launched the Congress campaign for the Assembly election by staging a 12-km roadshow from the Sanganer airport to the Ramlila Maidan to address party workers.

From the meeting, he went to the famous Govind Dev temple in the Walled City here.

Mr. Gandhi travelled in a modified bus and greeted the people, as rose petals were showered on him.

Roadshow

He alighted from the bus several times to meet party workers, while cars, buses, SUVs and even elephants followed him on his way to the meeting venue.

Outside the airport, a group of Kalbeliya folk dancers welcomed him.

In his address, Mr. Gandhi said the Prime Minister, who had promised 2 crore jobs, ₹15 lakh in every bank account and measures for women's safety, had failed on all fronts. "Why were the debts of ₹2,30,000 crore of 15 to 20 rich industrialists written off as as bad loans? On the other hand, the government cannot help the debt-ridden farmers who are committing suicide," he said.

Mr. Gandhi accused Mr. Modi of remaining silent on the atrocities against Dalits, minorities and tribal people, and asserted that his party would form the government in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh going to the polls this year.

Gone girls: trafficked children of Yadadri



Vast network: Several houses were sealed in Yadadri. ▪ SINGAM VENKATARAMANA

Most of the girls were rescued from houses in the same colony. The officers did not comment on how long child prostitution was going on. Residents, however, said "everyone knows about this".

"Genuine devotees go up the hill for darshan of Lord Narasimha Swamy, but others head for lodges, family rooms or private homes in scattered localities," said a mess worker, referring to parts of Angadi Bazar, Ganeshnagar and Pathagutta.

Within hours of police rescuing the girls, occupants of 20 houses in the colony vanished, locking up their premises. Some apparently alerted others on WhatsApp.

In Vijayawada, police said more than 25 persons were thought to have escaped, taking some of the children from Yadadri with them, to Andhra Pradesh and other States. The Telangana police had formed special teams to rescue the missing children.

Following the raids, a few parents from Andhra Pradesh rushed to Yadadri in search of their children, clutching their photographs. The children went missing a few years ago and cases were filed with police.

"Traffickers have a wide network in different places in Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar and other States", an investigation officer in Vijayawada said.

Tracing the families of the girls is proving to be a tough task for Telangana police. They say that Kalyani's claim that she bought the nine-year-old from one Kamsani Shankar of Yadagirigutta was investigated. It turned out that Shankar, on whom there were police records for involvement in many such cases, had died a few months ago. Another man, Raju, was in jail.

Lured at transit points

Nalgonda District Child Welfare Committee chairman K. Nimmaiah said organised gangs operate at railway stations, bus-stops and isolated places, looking for girls, offering chocolates or ice cream as a lure, including in Medak and Jagitiyal districts. "Of late, some poor parents with two or three daughters are selling off the younger ones," he said.

A welfare officer associated with the raids in Yadagirigutta narrated that girls as young as five years old were bought.

Traffickers admitted them in local anganwadis (government shelters), and got them ration cards before they were 10 years old to make them look like family members. They were then taken out of school. School certificates with fictitious names of parents were created, the welfare officer said. In one case, the name of a person who died of HIV complications was added as the parent of a girl, who was eventually rescued.

Once in the hands of pimps, the lives of the girls turned horrendous. They were asked to note entry and exit of people in the houses and witness sexual acts.

Hormonal injections

Spending money was given to condition the girls, who were also administered hormonal injections by the time they were 10, by a quack attached to the brothel operators' network, the officer added.

Police records say that child prostitution in Yadagirigutta is not new. Nalgonda Child Welfare Committee members recollected that two years ago, seven girls were rescued by police after Bengaluru-based Justice and Care organisation took the initiative.

One girl tested positive for HIV. She and five others were taken away by their parents. The seventh girl, 12 years old now, was in a home for HIV children in Nalgonda. "This girl is not HIV positive but has to be accommodated in the home. That shows how prepared the government is to tackle the issue," says Nalgonda CWC chairman K. Nimmaiah.

Police said they had booked 10 cases, arrested 19 persons, and rescued 16 girls so far after the recent bust.

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) Advisory Committee Chairman M. Ramachandra Reddy and CARA Member, and also Telangana in-charge, Gundlapally Sreenu, issued statements on the issue. They wrote on July 12 to the State Minister for Women and Child Development, Thummala Nageswara Rao, requesting constitution of a Child Welfare Committee in all districts and for constitution of a State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

At least five of those arrested by Rachakonda police recently were accused of involvement in similar crimes earlier. About 450 children, including 295 girls were reported missing in January and February, 2018, in Andhra Pradesh, official data show.

(Inputs from Rajulapudi Srinivas in Vijayawada)

Activists slam Cong. for stalling triple talaq bill

'Women's issues must be heard'

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Activists spearheading the movement against instant triple talaq have lashed out at the Opposition parties, particularly the Congress, for failing Muslim women by blocking the tabling of the Bill on the last day of monsoon session of Parliament.

However, the amendments made to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, by the Union Cabinet earlier this week, were uniformly welcomed, which the activists say are in sync with their demands.

"Earlier, the Bill was hastily prepared and not thought through but the government has taken appropriate steps and brought amendments, which is a good move. But, it seems the opposition is not in a mood to collaborate. Most political parties are used to doing politics the old way, where women's issues don't matter. So they continue to hear the voices of All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), like some of the MPs in Congress party," said Zakia Soman, co-founder, Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA).

The NGO was among the interveners in the Shayara Bano case, where the Supreme Court gave a 3-2 verdict setting aside the practice of triple talaq.

No mention of Shah's liabilities in his electoral affidavit: Cong.

BJP says he mortgaged his property as collateral security

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Alleging that BJP president Amit Shah made no mention of his "liabilities" in his Rajya Sabha election affidavit, the Congress on Saturday said that it would approach the Election Commission against him.

The BJP hit back at the Congress with the allegation that it is resorting to fake news.

At a press conference, former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh said Kusum Finserve, a company owned by Mr. Shah's son Jay Shah, managed to obtain a credit facility of ₹95 crore after it mortgaged two plots and a building owned by the BJP president.



Jairam Ramesh

Mr. Ramesh questioned how Kusum Finserve, with a net worth of only ₹6 crore, managed a "huge" credit facility of nearly 15 times the firm's worth. "Shell companies are closing and they should close but Shah companies are flourishing," said Mr. Ramesh.

In a strong rebuttal, BJP spokesperson Sambit Partra said Mr. Shah cannot show the liability of an independent entity belonging to his son as his own. "The allegations against him [Shah] are totally bogus and fake... Even if Amit Shah has mortgaged his property, it does not mean that liability is his," said Mr. Patra and pointed out that the BJP chief had only mortgaged his property as a collateral security. "On the contrary, he (Shah) will be violating the law if he shows his adult son's liability in his election affidavit."Mr. Patra added.

Rajnath, Shah visit Vajpayee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Home Minister Rajnath Singh and BJP president Amit Shah visited the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here on Saturday evening to enquire about the health condition of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who has been undergoing treatment at the premier institute.

Mr. Shah visited the AIIMS at around 6.30 p.m. and Mr. Singh at around 8.15 p.m., a source at the institute said. Mr. Vajpayee was admitted to the hospital on June 11 with kidney tract infection, chest congestion, urinary tract infection and low urine output.

Congress betrayed Muslim sisters: Ananth Kumar

Union Minister says politics should not come in the way of the triple talaq Bill as it is a matter of social justice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the monsoon session of Parliament ended as one of the most productive sessions in recent past, the government and the Congress sparred over the Bill to ban the practice of instant triple talaq.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar, addressing a press conference on Saturday along with his colleagues Vijay Kumar Goel and Arjun Ram Meghwal, said the Bill was a matter of social justice but the Congress was playing politics over it.

"The government did three amendments in the triple talaq Bill. The question is why the Congress, Rahul Gandhi*ji* and Sonia*ji* are trying to thwart the Bill. Why are they trying to create obstacles? By thwarting triple talaq Bill, they betrayed our Muslim sisters," Mr. Kumar said.

"The Bill to ban triple talaq is not about politics but about social justice and struggle. People are anguished, our sisters are agitated. The Bill was passed unanimously in the Lok Sabha, then why are they [the Congress] trying to create hurdles in the Rajya Sabha repeatedly," Mr. Kumar asked.

Asked if the government was planning to bring an Ordinance, he said, "The session ended only yesterday. Once we decide what we are going to do next, we will come back to you and share."

"I heard Sonia*ji* on TV yesterday [Friday] saying their [Congress] stand on the triple talaq Bill is clear. But she didn't say whether she supports or opposes the Bill," said Mr. Goel, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, who looks after the functioning of the Rajya Sabha.



Union Ministers Ananth Kumar, right, and Arjun Ram Meghwal addressing a press conference on Saturday. ▪ PTI

Contesting the government claim that the Congress created hurdles for the triple talaq Bill, senior leader Jairam Ramesh said the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha had announced that the Upper House would take up the Insolvency Code and Commercial Courts after the Private Member's Bill.

Mr. Ramesh said, "He [the Chairman] said this, we didn't say this. And we took up both these issues. Yesterday, the behaviour of Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad and Mr. Ananth Kumar leads me to believe that this was a well-planned strategy saying, 'We want this Bill but the Congress and other parties don't want it'. This is absolutely false." He said the government's three amendments to the triple talaq Bill were similar to the suggestions made by the Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad and could have been brought earlier instead of on the last day.

20 Bills in 17 sittings

Mr. Meghwal said the session, which saw 20 Bills being passed in 17 sittings, would be remembered for legislation such as restoring the provisions of the SC/ST Act and granting constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes, empowering OBC communities.

He said "failure to form a National Commission for OBC was one of the reasons why Dr. B.R. Ambedkar resigned from Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's Cabinet." "This is a historic session as the OBC decision affects 72 crore people and every year, between August 1 and 9, we will be celebrating it as social justice week," Mr. Meghwal said.

However, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi mocked the track record of BJP governments on violence against the SC/ST communities. "Mr. 56's best buddy, asked me to "check my facts" when I said the BJP fuels violence against Dalits & Adivasis. I hope the fact check I'm attaching below, will wake him and Mr. 56 up from their deep slumber on these rising atrocities; or I and the Congress party will," tweeted Mr. Gandhi, attaching a news report that claimed that BJP-ruled States witnessed more crimes against SC/ST.

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Tight-fisted neighbour? Indian aid to SAARC nations falls

Going by government data, assistance fell from ₹5,928.6 crore for 2013-14 to ₹3,483.6 crore for 2017-18; but Maldives has been an outlier, despite the dip in ties

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India's financial assistance to SAARC neighbours declined considerably in the past five years, a reply by the government in Parliament this week showed.

The startling figures were revealed in the Lok Sabha in answer to a question whether India had completed projects committed to countries in the neighbourhood. Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh submitted a chart of India's grant assistance (GA), or projects financed through a grant, to neighbouring countries. According to the figures, the GA actually fell from ₹5,928.6 crore for 2013-14 to ₹3,483.6 crore for 2017-18 for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka combined.

Significantly, the drop for most SAARC countries was most steep in 2014, the year the NDA government launched its tenure with the "Neighbourhood First" slogan. The one exception was the Maldives, to which Indian assistance has been consistently increasing year on year since 2013, despite the dip in bilateral ties. The Maldives is the only country of the grouping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not yet visited, and despite rising tensions between New Delhi and Male over the conduct of elections this year and the crackdown on the Opposition parties by President Abdulla Yameen, Indian largesse appears to have increased ten-fold to the islands: from ₹9.67 crore in 2013-14 to ₹109.24 crore.

When contacted, the External Affairs Ministry declined to make any formal comment. In its reply in Parliament, the Ministry had said: "An assessment of fund requirement is made before each financial year, based on the progress in execution aligned with project implementation cycle. Time lines fixed for projects vary, and are determined based on consultations with host governments and ground situation."

However, officials gave a number of explanations for the downtrend. "Our commitment to the neighbourhood has never been as strong," said an Indian diplomat now serving in the region, explaining that the GA figures did not include the lines of credit extended to Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. These lines of credit are given at the minimal interest rates of 1-2%, the official explained, compared with loans offered by China at 6-7%.

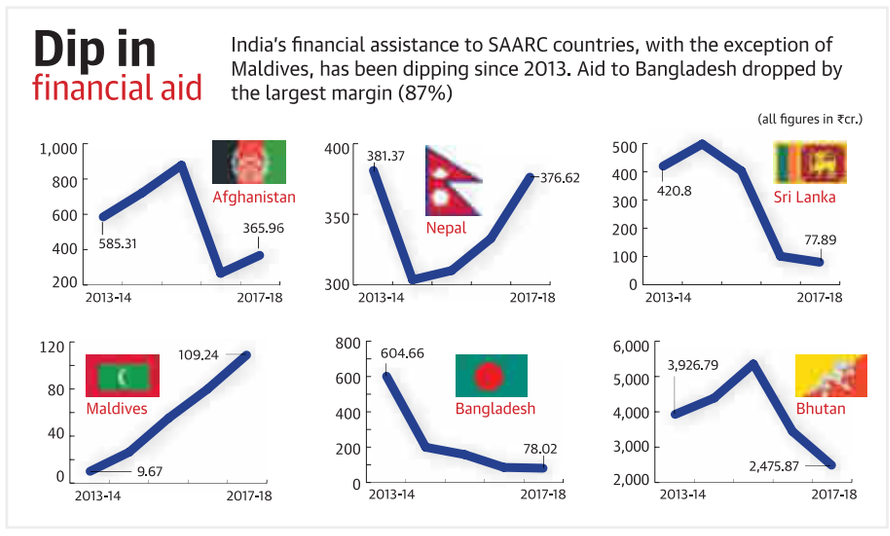
Another South Block official strongly denied the contention that the declining figures showed a flagging interest in the government's neighbourhood policy. The official said financial assistance had a "cyclical" nature, and the GA figures for 2018-19 were expected to be higher for each of the countries involved. The GA for Nepal in 2017-18 was ₹303.26 crore, for instance, and was expected to rise this year to ₹650 crore, provided the government in Kathmandu was able to absorb the additional aid, he added.

"These [trends] are mainly related to project cycles," concurred the former Ambassador to Afghanistan Amar Sinha, who was also Secretary (Economic Relations) before he retired. "Both our major projects – the Salma dam and the Afghanistan Parliament – were done and handed over [in this period]. So there is a natural tapering until we undertake the next major project."

When asked, officials conceded that one of the major reasons for the decline was that many projects had been completed in the neighbourhood, and there were fewer projects started in the period since 2014.

In Afghanistan, India has shifted to work on small development projects (SDPs) rather than the ambitious highways, dams and big building projects that were started in 2008-09. In Bangladesh, the main grant for land acquisition for the Akhaura-Agartala rail "last link" project has now been completed. In Bhutan, which has always received the largest share of Indian assistance, the assistance required for major hydroelectric power plants like Punatsanghchu 1 and 2 and Mangdechu has been disbursed 75-90%, said officials, while Indian assistance to Bhutan's 11th five-year plan (2013-2017) has been handed over nearly fully. In Sri Lanka, the decline was explained by delays in land acquisition for 15,000 homes to be built by India in the plantation areas, though the work on 45,000 homes in the north and east of the island has been completed.

India is still completing three main projects in Maldives: a police academy, a coastal radar project, and the refit of MNDF ship *Huravee*. An offer to build a new Defence Ministry building is pending, which explains why the Maldives alone is the outlier to an otherwise declining trend in neighbourhood aid.



IN BRIEF



Somnath Chatterjee's condition critical

KOLKATA

The condition of former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee, 89, who was hospitalised on Friday for the second time in the past two months, remains critical. He has been put on ventilator support. Mr. Chatterjee, admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata, is suffering from age-related issues and kidney complications.

Undeclared emergency in Tripura: Left team

NEW DELHI

A fact-finding team of Left leaders and farmer activists has alleged that a "wave of anti-communist violence" has broken out in Tripura. The delegation, led by Medha Patkar, visited the State from August 3 to 5. Releasing an interim report on Saturday, Raja Ram Singh, team member, said it had concluded that an "undeclared emergency" prevailed in Tripura.

Assam's neighbours on anti-migrant drive

In Nagaland, NGOs target 'NRC-excluded people'; Arunachal DGP warns outsiders without ILP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The police and non-governmental organisations in the northeastern States adjoining Assam have intensified the drive against "illegal immigrants" that began soon after the complete draft of the updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) was published on July 30.

A statement from the office of the Director-General of Police, Arunachal Pradesh, on Friday said 2,098 inner-line permit (ILP) violators had been detected in the State during the past 10 days.

The ILP is a temporary permit required by Indians to enter Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland, issued under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Act, 1873.


People collecting claims forms at an NRC centre in Guwahati on Saturday. ▪ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Students assist police

"The ILP-checking drive will continue and outsiders without ILP will face strict action as per the law," the statement said.

Volunteers of pressure groups such as the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union helped the police find people without the permit in at least 20 districts, including Tawang, Siang, Lohit, Namsai and Tirap.

In Nagaland, NGOs such as AO Students' Conference have been more vigilant against "NRC-excluded people" from Assam than the security forces. Members of this organisation have been checking documents of people at entry gates on the boundary between Assam and Nagaland.

Over the past 48 hours, the NGO caught 128 ILP defaulters and had them ejected from Nagaland through the police.

Drive to continue

The organisation's vice-president, Sunglem Walling, criticised Nagaland officials at the check gates for not being strict enough. "We will continue the drive against people of suspect nationality," he said.

Though the ILP is not applicable for Manipur, NGOs there have stepped up the demand for checking illegal migrants.

In Jiribam area, members of several indigenous groups have been checking documents of non-tribal people who come from southern Assam's Barak Valley for work or business.

Meghalaya too has continued its drive against people travelling without valid documents that establish their citizenship. The police, though, said they have not identified any foreigners or illegal migrants yet.

PM lauds role of IITs in nation-building

Was addressing IIT-Bombay's convocation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday urged eminent engineering institutions to focus more on quality than on the quantity of students, for research in cutting-edge science and technology domains, with emphasis on national priorities.

The country produces over seven lakh engineers every year, but not all of them graduate with the right set of skills, said Mr. Modi in his keynote address at the 56th convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay.

Eminent institutions and teachers must collectively own up the responsibility for bringing improvements in the engineering curriculum and systems, he said.

"In this direction [improving the quality of engineers being produced], my government is doing its best to improve quality, but more ideas have to come from teachers and the eminent institutions, such as the IITs," he said.


PM Modi addressing the convocation of IIT-Bombay, on Saturday. ▪ PTI

Encouraging students to be bold and courageous in their career, Mr. Modi said the IITs were at the forefront of development of new technology and innovation, and would play a crucial role in the creation of a 'new India', with help from new-age technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Big Data Analysis and Machine Learning.

More Assembly seats for Sikkim

Cabinet panel to take a decision soon

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Home Ministry has moved the Union Cabinet to increase the number of seats in the Sikkim Assembly from 32 to 40. The State goes to the polls in 2019.

A senior Ministry official said the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will soon decide on the proposal. If approved, it will be the first expansion of the Assembly since Sikkim merged with India in 1975.

The official said the polls would then be held for the expanded Assembly next year.

The seats are being increased to accommodate the Limboo and Tamang communities, notified as Scheduled Tribes in January 2003. Of the eight new seats, five will be reserved for them.

Prem Das Rai, the lone Lok Sabha member from Sikkim, voted against the no-confidence motion moved against the NDA government on July 20. Mr. Rai represents the Sikkim Democratic Front, the ruling party in Sikkim headed by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.


Pawan Chamling's tenure ends next year.

Plea in SC

A petition was moved in the Supreme Court that Limboos and Tamangs were not adequately represented in the Assembly, and the court on January 4, 2016 directed the Home Ministry to take action.

The representatives of the two communities were in Delhi in July and met Home Minister Rajnath Singh to expedite the process to increase the number of seats. The delegation said the tribal community nursed a sense of deprivation of their political and fundamental rights, ever since they had been declared a Scheduled Tribe in 2003 under Article 342 of the Constitution. There are 90,000 Limboo-Tamangs.

Sikkim has 12 seats reserved for Bhutias-Lepchas. It is not because they are a Scheduled Tribe, but as a sequel to a political agreement in 1973 between the Government of India, the former Chogyal (King) of Sikkim and political parties. By the Delimitation Act, 2002, the number of seats in an Assembly can be readjusted only on the basis of the first census after 2026. The Second Schedule to the Representation of People Act, 1950 and Section 5A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 have been amended to change the Assembly strength.

Sidhu, Kapil get Imran Khan's invite

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Cabinet Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu said here on Saturday that he had been invited to the swearing-in of Imran Khan as Pakistan's Prime Minister, and he planned to attend the function in Islamabad on August 18.

Mr. Sidhu said he had informed the Union Home Ministry and Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's office about his plan.

The secretary (Protocol), Punjab, had been asked to take formal action on his visit. He had spoken to former Indian cricket captain Kapil Dev, who, too, had received the invitation.

Personal invitation

Mr. Sidhu said he received an invitation from the secretariat of the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf.

"Apart from this, Mr. Khan extended a personal invitation to me over the phone, which I have accepted in all humility," he said.

Mr. Sidhu said that during the brief conversation, Mr. Khan thanked him for praising him in press communiques.

"The invitation from the office of the chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf mentions that the secretariat of the chairman will contact me in connection with attending the ceremony and making adequate arrangements," he said.

Centre to spend ₹10,000 crore on Northeast

Over 400 projects to be implemented; 8,621 unconnected villages in the region to get special attention

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
GUWAHATI

To boost connectivity in the northeastern States of the country, the Union government on Saturday announced investments worth nearly ₹10,000 crore in the region over the next four years to implement more than 400 projects.

The Digital North East Vision 2022, which has been announced just a year ahead of 2019 general elections, has identified a total of eight thrust areas to enhance connectivity, including telecom infrastructure, electronics manufacturing units, BPOs and cyber security, besides promotion of digital innovations.

"The success of Digital India lies in the successful implementation of Digital North East," Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

The majority of the projects will be implemented by the Department of Telecom. The Ministry of Electronics and IT is expected to fund projects to the tune of ₹1,397 crore, while the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region will spend ₹411 crore. The Home Ministry has committed investments of ₹53 crore. The investments from the private sector, however, are expected to be limited to about ₹70 crore. Special focus will be given to 8,621 unconnected villages in the region, Mr. Prasad said.

Electronics cluster

As part of the initiative, Mr. Prasad also inaugurated the first electronics manufacturing cluster in the northeastern region in Guwahati on Saturday.

Mr Prasad added that the number of seats provided for the region under the rural BPO scheme has also been doubled to 10,000.

A gaffe and some laughter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday addressed Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad as "Pandit Ravi Shankar" at the launch of the 'Digital North East Vision 2022' document here.

Pandit Ravi Shankar was a sitar maestro, who passed away in 2012. Mr. Prasad was quick to interrupt Mr. Sonowal. "Ah, you made me Pandit!" he quipped, evoking laughter from the audience.

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

WHO

Mnangagwa, Zimbabwe's new hope

Zimbabwe's newly elected President, Emerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa of the Zanu-PF party, has seldom shrunk from the rough and tumble of realpolitik. Born in a family of farmers, the septuagenarian veteran had come ominously close to being executed for plotting to blow up a rail line during the nation's liberation struggle from Britain. The sentence was commuted to a prolonged jail term because he was a minor at the time.

How did he replace Mugabe?

Last November, when Mr. Mnangagwa was dismissed as Vice-President of the southern African nation by the deposed dictator of 37 years, Robert Mugabe, history was merely repeating itself. He was elevated to that position in late 2014, in a sequel to the removal of Mr. Mugabe's No. 2 at the time and a potential heir-apparent. In a strange irony, the victory against Joice Mujuru also meant a recompense for Mr. Mnangagwa's failed bid for the vice-presidency a decade earlier. When the 2017 version of Harare's palace intrigue began to unfold, it was also time for independent Zimbabwe's history to be rewritten. Mr. Mnangagwa went briefly into exile, but returned as the popularly hailed, even if army-installed, President, dealing a decisive blow to the machinations of the former first lady.

Why is he controversial?

The long career of President Mnangagwa, a known hardliner and Mugabe loyalist, is inevitably intertwined with Harare's descent into authoritarianism under his mentor. As the country's intelligence chief in the 1980s, critics hold Mr. Mnangagwa accountable for the Gukurahundi massacre of thousands of civilians by Mr. Mugabe's Fifth Brigade. His role in the appropriation of agricultural land from the white minorities has also come under sharp criticism. In more recent years, Mr. Mnangagwa has nurtured his presidential ambitions through the Team Lacoste faction – an allusion to the liberation army – within the Zanu-PF, against the rival Generation 40 group. On assuming charge last November, Mr. Mnangagwa assured a hopeful nation that his writ would be the people's will, assuaging concerns that the new President might end up being a prisoner of the past. He invited international observers, expelled for years, to monitor the general election, which he promised would be free and fair. In a positive signal to investors, the government agreed to ease the requirement for overseas firms to give a 51% stake to local partners. Mr. Mnangagwa also stressed that all other sectors, except diamonds and platinum, were open for foreign investment. The new narrative was broadly corroborated by evidence of a transparent voter registration system, freedom of expression and absence of intimidation of the Opposition. The climate in the run-up to the July 29 vote fuelled expectations that the election would bestow popular legitimacy on the new President, handing him a mandate to implement political and economic reforms. But the post-poll scenario has been marred by violence and fatalities familiar from the Mugabe era. The Opposition Movement for Democratic Change and international monitors have alleged that the defence forces were behind the atrocities.



What's the way forward?

Against this backdrop, the President's urgent priority is to live up to the trust reposed in him by millions only months ago to liberate the nation from dictatorship and lift them out of poverty. For his part, Mr. Mnangagwa is keen to reopen the country to foreign investment, to reengage with multilateral lenders and rejoin the British Commonwealth. Western capitals have been enthusiastic about building bridges with Harare, once a regional export hub and home to a vast educated population. But they have insisted on adherence to democratic standards and respect for human rights as preconditions for debt relief. Over these many years, Mr. Mnangagwa has burnished his credentials as a more pragmatic than ideological politician, unlike his strongman predecessor. Count on him to renew ties with the West, but without compromising the close economic bonds built with China. The latter, after all, comes with fewer strings attached.

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

WHAT

The monsoon and its march so far

WHAT IS IT? For 2018, the monsoon is past the crucial half-way mark. As of August 9, the seasonal rain, which decides the fate/extent of the kharif crop acreage, has run up a deficit of 10%. But it is not so much the deficit figure as the spatial and temporal spread (across space and time) of rain, that is important from the view point of monsoon performance. And, here, the 2018 monsoon has delivered reasonably well, according to top officials of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), who have stuck to the original forecast of a 'normal' season (96-104% of the long-period average) this year. This is despite alarmist call-outs from certain quarters about it likely delivering less than par during August, the second rainiest of the four monsoon months. This was attributed to creeping fears about the dreaded 'break monsoon' phenomenon – an inevitable phase when rains shut out over large parts of the country for a prolonged period. It has a tendency to rear its ugly head in August.

HOW DID IT COME ABOUT? Monsoon 2018 has had a typical roller coaster ride during June and July, the first two months. They set the tone for the four-month season, in that June basically witnesses the Arabian Sea arm of the monsoon progress steadily along the west coast and into central India, while the Bay of Bengal arm lunges in from the east to meet with it. The combined entity takes the Indian monsoon, among the largest and most spectacular on the face of the planet, into northwest India. July is also the rainiest of all four months and must also ensure the spatial and temporal spread. But after June delivered less than optimal with a 5% deficit, July disappointed, yielding only 94% against the IMD's forecast of 101%. This was mainly because of a lean patch from June 12 to 27, after which the monsoon revived. But it ran into minor trouble in July as well. Otherwise, the spread of rain has been mostly on par, despite deficits in east India, northeastern India, Saurashtra and Kutch, parts of Gujarat, and a few Met subdivisions in the south peninsula.

WHY DOES IT MATTER? There is no better a 'feel good' factor that one can hope for in the domestic economy than the very palpable one emerging from a successful southwest monsoon. It can literally lift the spirits of the farming sector, not forgetting the fact that it contributes less than 15% to the GDP these days. The 'feel good' spills over into the stock market and into the macro economy since a bumper crop helps douse fears over food inflation and could favourably influence the setting of policy rates by the Reserve Bank of India. The 'feel good' comes also from major rivers and reservoirs flowing bank-to-bank, as is the case now in many Met subdivisions, with capacities exceeding the 10-year average already. Most of these rivers in the south peninsula are critically rain-fed, and surplus rain during June and July have sent them early into spate. This is a major relief for the political class and the administration at large especially in the riparian states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu where emotions run high seasonally over sharing of river waters.

WHAT NEXT? A successful monsoon also comes with the collateral damage in loss of lives, flooding, landslides, and massive destruction to property and infrastructure. This year has not been an exception, which is a telling comment on our state of disaster preparedness. The IMD has already forecast a higher rainfall during August (96% of the long period average). An evolving positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD, the equivalent in the Indian Ocean, of El Nino-La Nina in the far-off equatorial Pacific) could boost the monsoon further, as has been proved in the past. What is needed is an early warning system, backed up with men, equipment and material, to correctly anticipate and effectively deal with monsoon-triggered disasters.



VINSON KURIAN

WHY

are the Marathas so restive?



What is the trigger?

■ In July, while the monsoon session of the legislature was on, a group of Maratha protesters launched a sit-in against the BJP government for not fulfilling the promises made to the community, including 16% reservation.

The issue, however, spilled outside the Assembly, when Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis cancelled his visit to Pandharpur for the Ashadhi Ekadashi puja. He cited police reports that pointed to the possibility of snakes being released in the crowd. It enraged the community which accused him of false allegations and announced a State-wide protest and bandhs. The Marathas also wanted clarity on the Chief Minister's statement that of the new recruitment for 72,000 posts, 16% would be reserved for the community.

What did the government do?

■ The bandh was marked by violence in Aurangabad, Navi Mumbai and the Chakan industrial area near Pune, with Maratha leaders alleging infiltration of anti-social elements. Eight Maratha youths committed suicide. Pressure from the community resulted in MLAs from the Shiv Sena, the Congress and the NCP offering to resign. The government finally announced a stay on the recruitment. It sought time till November to resolve the issue.

Why raise the demand now?

■ The community feels the government is dragging its feet on reservation. The struggle for special treatment has been going on for the past few years. On November 14, 2014, the Bombay High Court stayed the Maratha reservation granted by the Congress-NCP government. It said the State had crossed the 50% limit capped by the Supreme Court and that the Mandal Commission (1980), the National Commission for Backward Classes (2000) and the Bapat Commission (2008) had concluded that the Marathas were a socially advanced community. The Supreme Court refused to stay the order.

In January 2015, the State government decided to submit additional information to the court in support of Maratha reservation. On July 13, 2016, the rape and murder of a minor Maratha girl fuelled the community's demands. Till 2017, over 58 massive silent Maratha morchas were organised across the State.

To make its case stronger in court, in November 2017, Justice Maroti Gaikwad (retd.) was appointed as the head of the State Backward Class Commission. It is compiling a report to ascertain the economic and social backwardness of the community.

The report will be based on the findings of a sample survey conducted in five villages in every district. It is yet to be submitted to the government. The case is pending in the High Court. Till then, no decision on reservation can be taken.

Is it justified?

■ In 2008, the State Backward Class Commission, headed by Justice R.M. Bapat (retd.), did not endorse Maratha reservation, voicing opinion against the inclusion of the community in the OBC category as they were not "socially backward." His report was neither accepted nor rejected by the State government. As the Maratha coordination committee launched a State-wide campaign called 'Deta ki Jata' (Are you giving or going back?), with the demand for reservation from 2011, the then Congress-NCP government, headed by Prithviraj Chavan, appointed a high-powered committee under Industries Minister Narayan Rane to submit a case to grant reservation for the Marathas. The report was submitted in June 2013. A year later, the Congress-NCP government cleared 16% reservation for the Marathas.

What lies ahead?

■ Mr. Fadnavis has promised to resolve the issue. A special legislative session will be called after the report of the Backward Class Commission, and the reservation is likely to be extended.

Till then, protests are likely to continue. With elections approaching, all political parties are attempting to keep Marathas – politically one of the strongest contingents – happy. As for the Marathas, with no clear leader, cracks are visible.

ALOK DESHPANDE

WHEN

18 August 2018

Countdown begins: Indonesian security forces jumped out of helicopters and abseiled down the side of a high-rise in a counter-terrorism drill in Jakarta this week, as preparations for the Asian Games from August 18 to September 2 gathered momentum. Reuters reported that Indonesia is readying to host over 10,000 athletes. The Games will also see North and South Korea fielding joint teams across three sports and six events and being represented under a unified flag. The move comes amid warming ties between the two Koreas as relations between Pyongyang and Washington have also improved after tension last year over the North's nuclear and missile programmes. Picture at left shows the Indian contingent for the 18th Asian Games taking a selfie with Mary Kom during the send-off ceremony in New Delhi on August 10; in the 2014 edition, 'Magnificent Mary' had won India its first boxing gold. At right, Indonesian dancers performing the traditional Poco-poco dance as the countdown to the Games begins. ■ AFP, REUTERS





WHERE

North Karnataka, reeling under neglect

Thirteen districts of north Karnataka recently raised a fresh cry for a separate State, pointing out that Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy's budgetary allocations favoured only the southern districts. The crisis has blown over and Mr. Kumaraswamy has clarified that he has big plans for the development of the region. Historical neglect during the pre-Independence era, coupled with apathy after unification of Karnataka, has often been cited as the reason for backwardness of north Karnataka. Almost on all markers of development, there is a marked lag. A symbol of this has been the Krishna. People of the region have always argued that the river and projects related to it never get the attention that the Cauvery in south Karnataka does. In recent times, the delay in solving the long-pending inter-State Mahadayi river row has been cited as another pointer to the apathy.

Has no government taken note?

In 2000, the S.M. Krishna-led Congress government constituted a high-powered committee for redress of regional imbalances led by D.M. Nanjundappa. After an exhaustive study, the committee, in its report in 2003, listed 39 taluks as the "most backward." As many as 26 of them were from seven districts of north Karnataka. The committee also indicated the quantum of resources required to ensure these taluks caught up with the others in development. Along with a special development plan of ₹16,000 crore over eight years, the committee pleaded for an optimal 60:40 ratio in favour of the northern region as a basis for additional resource allocation. However, despite acknowledging that implementation of the recommendations holds the key to the development, successive governments have paid only lip-service to the issue.

Why is it difficult?

There are imbalances within the region. The 13 districts are further categorised into Hyderabad Karnataka and Bombay Karnataka (of Bombay Presidency). Compared with Bombay Karnataka, developmental lag is worse in Hyderabad Karnataka, the region which was under the Hyderabad Nizam's domain till its liberation in 1948. The identification of two of the districts of the region, Bidar and Kalaburagi (earlier Gulbarga), as the poorest districts in the country in the National Sample Survey in 2005 and their subsequent inclusion in the food for work programme are indicative of the state of affairs.



What has been done so far?

Amendment to the Constitution that gave special status to the Hyderabad Karnataka region under Article 371(J) has been seen as a big move towards development. However, the downside is that the Hyderabad Karnataka grouping has discouraged employees from other regions from working here. Over 1.30 lakh posts are still vacant in the region and development projects, particularly related to infrastructure and irrigation, often find lower or little allocation. As per official data, ₹13,565 crore of the ₹16,000 crore recommended by the Nanjundappa Committee has been spent between 2006-07 and 2014-15. However, development is not palpable, say people of the region.

What is the way ahead?

Lack of political will is often cited as the biggest reason for backwardness, though the region has sent five Chief Ministers so far. But reasons are deeper, point out some studies. The Centre for Multi Disciplinary Research (CMDR), based in Dharwad, came out with a "Critical analysis of Dr. D.M. Nanjundappa Committee Report and its implementation" by Shiddalingaswami V. Hanagodimath in 2014. It says: "This regional imbalance is the product of plans, because plan makers have concentrated on overall development than the potential and availability of resources in different regions and its optimum utilisation. Hence, regional disparity has increased." The Siddaramaiah government had asked the CMDR to review the implementation of the Nanjundappa committee report. It submitted a draft report earlier this year, and the Kumaraswamy government must take it forward.

GIRISH PATTANASHETTY
RISHIKESH BAHADUR DESAI

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A depressing English summer

India needs to rapidly grow a batting spine that won't crumble across an unpredictable August



PASSING BITE

RUCHIR JOSHI
is a writer, filmmaker and columnist

Watching the Indian cricket team tour during an English summer is one of the most contradictory experiences for an Indian cricket fan. Here is your favourite sport being played in (mostly) beautiful conditions, here is your much-feared batting line-up, and here are your own not-that-bad seam attack and deadly spinners. Then there are lovely grounds, people cheerfully lifting their beers and Pimm's and watching the game with some knowledge and (mostly) sporting attitude, clapping when there is good play from either side. Not everyone is taking themselves too seriously – some are in duck suits and Kim Jong-un wigs. There is top-class commentary and great TV coverage, crazily detailed statistics and infographics. What's not to love in all this? And yet...

It now seems a long time since India dominated the English side, and now, with this strange second Test at Lord's unfolding, it looks like our disappointment is likely to continue. The ghost of Twenty20 yet again grips the ankles of most of the top order. Their feet stay glued to the crease. The gaps between bat and pad stay wide. The hands on the handle of the bat regularly offer catching practice to the enemy slips. No one seems to even imagine that he can dig in and play a long, slow innings to save a match or turn it around by playing wrestling cricket rather than the speeded-up kung fu that most Indian players are so used to.

Runs and runes

Added to this, for some reason our slips never seem to know where to stand, series after series. The current cordon is bringing back the memories of that previous visit which could be labelled as the *Dhoni Disinterested in Red Ball Tour* – those series of matches where catches kept dropping short of slips and wicket-keeper who were standing four feet too far back and not reading the runs or the runes.



GETTY IMAGES

Nostalgia, for both actually experienced time and imagined time, plays its tricks but you have to be firm and say to yourself that those days are gone. Gone are the days when Vijay Merchant would practice on a hosed-down pitch in early morning Bombay, bringing into play both wet pitch and dewy heavy air conditions; when, on an incredibly wet England tour, he would put into effective practice his axiom: give the bowler the first two hours, the rest of the day is yours. Gone are the days when blocking a formidable bowling attack for a whole day on an uncovered northern English pitch was a heroic feat in itself. Gone are the days when a Gavaskar, Kapil, Vengsarkar or Azhar could boss over an England attack in English conditions. Gone are the days when two striplings in Ganguly and Dravid made their names on a grey day when it swung wickedly at Lord's. Gone are the days when, as an English bowler, you would prise out Tendulkar after a big score only to find his young clone in one Virender Sehwag walking out of the pavilion to replace him. And yet, time plays strange practical jokes. Is it that different: Fred Trueman ripping through a sweater-swaddled yet helplessly exposed Indian 'batting line-up' in 1952 and Anderson cutting through the overconfident and clueless Indian batsmen of today?

At some point, once one had finished celebrating the wonder that is Viru Beta No.2 (as in he who is even Virat-er than Viru Sehwag) and some decent bowling, there comes a point of rising irritation at our many shortcomings as a touring Test side. Why is Michael Holding always so snide about Indian players? Why is this man, once such a terror for England teams, now such a commentator-sycophant for the English? Why have we *never* had such an intelligent, witty, relaxed and yet incisive commentator from India such as Kumar Sangakkara? Why are Indian fans always so crude, at least the ones the cameras tend to catch?

Voodoo and reality

At some point, some of you in the group tearing their hair out in front of the TV reach for voodoo, hoping to make some headway against the run of play. What's with these English names? Let's imagine them getting out, one by one, and commentators being witty, but mind, not in a Navjot 'Sherry' Sidhu kind of way. So, Cook's goose is cooked, Jennings has gone the way of Lemmings, Root's stump has been uprooted, the young Pope has been de-frocked by one that kept low, Buttler has been sent back to the Pantry, Bairstow's stumps have been laid bare, Woakes's batting license has been revoked, Curran has turned into curry. Back to reality: they are 131 for 5 which we would normally be celebrating, but with England's lead likely to swell into a big Test-winning infection, we are not.

It's been a strange old summer so far – days of dry, scorching heat except the precise few days during the Edgbaston Test, and now, at Lord's. Is this the time to pray for rain? Or a quick shower of England wickets leaving us to face a second innings on a pitch that becomes increasingly docile? The sensible person would say let's now try and eke out a draw, there are still three more Tests to come. The pessimist would know, however, that India needs to rapidly grow a batting spine that won't crumble across an unpredictable August.

The alchemy of silver

This year marks the 25th anniversary of many remarkable institutions



ON THE OTHER HAND

RAGHAVAN SRINIVASAN
is Editor, The Hindu BusinessLine

Anniversaries are important. They record milestones, achievements, or even the simple joy of existence. That is why we celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, to celebrate the one achievement common to all human beings – of having been around for another year. That's also why a silver or a golden wedding anniversary is a remarkable event in most cultures, given the increasing pressures on modern families and relationships and their increasing fragility.

Shorter half-lives

But such occasions are equally important for institutions. Globally, technology is causing existence-threatening disruptions for most companies. In 1935, a company finding a place in the U.S. S&P Index could have confidently expected to be in business for the next 90 years. Today, the life expectancy of an S&P 500 company is under 20 years. The average life expectancy of a business is down to 12.5 years in Europe and Japan. According to a McKinsey study, a company disappears from the system every 12 weeks in the U.S. In Turkey, eight out of 10 businesses don't last beyond five years.

It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that this year sees the silver jubilee of several remarkable institutions in India. Some are public institutions, some private, but all bear testimony to the enduring success of liberalisation and economic reforms in India, which provided fertile soil for these seeds to grow into mighty trees. It is a certificate to the acumen, adaptability and, above all, tenacity of the individuals who steered these institutions during this long (in business-age terms) time period.

They have all had their ups and downs and some are currently having a particularly tough time right now. But given their track records and their sheer ability to hold their own during times of adversity, I am pretty sure they will be around for some time to come.



GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK PHOTO

Take the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Earlier this week, on August 8, the NSE celebrated 25 years of starting business as a stock exchange. Fittingly, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who had mooted the need for such an exchange as Finance Minister, and subsequently inaugurated it as Prime Minister, was on hand to join the celebrations.

The NSE is currently under the cloud of the so-called 'co-location scam', which has already led to a management shakeout and a deferment of what should have been the crowning achievement of its 25 years – its IPO and listing as a traded security on stock exchanges. Nevertheless, over its quarter century of existence, it has had a transformational impact on Indian capital markets.

The stock market of 25 years ago would be unrecognisable to the investor of today. The equity culture was limited to a few pockets in a few cities, stock exchanges were both owned and managed by brokerages, leading to rampant malpractices. Trading was an opaque affair, carried out with esoteric code words and exotic hand signals indecipherable to the common man. When defaults happened, traders and exchanges often colluded to minimise their losses and maximise the pass-through to the investors.

The NSE changed all that. As a demutualised exchange, it became the first exchange in India to separate ownership, trading and management functions. With electronic, screen-based trading, it facilitated instant price discovery and trade. It created its own communication network to spread trading terminals across the country. Today, the NSE has over 2.5 lakh trading terminals. It added 1.8 million new investors last year, of which 40% came from outside India's 100 largest cities and towns.

Above all, it has led in evangelising equity investing. India today has 2.5 crore retail investors in equities. This is still just 2% of the population directly in equity markets but a respectable 37% of taxpayers (the figure for the U.S. is 40%).

The Infosys story

They have all gained from the 'equity premium' of higher returns against the higher risk of investing in equities. In fact, nothing illustrates this better than another silver jubilee celebrant – Infosys, which listed on the stock exchanges 25 years ago. Hundred Infosys shares bought in the IPO would have grown to over 17,000 shares today on account of splits and bonuses. The original ₹10,000 invested would be worth over ₹2.5 crore today. But even this pales before what Infosys has done for India's IT services sector and the emergence of India as a technology superpower on the global stage.

Another 25-year-old has played an equally significant role in another sector: aviation. Jet Airways started in May 1993 with just four aircraft. But it quickly revolutionised air travel in India, setting new standards for service and outliving disruptors at the low-cost end (Air Deccan) as well as the full-service end (Kingfisher). From four aircraft, its fleet has grown to 119 and 24 daily flights have expanded to 662. It has its share of troubles today, but remains a key player in its sector.

Clearly, a touch of silver in one's hair is something to be proud of!

Breaking out of filter bubbles

How to stop being at the mercy of algorithms



WORD COUNTS

MINI KAPOOR
is Ideas Editor, The Hindu

A few months after Donald Trump took over as the President of the U.S. in 2017, Michiko Kakutani stepped down as the chief book reviewer at *The New York Times* to devote herself to studying the post-truth, divisive political era that his election marked. Or, as she writes in the book her inquiry has now yielded, *The Death of Truth*: "How did truth and reason become such endangered species, and what does their impending demise portend for our public discourse and the future of our politics and governance? That is the purpose of this book." Her inquiry is multilayered, with insights that echo worldwide as institutions and expertise are undermined, but it is useful to pause at her reference to "systemic problems with how people get their information and how they've come to think in increasingly partisan terms".

Echo chambers

Filter bubbles created by algorithms and social media are crucial here, with their capacity to create echo chambers so that one world view is repeatedly conveyed to the exclusion of all else. For instance, Kakutani cites a 2017 Harvard study which found that in the 19 months leading up to election day in 2016, pro-Trump audiences were reliant on an "insulated knowledge community", with "social media as a backbone to transmit a hyper-partisan perspective to the world". This creates a fertile ground for what a Trump aide later called "alternative facts", so that such "facts" are not just being floated, but also used to contest reportage in the mainstream media.

Kakutani's important study has a rather specific context. But even away from the ideological fight in the U.S. and elsewhere – and perhaps even away from the danger of concocted stories gaining credence by virtue of having been forwarded, shared, liked, and retweeted – each one of us would benefit from an appraisal of how we get information and how we read it.



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A lot of it is through social media, including links to news stories, many of them put out by news media itself. Jaron Lanier's *Ten Arguments For Deleting Your Social Media Accounts Right Now* is a riveting call for self-preservation. Lanier, an Internet and virtual reality pioneer, lists some of the gains to be made by doing so: "To free yourself, to be more authentic, to be less addicted, to be less manipulated, to be less paranoid..." There is, he suggests, no good way to be on social media and retain a free mind. In fact, among the reasons (all very convincing, and urgent) are that "social media is undermining truth", "making what you say meaningless", "making you unhappy", and "making politics impossible".

Lanier also says that social media is destroying your capacity for empathy: "When we're all seeing different, private worlds, then our cues to one another become meaningless." Anxiety is easy to whip up. It's like the childhood prank where one kid rattles the rest by gazing at the sky, so that everyone else gets anxious and keeps looking up, he explains. Soon, I suppose, the children snap out of it. But with filter bubbles, the anxiety keeps getting reinforced. He cites the American example of a man reacting to a conspiracy theory, targeted at Hillary Clinton, that a pizza place in Washington was running a child-abuse racket by firing shots at the site. In India, we could substitute as examples the horrific lynchings in recent months based on viral WhatsApp messages about kidnappers being on the prowl to harvest children's organs.

But even as he attempts to persuade readers to get off social media, one person at a time till Silicon Valley gets the message, Lanier emphasises that this should not mean a rejection of the Internet. And whether you are brave enough to get off social media or not, do heed this advice to keep your sanity and ensure the integrity and cohesion of your information gathering: "You can still get news online. Read news websites directly (instead of getting news through personalised feeds), especially sites that hire investigative reporters. Get a feel for the editorial voice of each site, which is only available when you go direct."

Quiet time

It's tough to delete one's accounts, admits Lanier, in the face of addiction and the network-effect lock. But advice from physicist Alan Lightman may help break the addiction to being constantly online. In his slim book, *In Praise of Wasting Time*, he suggests some society-wide moves to roll back "the destruction of our inner selves via the wired world". He recommends a daily ten-minute period of silence in schools, an "introspective intensive" course in university, a "quiet room" at workplaces that are mandatorily free of devices for employees to retreat to, an "unplugged" (i.e. free of phones, computers, etc.) hour at home, and "screen-free zones" in public areas. Sounds also like advice for saving time.

A collection of half-truths and hagiographies

There are few deeply researched and judiciously written biographies of our politicians



SERENDIPITIES

KEERTHIK SASIDHARAN
is a writer and lives in New York City

The river Otter flows through southwestern U.K., past farmlands, through salt marshes and mudflats, offering itself as wintering grounds for birds with resonant names: ringed plover, water rail, and red-breasted merganser. Arguably, the river's most important claim to immortality in human imagination comes via the great English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge who was born in the area and wrote a poem titled 'To the River Otter'. In his childhood, Coleridge explored the places along the river. In a cave that was famous for being haunted, he carved his initials, STC, on its walls. Nearly 200 years later, Coleridge's biographer, Richard Holmes, made a trek to the same cave. To his surprise, at the back of the cave were still inscribed those three letters.

Holmes was exhilarated. It was as if he were in communion with his subject whom he had spent 15 years researching and of whose complex and creative mind he had written thousands of pages about. In his excitement, Holmes stood up in the cave only to bang his head on the cave's roof, much of which was, according to Coleridge himself, made up of "the roots of old trees". As Holmes recovered from the shock, he saw that "a large sliver of sandstone came down." Thinking about it, he realised that the cave's geology – soft, porous stone – would not have allowed the initials to survive for 200-odd years. As it turns out, the initials had been carved over the original by subsequent generations of cave visitors. They had kept the memory of the poet's presence and his carving alive till it became a ritual of sorts. It was a non-religious ritual worship of a Romantic poet.

Collective remembering

This relatively obscure event throws sharp relief on how public memory operates. The glow of individual lives



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eventually mellows out and ultimately vanishes. Yet, for some of those lives – usually, politicians and historical figures – we collectively keep the flame alive. Each generation carries forward memories of that life and passes it down to the next. In each phase, we take what came down to us, embellish it a bit, recreate it, mishear the rest. Before long, these lives are endowed with clarity and purpose. They become characters in stories we tell of the past. In parts, we do this collective remembering and transmission to actively recognise what came before. But more fundamentally, we do so because our lives continue to be influenced by actions and institutions created long ago.

Yet, despite the influence of these lives on our collective imaginations, an irony is the poverty of thoughtful biographies. Few lives in India are as well documented as those of our political leaders. Their vast oversized presence is recorded, their decisions and signatures filed away in cabinets, their pettiness and magnificence critiqued and fawned over. Nowadays, even their private lives, unlike the rest of ours, undergo a public inquisition. Despite all this, our bookstores are threadbare as far as deeply researched and judiciously written biographies of our leaders are concerned.

Personality cult

If one wanted to read about political leaders who have had a long and influential innings in Indian politics, such as Kanshi Ram, M.S. Golwalkar, N.T. Rama Rao, Madhavsinh Solanki, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Farooq Abdullah, J. Jayalalithaa, E.K. Nayanar, Periyar, or H.D. Deve Gowda, one would be hard-pressed to find a biography of quality, particularly in English. Instead, as the uneven coverage in the aftermath of M. Karunanidhi's death revealed, we have lulled ourselves into thinking that we know, or even understand, these political leaders by simply parroting biographical facts, trivial anecdotes, or by furnishing a list of legislative achievements. Upon their death, the lives of Indian political leaders are entombed along with exaggerations and convenient half-truths. And this closure is before we have said anything of what are treated as no-go areas – their private lives, sexual proclivities, addictions. All this adds to the personality cult around which much of our politics accretes. To defend the party is equivalent to rendering the memory of the all-too-human political leader impregnable to criticism.

To change any of this to ultimately lead to a reading and writing culture that seeks to see a complex live in its entirety would mean changing how we think and speak about our figures of authority, and whether we can assess their works and lives fairly. Any such change is the work of two or three generations. Till then, all we can do, as readers and writers, is to be aware of our own biases and ask, how does the author know what he claims to know? If we fail to do this, we would be no different than all those who see the Coleridge initials in the cave and think it was the poet's original carving.

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CAPSULE



Waves of death
Cells can send out waves of chemical activity to signal a death message, research shows. Using fluorescent probes and microscopy, researchers saw waves of apoptotic signals pass through frog-egg cytoplasm. A positive feedback regenerated these waves, the *Science* report said.



Gene treatment
The US Food and Drug Administration recently approved a gene-silencing treatment based on RNA interference. The technique can be used to silence specific genes linked to a disease. The drug, patisiran, targets a rare genetic disorder that can impair heart and nerve function, a *Nature* report said.



Not a fitting cure
Solar geoengineering suggests a cure for global warming by spraying huge amounts of sulphate reflectors into the upper atmosphere to block out sunlight. A study from University of California, Berkeley, published in *Nature*, finds this will not help improve crop yield which will only decrease in low sunlight.



Marine mammal woes
A genome analysis of several species of marine mammals showed multiple losses of the Paraoxanase 1 gene. This gene is the primary defence in mammals against organophosphorus toxicity. Its loss can render them susceptible to pesticides run off from the land. The study was published in *Science*



Root of pessimism
Pessimism may arise in the caudate nucleus – a brain region linked with emotional decisionmaking, says a paper in *Neuron*. Stimulating macaques' brains and offering a reward paired with an unpleasant stimulus, researchers found the animals' choices were skewed compared to when they were not stimulated.

ODD & END

Lost through laziness

Excavations from the Arabian Peninsula indicate that the species *Homo erectus* may have gone extinct because of the lack of effort they made in creating good stone tools.
Researchers from Australian Open University found that stone tools of *H. erectus* were made from stones lying around at the bottom of a hill, for instance, rather than from the better-quality stones found uphill.
In contrast, *H. sapiens* and Neanderthals, who came later, made the effort to seek and find good stone tools, which they transported over long distances.
This coupled with inability to adapt to a changing environment was what, according to these researchers, led to their extinction.
The research is reported in *PLOS ONE*.

IGIB team finds a new target to reverse iron overload disease

Instead of picking one target for drug screen, they focused on the symptoms of the disease

R. PRASAD

Using zebrafish, researchers at the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB) have successfully discovered a pathway that regulates hepcidin hormone production. The hepcidin hormone, released by the liver, is a central regulator of iron in the body. Dysregulation of the hormone leads to anaemia on one hand and excess iron accumulation in organs such as liver and heart leading to multi-organ failure.

Hemochromatosis is a rare hereditary disease that is characterised by iron accumulation or overload in various tissues. The symptoms are non-specific and hence difficult to diagnose. Current options only manage the disease by removing excess iron. "One method is to bleed the patients and the other is to absorb iron using iron chelation, which is toxic to liver and kidney and may also cause hearing problems. There is no therapy currently available," says Sandeep Basu from CSIR-IGIB and first author of a paper published in *ACS Chemical Biology*.



What is important is that we have found a strategy for therapy, say Chetana Sachidanandan (left) and Sandeep Basu.

Gene mutations
Mutations in about six genes are known to cause reduction in hepcidin hormone production thereby causing excess iron accumulation. But for the study, the research team led by Chetana Sachidanandan created a disease model in zebrafish by mutating one of these genes (TFR2). Mutations in the TFR2 gene cause a severe form of the disease.

The zebrafish with the mutant gene showed excess iron accumulation in organs, quite similar to what is seen in humans.

In the conventional drug discovery approach, the target protein and even the pathway are already known and molecules that would either inhibit or overproduce the target protein are screened for. But the researchers adopted a different approach for this study.

"Hepcidin gene is controlled by many factors, many of them not well understood. So, instead of picking one target for our drug screen, we focused on the symptoms of the disease – excess accumulation of iron," says Dr. Sachidanandan. "We knew that hepcidin hormone is low in the hemochromatosis patients, and that this causes iron overload."

Since the researchers knew hepcidin production is regulated by many signalling pathways, they selected 80 compounds that specifically target signalling pathways in zebrafish. Of the 80 compounds tested, eight were found to induce the production of hepcidin hormone in the fish. "One of these compounds is a blocker of NFkB signalling pathway. This pathway was not known to be important in hepicidin regulation in the liver." This is the first time that researchers have been able to identify and tell that the NFkB pathway regulates liver hepcidin production.

Unbiased strategy
"It was not a blind screening, but rather we used our existing knowledge about hepcidin regulation. When we don't have a deep understanding of a disease, but need to discover drug candidates, this kind of unbiased strategy is more efficient," she says.

The researchers tested the ability of this compound to regulate hepcidin production. "The small molecule targets and inhibits the NFkB pathway signaling thus increasing hepcidin production and reducing iron overload," says Basu. They tested three more compounds that target the same pathway to confirm that the NFkB pathway is indeed a key to regulating hepcidin production. "There are other signalling pathways that regulate hepcidin production but our discovery places NFkB pathway as an important negative hepcidin hormone production," Basu says.

When the pathway in the zebrafish model of Hemochromatosis was inhibited using the four compounds, the hepcidin production was restored and iron overload was reduced, thus reducing the severity of the disease.

To further reconfirm the role of the NFkB pathway, the researchers removed it in zebrafish. This led to overproduction of hepcidin hormone in the fish, confirming that the pathway negatively regulates the production of the hormone.

None of the four compounds tested in zebrafish is approved for use in humans; one compound tested is approved for use in poultry. "The target pathway has been identified even though the tested compounds cannot be used as drugs. What is important is that we have found a strategy for therapy," says Dr. Sachidanandan. "Now that we know the pathway to be targeted, it's easier to discover drug molecules."

"We are now working to see if we can apply this therapeutic strategy for Thalassemia patients," Basu says.

Gecko species split in three

One clade named after herpetologist Whitaker

AATHIRA PERINCHERY

Termite hill geckos are all chocolate-brown, banded and small enough to fit into your palm. But the finer physical details and genetic differences reveal that what was believed to be one species is now three: the Whitaker's, Sahgal's and southern termite hill geckos.

In the past, scientists depended solely on physical differences to describe new species. Now, researchers can use genetic techniques to identify a new species. Many researchers also use a combination of these to tap into the strengths of both methods and obtain more robust results.

This is precisely what Zeeshan Mirza, of Bengaluru's National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), and his colleagues did when they suspected that there could be "hidden" species amongst termite hill geckos (lizards which are widely distributed across India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan; their taxonomy has been confusing in the past).

The team collected termite hill geckos across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry and extracted genetic data from these samples.

The four genes they studied reveal that all these geckos separated neatly (and robustly) into three different 'clades' or branches.

Herpetologist honoured
Samples from Nellore, Pondicherry and Sri Lanka (recognised as a subspecies till now) grouped as one, proving that they were one species; the team designated this as the southern termite hill gecko *(Hemidactylus triedrus)*. Samples from south Karnataka and the Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu formed a separate clade, distinct enough to be a separate species; the researchers named it *Hemidactylus whitakeri* (in honour of herpetologist Romulus Whitaker's contributions to the conservation of India's reptiles). Geckos from Maharashtra, Gujarat and parts of Pakistan clustered together and Mirza and colleagues have named it *Hemidactylus sahgali,* after Bittu Sahgal, the editor and founder of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine.



The Whitaker's termite hill gecko is found in south Karnataka and the Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu.
▪ ZEESHAN MIRZA

Physical features
Detailed examinations of the physical features of the geckos from existing literature and by comparing both the newly collected specimens and museum specimens also complemented the genetic descriptions. Small pores on its thigh demarcate the Sahgal's gecko clearly from the other two; however, identifying and comparing many of these features on field takes a trained eye.

According to Mirza, lead author of the study published in *PeerJ,* using numerous methods together has helped solve the taxonomy of a species that has been debated for two centuries and also reveals that we do not know enough about the distribution of the Whitaker's and southern termite hill geckos.

"More studies in India's arid habitats could reveal more 'hidden' species," he adds.

Bed net to prevent malaria

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Researchers have developed a new type of bed net with a specific combination of an insecticide and insect growth regulator that could prevent millions of cases of malaria.

The novel net, detailed in the journal *The Lancet,* contains a pyrethroid insecticide, which repels and kills the mosquitoes, and an insect growth regulator, pyriproxyfen, which shortens the lives of mosquitoes and reduces their ability to reproduce.

This new type of mosquito net reduced the number of cases of clinical malaria by 12%compared with conventional nets. There was also a 51% reduction in risk of malaria infective mosquito bite.

Children using the new bed nets were 52% less likely to be moderately anaemic, which is a major cause of mortality in children under two years, the research showed.

"This new invaluable tool would enable us to tackle more efficiently this terrible and deadly disease that affects many children ," said principal investigator Alfred B. Tiono, from the CNRFP in Africa. The team conducted a two-year clinical trial in Burkina Faso, West Africa, involving 2,000 children, aged between six months and five years.

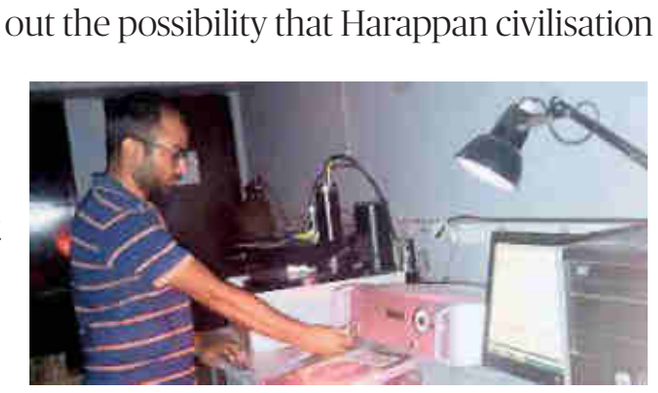
The latest figures from the World Health Organisation shows that in 2016 malaria infected about 216 million people across 91 countries, up from five million in 2015.

Paleo-rivers predated Harappans by 35,000 years

A recent study rules out the possibility that Harappan civilisation flourished on the banks of mighty rivers

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

A recent study on direct dating of sediments extracted from paleochannels close to Harappan sites in the region of Sutlej-Yamuna interfluve by a team of scientists from the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad (PRL) and CNRS, France, indicate that these rivers changed their course nearly 35,000 years before the Harappans came to settle there.



Using an ultra sensitive optical spectrometer, a researcher measures the intensity of stimulated light signal which is related to the age of burial of the samples.

Scientific evidence
Along with a 2017 paper in *Nature Communications* by A. Singh from IIT Kanpur and others, this study now provides scientific evidence that contradicts the suggestions on Harappans flourishing on the banks of the mythical Vedic rivers, Sarasvati and Drishadvati. These studies provide evidence that these rivers changed their course much before the time of Harappan settlements about 5,000 years ago. The study was published recently in *Quaternary Geochronology.*

The discovery of several hundred Harappan sites in the Sutlej-Yamuna interfluves led archaeologists to infer that like other ancient civilisations, Harappans too flourished on the banks of mighty rivers. Presence of ephemeral rivers Ghaggar-Hakra and Chautang in this area led people to suggest that these were vestiges of the once mighty glacial rivers on whose banks the Harappan civilisation was established. This gained popularity when a paleo-channel (ancient remains of rivers) was discovered in this region.

The naming of a paleo-channel and associating it with archaeological sites irked the curiosity of Prof. A.K. Singhvi from PRL. "To me this appeared unrealistic and farfetched. A ballpark analysis of Harappan site per unit time indicated that the numbers of settlements to be supported [by a large river] were too few and the need to invoke a mighty river was somewhat misplaced," he says.

For over three decades many papers were written but this premise was not tested scientifically using modern dating techniques till now.

Settlement patterns
This study analysed the distribution of Harappan sites along the two main rivers in the region - the Indus, which is perennial, and the Ghaggar-Hakra, which is ephemeral; examined the mineralogy of river sediments to establish their source and dated the entire sediment succession of the region using dating technique to establish the event chronology of the evolution of the region.

The authors conclude thus: "Settlement patterns and other analysis suggest that factors other than perennial rivers dictated their [Harappan's] settlement" and that, "Major change in the river dynamics occurred between 24,000-45,000 years ago (most likely around 40,000-45,000 years ago), and since 25,000 years the landscape has not changed significantly."

Prof Singhvi, who led the study, states that *ipso-facto* this study implies that so called paleo-river features are far too old to be associated with Vedic times.

"Care should be taken in making a linear association of river hydrology with abundance of archeological sites," he says.

He points out that this inference is also buttressed by the evidences of water harvesting techniques of Harappans, the cropping patterns suggesting their dependence on seasonal monsoon rather than constant supply of water.

Actual problems are solved only by 'whole men'

It is high time that the humanities, arts, craft and design are introduced in school from the very beginning



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

"If you have ever had a medical procedure, chances are you are benefited from the arts. The stethoscope was invented by a French flautist-physician named Rene Laennec who recorded his first observations of heart sounds in musical notation". Thus begins an article by the physiologist Dr Robert Root-Bernstein in the July 6, 2018 issue of *Science*. He discusses how incorporating the humanities, arts, crafts and design into curricula makes better scientists. He points to the recent report released by the Board on Higher Education and Workforce of the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM), which has recommended that humanities, arts, crafts, and design (HACD) be integrated with science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). Dr Root-Bernstein quotes the developmental biologist Conrad Waddington, who said: "The acute problems of the world can be solved only by whole men, not by people who refuse to be, publicly, anything more than a technologist or a scientist or an artist"; and Professor Charles West, President of the US National Academy of Engineering, who says: "Engineering systems cannot be wisely envisioned, designed or deployed without an understanding of society, culture, politics, economics, and communications - in other words, the very stuff of the liberal arts and also of the social sciences".

India's graduates
India produces over 1.5 million engineering graduates every year, from 3,345 colleges and institutes. Sadly, a major portion of these graduates are not employable. As Ms. Maria Thomas wrote in the *Economic Times* last year, the rapid growth of India's IT industry during the last three decades had led thousands of students, often pushed by their parents, to pursue a profession that often guaranteed wealth, status - and with same luck, a one way ticket out of the country. Likewise India produces 52,000 doctors (MBBS degree) every year from about 1,700 medical colleges. Over 6.3 lakh students take the pre-medical entrance tasks, and a significant number among them manage to get into private colleges, paying hefty sums. Here again, it is the parental push for better future for their children. The quality of most doctors, particularly in small towns and rural areas is well known. Most of them are ignoramuses when it comes to HACD. These are not what Dr Waddington termed as "whole men".



Working in villages gives the young scholar a perspective of the community.

The deficiency
Where does the deficiency lie? Right at the school level. Over the last seven decades, governments - both central and state - have abused the school system by fiddling around with the curricula, depriving schools of much needed money, appointing ill-qualified teachers through quota systems (many of them not bothering to come to schools), playing with the syllabus and myriad other modes of interference. Education analysts such as Pratham have shown that the government school system is so bad that an eighth class student cannot solve a fifth class problem, and a fifth class student is unable to answer a third class question. People have preferred sending their children to private schools, and these are money-making machines, not easily affordable by the lower middle class families. This, combined with the need for steady jobs and income for the child once he/she graduates, has played havoc with our education system, Thus were born coaching centres, run by the politically connected, which take students right at the secondary school level and send them through tortuous courses so that they may pass engineering and medical entrance examinations. And in none of these coach centres, nor in the schools, are students taught HCAD at any level, and those who successfully come out of these mechanised teaching factories are absorbed in the NITs, IITs or medical colleges, but with no 'soft skills'. It is high time that the school system is revamped and HACD introduced from the very beginning.

It is with this deficiency in mind that the IITs, BITS Pilani, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, and a few others, have tried to make up through the introduction of 'core courses' in the first few semesters, where the students are taught language, literature, humanities and social sciences, arts and crafts, and design. Happily enough, several IITs now have actual departments in some of these subjects (besides technology and science departments) where faculty members teach and also do research in areas of HACD. (One beautiful example of this was the design of the convocation robes designed at the IIT Hyderabad last week, using Ikat stoles made by local weavers). These core courses at IITs and BITS are of some help. Similarly Christian Medical College at Vellore requires their graduating doctors to spend a year in rural India. Working in villages gives the young scholar a perspective of the community, its needs and its talents and enriches the mind. And professional IT companies offer months-long sessions to their trainees in generic and stream learning plus "soft skills". What about the other technological and medical institutions?

Route to eminence
Sadly, the Central Ministry of Higher Education does not appreciate the value of liberal arts and HCAD. A glaring display of this has been the identification of four institutions of technology, and one "green field" institute yet to be made, as Institutions of Eminence. Tellingly, not one university or institute devoted to HACD was thought of as eminent! What the government decides is eminent is at variance with what the professional scholars think.

Given this disconnect, here is one suggestion: why should some of these 'green field' institutes not concentrate on HCAD rather than more technology-based ones? Better yet, rather than start institutes, establish Trusts that catalyse and promotes HCAD?

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HEALTHLINE RITESH KUMAR



"A low-calorie diet causes different metabolic effects in women than in men, suggests a new study." — *Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism*

AROUND THE WORLD



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Who does mummy love more?

New research shows that mothers hold similar views and attitudes when parenting their first and second children, but their parenting behaviours with their two children differ. In the study, 55 mothers were observed interacting with their first child at the age of 20 months and again (using the same procedures), when their second child was 20 months. First-born children tended to be more sociable and emotionally available to mothers than second-born children. Mothers' behaviours with first-born and second-born children were not similar in rank order. The authors say that these findings suggest that despite relatively consistent parenting beliefs over time, siblings behave differently from one another by 20 months of age, and mothers behave differently when interacting with their two children at the same age. The findings have been published in *Social Development*.

Dads have the baby blues too



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

When it comes to postpartum depression, most people think of the mother's well-being, but research suggests that a similar proportion of men experience some form of depression after the birth of a child. Women's experiences of pregnancy and postpartum, most of it exploring negative reactions, ranging from clinical depression to postpartum psychosis, and attributing them to unique physical changes women experience during pregnancy, are better reported. The new study says that the incidence rate of depression is comparable between new mothers and fathers and that postpartum depression could no longer be seen as primarily a pathological variant of female reproductive processes. The findings were presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association recently.



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Video games can teach empathy

Results published recently have shown for the first time that in as few as two weeks, children who played a video game designed to train empathy showed greater connectivity in brain networks related to empathy and perspective taking. Some also showed altered neural networks commonly linked to emotion regulation, a crucial skill that this age group is beginning to develop, the study authors say. The realisation that these skills were actually trainable with video games is important because they are predictors of emotional well-being and health throughout life, and could be practised anytime — with or without video games, according to a researcher associated with the study. Empathy is the first step in a sequence that can lead to pro-social behaviour, such as helping others in need. On average, youth (between 8 and 18) rack up more than 70 minutes of video game play daily. This spike in game play during adolescence coincides with an explosion in brain growth as well as a time when children are susceptible to first encounters with depression, anxiety and bullying. The findings have been published in *Science of Learning*, a Nature journal.

New drug target for joint pain



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Researchers have identified a new therapeutic target, Panx1 channels, to effectively treat joint pain without impairing sensory function. Their results provide novel mechanistic understanding of joint pain. Additionally, their study offers important insights for therapies aiming to alleviate the most debilitating ramifications of arthritis — chronic joint pain; among these therapies are clinically-approved Panx1-blocking drugs, such as probenecid. To date, effective therapies to treat chronic joint pain are lacking, and treatments that do provide some pain alleviation often cause adverse side effects. The researchers examined the interactions between joints and the spinal cord using rats. The findings have been published in *Science Advances*.

GETTY IMAGES

Protein linked to bone formation

A research group has found that altering levels of a protein disrupts the balance between formation of bone and fat tissue in animal models. The results show that the protein, named Thy-1, plays a critical role as both a promoter of bone formation and an inhibitor of fat formation, a discovery with implications for the study of obesity and bone disorders. Mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) are a type of stem cell that can differentiate into various cell types such as bone and fat cells. The fate of MSCs is governed by a complex network of signalling pathways that maintains a balance between the formation of new bone tissue and fat stores. Sometimes this balance is disrupted. The scientists founds that MSCs deficient in Thy-1 were more likely to differentiate into fat cells instead of bone cells. Furthermore, mice deficient in Thy-1 displayed increased body weight and fat volumes, lower bone mass, and were more vulnerable to bone fractures when compared to control animals. The findings have been reported in *Science Translational Medicine*.

DEMYSTIFYING SCIENCE

What is the Basel papyrus?

For four centuries now, Basel, in Switzerland, has been home to a mysterious papyrus. With mirror writing on both sides, it has puzzled generations of researchers. It now emerges that it was probably an unknown medical document from late antiquity, written by Galen, the famous Roman physician. The Basel papyrus collection comprises 65 papers in five languages, which were purchased by Basel University, in 1900, for the purpose of teaching classical studies — with the exception of two papyri. The secrets of the papyrus were revealed only through ultraviolet and infra-red imaging. It turns out that the 2,000-year-old document was not a single papyrus at all but several layers of papyrus glued together. A specialist papyrus restorer was brought to Basel to separate the sheets, enabling the ancient document to be decoded for the first time. — Science Daily

Is the Paleo diet outdated?

A Mediterranean-style diet is better balanced nutritionally and a whole lot tastier

JANE E. BRODY



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

It seems these days that every third person I meet is either already on the "Paleo" diet or planning to try it. Their goals are either weight loss or better health, but certainly not to save the planet.

The main premise of the Paleo diet: If the cave men didn't eat it, you shouldn't either. But is this sound nutritional advice?

Then and now

Let's start with three basic facts: There is no such thing as "a" Paleo diet. The Palaeolithic era lasted 2.5 million years and involved different and continually evolving populations with a wide dietary range determined by climate, geography, season and availability. Human beings today and the composition of the foods they eat are not the same as they were at that time. Genetic changes and breeding have resulted in very different organisms for both. There have been no studies of large groups of people who have followed the currently popular versions of the Paleo diet for decades to assess their long-term health effects.

Keep in mind that the life expectancy of people before the advent of agriculture 15,000 years ago rarely reached or exceeded 40, so their risk of developing the so-called diseases of civilisation is unknown.

There is one basic premise of the Paleo diet that could benefit everyone's health: Avoid all foods that are packaged and processed. That said, consider a daily menu of 2,200 calories suggested in a popular book on how to eat like a cave man. *Breakfast*: 12 oz. broiled salmon, 1 3/4 cups cantaloupe; *Lunch*: 3 oz. broiled lean pork, 4 1/2 cups salad dressed only with lemon juice; *Dinner*: 8 oz. lean sirloin tip roast, 3 cups steamed broccoli, 4 1/2 cups salad (again, no oil, though some versions of the diet include olive oil), 1 cup strawberries. Snacks: ½ orange, ¾ cup carrots, 1 cup celery.

With so many vegetables and fruits, the diet does contain plenty of fibre and most essential vitamins and minerals. Despite a few serious nutritional deficiencies like calcium and vitamin D from the lack of dairy foods spurned by Paleo enthusiasts, it sounds healthy enough, as long as your kidneys can handle so much protein.

But is it practical? How many people trying to get the children off to school in the morning and themselves ready for work will take the time to broil salmon? What will they do when they dine out, especially in someone else's home? And most important of all, can they stay on the diet indefinitely and live happily without a piece of bread, cracker or, heaven forbid, a serving of ice cream?

And not all Palaeolithic diets are equally nourishing. Those who choose the ancestors of the Inuits as their guide would be eating mostly meats and seafood and few if any fruits and vegetables, which grow poorly in the Arctic. As Marlene Zuk, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Minnesota and author of *Paleofantasy*, told *Nutrition Action* three years ago, the fact that people like the Inuits can adapt to a diet with little plant food "doesn't mean they should live that way if they have a choice."

I also wonder whether Paleo diners faced with currently available choices will stick to lean animal foods (grass-fed meats, skinless poultry, etc.), or would they be tempted to choose more succulent, fattier, more caloric cuts like brisket, burgers and pork ribs. Even worse, they might select processed meats like bacon (allowed on some Paleo diet lists) and sausages that have been linked to an increased risk of cancer and heart disease. Would they succumb to using butter and salt to enhance the flavour of steamed vegetables?

Going Mediterranean

As I see it, a Mediterranean-style diet, now promoted by most dieticians and researchers who study the effects of what we eat, is far easier to incorporate into modern lives with minimal risk to lasting health. It is also better balanced nutritionally and a whole lot tastier.

The Mediterranean diet features only small portions of animal foods and depends more on plant proteins like beans and peas. It includes olive oil and other monounsaturated fats. It is more varied, less expensive, less taxing on the environment, and easier to fit into the demands of life as it is lived today.

Several short-term studies among small groups of people (often with no control groups) suggest that the Paleo diet is more effective than the Mediterranean approach at promoting weight loss and reducing risk factors for Type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease. Still, my vote goes for the more flexible and far more thoroughly researched Mediterranean diet.

A popular claim of Paleo dieters, among others, is that we are the only mammals that drink milk after weaning, which is true. Many people lose the ability to digest the lactose in milk in early childhood. On the other hand, Dr. Zuk pointed out, many others have evolved a lifelong ability to produce the lactose-converting enzyme lactase, a change that has occurred during the last 5,000 to 7,000 years and is but one example of how humans can and have changed, and rather quickly, since Paleo days.

And while it is wise (consistent with the Paleo diet) to eat far fewer starches, especially white flour and refined grains that our bodies quickly convert to sugar, Dr. Zuk noted that people have continued to evolve genes for amylase, the enzyme that breaks down starches in saliva and the small intestine.

It is also true that our microbiome – the billions of organisms that reside in our guts and elsewhere – is vastly different now than in Paleo times and affects how our bodies process what we eat.

Finally, there remains one other critical aspect of Palaeolithic populations that is vastly different from how most Americans live today. Paleo people were hunter-gatherers and spent most of their waking hours walking and running around in search of food, with additional time and effort spent preparing it for consumption.

If you're willing to do all that, go for it. NY TIMES

Struck by 'lightening'



One shade: 'Skin lightening', which is popular especially in South Asia and West Asia — to the dismay of most medical experts — is now shifting to a new zone — Africa. "Africa is experiencing a massive trend of increased use of skin bleaching, particularly in teenagers and young adults," says Lester Davids, a physiology professor at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. Even babies are not spared. In Nigeria alone, 77% of women, or around 60 million people use 'lightening' products on a "regular basis", according to the World Health Organisation. Experts say the African market is seen as a goldmine as companies seek to cash in on the continent's booming youth population. Many of these skin products contain hydroquinone, steroids, mercury and lead which can cause serious health problems that include cancer. Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast and Ghana have banned or advised against the use of skin bleaching products with high amounts of hydroquinone and mercury. But in the largely unregulated African market, some companies have started to label their products as organic based. Health authorities are also struggling to control the use of intravenous injections and pills of the compound, glutathione, which is now the rage, to whiten skin. Picture shows a shopkeeper arranging a range of 'skin lightening' products at his store in Johannesburg, South Africa. — AFP ▪ AFP/GULSHAN KHAN

Counting on a new test

Urine biomarker could help Severe Alcoholic Hepatitis patients

DINESH C. SHARMA

A newly discovered biomarker in human urine may help clinicians predict the success of treatment for patients of Severe Alcoholic Hepatitis (SAH). This will help avert risks involved in giving the standard steroid treatment to patients who are not likely to benefit from it.

SAH, which is caused due to chronic alcohol abuse, progresses fast and results in death in 60% of cases. Unlike Hepatitis B and C, which are treatable with drugs, therapeutic options for SAH patients are limited. Corticosteroid therapy is available but not all patients respond to it. Those who do not respond to steroid therapy have a high risk of infections and may die within three months. That's why patients need to be classified clinically to predict their likely response to steroid treatment.

The study

In the new study at the New Delhi-based Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), scientists collected baseline data about urine metabolome (the range of the metabolic products) in 140 patients with SAH using ultra-high-performance liquid chromatography and high-resolution mass spectrometry.

They were put on steroid treatment and categorised as responders and non-responders based on a parameter called the Lille score after one week of treatment. Further analysis identified certain urine metabolites that were significantly higher in non-responders.

A total of 212 features were annotated and identified using various metabolomics and biochemical databases for metabolite identification. The analysis helped zero in on nine urinary metabolites prominent in non-responders. These significantly correlated with severity indices (like MELD or Model of End stage Liver Diseases) and mortality.

Based on all this data and analysis, researchers have concluded that one particular urinary metabolite – acetyl-L-carnitine – can be used as a biomarker to predict non-response. "Acetyl-L-carnitine at a level of less than 2,500 nanogram per millilitre could reliably segregate survivors from



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

non-survivors," said Jaswinder Singh Maras, who conducted the study.

"We also assessed if changes in urine metabolome in patients with SAH were linked to alterations in liver gene expression. This highlighted that the change observed in the urine metabolome corresponds to liver anomaly," he added.

Window of opportunity

"Acetyl-L-carnitine is a non-invasive marker and its quantitation in the urine of SAH patients could help clinicians categorise (baseline) patients who have high predisposition to non-response and non-survival. This could provide a window of opportunity to clinicians to treat these patients differently as compared to those who may respond to treatment," said Dr. Shiv Kumar Sarin, director of the ILBS.

Scientists at the ILBS now plan to customise a dipstick test which will be cost effective for prediction of non-response to corticosteroid therapy and survival chances of patients.

"This study is the first demonstration of the utility of urine to determine treatment responsiveness in SAH. These findings could form the basis for the development of a cost-effective dipstick screening test for restricting steroid use to patients with a good likelihood of responding. Such a urine test for SAH could provide a practical point-of-care assessment that may delineate metabolic changes, predict mortality, and potentially personalise treatment strategies," according to Dr. Shilpa Chokshi, Institute of Hepatology, Foundation for Liver Research, U.K.

However, she said, the findings needed to be confirmed and replicated with patients from different centres worldwide. The results of the study have been published in the journal *Hepatology Communications*. – India Science Wire

A note to mothers



NIRMALA CHANDRASHEKHAR

Infant mortality is one of India's persistent health concerns. It is a well-established fact that breastfeeding reduces child mortality and has health benefits that extend well into adulthood. While the benefits of breastfeeding have been known for decades, it is only recently that the association of time-to-initiation of breastfeeding, with mortality and morbidity in children-under-5, has been assessed.

Global guidelines

This year, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF jointly issued a new 10-point guidance to further raise awareness on the criticality of early breastfeeding. In addition, they noted that breastfeeding for the first two years would save the lives of more than 8,20,000 children annually. Their report recommends that mothers start breastfeeding in the first hour after birth. The early initiation ensures that infants consume the colostrum – the first secretion from the mammary glands after giving birth. Colostrum is said to be high in antibodies, reduces the risk of death from hypothermia, helps in epithelial recovery and protects children from infectious diseases. Early initiation also has numerous immunological and nutritional benefits that have been found to reduce mortality in babies under the age of 1.

Infants who are breastfed have a reduced risk of diarrhoea, pneumonia and other infectious diseases in comparison to infants who drink breast milk substitutes. Human milk is a rich source of immune and non-immune components which resist infection and also accelerate intestinal maturation in a child.

Despite the significant progress made in improving child survival at the national level, infant mortality still remains high in some States in India. While there are multiple factors that lead to infant mortality, breastfeeding rates too play a key role. It is estimated that only one out three children are breastfed exclusively within six months, which results in a higher risk of death due to various illnesses (diarrhoea and respiratory infection).

Improving India's breastfeeding rates requires a multi-pronged approach with its focus on educating women and health providers. The challenges of limited public knowledge, social norms that trend toward formula feeding, lack of access to lactation services and education have to be addressed through consistent awareness initiatives at every level. The better the breastfeeding practice, the higher the protection. Even partial breastfeeding has a modest protective effect when compared to no breastfeeding. Every mother-to-be should undergo proper training on breastfeeding. In this, doctors and medical professionals play an important role. Only mothers suffering from severe illnesses or other issues affecting early lactation should go in for bottle feeding or milk substitutes.

Government's strategy

Some factors that may delay early breastfeeding are caesarean delivery, use of anaesthesia, fatigue and the use of pre-lacteal feeding with formula milk. The government is making efforts to promote and organise programmes focussed on maternal and infant health. Their aim is to educate health-care providers and young parents on the importance of human breast milk. Our hospitals are also in desperate need for an improvement in policies and maternity-care practices. The first 24 hours of an infant's life is considered to be a crucial period. If the child is not breastfed, it is more likely to suffer from various diseases such as asthma, diabetes, childhood leukaemia, obesity and allergies.

In addition to these awareness programmes, the Health Ministry is also planning to increase the network of human milk banks across the country. Hopefully, this will reduce India's infant mortality rate.

Dr. Nirmala Chandrashekhar is a gynaecologist at BGS Gleneagles Global Hospitals, Bengaluru

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Discovered in translation

Tracing the growth of Tamil with the help of conversions and adaptations, both from and into that language

N. KALYAN RAMAN



■ **Culture, Language and Identity: English-Tamil in Colonial India 1750-1900 CE**
Edited by *C.T. Indra* and *R. Rajagopalan*
Routledge India
₹595



■ **Language, Culture and Power: English-Tamil in Modern India 1900 CE — Present Day**
Edited by *C.T. Indra* and *R. Rajagopalan*
Routledge India
₹795



A tale to tell: No language can grow in isolation; to survive, a language must constantly reinvent itself over time. ▪ GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK

No man is an island; neither is the culture a man is born into. In the same way, no language can grow in isolation; to survive, a language must constantly reinvent itself over time, which necessarily involves transactions with other languages, near and far. Throughout history, and especially in the contemporary age, translation has been a pivotal mode of transaction between languages, and thereby between cultures and communities.

Expanding Tamil

The two slim volumes under review is a marvellous attempt to tell the fascinating story of how, since the middle of the 18th century, "the Tamil language has grown in status, asserting its history and expanding its horizons," and how "it has done this with the help of translations, both from and into that language," as Susan Bassnett says in her foreword.

The story in the first volume begins with the arrival of European colonisers in the Tamil country during the 16th and 17th centuries and the introduction of communication technologies, including the printing press, as instruments of domination. Translation of religious texts into Tamil was undertaken by Christian missionaries as an aid to proselytisation. Literary translation was also copious, with works by Shakespeare, Milton, George Eliot and Dickens being rendered into Tamil multiple times. Initiation of modern prose in Tamil was a transformative achievement during this period. In addition to Cankam ethical literature (*Kural* and *Naladiyar,* among others) and twin major epics (*Silappadikaram* and *Naladiyar),* grammatico-theoretical works like *Nannul*, Saivite mystical poetry and Saivite philosophical tracts were translated into English.

Chapter 2 is a fascinating account of the development of Tamil and English dictionaries aided by in-depth knowledge of literary, grammatical and philosophical works in Tamil and a growing familiarity with the family of Dravidian languages.

Next, the political and linguistic aspects of translating the *Bible*, intended as the first bridge between the coloniser and the natives, are delineated. The translation of ethical and moral texts, of Jain and Buddhist origin, into English was an important step in understanding "the whole ethical and social philosophy of Tamil people," from both Christian and secular perspectives (Chapter 4).

Towards the end of the 19th century, Krupabhai Sathianandan, a Marathi convert to Christianity, wrote two novels, *Kamala* (1894) and *Saguna* (1895), each narrated from a woman's point of view, respectively dealing with the social environment of Hindus and Christians. The novels were translated into Tamil a few years later. A study of the two novels in Chapter 5 shows how the translations paved the way for Tamil women to venture into writing in the 20th century.

Volume II deals with translations since the beginning of the last century. Chapters 1 and 2 present a detailed treatment of translations, respectively, of classical Tamil poetry and works of the Bhakti period. Perhaps for the first time in recent memory, we see A.K. Ramanujan in the company of his peers. His lustre is undimmed but he is no longer the lonely hero.

Western ideas

Chapter 3 is a brilliant account of the role of 'little magazines' in contributing to the literary journey of Tamils through translation of texts as well as literary criticism from outside. Works by a large number of European and Latin American authors have been translated into Tamil over the past 40 years. Since the 1980s, the influx of modernist and post-modernist theories of literature, either as translated texts or as treatises of the introductory type, has transformed critical practices in the Tamil milieu.

In his fascinating paper on *Translating Theory* (Chapter 4), R. Azhagarasan traces the process by which western critical theories such as structuralism and post-structuralism were translated into Tamil, largely by the so-called Little Magazines. Azhagarasan points out that the translators looked for parallel concepts in the Tamil tradition, debated their relevance, formulated sites of contest and shaped local struggles with insights gained from these theories.

In *Cultural Empowerment and Translation* (Chapter 5) and *Mapping the Nuance of Language* (Chapter 6), C.T. Indra and R. Rajagopalan present a study of translations produced since 1970 of selected Tamil works in various genres (novels, short fiction, poetry and drama). Besides showcasing the variety of themes, they also elaborate on the challenges met by translators in terms of conveying the tone, register, aesthetics and ideology of the original.

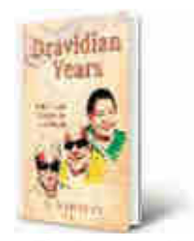
As they say in conclusion, "translation today is not a monological, isolated, purely linguistic or literary activity. It has inevitably aligned itself with literary and critical theory, emerging socio-economic and aesthetic discourses, political upheavals guided by alternate philosophies of life and the art of representation."

Minor quibbles

These volumes present a fascinating history of Tamil-English translation in a lucid and engaging manner. That said, I have a couple of quibbles. In her introduction to Volume 2 covering the 'boom' in Tamil-English translation over the past few decades, Indra provides scant space to the community of translators who are, after all, primary producers of translations. I hope that someday translators would become as much a part of the narrative as, say, other contributors to the field.

Second, an editor is quoted as saying that "Translation is the product of a collaborative venture between the translator and the editor of a publishing house." As a literary translator, I would like to say that an editor's contribution, important though it might be, is still ancillary to the effort of *writing* the translation. The cause of translation, and translators, can hardly be well served by the propagation of such tendentious claims.

BOOKSHELF



■ **The Dravidian Years: Politics and Welfare in Tamil Nadu**
S. Narayan
Oxford University Press
₹550

In the 50 years of rule between them, M. Karunanidhi, MGR and J. Jayalalithaa transformed institutions and structures to deliver a welfare agenda in the State, writes a former bureaucrat who had served at the Centre and in Tamil Nadu. This is an intimate narrative on the Dravidian years when politicians and bureaucrats worked together to implement a social policy.



■ **Between the Great Divide**
Anam Zakaria
HarperCollins
₹599

A writer travels through Pakistan-administered Kashmir to hear its people. She talks to women and children living near the Line of Control, bearing the brunt of ceasefire violations; political and military representatives championing the cause of Kashmir; former militants still committed to the cause; nationalists struggling for a united independent Kashmir; and refugees yearning to reunite with their families.



■ **RSS: A View to the Inside**
Walter Andersen, Shridhar Damle
Penguin Random House
₹699

Backed by research and case studies, two scholars explore the evolution of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) into its present form, its relationship with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), their overseas affiliates and so forth. Among the questions they seek to answer is how does its rapid growth impact the country's politics and policy.



■ **Is this 'azaadi'?**
Anand Chakravarti
Tulika Books
₹750

A sociologist writes about living conditions of landless agricultural labourers in Muktidih, a village in southwest Bihar. Most of them are Dalits and find it difficult to access necessities like food, shelter, clothing and healthcare. He points out that their counterparts elsewhere in the State live in similar dismal conditions, calling attention to issues of caste, class and politics.



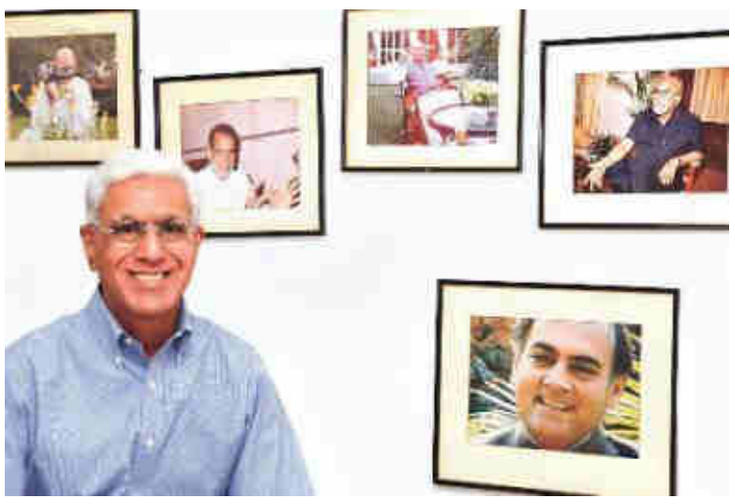
■ **Scent of a Story: A Newspaperman's Journey**
Shankar Ghosh
HarperCollins
₹399

Combining biography and memoir, Ghosh writes of his father's life as a journalist. As the longest-serving and the first Indian editor of Pioneer, S.N. Ghosh's career matched steps with profound changes in our history. As a reporter, Ghosh senior saw the 'whites only' club of the British; on the eve of Independence, he wrote the editorial to mark the historic day.

Getting it done

A journalist's interviewing career marked by estrangements and rapprochements with high-powered guests is compiled in a memoir

G. SAMPATH



Questioning the powerful: There was no stopping Karan Thapar even when he interviewed those with whom he had a cosy relationship. ▪ R.V. MOORTHY

In his mid-20s, as a D.Phil. student at Oxford, Karan Thapar could have become anything he wanted – academic, banker, industrialist, politician, novelist, filmmaker, or even an honest arms dealer, had he been so inclined. The future was a realm of limitless possibilities in a way unimaginable for 99.99% of his countrymen.

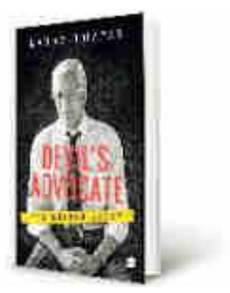
But he chose a profession that has largely been a preserve of – and a channel of social mobility for – the middle classes. He became a journalist, and that too of a particular kind: the celebrity interviewer. Having picked a middle class profession, he charted a career path founded on his privileged position at the apex of the country's elite. This, then, is the first contradiction of Thapar's public life.

Hard talk

The nature of his preferred occupation was such that its sustainability depended on one thing: his ability to get public figures to his show. And then to get them again. And again. It was not necessary for his success that he ask tough questions. He could have built an equally profitable career asking the kinds of questions Karan Johar does in *Koffee with Karan*. Thapar has, indeed, done those kinds of shows as well. But those alone would not have permitted him to claim the mantle of a journalist – that called for something more. It required the interviewer to ask any and every question that is in the public interest without being intimidated by the interviewee's power or stature.

To his credit, in a career spanning more than a quarter of a century, Thapar has consistently managed to do that. This is the second contradiction, for if there is one thing the powerful hate more than being asked uncomfortable questions, it is having their discomfort and doublespeak dramatised and broadcast to the general public.

Thapar's interviewing career, therefore, was marked by estrangements and rapprochements with his high-powered guests. *Devil's Advocate* is largely a compilation of these moments. Along the way, it also offers little nuggets that illuminate these figures in unusual ways. For instance, did you know that the bed Narasimha Rao used when he was the prime minister had a mosquito net on which he liked to hang his underpants?



■ **Devil's Advocate: The Untold Story**
Karan Thapar
HarperCollins
₹699

Thapar's interviewing style put off many, including L.K. Advani, J. Jayalalithaa, Ram Jethmalani, and Chandra Shekhar, among others. But he was able to restore civil relations with every one of them, with the sole exception of Narendra Modi.

And it is the section of the book that deals with his (in)famous, three-minute interview with Mr. Modi that has drawn the most attention, and also criticism. Thapar has copped flak on two counts: for breaking a cardinal principle of journalistic ethics, which stipulates that you must never reveal your sources; and for repeatedly offering to apologise to a politician in order to regain access. Both these departures from accepted journalistic norms concern the same issue: Thapar's bafflement, and later, intense resentment, at being boycotted by every BJP politician.

There can, of course, be no justification for Thapar outing his sources. But post-facto, now that the information is out in the open, it is difficult to deny that they are of public interest. The naming of names lays bare the extent to which India's most powerful political party has prostrated itself at the feet of one individual. It is useful to have this on record, and in the public domain, in a context where parties routinely trade charges of inner party democracy being sacrificed at the altar of competitive sycophancy.

Cross examination

Thapar also deserves credit for introducing to Indian news television the sub-genre of the hyper-combative political interview, and he did it at a time when a certain deference to power was the norm. We are used to seeing him go straight for the jugular, even when interviewing those with whom he enjoyed a cosy relationship.

In contrast, among today's TV journalists, it is tough to pinpoint anchors who opt for the kind of adversarial cross-examination Thapar is known for. When anchors do show aggression, it is typically directed at entities questioning the powerful.

The third and final contradiction of Thapar's career is that, despite enjoying access, he did not settle for doing softball interviews with the political establishment, mouthing questions vetted by them in advance. It wouldn't have gelled with his television persona anyway.

Devil's Advocate gains from the tensions generated by these three contradictions. This part-memoir, part-nostalgia trip, and part-tantrum is a delectable read, not only for its revealing glimpses of the fabled Lutyens elite, but also for the polished prose that greets you, with old world courtesy, wearing an elegant bow tie.

Fear and tragedy

Understanding why Kashmir's stone-pelters are angry

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE



■ **The Generation of Rage in Kashmir**
David Devadas
Oxford University Press
₹495

Parachute journalism is often blamed for inflicting injustice to lingering conflicts of the world. This criticism sticks particularly in case of Kashmir, where pressure and intimidation against the media from state agencies and pro-azadi elements, adds to the difficulties to write ethnographic accounts of the problems of the valley.

Often the only account is that of the day's developments – which means a roster of 'terrorists' and 'soldiers' killed. At times, outrage pours forth when 'officers' are victims. The casualty of such a narrative are the thousand heartbreaking details that disappear as the bipolar narrative takes root. David Devadas in *The Generation of Rage in Kashmir* has done a great work by bringing those thousand heartbreaks of Kashmir's young generation to readers.

The author has brought out the pain and white fear that emerged in the heart of teenaged Kashmiris when elders urged them to switch off lights and go to bed fearing the midnight knock. Thousands of such midnight knocks reverberated all over Kashmir during the 1990s when terrorism and insurgency blended into the 'disturbances'. No one paid attention to the long-term impact of those moments of fear. Yet as the mainstream media in India wondered about the roots of rage in contemporary Kashmiri youth, the impact of the past became clear.

The previous generation of Kashmir had witnessed the political complexity of India as well as the softer pull of the State's pluralist culture.

But as the 21st century matured into its teens, the rage of modern Kashmir had to be explained. The heart of the stone-pelter in 2016 in the aftermath of the slaying of Burhan Wani was full of rage that he had picked up as a child growing up in the 1990s. Devadas should get the credit for laying out the reasons that mobilised thousands by the Facebook posts of Burhan Wani and subsequently, those who protested against his slaying with intense passion.

Devadas has produced a detailed study of Kashmir's social and government institutions and how they morphed over the last decades and how they failed as the generation of rage grew up. The study looks at family structure, social and urban movements, and State-population interaction.

Devadas has generously showered attention on the masses who were often left out by the media and the essayists.

Surgical strikes

A doctor on the 'tracheotomy of the century' and other operations

MURALI N. KRISHNASWAMY



■ **Under the Knife: The History of Surgery in 28 Remarkable Operations**
Arnold Van De Laar
John Murray/ Hachette
₹699

The stories in Dutch surgeon Arnold van de Laar's book are not a complete account of the history of surgery. The narrations are more an interpretation from a surgical perspective than an accurate account. Piecing together tales of surgery "in 28 remarkable operations," they dip into historical sources, interviews, reports, biographies and what has appeared, but abridged, in the journal of the Dutch Surgical Association, to bring alive the complexities of the human body.

What is surgery and what was it in the past? How does the body respond when under siege: by a knife, a bacterium, a cancer cell or even a bullet? The answers to these and much more can be found across the book. At its heart though are his riveting accounts that flesh out fascinating tales: of the "tracheotomy of the century" performed on John F. Kennedy who was wheeled into the emergency room in Dallas "with a gaping bullet wound to the head" dripping blood and brain tissue, to the surgery on Lee Harvey Oswald, JFK's assassin, which ended in every surgeon's nightmare (*mors in tabula* or death on the operating table) after an 85-minute operation and a loss of almost eight and a half litres of blood. Interestingly, both men were operated on by the same surgeon. Other splendid stories are of the miracle bullet which spared the life of Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), to the slow death of escape artist Harry Houdini (a case of appendicitis) to the passing away of Albert Einstein (from an AAA or an abdominal aortic aneurysm).

Dr. Laars, a first-time writer, has more. He lists the story of the gluttonous popes as "intriguing" and one that strikes a chord in him because of what he calls his special interest in operating on people with obesity problems. The one about keyhole surgery is educative. He also has his favourite (because of its Amsterdam connection) – of Jan de Doot and his bladder stone and how he operated on himself. Other subjects dealt with deft and incisive flourishes are gangrene, laproscopy, hernia, prosthesis, stroke, gastrectomy, cancer, fracture, wound healing, varicose veins and, interestingly, the placebo. The glossary, bibliography and the many explainers (on sutures, for example) are rich additions.

Finally, says Dr. Laars, even if technology ensures that minimally invasive treatment is a key concept of the future, there will still be a place for the man with the scalpel to save lives.

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

Woakes and Bairstow bat India out of Lord's Test

England takes complete control of the match as the lead balloons to 250; Shami had earlier given the visitors some hope with an inspired burst

INDIA IN ENGLAND

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
LONDON

For a while on Saturday, it seemed as if India would make a match of this after all. An inspired burst from Mohammed Shami had left England four down at lunch. Joe Root was gone and the ball was doing something. It all unravelled pretty quickly in the afternoon, however.

Chris Woakes scored his maiden Test match hundred and Jonny Bairstow a typically busy 93 as England gained complete control of the second Test.

At stumps, the lead had ballooned to a neat 250, Woakes unbeaten on 120. It is expected that most of day four will be lost to rain but the home side will feel still confident of forcing a result.



Super Saturday: It was a memorable day for Chris Woakes who notched up his maiden Test century. ▪ REUTERS

Delight to behold

Lord's was a delight to behold on the third morning: green turf, bright sunshine, a new red ball, and a packed house. It is a sight that can only be described as glorious. Keaton Jennings and Alastair Cook, fed a couple of deliveries on the pads, started confidently enough.

Shami was the first to break through, pinning Jennings lbw with a full delivery that swung into the left-hander.

At the other end, Ishant Sharma changed his approach, coming from around the wicket, and was rewarded almost at once. Cook was suckered into pushing at one that straightened and was caught behind.

Ollie Pope looked fairly confident for a young man making his debut.

The 20-year-old struck the ball well and seemed completely at ease until he was surprised by a delivery from Hardik Pandya that swung back in sharply.

A few minutes later, Shami dismissed Root with a similar ball, trapping the England captain in front for 19.

Lunch was taken with England 89 for four.

India's bowlers were buzzing and it seemed the lead may not be a threatening one after all.

On the other side of the break, Jos Buttler, who like many before him had begun well, was claimed by yet another fine ball from Shami, a full delivery that tailed in at great pace.

This united Woakes and Bairstow at the crease, and the two would go on to add 189 runs for the sixth wicket. India opted for a second spinner in Kuldeep Yadav despite the conditions that prevailed on the second morning. It is a move Virat Kohli may come to regret in hindsight.

There was no great turn for the left-armer; additionally it meant Pandya had to function as the third seamer.

The Baroda cricketer did not bowl badly but he does not carry the same threat that someone like Umesh Yadav would have.

No help for Ashwin

As India's bowlers tired, Woakes and Bairstow simply cashed in, putting loose balls – of which there were many – away. R. Ashwin was introduced only after 38 overs but he had no help from the pitch either.

Kuldeep finished the day with figures of none for 44 from nine overs, struggling with his length late in the evening.

Bairstow fell seven short of what would have been a fine hundred, held by a diving Dinesh Karthik off Pandya. But he, and England, had done enough.

India, meanwhile, will pray for a miracle.

SCOREBOARD ENGLAND VS INDIA, SECOND TEST, DAY 3

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.

England — 1st innings: Alastair Cook c Karthik b Ishant 21 *(25b, 4x4)*, Keaton Jennings lbw b Shami 11 *(22b)*, Joe Root lbw b Shami 19 *(53b, 2x4)*, Ollie Pope lbw b Pandya 28 *(38b, 3x4)*, Jonny Bairstow c Karthik b Pandya 93 *(144b, 12x4)*, Jos Buttler lbw b Shami 24 *(22b, 4x4)*, Chris Woakes (batting) 120 *(159b, 18x4)*, Sam Curran (batting) 22 *(24b, 4x4)*; Extras (b-7, lb-10, nb-1, w-1): 19; Total (for six wkts. in 81 overs): 357.

Fall of wickets: 1-28 (Jennings, 7.3 overs), 2-32 (Cook, 8.2), 3-77 (Pope, 21.2), 4-89 (Root, 24.4), 5-131 (Buttler, 31.1), 6-320 (Bairstow, 74.4).

India bowling: Ishant 19-3-88-1, Shami 19-4-74-3, Kuldeep 9-1-44-0, Pandya 17-0-66-2, Ashwin 17-1-68-0.

Dhawan has not learnt from experience

Difficult to be convinced that he is the right choice to open in Tests in England

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
LONDON

As India took the field on the third day of the Lord's Test in bright sunshine, Shikhar Dhawan was on his own at the Nursery ground, taking throw-downs in the nets. He was out there at lunch again, facing Arjun Tendulkar's left-arm medium while patrons picnicked on the grass in the far corner.

Dhawan is not a man to lose sleep over being dropped for one Test match, yet he must wonder what the future holds for him.

He was left out after the first Test in South Africa earlier this year, failed to score a run in the tour game against Essex last month, and did not impress anyone with his performance at Edgbaston. Dhawan was out trying to play a rasping drive through the off-side both times.

Repeating the mistake

It is bad enough being dismissed like that once; to do so in the second innings after being punished for it in the first is inexcusable. Dhawan is a fine limited-overs batsman, but it is difficult to be convinced that he is the right man to open for India in a Test match in England.

He struggled here four years ago – although he wasn't the only one – and he does not appear to have learnt from his experience.

Dhawan was the wrong choice of opener to begin with and it was right to have promoted K.L. Rahul and restored Cheteshwar Pujara to the side.

But it is worth wondering what Virat Kohli gleaned from Dhawan's display in Birmingham that he did not know already. Why select him in the first place? And why drop him after two innings?

"You'll have to ask them (the selectors) that," says Sourav Ganguly. "It's important to look for players who'll play well in tougher conditions. He (Dhawan) has struggled, hasn't he?

"It's not easy for him also. To play one Test and then be dropped and come back into the squad. That's the challenge in sport, isn't it?"

Vijay disappoints

Kohli has not had to worry about the other opener for some time now. This year, however, M. Vijay's efforts have been disappointing. Ignoring the Afghanistan Test, Vijay averages near 14 in 2018, with a top score of 46.

It is a bit of a headache for Kohli since the 34-year-old has been a reassuring presence at the top of the order. Vijay was India's leading scorer in England four years ago and a great deal depends on him.

The team needs his confidence at one end of the pitch while Rahul finds his feet at the other. There's no question of looking for a replacement for Vijay, feels Ganguly. "He'll be fine. You can't just drop and chop like this. I'm sure he'll get runs," he says.

Then there's the question of Rahul. The Karnataka batsman has not scored a Test hundred in 20 months, but India needs to persist with him.

He was in excellent form in the home series against Australia and the decision to leave him out of the side in Cape Town was not a wise one.

This is his first tour of England and he will improve.

India needs a stable, reliable opening pair, two batsmen at ease and in control at the wicket.

This series could be a long one otherwise.



Despondent: Shikhar Dhawan has been successful in the short formats but has struggled in tough conditions in Tests. ▪ REUTERS

It's advantage South Africa-A

After Olivier's six-for, Hamza and Erweee pile on the runs

SA-A IN INDIA

S. DIPAK RAGAV
BENGALURU

For the first time in this 'Test' series, South Africa-A got on top of the hosts both with bat and ball, as it gained the upper hand on the second day at the Alur ground here on Saturday.

Led by pacer Duanne Olivier, SA-A ran through the India-A batting line-up, bundling it out for 345 after it resumed on 322 for four.

In reply, Zubayr Hamza (93, 125b, 15x4) and opener Sarel Erwee (58) came together for a flawless 154-run partnership for the second wicket to help the visitors finish on 219 for three as rain curtailed play in the last hour of the day.

Under overcast conditions and an eight-over old ball, Olivier wreaked havoc with a probing line outside off-stump picking five wickets in just about an hour to finish with six for 63.

It started when K.S. Bharat inside-edged on to his stumps off Olivier before Jayant Yadav was dismissed leg-before.

At the other end, Nortje accounted for centurion Hanuma Vihari who was caught in the slips, two short of a what would have been a well made 150. Olivier then cleaned up the tail quickly as India-A lost its last six wickets for just eight runs, slumping from 337 for four to 345.

When SA-A began, it lost Pieter Malan off the first ball, but Hamza and Erwee counter-attacked to blunt the hosts. The duo scored briskly picking boundaries at ease, scoring at more than four per over.



On fire: Duanne Olivier ran through the India-A batting line-up. ▪ G.P. SAMPATH KUMAR

Hamza, who walked in at three, made his intentions clear in the first over itself striking two boundaries, one straight down the ground and another through the cover point region. By lunch, he raced to 25 off 33 balls with five boundaries.

Post lunch, Hamza continued from where he left off driving the fast bowlers and easily playing off-spinner Yadav as he reached his half-century off just 57 balls.

At the other end, the left-handed Erwee too got going with a beautiful pull shot for a six off Siraj over fine-leg. Erwee was not afraid to use his feet and sent Chahal over the long-on boundary for his second six.

But Chahal found his groove tossing a few and finding some turn as he scalped both Hamza, caught driving at slips and Erwee, trapped leg-before.

The scores: India-A: Prithvi Shaw c Second b Nortje 16, Mayank Agarwal c Hamza b Olivier 0, G. Hanuma Vihari c Hamza b Nortje 148, Shreyas Iyer c van der Dussen b Muthusamy 39, Ankeet Bawane st. Second b Piedt 80, K.S. Bharat b Olivier 34, Jayant Yadav lbw b Olivier 1, Yuzvendra Chahal c Malan b Olivier 1, Mohammed Siraj c van der Dussen b Olivier 4, Navdeep Saini (not out) 0, Ankit Rajpoot b Olivier 0; Extras (nb-8, w-2, b-7, lb-5): 22; Total (in 101 overs): 345.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-18, 3-80, 4-257, 5-337, 6-340, 7-340, 8-344, 9-345.

South Africa-A bowling: Olivier 24-6-63-6, Nortje 22-5-69-2, Nabe 10-2-46-0, Pretorius 17-1-58-0, Muthusamy 12-2-51-1, Piedt 16-0-46-1.

South Africa-A: Pieter Malan lbw b Siraj 0, Sarel Erwee lbw b Chahal 58, Zubayr Hamza c Shreyas b Chahal 93, Hendrik van der Dussen (batting) 18, Rudi Second (batting) 35; Extras (nb-13, lb-2): 15; Total (for three wkts. in 59.5 overs): 219.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-154, 3-163.

India-A bowling: Siraj 11.5-1-51-1, Saini 12-5-28-0, Rajpoot 10-2-36-0, Yadav 9-1-40-0, Chahal 17-1-62-2.

Women's coach: six shortlisted

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

The Indian senior women's cricket team is scheduled to play three ICC championship matches (three ODIs) in Sri Lanka in September and the ICC World T20 in the West Indies in November and the BCCI is looking to appoint a Head Coach after Tushar Arothe resigned from the post in July.

Important engagements

India is placed sixth in the ICC championship and the matches against Sri Lanka are seen as important engagements.

India is also scheduled to play five T20 games during the Lanka tour.

On Friday, the BCCI interviewed over 20 aspirants, including a candidate from Ireland. After the initial process, six applicants have been shortlisted – Mamatha Maben, Sunil Joshi, Ramesh Powar, Atul Bedade and Sanath Kumar, bowling coach of the India under-19 team, and Rajkumar Sharma.

With the Supreme Court stating that the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), consisting of former international cricketers, have to be involved in the appointment of the Head Coach of National teams, the BCCI may be compelled to put an end to the coach-hunting process and continue with the interim arrangement.

Powar, who was the interim coach, supervised the 12-day camp in Bengaluru in July-August. It is not known if the Committee of Administrators (CoA) would reconstitute the CAC which has Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and V.V.S Laxman as its members.

- BCCI may be compelled to put an end to the coach-hunting process and continue with the interim arrangement
- Powar, who was the interim coach, supervised the 12-day camp in Bengaluru in July-August

"With the Lodha reforms coming into force, Ganguly (CAB president) cannot be part of the CAC because of the conflict of interest rule," said a BCCI official.

SC's ruling and AIU's dilemma

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

The Association of Indian Universities (AIU) was given the voting rights by the Supreme Court on Thursday, but the government agency would find it difficult to name a representative who can attend the BCCI meetings.

The criterion

The apex court has said that only former players chosen by the associations of Railways, Services and AIU can attend the BCCI AGM and also vote.

This has been done to avoid government interference in the functioning of the BCCI.

- It will be tough for AIU to find a player-representative to attend BCCI meetings

While Railways and Services which have been taking part in the Ranji Trophy have many cricketers who can be chosen for player-representative, AIU would not be in a position to do so as it does not have the players to form an association.

AIU conducts the inter-university tournament for the Rohinton Baria Trophy. The amicus had suggested that full membership should not be given to Services and AIU.

However, the Supreme Court said: "The Universities are a nucleus for encouraging the game of cricket among the players of the college-going generation in the country."

The court also said that Nana Joshi, Pankaj Roy, Polly Umrigar, G. Ramchand, Deepak Shodhan, Subhash Gupte, Ashok Gandotra, Mohinder Amarnath, Budhi Kunderan, Sunil Gavaskar, Kenia Jayantilal, Surinder Amarnath and Dilip Doshi represented Indian Universities before playing Test cricket for India.

The Supreme Court order also said that a government/sports control board nominee cannot attend BCCI meetings.

du Plessis to miss Zimbabwe series

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CAPE TOWN

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis revealed on Friday that he is likely to be out of action for an extended period after suffering his third injury blow in less than a year.

Du Plessis returned early from the tour of Sri Lanka after injuring his right shoulder while fielding. He said on arrival here that although he would not need surgery, he would probably miss the one-day series against Zimbabwe starting on September 30 because of a long-term goal of being ready for an extended campaign which will culminate in the World Cup in England in May and June next year.

"It is just a small tear," he said of what was diagnosed as a rotator cuff injury. "But luckily there is no cricket for the next seven weeks. It's important to make sure the shoulder gets strong with all the cricket that's coming up."



Faf du Plessis. ▪ AFP

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TV PICKS

EPL: 5.45 p.m.; Star Sports Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD); 8 20 p.m.; Star Sports Select 1 (SD & HD).
England vs India: 2nd Test, day 4, 3.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD).
Sri Lanka vs South Africa: 5th ODI, 5.30 p.m.; Sony ESPN (SD & HD).
TNPL: Final, 7 p.m.; Star Sports 1 (SD & HD).
Rogers Cup: Semifinal, 5.30 a.m.; Final, 1.30 a.m. (MON); Sony ESPN (SD & HD).
German Super Cup final: 12 a.m. (MON); Star Sports Select 2 (SD & HD).

IN BRIEF



Lionel Messi named Barcelona captain

MADRID

FC Barcelona has named Lionel Messi as the new captain of the club for the new season. Messi will replace Andres Iniesta *ESPN* reported. Messi will now take over as the full-time skipper of the La Liga champion. Meanwhile, Sergio Busquets, Gerard Pique and Sergi Roberto would become the second, third and fourth captains of the club respectively. ANI



Pay rise may stop Luka Modric exit

MADRID

Luka Modric looks set to extend his six-year stay with Real Madrid after securing a salary rise which will see him elevated to the same pay grade as skipper Sergio Ramos, Spanish media reported. Modric, 33, only returned to training with the European champion this week amidst rumours that he was a target for Inter Milan. However, both *Marca* and *As* dailies insisted on Friday that Modric will pen a new deal which will see him make at least €11 million a year in Spain. AFP



Ullrich admitted to psychiatric hospital

BERLIN

Germany's Tour de de France champion Jan Ullrich was admitted to a psychiatric hospital on Friday after his brief detention for allegedly assaulting a prostitute. The 44-year-old former cycling star was earlier on Friday released on bail. But once free, Ullrich suffered a panic attack. "Jan Ullrich was admitted to a psychiatric hospital where his state of health is being assessed by specialists," a Frankfurt police spokesperson said.

Sushil's return augurs well for India at Asiad

The country's 12 medals in CWG cannot be taken as a benchmark in Jakarta

COUNTDOWN

Y.B. SARANGI

His stature will make double Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar a big draw on the wrestling mat of the 18th Asian Games.

India, which recently sent its wrestlers on an useful exposure trip to Turkey, may have selected a strong squad (comprising Worlds, Olympics and Asian medallists) for the Jakarta event, but Sushil's presence is bound to dwarf his compatriots.

The former World champion is returning to the Asiad after the 2006 Doha Games, where he won a bronze. Some experts believe that the champion wrestler squandered golden opportunities by skipping the multi-sport event in 2010 and 2014.

On several occasions, Sushil has foregone important competitions due to injuries. It will be keenly watched whether the 35-year-old ageing icon gives the continental event a miss for the third consecutive time.

If he stays on for what may be his final appearance in the Asiad, Sushil, who is currently training at his favourite destination in Georgia, is likely to face tough challenge from the wrestlers of Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in the men's 74kg freestyle class.

Punia in great form

Olympic medallist and last Asian Games' lone gold medallist Yogeshwar Dutt's protégé Bajrang Punia (65kg) has proved himself time and again in the World championships, Asian Games, Asian championships and Commonwealth Games.

The 24-year-old, who clinched a silver four years ago, has been in the form of his life and has ensured podium finishes in almost all events for the last one-and-a-half years. He will be one of the biggest medal hopes for the country.

Olympian and former Asian champion Sandeep Tomar (57kg) seems to be in fine form as well and can end up in the medal bracket.

Pawan Kumar (86kg), old warhorse Mausam Khatri (97kg) and Sumit Malik (125kg) have an outside chance.

Phogat in the race

Among women, two-time Commonwealth Games champion and Incheon Asian Games bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat (50kg) will be in the race for a medal. She will have to see off Japanese and Chinese wrestlers to realise her dream.

In a formidable field, consisting of competitors from Mongolia, China and Japan, Olympics bronze medallist Sakshi Malik (62kg) will rely on her resilience to live up to expectations.

Pooja Dhanda (57kg) and young faces Pinki (53kg) and Divya Kakran (68kg) can spring surprises.

Harpreet Singh (87kg) and Hardeep Singh (98kg) are among the Greco Roman wrestlers, who have the capability to make the country proud.

India's sparkling show of 12 medals, with each participant returning a medal, in the Commonwealth Games in April is not a benchmark for the Asian Games (where overall two weights have been dropped and three styles have been allotted six weights apiece).

The country had secured five medals in the sport, including three bronze in Incheon. Unless the Indians have lot of luck, the overall number may not alter significantly in Jakarta.



Holding centrestage: Sushil Kumar, who missed the 2010 and 2014 Asian Games, will add to India's medal hopes. PTI

Ministry clears 804-member contingent

Will pay for 755 only; no parents of players allowed as officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry has cleared a 804-member Indian contingent, including 572 athletes, for the Asian Games but said it will bear the expense of 755 members with 49 out of 232 officials allowed at no cost to the government.

The government will bear the cost of 572 athletes, 183 officials, 119 coaches and 21 doctors and physiotherapists and 43 other extra officials. Out of the 572 athletes cleared to take part in 36 disciplines, 312 are men.

The long protracted process of naming of the Indian contingent and subsequent clearance by the ministry thus came to an end without any major tussle between the government and the IOA, which had submitted its list on Monday.

Athletics, which returned the highest number of medals (13) in the last Asian Games in 2014, has most number of participants (50) and its contingent is the biggest at 75.

Surprisingly, canoe-kayak is second in terms of number of players (49) and number of contingent members (60). Hockey is third with 36 players forming a 51-strong contingent.

Shooting, which had yielded the second highest number of medals (9) in the last edition, will have 28 participants out of 36-strong contingent.

- Out of the 572 athletes cleared to take part in 36 disciplines, 312 are men
- There will be 183 officials, 119 coaches, 21 doctors and physiotherapists, and 43 other extra officials
- Athletics has most number of participants (50) and its contingent is the biggest at 75
- All the six team officials of kurash have been cleared at no cost to government

All the six team officials of kurash have been cleared at no cost to government.

Unlike the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games contingent in April, the IOA has not allowed any parents of players to be named as extra officials.

However, badminton stars Saina Nehwal and P.V. Sindhu's personal physios have been included in the contingent and they have been cleared at government cost. Badminton will go to Jakarta with four physios.

Shooter Heena Sidhu's husband-cum-coach Ronak Pandit and star gymnast Dipa Karmakar's personal coach Bishweshwar Nandi have also been cleared at government cost.

Asian Games: Indonesia is all set with a week to go

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JAKARTA

Indonesia has set aside worries about terrorism, street crime and Jakarta's notorious traffic, saying it is ready to roll for the Asian Games in a week's time.

Jakarta and Palembang in Sumatra are set to host about 11, 000 athletes and 5, 000 officials from 45 Asian countries for the August 18 to September 2 Games, the world's biggest multi-sport event behind the Olympics.

Indonesia started with less time than most host countries after it agreed to hold the Games when Vietnam pulled out.

However, officials say they are ready to take the Games in their stride.

"There are no problems for the preparation so far, even if we have problems we will solve them right there right then," chief organiser Erick Thohir told journalists on Thursday.

Seventy percent of tickets have been sold for the opening ceremony in the capital Jakarta next Saturday, he added.

When Indonesia last hosted a major sports event, the 2011 SEA Games, two people died in a stadium stampede at the football final in Jakarta.

In a bid to safeguard the event, some 40,000 troops and police officers will be deployed in Jakarta and Palembang.

Police say they have been rounding up terror suspects and petty criminals in a pre-Games crackdown.

Haze from forest fires in Sumatra remains another potential headache for events in Palembang.

But Indonesian meteorologists have been monitoring weather conditions closely and extinguishing hotspots.

"We have been conducting weather modification efforts since May, including cloud seeding and water bombing," Hary Tirto Djatmiko, spokesman for national meteorology, climatology and geophysics agency, told AFP.

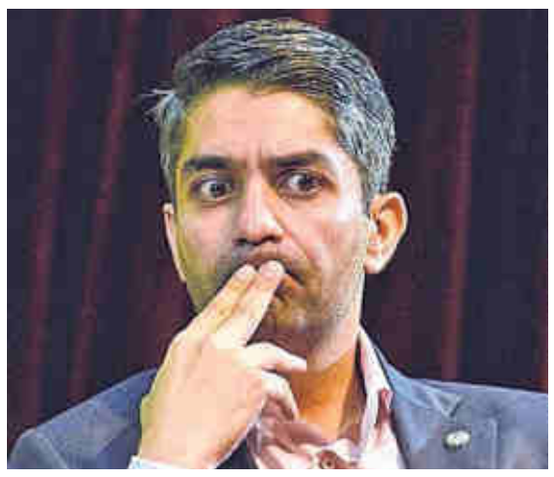
Video on Bindra's journey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

In a bid to inspire the youth of the country to aim for gold in the upcoming Asian Games and 2020 Olympics, India's only individual Olympic champion, Abhinav Bindra released a video to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his historic gold-winning performance.

The video captures the highlights of the ace shooter's successful journey, becoming an icon in the world of sports.

"You made me who I am. Now you inspire a billion others. I am cheering for the sportsmen and women of India to get our next #GoldforIndia #Olympics #TheGoldTurns10 #HappyBirthdayGold #Tokyo2020 #2YearstoGo," he tweeted.



Abhinav Bindra. FILE PHOTO

My Opinion and Moondancer may fight it out

HYDERABAD My Opinion and Moondancer may fight out the finish of the Governor's Cup (1,600m), the chief of the races to be held here on Sunday (August 12). There will be no false rails.

1 NIZAM SAGAR PLATE (1,600m), 3-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (Cat. III), 1-20 p.m.: 1. Golden Fortune (7) Hannam 60, 2. Wine N Dine (3) B. Dileep 59, 3. Guiding Force (1) N. Rawal 57, 4. Kohinoor Legend (4) Ajeeth Kumar 53, 5. Vijay's Harmony (6) Gaddam 53, 6. Mossad (2) Arshad Alam 50.5 and 7. Sisco (5) G. Naresh 50.
1. GOLDEN FORTUNE, 2. GUIDING FORCE, 3. KOHINOOR LEGEND.

2 NOBLE QUEST PLATE (Div. I), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms), 1-55: 1. Artistic Tribute (2) N. Rawal 56, 2. Evon Von Brando (7) Hannam 56, 3. Naucratis (8) Kuldeep Singh 56, 4. Story Teller (6) Nakhat Singh 56, 5. That's My Magic (1) Akshay Kumar 56, 6. Lucky Star (5) A. A. Vikrant 54.5, 7. Secretary (4) G. Naresh 54.5, 8. Shiloh (9) Deepak Singh 54.5, 9. Tokyo Jam (3) Jai Shankar 54.5 and 10. Yogastha (10) Kiran Naidu 54.5.
1. THAT'S MY MAGIC, 2. NAUCRATIS, 3. STORY TELLER.

3 NOBLE QUEST PLATE (Div. II), (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms), 2-30: 1. City Of Ayaansh (9) Suraj Narredu 56, 2. Kingswood (7) Ashhad Asbar 56, 3. Satin Symphony (4) Tanwar 56, 4. Amazing Script (8) Hannam 54.5, 5. Country's Gift (3) Sai Kumar 54.5, 6. Natasha (6) A. A. Vikrant 54.5, 7. Once More (5) Nakhat Singh 54.5, 8. Smarty (10) Jai Shankar 54.5, 9. Southern State (1) Akshay Kumar 54.5 and 10. Yogya (2) Ajith Kumar 54.5.
1. SOUTHERN STATE, 2. CITY OF AYAANSH, 3. AMAZING SCRIPT.

4 WANAPARTHY CUP (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 42 to 62 (Cat. II), 3-05: 1. Gorgeous Lady (6) Jai Shankar 60, 2. Aakash Vani (8) Kunal Bunde 59, 3. Sketch Of Beauty (7) G. Naresh 57.5, 4. Platinum (15) Akshay Kumar 57, 5. Big Flash (2) Deepak Singh 56, 6. Elysian (12) Ashhad Asbar 56, 7. Scooby Dooby Doo (9) Suraj Narredu 56, 8. Humaaghar (1) Arshad Alam 55.5, 9. Mighty Swing (3) Nakhat Singh 55.5, 10. Shandaar (5) Deep Shanker 55.5, 11. Citi Colors (4) Sai Kumar 53.5, 12. Delta Force (10) Koushik 53.5, 13. Supurinto (11) A. A. Vikrant 53, 14. Space Ship (13) C. P. Bopanna 52.5 and 15. Khan Sahib (14) Md. Ismail 51.5.
1. SCOOBY DOOBY DOO, 2. PLATINUM, 3. MIGHTY SWING.

5 KALAMARIS PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 26 to 46 (whips are not permitted in this race), (Cat. III), 3-40: 1. Platts Tour (10) Gopal Singh 60, 2. Meka's (1) B. R. Kumar 58.5, 3. Solar Heights (4) Koushik 58, 4. Exclusive Shanghai (12) R. Ajay Kumar 57, 5. Proclamation (5) Suraj Narredu 57, 6. Sweet Pistol (8) Ajeeth Kumar 57, 7. Proud N Arrogant (9) Sai Kumar 56, 8. Island Queen (6) G. Naresh 55, 9. Mean Machine (3) Kiran Naidu 54.5, 10. Golden Hope (2) Harinder Singh 54, 11. Penthesilea (-) (-) 54, 12. Wood Bridge (13) Rohit Kumar 54, 13. Flowersfromabrook (11) Md. Ismail 53 and 14. Brave Warrior (7) Rafique Sk. 52.
1. PLATTS TOUR, 2. PROCLAMATION, 3. ISLAND QUEEN.

6 GOVERNOR'S CUP (1,600m), 3-y-o & over, rated 74 & above (Cat. I), 4-15: 1. Like Wise (4) Koushik 63, 2. Exclusive Wind (5) Arshad Alam 60.5, 3. Moondancer (7) Suraj Narredu 60, 4. Mahateji (3) Jai Shankar 59, 5. Mr. Baahubali (8) Gaddam 58, 6. King Of Pop (6) Nakhat Singh 56, 7. Kolors (1) Rohit Kumar 53.5 and 8. My Opinion (2) Akshay Kumar 50.
1. MY OPINION, 2. MOONDANCER, 3. MAHATEJI.

7 BEST OF BOLD PLATE (1,600m), 4-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 4-50: 1. Delmonico (3) Kunal Bunde 60, 2. Halo's Princess (11) Ashhad Asbar 60, 3. Sharp Eye (13) Hannam 59, 4. Tough Princess (9) B. R. Kumar 59, 5. Abracos (5) Akshay Kumar 58.5, 6. All That Jazz (8) Koushik 58.5, 7. Forever Bullish (10) Deepak Singh 58.5, 8. Gaandeevan (7) Ajeeth Kumar 58, 9. Tough Sussex (6) Ajit Singh 57.5, 10. Royal Dancer (1) Uday Kiran 54.5, 11. Cannon Fury (2) N. Rawal 51, 12. Amaravathi (12) G. Naresh 50.5 and 13. Kohinoor Lucy (4) Koushik 50.5.
1. ALL THAT JAZZ, 2. TOUGH SUSSEX, 3. ABRACOS.
Day's best: **GOLDEN FORTUNE**
Double: **SOUTHERN STATE – PLATTS TOUR**
Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 & 4; (ii): 5, 6 & 7; Tla: all races.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Pogba leads United to winning start; Chelsea spanks Huddersfield

Tottenham shrugs off transfer inactivity by resisting a Newcastle fightback

PREMIER LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MANCHESTER

Paul Pogba assumed the responsibility of captain handed to him by Jose Mourinho to help Manchester United get off to a winning start in the Premier League with a 2-1 win over Leicester City on Friday night.

Less than a month since Pogba scored in the World Cup final to help France lift the trophy, he was thrown straight into action by Mourinho despite just returning to pre-season training this week.

Pogba's third-minute spot-kick settled the hosts' nerves as United allayed some of the doom and gloom predicted by Mourinho after failing to land a series of targets before Thursday's transfer deadline.

Luke Shaw sealed the points seven minutes from time before Jamie Vardy headed home a consolation for the visitors.



Oh captain...! Manchester United skipper Paul Pogba celebrates his penalty conversion. AFP

After a week in which Pogba has been linked with a move away from Old Trafford, with Barcelona's interest piqued by the Frenchman's frosty relationship with Mourinho after he was repeatedly dropped last season, the Portuguese showed his faith in the midfielder by surprisingly handing him the armband.

Shaw, who has suffered plenty of criticism from Mourinho in the past two seasons, appeared to make the game safe when he fired low into the far corner to spark wild celebrations from his manager.

However, Vardy pulled a goal back deep into stoppage time when he stooped to head in after Ricardo Pereira's cross came back off the post and United was forced to see out a nervy final few minutes to get off to a winning start.

> **Pogba was a monster. We thought maximum (he could play) 60 minutes, but he managed 80. Paul was fantastic, his contribution was amazing**
>
> JOSE MOURINHO
> United manager

Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri got off to a winning Premier League start as new signing Jorginho slotted home coolly from the penalty spot in a 3-0 win at Huddersfield on Saturday.

Tottenham also made light of discontent over its lack of summer transfer activity by resisting a late Newcastle onslaught to win 2-1 at St. James's Park thanks to goals from Jan Vertonghen and Dele Alli.

Watford, Bournemouth and Crystal Palace also picked up 2-0 wins on the opening weekend of the season.

"It is important to be strong from the beginning and have belief and convey a positive message," Tottenham's manager Maurico Pochettino said.

"It is important the fans know the players need their help."

"I am so proud of the performance in the circumstances," added Pochettino. "We can do better, of course, and be more consistent."

The result: Manchester United 2 (Pogba 3-pen, Shaw 83) bt Leicester City 1 (Vardy 90+2); Newcastle United 1 (Joselu 11) lost to Tottenham 2 (Vertonghen 8, Alli 180; Bournemouth 2 (Fraser 24, Wilson 90+1) bt Cardiff 0; Fulham 0 lost to Crystal Palace 2 (Schlupp 41, Zaha 79); Huddersfield 0 lost to Chelsea 3 (N. Kante 34, Jorginho 45-pen, Pedro 80); Watford 2 (Pereyra 35, Pereyra 54) bt Brighton 0.

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Carballo surges to the top

Overnight leader Boonma cards a shocking two-over 73

TAKE SOLUTIONS

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

Argentina's Miguel Carballo surged to the top of the leaderboard with a four-under 67 third round in the TAKE Solutions Masters golf tournament, at KGA here on Saturday.

Carballo (14-under 199 overall) is one shot clear of the tied-second pair of Thailand's Danthai Boonma and local lad Khalin Joshi. Boonma, the overnight leader with a five-shot advantage, carded a shocking two-over 73.

Khalin, cheered on by a loyal set of supporters on his home course, celebrated his 26th birthday with a seven-under 64.

Carballo, who played a mix of PGA Tour and Web.com Tour events between 2014 to 2017, stated, "Boonma made an easy birdie on the first hole, but I told myself to just play my own game."

Move to Asian Tour

Carballo only recently moved to the Asian Tour, a decision he took because he wanted to "experience new culture, new countries and new people".

It also helps that the competition in Asian Tour events is not as strong as what he faced in North America. "It is easier to win money on the Asian Tour. Living expenses in Asia is lower too. The prize money on the PGA Tour is higher, but it is difficult to finish in the winner's bracket there," Carballo stated.

For Khalin (13-under 200), a good show on Sunday could see him win his first title on the Tour. "Before the tournament began, I had set myself a target of 20-under.

"So I need a seven-under tomorrow. (Fellow Indian pro) Shubhankar (Sharma) told me that if I shoot a 20-under, I will win," Khalin said, after his bogey-free round.

The loudest applause of the day was reserved for Khalin's playing partner Honey Baisoya, who made a hole-in-one on the par-3 eighth hole.

"I was playing the practice round with Khalin and he made a hole-in-one on the fourth hole. So I told him that he has to give us a party. And when I made a hole-in-one today, he said that I have to give him a treat. I said we're even now," Baisoya said.

The 21-year-old Baisoya used a pitching wedge to ace the short hole.

"When the ball went in, I blacked out for a minute. It was the first hole-in-one of my life," Baisoya said.

Viraj Madappa, who made his professional debut only last year, recorded his third straight sub-par round to take tied-fourth, alongside Bengaluru golfer S. Chikkarangappa.

The scores (top six):

199: Miguel Carballo (Arg) (66, 66, 67); **200:** Khalin Joshi (67, 69, 64), Danthai Boonma (Tha) (66, 61, 73); **201:** Viraj Madappa (70, 65, 66), S. Chikkarangappa (69, 64, 68); **202:** Miguel Tabuena (Phi) (69, 68, 65), Maverick Antcliff (Aus) (67, 65, 70), S.S.P. Chawrasia (69, 65, 68), Honey Baisoya (70, 66, 66), Scott Vincent (66, 71, 65).



Solid backing: Khalin, cheered on by a loyal set of supporters on his home course, celebrated his 26th birthday with a seven-under 64. ▪ SUDHAKARA JAIN

Shubhankar likely to make cut

Woodland going great guns

PGA C'SHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ST. LOUIS

Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma was one-under through seven holes in the second round of the PGA Championships when play was stopped because of inclement weather.

Shubhankar, playing his fourth successive Major this year, was two-under for the tournament at that stage and looked set to make his second straight cut in a Major.

Anirban Lahiri had another miserable day on the greens as he missed a bunch of makeable putts and went through a horrible streak of four bogeys over five holes on the back nine to card three-over 73.

Gary Woodland shot four-under 66 to get to 10-under, while in-form Kevin Kisner had a 64 to get to nine-under.

Woodland hit nine of 14 fairways and, for the second straight day, 15 greens in regulation.

Tiger Woods birdied three of his first five holes and was at three-under through his first seven holes. Woods is now three-under.

Two-time US Open champion Brooks Koepka charged into contention with a seven-under 63 that tied the record for low round at the PGA.

He had a chance to break the record but watched his 20-foot birdie putt slide by on his last hole, the par-4 ninth. He's at eight-under, just two behind.



Battling on: Shubhankar Sharma looked set to make his second straight cut in a Major when bad weather ended the day. ▪ AFP

Niki Poonacha wins maiden singles title



Dream come true: Niki Poonacha's first on the Tour came after a long wait. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
JAKARTA

Qualifier Niki Poonacha took a dream to its logical end as he beat Michael Look of Australia 6-3, 6-1 in the final of the $25,000 ITF men's Futures tennis tournament here on Saturday.

It was the maiden singles title for the 23-year-old, ranked a modest 1111, who has won three doubles titles including one with Davis Cupper Ramkumar Ramanathan.

"I feel incredibly happy. It is my first singles title on the Tour, coming after a long wait. It is just a start. I will work hard to win more," said Poonacha, who trains at the Rohan Bopanna tennis academy.

In the $100,000 Aptos Challenger in the US, eighth seed Prajnesh Gunneswaran lost 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 to fourth seed Thanasi Kokkinakis of Australia in the quarterfinals.

Kokkinakis fired 10 aces, converted three of eight breakpoints, as against six aces and conversion of two of nine breakpoints by Prajnesh.

The results: $100,000 Challenger, Aptos, USA: Quarterfinals: Thanasi Kokkinakis (Aus) bt Prajnesh Gunneswaran 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

$25,000 ITF men, Jakarta: Final: Niki Poonacha bt Michael Look (Aus) 6-3, 6-1.

Jayaram to meet Rhustavito in title clash

VIETNAM OPEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HO CHI MINH CITY

India's Ajay Jayaram made the final of the Vietnam Open badminton tournament after defeating Japan's Yu Igarashi in straight games here on Saturday.

The 30-year-old Indian, who is making a comeback after recovering from a hamstring injury suffered last year, saw off seventh seed Igarashi 21-14, 21-19 in 34 minutes.

Jayaram, who had reached the final at White Nights last month, will face Indonesia's World No. 79 Shesar Hiren Rhustavito.



Ajay Jayaram. ▪ FILE PHOTO

Rhustavito, who had won four consecutive Indonesia International tournaments, outwitted India's Mithun Manjunath 21-17, 19-21, 21-14 in a match that lasted 59 minutes.

Indian teams crash out

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ORLANDO (USA)

India's campaign ended at the junior NBA World Championship with both the girls' and boys' teams crashing out in the first knockout round of the under-14 international tournament here on Friday.

The girls, represented by a team from Bengaluru, showed great fight before losing 62-31 to China. They fought hard but failed to match the physically more superior Chinese.

Later in the day, the boys' team from New Delhi, was thrashed 86-29 by a combined side of Africa and Middle-East.

Nadal beats Cilic, stays on track in Toronto

Tsitsipas' dream run continues as he beats Alexander Zverev in the quarterfinals

ROGERS CUP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TORONTO

Rafael Nadal recovered from a slow start, overcoming Marin Cilic 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 as the Spaniard's chase for a long-sought ATP Masters title on hardcourt heated up on Friday.

The World No.1 reached the semifinals in Toronto and will next face Russian Karen Khachanov, who beat Robin Haase 6-3, 6-1.

Nadal last won a title at this level on cement in 2013.

Stefanos Tsitsipas saved two match points to beat defending champion Alexander Zverev in their quarterfinal contest 3-6, 7-6(11), 6-4.

The Greek teenager, who turns 20 on Sunday's final day, defeated his third straight top 10 opponent at the tournament after knocking out Dominic Thiem in the second round and 13-time major winner Novak Djokovic in the third.

Tsitsipas is the youngest player to post three top 10 wins at a single tournament since the 19-year-old Nadal at Monte Carlo in 2006.

Tsitsipas will next face Wimbledon runner-up Kevin Anderson, who beat Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-2.

"I'm confused now, is this real?" 27th-ranked Tsitsipas said after completing his prestige hat-trick of upsets.

Anderson's sweep past reigning ATP World Tour Finals champion Dimitrov was a rematch of their 2014 quarterfinal duel in Canada when Dimitrov claimed one of his six wins against the South African.

"It definitely was a great match today. I felt I played really well right from the beginning," Anderson said.

The results: Quarterfinals: Rafael Nadal bt Marin Cilic 2-6, 6-4, 6-4; Karen Khachanov bt Robin Haase 6-3, 6-1; Kevin Anderson bt Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-2; Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Alexander Zverev 3-6, 7-6 (11), 6-4. **At Montreal: Quarterfinals:** Ashleigh Barty bt Kiki Bertens 6-3, 6-1; Sloane Stephens bt Anastasija Sevastova 6-2, 6-2; Simona Halep bt Caroline Garcia 7-5, 6-1.



Slugging it out: Nadal got past Cilic in three sets. ▪ AFP

Bhardwaj fires fresh salvo at DDCA chief

Accuses him of working in 'dictatorial' fashion

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

Former first-class cricketer Sanjay Bhardwaj on Saturday launched a blistering attack on the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) president Rajat Sharma accusing him of working in a "dictatorial" fashion.

Bhardwaj, who is an elected member of the DDCA Executive Committee, claimed that, "Mr. Sharma had disregarded my contribution to Delhi cricket as a player and kept me away from the affairs of the DDCA. He has accommodated relatives of some tainted officials of the previous DDCA regime."

Sharma, anticipating the opposition following repeated mails to him from Bhardwaj, had clarified on Friday that "all decisions had been taken in a transparent and democratic manner. The decisions, in the interest of Delhi cricket, had the backing of 13 of the 15 members of the EC."



Sanjay Bhardwaj.

Irked at being sidelines by Sharma and not finding a place in any of the committees formed by the EC, Bhardwaj said, "The DDCA president has disregarded the Lodha reforms by forming a Cricket Committee which has members with conflict of interest issues." He was referring to Virender Sehwag, Aakash Chopra and Rahul Sanghvi, who, according to Bhardwaj, had conflict of interest in picking the selectors and coaches for the forthcoming season.

Incidentally, it is the presence of Gautam Gambhir which has caused a turmoil in the Cricket Committee. "Gambhir is still playing competitive cricket. At least he has not announced his retirement," said Bhardwaj.

Bhardwaj also raised objections to the Cricket Committee picking Amit Bhandari, Rajat Bhatia, Sukhvinder Singh, Parvinder Awana, Siddharth Sahib Singh and Mayank Tehlan as senior and junior selectors. "They don't meet the eligibility criteria according to Lodha reforms," insisted Bhardwaj. He also demanded an emergency meeting of the EC to discuss the issues.

Sharma was elected to the post on July 2 following his victory over former India all-rounder Madan Lal. "We want to give better facilities and respect to the DDCA members and Delhi cricketers. To players, I want to assure that there will be absolute transparency in selections on merit and no favouritism. We are an open book and open to all questions from any quarters," he had remarked on the day of his election.

Bhardwaj also released copies of his communication with Sharma and his complaint to the DDCA Ombudsman Badar Durrez Ahmed. In response to Bhardwaj's complaints, Sharma had responded, "As far as you running the cricketing affairs is concerned, Lodha Committee recommendation is absolutely clear that office-bearers/Executive Committee members cannot be in any Cricket Committee. I look forward to working amicably with you as part of the EC for the betterment of DDCA and cricket in Delhi."

Laver leads Australia greats in Davis Cup reform fight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY

Four generations of Australian Davis Cup captains and players, led by Rod Laver, John Newcombe and Lleyton Hewitt, united on Saturday to oppose proposed reforms, saying they will ruin a historic tournament.

Currently, the Davis Cup is structured around a 16-nation World Group, contested over four weekends during the year. The remaining countries are then divided into three regional zones.

But the International Tennis Federation wants the event reduced to a season-ending World Cup of Tennis final featuring 18 countries, which it says will allow it to attract more top players.

The proposal must win approval at the federation's annual general meeting in Florida this month.



Rod Laver. ▪ REUTERS

Australia is the second most successful team in Davis Cup history behind the United States, winning the coveted title 28 times, and while Tennis Australia acknowledges reform is needed, it is against the current plans.

"It takes away too much of what makes the Davis Cup unique and special, especially the home and away aspect of the competition," it said on Saturday.

Sumit fires winner

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Mohammedan Sporting returned to winning ways defeating Rainbow AC by a late second half goal, in a Premier Division-A match of the Calcutta Football League at the Vidyasagar Stadium, Barasat on Saturday.

The only goal of the match came in the 75th minute of the action when substitute Sumit Das found the target off a Bazie Armand assist.

The win improved Mohammedan Sporting's position in the league standings as it stood next to the current leader Mohun Bagan with six points from three outings. Mohun Bagan also has six points but has won both its matches to have a better goal difference.

The result: Mohammedan Sporting 1 (Sumit Das 75) bt Rainbow AC 0.

Ronaldo set to begin Juventus adventure

Will wear the club's kit for the first time in a traditional pre-season friendly today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ROME

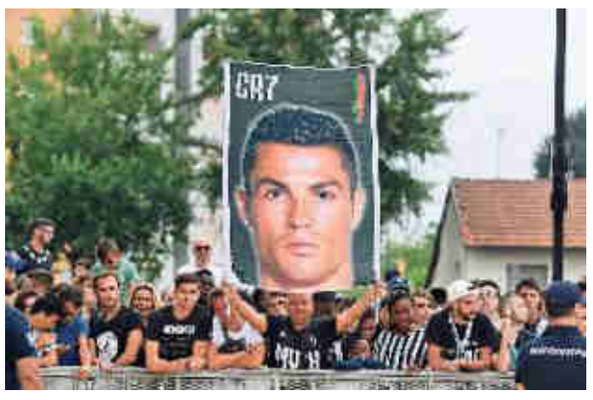
Juventus fans will get their first glimpse of summer signing superstar Cristiano Ronaldo on Sunday, when he makes his debut for the Italian champion at the foot of the Alps a week before the start of the new Serie-A season.

Ronaldo, who signed for Juventus from Real Madrid in a €100 million deal exactly a month ago, will wear the Juventus kit for the first time in the club's traditional pre-season friendly between Juve's first XI and a 'B' team in Villar Perosa, a small town 40km west of Turin.

Set in a valley at the foot of the Italian Alps, Villar Perosa is the home of the family estate and summer retreat of the powerful Agnellis, who, apart from a brief period around the Second World War, have run Juventus since 1923 and established the traditional alpine curtain raiser.

Members of the industrial dynasty – founders of Fiat car manufacturers and often called the "Italian Kennedys" – have lived at "The Castle" in Villar Perosa since the 19th century, while deceased former club chairman Gianni Agnelli was town mayor between 1945 and 1980.

Used to imposing arenas such as the Camp Nou, Old Trafford and the Bernabeu, the Ballon d'Or holder Ronaldo will take his first steps in black and white stripes at the town's compact ground, named after notoriously brutal Italy centre-back Gaetano Scirea.



New weapon: Juventus fans will expect fireworks from superstar Ronaldo. ▪ FILE PHOTO: AFP

Delhi to host World Cup in 2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian shooters preparing for the Tokyo Olympics will have top-class competition at home as the International Shooting Federation (ISSF) has awarded a World Cup in principle to India in 2020.

The assurance was given to the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) president, Raninder Singh, during the ISSF's ongoing executive committee meeting in Vienna.

"We are extremely grateful to the ISSF president and the entire executive committee for reposing faith in the country's and NRAI's ability to hold such big competition'', said Raninder in a release issued on Saturday.

India is scheduled to host a World Cup next year from February 20 to 28, which will offer Olympic quota places for Tokyo.

India has been hosting a series of world class competition in recent times, including the World Cup Finals in all events last year.

Dates to be finalised

The dates for the World Cup in India in 2020 will be finalised soon, as the ISSF has only put the dates for the Olympic Games as well as the World Cup in Tokyo, a test event for the Olympics, for 2020.

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THE HINDU
AUGUST 12, 2018
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878
DELHI
on Sunday
SECTION 2
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IN BRIEF



Employee crashes stolen plane in the U.S.

SEATAC

A "suicidal" airline employee stole an empty Horizon Air turboprop plane, took off from the Sea-Tac International Airport and was chased by military jets, before crashing into a small island in the Puget Sound on Friday night. Preliminary information suggests that the crash occurred because the 29-year-old man was "doing stunts in the air, or lack of flying skills," officials said.

WORLD ▸ PAGE 3

UN panel confronts China over Uighurs

GENEVA

UN human rights experts expressed alarm over what they said were credible reports that China had detained 1 million or more ethnic Uighurs in the western region of Xinjiang. In the name of combating extremism, China had turned Xinjiang into "...a massive internment camp," a UN official said.

WORLD ▸ PAGE 4

Samsung launches Galaxy Note 9

SEOUL

Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. unveiled the Galaxy Note 9 "phablet" that it hopes will attract younger customers, with stepped-up features and services for gamers and music-lovers. Samsung also announced partnerships with global hit game Fortnite and music-streaming service Spotify Technology SA in a challenge to Apple Inc. in the premium-phone race.

BUSINESS ABROAD ▸ PAGE 12

Body and soul



Symbolic offering: Pilgrims taking a holy dip in Rameswaram on the occasion of Aadi Amavasya on Saturday. ▪ L. BALACHANDAR

'Army can't deduct alimony from pay'

Jurisdiction only to implement court orders on payment of maintenance: AFT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Army does not have the jurisdiction to entertain claims for maintenance for estranged partners in the face of marital disputes, an Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) has ruled.

The Chandigarh Bench of the AFT has ruled that it has jurisdiction only to implement the order from a court of competent jurisdiction or the Central government as far as such pay deductions are concerned.

Justice M.S. Chauhan and Lieutenant General Munish Sibal said in their order: "The Army Authorities have no jurisdiction to adjudicate



ISTOCKPHOTO

such claims... Sections 90 (i) and 91 (i) of the Act only empower the prescribed officers to pass an order... to give effect to a decree passed by a court of competent jurisdiction granting maintenance in favour of the wife and or child of such person, not otherwise."

The order came on the application of Major Amit Kumar Mishra, who moved the AFT against an Army order granting his estranged wife and minor daughter maintenance from his salary. His wife had approached the Army authorities seeking maintenance support, and a show cause notice was issued to him in August 2015.

Army's order

The Army issued an order in February 2016 saying that the maintenance amount be deducted from his salary.

Major Mishra, in his appeal, pointed out that the Army order was issued without giving him an opportunity to present his side of the case.

Major's contention

He told the AFT that the order was illegal and it had overstepped on the civil court's jurisdiction under both the CrPC and the Hindu Marriage Act. Army representatives argued that they had powers to grant maintenance to his estranged wife.

The AFT order pointed out that there was no power under the Army Act to direct pay cuts in the absence of orders from competent courts. The Army Act only empowered the Army to deduct sums ordered by the Central government or any another competent office.

Deccan papers shine the light on Aurangzeb rule

1.5 lakh indelible ink documents preserved in Hyderabad

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

Think Mughals, and you think of Delhi and Agra. But few know that it is Hyderabad that houses the largest collection of written communications of their reign.

The Telangana Archives and Research Institute holds a whopping 1.55 lakh documents – all on handmade paper – including 5,000 from the period of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) and another 1.5 lakh of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). No other archive in the country, not even the National Archives in New Delhi, boasts of such a collection. It gives a graphic picture of the mansabdari system, the military administration and the revenue machinery of the Mughals in the Deccan.

Written in Persian in Shikasta script, cursive style, the documents are linked and arranged in chronological order – date, month and regnal year-wise.

Slew of orders

The documents include *farman* (order of the emperor), *nishan* (order of a member of the royal family), *yaddasht-i-ahkam-i-muqaddas* (memorandum containing imperial orders), *parwana* (orders issued by higher authorities), *siyaha huzur* (proceedings of the provincial court), *roznamcha-i-waqai* (daily news report), *qabzul wasil* (bill payments) and *arz-o-chihra* (documents on personnel and horses).



The king's notes: The Yaddasht-i-Ahkam-i-Muqaddas with Aurangzeb's imperial instructions. ▪ G. RAMAKRISHNA

Aurangzeb spent 13 years as the subedar of the Deccan during the reign of Shah Jahan and had vast experience in political and other matters. Even after he ascended the throne on July 25, 1658, he continued to focus on the Deccan to check the activities of his rebellious son Mohammed Akbar and on conquering Bijapur and Golconda, which he did in 1687.

SUNDAY SPECIAL

According to State Archives Director Zareena Parveen, the accountant-general of the erstwhile Hyderabad State, Syed Muhibuddin, went to Aurangabad (the headquarters of the Mughals) for an inspection in 1916 when he discovered a large number of old documents lying in the vaults of Fort Ark.

He reported the matter to theDaftar-i-Diwani, the administrative wing of Hyderabad State, headed by the superintendent Syed Khurshid Ali. Steps were taken to shift them to the Daftar-i-Diwani, which eventually became the State Archives.

The paper, made by Chinese professionals, has withstood the vagaries of time. The documents are intact even after water seeped into the archives a few years ago.

"In fact, they became brighter as it washed away the acidic material that covered the indelible ink used by the Mughals," said Ms. Parveen.

An expert in Persian herself, Ms. Parveen arranged the documents chronologically, deciphering the contents, and put them in non-acidic dockets.

The documents reveal Aurangzeb's administrative skills. The *yaddasht-i-ahkam-i-muqaddas* shows reports on recommendations of pay hikes for staff sent to the emperor, who also had spies to report on negligence, and actions against the government.

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

IN BRIEF



No free travel insurance on trains from Sept. 1

NEW DELHI

The Railways will stop free travel insurance for passengers from September 1, an official said on Saturday. Travellers, while booking tickets through the IRCTC website or mobile app, can opt for travel insurance or opt out. The order to charge for travel insurance will be generated in a few days. IANS

Aadhaar of over 30,000 children linked to portal

NEW DELHI

The Aadhaar details of over 30,000 children living in child care institutions have been linked to the TrackChild portal, a central database, following reports of many going missing from shelters, an official said. TrackChild, which has details of missing children, coordinates with child homes, the police and State governments. PTI

Student attacks classmate in M.P.

CHHATARPUR

A Class 8 student was allegedly attacked by his classmate with a sharp-edged weapon inside a school here in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, after the two had an argument. The incident took place in Chhatarpur's Sanmati Vidhya Mandir school. The victim is said to be in a critical state. ANI

Policemen in Una barred from carrying over ₹200

SHIMLA

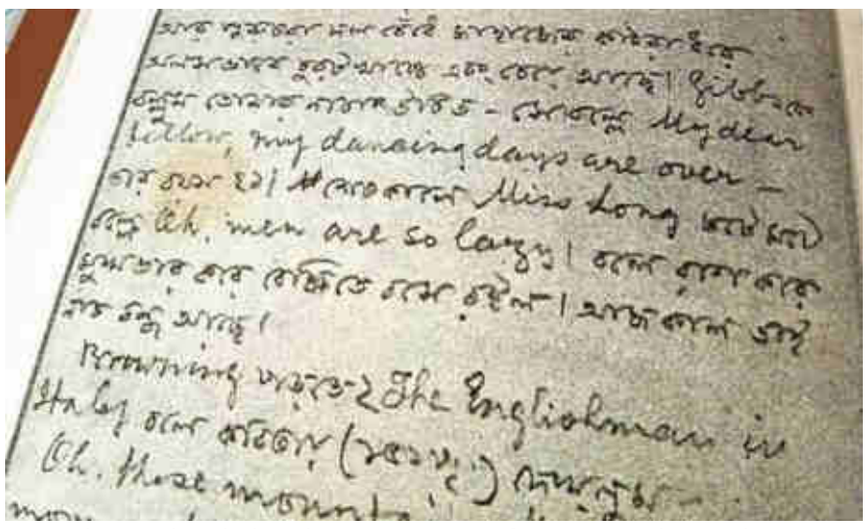
In a bid to curb corruption, the police chief of Himachal Pradesh's Una district has issued a unique diktat barring police personnel manning checkpoints from keeping more than ₹200 with them. Una Superintendent of Police Diwakar Sharma said the decision was taken following complaints that policemen at checkpoints were seeking bribes. PTI

Decoding Tagore through his letters

7,500 letters written by the Nobel Laureate have been published chronologically with synopses

SUVOJIT BAGCHI
KOLKATA





Poet and chronicler: Rabindranath Tagore, who visited nearly three dozen countries, gave fascinating insights into their culture and practices through his letters. ▪ AP & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

From being a transient spy with the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to a diligent researcher of Rabindranath Tagore, it was a big leap of faith for Gaurchandra Saha in 1968. Fifty years later, Mr. Saha's rigorous work has yielded a treasure trove revealing little known facets of one of India's greatest intellectuals.

"Saha has done enormous work of putting together the synopsis of all the 7,500 letters of Tagore. It was done earlier too but never chronologically," said Amitra Sudan Bhattacharya, the Tagore and Bankim Chandra scholar who taught at Visva-Bharati University for several decades. The volume of almost 1,000 pages was released on August 8, Tagore's 77th death anniversary.

"All the letters are chronologically arranged with the dates, the recipients, places [from where the letter was written] and a synopsis of each letter," said Dr. Saha, 76. "The first letter was written on September 20, 1878, when Rabindranath was visiting Europe for the first time, from somewhere near the Suez Canal," he said. Most probably the letter was written to Kadambari Devi, Tagore's sister-in-law, Mr. Saha says.

The last letter was written around July 30, a week before Tagore's death in 1941 to his daughter-in-law Pratima Debi. "He was so unwell that he could not write it himself. It was written by litterateur Rani Chanda, and Tagore signed it," Dr. Saha said.

Ahead of his time

The content of some of the letters, which Dr. Saha discovered during the course of his work, overwhelmed him. "His letters on women's role and participation to his many women associates surprised me. The depth of thought and clarity on women's emancipation was unbelievable," Dr. Saha said, more so since the letters date to a century ago.

Dr. Saha, who had an M.A. in Bengali before he took up his job with the IB, went on to complete a Masters in History after he quit the Bureau to join Visva-Bharati. In the early 1970s, he went on to complete a Ph.D on "whereabouts" of Tagore's letters.

The project was quite like a sleuth's. "Just that I was chasing a missing letter or its recipient instead of a criminal," recalled the septuagenarian with a laugh.

It is perhaps fitting that from 1994 to 2003, Dr. Saha was the curator of Rabindra Bhavana, which houses an archive on Tagore, on the Visva Bharati premises.

Tagore scholars opine that among his works, the most "commercially viable" are his songs, composed and set to tune by the bard himself.

However, "if one needs to understand Tagore, the changes he had undergone as a person and an artist, then his letters map him the best," said Nityapriya Ghosh, Bengal's foremost Tagore scholar. The latest volume thus has huge significance, Ms. Ghosh pointed out.

Globe-trotting Gurudev

Tagore, who often advocated the idea of a united world, had travelled to nearly three dozen countries, visiting many repeatedly. On the long voyages on giant steam-powered vessels, he wrote to a whole range of relatives – children, their spouses, close male or female friends and their children. The letters vividly describe the society and culture of countries he visited, comparing those countries – China, Japan, Iran, United States or Germany – with India.

For instance, on a trip to Bali, he wrote to his son Rathindranath about how girls below 12 are "only allowed" to dance with traditional music with the gamelan, a percussion instrument, and the significance of masks in cultures.

According to scholars, many of the letters can be considered major documents of India's foreign relations at the time. For instance from Surabaya, he writes of his disappointment on how the sugar trade, once controlled by India, had moved to the port city of East Java.

"This place [Surabaya] is a hub of foreign traders…there was a time when Bharat used to distribute sugar to the rest of the world. But now the sugar purchased from this Java market is used to make *sandesh* [bengali sweetmeat] in Bhimchandra Nag of Bowbazar [in central Kolkata]," he wrote to his daughter-in-law Pratima Devi.

Against dictatorship

In his letters from Russia, he extensively explored the possibility of the rise of the working class while disapproving of dictatorship.

"The other issue of discussion is dictatorship… there is little doubt that dictatorship or one-upmanship has multiple dangers," he wrote to Ramananda Chattopadhyay, a pioneer of Indian journalism. He even laughed at himself in the letters, describing himself as someone "born lazy" and averse to work.

"I am from a family of Bangladeshi traders, who had never heard of Tagore. Since I left the IB job to work in Visva Bharati, it was my professors, especially Amitra Sudan Bhattacharya, who encouraged me to pursue this work," Dr. Saha said.

Another tome

Prof. Bhattacharya, who penned a long introduction to Mr. Saha's book, *Rabindra Patra Probaho o Tothyoponji: Kalanukromik*, is working on a project to publish all Tagore's letters in toto.

"The difference between Saha's project and mine is vast. While he has compiled a synopsis of all the 7,500 letters in one volume, I am publishing the letters in their entirety covering 10,000 print matters in 10 or so volumes. But both are done chronologically," said Prof. Bhattacharya, who is the project director of Rabindra Patra Prakash Prakalpa.

Shift mentally ill from vagrants' homes: WBHRC

225 inmates found in six shelters

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Human Rights Commission (WBHRC) has learnt that a number of people suffering from mental illness have been placed in vagrants' homes run by the State government, and has recommended that they be provided medical intervention.

In its recommendation, the WBHRC directed the West Bengal government that before applying the provisions of the Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1943, the State must, "ascertain if the person concerned is a mental patient," and in case he or she has mental ailments, the person must be produced before doctors.

"Only after being satisfied that the person is not a mental patient, an application under the provisions of the Bengal Vagrancy Act should be made before the learned Magistrate," the WBHRC said.

Overcrowding, a worry

The communication was sent to the Chief Secretary of West Bengal last month.

The Commission found that 225 inmates with mental health issues had been lodged in six vagrant homes across the State. The WBHRC pointed out that placing people with mental health issues in vagrants' homes led to overcrowding there.

Ratnaboli Ray, a mental health rights activist, said the recommendations of the WBHRC should be co-read with the provisions of the Mental Health Care Act, 2017. "The Act, for which rules have recently been framed by the Centre, provides scope for community living, decriminalising suicide, and a plethora of rights to people who live in mental health facilities," Ms. Ray said.

> **Efforts should be made to find out their details so that they can be reunited with their families**
>
> JUSTICE GIRISH CHANDRA GUPTA (RETD.)
> West Bengal Human Rights Commission

The issue of overcrowding cannot be addressed by shifting one group of people from one facility to another, she says. The larger question pertains to the general perception and attitude towards those suffering from mental illness, she said, explaining it was about "whether we want to incarcerate these people and keep them behind bars or to mainstream them."

According to sources, the West Bengal Health Department is likely to come out with its own set of rules in accordance with the Mental Health Care Act, 2017, in the next four months.

The WBHRC also pointed out that there was no proper arrangement at such vagrants' homes for rehabilitation of the inmates, and suggested that training be provided to them.

The Commission, headed by Justice Girish Chandra Gupta (retd.), also recommended that the homes' authorities should hold "regular interactions with the inmates to find out their names and the particulars of their family members so that they could be reunited with their families."

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ELSEWHERE



Kazakh leader praises port on China's BRI

KURYK

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Saturday hailed a newly modernised Caspian Sea port, which the country hopes will link up to China's "Belt and Road" infrastructure project. "We are providing a stimulus to the trade routes of the revived Silk Road," Mr. Nazarbayev said. AFP

Plane carrying 9 people missing in Indonesia

JAYAPURA

A small plane carrying nine people went missing on Saturday, during a short flight in mountainous eastern Indonesia, authorities said, with a search and rescue mission underway. "Villagers in Okatem reported that they heard a loud roar from the plane followed by a big explosion," said the police. AFP

IS jihadists in Iraq kill 5 members of a family

TIKRIT

Islamic State group jihadists killed five members of a family at a checkpoint on the edge of their village north of Baghdad early on Saturday, a police official said. All five persons were members of a tribal militia operating under the umbrella of the Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary force that has fought the jihadists earlier. AFP

3 Chinese among five injured in Pak. attack

KARACHI

Three Chinese nationals were among five people who were injured in a suicide attack in southwest Pakistan's restive Balochistan province on Saturday, the police said. A suicide bomber tried to ram a pick-up truck into a bus carrying the foreign nationals, who were going to Dalbandin city, an official said. PTI

Airline worker crashes stolen plane

No passengers aboard; U.S. police say the man was "suicidal" and there was no connection to terrorism

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEATAC

A "suicidal" airline employee stole an empty Horizon Air turboprop plane, took off from the Sea-Tac International Airport and was chased by military jets before crashing into a small island in the Puget Sound on Friday night, officials said.

Preliminary information suggests the crash occurred because the 29-year-old man was "doing stunts in air or lack of flying skills," the Pierce County Sheriff's Department said.

Ed Troyer, a spokesman for the Sheriff's Department, said on Twitter that the man was suicidal and there was no connection to terrorism. The man's condition after the crash wasn't immediately known.

Video showed the Horizon Air Q400 doing large loops and other dangerous manoeuvres as the sun set on the Puget Sound. There were no passengers aboard. Authorities initially said the man was a mechanic, but Alaska Airlines later said he was believed to be a ground service agent employed by Horizon. These employees direct aircraft for takeoff and gate approach and de-ice planes.



Safety concerns: A video grab of the stolen plane making an upside-down aerial loop near Pierce County, Washington, on Saturday. ▪ AFP/ JOHN WAULDRON

Witnesses reported seeing the plane being chased by military aircraft before it crashed on Ketron Island, southwest of Tacoma, Washington. Mr. Troyer said the F-15 aircraft scrambled out of Portland, Oregon, and were in the air "within a few minutes" and the pilots kept "people on the ground safe."

The Sheriff's Department said that they were working to conduct a background investigation on the Pierce County resident, whose name was not immediately released. White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said on Saturday morning that President Donald Trump was "monitoring the situation." He's currently at his New Jersey golf club.

'Just a broken guy'

The aircraft was stolen at around 8 p.m., and Alaska Airlines said it was in a "maintenance position" and not scheduled for a passenger flight. Horizon Air is part of the Alaska Air Group and flies shorter routes throughout the U.S. West. The Q400 is a turboprop aircraft with 76 seats.

Pierce County Sheriff Paul Pastor said the man "did something foolish and may well have paid with his life."

The man could be heard on audio recordings telling air traffic controllers that he is "just a broken guy."

An air traffic controller called the man "Rich," and tried to convince him to land the airplane.

"There is a runway just off to your right side in about a mile," the controller says, referring to an airfield at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

"Oh man. Those guys will rough me up if I try and land there," the man responded, later adding, "This is probably jail time for life, huh?"

Later the man said – "I've got a lot of people that care about me. It's going to disappoint them to hear that I did this…Just a broken guy, got a few screws loose, I guess."

Flights out of Sea-Tac, the largest commercial airport in the Pacific Northwest, were temporarily grounded during the drama.

'Turkey-U.S. relations may be in jeopardy'

We could look for new allies: Erdogan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISTANBUL

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey's partnership with the U.S. may be in jeopardy as ties strain, warning Ankara could start looking for new allies, in an op-ed published in the *New York Times* on Saturday.

Relations between the two NATO allies have sunk to their lowest point in decades over a number of issues, including the detention of U.S. pastor Andrew Brunson on terror-related charges, prompting the Turkish lira to hit record lows against the dollar.

The embattled lira tumbled 16% against the dollar on Friday, with U.S. President Donald Trump saying he had doubled steel and aluminium tariffs on Turkey in comments that contributed to the currency's further slide. In the *New York Times*, Mr. Erdogan warned Washington not to risk relations with Ankara, saying his country would otherwise look for "new friends and allies". "Unless the United States starts respecting Turkey's sovereignty and proves that it understands the dangers that our nation faces, our partnership could be in jeopardy," he wrote.

"Before it is too late, Washington must give up the misguided notion that our relationship can be asymmetrical and come to terms with the fact that Turkey has alternatives," he said. "Failure to reverse this trend of unilateralism and disrespect will require us to start looking for new friends and allies."

The White House said the new sanctions would take effect from August 13.

No meeting with U.S., says Iran

America's addiction to sanctions does not allow negotiation to take place: Zarif

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran gave its most explicit rejection yet of talks with the U.S. on Saturday, and accused Washington of an "addiction to sanctions" over its latest spat with Turkey.

The U.S. reimposed harsh sanctions on Iran on Tuesday, following its May withdrawal from a landmark 2015 nuclear agreement, dealing a heavy blow to the already troubled economy.

U.S. President Donald Trump has offered talks on a "more comprehensive deal", but Iran has baulked at negotiating under the pressure of sanctions and has instead leant on its increasingly close ties with fellow U.S. sanctions targets Turkey and Russia.



Mohammad Javad Zarif

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was asked by the conservative Tasnim news agency whether there was any plan to meet with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"No, there will be no meeting," was the blunt response from Mr. Zarif.

He said there were also no plans for a meeting with U.S. officials on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York next month, which both Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Mr. Trump are due to attend.

'Not honest'

"On Trump's recent proposal (of talks), our official stance was announced by the President and by us. Americans are not honest and their addiction to sanctions does not allow any negotiation to take place," Mr. Zarif said.

It was Iran's most explicit rejection of talks to date, after much speculation that economic pressure would force its leaders back to the table with Washington or at least to engage in backroom discussions in New York.

Earlier on Saturday, Mr. Zarif waded into the mounting row between Turkey and the U.S.

"Trump's jubilation in inflicting economic hardship on its NATO ally Turkey is shameful," he wrote on Twitter.

"We've stood with neighbours before, and will again now".

Gaza protests toll rises to 3

At least 131 Palestinians wounded by Israeli bullets

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GAZA CITY

A 40-year-old Palestinian hit by Israeli fire during protests on the Gaza border died of his wounds on Saturday, taking the previous day's death toll to three, the territory's Health Ministry said.

He was among at least 131 Palestinians wounded by Israeli bullets during Friday's protests, even as an informal truce agreed after a deadly flare-up between Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas and the Israeli Army largely held.

The Ministry identified the dead man as Ahmed Abu Lulu, and said he was shot in a section of the border east of the southern city of Rafah, where two other Palestinians were also killed.



Taking cover: Palestinian protesters escaping from teargas shells fired by Israeli troops near the Gaza border. ▪ AP

The Ministry identified them as Ali al-Alul, 55, and twenty one-year-old volunteer medic Abdullah al-Qatati. A few thousand protesters had gathered in different locations along the border, setting tyres ablaze and throwing stones, but there were fewer people demonstrating than in previous weeks, AFP correspondents said. At least 168 Palestinians have been killed since the border protests began on March 30.

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ELSEWHERE



Obrador says no to armed protection

MEXICO CITY

Mexican President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador said last week that he will abandon the secret service-style protection used by his predecessor in favour of a security detail of 20 unarmed men and women, including lawyers, doctors and engineers. REUTERS

'Iran TV muted anti-govt. chants in stadium'

TEHRAN

Iranians reported on Saturday that the state broadcaster had muted stadium noise during the previous evening's football match in Tehran, in an apparent attempt to drown out anti-government chants. Mobile phone footage showed thousands of fans in Tehran's Azadi stadium chanting "Death to the dictator". REUTERS

'Politicians involved in murder of Brazil activist'

RIO DE JANEIRO

Politicians and public servants have been linked to the murder of high-profile Brazilian lawmaker and Black rights activist Marielle Franco, Brazil's Security Minister Raul Jungmann said late on Friday. Franco was murdered on March 14 in what appeared to be a professional hit in the centre of Rio de Janeiro. AFP

Briton admits to plotting IS-inspired terror attack

LONDON

British Muslim convert Lewis Ludlow has pleaded guilty to plotting an Islamic State-inspired attack on targets in London, including the city's shopping hub of Oxford Street and Madame Tussauds wax museum. He admitted to swearing allegiance to the IS and preparing to drive a van through major targets. PTI

UN confronts China over 'holding' Uighurs in camps

'China has turned Xinjiang into something resembling a no-rights zone'

NICK CUMMING-BRUCE
GENEVA

UN human rights experts have expressed alarm over what they said were many credible reports that China had detained one million or more ethnic Uighurs in the western region of Xinjiang and forced as many as two million to submit to re-education and indoctrination.

In the name of combating religious extremism, China had turned Xinjiang into "something resembling a massive internment camp, shrouded in secrecy, a sort of no-rights zone," Gay McDougall, a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, said in the opening session of a two-day review of China's policies in Geneva.

Accounts from the region pointed to Muslims "being treated as enemies of the state solely on the basis of their ethno-religious identity," Mr. McDougall said, citing reports from activists and scholars that many had disappeared and that even the most commonplace religious practices had become grounds for punishment.

Students disappeared

Raising questions about the fate of Uighur students, who had returned to Xinjiang from overseas, Mr. McDougall said more than a hundred had disappeared, some had been detained and others had died in detention.

In opening remarks at Friday's session, Yu Jianhua, China's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, praised China's policies toward minorities, saying they were aimed at promoting unity and harmony, and said economic progress in the region had lifted 20 million people out of poverty in the past five years. Mr. Yu, leading a delegation of 48 senior officials, offered no response to the committee's questions, but he is scheduled to address them when the meeting resumes on Monday morning.

Chinese officials have said tightened security measures and limits on the religious practices of Uighurs, who are mostly Sunni Muslim, are aimed at trying to prevent violent, anti-state episodes in Uighur areas, which they have attributed to separatism, terrorism and religious extremism.

Uighur advocates say the harsh security measures fuel resentment.

"We are really talking here about a humanitarian emergency," said Adrian Zenz, a specialist on Xinjiang who lectures at the European School of Culture and Theology in Berlin. "This is a very targeted political re-education effort that is seeking to change the core identity and belief system of an entire people. On that scale it's pretty unprecedented."

Tightening controls

Beijing tightened controls and surveillance of Xinjiang's population after an eruption of violence aimed at Han Chinese, the dominant ethnic group in China, in Xinjiang's capital, Urumqi, in 2009 and an attack in Beijing in 2013 attributed to Uighur Muslims.

But the authorities drastically increased the scale and intensity of the crackdown after the arrival of Chen Quanguo as the Communist Party secretary in charge of the region in August 2016 and the promulgation of a "de-extremification" ordinance in early 2017.

More than one-fifth of all arrests in China in 2017 occurred in Xinjiang, whose 11 million people make up less than 2% of China's population, the Hong Kong-based advocacy group China Human Rights Defenders said in a report last week drawing on official data. NY TIMES



Heavily guarded: A police officer checking the identity card of a man as security forces keep watch in a street in Kashgar, Xinjiang, in March 2017. ▪ REUTERS

Protesters ask govt. not to demolish mosque

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

Thousands of demonstrators gathered at a mosque in China to stop its government-ordered demolition, a participant said on Saturday, as Beijing's increasingly harsh policies against religion heighten anxiety about Islam's future in the country. Protesters began gathering on Thursday ahead of a deadline to demolish the grand mosque in the town of Weizhou in the northern Ningxia region, said a restaurant owner surnamed Ma.

Videos show hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the building as police with riot shields stand by. "The government said it's an illegal building, but it's not. The mosque has several hundred years of history," Mr. Ma said.

The mosque was rebuilt over the past two years, according to government documents, but the licensing process was not carefully managed.

In the process, the façade was changed from its previous Chinese style – featuring sweeping tiled roofs similar to a Buddhist temple – to what is often described in China as an "Arab" design, with domes and crescents.

Pro-Khalistan rally in London today despite India's concerns

Another demonstration will celebrate Independence Day

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

A rally to mark India's Independence Day and a pro-Khalistani demonstration dubbed the "London declaration" are both set to go ahead on Sunday, in Trafalgar Square, central London, despite New Delhi's strong and publicly stated reservations about the latter, which it views as an impingement on its "territorial integrity".

Last month, India issued a demarche over the pro-Khalistani rally. The rally is intended to drum up support and awareness for a non-binding referendum on a Sikh homeland in 2020. The British government, however, insisted that people had a right to gather together and demonstrate their views, provided they did so within the law.

A "We Stand with India" rally is set to take place on Trafalgar Square to celebrate 71 years of India's Independence. "India is all about culture, diversity, growth and celebration," says the group's Facebook page set up last month.

The London Declaration rally is being organised by Sikhs for Justice, a U.S.-based group, though U.K. groups indicated they would be participating too. The pro-Khalistan Sikh Federation U.K. said "some members" would be attending the event, while Dal Khalsa U.K. urged people to join the rally.

Within Parliament, the Green Party's co-leader Caroline Lucas is the only one to publicly back the rally, stating she stood in solidarity with those "fighting discrimination, and campaigning for a referendum around the world".

Others to publicly support the rally include George Galloway, the former Labour Party and Respect Party MP, who made a video in support, comparing the right for a Sikh referendum to the right for a Scottish referendum.

False expectations

In a letter, Preet Gill MP, the chair of a parliamentary group on British Sikhs, said she wouldn't be attending the rally due to "prior commitments" and advised constituents taking part to consult both the organisers to ensure they had the necessary permissions, and gauge if they had had contact with the Federation of Sikh Organisations that organised an annual protest in central London.

"History shows us that non-binding referendums have very little impact on governments of the UN, and run the risk of lacking credibility, wasting significant resources and building false expectations," she continued in the letter from earlier this month.

Among those to have spoken out against the pro-Khalistan rally publicly is businessman Rami Ranger, the founder of Sun Mark and Chair of the British Sikh Association. He described the organisers of the rally as an "unelected self-appointed handful of separatists... Please stop dividing British communities, especially the Sikhs."

"We have said that it seeks to violence, secessionism and hatred and we expect them to take into account the larger perspective of the relationship when they take a decision in such matters," Raveesh Kumar, spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs, said earlier this week, of the rally.

Separatist activity

Indian concerns that Britain was too accommodating of separatist activity against India on its shores have been a long-running theme of tension between the two nations. Earlier this year, Britain was forced to apologise after an Indian flag was taken down and ripped on Parliament Square during a rally by pro-Khalistani activists.

Last year, it was only after India's intervention that a rally to mark the death anniversary of militant Burnham Wani was not allowed to take place.



Against separatism: A demonstration outside the British High Commission in New Delhi against the proposed move by a Sikh organisation to hold a referendum. ▪ AP

Afghan forces now in control of Ghazni, say officials

Taliban launched an onslaught on the city last week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Afghan officials said security forces were in control of the eastern city of Ghazni on Saturday, more than a day after Taliban fighters launched a major onslaught on the provincial capital and as reinforcements continued a clearance operation.

Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish said fresh reinforcements had arrived in the area and were battling Taliban fighters north of Ghazni, promising that the insurgents were in no position to take control of the city. "The situation is fully under control. The city is not going to fall," Mr. Danish told a press conference, after confusion mounted over the fate of the city following hours of official silence.

A spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan also described the fight for Ghazni as a clearance operation, with sporadic clashes between security forces and insurgents punctuating relative calm. "The fact remains that the Taliban are unable to seize terrain and unable to match the Afghan security forces or our enablement, retreating once directly and decisively engaged," said Lt. Colonel Martin O'Donnell.

Insurgents entered Ghazni from several directions late on Thursday night, attacking media offices and damaging a telecommunications tower, effectively shutting off mobile service to the city as of Friday afternoon – making information about the fight difficult to verify.

'Intense fighting still on'

An MP from Ghazni urged caution following Mr. Danish's press conference, saying heavy clashes continued to rage between the two sides. "Intense fighting is still ongoing in Ghazni city. The prison is under attack from several directions, they are trying to free the prisoners," said Nafisa Azimi by telephone from Kabul.

Mr. Danish said at least 25 security forces had died in the fighting along with 150 Taliban fighters. At least one media worker from a local broadcaster was also killed.

Earlier on Saturday, the Taliban claimed victory in the fight for the embattled city, saying its forces were in control of Ghanzi after routing Afghan troops. "Last night, our mujahideen have completely conquered a battalion in Ghazni, seizing weapons and ammunitions and four pickup trucks," said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid. "Our mujahideen are protecting the city of Ghazni." The city – less than two hours by road from Kabul – has been under danger from massing Taliban fighters for months.

For a united Korea



Art for a cause: South Korean artists performing in front of a unification flag before a friendly football match on Saturday. The Unification Ministry last week said that North Korea proposed talks at Panmunjom on Monday to discuss preparations for a possible third summit meeting between North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and President Moon Jae-in. ▪ GETTY IMAGES

Trump used racist slurs on TV show's set: book

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRIDGEWATER

Former White House staffer Omarosa Manigault Newman claims in a new book that there are tapes of President Donald Trump using racial slurs and that she saw him behaving "like a dog off the leash" at numerous events.

The accusations are among a long list of scandalous claims contained in her new book, *Unhinged*, set to come out August 14. The White House has already slammed the memoir as being "riddled with lies and false accusations".

In the book, Ms. Manigault Newman, who was a contestant on Mr. Trump's "The Apprentice" reality show and later served as a senior adviser to the President, hurls a litany of allegations, painting the President as scattered, self-absorbed, misogynistic and insecure. Mr. Trump, she said she'd concluded after years of defending him, was a bigot.

She also claims without evidence that tapes exist of the President using the N-word repeatedly on the reality show's set. She acknowledges she had never been able to obtain or hear the tapes but said three unnamed sources had described their contents.

'Stay silent, or else'

Ms. Manigault Newman also alleges that allies of Mr. Trump tried to buy her silence. When she left the White House, she says she was offered $15,000 a month to serve in a "senior position" on his 2020 re-election campaign. But that offer came along with a stringent nondisclosure agreement. After turning down the job, she said she received a "flurry" of letters from attorneys telling her to "stay silent about Trump, or else".

Twitter discusses how to regulate 'dehumanising' content

Following a meeting with 18 staff members, Twitter chief Jack Dorsey said he is contemplating systemic solutions to regulate content

CECILIA KANG
KATE CONGER
SAN FRANCISCO

Twitter chief executive Jack Dorsey on Friday gathered with 18 colleagues, including the safety team, to debate ways to make the social media service safer for its users. The discussion quickly turned to how to rid the site of "dehumanising" speech, even if it did not violate Twitter's rules, which forbid direct threats of violence and some forms of hate speech but do not prohibit deception or misinformation.

Twitter asked that members of its safety team not be identified, for fear of them becoming targeted by Internet trolls.

For about an hour, the group tried to get a handle on what constituted dehumanising speech. At one point, Mr. Dorsey wondered if there was a technological solution. There was no agreement on an answer.

The discussion capped a difficult week for Twitter. For the past five days, the company has been embroiled in internal conversations about how to evolve and explain its policies for what can and cannot be posted on its site. The debates were urgent, fuelled by criticism against Twitter for its lack of action against the posts from the far-right conspiracy site InfoWars and its creator, Alex Jones.

Banning Alex Jones

While Apple, Facebook and Google's YouTube this week purged videos and podcasts from Mr. Jones and InfoWars, Twitter let the content remain on its site. In a string of tweets on Tuesday, Mr. Dorsey said Twitter would not ban Mr. Jones or InfoWars because they had not violated the company's rules.

In the aftermath, many of Twitter's users and own employees heaped ire on Mr. Dorsey and the company.

On Friday, to provide more transparency about its decision making, Twitter invited two *New York Times* reporters to attend the policy meeting. During the one-hour gathering, a picture emerged of a 12-year-old company still struggling to keep up with the complicated demands of being an open and neutral communications platform that brings together world leaders, celebrities, journalists, political activists and conspiracy theorists.

Even settling on a definition of dehumanising speech was not easy. By the meeting's end, Mr. Dorsey and his executives had agreed to draft a policy about dehumanising speech and open it to the public for their comments.

In an interview on Friday, Mr. Dorsey, 41, said he was "OK with people not agreeing" with his decision to keep Mr. Jones's account live.

But Mr. Dorsey also said that while Twitter's long-time guiding principle has been free expression, the company is now discussing "that safety should come first".

Debate on immigration

In Friday's meeting at Twitter, the 18 attendees debated topics including whether tweets that disparaged immigrants could be considered dehumanising. One executive insisted that it was important for Twitter to enable debate about immigration policy.

"Immigration is a really valid political debate in many countries around the world and I think we want to make sure we protect the ability of people to say things like, 'Immigration has affected my community. My local factory employs different people now; I can't get a job.'" said Nick Pickles, a policy strategist. Any new rules also had to allow victims of rape to openly discuss their experience online, Ms. Harvey said. In an interview afterwards, Mr. Dorsey said he was contemplating broader changes, including "systemic" solutions that aren't a "one-off."

But those conversations, he said, have not been "explicit." Twitter is early in the process, he said. "We'll talk more," he said. NY TIMES



Free speech debates: Twitter was embroiled in conversations last week about its policies on what can and cannot be posted. Picture shows an artwork at its office in Santa Monica. ▪ AFP

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AP

WASHINGTON

No consensus on how to fight the info-wars

Amid mounting evidence on the falsehood and hatred spread by many of their users, social media platforms are under immense pressure to act. Last week, most digital platforms blocked American conspiracy theorist Alex Jones, who has created an online media empire by peddling outright lies that inflame racial animosity and religious bigotry. Apple removed all his podcasts, Facebook removed his pages and YouTube ended his account. However, InfoWars, Mr. Jones's flagship digital platform, remains online and can also be accessed through apps.

While the sweeping action has been applauded by many, it has hardly resolved the underlying questions related to the governance of digital platforms. Twitter has refused to block Mr. Jones's account.

While other digital platforms have rescinded on their long-held view that they would not want to regulate content, Twitter has stood its ground. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey reiterated that content posted on the platform could be contested or verified by professional journalists.

Twitter itself has been under attack by American conservatives who accuse it of censorship. President Donald Trump, an avid Twitter user, decried the platform last month for alleged censorship of Republican leaders. While Mr. Dorsey denied censorship, he said there are certain limits that kick in to prevent bad behaviour. "These signals evolve minute by minute... These signals look at behaviours of bad faith actors who intend to divide, manipulate...," he said in a TV interview.

> The sweeping action taken against the media empire of conspiracy theorist Alex Jones has drawn appreciation. However, difficult questions on governance of digital platforms remain unanswered

Who is authorised to regulate?

Whether or not an algorithm could enforce appropriate online behaviour is marginal to the fundamental question on the power that could be acceded to these technology companies. Roger McNamee, an early Facebook investor, has become a strong critic of the undue influence of social media in recent times. "The problem here is that these companies, Google, Facebook or Twitter, act like government, and enforce a set of rules... The problem is that their business interests are driven by promoting conspiracy theories... It is not because they are bad people, but simply because that is what gets maximum attention, most economic value. They are in a difficult position. They would like to have all conspiracy theorists remain on their platform, and yet they do need to respond to public pressure. The problem is that these guys should not be the ones making the decision on what speech is useful, what speech is appropriate or not," he said on CNBC this week. "We need to have a national conversation on where those limits are and we need to make some choices about that..." he added.

There is no legal bar that prevents these companies from blocking anyone. They are private entities that are in no way legally obligated to carry or not to carry particular viewpoints. But many experts are wary of handing out the power to control all information to a handful of companies. "Are we comfortable with 30-somethings... decid[ing] on what content gets resonance..." Scott Galloway, NYU Stern professor, wondered on a TV discussion.

If the question is about regulation, who indeed is equipped to regulate them? Some commentators have pointed out the inadequately informed probing of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg by U.S. lawmakers in April. One possible way out, according to Mr. McNamee, is that all social media platforms be held up to the same standards as conventional media platforms. That sounds simple in theory, but may not be in practice.



WWW.VERSOBOOKS.COM

LONDON

The attack on a socialist bookshop

Close to a busy intersection in Bloomsbury in central London, with large red-arched windows, and a jumble of books outside for passers-by to browse through, stands Bookmarks, one of London's last remaining socialist bookshops. Just off Tottenham Court Road, the bookshop is something of a rarity in central London, where independent shops have been under pressure from sky-high rents and competition from online marketplaces.

On August 4, just before closing time, a group of around 12 masked far-right demonstrators attacked the bookshop, attempting to "intimidate staff and customers and to destroy books and materials", Bookmarks said that day. Images of the protesters showed one wearing a mask of Donald Trump, while another held a placard reading, "British Bolshevik cult". No one has been arrested to date, but the U.K. Independence Party said it had suspended three of its members, who had been involved in the incident.

Earlier that day, a "Make Britain Great Again" demonstration had taken place in London, one of several far-right protests that have taken place in the British capital this year. The attack provoked an outpouring of support in Britain and beyond – from academics, trade unionists, politicians, and others such as film director Ken Loach and singer Billy Bragg. "The support has been absolutely overwhelming," said David Gilchrist, the manager of Bookmarks.

Born in the 1970s and initially located in north London, Bookmarks has grown from selling a handful of pamphlets and books to being one of London's last remaining socialist bookshops. Alongside having publications from across the world on themes ranging from anti-Semitism, anti-racism and Islamophobia, to critiques of the Empire and texts on socialist political philosophy and history, the bookshop gained support after becoming the official bookseller of the nearby Trade Union Council. It also publishes a range of its own

> Born in the 1970s and initially located in north London, Bookmarks has grown from selling a handful of pamphlets and books to being one of London's last remaining socialist bookshops

books, alongside paraphernalia such as anti-racism mugs, busts of prominent socialist leaders and activists, and sardonic postcards.

"There has long been an appetite in the U.K. on issues such as the struggle against racism, anti-colonial struggles and women's liberation so we've always had an audience for a wide range of historical and political texts," said Mr. Gilchrist. The bookshop has seen interest rise at times of political upheaval in Britain – such as in the build-up to the 2003 Iraq War, when it formed one of the hubs for the massive anti-war movement in the country.

Pressure from Amazon

It has faced challenging times too – not the least with the rise over the past few years of Amazon, which has piled pressure on London's independent bookshops (just over a 100 remain). "We've found that we can hold ground because there are people who trust us and know we can have a knowledgeable discussion to help them find what they want," said Mr. Gilchrist.

The emergence of Mr. Trump and the alt-right on the one hand and the appetite for socialist politics in the wake of Jeremy Corbyn's rise in the Labour on the other have seen a resurgence of interest again, said Mr. Gilchrist.

The attack is the first one on the bookshop, and Mr. Gilchrist has little doubt on who is to be blamed. "We will be more watchful and take more precautions during far-right demonstrations," he said. "But we won't let them silence us... That would be giving them victory. And the solidarity we've seen since the attack shows we are much stronger than they are."



ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

DHAKA

From behind the lens to behind bars

On August 5, Shahidul Alam, an award-winning photographer and social activist, streamed videos on Facebook, criticising the Bangladesh government for its handling of students' protests for safe roads. Hours later in an interview with Al Jazeera, Mr. Alam said larger issues such as extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and corruption came into play in the protests. "It's a never-ending list. It's huge. It's really that pent-up energy, emotion and anger that have been let loose."

Mr. Alam also took a jibe at Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, citing the previous student protests against the unfair quota system for government jobs. He claimed that she lost "credibility" as the promises to reform the quota system were not kept. Mr. Alam alleged that the "police specifically asked for help from armed goons to combat unarmed students".

Hours later, a group of policemen, all in plain clothes, arrived on his doorstep in the Dhaka neighbourhood of Dhanmondi, locked up his guards in a room and dragged him into a waiting van. His partner, Rahnuma Ahmed, rushed down the stairs hearing him crying for help, but the van carrying him and two other vehicles sped away into the dark. The next day, the detective branch of the police confirmed that Mr. Alam was in its custody, waiting for a court appearance.

> An award-winning photographer, who criticised the government's handling of students' protests, has been arrested and charged with 'spreading fantastical and provocative lies to create panic'

Stifling freedom of expression

The police charged him with "spreading fantastical and provocative lies to create panic" under the controversial Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act. If he is proved guilty, he could be jailed for as many as 14 years. Later in the day, police took him to court in Old Dhaka barefoot. At the court building, he told the waiting reporters that he was tortured in custody and that police had forced him to wash the blood from his clothes and wear them again. The government rejected his claim. "Contrary to recent reports, no evidence exists that Shahidul Alam was tortured while in police custody," said Sajeeb Wazed, ICT affairs adviser to Prime Minister Hasina and her son.

As a Dhaka court allowed the police to question Mr. Alam for seven days in their custody, condemnation poured in from around the world. Civil society leaders and human rights campaigners demanded his freedom.

Mr. Alam spent his first night in remand on August 6. The next morning, Kamal Hossain, a prominent lawyer, and his daughter Sara Hossain stood by him in the High Court, securing an order for his quick transfer to a government hospital from the police remand. But doctors at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University concluded that his health condition did not warrant hospitalisation and sent him back into custody.

The Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) seized the moment. "The government hospital doesn't provide health services for those who have dissenting views," BNP's senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said.

A second court order followed after the submission of a hospital report on Mr. Alam's health. Two High Court judges asked the Home Secretary to check if he was tortured physically or mentally in police custody, and report back. The arrest sparked a torrent of protests both at home and abroad.

India's celebrated photographer Raghu Rai, who has been honoured by the Bangladesh government for his coverage of the 1971 Liberation War, wrote an open letter to Ms. Hasina, calling upon her not to punish Mr. Alam. His friend, however, is still waiting for his release.



REUTERS

DALIAN

The promise of Korea peace for China

Northeast China has high stakes in North Korea. A durable peace on the Korean Peninsula could mean much needed jobs for China's industrial rust belt. China's northeast, historically known as Manchuria, was among the first to industrialise. The region's plentiful reserves of iron ore and coal premised the rise of its heavy steel-based industry. At one time, Tsarist Russia's advances, as well as the northeast's occupation by imperial Japan before the Second World War, spurred the first phase of industrialisation.

Food security that the region provided deepened the spread of local industry. The Northeast Plain's fertile black soil was ideal for growing wheat, corn, sorghum, soya beans, flax and sugar beets. But Deng Xiaoping's market-driven reforms and opening up, which spurred a new wave of industrialisation, starved the now obsolete production lines of the northeast of fresh capital and markets, haemorrhaging the local economy.

Nevertheless, the region is now getting its second wind. Two years ago, China's planners said they would pour billions of dollars till 2019 to revive the northeast's economy, with Liaoning province as the spearhead.

Unsurprisingly, a new pilot free trade zone (FTZ) spanning Liaoning's three cities – Shenyang, Yingkou and Dalian – has taken root. At the FTZ office at the picturesque Yingkou port, officials point out that they have been officially asked to bridge Northeast Asia with Central and Eastern Europe. "We are the nearest port of landing for South Korea and Japan. We have then a rail connection to Central and Eastern European countries to take these goods forward," said Zhang Dong, a senior official at the Yingkou FTZ.

At the port, an assortment of brightly coloured containers can be seen piled up prior to their onward journey by rail to destinations in Europe. A similar model of land-cum-sea transportation is visible in Dalian, a giant deep water port not far from Yingkou. From an elevation in the port complex, an army of

> Once sanctions on North Korea are lifted, Chinese companies would benefit from the anticipated heavy demand in Pyongyang for infrastructure, real estate as well as energy

orange cranes can be seen hauling containers from ships. "There are 18 container-handling berths along the south coast of the port, which you can see are operational, while the north coast of the port is still under construction," said Sun Shiwei, an official at Dalian's pilot FTZ. "With a 20-metre depth, even the largest container ship can dock at the port."

Transcontinental trains

Not far away is a dense cluster of rail tracks that can be used to transport cargo to distant European cities by transcontinental trains. Both the promise of peace in the Koreas and U.S. President Donald Trump's so-called trade war with China appear to be feeding into the northeast's second coming. Mr. Zhang at the Yingkou port stressed that the budding peace initiatives in North Korea were likely to benefit northeast China.

"We have reason to believe that there would be better development and more communication and exchanges with North Korea." Other officials spotlighted that once sanctions were lifted, Chinese companies would benefit from the anticipated heavy demand in Pyongyang for fresh infrastructure and real estate as well as energy.

Officials were also sanguine about being impacted by the Sino-U.S. trade war, as the region was mainly opening out to Northeast Asia. "I have just come back from a conference in Japan and I can say with confidence that the political atmosphere in Northeast Asia, specifically in South Korea and Japan, is much better than before. I believe this will help us to reduce the bad influences of the trade war," said Mr. Zhang.



AFP

COLOMBO

Braving many hurdles to return home

Responding to a question from Tamil legislator Charles Nirmalanathan, from Mannar district, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe recently told Parliament that his government would extend all support to Sri Lankan refugees who wish to return from India.

The assurance is significant, especially to the nearly 4,000 persons in India who have expressed their desire to get back to the island. Though a fraction of the total 1,00,000 Sri Lankan refugees who live in India, they may be representing a shade of opinion that is growing popular among refugees – return home now, almost 10 years after the civil war ended. However, between their desire and the Prime Minister's assurance are many hurdles – both administrative and logistical.

To start with, a daunting task of paperworks awaits them. The Sri Lankan High Commission in Chennai is helping refugees obtain the necessary documents, including birth certificates for their children born in India, in addition to citizenship certificates and passports. The Sri Lankan government now provides the services free of charge, which is welcome, but that does not make the procedure easier. Getting citizenship documents requires a time-consuming vetting process, marked by bureaucratic delays. But that is not all. Even after getting the necessary papers in order, the actual journey back is far from simple. Expecting a family that has lived in India for 10 or 20 years to return on a flight with 30 kg baggage allowance would be rather unfair.

> Nearly 4,000 Sri Lankan refugees living in India have expressed their desire to get back to the island and Colombo has offered 'all support' to those willing to return to their home country

"Some of these families may have purchased items like a sewing machine or a refrigerator during their time in India. They won't have the money to come back and buy all of that again," Mr. Nirmalanathan, the parliamentarian from Mannar, told *The Hindu*.

Authorities in India and Sri Lanka are said to be mulling other modes, including by sea, to address this challenge.

Different challenges

If the pre-departure process and actual journey back are complicated, it's not like things get instantly better for them when they land in Sri Lanka.

The Hindu's earlier interviews with returnees – nearly 10,000 have returned since 2010 – revealed how being back home meant taking on a series of new challenges. This is not the country they left.

And for some, this is not the country they imagined returning to. For many, there is no trace of their homes or sight of the land they owned. There are no known neighbours, no familiar grocery shop at the corner at their place of return.

For the younger returnees, converting their Class 12 mark sheets to corresponding documents that are valid in universities in Sri Lanka has proved difficult. Some spoke of how their Tamil, different from the variant spoken in Jaffna, was mocked. But that is the only Tamil that the returnees, growing up in Tamil Nadu, learnt to speak.

"There are different challenges. But land, homes and livelihoods – these are the fundamental needs for any returnee. And isn't that the Sri Lankan government's responsibility?" Mr. Nirmalanathan asked. There is a need for a comprehensive plan and a support system, including financial assistance, for at least a year into resettling, he said.

A returnee told this correspondent sometime ago: "Life is not easy here, I am waiting for the military to return my land [which she eventually got]. It's true, we led a relatively comfortable life in India and they took good care of us in Tamil Nadu. But at the end of the day, we were still called a refugee."



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NOIDA/DELHI THE HINDU
SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2018



Wholesome fare: Buffaloes kept in a homestead at Asadpur in Rewari district of Haryana. Such small operations in the district feed Delhi's appetite for fresh, unprocessed milk, collectively supplying 40,000 litres a day.



By the bucket: A woman carries a bucket of milk destined for the national capital. Milkmen call at homes to collect the produce.



By road and rail: Autorickshaws take the collected milk to a railway station 10 km away. From there, Delhi is still two hours away.



More pails than passengers: The morning scene at the Inchhapuri railway station.

Milk run

From villages in Haryana, unprocessed, fresh produce goes to Delhi homes daily

TEXT AND IMAGES BY R.V. MOORTHY

For Rajesh Kumar, Rajpal Yadav and other milkmen at Asadpur in Rewari district of Haryana, the day begins an hour before dawn. They set out to collect fresh buffalo milk from the homesteads run by women like Narangi and Laxmi. After a cursory examination to catch any dilution of the milk, the men move to the next door. By 5.30 a.m., the morning's collection is loaded onto an autorickshaw for transport to the Inchhapuri railway station, 10 km away. It's another two hours by train to Delhi.

Each milkman collects 50 to 200 litres a day, and 300 to 350 of them travel daily from Asadpur, Rojka, Malahera, Shahpur, Khalilpur, Doki Dabri, Pataudi and Jhatola villages of Haryana to Delhi to distribute milk in various parts of the city.

Though Mother Dairy and Amul dominate the milk market, an informal network of milkmen from Haryana has a sizeable clientele, selling 40,000 litres. "When I began selling milk in 1986, milk was retailing at ₹3 a litre. Now it is ₹45. Neither the demand nor the supply shows signs of abating," Rajesh Kumar, 51, of Asadpur says.

"The journey from the village to the railway station and to the final destination can be mapped, thanks to mobile phones which are extremely useful in our line of business."

(R.V. Moorthy is a Special News Photographer of the The Hindu *based in Delhi)*



Last-mile hurry: The milkmen switch to bicycles from the Delhi Cantonment railway station for distribution. While many directly supply to the consumers, some hire delivery boys.



Endpoint: An Asadpur milkman in the Nangal Raya area near the Delhi Cantonment station.



In time for breakfast: A customer at Nangal Raya who has been buying milk from Asadpur for 12 years.

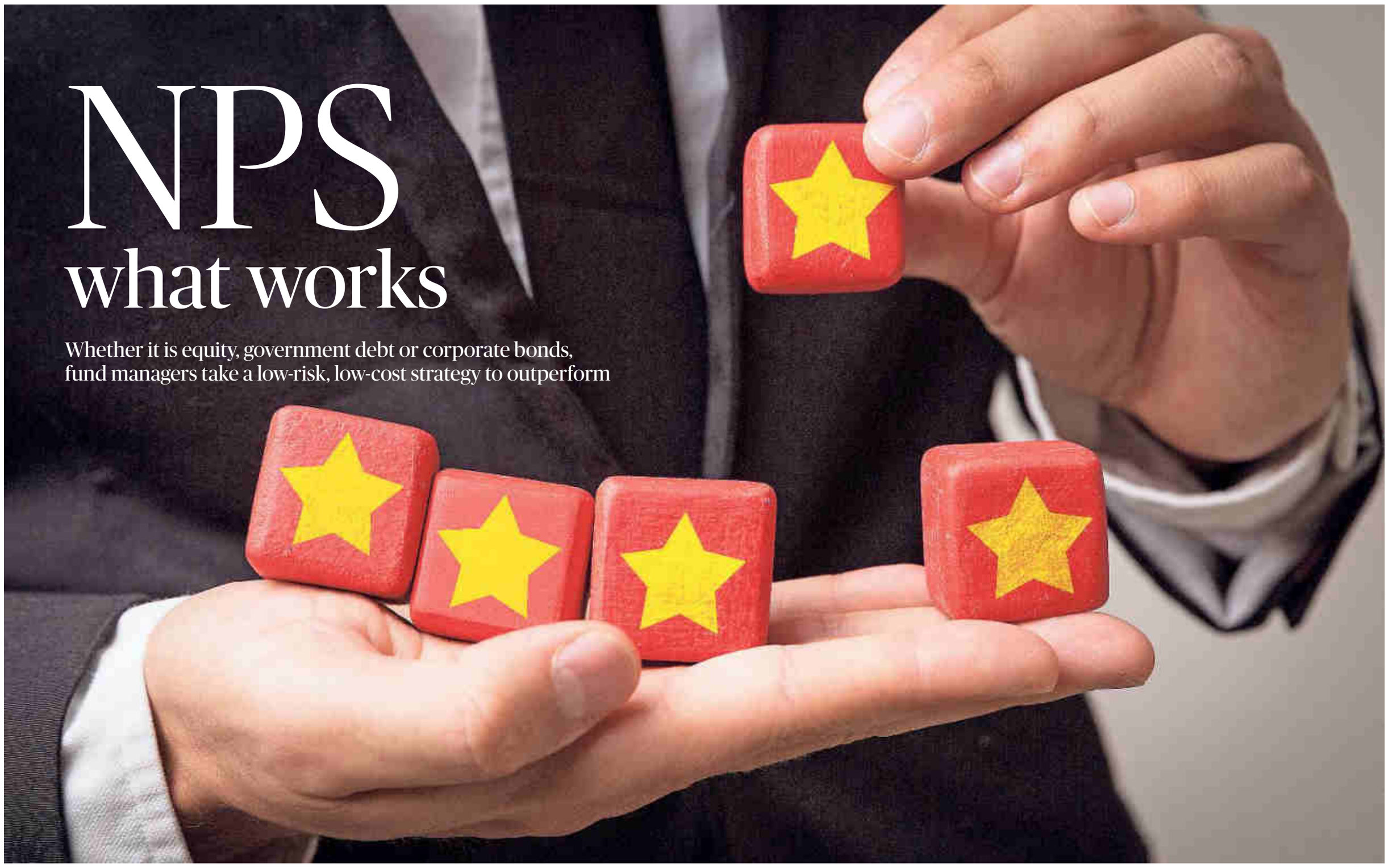


By hook or by crook: Milk cans dangle from the train window as the Haryana landscape blurs past.

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NPS what works

Whether it is equity, government debt or corporate bonds, fund managers take a low-risk, low-cost strategy to outperform



▪ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

K.VENKATASUBRAMANIAN

As an important retirement investment vehicle, the national pension system (NPS) offers considerable diversity – equity, government debt and corporate bonds.

Majority of the eight fund managers have delivered well across all three asset classes over the past few years. In the equity portion, most of the NPS managers have managed to record returns that are close to those of bluechip indices and better than the large-cap mutual fund category.

In corporate debt and government bond categories, all NPS managers have outperformed standard benchmarks.

Whether it is equity, government debt or corporate bonds, these fund managers take a low-risk, low-cost strategy to invest in the available avenues.

While most of the portfolio is managed in a somewhat passive manner, there is an element of fund manager intervention in adjusting holdings based on equity and debt market volatilities.

We analyse the portfolio holdings of various NPS fund managers across categories over the last few years, to assess the level of risks taken, suitability for investors, and explain the reasons for their out/under-performance.

While Birla Sun Life began its operations just over a year back, the other seven – HDFC, ICICI Pru, Kotak, LIC, SBI, Reliance and UTI – have been around for over five years now.

Safety in bluechips

Given that the investment universe for the equity portion of the NPS is restricted to Sensex, Nifty 50 and Nifty 100 stocks, fund managers have stuck to the mandate.

Though the portfolios are not passively-managed, these fund managers tend to buy most of the stocks in the Nifty 50 basket, and a few from the Nifty 100 index.

In this regard, Reliance, SBI, UTI, HDFC and ICICI maintain a portfolio of anywhere between 50 and 70 stocks picked from the indices mentioned earlier. The weightage assigned to stocks is not necessarily the same as prevalent in the index. So, in turn, a Reliance Industries, ITC, Infosys and TCS may be among the top stocks held. But portfolios are not churned that actively to reflect fundamentals.

As such, most of these fund managers maintain a fairly diffused portfolio, with exposure to individual stocks restricted to less than 3 per cent, barring the top few holdings.

Portfolio churn is minimal, with mostly the weightages of holdings alone being altered over the past two to three years.

HDFC and SBI also take cash positions to the tune of 5 per cent of the portfolio during volatile markets, which protects downsides when stocks correct significantly. This somewhat passive stock selection strategy has worked for SBI, UTI, HDFC and ICICI, with these NPS fund managers almost equalling or mildly exceeding benchmark indices, Nifty 50 and Nifty 100, over one-, three- and five-year time-frames.

Thus, most NPS managers have delivered above-average returns without taking any undue risks that may come with an actively-managed mutual fund.

What comes as a surprise though is that these fund managers have managed to deliver better returns than even the actively-managed mutual funds from the large-cap stable. Of course, some portion of the outperformance can be explained by the higher cost structure (1.5-2.5 per cent) that actively-managed funds incur. That NPS managers have managed to match the MF category with a low-cost, low-risk strategy is still a healthy trend.

UTI has the best track record across periods and has delivered more than benchmarks and the large-cap MF category. It holds as many as 70 stocks, and a highly diffused portfolio. HDFC and ICICI too have performed reasonably well, especially over longer time-frames.

Reliance has been an underperformer within fund managers which follow this strategy, mostly lagging peers and the bluechip indices.

With the equity portion of the NPS delivering returns that are on a par with those of index funds, those already investing in mutual funds can skip the equity option

Now, Birla Sun Life is the only NPS fund manager to take fully active calls on its equity portfolio. In the year or so of its existence, it has maintained a portfolio of 25-30 stocks and has actively altered positions in its holdings. It is little surprise then that Birla Sun Life tops the list in terms of returns delivered over the last one year.

Two other fund managers – Kotak and LIC – have taken very different approaches compared to others. These two NPS players invest in large-cap mutual fund units.

Kotak invests in the units of Aditya Birla SL Frontline Equity, Aditya Birla SL Top 100, SBI Bluechip, Franklin India Bluechip, ICICI Pru Focused Equity, SBI Magnum Multiplier, DSPBR Opportunities and Mirae Asset India Equity, among others. These are holdings as of March 2018.

Most mutual funds have stocks within the Nifty 100 universe. There may be mid-cap stocks or companies that fall outside the Nifty 100 too. But after SEBI guidelines came to force over the past couple of months, the mandate of many of these funds have changed, and Kotak NPS may have made suitable alterations.

Each fund accounts for about 7.2-9.6 per cent of the portfolio. The investments are in the direct plans of the diversified funds mentioned above, with about a percentage point lower charges than regular options.

But even at 1-1.5 per cent, the charges are higher than that involved in investing directly in equity.

Kotak has underperformed over one- and five-year timeframes *vis-à-vis* the large-cap MF category and the Nifty 100.

The strategy adopted by the fund managers has a few important factors to note.

By investing in mutual funds, the manager is effectively making the strategy passive. Next, as the Kotak NPS invests in multiple funds with the same mandate, there would be considerable portfolio overlap. As almost all of those investments are large-cap schemes, the mutual funds would sport very similar holdings.

LIC invests directly in equity, mostly stocks from the Nifty 50, and in mutual fund units of large-cap schemes. It has underperformed the bluechip indices as well as the mutual fund category across all time-frames.

The shuffling in stocks without giving higher weightage to outperforming shares may explain LIC's relative underperformance. In this case too, there would be portfolio overlap with its mutual fund holdings and equity shares.

Plan of action

Overall, if you are satisfied with index-fund level of returns, then at least five of these NPS managers appear well-placed to deliver such returns, with mild outperformance over the long term.

This avenue is suitable for moderate risk investors if their only investment in equity for retirement is through the NPS.

Those with a higher surplus and the ability to take more risks can go for mutual funds and invest in mid- and multi-cap funds for the long term – seven to 10 years at least. These funds can deliver 3-5 percentage points more than the benchmarks over such periods.

Delivering on gilt

All the NPS gilt fund schemes have managed to outperform the CRISIL 10-year Gilt Index and deliver reasonable returns across time-frames.

The returns – 9-10.5 per cent over the last five years – are better than even what actively-managed debt funds delivered. The yield on the 10-year G-Sec has already risen by about 125 basis points in the last one year, after the US Federal Reserve started raising rates. Even the 364-day treasury bill has a yield of nearly 7.3 per cent.

Hardening inflationary expectations, mostly due to the spike in crude prices, have meant that the RBI – which was seen as being behind the curve in interest rates action – hiked rates by 50 basis points within two months.

It is common knowledge that bond prices and yields move in opposite directions. That is, higher the yields, lower the bond prices.

Therefore, bond fund managers need to carefully take calls on the interest rate scenario, yields and profiles of securities that mature at various times, so that prices don't fall inordinately, causing losses to investors.

NPS gilt fund managers have managed to juggle the average maturity profile of their holdings and tweak the modified duration, so as to gain from the changing interest rate scenarios.

Modified duration measures the sensitivity or change in the price of a debt instrument to a change in interest rates.

Most of the managers have invested in listed Government of India securities maturing from 2028 to 2051. In addition, they also take exposure to various State Government development loans.

LIC has been the best in the category, delivering the highest returns across one-, three- and five-year periods. Its portfolio's average maturity was 20.4 years last July, which was altered to about 16.4 years recently.

The modified duration too was reduced. In a rising interest rate scenario, generally, the average maturity is lowered as shorter maturities are preferred for better returns. HDFC has reduced the average maturity to about 13.4 years from 17.4 years in the last 12 months. The modified duration has also been decreased to 7.4 years from nine years earlier.

Thus, all these fund managers have actively taken calls on the maturity profiles and delivered robust returns over the long term, comparable with the best in the debt mutual fund category.

Higher corporate yields

As with gilt investments, all NPS managers of corporate bond schemes have almost equalled or outperformed the CRISIL Composite Bond Fund Index across all periods – one, three and five years.

From secured non-convertible debentures (NCDs), bonds and other debt instruments of NBFCs, NABARD, Exim Bank and high-quality private sector companies, NPS fund managers invest in an array of options. They also invest in infrastructure bonds.

ICICI Pru has been the best manager in the category, delivering ahead of peers across time-frames.

The pension fund regulator has progressively allowed investments in instruments down the rating curve over the years – apart from the highest-rated AAA bonds, AA+, AA and A rated securities are also allowed for investments. Although lower-rated securities increase risks, the higher returns are expected to compensate adequately.

In managing corporate bonds too, investments are actively managed to benefit from changing interest rate scenarios. ICICI Pru, for example, has a portfolio with a yield-to-maturity of 8.6 per cent compared with 7.3 per cent in last July.

Typically, most fund managers have 70-90 per cent of the portfolio in AAA-rated securities, with the rest in lower-rated instruments.

Exposure is always to quality companies even in AA-rated securities, and there are minimal risks taken in the portfolio on the corporate debt portion.

LIC is the only fund manager to mildly lag the benchmark over a one-year period, but has beaten it over longer time-frames.

Plan of action

The outperformance of all NPS fund managers in the gilt and corporate debt categories holds important takeaways for investors.

For those parking sums in equity mutual funds for the long term, investing in gilt and corporate debt options of NPS alone, without taking exposure to the equity portion, would be a good idea.

A reasonably good active mutual fund could deliver better returns than the benchmarks over the long term, with a dash of mid- and small-cap stocks in the portfolios.

With the equity portion of the NPS delivering returns that are on a par with those of index funds, those already investing in mutual funds can skip the equity option.

Investment in the debt categories comes at lower costs compared to debt mutual funds. NPS charges just 0.01 per cent for asset management, while debt mutual funds have expense ratios ranging from 0.5 per cent to 2.1 per cent.

Also, 40 per cent of the corpus on retirement at 60 is tax-free in the case of NPS. Thus, there is a tax advantage as well.

A debt mutual fund is taxable, with indexation benefits, if there are long-term capital gains (holding period of three years and more).

Thus, if you are saving for retirement, you can consider investing in government bonds and corporate debt categories of NPS instead of debt funds. But if you have no other equity investments, you must park a portion of your corpus in the NPS equity option in accordance with your risk appetite and asset allocation requirement.

Alternative assets

The pension fund regulator allowed NPS managers to invest in alternative assets – alternative investment funds, real-estate investment trusts and infrastructure investment trusts, and so on.

But this asset class has been a non-starter as there is very limited investor interest. For one, the corpus accumulated is very small. Most fund managers have less than ₹1 crore in this category. HDFC, ICICI Pru and SBI have accumulated ₹2-3 crore in the asset class 'A' category.

Most AIFs require a minimum investment that is well in excess of the entire corpus of these funds, thus leaving NPS managers with insufficient amounts to invest in these avenues.

Thus, most NPS managers in the category have parked the accumulated corpus in safe money market instruments and have managed to deliver around 7 per cent returns in the last one year.

HDFC has invested its corpus in the AIF category in the perpetual additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds of IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI and Axis Bank.

Plan of action

Alternative investments are typically for high net-worth individuals looking to diversify across asset classes. They may not be suitable for investors looking to save for retirement.

Lack of meaningful avenues to park the amounts is also an impediment. Investors can thus skip this asset class 'A' for the present, while investing in the NPS.

Churning G-Secs actively

Returns %*

Government Bond	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Birla Sun Life Pension	-1.3	-	-
HDFC Pension Fund	-0.6	7.6	9.2
ICICI Prudential Pension	-0.3	7.8	9.2
Kotak Pension	-1.2	7.8	9.1
LIC Pension	-0.2	8.6	10.5
Reliance Capital Pension	-0.8	7.8	9.2
SBI Pension	-0.4	7.9	9.3
UTI Retirement Solutions	-1.1	7.3	8.9
Crisil 10 Yr Gilt Index	-3.0	6.0	6.4

*1 year absolute; 3 and 5 years annualised

Play on bluechips

Returns %*

Equity	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Birla Sun Life Pension	15.7	-	-
HDFC Pension Fund	14.2	12.0	17.1
ICICI Prudential Pension	14.1	10.7	16.8
Kotak Pension	8.3	10.2	16.2
LIC Pension	10.5	9.4	13.9
Reliance Capital Pension	9.2	9.2	15.5
SBI Pension	13.7	11.0	16.5
UTI Retirement Solutions	14.9	11.7	17.2
Large-cap MF Category Average	13.1	10.1	17.1
Nifty 50	14.7	10.1	15.5
Nifty 100	13.4	10.4	16.5

*1 year absolute; 3 and 5 years annualised

Persisting with top-rated bonds

Returns %*

Corporate debt	1 Year	3 Years	5 Years
Birla Sun Life Pension	5.2	-	-
HDFC Pension Fund	2.0	8.3	10.0
ICICI Prudential Pension	2.3	8.5	10.0
Kotak Pension	1.9	8.4	9.8
LIC Pension	1.1	7.9	9.9
Reliance Capital Pension	2.0	8.3	9.7
SBI Pension	2.0	8.2	9.6
UTI Retirement Solutions	1.8	8.1	9.5
Crisil Composite Bond Fund Index	1.3	7.5	8.7

*1 year absolute; 3 and 5 years annualised

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

DE-TAX

To err is human, to revise is necessary

You can revise tax returns to make changes to deductions, exemptions and income disclosures

SATYA SONTANAM



GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

Human errors are inevitable. The taxman, too, understands that mistakes occur while filing income tax returns. The Income Tax Department allows tax payers to revise their returns and make changes such as rectification of deductions or exemptions claimed and disclosure of any income that was missed while filing the original return.

Make use of this option soon after you realise the mistake. Because, on verification, if the I-T Department finds any of the information false, you will be liable for huge penalties under the Income Tax Act.

In fact, you should revise the return when an intimation or notice is received from the department for higher demand of tax and to which you agree to.

Revise before end of AY

The due date to revise a return is the end of the respective assessment year or the completion of assessment, whichever is earlier. For instance, revision of return for FY 2016-17 (AY 2017-18) should have been done by March 31, 2018, which is the end of that assessment year. But, if the I-T Department finishes the assessment (scrutiny assessment or best judgement assessment) before that, the date of assessment completion will be the last day to revise your return.

Remember, intimation that you receive under Section 143 (1) for cases such as refund, arithmetical errors and incorrect claims cannot be considered as assessment. In other words, you can revise the return even after you receive such intimation.

There's no limit on the number of times a return could be revised if it is filed within the deadline for revision. But use the option sparingly as multiple revisions could lead to scrutiny by the I-T department, which could drag you through unwanted procedures such as substantiating the income declared and the expenses claimed, with the help of evidences.

To revise your return, all you need is the acknowledgement number and the date of filing of the original return. If the return is revised multiple times, only the details of the original return should be used during each new revision.

One can revise the returns that are filed even after the due date. That is, you can revise the return of FY 2017-18 even if it is filed after August 31, 2018 (due date to file the return). But do not take that statement for granted. Delayed return-filing has its own disadvantages. You will not be allowed to carry forward the losses under the heads capital gains and business/profession. Also, interest will be levied under Section 234A upon the amount of tax due, at 1 per cent per month. This is in addition to a penalty of ₹5,000 or ₹10,000.

Tax payable and refund

If the revision leads to additional tax payable, pay the self-assessment tax using challan 280. In such cases, you may have to pay interest under Sections 234B and 234C for non-payment of advance taxes. In case of refund, you will receive an intimation under Section 143 (1) in due course of time.

Also note that if the original return was filed offline, it cannot be revised online. Similarly, if the original return was e-filed, revision is not possible through offline mode. Physical forms have an option to declare that it is a revised return. And for online revisions, there is a separate tab on the e-filing website.

Not rectification

It is to be remembered that revision of return is different from rectification. Unlike revision, rectification should be made only after you receive an intimation from the Central Processing Centre (CPC) of the I-T Department. This order generally comes in response to a rectification request filed by the taxpayer or when the department notices any discrepancy. Cases for rectification include mistake in gender, advance tax disparity and mismatch in tax credit.

Note that a change in bank account number or address should be made only using revision of return and not rectification.



TAX EDITS

- No limit on number of revisions
- Revision different from rectification of return
- Returns filed late can also be revised

Deadline

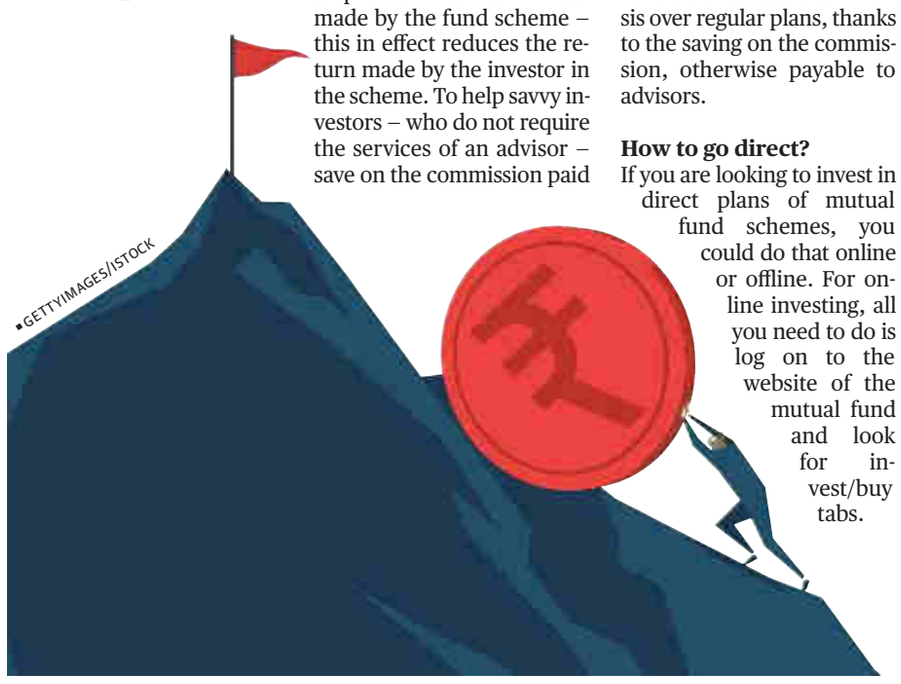
The due date to revise a return is the end of the respective assessment year or the completion of assessment, whichever is earlier

SAVE SMART

Direct plans: What, why and how to invest

Direct MF schemes save on commission, earning higher returns than regular plans

NALINAKANTHI VENKATARAMAN



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Mutual funds have traditionally been sold through advisors who also double up as brokers and get paid a commission from the mutual fund house. The commission is paid out of the return made by the fund scheme – this in effect reduces the return made by the investor in the scheme. To help savvy investors – who do not require the services of an advisor – save on the commission paid to advisors, SEBI in 2013 mandated mutual fund houses to introduce direct plans for fund schemes, in addition to regular plans.

Over the past five years, direct plans have managed to deliver 0.5-2 per cent higher return on an annualised basis over regular plans, thanks to the saving on the commission, otherwise payable to advisors.

How to go direct?

If you are looking to invest in direct plans of mutual fund schemes, you could do that online or offline. For online investing, all you need to do is log on to the website of the mutual fund and look for invest/buy tabs. You need to be KYC compliant to be able to invest online.

On the website of the fund house, you need to first enter either your PAN number (in case KYC was done before February 2017) or Central KYC (CKYC) identification number to get started.

You must then fill in your personal details and investment details including name, address, nominee, name of the scheme, plan (direct or regular), option (dividend/growth), amount, lump-sum or SIP mode, and SIP details. Choose 'direct' under the mode of investment. The next step is to provide payment details/bank account, etc, and upon confirmation, the investment will be completed. You can also buy direct online through the MF Utilities India portal, which is a shared infrastructure of AMCs (asset management companies). For offline investing, walk into the nearest branch office of the respective mutual fund and submit the duly filled application to invest in a direct plan. Alternatively, you can also do this at the offices of R&T (registrar-and-transfer) agents.

In case you have an ongoing SIP in a regular plan and wish to switch to the direct plan, you need to close the current SIP and start a new one. You can also switch the existing corpus in a regular plan to a direct plan. In case you want to move the corpus before the specified period is over, you will have to pay exit load, as applicable.

Not for all

While the returns in direct plans are higher compared with regular plans, they are only for savvy investors who can do their own research to identify the right schemes and track their performance to make course corrections, if necessary. If you are new to equities and need help in understanding the schemes and their suitability, you may be better off taking the advice of a good advisor and investing in the right scheme.

The writer is co-founder, RaNa Investment Advisors.



GOING DIRECT

- Close the current regular SIP plan and start anew
- Exit load charged for premature switch
- Switch existing regular corpus to direct plan

Is it for you?

Direct plans of mutual funds are suitable only for savvy investors who understand the equity market well and can make informed decisions

REAL RETURNS

Don't fret over MF choices

Selecting the right fund isn't the most important ingredient to financial success

AARATI KRISHNAN

Most investors seem to believe that they would have a sure-shot recipe for financial success if only they could choose the best mutual fund schemes for their portfolio.

"Can I get to a ₹1-crore portfolio in 10 years with schemes X, Y and Z?" is the most common query from investors writing in to this paper for financial advice.

But the truth is: selecting the right fund isn't the most important ingredient to your financial success.

The following are other investing decisions that will make a much bigger difference.

When you start

Many of us are so caught up in our careers that we keep postponing our investing decisions ad infinitum. New investors, perplexed by the variety of schemes on offer, may be so petrified of making the wrong choice that they don't invest at all. But in equity investing, starting as soon as you can is far more important to building a sizeable net worth, than being spot-on with your fund choices.

Consider brave-heart investor A, who wasn't great at choosing equity funds, but still kicked off a ₹10,000-a-month SIP in a large-cap fund in August 2008.

The scheme was ranked a middling 30th out of 50 schemes, and he would have got to a ₹24.8-lakh corpus by today (August 2018). His friend, investor B, kept researching his fund choices until August 2010, but finally managed to pick the category topper for a similar SIP.

Because of his late start, investor B would today be sitting on a substantially lower corpus of ₹18 lakh. This is despite his equity fund (with a 15 per cent annualised return) beating his friend's (13.7 per cent) on returns by a good margin.

In effect, just a two-year head-start on starting his SIPs gave the first investor a corpus that was 40 per cent larger, even though his fund selection wasn't great.

If in doubt, start your SIPs with a Nifty50 index fund and fine-tune your choices later.

Allocation, category

Many investors pay scant attention to their asset allocation and spend much of their time poring over the return rankings of the schemes they intend to buy. But consider investor A who was lucky enough to choose the best-performing large-cap fund for SIPs 10 years ago, but didn't give much thought to his asset allocation.

If he had allocated money in a 40-60 mix between equity and debt, he would have a corpus of ₹18.4 lakh today.

But investor B who picked a no-brainer Nifty50 fund but made a consciously higher equity allocation of 70 per cent, would have a corpus of ₹21.7 lakh without much effort.

We used the same liquid fund in the debt allocation of both investors.

Here, investor A's SIP in the star equity fund delivered an annualised return of 16 per cent, far better than the index fund's 12.6 per cent. But it was the under-allocation to equities that proved to be his undoing.

Apart from asset allocation, the category of scheme you choose, too, plays a huge role in your final portfolio value. So if higher returns are your objective, ensure a mid-cap flavour in your equity investments.

Investing enough

If you commit piddly sums to MF investments, your final corpus will be small, even if you pick chart-topping schemes. Therefore, committing an adequate portion of your monthly earnings to investments is far more important to attaining your goals than selecting star funds.

Aim to save a minimum 15 per cent of your monthly pay cheque and invest it in line with your chosen allocation pattern. And don't forget to ensure that your investments keep pace with inflation and your income.

A young investor who starts a ₹5,000 SIP today in an equity scheme that delivers a 12 per cent rate of return, will accumulate ₹ 45 lakh at the end of 20 years. But if she manages to increase that SIP by just ₹500 every year, her expected corpus jumps to ₹ 73 lakh. Given that most of us see pay increases of at least 5 per cent a year, stepping up one's SIPs at least by 5 per cent a year is critical to get to a reasonable target.

Staying the course

Finally, many of us start our investments with much enthusiasm but fail to persist with them through tough times.

Remember, choosing the right schemes for your SIPs is far less important than sticking with your SIPs, through market and career ups and downs over a 10- or 20-year period.



SAVE UP

- The earlier you start investments, the better
- Add mid-caps for superior returns
- Asset allocation critical to achieving goals

Sow as to reap

Aim to save at least 15% of your monthly pay cheque and invest it in line with your chosen allocation pattern



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ALERTS

UTI Equity Savings Fund launched

UTI Mutual Fund has launched a new open-ended scheme, UTI Equity Savings Fund, which opened on August 10, and will close on August 24. It would invest in equity or equity-related instruments, debt and money market instruments, and also makes use of arbitrage opportunities. According to the fund manager, the equity portion of the scheme would take a multi-cap approach with a large-cap bias.

SBI clarifies on account maintenance

State Bank of India has clarified that one could convert his/her Savings Bank (SB) account to a Basic Savings Bank Deposit (BSBD) account, free of cost, to avoid penalty for not maintaining average monthly balance (AMB). It also clarified that SB accounts under PMJDY (Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana), BSBD (Basic Savings Bank Deposit), and those of pensioners, minors and social security benefit holders are exempt from the AMB requirement. Also, charges would not be recovered from these accounts. The bank has reiterated that effective April 2018, the AMB requirement has been reduced by up to 40 per cent. Similarly, the bank has steeply reduced charges for non-maintenance of AMB by up to 70 per cent in metro, urban and semi-urban categories. Charges in rural markets were also reduced by up to 75 per cent. Its customers are required to maintain an average monthly balance of ₹3,000 for SB accounts in metros and urban areas, ₹2,000 in semi-urban and ₹1,000 in rural zones.

India Post Bank to be launched

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) on August 21. On the day of the launch, IPPB will have 650 branches and 3,250 access points across the country. It will provide services such as savings and current accounts, money transfer, direct benefit transfers, bill and utility payments, and enterprise and merchant payments. All the 1.55 lakh post offices will be linked to the IPPB system by December 31. IPPB will partner with banks and financial firms to offer loans, mutual funds and insurance policies to its customers.

BANK FD INTEREST RATES (%)

Bank	less than 1 year	Years 1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 5	W.E.F
FOREIGN					
Citi Bank	6.25	7.00	6.00	6.00	08-18
DBS Bank	6.10	7.00	7.50	7.50	07-18
Deutsche Bank	6.50	7.75	7.75	8.25	07-18
HSBC	6.00	6.25	7.00	5.00	06-18
Scotia Bank	4.00	4.50	4.50	5.00	04-17
StanChart	7.00	7.40	7.00	6.50	08-18
INDIAN- PUBLIC SECTOR					
Allahabad Bank	6.50	6.60	6.50	6.50	02-18
Andhra Bank	6.25	6.60	6.50	6.50	05-18
Bank of Mah	6.00	6.50	6.60	6.00	05-18
BOB	6.35	6.70	6.60	6.70	06-18
BOI	6.25	6.60	6.65	6.40	06-18
Canara Bank	6.40	7.00	6.70	6.20	08-18
CBOI	6.50	6.60	6.50	6.50	04-17
Corp Bank	6.35	6.80	6.50	6.50	07-18
Dena Bank	6.25	6.70	6.60	6.30	06-18
IDBI Bank	6.50	6.75	6.70	6.75	06-18
Indian Bank	6.50	6.75	6.50	6.00	08-18
IOB	6.25	6.60	6.75	6.80	04-18
OBC	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	06-18
PNB	6.35	6.75	6.75	6.25	08-18
Punjab & Sind	6.40	6.75	6.60	6.55	03-18
SBI	6.40	6.75	6.80	6.80	07-18
Syndicate Bank	6.35	6.80	6.60	6.60	07-18
UCO Bank	6.35	6.60	6.60	6.60	06-18
Union Bank	6.75	6.75	6.70	6.75	07-18
United Bank	6.00	6.25	6.00	6.00	07-18
Vijaya Bank	6.60	6.80	6.80	6.80	08-18
INDIAN- PRIVATE SECTOR					
Axis Bank	6.50	7.10	7.00	7.00	07-18
Bandhan Bank	6.80	7.40	7.40	7.40	06-18
Catholic Syrian	6.25	6.50	6.75	6.50	08-18
CUB	7.00	7.10	7.10	7.10	02-18
DCB	7.00	7.50	7.75	7.75	08-18
Dhanlaxmi Bank	6.00	6.60	6.50	6.50	08-17
Federal Bank	6.50	7.30	7.00	7.00	06-18
HDFC Bank	7.00	7.25	7.10	7.10	08-18
ICICI Bank	6.50	6.75	7.00	7.00	06-18
IDFC Bank	7.00	7.50	8.00	8.25	07-18
IndusInd Bank	7.00	7.65	7.25	7.00	08-18
J & K Bank	6.25	7.00	7.00	6.25	05-18
Karnataka Bank	6.50	7.30	6.50	6.50	07-18
Kotak Bank	7.00	7.30	7.10	7.10	08-18
KVB	6.90	7.00	7.00	7.00	07-18
LVB	7.30	7.50	7.50	7.50	08-18
RBL Bank	7.25	7.75	7.50	7.50	06-18
SIB	6.85	7.40	7.00	7.00	06-18
TMB	7.00	7.15	7.00	6.90	07-18
TNSC Bank	6.65	6.80	6.50	6.50	03-18
Yes Bank	7.00	7.10	7.10	7.10	06-18

Data taken from respective bank's website as on 10 Aug 18. For each year range, maximum offered interest rate is considered; Interest Rate for deposit amount below Rs 1 Cr. Contributed by BankBazaar.com, an online market place for financial products.

THIS WEEK IN
THE HINDU BusinessLine PORTFOLIO

Stock Calls
Want to bet on India's consumption story? Go for this market leader

Mutual Funds
Investors looking to save taxes can consider ELSS funds. Here's a steady performer

Commodity Wise
Industrial metals have been under pressure in recent times. What's the outlook?

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IN BRIEF



DLF Q1 profit climbs 56% to ₹172.77 crore

NEW DELHI

India's largest real estate firm DLF reported a 56% increase in consolidated net profit at ₹172.77 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal. Net profit stood at ₹110.70 crore in the year-earlier period, the company said in a regulatory filing. Total income, however, declined to ₹1,657.67 crore during April-June this fiscal from ₹2,211.24 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. DLF said that quarterly numbers are not comparable as it has adopted new accounting standard from April this year. PTI

Godfrey Phillips turns a profit of ₹56.74 crore

NEW DELHI

Cigarette maker Godfrey Phillips India clocked a standalone net profit of ₹56.74 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal due to lower expenses. The firm had posted a net loss of ₹3.14 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, as per the regulatory filing. Net income declined to ₹608.68 crore during April-June quarter of the 2018-19 fiscal from ₹1,052.76 crore in the year-earlier period. But expenses reduced substantially to ₹524.77 crore from ₹1,057.67 crore in the said period. PTI

VRL Logistics net slumps 28% on higher expenses

NEW DELHI

VRL Logistics posted a 28.31% drop in net profit to ₹24.18 crore in the first quarter of the 2018-19 fiscal on higher expenses. The net profit stood at ₹33.73 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, the firm said in a regulatory filing. Net income increased to ₹530.95 crore in the April-June quarter of the current fiscal from ₹497.64 crore in the year-ago period. However, the expenses rose to ₹494.34 crore from ₹448.03 crore in the said period. PTI

Shibulal's family sells 1.6 million Infosys shares

BENGALURU

Co-founder and former CEO of IT major Infosys S.D. Shibulal announced that some of his family members have sold 1.6 million equity shares (representing 0.074% of the paid-up equity share capital) of Infosys on the stock exchanges. The shares were sold between August 8 and August 10, a release from Mr. Shibulal's office said. The release said the partial monetisation was done to raise proceeds for personal reasons, including for various philanthropic activities. PTI

Hetero pulls BP drug from U.S. amid probe into cancer risks

Many firms have recalled specific batches of valsartan from the market since July

REUTERS
MUMBAI

A unit of India's Hetero Drugs is recalling some batches of the blood pressure and heart medicine valsartan in the United States, a notice on the U.S. regulator's website said, amid a wider probe into cancer risks associated with the drug.

At least a dozen companies around the world have pulled specific batches of valsartan from the market since early July, when regulators said valsartan made by the Chinese supplier Zhejiang Huahai Pharmaceuticals had been found to contain a probable human carcinogen, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA).

The notice from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said Hetero was found to be using a similar manufacturing process to Chinas Zhejiang Huahai for valsartan.

Test results from Hetero Labs show the amount of NDMA found in its valsartan active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) exceeds acceptable levels; although it is generally lower than the amount discovered in the API manufactured by Zhejiang, the FDA said. Hetero declined to comment, a spokesman in India said.



Cautious approach: The company sells valsartan in the U.S. through Camber Pharmaceuticals. ▪ C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

The company, among India's top 15 drugmakers and one of the worlds largest suppliers of HIV/AIDS drugs, sells valsartan in the U.S. through its unit Camber Pharmaceuticals, which is recalling the drug as a precautionary measure, the FDA notice said. It added that Camber had not received any reports of adverse events related to the drug. Calls to New Jersey-based Camber went unanswered on Saturday.

Indian imports

Valsartan was originally developed by the Swiss firm Novartis and sold under the name Diovan, but it is now off patent and is used in several generic medicines made by companies around the world. Hetero's website says the company has more than 30 manufacturing plants around the world.

India has temporarily suspended imports of medicines from China that contain valsartan, K. Bangarurajan, a joint drugs controller at the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, told Reuters on Saturday. Imports from elsewhere continue, he said.

Not all imports have been blocked, he said, adding that the action was taken after FDA posted a notice about cancer links to valsartan last month. European regulators said on Friday that a second Chinese contract manufacturer, Zhejiang Tianyu, had produced valsartan with the cancer-causing chemical.

NDMA is classified as a probable human carcinogen. Based on results from laboratory tests, it may cause cancer with long-term use. China and India supply more than two-thirds of all active drug ingredients used in medicines, industry experts estimate.

Tea sector suffers ₹40 crore loss on workers' agitation

Industry relieved as stir 'partial' in most tea growing regions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The recent strike demanding finalisation of minimum wages in West Bengal caused an estimated loss of ₹40 crore to the tea industry, according to industry officials. The strike was called by the Joint Forum of Trade Unions (JFT).

However, the industry heaved a sigh of relief as the strike was partial in most of the State's tea-growing areas. Known as the second flush season, the period between June and early August yields some of the best teas.

While about 50% of tea garden workers in Dooars region participated in the strike, only 20% took part from Terai region.

In West Bengal, which accounts for about 25% of the tea output in the country, tea cultivation is undertaken in the upper reaches of Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling. JFT convener Zia ul Alam said that the strike which began on August 7 was near total and spread to the Darjeeling hills as well.

The Consultative Committee of Plantations Association (CCPA), the apex planters body, had appealed to the trade unions to withdraw their agitation and allow normalcy to be restored in an industry which was facing financial stress on account of stagnant tea prices.



Uphill task: Tea cultivation is undertaken in the upper reaches of Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling in W. Bengal. ▪ THULASI KAKKAT

'Irresponsible'

The Tea Association of India (TAI), a constituent of the CCPA, termed the agitation 'irresponsible' as it was called without any notice to the industry amid ongoing talks on the issue.

A tripartite meeting was held in Siliguri, in which labour department officials outlined the progress on the issue of minimum wages, the CCPA said in a statement.

Mr. Alam, however, said that there was lack of clarity on the ₹172 per day minimum wage offered by the government at the August 6 meeting.

According to planters, the tea industry in the Dooars and Terai regions has already suffered production losses during the peak season in 2018 due to frequent gate meetings in the first half of July. CCPA secretary general Arijit Raha said that productivity and price increase were crucial for sustaining any wage increase.

Tata Motors Group's wholesales take a hit

July sales slide 5% on JLR's poor show

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Poor sales at Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) in July dragged down the overall wholesale sales performance of the Tata Motors Group by 5% in July despite a strong showing by the group's commercial vehicles division.

"The Tata Motors Group global wholesales in July 2018, including JLR, were at 92,639 units, lower by 5%, as compared to July 2017," Tata Motors said in a statement. Global wholesales of all Tata Motors' commercial vehicles and the Tata Daewoo range in July 2018 were at 40,443, higher by 29%, over July 2017, it said.

Global wholesales of all passenger vehicles in July 2018 were at 52,196 units, lower by 22%, compared with July 2017, it added.

Global wholesales for JLR were 35,007 vehicles (JLR's July numbers include 4,076 vehicles at the firm's Chery Jaguar Land Rover unit in China). Jaguar wholesales for the month were 12,427 vehicles, while Land Rover wholesales for the month were 22,580 vehicles.

On Friday, JLR had reported a total retail sales of 36,144 vehicles in July 2018, down 21.6% year-on-year, primarily reflecting transitional issues in certain markets.



Land Rover wholesales for July 2018 were 22,580 vehicles.

Market volatility

"Retails for July were down in China (46.9%), reflecting continued market volatility in the first month of the duty change as well as trade tensions. Sales were also down in Europe (26.5%) and the U.K. (18.3%), impacted by the industry wide issue of delays in WLTP certification of 2019 model vehicles," JLR said.

Retail sales were also down in North America (9.5%). However, sales in overseas markets rose 8.6%.

India 'Doing Okay' in philanthropy

Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand Vietnam 'doing better': survey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In spite of government mandating corporates to invest 2% of their net profits for corporate social responsibility (CSR), India is just 'Doing Okay' in philanthropy according to the Centre for Asian Philanthropy and Society's (CAPS) Doing Good Index (DGI), a first of its kind survey looking at factors that enable or impede private social investment.

India, along with neighbours Pakistan and China, is featured in the 'Doing Okay' cluster in DGI, just ahead of Indonesia and Mynamar.

Countries like Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam are 'doing better' while Japan, Singapore and Taiwan are 'doing well,' according to the DGI.

India and China have both recently enacted sweeping sets of reforms targeting international NGOs and funding and domestic philanthropy. India put in place the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act in 2010, which originally focused on international support for political parties.

In 2013, the Companies Act was revised to require companies with revenue of more than ₹10 billion to dedicate 2% after taxes to corporate social responsibility through approved organisations.



Select districts: Daily dashboards help monitor the progress of 'aspirational' districts, says Ajay Piramal. ▪ PAUL NORONHA

'U.S. most philanthropic'

"U.S. is the most philanthropic country in the world with philanthropic activity constituting 2% of the GDP, enough to fund one-third of worlds social development goals on an annual basis," said Ruth Shapiro, chief executive CAPS.

Ajay Piramal, chairman, Piramal Group, said philanthropy had seen good growth in India. "A 2% mandatory CSR spend had good impact as a lot more companies and individuals are contributing. We focus on education and health. We partner with government schools to achieve scale. Many of our schools are on a par with private schools.

Today, we touch the lives of over five lakh students on a daily basis. In terms of social development goals, we are behind in healthcare but we are optimistic. Today, India is a polio free country."

Talking about challenges, he said, "One very disturbing part of the India story is that many districts don't have basic infrastructure. The Prime Minister has identified 150 such districts and they are known as 'aspirational' districts. There is one such district in Uttar Pradesh, where we are working. It is 70% covered with forest and 30 lives were lost due to leopard attacks in the last one quarter. Then there is another district in Assam; during floods, it becomes [a collection of] islands and it takes people eight hours to commute from one island to another. These are some of the challenges of 21st century India."

'GDP will rise'

"Daily dashboards are prepared to check on the progress of such districts and the Prime Minister himself reviews it on a monthly basis. The entire GDP of the country will go up and we will achieve our social development goals before 2030," said Mr. Piramal.

Jamshyd Godrej, chairman Godrej & Boyce, said, "When you talk of giving, it has to start from a very young age, and [on] a small scale, which is probably missing in the corporate sector.

The industry has been the part of the problem, but it can be part of the solution, too. We have got to build a business case for philanthropy and conservation," said Mr. Godrej.

Bring in 'rule of origin': textiles body

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA
COIMBATORE

The textile industry has welcomed the doubling of import duty on 328 textile items and urged the Centre to introduce the 'rules of origin' clause for imports from Bangladesh.

The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India said in the last five years, there had been a close to 100% rise in import of apparel products. While customs duty had been raised, specific duties have seen no change. About 70% of apparel imports are from Bangladesh and China.

As the former has zero duty access for all apparel products, the customs duty hike will not impact those imports. In the case of Chinese garments, it is the Specific Duties that apply and not the Ad Valorem duty. The Confederation of Indian Textile Industry said that Chinese fabric is entering India duty free through Bangladesh.

This would affect Indian fabric production unless the Centre introduced the rule of origin clause, yarn forwarding, and fabric forwarding rules for imports from Bangladesh, it said.

'Mumbai Metro, Pune among realty investment hotspots'

Mumbai region saw highest new projects, sales in 2018: study

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and Pune in Western India and Gurugram, Noida and Greater Noida in the North have emerged as this year's top real estate investment destinations of the country, according to a study by Anarock Property Consultants.

"Beyond doubt, the MMR and Pune have remained West India's most attractive cities for real estate investment in 2018," Santhosh Kumar, vice-chairman, Anarock Property Consultants, said in a note.

"The MMR realty market has regained a lot of momentum over the last few quarters, with both sales and new supply increasing quarter-on-quarter," he said.

According to Anarock data, out of the total new supply of approximately 50,100 units across the top 7 cities (NCR, MMR, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune, Kolkata and Hyderabad) in Q2 2018, MMR saw maximum new projects with nearly 13,600 new units entering the market. "There was a 59% increase in this new supply as against Q1 2018. On the sales front too, MMR clocked the maximum housing sales as against the other cities, with approximately 15,200 units being sold in Q2 2018, an increase of nearly 26% as against the previous quarter," he said.



Noida and Greater Noida together saw the addition of about 4,500 units.

In Pune, new housing supply increased by 214% in the second quarter of 2018. Approximately 6,900 new units entered the market during this period as against 2,200 units in the first quarter of 2018.

"The new supply was dominated by two large projects in the affordable category. In terms of housing sales, the city witnessed a 24% increase in Q2 2018 over the preceding quarter," Mr. Kumar said. Maximum of the new units in these two locations were in the affordable segment (₹40 lakh per unit).

North India market

In North India, while Gurugram saw the nearly 1,150 new units entering the market in Q2 2018, Noida and Greater Noida together saw the addition of about 4,500 units. "The new housing supply in these regions saw a drop in Q2 2018 over the previous quarter. However, the sales numbers are buoyant. While Gurugram saw a 20% quarter-on-quarter rise in housing sales, Noida and Greater Noida collectively saw an increase of 25% in Q2 2018," Mr. Kumar said.

NBCC net profit jumps 21% to ₹68 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

State-owned NBCC posted a 21% jump in standalone net profit at ₹67.66 crore for the quarter ended June 30. Net profit stood at ₹55.94 crore in the same quarter of 2017-18, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Net sales increased to ₹1,625.24 crore from ₹1,260.55 crore in the year-earlier period.

https://t.me/Material_For_Exam https://t.me/TheHindu_Zone_official

IN BRIEF



Glenmark signs accord with PE firm True North

NEW DELHI

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has entered into a collaboration with private equity firm True North for its orthopaedic and pain management business for India and Nepal market. Under this, Glenmark's orthopaedic and pain management business, valued at ₹635 crore, will be transferred to a new entity to be incorporated by True North, Glenmark said. PTI

Centre notifies due date for filing GST returns

NEW DELHI

The government has modified the due date for filing of final GST sales returns by businesses with turnover exceeding ₹1.5 crore to the eleventh day of the succeeding month. In a notification, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has stipulated that details of outward supplies for July 2018 to March 2019 has to be filed by the 11th of the succeeding month. PTI

IHCL turns a ₹9.1 crore profit on higher margins

MUMBAI

The Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), the largest hospitality chain in South Asia that runs the Taj and Vivanta brands of hotels, has reported a consolidated net profit of ₹9.1 crore for the June quarter, against a net loss of ₹28.44 crore a year earlier, boosted by a rise in margins and revenue. However, on a standalone basis, the company reported a net loss of ₹16.75 crore. PTI

Cipla arm secures rights for cancer drug in U.S.

NEW DELHI

Drug major Cipla said its subsidiary has secured rights from Hyderabad-based MSN Laboratories to market and distribute colon cancer treatment drug Capecitabine in the U.S. market. Cipla USA, Inc., a subsidiary of the company, will be marketing the drug in strengths of 150 and 500 mg tablets. The pharma company's product is generic equivalent of Genentech's Xeloda. PTI

India Cements Q1 profit slides 20.5% on lower realisation

Tighter operations aid cost cutting; prices may rise next year, says vice chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The India Cements Ltd (ICL) reported a 20.5% drop in net profit to ₹21.03 crore for the quarter ended June, down from ₹26.44 crore in the year-earlier period.

Sales for the quarter fell about 7% to ₹1,360.65 crore, from ₹1,461.57 crore.

Addressing the media on Saturday, N. Srinivasan, vice-chairman and managing director, said a steep drop in net plant realisation of about ₹340 per tonne to ₹3279 had impacted the numbers for the quarter under review.

Yet, lower freight handling cost and a general cost tightening exercise had ensured that the firm could post 'reasonably better' EBIDA (earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation) albeit somewhat lower than a year earlier.

Pointing to the 16% increase in sales volume during the quarter under review to 30.75 lakh tonnes, Mr. Srinivasan said there had been a slow but sure increase in demand for cement. For one, he said, the disturbing effects of demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax had settled down.



Peak capacity: India Cements saw volumes rise 16% in the quarter to 30.75 lakh tonnes, says N. Srinivasan. ▪ R. BALAJI

For another, the sand shortage issue had also been laid to rest in Tamil Nadu, he said. The huge demand for cement from the infrastructure segment had helped spur demand, he said. ICL's plants, he added, had been running to 80% capacity, up from 67% firom a year earlier.

'Boom time soon'

Stating that ICL had sold more cement in the South in the latest quarter, Mr. Srinivasan said this was also the primary reason for lower freight handling costs incurred by the company. Asserting that ICL would run to full capacity soon, he hinted at the possibility of prices moving up in the coming months.

"It will be boom time for the cement industry by the middle of next year."

Mr. Srinivasan said that once demands picks up due to assorted initiatives from governments at the Centre and States, the industry might have to consider expansion. He said the non-trade (or non-retail) demand for cement had skyrocketed. To a question, he said cost headwinds were strong, particularly on the fuel front.

He added ICL was focusing on multi-skilling its workforce and rationalising marketing expenses to improve plant realisation, aided by technology and increasing automation levels across plants, all towards raising operational efficiencies.

Coal India net soars 61% to ₹3,786 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Coal India Ltd. (CIL) has posted a 61% jump in consolidated net profit at ₹3,786.44 crore for the June quarter of FY 2018-19.

The state-owned company had reported a net profit of ₹2,350.78 crore in the same quarter of 2017-18, it said in a regulatory filing.

Net income rose 17% to ₹25,470.86 crore from ₹21,774.42 crore in the year earlier period.

Expenses remained higher at ₹19,383.99 crore as against ₹17,837.17 crore in April-June 2017.

During the reported quarter, the government divested 0.225% stake by way of placement of shares in 'Bharat 22-ETF' After the divestment, the Government of India holds 78.32% equity in CIL, it said.

Coal production stood at 136.85 million tonne (MT) during the quarter, while offtake was 153.47 million tonne.



Time to take off: Mixed messages won't help reassure investors that the company is on an upward flight path. ▪ PTI

Jet's poor piloting exacerbates Indian airline turbulence

'Goyal has to restore confidence fast'

UNA GALANI
MUMBAI

A poor pilot can make a bad problem worse. Naresh Goyal's Jet Airways has spent the week denying it is short of cash, in talks to sell a stake, or planning large-scale job cuts. Yet the Indian carrier's failure to get its earnings signed off on time by its audit committee on time late on Thursday, pending the closure of unspecified matters, suggests profound financial problems.

The whole industry is suffering with high costs and low fares, but mixed messages won't help reassure investors that the company is on an upward flight path.

COMMENT

Shares in India's second-largest airline have fallen for much of 2018, but they crashed further this week after local media reported Jet had given pilots an ultimatum on a pay cut, warning them it only had enough cash to last 60 days.

'Chairman feels guilty'

Things turned bizarre on Thursday, when Mr. Goyal, chairman and majority shareholder, declared at the annual general meeting that he felt guilty and embarrassed investors had lost money.

The firm set up a committee to counter negative publicity. Hours later, Jet said it could not yet publish first-quarter results. Jet is in a poor position to keep investors in a holding pattern.

The airline is loss-making, has seen its domestic market share shrink to barely 13% in June, and is less punctual than rivals on local routes. Its $1.2 billion of net debt, mostly dollar denominated, means it is in worse financial shape too.

ICRA downgraded the airline's credit rating in May, citing the company's inability to pass on fuel price increases, despite large repayments due each year for the next three years.

If Jet, which is already partly owned by Abu Dhabi's Etihad, really isn't in talks to sell a stake to help recapitalise the business, then it will need to look elsewhere to refinance debt.

The alternative may be to sell and lease back more aircraft, as ICRA suggests. It could also be the first to break from the Indian stack and hike fares, which have remained almost flat for two years despite higher fuel costs, as carriers add capacity in what's now the world's fastest-growing aviation market. That would risk a further erosion of market share, but may be inevitable. Mr. Goyal has to restore confidence fast.

(The author is a Reuters Breakingviews columnist. The opinions expressed are her own)

States urged to sell surplus wind energy

'Consider spot selling of excess power'

M. SOUNDARIYA PREETHA
COIMBATORE

Wind energy generators have urged State Electricity Boards to arrange to sell surplus energy generated through power exchanges and not to back down on renewable energy generation.

This was a key resolution passed at the annual meeting of the Indian Wind Power Association held here.

K. Kasthurirangaian, chairman of the association, said that in Tamil Nadu, which has 8,700 MW of the 34,000 MW installed wind energy capacity in the country, 6,234 million units of wind energy was generated between April 1 and August 5 this year. This was 7,547 million units during the corresponding period last year.

Delayed winds

The winds started late in the State this year and evacuation can be improved, he said. Several other States have 4,000 to 5,000 MW each. Evacuation of wind energy is better in States such as Gujarat and Karnataka.



"When the load drops, the State Electricity Boards should not back down wind energy generation. Instead, they should look at options such as spot selling of the excess power or swapping it with power deficit States," Mr. Kasthurirangaian said.

Similarly, some States have settled all the dues for the power purchased from wind energy generators. In States such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the dues are pending, he said.

Italy's Benelli to roll out 12 bikes in India by 2019

Firm to kick-start operations at Hyderabad facility from Oct.

N. ANAND
CHENNAI

Italian motorcycle manufacturer Benelli, which plans to reposition itself in the 300cc to 500cc superbike segment, will be rolling out at least 12 models in India by 2019, said a senior official.

"We are making a re-entry by introducing three bikes by this year end and nine by 2019," said Dante Bustos, senior director, chief marketing officer, Benelli. "In the first phase, we will roll out TNT 300, TNT 302 and TNT 600i super bikes."

The Italian firm, which parted ways with Pune-based dealer DSK Motowheels in July 2018, recently announced its tie-up with Hyderabad-based Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI), a subsidiary of Mahavir Group, to assemble and market its motorcycles in India and is in the process of setting up an manufacturing plant in Telangana.



"The 200cc market has matured. People will look to upgrade seeking more power and better riding experience and that's why we are focussing on 300cc to 500cc bikes, which will grow more. We will offer these bikes across Naked, Adventure, Sports, Modern Classic and Heritage categories from 250-600cc. Cruizer bikes will be unveiled during 2020," he said.

According to Mr. Bustos, in the next two to three years, a lot more players would be competing in the 500CC category.

The market size for super bikes in India is tremendous. In the last three years, Benelli had sold nearly 5,300 bikes and plans to sell 3,000 units during 2019, he said.

Mr. Bustos said they would be revamping the existing dealerships with more facilities.

'India-specific'

Vikas Jhabakh, director, Mahavir Group, said Benelli was looking at setting up an R&D centre in India and make India-specific bikes that have global demand. "Besides, we are setting up the manufacturing plant in two phases. The first phase will become operational by October 2018," he said. Currently, Benelli has 18 touch points (dealerships) in the country and will add 20 more in the next 12 months.

INTERVIEW | SHILPA KUMAR

'High-risk, high-growth' is out of favour

There is activity in the economy, which will translate into earnings, says the head of ICICI Securities

ASHISH RUKHAIYAR

ICICI Securities has seen its valuation dip by more than 30% since listing in April. MD and CEO **Shilpa Kumar**, *however, said the opportunity to grow was huge and the company would benefit from the growing share of financial assets and rising equity markets. While stock markets could continue to rise amid strong earnings growth, the focus would be on quality stocks, she said. Excerpts:*

Your share price is down more than 30% post listing. Does that bother you?

■ Certainly. But the way we, as management, see it, is that the opportunity in the space is large. The commitment we have is remaining focused on our business to mine this opportunity. With demonetisation, the move to financial assets, particularly equity, has sped up and it is yet at an early part of its journey.

Also, with two thirds of our population set to be digitally connected in the next two years, the way they access information or transact is also changing. ICICI Securities, being a digital platform for financial savings, will be a natural beneficiary of both these long term trends.

But, how will you boost your business?

■ The opportunity is huge. The number of folios, or people registered to deal with the equity market, is not that high given the size of the country. Secondly, the bulk of savings still goes to banks as deposits. But the nominal rate of return is nowhere close to what the consumer would get earlier. So if you want to create a savings corpus for the future, you will have to look at other sources.



In the past, people looked at real estate as an investment, but that market has been muted and is illiquid. Therefore people have been looking at equity markets now. The third structural thing is mass adoption of systematic savings or SIP, which has come about due to sustained education campaigns by the MF houses and distributors. We as a house play on all of the three trends.

The other important thing that needs to be watched are the elections and how that pans out

The markets are at an all-time high but the euphoria is missing this time. Mid caps and small caps are 10-15% lower than their January highs. How do you see the market going ahead?

■ In the broader market, there is a dichotomy and trichotomy between these three sectors – large cap, mid cap and small cap. Most analysts, including us, are expecting good earnings growth in next three years.

This quarter hasn't been too bad in terms of earnings growth. One might argue that on a year-on-year basis, a lot of people benefitted from last year's GST impact. But on a quarter-on-quarter basis too, it's actually been quite good for a number of sectors like consumer, durables and non-durables, etc.

As we head into elections, there's a lot of activity pick-up in terms of RFQ (Request for Quotation) or tenders. Tendering has gone up very substantially across key infrastructure sectors like roads and railways. So this surely means that there is activity in the economy, which will translate into earnings.

We expect earnings growth of about 20% in the next three years, which is pretty good. That should fundamentally support the economy. The key risk is, of course, a global trade war. Oil prices currently have stabilised so that's not much of a concern right now. The other important thing that needs to be watched is elections and how it pans out.

Will the whole market be participating in the rally rather than select stocks in the next couple of quarters?

■ At this point, the emphasis on quality is paramount for most people. This has to do with the fact that there have been severe earnings dislocations or at a governance level, some stocks have got impacted.

That and a lot of structural factors like reclassification have happened. As the dust settles down and people again begin to look at the prices, earnings, and multiples, there will be again opportunities in the small and mid and mid cap space. But in the end it will also be not just the multiple but also the quality of the stock and management.

How are foreign investors viewing India in the light of forthcoming elections, global macro trends such as trade war and the like?

■ Given the way the dollar has strengthened, FPIs are turning cautious and easing up on their investments. In India, the mutual fund support, which is the retail investor participating in an indirect way, has continued. This has provided regular flow of funds to the market.

At one level it seems like global risk-off, which means with dollars strengthening, we have seen emerging market equities under performing this calendar year. On the other hand, India has done much better than the overall emerging markets.

If you take that fact and again strip it up, two trends emerge this year. One, we are moving away from high-risk and high-growth kind of stocks that people were preferring last year, to more quality, more return-giving assets, and less risk in this.

The other trend is the move away from small and mid cap because they exactly reflect these characteristics, to large caps. Also, over the years the government has allowed increasing EPFOs and PFs to invest a part of their money in the stock markets through ETFs.

With this, an enormous amount of money is flowing into ETFs and because they are investing largely in large caps, it has meant that the support in that sector has continued.

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IN BRIEF



Consumer prices rise; Fed on track to lift rates

WASHINGTON

U.S. consumer prices rose in July and the underlying trend continued to strengthen, pointing to a steady rise in inflation pressures that keeps the Federal Reserve on track to gradually raise interest rates. The Labor Department said its Consumer Price Index advanced 0.2%, the bulk of which was due to a rise in the cost of shelter, driven by higher rents. REUTERS



Tesla, CEO Musk sued for fraud over tweets

Tesla Inc. and CEO Elon Musk were sued twice on Friday by investors who said they fraudulently engineered a scheme to squeeze short-sellers, including through Mr. Musk's proposal to take the electric car company private. The lawsuits said Mr. Musk's and Tesla's conduct artificially inflated Tesla's stock price and violated securities laws. REUTERS



Automakers balk at U.S. request for information

WASHINGTON

Two automotive trade groups raised "significant concerns" over the U.S. government's request for confidential business information as it probes whether automotive imports pose a national security risk. The Commerce Department survey demands sweeping details on operations of major U.S. and foreign automakers. REUTERS



Maersk says 94 entities join blockchain platform

COPENHAGEN

Shipping group Maersk said 94 firms and organisations had joined a blockchain platform developed with IBM aimed at boosting efficiency and limiting the enormous paper trail of global container shipping. Maersk aims to expand its transport and logistics business in areas such as freight forwarding and trade finance. REUTERS

Turkish currency's freefall rocks world markets, euro

Lira's worst drop since 2001 hits global stocks, emerging markets; yen, bonds gain

REUTERS
NEW YORK/LONDON

A plunge in the Turkish lira rocked global equities and emerging markets on Friday and fear of further fallout sent investors scurrying for safety in assets like the yen and U.S. government bonds.

European shares and a gauge of global equity markets closed down more than 1%, while Wall Street also fell, though not as much. Germany's DAX index slid 2%.

The lira fell as much as 18% against the dollar in its worst day since Turkey's financial crisis of 2001. The plunge followed a deepening rift with the United States, worries about its own economy and lack of action from policymakers.

President Tayyip Erdogan told Turks to swap gold and dollars into lira as the currency tumbled after President Donald Trump doubled U.S. tariffs on metals imports from Turkey.



Seeking security: Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan told Turks to swap gold, dollars into lira as the currency fell. ▪ AP

Fears of full-blown crisis

Turkey later warned the United States that sanctions and pressure would only serve to harm ties between the two NATO allies, adding Ankara would continue to retaliate as necessary against U.S. tariffs. The lira has fallen more than 40% this year, fanning worries about a full-blown economic crisis.

Bank shares across Europe fell and the euro slipped to its lowest since July 2017 as the Financial Times quoted sources as saying the European Central Bank was concerned about European lenders' exposure to Turkey. The country is not a member of the European Union but is economically linked to it.

The dollar rose as exposure to Turkey could impact European banks and spark a domino effect as people begin to pull out of those banks and into U.S. assets, said Gregan Anderson, macroeconomic strategist at brokerage Bulltick LLC.

The flare-up in tensions has made it difficult for global investors to justify remaining in Europe and is negative for emerging markets, he said.

Policy errors created the current situation, with Turkey's central bank decision not to raise rates in their last meeting a key driver, said Charlie Wilson, an emerging markets-focused portfolio manager at Thornburg Investment Management in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"The lira has been weakening since and it's coming to a head today," Mr. Wilson said, adding the downward spiral will continue if Turkey insists on a soft landing.

"The only way to correct these policy mistakes is to really make some concrete changes on the fiscal and monetary side."

European banks slide

Shares in France's BNP Paribas, Italy's UniCredit and Spain's BBVA, the banks seen as most exposed to Turkey, fell 3% or more.

An index of regional banking shares closed down 3.2% while the pan-European STOXX 600 index fell 1.07%.

The MSCI All-Country World index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, was down 1.22% and erased all its gains for the week.

Wall Street also fell.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 196.09 points, or 0.77 %, to 25,313.14. The S&P 500 lost 20.3 points, or 0.71 %, to 2,833.28 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 52.67 points, or 0.67 %, to 7,839.11.

Investors piled into "safe" government debt, with German yields hitting three-week lows and the yield on the benchmark U.S. 10-year Treasury note falling to 2.8750% as investors sought its safety.

The safe-haven Japanese yen hit a one-month high of 113.38 against the dollar, and was last traded at 110.91.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a group of six major currencies, breached 96, taking it to its highest level since July 2017. It was last up 0.84% at 96.309.

Emerging market stocks lost 1.66%, while the Mexican peso, a proxy for emerging market currencies, shed 1.29% to the dollar.

Adding to emerging market currency woes was the Russian ruble, which weakened to 67.6825 to the dollar. Overnight it had retreated to its lowest since November 2016 on threats of new U.S. sanctions, weakening beyond the psychologically important 65-per-dollar threshold.

Oil prices rose more than 1% as U.S. sanctions against Iran looked set to tighten supply, but futures remained lower for the week as investors worried that global trade disputes could slow economic growth and hurt demand for energy.

Benchmark Brent crude oil rose 74 cents to settle at $72.81 a barrel. U.S. light crude settled 82 cents higher at $67.33 a barrel.

U.S. gold futures for December delivery settled down 90 cents, or 0.1%, at $1,219 per ounce.

WEEK AHEAD IN MARKETS

Tariffs, sanctions turmoil may overshadow EU data

The ECB has said that risks to global growth are growing

REUTERS
BERLIN

U.S. tariffs and sanctions policies are likely to keep investors on their toes in the coming week as European politicians and policymakers continue their summer break, while economic data from Germany and the eurozone will also be in focus.

Washington's latest sanctions on Russia have battered the rouble, and Turkey's lira has been hammered by concern that Ankara is sliding into a full-blown economic crisis.

U.S. President Donald Trump's determination to push ahead with sanctions on Tehran that also target foreign firms doing business with Iran has opened another battle front in addition to a much broader dispute over trade tariffs.

German business associations have warned that companies are increasingly suffering from Mr. Trump's sanctions policies – including those against Iran – as well as the tariffs he is imposing in an escalating tit-for-tat trade conflict with China.

"In terms of geopolitics, the trade war between the U.S. and China could enter centre stage again next week," ING economist Carsten Brzeski said. "Also, keep an eye on Turkey, where some kind of IMF involvement is getting closer."

Turkey's lira has plunged to record lows on concerns about President Tayyip Erdogan's influence on monetary policy and increasingly authoritarian rule, and



▪ AFP

about a diplomatic rift with Washington over Ankara's detention of several Americans including an evangelical pastor.

On the data front, Germany on Tuesday will be the last of the large euro zone economies to publish an estimate for gross domestic product (GDP) in the second quarter.

Analysts polled by Reuters expect the quarterly growth rate to pick up to 0.4% from 0.3% in the first quarter, suggesting that Europe's largest economy is humming along despite the uncertainty caused by U.S. tariffs and sanctions.

Rising risks

Also on Tuesday, the eurozone will report its second estimate for GDP in April-June. Preliminary data last month showed economic growth in the 19 countries sharing the euro slowed to 0.3% quarter-on-quarter.

Eurostat's preliminary figures for eurozone growth have often been revised up in the past, but weaker-than-expected June industrial output data from Germany and Spain have suggested this may not be the case this time.

"An upward revision would change little in economic terms, but could bolster perceptions of stable growth despite rising risks," Oliver Rakau from Oxford Economics said.

The European Central Bank has said that risks to global growth are growing as the spectre of protectionism and the threat of higher U.S. tariffs sap confidence.

Final inflation data for the eurozone due on Friday is likely to confirm that headline consumer price inflation accelerated to 2.1% year-on-year in July from 2.0% in June, mainly because of a spike in the cost of energy. The ECB wants to keep headline inflation below but close to 2% over the medium term.

"For the ECB all of this means that it can remain on track with its dovish tapering," ING's Mr. Brzeski said. "The timing of a first rate hike, however, remains extremely uncertain." The ECB plans to wrap up its unprecedented 2.6 trillion euro stimulus programme known as quantitative easing (QE) by the end of the year and keep interest rates at record lows through the summer of 2019. Surveys suggest concerns over trade have already begun to dampen investment activity which could translate into meagre growth and moderate inflation rates in the second half of the year.

"All of that should not alter the ECB's QE exit plans, but it will keep all of us busy speculating about the first rate hike," Mr. Rakau from Oxford Economics said.

Firefighting from the sky



Containing the conflagaration: Reinsurer Aon estimates that wildfires raging across vast tracts of California may result in economic costs in excess of $1 billion, with insurers expected to pay claims close to a billion dollars as well. ▪ REUTERS

Tinder parent Match gives Facebook a dating lesson

Since listing in 2015, Match shares have almost quadrupled

JENNIFER SABA
NEW YORK

Tinder is fueling Match Group's growth. Subscription revenue at the mobile dating app is growing at a triple-digit rate and pushing the company's stock to a new high. The successful model only highlights the shortcomings of Mark Zuckerberg's wannabe status.

Serious business

The swiping app that became a watchword for hookup culture among millennials has grown up into a serious business. A recently introduced premium service, Tinder Gold, which allows users to pay various prices for extra features, has taken off like wildfire. Fifty percent of subscribers shell out for the package. The younger-skewing mobile app is also a nice hedge against the group's flagship site Match.com, which attracts people in their 40s and 50s.

COMMENT

Match underscored those strengths on Wednesday when it said Tinder was on track to have more than $800 million in sales this year, double the revenue it had last year. All told it will represent nearly half of the group's top line, which analysts reckon will reach $1.7 billion in 2018, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

Shares in Match cratered back in May when Mr. Zuckerberg said his dorm-room creation was going to start a dating service for Facebook users. Turns out that was hasty. The stock jumped by more than a quarter in the two days after the company's earnings call, to a record high of $49.28.

Meanwhile the $530 billion social network is mired in a host of thorny challenges about how it handles user data and how the platform can be easily manipulated. Facebook's business model is predicated on culling sensitive data the more granular the better so brands can better target ads. The chances that might spook people looking for love is high.

Since its listing some three years ago after it was spun out from Barry Diller's IAC (which still holds more than 80%), shares in Match have nearly quadrupled. Facebook's stock has risen about 70% in the same period. Talk about swiping left.

(*The author is a Reuters Breakingviews columnist. The opinions expressed are her own*)

Samsung eyes young buyers with gaming, music-friendly Galaxy Note 9

Device is the first Android phone to support Fortnite, a hugely popular video-and-smartphone survival game; also features a Bluetooth-enabled stylus that can serve as a remote

REUTERS
SEOUL

Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. unveiled the Galaxy Note 9 "phablet" in New York in a key product launch that it hopes will attract younger customers with stepped-up features and services for gamers and music-lovers.

Introducing the Note 9 in New York, Samsung also announced partnerships with global hit game Fortnite and music-streaming service Spotify Technology SA in a stepped-up challenge to Apple Inc. in the premium-phone race.

Samsung's new focus marks a shift away from its previous positioning of the Note as a multi-tasking device popular with graphic designers and artists.

But the hefty price tag – at $999.99 for the base 128 gigabyte model, according to U.S. carrier Verizon Communications – has raised questions as to whether features such as a longer battery life and quick cooling would be enough to attract customers.

"I couldn't find anything that was eye-catching enough to prompt customers to ignore the high price tag," said Greg Roh, an analyst at Hyundai Motor Securities.

Huawei at its heels

Samsung is under pressure to jump-start faltering smartphone sales after posting its slowest quarterly profit growth in more than a year, as rivals such as China's Huawei Technologies nip at its heels with cheaper, feature-packed models.

The Note 9 will support up to 1 terabyte of memory – a 512GB version that can take another 512GB through a memory card – making Samsung the first major smartphone maker to sell a 1TB phone. The phablet – a cross between a smartphone and a tablet – will hit stores on Aug. 24, Samsung said.

Verizon said the Note 9 will be available for pre-order from Aug. 10, with the 512GB model priced at $1,249.99. Sprint Corp. will introduce the device on Aug. 24 at a 50% discount as part of a promotional scheme.

The Note 9 is the first Android phone to support Fortnite, a hugely popular video-and-smartphone survival game that was only playable on computers, consoles and Apple products until now.

It also comes with a Bluetooth-enabled stylus designed to act as a remote for snapping photos and controlling YouTube video playback. The New York event also featured a Samsung Galaxy watch and Galaxy Home speaker, a device that will use its Bixby voice assistant and compete with similar products from Amazon.com Inc., Apple and Alphabet Inc.'s Google.

Spotify will be supported on the speakers, along with all other Samsung devices – news that sent shares in the music-streaming service provider up nearly 5%.

Samsung is counting on the Note 9 to outsell the Note 8 to stem a sales slump. It said last month its flagship Galaxy S9 phone missed sales targets, sending profits in the mobile division down by a third in the April-June quarter. Samsung does not break out shipments of its smartphone models, but analysts reckon it has shipped about 10 million Note 8 models so far.

"The jury is still out if the device can boost sales of Samsung's premium category," mobile phone market tracker Counterpoint Research said in a blog, pointing to stiff competition from the iPhone X, Huawei's P20 Pro and the Find X from China's Oppo Electronics.

"The price is a big factor."

Huawei has predicted it would become the world's top smartphone seller by volume – displacing Samsung – in the final quarter of next year, while Apple sold more of its $1,000 iPhone Xs in the June quarter.



Lot at stake: Samsung is counting on the Note 9 to outsell the Note 8 to stem a sales slump and help it compete better with Apple Inc. in the premium phone segment. ▪ AFP

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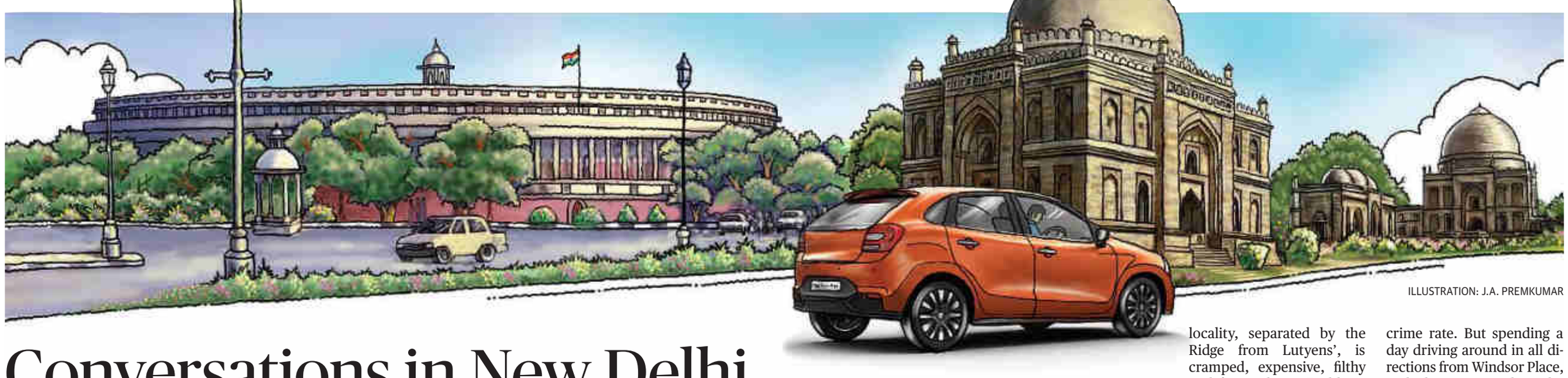


ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

Conversations in New Delhi

How it looks and feels like this is the heart of the whole country

DIKSHA PANDEY

The weekend was upon us, with light showers, the kind of weather that makes you want to step outside for a drive.

Driving around in the snobbish Lutyens' Delhi is different. This part of the city is cleaner and greener, and the roads are wider. The traffic was never bad enough to trigger terrible moods. It is a neighbourhood with a character like that of Gatsby. If you inhale the surroundings, rich is the air, and you almost feel the power the people inside the majestic buildings all around must hold.

I meet a friend for brunch at a small café across the street from the Taj Palace, a street full of big and fancy cars, and often on lock-down for VVIP movement. We discuss the week's hot news over ham sandwiches. "It's the 21st century and we need a new law to regulate mob lynching?" "They are trying to discreetly bring in amendments to wane the RTI!" "Traditions and faith can't take away the fundamental rights of women!" A cat tries obstinately to steal a bite.

Well past noon, we stop by the Lodi Gardens. "It is just unfortunate that, as a nation, we have not been faithful to our Constitution and its spirit." My friend is trying to convince me of the advantages of a short, concise constitution. "Not to mention, the common man might actually attempt to read it fully." "Let me Google it. Here, 448 articles!" "Brevity guarantees durability." I tell him we are not the U.S. of America.

It is now too humid to stay outdoors. It is also stifling to discuss the sobering realities of our country in a neighbourhood that seems to exist in parallel. We stop by the office of the Worldwide Fund for Nature and pick up some free saplings to plant around our homes. "This is good work. Why are not people and organisations with access to all kinds of resources doing more good work?"

I read somewhere on the Internet how saying "billionaire" should be a slur, as if it is a shameful thing to be. "Capitalism is a cancer on society." New statistics are out. "The world's richest 0.7% now own 46% of the world's wealth." It is immoral.

A small girl taps on our window at the red light asking for money. My friend promises to get back to her with food. "I will find her and give her the food." "How do politicians make false promises, lie and deceive endlessly?"

The sun comes down; we head back to our homes. My locality, separated by the Ridge from Lutyens', is cramped, expensive, filthy and for students. Problems of our democracy are sundry. Around me are thousands of civil services aspirants who one day will be a part of our bureaucracy.

"Will things get better?" "We can be idealistic, but power corrupts." I fall asleep, reading The Communist Manifesto, my heart full of the confusion that is Delhi.

There are a lot many things to dislike about the city. Unruly people hurling abuses on roads, the pollution, lack of respect for personal space on the Metro, the crime rate. But spending a day driving around in all directions from Windsor Place, with the crescent along the President's Estate holding you in, I see the heart of my country.

It is big money, careful planning, an architectural prize, a cité. It is elitist but I cannot hate. I drive around here to feel hopeful about our future, our politics. It is because the pillars of Parliament House radiate inspiration for all of India to be just as glorious one day. And so, the conversations must never end.

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Paper boats, gone

Waterlogging, the growing worry in the cities

RAJESH KRISHAN



My father's car is a 2001 Maruti model, so the other day when it broke down on a waterlogged road, and the water was threatening to seep into the car through the corners of the doors, I knew exactly what I had to do: pray.

And so I did – praying that the rain gods stop to rest, and the water level subsides, but to my disappointment, my prayer went unanswered. I even sang to myself the nursery rhyme 'Rain rain go away, come again another day!' while I sat in the driver's seat in awe of the unprecedented showers, but it didn't work either.

Eventually I realised that I was on the verge of being trapped there forever, and that I'd but one option left, and that was to escape; to abandon my father's prized possession, and walk – no, swim – to safety.

After a nearly two-hour ordeal, until the mechanic arrived and had the car towed to his garage, I took a bus and returned back home, but I couldn't get over the scenes of waterlogging and flooded roads that I witnessed in different parts of the city.

The following day ushered in another day of reflection. The newspapers were full of pictures of inundated roads and residential areas, which made me reminisce my memories of monsoon from my school days, and how at the time, the post-rain scenes were so drastically different from what we experience nowadays.

I'm talking about the late-1980s, when one was able to ride through the roads even in the heaviest of downpours. Back then, the cities were not concrete jungles and one could smell the scent of moist earth after the rain had fallen. In those days, it was common to see young children running around the pavements on rainy days, where they would sail their tiny paper boats in the fast-flowing rainwater.

Sadly, today, toss paper boats have become a metonym of a past that the new generation of children cannot access; the pavements, that once gave great joy, have become unusable (thanks to rampant encroachments), and the roads – meant to provide safety – have become virtual death traps.

You may blame it on poor engineering technique or climate change, but the reality is that today, the transition of waterlogging/flooding scenario in cities from bad to worse has become a pan-India phenomenon.

Of course, efforts, such as the Smart City initiative, are being made to improve the present state of affairs, but whether it will be enough is not clear.

One thing that is clear is that in the future the battle to tackle waterlogging and flooding of the cities will involve more than convincing people to build grassy front lawns, or dig underground tanks to capture rainwater from rooftops.

Municipal and State governments across the country will need to make concerted efforts and take a variety of initiatives: building soak away systems, upgrading the existing drainage structures, proactive scheduling to clean the drains early on, and forming rapid-response teams to provide timely relief to those affected – to name but a few of them, so that things become better in the future, so that our cities remain in order even during heavy downpours, so that people do not get stuck in traffic snarls for hours, so that pavements remain accessible and easy to navigate, and the paper boats be able to sail along smoothly – just the way they used to.

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The code for happiness ever after

A charming, hesitating tinkling smile, which has remained fresh in his heart all these years

ANIL GANDHI



As I do each day, I made myself a cup of tea and came to my writing table. Just then, my wife Alka came with her soft, sober smile as ever. She peered at me and my heart started beating harder, thinking that a big demand was about to come. She said, "It's June 26."

I am a historian by profession, yet forgetting dates has been my habit. I looked nervously and soon remembered that it was our wedding anniversary.

I have never given her a gift on this day; only last year was an exception when I had knelt down to offer her a rose. And at this she had reacted with a charming, hesitating, tinkling laughter that is still fresh in my mind. Such a charming, hesitating tinkling laughter she had given once before too. It was not long after our marriage when I had gone to take her from my in-laws.

At that time, I was studying Chinese and I had told her two phrases as code words which we could use anywhere. These were *wo ai ni*, meaning 'I love you', and *he cha pa*, meaning 'Would you like to have some tea?' The latter expression was meant as an enquiry if a visitor was to be served tea.

As I entered the large courtyard and went down to touch the feet of my father-in-law, standing behind his cot Alka uttered, *he cha pa*, and repeated it twice more. Evidently, she had confused the phrases, so I smiled. And then she realised where she had gone wrong, and instead of uttering the right phrase, ran inside the house with the same charming, hesitating tinkling smile, which has remained fresh in my heart all these years.

I was thinking, had she uttered *wo ai ni* (which in Hindi can mean – 'Did he not come?'), my father-in-law was sure to ask if someone else was to accompany me.

All these twenty-nine years of her company have been like god's gift to me. She has stood by me like a rock – in happiness and in grief, in abundance and in deficiency. She has worked with me shoulder-to-shoulder, and together we have treaded the path from bicycle to car, from low-quality clothes to branded ones, from cheap street food stalls to big restaurants, from small schools for children to the most renowned educational institutions in the country.

Love at one time and confrontation at another have been regular features of our married life, yet her sacrificing nature has always kept me fascinated to her. If ever I wish to say a phrase to her, it would be – *wo ai ni*.

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The right to education and aspiration

RANA PREET GILL

When my grandfather died, my dad was unceremoniously plucked out of school and told to work in the fields. My grandmother had responsibilities and she could not take care of the household and the farmland all by herself with the measly resources available.

My dad did not complain, but every morning when he would plough the fields and see kids of his age going to school his heart would churn with a million emotions. He wanted to study and he nestled the fierce desire within him day and night.

One day he finally found the courage and wept in front of his mother as he told her he wanted to be in school. She took a small loan from ahrtiya and took him to the principal of the local government school. After paying the measly fees of a few rupees, he was admitted to school again.

Scholarships all the way

He never forgot the circumstances of the family and worked hard and earned a scholarship. It covered all his expenditure and left some to be saved, out of which he gave some to his mother.

He studied at the Government Mohindra College Patiala, Kurukshetra University and later on at Punjabi University without seeking any monetary help from home.

Throughout his education he went on to win scholarships. He would tell me of a burning desire inside him that prodded him to work harder every single day. This want was created because of lack of resources.

My dad used to narrate the incidents over and over again. Every time I would listen with the same enthusiasm, wondering how a life riddled with lack of necessities must have felt.

I had a rather comfortable existence and never experienced any financial problems. My daughter gets everything on a platter. Her life is easy and neatly scripted by me with only the happy and rosy moments stashed together. She does not know how it feels to be denied the basic amenities of life. Perhaps all the kids who are mollycoddled and given too much of everything would never realise that though education is a basic fundamental right it eludes so many of their peers.

My own veterinary hospital is located next to a government senior secondary school. When I leave the premises, I see hordes of kids walking back home. Most of them come from far-away villages. Life is not easy for them, and competing with kids who have better resources would always be a challenge for them.

No less a mortal

But that does not make them lesser mortals. They look exuberant and enthusiastic. They only have to carve their own identities and find ways to survive amid fierce competition. They might not get enough opportunities but they would have to work hard and create them.

On some days I wish they don't have to struggle the way my father did for an education. Their families should not make them sacrifice their education for the basic wants and needs of life. No matter what happens, the right to education should be ensured to every child and a desire to safeguard that right must be aroused in them.

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Coping with the ways of the city and its dwellers

Big cities have a lot to offer on multiple fronts, but no one pays heed to how much we also lose there

MIRAJ CHAUHAN

Moving out of a suburb to a metropolis transformed me totally. Life in a small town is much easier in comparison to the big and smart cities. One does not have to wait for years to understand the intricacies of life in a metropolis; the mere sight of people's behaviour on the roads lays bare the general mindset of city-dwellers.

The other day it was raining in torrents, and after calling it a day at the office I sat in my car half-drenched. Mighty raindrops splattered on the windscreen as if they were coming for me. Putting my car's GPS on navigation, I started for home, and on the way what I witnessed was quite horrid. The indifferent and uncouth behaviour of many of the city-dwellers disturbed me to the core.

The poor pedestrians and bikers received innumerable douches of water by rowdy car-wallahs. Already facing atrocious weather, these uncalled for splashes by passing cars worsened the situation for them.

At a traffic signal, I spotted a middle-aged woman struggling with her scooter that had broken down. She was relentlessly trying to start the engine but in vain. Instead of showing some sympathy and extending her a helping hand, the vehicles behind her kept honking, and eventually she had to



give way, pushing the scooter away. At another signal, I found a chaotic scene. In the absence of traffic police personnel, people were jumping the signal like anything. Some of the vehicles had a close shave.

Moving ahead while crossing under a metro bridge, I found so many stranded people waiting for the rain to abate. I could see them making incessant calls and scrolling down the screens of their cell phones.

This won't happen in small suburban towns, where people are still considerate enough. During rains, many of them would slow down their vehicles in order not to affect passers-by. They have leisure at their disposal. Instead of going out and facing the hardships of rain, they would prefer sitting at home and relish the fritters.

I still fondly remember an incident when I was stranded in heavy rain. I took shelter under someone's shed and was waiting for the rain to stop. I could not move out as the streets were waterlogged. Suddenly a voice summoned me, "Beta andar aaja, nahi to bimaar ho jayega". I turned and saw an old lady at the window of that house. I went in and she gave me a towel to dry myself up.

I feel big cities have a lot to offer but no one pays heed to how much we lose. Financially we see an upsurge in our career graph, but ethically we reach a stage of bankruptcy. Indifference, lack of compassion, and self-centred approach are the demons that are on a mission.

Enjoy the rains in your high-end cars but please consider the other vehicles on road as well!

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GOMATHI MOHAN

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GOVIND DHASKE

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IN BRIEF



NASA's solar probe flight postponed by 24 hours

CAPE CANAVERAL

NASA postponed until Sunday the launch of the first ever spacecraft to fly directly toward the Sun on a mission to plunge into our star's sizzling atmosphere and unlock its mysteries. The reason for the delay was not immediately clear, but was called for after a gaseous helium alarm was sounded in the last moments before liftoff, officials said. AFP



Kesha agrees to officiate same-sex wedding

LOS ANGELES

Singer Kesha will be officiating a same-sex couple's wedding after they asked the pop star to marry them. The *Tik-Tok* hitmaker was at the premiere of her new documentary *Rainbow: The Film* at the Metrograph in New York when an unidentified couple said, "We want you to officiate our wedding." Kesha replied, "Well I do that!" PTI



Crows to pick up litter at French theme park

PARIS

Six crows, specially trained to pick up cigarette ends and rubbish, will be put to work next week at a French historical theme park. The birds will be encouraged to spruce up the park through the use of a small box that delivers a tasty nugget of bird food each time it deposits a cigarette end. AFP

Raising the horns at Wacken festival

Hyderabad metal band leaves the audience begging for more after its performance in Germany

SYED MOHAMMED
HYDERABAD

It was an endless sea of black at the Wacken Open Air (W.O.A.), a music festival held over four days in the eponymous village in Schleswig-Holstein, 80 km northwest of Hamburg, Germany. People showed each other the 'sign of the horns' in greeting and giants of the metal world converged in one place. For the Hyderabadi death metal quartet Godless, it was an opportunity to rub shoulders with these giants.

"It was surreal," says bassist Syed Abbas Razvi, who returned to India on August 10 after playing a four-song set with the band at the Headbanger's Stage. "We won the W.O.A. Metal Battle in India to represent the country at Wacken. To play on that stage, before thousands of people, at W.O.A. is a dream come true and a great learning experience. The hugely respected Brazilian thrash metal band Sepultura too played on the same stage."



Blasting off: Members of the Godless band at Wacken in Germany. ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The band, comprising frontman Kaushal L.S., drummer Aniketh Yadav, guitarist Rajiv Nidamarthy and Abbas on bass, reached Hamburg on July 30 where they camped at the Airport Hostel Hamburg for a day, before hitting the road for W.O.A. on a tour bus.

Soon after they hit the stage, the curtain drew open. What they beheld was something unimaginable.

"There were hundreds and hundreds of metalheads not just watching, but cheering for us. We played our originals *Infest*, *Empty Graves*, *Infected by the Black* and *Oneiros*," Abbas says.

The crowd, Kaushal chips in, and its hunger for metal was insatiable. "We did not expect that kind of a reaction. They kept screaming: we want more, we want more. The roar was deafening," the vocalist adds.

The band says that hitting the right notes at W.O.A. has opened a plethora of opportunities. Soon after playing the set at the Headbanger's Stage, they were offered a headlining slot at the Hot Rock Bar in Kiel, a port city north of Hamburg.

Several artist managers and promoters, the band says, were appreciative of their music and expressed an interest to have them on board.

"We were offered a slot at the Meltdown Festival in Germany next year. We met promoters from Finland and Sweden who showed interest in our music," Abbas says.

For Godless, W.O.A. is just the beginning. The quartet is now busy with the release of their second album *Swarm*. "After Wacken, we thought it best not to relax. With *Centuries of Decadence* already out, we are now working out the finer details of releasing the second one. *Swarm* will be out in November," says Kaushal.

Paris Gay Games a respite for oppressed athletes

10,000 transgenders are participating in the sporting events to showcase their uniqueness

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

The Gay Games which are under way in Paris are not just a chance to celebrate sport and diversity: they offer crucial respite to gay athletes forced to hide their sexuality in their home countries.

Unable to share the truth about being gay with his family, 21-year-old Zhang Nan flew to Paris on the pretence of taking French classes. But rather than practising grammar, he's enjoying the freedom that comes with being himself.

"My family is very traditional," he said, his broad smile disappearing.



Celebrating diversity: Ugandan transgender player Jay Mulucha posing at the 2018 Gay Games in Paris. ▪ AFP

"My friends know I'm gay, but you can't be openly gay in China. The government never talks about it."

The tennis player is part of a delegation of 69 competitors from China joining 10,000 athletes at the games.

"The competition here is very hard. But I came here mostly to find a man," he laughed.

Passionate athlete Jay Mulucha's life came crashing down when staff at the Ugandan university, where he was studying discovered photos of him in the press attending an LGBTQ event. "In Uganda, being gay is illegal. You can be beaten, arrested, evicted from your home, jailed or killed," he says. "When (university staff) got to know, they suppressed my scholarship and I had to stop my studies," he said.

Despite being expelled from the university, he wants to begin living openly as a gay man. "I didn't want to hide anymore."

For a group of lesbian dancers in Russia, what should be a simple training session is often complicated. "For some of my students, their parents don't even know about the fact that their child is gay," says Yulia Zhdanova, their heterosexual coach, who won the gold medal for International Latin dance at the games which is open to all athletes. "After another sport club was beaten by Russians, we had to lock the door while training."

In Russia, homosexuality was illegal until 1993, a mental illness until 1999 and since 2013 the law punishes acts perceived as promoting homosexuality to minors.

Visitors throng IKEA store in Hyderabad

No let-up after 40,000 customers on Day 1



Big draw: An inside view of the IKEA store on the outskirts of Hyderabad. ▪ NAGARA GOPAL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Three days after Swedish home furnishings major IKEA opened the doors of its first India store in Hyderabad, all roads for thousands of residents as well as a good number of visitors to the city seem to be leading there.

At a massive 4,00,000 sq. ft., this is one of the largest single brand retail showrooms, and yet the rush of customers is making it appear small.

"Very nice, there is no equivalent," is how Rohit, a businessman from Delhi, described the store that stocks 7,500 products. This is the first of 25 stores IKEA wants to set up in India within seven years.

On the opening day, August 9, the store received 40,000 people. There was no let up on Friday too, though the numbers are being checked, IKEA executives say, while refusing to share sales details.

When pointed that there were media reports speaking of first day sales in excess of ₹80 lakh and cumulative samosa sales of around 40,000 pieces, they respond with a smile.

Smiling service

It is the same smile with which personnel went around handling customers' queries on Saturday, whether on navigating the store, on what certain products are meant for, and if there is a change in prices in the offing.

This is the first weekend and the numbers are only expected to go up, a spokesperson said, adding that the management on Saturday had resorted to limiting the number of people on a floor at a time. It was required from a safety perspective, and achieved by diverting customers on arrival to another floor even as the footfalls were building up, notwithstanding an intermittent drizzle.

"Everything is available under one roof... they have captured everything beautifully," said Shiwani Gupta, a resident of Miyapur, who was shopping for things for her son, including a study table.

Stating that she could not speak about the quality of the products until she has used them, the finance professional in a private firm said, "The pricing seems to be okay... [Furniture] is not cheap." For IKEA, which has been sourcing from India for over three decades, and whose value the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Secretary Ramesh Abhishek has recently said stood at €350 million, the foray into retailing has been a learning experience. IKEA is keen on making itself accessible and affordable, Group CEO Jesper Brodin underscored.

11-year-old Thai bride returns from Malaysia

Marriage to 41-year-old led to uproar

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BANGKOK

An 11-year-old child bride returned to Thailand this week following widespread outcry over her marriage to a Malaysian man 30 years her senior, an official said on Saturday.

Malaysian Muslims below the age of 16 are allowed to wed with the permission of religious courts but news of the union between the girl and the 41-year-old trader went viral on social media, reigniting calls to end child marriage.

'Third wife'

The ceremony took place in June over the border in Thailand's Muslim-majority south in Narathiwat province, where the girl returned to Wednesday in the wake of "immense pressure from Malaysian media", provincial governor Suraporn Prommool said.

The 11-year-old, believed to be the trader's third wife, is undergoing mental-health counselling because of the intense level of attention, Mr. Suraporn said.

He added that the marriage was not recognised under Buddhist-majority Thailand's civil law but that it took place under the auspices of an Islamic council in Narathiwat with the consent of the girl's parents.

"We cannot do anything (to annul the marriage) because they married under the religious law," he said.

The trader, however, could face six months in jail if it is found that he did not get permission in Malaysia.

Around 16,000 girls below the age of 15 in multiethnic and predominantly Muslim Malaysia are already married, according to the most recent statistics.

Safety track



Volunteers corralling flamingo chicks before tagging them with identity rings at a lagoon in the Fuente de Piedra natural reserve, near Malaga in southern Spain, on Saturday. ▪ REUTERS

Nano therapy for cancer cure in pipeline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

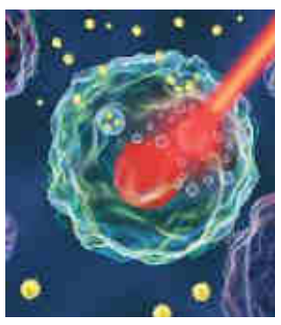
A new cancer therapy using nanoparticles to deliver a combination therapy direct to cancer cells could be on the horizon, scientists say.

The therapy, which has been shown to make breast cancer and prostate cancer tumours more sensitive to chemotherapy, is now close to entering clinical trials, said researchers from the University of East Anglia in the U.K.

A study, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, confirmed that it can be mass-produced, making it a viable treatment if proved effective in human trials.

The technology is the first of its kind to use nanoparticles to deliver two drugs in combination to target cancer cells.

The drugs, already approved for clinical use, are an anti-cancer drug called docetaxel, and fingolimod, which is used to treat multiple sclerosis.



The therapy is now close to entering clinical trials. ▪ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"So far nobody has been able to find an effective way of using fingolimod in cancer patients because it's so toxic in the blood," said Dmitry Pshezhetskiy from UEA.

"We have found a way to use it that solves the toxicity problem, enabling these two drugs to be used in a highly targeted and powerful combination," he said.

Netflix's *Insatiable* slammed for fat-shaming

Touted as a dark comedy by the streaming service, critics say it is homophobic and denigrating to transgenders

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

Netflix's new series *Insatiable*, hitting screens on Friday, was touted by the streaming service as a dark comedy meant to spark debate on society's ills.

Instead, critics have slammed it as fat-shaming, homophobic and denigrating to transgender people.

The offbeat show follows the story of overweight teen Patty, who is mocked and bullied incessantly until she has an accident that requires her jaw be wired shut – which causes her to shed significant weight.

Seeking revenge

With her new svelte figure, she vows to seek revenge on all those who attacked her, notably by participating in beauty contests.



Diet culture: A file photo of actors Alyssa Milano and Debby Ryan at the premiere of *Insatiable Season 1* in Los Angeles. ▪ AFP

The trailer prompted fierce backlash from critics accusing the show of body-shaming.

It perpetuates "not only the toxicity of diet culture, but the objectification of women's bodies," read a petition launched last month.

With the show's release on Friday, the petition - which calls for the series' cancellation – had more than 2,29,400 signatures.

Some people also skewered the show for the way it portrayed homosexuality, including apparently making light of Patty's best friend Nonnie for her repressed desire.

'Feel proud'

In another scene, a young girl who accidentally releases a nude photo of herself says she initially "figured everyone would think I'm a slut."

"Now they think I'm a lesbian and that's way worse," she says.

"Feel proud"And in another scene, Patty and a transgender woman compare being fat to being transgender, saying they both aspire to change their bodies.

"People bring with them their own emotional history and that's what makes art amazing and TV entertaining. I'm completely aware that it's not a show for everybody but we're really proud of what we did."

Netflix's vice president of original series, Cindy Holland, said the series explores issues "satirically, in a very over-the-top way."

Lauren Gussis, who created the show, called it "a cautionary tale about how damaging it can be to believe the outsides are more important – to judge without going deeper." "Please give the show a chance," she said.

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MAGAZINE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2018



On World Elephant Day, see how the mammals are adapting to human habitats
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A school founded for Muzaffarnagar riot victims has become an academic haven
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My rootedness is paying off, says filmmaker Aanand L. Rai about his success
page 5





Off track Every five minutes, a child arrives unaccompanied on the country's railway platforms.
CREATIVE COMMONS & SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

COVER STORY

India's missing children

Some 174 children go missing every day. Only about 50% of them are ever found again. But the story behind these statistics is far more complex than what social media will have you believe

BY DIVYA GANDHI & JULIE MERIN VARUGHESE

Shehzadi Malik has watched the seven-minute video clip on her phone a few hundred times these past three months. Sometimes she is looking for clues. Sometimes she is just watching it, empty of hope. Sometimes she is simply looking at her nine-year-old boy, Kabir. This CCTV footage was given to Malik by the police, on a pen drive, and it's the last record she has of her son, who went missing on May 11 this year.

In the video, at 2.25 p.m. that day, Kabir enters the frame; he is walking back from tuitions in Delhi's Nizamuddin colony – as he has done for two years – carrying a big red-and-black schoolbag on his back. His gait is jaunty but he seems to be in no particular hurry; at one point he appears to mock-bowl with his left hand, at another he stops to pick up something from the pavement, maybe a coin or a pebble. He doesn't exit the frame, he gets obscured by a row of Ashoka trees, then the video ends. "Can you see him standing behind the tree?" Malik asks, pointing to a corner of the phone screen where a portion of his black trousers is just about visible through the foliage. " Maybe he is waiting for someone, or talking to someone. He is a friendly child, he spoke to everyone in the area," she says, the possibilities clearly confounding her.

Door-to-door search

From under a mattress in her single-room home in Sarai Kale Khan village, a few kilometres from where the boy was last seen, Malik a domestic help, pulls out a wad of posters with information about the missing child, and a copy of the FIR. The police helped initially, pasting posters of the boy around the colony, and told her they have looked for him in hospitals, children's shelters, even in storm-water drains.

"The police say they're still looking, but I am not sure what they've done after the initial search. They keep asking if we have enemies who might have taken the child." With no headway made by the police, Malik's husband Aamin, a mechanic, has taken it upon himself to go door to door with the posters. He has distributed them around the neighbourhood and beyond, in Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Noida, and on the instruction of astrologers, even travelled as far as Aligarh and Mathura looking for his son in orphanages. He hasn't found answers, but continues his search, however far it may take him, if for nothing else, then "*bas dil ki tasalli ke liye* (at least for my peace of mind)," he says.

Helping neither the investigation nor Aamin's peace of mind is a WhatsApp forward that has landed on his phone featuring a purported 'child lifter'. In the video – a professionally directed one with fades and percussion to boot – a woman in dark glasses physically carries away children from bus stops and sidewalks after rendering them unconscious with drugged toffees or chloroform.



On the instruction of astrologers, Aamin even travelled as far as Aligarh and Mathura looking for his son in orphanages

We may never know Kabir's story. But for now, he is part of a staggering statistic of missing children in India: 63,407 children went missing in 2016, according to the latest data from National Crime Records Bureau, which translates to an average of 174 every day. More disquietingly, 50% of the children who have gone missing until 2016 have stayed untraced.

But the stories behind the statistics are complex, sometimes counterintuitive, and vastly different from what 'child lifting' rumours on social media will have us believe about 'gangs with weapons' or 'travelling va-

Continued on page 2

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India's missing children

Into the blue Shehzadi Malik holds a picture of her son, Kabir, 9, who went missing in May. (Below) Unaccompanied children at a railway station in Bihar. R.V. MOORTHY & GETTY IMAGES

Continued from page 1

grants'. It can be a 14-year-old who runs away with a 'friend' only to realise she's actually been trafficked. Or it could be a 17-year-old girl who elopes with her lover, and her family back home reports her as 'kidnapped'. It could be a neighbour promising a job for a young boy but instead enslaving him in a factory; or a kid who runs away from an abusive father; and sometimes, it could just be a star-struck girl boarding a train to see her favourite actor in a big city and getting lost there.

Salim*, 12, was abducted by his neighbour in Raghunathpur village in Bihar's Katihar district. In May 2016, the boy left with a man who had promised his parents that he would educate and employ Salim in his jewellery workshop in Old Delhi. Salim's father Basheer, who works as a mason in Gurugram, realised a few days later that he had lost all trace of Salim and their neighbour, and that's when he decided it was time to file a police complaint. He gave the police details of the suspect: his name, where he worked. When word got around, his neighbour's family offered Basheer money to withdraw the case, but he refused. "We just wanted our boy back," he says. Months later, the police had made no progress. "In fact, they even asked us to take the money and withdraw the case," says Basheer. So the mason took off from work to go to Delhi and scour the city for clues.

It took the police a year and a half, with some nudging from Delhi-based child rights NGO, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), who Basheer approached, to locate Salim. That year, BBA and the police conducted a rescue operation in Old Delhi and found 16 child labourers in small workshops, including one that belonged to Basheer's neighbour. Salim was not among them. A massive search operation followed; his photograph and details were shared with child care institutions and Child Welfare Committees across 20 States. Finally, in March this year, Salim was traced to a dargah in Haridwar.

Structured nexus

He is now back home with his parents, but continues to be deeply traumatised by the experience. He hasn't been able to say how he reached Haridwar or what transpired at the factory except that he saw other children being beaten. The day we spoke to Basheer, his wife had taken their son to see a psychologist. "Salim doesn't talk to us much any more," says Basheer.

Salim was fortunate to have been rescued at all**.** "The longer the police takes to investigate, the less likely the child will ever be found. Trafficking is a structured nexus where the child changes hands, travels between States," says Soha Moitra, director (northern region), Child Rights and You.

Despite a 2013 Supreme Court order that mandates that the police register an FIR of kidnapping when they receive a missing child complaint, "there is still huge hesitation on the part of the police," says Moitra. "Missing children cases are often dismissed, families are told they have 'run away' and 'will come back'. Precious time is wasted; the child could well be out of the State before investigation begins."

When Meghana, 14, was rescued after eight months, she was already 22 weeks pregnant

When Meghana, 14, was rescued after eight months, she was already 22 weeks pregnant. It took a call from her, with a mobile phone she managed to lay her hands on, for the police to track her down to Chandpur in Uttar Pradesh. Meghana belongs to Kalyan in Maharashtra. She had been abducted by a 23-year-old, a regular customer at the eatery her father worked in. They used to chat and within days of their meeting, he had convinced her to come away with him. It isn't clear if he had promised marriage. "He said he would enrol me in a good school," says Meghana.

She boarded a train with the man last July, and that was the beginning of her nightmare. The man imprisoned her in a house he shared with his extended family. "He hit me and raped me every day. He wouldn't let me leave the house," says Meghana. Meanwhile, her parents had filed a missing child complaint. They even told the police they suspected this man, but there was no headway. Fortunately, Meghna managed to get hold of a phone and dialled her aunt's number. "I told her everything and she said she would let my parents know." Meghana was rescued in March this year with the help of BBA. Her baby was later born premature and didn't survive. Now, Meghana and her family are trying to look ahead. "All I want is to go to school," she says.

Girls between 12 and 18 account for 66% of the 54,328 children reported as kidnapped in 2016. But with one caveat. "A lot of romantic relationships are reported as kidnapping by parents who don't approve of the relationship," says Bharti Ali, co-founder of Haq, a Delhi-based NGO working for towards child rights. She studied 1,957 cases in Delhi and Mumbai under the POCSO Act, and found a significant number involved consensual sexual relationships. "Courts in such cases tend to acquit the accused on charges of rape, but convict them for kidnapping. Such cases add up to the large number of kidnapping records that we come across."

Indeed, not all children in the 'missing' database have been trafficked.

Mathivanan was 16 when he ran away from home to escape his dysfunctional family in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district. His mother had died, his father was a drunk, and he didn't have a good relationship with his stepmother. "My parents argued bitterly about money and my father's alcoholism. I didn't want to live with them. I thought I'd run away and get a job somewhere far away," says Mathivanan, now 19.

He was found wandering at Villupuram railway station by volunteers of an NGO, Scope India. When he told them he didn't want to return home, they persuaded him to move into a children's shelter. The NGO reached out to his siblings and family, and after much counselling, Mathivanan has now returned home.

Every five minutes, a child lands up unaccompanied on the country's railway platforms, according to data from Railway Children, an international organisation working with street children. Many of these 'missing children' have run away to escape abuse at home or corporal punishment in school or sometimes to head off to a big city to 'become a film actor', says the Railway Children India report published last month.

Missing children cases are often dismissed, families are told they have 'run away' and 'will come back'

"We once found a young girl who had travelled 500 km from Theni to Chennai to meet her idol, the then Chief Minister Jayalalithaa," says Sheila Charles Mohan, member of the Child Welfare Committee in Chennai. Then there are children who go missing 'seasonally', for instance, during exam time or on the day results are announced, she says.

With 50% of missing children remaining untraced, Moitra believes there needs to be greater coordination between child welfare bodies and the police. Ali calls for police reform, capacity building and trained human resources to crack these cases. "Tracking mobile phones from which a child has called, mapping vulnerable areas, all this could help in investigation and prevention," she says.

Tech support

A senior officer with the Delhi Police, however, contests the 50% figure. "Families often don't report back to the police when a child has been found," he says. Delhi was one of the first to begin filing FIRs for missing children and to use a facial recognition system (FRS) to identify them, he says. The majority of cases involve children who have run away on their own, the officer believes, and trafficking constitutes no more than "2 or 3%" of the cases.

Inspector A.S. Thahira is in the middle of a rescue and reunion operation when we meet her at her office at the State Crime Records Bureau (SCRB) in Chennai. Thahira is on the phone, speaking in Hindi to a man from Bihar, who has landed in the city to take back his 16-year-old sister-in-law who ran away from home.

After reuniting several missing adults with their families in the past two years, the SCRB, led by Seema Agrawal, Additional-Director General of Police, has now taken on missing children cases too. The State is in the process of acquiring FRS software to speed up investigations, says Agrawal. In April, the Delhi police was able to trace nearly 3,000 missing children by running FRS on an experimental basis on photographs of children in government homes that were uploaded on TrackChild, an online database of missing children created by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

This technology could help speed up the process of tracking missing children, says Thahira. "Without FRS, all we have are photographs of thousands of missing children, and it can take days, even months, to trawl through the portal's database and cross-reference each photograph against pictures of children in government homes and shelters."

Salim, Meghana and Mathivanan are just three who have luckily made it back home. Salim is receiving counselling, Meghana is applying to schools, and Mathivanan has decided he will stay home for his younger brother and sister.

Kabir, like the remaining 50%, stays untraced. He appears, however, in the photo gallery of TrackChild, along with hundreds of missing girls and boys whose fates remain unknown.

*(*Some names changed to protect privacy.)*



FOCUS

Maps without borders

How to use satellite mapping to pinpoint just where aid and medical supplies need to go in disaster zones

BY JACOB KOSHY



Joining the dots A Rohingya child in front of her hut at a refugee camp in Bangladesh. (Above) Pete Masters of Medecins Sans Frontieres. AP & R.V. MOORTHY



In 2010, there was a devastating earthquake in Haiti. A majority of inhabitants of Port-au-Prince, severely impacted by the quake, lived in unmarked settlements. When aid workers and humanitarian organisations landed there to plan relief activities and spot which places needed the most attention, they often didn't have a clue where to begin. That's when a few volunteers outside Haiti used satellite images to mark out locations and create a map that could help volunteers. The response was overwhelming.

This was the beginning of Missing Maps. In the conference room of a tony hotel in South Delhi, a bunch of people listen to a bright-eyed, bald man as he takes them through several slides of Haiti, Bangladesh or London. At the end, the participants rouse their laptops and find themselves scanning Niger, one of the poorest states in Nigeria.

Editable maps

Unlike the richly detailed blueprints one normally finds on Google Maps, where red, orange and blue ribbons plot the most efficient ways to reach a destination, the Niger maps are bare and, strictly, don't quite qualify as maps.

There are no location marks, names of places, signposts. "This is where Missing Maps comes in," explains Pete Masters, Medical Innovation Advisor at Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), which along with the American and British Red Cross organisations co-founded the project.

Masters has been involved with Missing Maps for a few years now. He is in Delhi to conduct a training session and explain the project, which builds on OpenStreetMap, a 2004 initiative that aims to create an 'editable' map of the world. It is analogous to how Wikipedia has positioned itself as the world's largest editable encyclopaedia. Missing Maps describes itself as "... an open, collaborative project in which you can help to map areas where humanitarian organisations are trying to meet the needs of vulnerable people."

In Port-au-Prince that fateful winter, "more than 600 individual contributors used satellite imagery donated by NOAA, GeoEye, DigitalGlobe, CNES, Google, along with aerial photography from World Bank/RIT flights, to hand-digitise the entire city of Port-au-Prince in astonishing detail," as Tyler Radford, Executive Director of OpenStreetMap wrote in a 2012 blogpost.

Basically, just as commercial organisations are using satellite images and mapping to assist in taxi-hailing or food delivery, Missing Maps is using the same images to help humanitarian organisations to efficiently deliver aid and medicines in disaster zones.

Over the years, Missing Maps has seen 1,32,000 volunteers contribute time and expertise to make places come alive on maps. With many volunteers mapping places they've never visited, mistakes creep in. But "different volunteers, sometimes other organisations and NGOs, will go out on the field for verification," says Masters.

An "unmapped and unmarked" place is akin to a living person being "non-existent", says Peter Paul de Groote of MSF

Tracing shapes

Peter Paul de Groote, the Indian director-general of MSF, says that when a place is "unmapped and unmarked", it's akin to a living person being "non-existent". de Groote recounts a relief trip conducted in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake. Given the devastation, the only mode of transport was helicopter. "We had to rely on an aerial view to gauge the damage... there were no maps. Once, we returned from a location and only later realised that we'd missed a massive settlement just round the corner," he says.

The volunteers at the Delhi session – this is the second one in the city – are a mix of software engineers, students, marketing professionals from the digital space. Most of them have heard of the mapathon from their social media networks and are attending out of curiosity. Some are motivated by altruism. Srishti Singh, a software developer, says her professional life is consumed by coding. "This seemed different... I'm comfortable with the concept and am thrilled that I am helping a humanitarian cause." Aryaman Jain, an environmental engineer, has worked on digital mapping as part of course work, and is keen to learn about new projects that require his skills.

Tracing out shapes of buildings and structures is tedious work and Masters says that one of the challenges is keeping people motivated. On average, most people don't spend more than an hour on a project. Over the years, though, some people have chosen to convene and map together. "I know folks who don't know the names of their colleagues but have formed lasting communities with fellow mappers," he says.

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FIELD NOTES

From Alugunoor to Oregon

A programme in Telangana that helps children from the most marginalised communities get into India's most elite colleges







Empowered (Clockwise from above) Students of the welfare school in Gowlidoddi; at an eye health programme on campus; during lunch break. NAGARA GOPAL

BY SERISH NANISETTI

One girl has climbed Mt. Everest, another has taken to skydiving, while a boy skims the Arabian Ocean in a yacht off Goa when not in the classroom. Nothing out of the ordinary, you might say.

But once you know where these youngsters come from, the story becomes remarkable. They are only three of the roughly 28,560 students who are studying in Telangana's government-run welfare schools where some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised children get a shot at a better life.

This year, 100 of them broke into the merit list to get admission to Delhi University's hallowed institutions such as New Delhi's Miranda House, Lady Shri Ram College and Ramjas College. Others secured admissions in Pondicherry University, Azim Premji University and more. The students have also cracked the tough joint entrance exams to IIT and other institutions.

Astonishing success

A world away, on the banks of the Manair, a tributary of Godavari, the quietude of expansive paddy fields, grazing goats and mango orchards is broken by the low thrum of classroom chatter and the occasional raised voice of a teacher.

I am at the riverside Telangana State Centre of Excellence at Alugunoor in Karimnagar, about 160 km from Hyderabad. The school, run by the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TSWREIS), doesn't look like your usual utilitarian government schools.

The classrooms are arranged around a large leafy courtyard. Inside, the teacher explains lessons in English, the students nod and occasionally jot down points. A girl at the back has her head down on the table.

At the heart of the astonishing success of this programme is the push to use English for teaching and communication, a shift that happened in 2015. "Earlier, children were wary about English and scared of making mistakes. Now, they are highly motivated. They don't see it as a challenge, but as something they should get on with," says K. Krishnaveni, who teaches social studies at the school.

These students are now outperforming their counterparts from other parts of Telangana. About 90% of these students passed the Class X board exams in 2017-18 compared to the State average of 83.78%. Similarly, in the Class XII exams, 86.47% of the welfare school students passed compared to the 67.25% State average. This, when politicians across India vociferously oppose English as a medium of instruction instead of regional languages.

"English is a language of empowerment," says R.S. Praveen Kumar, the IPS officer who heads TSWREIS. The change happened when a farm labourer's daughter spoke in English to the Chief Minister.

"The girl was from his village of Chintamadaka; her parents most likely would have worked on his farm. That's when K. Chandrasekhar Rao agreed to all-English schools," says Kumar with infectious enthusiasm.

The government's willingness to pay for the small expenses to upgrade the children's skillsets has given them confidence

Race for admission

Kumar is a first-generation learner whose mother was rescued from child labour. He was a student of the first batch of welfare schools for backward class students started by the then Chief Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao in 1971.

Later, the Thanjavur-born bureaucrat S.R. Sankaran expanded the network, and they now number 268. The government plans to add 108 more schools. And, as quality improves, there's a race for admission. Three times the number of students have applied this year for the 28,560 seats.

Interestingly, the institution has developed an old boys' network as well. "Last year, 12 students got admission to Delhi University. This year, it's 100 students. Kumar's son, who is studying in Delhi, helped do the groundwork required for processing applications and understanding admission procedures," says K. Vinayakala, who handles alumni affairs for TSWREIS.

This is Kumar's seventh year as admin head. "The earlier heads of the society had very short tenures. I've been given a lot of freedom," he says. And he knows how to use the freedom, as can be seen in the Telangana budget paper, which almost reads like a family budget. It lists field excursions, movies, books, magazines, horse riding (at ₹1.5 lakh for 40 students), newspapers, special coaching and sports.

Small details

Everyone knows that governments are willing to invest in infrastructure but become tight-fisted when it comes to maintenance. It is this willingness and vision to pay for the small expenses to upgrade these children's skillsets that has created a palpable sense of confidence among them.

A confidence that can be seen in the eyes of K. Sumalatha, a Fellow of the Kennedy Lugar Youth Exchange & Study Program, who spent 10 months in Oregon in the U.S. living with two host families. "I dream of becoming a doctor. I am good in biology and can crack the competitive exam," she says, using a vocabulary and a language that her family of daily wage workers from Khammam will scarcely understand.

"I want to be an IAS officer after I finish IIT," says P. Shankar, in a matter-of-fact manner. His village Timmaypalli in Mahbubnagar district has no hospital, transport or piped water. "If I become a civil servant I'll be able to take care of these needs," says the Class X student who cracked the National Science Test and whose name is inscribed on the electron microscope he won as a prize.

"When we admitted our daughter here we thought she would study like everyone else and then look for a job. We can't believe she is now at one of Delhi's top colleges," says a proud Ranga Devi, whose husband works for a municipal contractor. "She sends photographs every day, to show us her friends, how she is living there. She wants to be an IAS officer..."

The lunch bell rings and the students disappear in a flash. They troop into a large dining room carrying their own steel plates. Today, lunch is a spicy curry of boiled eggs plus dal, rasam, curd and rice.

The noise rises to a cacophony as the hungry children race around finding places to sit near their friends. Menus are pre-planned and change over the week, with meat, chicken, vegetables and egg included regularly. It's monitored online from the Hyderabad headquarters with frequent inspections.

If there's one thing you would want to improve? "Sanitation. I would like the sanitation to be improved," says one of the girls. She definitely has one of the qualities of leadership: Speaking her mind without fear.

FOCUS

Lessons in fellow feeling

Founded for Muzaffarnagar riot victims, the school today celebrates Diwali and Eid with equal gusto

BY ISHITA MISHRA

Sir Syed National School, part of an under-construction building that also houses a small mosque, stands at the junction of two narrow lanes in Muzaffarnagar's Jaula village. It looks nondescript. Yet it is remarkable in many ways – founded in 2016 as a primary school especially for the Muzaffarnagar riot victims, the school has 300-plus students today. That's not all. This year, over a dozen Hindu students took admission here.

The school is quite state-of-the-art: equipped with computers, audio-visual classrooms, and a well-stocked library. The campus has Wi-fi, solar power connectivity, and CCTV with night vision. The building was constructed using a ₹51 lakh donation from the staff and students of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) for the riot victims.



Studying in harmony

When Lt. Gen. Zameeruddin Shah (retd.), former vice-chancellor of AMU, founded the school two years ago, almost all the students were Muslim boys from nearby villages. Now there are girls too, wearing hijabs over their sky blue-and-grey uniforms. "The school has students till Class V now, but plans to upgrade by one class every year till Class XII. It charges students a minimum fee and runs on a 'no-profit-no loss' basis," Shah tells me.

The school gets the full support of both Muslim and Hindu communities, with students celebrating all festivals – from Independence Day to Rakshabandhan, Diwali and Eid with zeal. Prayers are recited in both Hindi and English; and Hindu students get moral science lessons when Muslim students are taking Quran classes.

The teachers – all with B.Ed degrees – stay on campus in quarters equipped with kitchen, dining hall and common room.

The day I visit the school, Shah is there too on inspection. "I have especially come to meet Razia," says Shah, entering the kindergarten class of about 50 children.

The class is headed by 28-year-old Razia Naseem, who hails from Bhajanpura in Delhi. Razia drives to the school in Muzaffaranagar, some 120 km from Delhi, on a scooter. She is the only differently-abled teacher of Sir Syed National School.

Zoya is very happy that Vaishnavi, a friend from her previous school, has joined her here

Missionary zeal

She tells me that the only reason she joined a school in a a remote and communally sensitive town, in spite of her disability, is because she wanted to do something for the kids who lost everything in the Muzaffaranagar riots.

"It was obviously a challenge to convince my parents. All the female staff members have this problem – nobody wants to send their girls to live all alone here. But it's okay. I am happy here," says Razia.

The eight teachers also teach around 50 kids from very poor families in a three-hour shift that starts at 3:30 p.m. after school hours. "The second shift is 'Roshni' – the 'academic intensive care unit' – for kids who cannot afford even the nominal fee charged here. Our teachers go from door to door to convince labourers and poor farmers living nearby to send their kids to the afternoon shift so that they can help their families while continuing their studies," says Salman Jafri, one of the members of the school management committee.

Teachers work with missionary zeal in spite of the constraints of living and working in a remote rural region. No student takes extra tuitions. Almost all the students are on a Whatsapp group, something unusual in rural schools. And they are all set to launch a school app on August 15 with the punchline 'Truly local, amazingly global'. "The school has succeeded in its aim of becoming a secular institution," says Jafri.

Zoya, who is in Class V, was very happy when Vaishnavi, a friend from her previous school, joined her here. The two come to school and leave together. Maria, who is in Class IV, doesn't like wearing the hijab – she says the teachers never ask her to wear it for the entire day.

"Hijab is only for the Quran class. For the rest of the day, the girls can remove the head-cover. It's hot and we understand that students won't be able to concentrate much if they are uncomfortable," says Dania Riaz, one of the teachers.



Young minds Lt. Gen. Zameeruddin Shah (retd.) interacts with a student; (top) a classroom session in progress. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Maria, who is in Class IV, doesn't like wearing the hijab — she says the teachers never ask her to wear it for the entire day

The writer is a U.P.-based crime and political journalist with a penchant for human-interest stories.

CREDITS



Jee Veerey
8 min, 37 sec
By Bloodywood

Heavy metal band Bloodywood's song, translated, 'Live, Brave One' is about fighting mental illness. It has the backdrop of the calm grasslands, forests and streams of Himachal Pradesh and speaks of braving the rough terrains of mental trouble. With its mind-thrashing guitar, heart-beat-increasing drums, and lyrics urging one to "talk back" and walk the "valley of death, head high", the song certainly is inspiring. Bloodywood has purchased 60 counselling sessions for anyone who wants to reach out. The details are in the video. The sessions will remain anonymous, and all the counsellors are licensed professionals.



Campaign advertisement for Ron DeSantis
30 sec

Ron DeSantis, a Republican gubernatorial candidate in Florida, U.S, released an incredible campaign advertisement this month. Meant to be tongue-and-cheek (hopefully), it is full of love for President Donald Trump. In fact, DeSantis's campaign pole is that he has Trump's endorsement. In the video, DeSantis is seen urging his little daughter to "build a wall" with toy blocks. "Then, Mr. Trump said, 'You're fired,'" he says holding his infant son, Mason, in one arm and Trump's book, *The Art of the Deal*, in the other. The polls are to be held in November.

A curation of some of the most interesting news films and videos from around the world.

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SPOTLIGHT

The secret ingredient

Recipes, doodles, sketches and stories make artist Shanu Lahiri's book *Tabled* an art project, a living installation of memories

BY KUNAL RAY



Tales of Lahiri's generosity abound. From spending time with students who dropped in to rustling up dishes in a jiffy



On the table (L to R) A sketch by Shanu Lahiri; the artist photographed by Eric Parker; the book cover. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Shanu Lahiri received her first lessons in Chinese cooking from a Chinese vendor who used to pass by their house every afternoon

Nobody who went to meet painter and art educator Shanu Lahiri at her Lake Town home in Kolkata ever left unfed. From fixing quick salads to preparing elaborate meals, there are numerous stories about her many experiments in the kitchen. Unsuspecting friends have found strange *saags* on their plate. The Oolong tea leaves that someone had gifted her had been given another life – she had taken the steeped leaves, chopped them up, tempered them with garlic and red chillies, and served them without missing a beat.

The persistent demands for Lahiri's idiosyncratic recipes have finally led her daughter Damayanti to publish *Tabled* (*www.samparkglobal.in*), a delightful collection of recipes, anecdotes, paintings, doodles and scribbles. Teeming with Lahiri's artworks, *Tabled* is designed by her nephew and renowned contemporary artist, Chittrovanu Mazumdar.

Recipes and recollections

Lahiri, who died in 2013, was an acclaimed renegade of the Kolkata art scene. Refusing to work with established art galleries, she carved out alternative spaces to exhibit her work. With students from local schools and colleges, she undertook massive public art projects in the 1980s to beautify the walls of the city marred by Naxalite manifesto and political graffiti. The walls became her canvas.

In 2010, she was invited for a similar project in Hyderabad where she, along with children from local schools, painted over the walls of the Lakshman Bagh temple. Her last big exhibition, which was also a retrospective of sorts, was held in 2012 at a friend's spacious apartment in Kolkata's Ballygunge area. Lahiri was present almost every day to meet the scores of people who came to see her paintings, on show after many years.

When I went for the exhibition, she held my hand, gave a guided tour, and then offered me some home-made *sondesh*. Lahiri hailed from one of Kolkata's most artistic families. Her brothers were littérateur Kamal Kumar Majumdar and the noted painter, Nerode Majumdar. She studied at the Government College of Art & Craft in Kolkata, and later went to Paris on a scholarship. Her Parisian experiences and other memories are recorded in her fascinating memoir, *Smritir Collage* (*A Collage of Memories*, 2001).

Leavened with stories

Tales of Lahiri's generosity abound. From spending time with eager students who dropped by to consult her on their work to creating anti-nuclear pamphlets that she would personally distribute, to rustling up dishes in a jiffy, she was always up to something. So much so that people often wondered when she got the time to paint.

The recipes and anecdotes in *Tabled* were originally written in Bengali and later translated into English by Damayanti and Manjusmita Bagchi, with a little help from friends. While reading *Tabled*, several questions occurred to me. Can a book be an art project, a living installation of memories? Is a book an archive? *Tabled* seemed to be all of these and more.

Damayanti writes in the foreword, "Rummaging through memories, our table laden with food and leavened with stories stands out. Acting as a unifier, a space of engagement, a strong narrative developed with the table at the centre. Rarely was it only the family around the table – house guests, friends (and their friends), relatives, neighbours, drop-ins. *Tabled* has been conceived largely out of the persistent demands for my mother's recipes from satiated diners and was a work in progress for her, almost till she passed away. It is a free flowing anecdotal installation, compiled in no particular direction – an assemblage of illustrations, photos, quirks, recipes and minor narratives."

Mortar and pestle

Several recipes included in the book don't mention exact measurements. Lahiri believed that knowing how to use the approximate measure is key to being a proficient cook.

In the opening section of the book, she laments the use of powdered spices that come in bottles or packets as against the wooden platter arranged with spice pastes but nowhere is she dismissive of modern cooking.

Instead, she says, "However, is there any harm in holding on to some of the methods we have learnt from the past? For instance, there were different ways of cutting vegetables. The potato was cut in a certain way, when it was for the *kaliya* or for the *jhol* or when it was fried or to be put into *shukto*, or *chocchori* or *dalna* as per tradition. We unwittingly follow the same pattern. If the generations ahead continue to follow these traditions, the result perhaps can only be good."

Tabled is also a book about people and food memories. Newly married, Lahiri received her first lessons in Chinese cooking from a Chinese vendor who used to pass by their house every afternoon selling his wares. One day she stopped him and asked if he could make her fried rice. He instantly agreed to do a demonstration.

Another story features her husband Prabhat Lahiri's encounter with Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan on a train journey from Bombay. The Ustad very kindly offered him some parathas and kebabs. From her husband's description, she instantly knew these were Padmini kebabs. Later, when she made them at home, Prabhat certified that they were indeed very close to what he had eaten on the train.

In 1972, Lahiri travelled to the U.S. and Canada at the invitation of sarod maestro and good friend, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan. She would often have Kentucky Fried Chicken, enjoying it thoroughly. Upon returning to Kolkata, she evolved what she fondly called the Calcutta Fried Chicken.

She would set up food stalls during Durga Puja selling *ghughni* and *alur dum*, among other delicacies. Curator and close associate Sounak Chacraverti recalls, "Her cooking was akin to the life she led, replete with experiments. She cooked and fed people with affection. That was her secret ingredient."

The writer is a full-time foodie who sometimes chats about literature with unsuspecting undergrads at Pune's FLAME University.

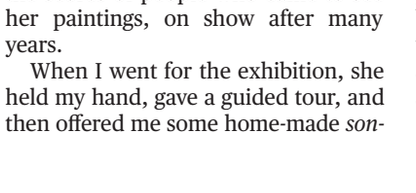
SCANNER

The Progessive Artists' Group



The Progressive Artists' Group was formed in Bombay right after Independence. The exhibition, 'The Progressive Revolution: Modern Art for a New India' (September 14-January 20, 2019) by Asia Society Museum, New York, will examine the ideology of the Progressives and explore the ways in which artists from different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds found common cause at a time of massive political and social upheaval. Works on show are from the Group's founders — K.H. Ara, S.K. Bakre, H.A. Gade, M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, and F.N. Souza — as well as from later members like V. S. Gaitonde, Krishen Khanna, Ram Kumar, Tyeb Mehta, Akbar Padamsee, and Mohan Samant.

India-U.S. friendship



The exhibition 'Celebrating 70 Years of US-India Relations' is on at American Center in Delhi till August 14. There are a few gems: former U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt sits on the ground, trying her hand at the charka, during her visit to Delhi in February 1952. From recent times we have Barack Obama on his presidential visit to India in 2010 posing with students of St. Xavier's College in Mumbai. As further proof of India-U.S. friendship, there's New York's Times Square clogged with yoga enthusiasts at the all-day yoga event in 2016.

The body transformed



The title of the exhibition opening at The Met Fifth Avenue on November 12 (till February 24, 2019), 'Jewelry: The Body Transformed', says it all. What is this thing that we love to wear and that changes the wearer in the blink of an eye? Why do we wear it? What meanings does it carry? Traversing time and space, the exhibition explores how jewellery acts upon and activates the body it adorns. There will be 230 objects drawn almost exclusively from The Met collection. A dazzling array of headdresses and ear ornaments, brooches and belts, necklaces and rings will be shown along with sculptures, paintings, prints and photographs.

STAGE WHISPERS

Gobsmacked by change

There was a time when being able to "just do theatre" was an unheard-of luxury. Not any longer



AKARSH KHURANA
is a theatre producer and director and hence often broke. To cope, he writes and directs films and web series and occasionally acts, albeit reluctantly.

A couple of years ago, I got fortunate enough to be cast in a film that was shot entirely in France. So I spent close to 45 days there, of which I shot for about 12. I snuck in a holiday with the wife, saw the sights, caught a few plays, and ate great food. But this article isn't about my Parisian jaunts, but about an amazing man I met then.

One particularly overcast morning in Paris, I was assigned a new car with a new gentleman at the wheel waiting to take me to the shoot. During the drive, we started speaking, and he asked what I did back in India. His eyes lit up when I mentioned the theatre group and he said he was a playwright. A published playwright, he said, and one of his plays was running in the city even as we drove.

Back in the day

Amazed, I quickly searched for him on Google, and not only had four of his plays been published and performed, but the comedy showing then was a massive hit. The cab, however, was his main source of income, and he had put in a request to be used by shooting crews so he could chat with actors. I was (and this is a word I've been wanting to use ever since) gobsmacked. And it got me thinking.

Today, fortunately, a lot of actors and writers can live off their acting and writing. But back in the day, theatre could never be the main source of income. I had a corporate job for two and a half years, because of which rehearsals usually started after dinner and went on into the early hours of the morning.

My wife worked bizarre shifts for an airline back-office, and showed up bleary-eyed for rehearsals. We learned lines on long bus or train rides to work, and rehearsal times were set in stone, because not everyone had a mobile phone and calling people's workplace lines was often taboo.



Love's labour Today, actors can just act, and writers can just write. SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

We've moved from rehearsals on a terrace where we ate homemade aloo parathas to posh spaces with unlimited cappuccino

Most of the people we worked with back then were juggling a salaried job and their passion for theatre. People found respite from their family business/ office politics/ college assignments in rehearsals. Graphic designers and advertising executives moonlighted as playwrights. Being able to "just do theatre" was an unheard of luxury. When I finally quit my job, and hadn't got any paying work outside, I was for a while "just doing theatre", and this information was greeted with raised eyebrows, and a mixture of awe and pity.

Today, there are drama schools, and a multitude of workshops, and much more productions and opportunities. Casting directors have understood the value of theatre and it is now their happy hunting ground for films, and more importantly, web series, which have opened up so many new jobs.

Today, actors can just act, and writers can just write. Sure, there may be the occasional soul-selling for extra cash, which is essential, but at the end of the day you can do what you love, and not something else to earn money.

We have just opened a dance drama that rehearsed almost every day for three months. A dozen actors showed up for almost every rehearsal and workshop, through the day. If they had availability issues, they came for another rehearsal or show. Only one girl was giving her law exams simultaneously. What was once the norm is now clearly a minority.

Validated by heart GIFs

A question that arises, though, is this: Did we value theatre more back when we had to pull off every trick in the book to manage it? And do the new kids on the block feel the same passion for it, or do they take it a little bit for granted?

We have moved from muggy rehearsals on the production girl's grandmother's terrace, where we would eat homemade aloo parathas that an actor's mother had sent, to posh air-conditioned rehearsal spaces with unlimited cappuccino and lunches ordered from Subway.

Actors have gone from being overly grateful for any cash they received from a well-attended show's box office to negotiating fees before coming on board. A theatre critic's review used to be awaited and would matter, but they're a vanishing breed now and heart GIFs on an Instagram story is validation enough.

These are not complaints, mind you, but amused observations of the changing times. I'm actually quite pleased that there is a semblance of infrastructure and professionalism now. Just like I'm thrilled that social media is now such an effective tool of publicity and gratification. Theatre is still not lucrative enough, and I've written enough in the past about the problems we face to pull off a new production.

So what I guess I'm saying is that the struggle is still real, but the circumstances are perhaps a little less uncomfortable.

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BIG SCREEN

'It all boils down to loyalty to the story'

Aanand Rai is showing exactly how to break the art-commerce divide in Bollywood

BY NAMRATA JOSHI



This too shall pass "There is no legacy to live up to. I am not answerable to anyone," says Aanand Rai. PRASHANT WAYDANDE

Filmmaker Aanand L. Rai and I are having a Gulzar moment in the middle of a feverish Monday afternoon in Andheri. Taking off from the song in *Aandhi* – 'Fursat ke raat din' – we get nostalgic about growing up in a laidback, unhurried Delhi, sleeping under the stars on the terrace, and listening to Hindi filmsongs on the transistor late into the night.

"Those were the days when parents had time to spend with their children, and even if families could barely make ends meet, there was always enough food on the table, even for guests. We have become more formal in our interactions now," says Rai. According to him, it's these little joys that he consciously seeks out in the worlds he creates in his stories.

Over the years he has come to be known for bringing alive the Hindi heartland on the big screen – the bylanes of Varanasi, Kanpur, Haridwar, Lucknow, Agra, Amritsar. He has created his own updated, contemporary, colourful version of 'small town cinema', parallel to Bollywood's metro and NRI-centred flicks. "I am a true-to-life location kind of person, someone who wouldn't have even seen film sets," he says.

The *fursat* or leisure he is reminiscing about is entirely missing from his life at the moment. Things couldn't have been more hectic at Colour Yellow Productions. He is busy wrapping up the shoot and working on the post production of the biggest film of his career, *Zero*, in which he directs Shah Rukh Khan in the role of a dwarf.

First of sorts

Meanwhile, Rahi Anil Barve's period horror-fantasy, *Tumbbad*, which Rai has come on board to present, will be the first Indian film to open Critics' Week at the next Venice Film Festival. Shortly after, his co-production with Phantom Films, Anurag Kashyap's *Manmarziyaan*, will première at Toronto International Film Festival. In the middle of all this, his team is busy looking into the promotion of another production that releases later this month – Mudassar Aziz's *Happy Phirr Bhag Jayegi*. The plate couldn't have been so full in the last few years even for top-of-the heap production houses like Yashraj Films and Dharma.

> ***Rai has come to be known for bringing alive the Hindi heartland on the big screen***

Spinning around

Rai's films might be travelling to Venice and Toronto, but the tight schedule at home (*Zero* has to hit the theatres around Christmas) makes him unsure if he'll make it to those cities. He has just returned from a morning shoot at Mehboob, and squeezes out a languid hour for us.

Rai started off as an engineer, but scared of the routinised life, he decided one day to take a dramatic detour into cinema, starting off by assisting his brother Ravi Rai in television ventures. "I was afraid that I would even say 'I love you' to someone in a cold and calculated way," he says about his tech days.

Since 2007, when he made his directorial debut with *Strangers*, Rai has had a slow and steady rise to fame, with the *Tanu Weds Manu* franchise and *Raanjhanaa* being the game changers. The last couple of years, in particular, have turned his studio to one of some reckoning in Bollywood.

An organic process

He calls it an "exciting and challenging roller coaster ride" but one that wasn't planned. "It has been an organic process. There is a big and diverse slate of films, but what is more important is whether we are getting our creative juices right, whether we are enjoying ourselves," he says.

It's not just the festival outings of *Newton* and *Tumbbad* that give him a high but that there's an eager audience and box office potential back home as well, pointing at the possibility of breaking the art versus commerce divide in cinema. These may have been atypical ventures for him to have had a stake in, but he candidly admits that *Newton* made the same return on investment as the more mainstream *Tanu Weds Manu*.

It all boils down to stories, each requiring different economics, approaches, treatments, casting and budgeting. A *Shubh Mangal Saavdhan* demanded Ayushmann Khurana and Bhumi Pednekar just as *Zero* needed SRK. "More money can at times spoil the tone and tenor of a film," he says. And, in his book of filmmaking, loyalty to the story is of utmost significance. "I am scared of damaging a story; a story should never go waste," he says.

Sticking together

Writers then have a special place in what he calls the Colour Yellow Family, which incidentally gets its name from Rai's favourite colour. Apart from Hitesh Kewalya, Kanika Dhillon, and Amit Masurkar, there is his long-standing writer, collaborator, partner Himanshu Sharma. "We got together very early in life, we've been together through trying times. We can't leave each other now," says Rai.

There's something decidedly old-worldly about Rai. He appears to be unfazed and easygoing with success and prosperity. He is contented, a rare achievement these days. "I am still not calculating profits for myself," he says, "I have a home, family, car and work. As a person with a middle-class upbringing, I couldn't have asked for more. I might upgrade to a bigger car, but even that will come only with four wheels. An excess of money takes away something vital from you."

A bonus after all

He attributes this mindset to being the son of teachers. "There is no legacy to live up to. I am not answerable to anyone. Whatever I have achieved is a bonus." Ask him the formula of his success and he says it's his honesty with the audience: "It's my rootedness that is paying off and taking care of me. If I lose my transparency, I will lose it all."

> ***He candidly admits that Newton made the same return on investment as the more mainstream Tanu Weds Manu***

After more than a decade in Bollywood, he still considers himself a 'director', not a 'filmmaker'. Filmmakers for him are people like Bimal Roy, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, Raj Kapoor, K. Asif and Mehboob Khan. "They changed the thought processes of people and society through their films. I haven't been able to make a difference yet."

Zero has been long in the making, the stakes are high. It's been a tough film, one that has taken him outside the middle class, small-town realities he's dabbled in so far. It's been about marrying technology to emotions, using VFX in a way that is not apparent to the audience. "I have been like a kid enjoying Disneyland," he says. It may be his most ambitious venture, but he remains rooted: "*Maine zameen nahin chhodi hai par main uda hoon* (I have not abandoned the earth, but I have flown high)."

ONE MOMENT PLEASE

Angels with dirty faces

The honour killing scene in *Harakiri* is harrowing



JAI ARJUN SINGH finds it easier to concentrate on specific scenes than entire films as he grows older

When I heard about the passing of the Japanese screenwriter Shinobu Hashimoto – all of 100 years old – my mind replayed vignettes from the Kurosawa classics *Rashomon*, *Ikiru*, *Throne of Blood* and *Seven Samurai*, which Hashimoto co-wrote. Donald Richie's book *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* has an anecdote about the director and his writers sitting at a long table, each individually coming up with ways to execute a scene, then gathering the ideas and rewriting each other's scenarios (there's something so *Rashomon*-like about this!) before reaching a decision.

But the Hashimoto-scripted scene I remember best is from a film that he got sole writing credit for: Masaki Kobayashi's magnificent 1962 *Harakiri*. A placid, elegiac and beautifully composed (in both senses of that word) film, the scene in question is one of the most harrowing things I have watched.



Beautiful composition Masaki Kobayashi's magnificent *Harakiri*.

> ***He is forced to carry through with a painful suicide in the name of the warrior's code of honour***

A bamboo sword

It involves a young Samurai named Chijiwa trying to commit *seppuku* (ritual suicide) in a palace courtyard, but struggling to pierce himself with the only available weapon, a bamboo sword. He writhes and groans, twists the inadequate blade this way and that; finally, he ends his agony by biting off his own tongue. The description makes the scene sound gory, but it isn't. It is in crisp black-and-white, and discreetly shot; we see only a few traces of blood.

The horror comes from the close-ups of Chijiwa's sweating face, the impassivity of the people watching him, and the narrative context: the impoverished Samurai had come to a royal house asking permission to commit *seppuku* on their grounds, but secretly hoping they would give him employment. To his shock, his request is granted and he is forced to carry through with a painful suicide in the name of the warrior's code of honour.

What I have described above occurs within the film's first 30 minutes. But to fully appreciate *Harakiri*, you must experience its many twists and turns, processing new information as it comes, so I won't reveal more except to say: at first we are led to think of Chijiwa as a mildly comic figure – a wide-eyed, cowardly pretender – and it is only later that the tragedy of his situation is revealed. Over the course of its narrative, the film dismantles many grand-sounding conceits about honour and tradition.

Scream of anguish

Harakiri is full of quiet, still sequences. Even its fight scenes have a detached, fatalistic tone – none of the kinetically exciting action associated with Samurai films. In the *seppuku* scene and elsewhere, one senses a scream of anguish trapped just below the film's restrained surface (much like the characters trapped by tradition), trying to break through and make itself heard. Perhaps this is why a late scene, where the film's protagonist Hanshiro Tsugumo laughs coarsely in the face of the palace retainers, has such raw, subversive power.

Though the story is set in a specific place and period, I see it as linked to other sorts of heroism myths – such as the schoolboy fantasy that there's glamour in the project of dying for an ideal, or facing death with a smile.

It reminds me of other cinematic moments such as the scene in Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* where a soldier, about to be executed, begins to wail and blubber. Or the ending of the gangster film *Angels with Dirty Faces* where Rocky (played by the brilliant James Cagney) "turns yellow" as he is led to the gas chamber – a development that takes the wind out of the sails of the young boys who were hero-worshipping him.

Artful misdirection

From a screenplay writing perspective, *Harakiri*'s structure also follows the tradition of artful misdirection. It leads us down a garden path, we become just a little complacent, and then a bucket of cold water is thrown into our gasping faces. You can see this in many other sorts of films – for instance, in the shocking, much-discussed ending of Nagraj Manjule's *Sairat*. First we are lulled by a scene where the female protagonist's relatives, visiting her for an apparent reconciliation, sit about in her room looking uncomfortable and out of place, glancing through an album of photos. The initially tense mood is diluted with the mild humour of social awkwardness... but then comes the knockout punch.

Come to think of it, the "honour killing" scene in *Sairat* (and in other recent Hindi films like *LSD* and *NH10*) are - like the *Harakiri* scene – built around the idea that death, or murder, is preferable to the violation of a rigid social code. Details of place and period apart, there isn't so much of a gulf between a terrified Samurai being led to a meaningless death and young lovers being savagely "punished" for defying tradition.

ODD FILM OUT

A long time before *Veere*

Aruna Raje's 1988 movie *Rihaee* first addressed female sexuality

BY PRAGYAN MOHANTY

The 80s was a notoriously unimaginative period in Bollywood history. But at this time, when mindless action flicks with sexist storylines ruled the roost, filmmaker Aruna Raje made *Rihaee* – a subversive piece of cinema addressing women's choice, sexual frustration and, most importantly, the female gaze. The film starred Hema Malini and Vinod Khanna with parallel cinema prominents like Naseeruddin Shah, Pallavi Joshi, Neena Gupta, Mohan Agashe and Reema Lagoo.

Today, as multiple analyses and opinion pieces are dedicated to the masturbation scene in *Veere Di Wedding*, Raje's work at its time seems truly groundbreaking. In fact, in her book, *Freedom: My Story*, the filmmaker writes about the ordeals she faced during and after the making of the film, which strangely resonate with the theme of the movie.

> ***Sensing the dangerous precedent Taku's assertion would set, the village panchayat is called upon to discipline her***



Female gaze A still from Rihaee.

Set in a village in Gujarat where the men have moved to the cities for work and the women are left behind to work on the fields, *Rihaee* explores physical pleasure, adultery and gendered hypocrisy from the female point of view. When away from home, the men routinely have affairs, and believe their need for physical gratification is but natural. The same rule, of course, doesn't apply to their wives.

Exploring pleasure

The film begins with the arrival of the flamboyant Mansukh (Shah) to the village. Many women flirt with him and are seduced, but he is rebuffed by Taku (Hema), who is devoted to her husband, Amarji (Khanna), a carpenter in the city. But Taku finally gives in to Mansukh and soon discovers she is pregnant. When Amarji returns, Taku confesses to the affair, but refuses an abortion. Sensing the dangerous precedent Taku's assertion would set, the village panchayat is called upon to discipline her. Tables are turned at the meeting when the women rally together and show the self-serving, hypocritical men the mirror.

The film has a scene where an engaged girl, besotted with a married man, watches him bathe, fascinated by his strong body. She feels an incredible physical attraction to him that she doesn't for her fiancé. Raje's move to employ the female gaze in that era is audacious. Few filmmakers have been able to portray female sexuality as unapologetically as Raje does. She was perhaps the first one to do so.

Rihaee portrays a woman's sex drive for what it is – natural and human. Taku, for example, shares a loving relationship with Amarji, but the long spells of loneliness and the lack of physical intimacy break her resolve. Refreshingly, she doesn't feel guilty about it.

The film makes no moral judgements on adultery – it only asks a simple question is a woman's desire any less than a man's?

The author is a Bangalore-based freelance writer who believes one Rafi song a day keeps the doctor away.

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RED EARTH

An elephant never forgets

On World Elephant Day, we look at how the animal has learnt to adapt to a crowded world

BY AATHIRA PERINCHERY

On a clear, sunny morning in Tamil Nadu's Valparai 15 years ago, M. Ananda Kumar was doing what he loved best: watching wild elephants at play. From his eagle's eye view atop a small hillock more than 50 feet away, he could see the four young calves of the Step-Ear Herd (named after one of the older females whose frayed ear resembled a flight of steps) gambolling in the waters of Naduvar-Sholayar river. Slightly older juveniles ran among tea bushes pulling each others' tails, while adult females of the 19-member herd looked on, grazing calmly.

But their destination lay ahead and the herd swam across the river to reach the tea estate on the opposite bank. The fun and frolic ceased as soon as they set foot here. Adults began trumpeting loudly and lifted their tails, behaviours that usually mark the presence of a predator. An alert Kumar scanned the area thoroughly to check for leopards or people, but there were none.

Astoundingly, the animals can distinguish the voices of adult Maasai men from those of women and boys

"The adults bunched together and began walking swiftly in tight circles with the calves at the centre," recollects Kumar. "The herd displayed this behaviour several times in this estate. People had actively chased them away in the past here and obviously, they remembered it as they passed that way. Elephants change their behaviour based on where they are."

In human-dominated areas that elephants frequent, scientists have noted not just deviations in pachyderm behaviour, but changes in their food preferences and physiology. Such 'habitat generalists' can adapt well to man-modified landscapes, argue Kumar and his colleagues in a recent article published in the international journal *Tropical Conservation Science*. So what then is elephant 'habitat'? Can it include both natural and human-dominated areas, and how possible is it in today's crowded world?

Field and forests

As far as crowded lands go, India ranks high on the list. And almost 70% of the population lives in villages, including those adjoining protected areas. Man-made, stone-marked borders – differentiating land that is 'protected' from that which is not – mean nothing for fauna, which spill over into adjoining fields and orchards.

Using mapping exercises in 2015, scientists found that 60% of Karnataka's elephant distribution is outside protected areas.

It is now common knowledge, confirmed by studies, that elephants use non-protected, human-dominated areas such as coffee estates and rubber plantations as they move between fragmented forest patches. Many human-modified habitats (including monocultures of acacia and eucalyptus) have now become crucial refuges – and in that sense, 'habitats' – for elephants, as Kumar's work in Karnataka's Hassan district shows. Adding to these changes, pachyderms are now making do with scarce resources or adapting to new food resources in these areas.

Behavioural alterations include moving over human areas at night to reach rich pastures they would not be able to access during the day. And now, a team has found that these changes seep into elephant physiology too: in a recent study, scientists who studied stress levels by analysing hormones left behind in fresh elephant dung found that elephants in human-dominated regions had similar baseline stress levels as those dwelling in comparatively undisturbed forests. This suggests that elephants seem to have adapted to the stress in 'human' habitats.

So what makes elephants so adaptable? In 2014, a team of scientists found that African elephants in Kenya's Amboseli National Park can recognise the voices of two ethnic peoples who live there, the Maasai (who chase away elephant herds because they compete for resources with their livestock) and Kamba (who do not threaten elephants in any way). The team played recorded human voices – saying "Look, look over there, a group of elephants is coming" – of both ethnic groups from a concealed loudspeaker and studied elephants' reactions to this. The pachyderms formed tight circles in defence and kept smelling the air much more when Maasai voices were played. Astoundingly, the animals could even distinguish the voices of adult Maasai men from those of women and boys (the latter don't pose significant threats).



In greener pastures? Elephants use non-protected areas while moving between fragmented forest patches. AFP

Learning from matriarchs

While individual elephants could learn this from experience, social learning – where young elephants learn behaviours from matriarchs and older elephants – could be helping them adapt to humans, wrote ethologists Joshua Plotnik and Frans de Waal in 2017. According to them, recent studies put elephant social complexity on par with that of great apes; studies now reveal that elephants cooperate, empathise, problem-solve and recognise themselves in the mirror. Thus it is "not surprising that they are learning to adapt to their changing natural environments," they write.

Understanding how elephants adapt to constantly-changing threats could be crucial in protecting the mammals in the wild. And if elephants primarily interact with the world using non-visual senses such as sound and smell as the African example shows, "the 'human perspective' for solving conservation problems may not be enough," they add. This is a view that Kumar and his colleagues also hold.

"We are passing judgements, based completely on a human perspective," says Kumar. "We think elephants should not be seen outside protected areas. We humans have already decided where animals should be." But seeing wildlife from the perspective of both people and animals reveals a completely different picture. Both natural and anthropogenic habitats of elephants could be important to conserve the charismatic species.

In principle, elephants can adapt wonderfully to human-dominated habitats including agricultural areas

And yet how practical is this? In principle, elephants can adapt "wonderfully" to human-dominated habitats including agricultural areas, agrees elephant biologist Raman Sukumar. "What about increasing conflicts with people when this happens?" he asks. "This adaptation comes at a huge cost, to both people and elephants. We have to plan where to let elephants wander and where not."

On the other hand, changing the perception of what constitutes a habitat could be crucial to bring meaningful change in conservation, write Kumar and his colleagues.

One way to do this would be to involve people – researchers, conservation agencies, policy makers and citizens – in the process; communicating the beauty and ecological importance of wildlife in production landscapes would be critical to combat the thinking that wild animals should be restricted to forests alone.

The Step-Ear herd for one definitely doesn't restrict itself to forests. Kumar and his team still follow and study the herd as it moves about the tea estates of Valparai. And even 15 years later, the pachyderms show high levels of agitation and unusual alertness in areas where they have learnt there could be trouble.

BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Who let the wild out?

In this country of one billion people, the space in one's heart for wildlife counts



JANAKI LENIN
is not a conservationista but many creatures share her home for reasons she is yet to discover
@JanakiLenin

Why do people make space for wild animals at a cost to themselves? If you believe news reports, then nothing good happens when humans meet animals. People kill animals or animals kill humans. The truth is these are aberrations.

To give wildlife a sporting chance of survival, conservation separates people and wildlife. Its core tenet is to keep national parks and sanctuaries, exclusive wildlife areas free of our presence so animals can multiply. But animals insist on stepping outside the boundaries we draw.

What do we do when they colonise farmlands and villages, compete with people for their crops and livestock, and sometimes even threaten human lives? For predators or herbivores we apply the same principle of separation.

Such animals, often leopards and tigers, caught transgressing into human lands are said to 'stray', meaning they are lost or wandering away from their home. The very use of the word suggests the solution: put them back where they belong, usually forests. This may seem to sanitise the landscape for humans but not for long.

Happy in villages

Almost every mammal is territorial, gravitating back to former homes in the farmlands. That may come as news to many but consider for a moment what stops these animals from living in villages. Predators have plenty of feral prey; herbivores have crops. Leopards, for example, may even prefer humans to forests ruled by tigers that will kill them if given a chance. Many species, large and small, from jackals and jungle cats to leopards and elephants, make a good living in the rural countryside.

When the animals are elephants and ungulates, conservationists suggest erecting fences, trenches and other barriers to exclude them. The tacit assumption is: humans and wildlife do not get along. If that is the case, this country of more than one billion people would be a war zone.



Where one belongs Humans and animals can get along. GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK

Instead, people and animals have a way of doing the unexpected as this column has chronicled. In Gujarat, lions live in mango orchards around Gir, and people of the Charotar share their ponds and backyards with mugger crocodiles. In the Deccan, the pastoral Dhangars literally sustain the wolf population with equanimity. In Rajasthan, the Bishnoi take on the powerful in defence of blackbuck, while Odiya villages let the antelopes eat their crops. Folks in Agumbe would rather use a neighbour's bathroom than disturb a sleeping king cobra that has taken refuge in theirs.

Almost every mammal is territorial, gravitating back to former homes in the farmlands

Plain tolerance

Why do they sacrifice part of their livelihoods, even tolerating danger to their own lives, to make space for these animals? Religious and cultural beliefs may play a role but not always.

Is it the size of the animal or its destructiveness that makes people intolerant? When elephants visit a farmer's field, the evidence is all over the place – their dinner plate-size footprints, the grapefruit-shaped balls of dung, and the flattened crops. But sight unseen, legions of rodents nibble at crops, causing more loss than the mammalian giants. Perhaps no field anywhere in India is free of rodents, and yet no one cares.

Taking it out

Or does it matter who owns these wild animals? If people think the government does, then they invest them with their anxieties about governance failures. When they feel overwhelmed and helpless, they take it out on the soft targets, bludgeoning leopards and setting fire to sloth bears. This is not to say that all these people are long-suffering saints or even that these communities always tolerate any loss.

Sadistic barbarians who torture and kill animals for no apparent reason should be condemned.

But urban citizens, who have nothing to lose but get high on their goody-two-shoes activism, show equal contempt for people who are down and out, without recognising the many years they have put up with dangerous wild beasts.

Snakes kill about 50,000 people a year, while other wild creatures put together kill less than 500. Yet, nobody makes a big fuss or hold the Forest Department responsible for the loss. One reason could be society's belief that the reptiles are owned by god or their community.

Despite their struggles, rural communities accept many a wild animal's right to live amongst them.

Peace moves

These feelings of inter-species kinship aren't traditional for many communities but can be taught.

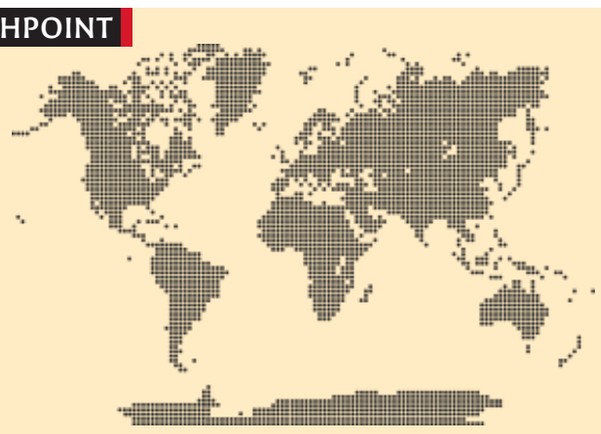
The work of Aaranyak (greater adjutant storks), Mumbaikars for SGNP (leopards), and Wildlife Trust of India (whale sharks) show the way. Much more needs to be done to help people make peace with the creatures who share their land.

If livelihood environmentalism, a phrase coined by former minister Jairam Ramesh, is the mutual trade-off that humans gain from caring for the environment, what does one call wildlife conservation practised by people at a cost to themselves? Altruistic conservation?

Contrast this situation with the U.S., a country with fewer but better-off citizens, where the mere sight of a wolf is enough for ranchers to reach for their guns. American conservationists who gave us the prototype of conservation practice – separation – are now struggling to turn their populace more wildlife-friendly.

However, in India, we are squandering what we already have by turning people into villains. More than human population size, it's the space in people's hearts that determines whether wildlife stays or goes.

FLASHPOINT



The earth on fire



Scientists have warned that the combined effects of climate change could push the earth into a 'hothouse'-like state, adding there would be little chance of return to normalcy after such a point. The added impacts of melting ice-caps, warming seas, dying forests, and shifting current circulation together will render the Paris Climate commitment to limit warming to 2°c above pre-industrial levels would be increasingly futile. The study, published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* journal said, in such a situation the world would hurtle towards warming at a rate 4°c, making it increasingly inhabitable for human life.

When harmless microbes can change



Researchers have discovered antibiotic-resistant microbes in Kerala's mangrove ecosystems. Research, conducted along four locations of the Kerala coast, found these resistant genes in both environmental regions, as well as those affected by human activities. The researchers said there are dire consequences if antibiotic resistance moves from harmless microbes to pathogens, and indicates a new source of microbial resistance. Further study is being designed to evaluate such disseminations.

Children most vulnerable



A study, published in the *PLoS Medicine* journal has found that young children are far more vulnerable to climate-related disasters, and that there is an increased onus on adults and parents to ensure their safety and well-being. The researchers have said the case is such because "of their anatomic, cognitive, immunologic, and psychologic differences, children and adolescents are more vulnerable to climate change-related events like floods, droughts, and heatwaves than adults." The paper also warns that increased temperatures may also lead to the further spread of vector-borne diseases, including the Zika virus.

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Writing. Reading. Rewriting. Magic

For me, a draft is like toilet-training a child. You write it so that no one else has to clean up afterwards



Artwork When one writes a letter, is it natural to write a draft? GETTY IMAGES/ ISTOCK

BY JERRY PINTO

I have been thinking about drafts. This is because I teach at the Social Communications Media department of the Sophia Polytechnic, a post-graduate course in media where I conduct journalism practicals and have done so for 25 years now. That means I have been on the receiving end of the first drafts of student writing for as long. And each year, I have to say it again: "Your second draft is always going to be better than your first draft. When you have finished, don't just save and send. Stop. Take a 10-minute break. And then read your work again. You'll see how much you need to change."

As ordinary humans who have been placed in the situation of teaching, one tends to become infected by the notion that one knows of what one speaks. No one need tell *me* that; I wrote the book on second drafts.

> ***I have trained myself to like ambiguity. I don't think it is natural to think of ambiguity as a friend***

But all of last week, in intermittent bursts, I have been editing a selection of the writings of Shanta Gokhale. And this means: I read it once. Shanta Gokhale read it once. Radhika Shenoy, our editor at Speaking Tiger publishing house, read it once. Then I read it again and sent it back to Radhika who sent me proofs and now I am reading it again and still finding things I want to change in my introduction. Will this never end?

The sea here

Of course it will. There comes a time when you have to sign off and send the file away. You have to say to yourself: I've done my best, now a new pair of eyes will flick over these pages and find the typo I missed because my eyes are not what they used to be.

So I wonder about the whole thing about letters, right? I mean, you do remember letters? People now write emails – though even that form is in peril with young people – but here is an excerpt from a letter written by the poet Dylan Thomas to Pamela Hansford Johnson: "I have decided not to get up today, to lie serene in my bed and write of the things that go round me, the shapes of shadows on my mountainous knees, the curving of my immaculate breast and the life in my ever-scribbling fingers. I have put on nice new pajamas, so this is going to be a pleasant day, and perhaps I shall not think of worms at all but only of the sun that I'm sure is shining in the curious world outside, and of

> ***Reading feels natural all the time, any time at all, but quoting what one has read?***

other equally lazy people who, too, from the white islands of their beds are writing to ones they love on the commercial sea. In peril on the commercial sea. What is this death, this birth and apparent pain, this glib love, this rush to the head of so many extraneous creatures of the air that crowd my words and never let me stop a sentence at a nice, rhythmic stop? Don't tell me."

Thomas' letters are wonderful things. They are works of art.

They are also letters.

I want to know how that happened. I want to know how you can write a letter that is a work of art. Look at that excerpt. 'The curve of my immaculate breast' has a wonderful odd feeling to it because it is a male breast and most male breasts tend to be maculate with last night's roistering. The sea here, the sea, Dylan's name means 'son of the sea', does that matter? Does that count? How does one swoop off one's immaculate breast and over the perilous sea and across love and death and pain and...

There it is perhaps. 'The extraneous creatures of the air that crowd my words.'

But when one writes a letter, is it natural to write a draft? A charged letter perhaps. One that might bring litigation in its wake, drafts, sure. But a letter to a friend, is a draft natural? Did Dylan write a draft or did he just... I can't tell. For me writing is an unnatural act when looked at from the outside, a natural act when I am doing it, unnatural again when I consider how the ideas in my head are spent once they are out in this dark world and wide and I start to work on them, natural/ unnatural now in the reworking because something of the original must be tapped, but often the original has faded or has suffered a sea change into something rich and strange... is a poetry haunting natural or unnatural? Reading feels natural all the time, any time at all, but quoting what one has read? How contaminated is that by the desire to count off the canonical names, Thomas, Milton, Shakespeare?

Opening lines

What do we do with words in drafts? I have often said that for me writing a draft is like toilet-training a child. You do it so that no one else has to clean up afterwards. You've done your best. There may be some accidents but those happen in the 'best-regulated households'. (Back-space, back-space, insert single inverted commas to indicate awareness of cliché, deliberately deployed.) But do we civilise or do we standardise? Do we take away the first wild delight in how it all seemed to be coming together? Is that comma going to help the reader or is it going to determine the reading of the line? How much ambiguity do you want?

I have trained myself to like ambiguity. I don't think it's natural to think of ambiguity as a friend, although in the writerly/ literary world you are supposed to embrace it. As a writer, I have a meaning, an intention in this line as in any other I have written. I should like it to be transmitted whole and perfect to my reader. But, of course, in my reading of the lines of other writers, I have brought myself to the act of reading.

I know that my reader, you in this case, if you have got this far, will bring yourself. You will have made judgements long before you started. This is *The Hindu*, a certain kind of piece. This is the supplement, another kind of piece. Jerry Pinto, hmm, identity politics anyone? And so to begin reading. *Begin reading?* You began reading a long time ago. How will you not bring all that/ some of that to the opening lines?

And yet we write. And edit. And read. And sometimes re-read and discover that in re-reading we have re-edited the meaning we made in the first instance. This piece, we say, is not what it was. How could it be? We are not who we were.

It doesn't stop. That's magic.

The author tries to think and write and translate in the cacophony of Mumbai.

Why we need reservations in cricket

Staggering fact: there's possibly not been even one Dalit test cricketer yet

BY NISSIM MANNATHUKKAREN

A few months ago, I wrote an oped in *The Hindu* about the lack of Dalit and Adivasi representation in the Indian men's cricket team, and the need for rectifying this by considering South Africa's quota system. Just as I had feared, the idea of quotas or reservations evoked "violent emotions", and responses termed it, among other things, "dangerous", "a menace," and "absolute madness".

Caste-based discrimination is as revolting and consequential as racism, yet many of the comments made a mockery of the debate, including equating reservations to "begging". This largely reflects public discourse, which sees reservations as handouts given to the "undeserving".

In India, 27% of people admit to practising some form of untouchability, according to the India Human Development Survey 2. We are still a nation where Dalit grooms wear helmets against upper-caste attacks for riding a horse, or, are killed for marrying an upper-caste person, as was seen recently in Kerala, the most advanced Indian state according to most social indicators.

Reality of race

The centuries-old history of caste oppression and violence (women bearing most of its brunt) has confined a section of the population to the bottom of the hierarchy. That Dalits and Adivasis continue at the bottom of socio-economic indicators, despite reservations, shows the intractability of the problem of overcoming an age-old socio-economic disadvantage.

So, it's hardly surprising if this lack of opportunities characterises cricket as well. Let's wrap our heads around this staggering fact: Possibly no male Dalit cricketer has played test cricket for India. (Dalit websites claim three or four test cricketers as Dalits, but none of them have publicly acknowledged their Dalit identity, which itself should tell us about the horror of caste oppression). This seems to be the case for Adivasis too.

Dalits and Adivasis make up a quarter of India's population. So what is more shocking? A debate on quotas in cricket? Or the fact that India's Dalit and Adivasi population, equivalent to that of America's entire population, has zero or near zero representation in cricket?

In contrast, the African-American population in the U.S. (at 12%), subject to horrendous slavery and racism, has produced some of the world's all-time sporting icons. This, despite the chilling reality of race in American society even today. The number of African-American sporting superstars run into the hundreds. Remember, until 1947, African-Americans were not even allowed to play in Major League Baseball and its affiliated leagues.

In India, on the other hand, upper-caste domination in Test cricket means that the team sees 50-60% Brahmin players (Brahmins constituted only 6.4% of the population in the 1931 census) on many occasions. The famous 2008 Sydney Test is an example, when there were six Brahmins in the eleven.

When we mock the idea of reservations, we ignore that the increasing visibility of Yadavs and other OBCs in the Indian cricket team in recent years has been made possible by the mobility they achieved through OBC reservations in jobs and education. Researchers Gaurav Bhawnani and Shubham Jain show that the Indian women's cricket team represents more marginalised sections because players mostly come from the Railways, which has employment reservations.

The marginalisation of Dalits and Adivasis in cricket cannot be trivialised any longer and justified with anodyne arguments that it's a coincidence, or that one plays as 'an Indian', and not as a representative of any caste and religion.

If one plays as an Indian, is it not one's social responsibility to include as many sections into the team as possible? What is a "national" cricket team when members largely belong to a few social groups? The cricketing team of the largest democracy has also to be more democratic.

But our public sphere is saturated with the idea of "merit" seen in a vacuum.

How does one assess merit after you listen to the story of Anil Gurav, once called the Viv Richards of Mumbai, and once Sachin Tendulkar's captain? While Tendulkar became a cricketing god, Gurav was consigned to the same slums from which he rose to become one of coach Ramakant Achrekar's chosen players. As Gurav says, "Background is everything."

Most often, there is no conspiracy to keep Dalits and Adivasis out of cricket teams. Discrimination works in more unconscious ways. As an Australian cricketer of indigenous origin, John McGuire, who never played for the state or national team, says, "People will say, 'It's not a race thing; we're not racist; our best mates are black Australians'... but the unconscious bias won't allow them to select an aboriginal person."

Usman Khawaja, the Pakistani-born Australian test cricketer, says the one story he heard all his life is this: "I could have played for Australia, but I didn't get selected because I was black/ Indian/ Pakistani, so I stopped playing."

We need desperately to increase diversity and representation in cricket rather than follow the common refrain to "leave Indian cricket alone". The BCCI is unlikely to ensure this. Not only is increasing caste representation inconceivable for it, it is even reluctant to broaden regional diversity . Recently, its counsel argued before the Supreme Court that that the northeastern states "cannot field even 11 players for a Ranji Trophy."



A. MURALITHARAN

> ***The increasing visibility of Yadavs and other OBCs in the cricket team has been made possible by OBC reservations***

Tectonic shift

Indians wrongly believe that developed democracies operate only on the concept of "merit". In the Canadian university where I teach, while there are no fixed quotas, there has recently been a concerted push to increase the number of aboriginal people and racial minorities in the faculty. Canada has had the Employment Equity Act since 1986, which seeks to correct disadvantages and adopt special measures in employment for women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities.

In the U.S., organisations like The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport are mapping and pushing for minority representation. Now that African-American player representation is at respectable levels, the focus has shifted to ensuring black representation in the ownership and management of pro sporting teams, or to addressing non-racial inequities such as sexual orientation. The Supreme Court of the U.S. ruled that race can be used as a criterion in college admissions, affirming the positive, including intangible, benefits of having a racially diverse student population.

Australia has an aboriginal programme in cricket, and the number of indigenous cricketers has increased from 8,000 in 2011-12 to 54,000 in 2016-17 – a significant achievement in a country with just over 3% indigenous people.

India needs a tectonic shift in thinking and practice. The first and most important step is to acknowledge the colossal nature of caste discrimination and its effect on sport. Only then can we think of measures to counter it. If the time spent debating quotas was spent on destroying caste, we would not have needed quotas in any sphere, including cricket. The time has come for Dalit and Adivasi cricketers to represent India.

The writer is with Dalhousie University, Canada. @*nmannathukkaren*

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Easy like Sunday morning

August 12 is a day of many landmarks

BY BERTY ASHLEY

1 This person, born on August 12, 1919, was responsible for setting up the Indian Institute of Management – Ahmedabad, Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, and the Uranium Corporation of India, among other institutions. His most valuable contribution however came through India's space programme. He founded the Physical Research Laboratory and eventually was responsible for the fabrication of Aryabhata, India's first satellite. Who was this scientist, whose 99th birth anniversary is today?

2 On August 12, 1851, Isaac Merritt ___ was given a patent for a machine that he had made. He hadn't invented it though, as the design had been around for many years. Walter Hunt had made one in 1834 but didn't patent it as he thought it would cause unemployment for many people. Merritt copied Elias Howe's (another inventor) design, made minor changes and then used his showmanship to make the machine popular. Soon, machines with his name on it were making their way into many homes. Many Indian houses still have one of these. What machine is this and what is Isaac's full name?

3 Sir Joseph ___ was a British surgeon who was present at the first surgical procedure carried out under anaesthesia in 1846. He read Louis Pasteur's work on micro-organisms and decided to experiment with one of his proposed techniques. On August 12, 1865 he applied a piece of lint soaked with carbolic acid on the fractured leg of a seven-year-old boy, and four days later found that no infection had developed. What was this the first use of and what is his full name (which is now a brand name for the same)?



Served Which tennis legend played with Rod Laver (pictured) at the age of 11? WIKI COMMONS

4 This person was born on August 12, 1887 in Vienna. One day, Nobel laureate Peter Debye told him to work on French physicist Louis de Broglie's thesis, which postulated that matter has wave properties. He took a 20-day vacation in the Alps, stuck two pearls in his ears for silence and came back with an equation that led to a Nobel Prize. Who was this scientist who is famous for explaining his theory with a familiar pet?

5 On August 12, 1981 International Business Machines introduced model number 5150 to the public. They used a particular two-word term to describe the product, which was shortened to two letters. Within a short time it became a hot seller and multiple companies made peripheral devices, expansion cards etc. which established a market for such products. How do we better know this company, and what is the term they made common through this model?

6 Born on August 12, 1971 in a Greek family in Washington D.C., this person discovered a tennis racket at the age of three. By age 11, he had already played with Rod Laver. Nicknamed for his precise serves, he retired with 14 titles (which was then a record). From 1993 to 1998 he finished each year ranked number one. Who was this player?

7 On August 12, 1944, British engineers opened an undersea pipeline between England and France, meant to supply fuel during the Allied Invasion of Normandy. They called it 'Pipe-Line Underwater Transportation of Oil'. What was the name it went by which should remind you of a popular cartoon character's pet?

8 Thomas Alva Edison was working on the telegraph and the telephone at the same time. He speculated about recording messages and went on to design a machine in which sound vibrations were indented on to a tin-foil cylinder and could then be played back. On August 12, 1877, he supposedly recorded 'Mary had a little lamb' on to it. What device was this, which led to the birth of the recording industry?

9 Since 2000, August 12 has been celebrated as 'International ___ Day' by the United Nations. It is meant to draw attention to a given set of cultural and legal issues surrounding a certain section of the population. Who are these people who make up 27.34% of India's population?

10 British musicians Mark and his brother-in-arms David formed a band called the Cafe Racers. They had a few gigs lined up but had money for nothing. Unable to rent a studio, they were rehearsing in a friend's kitchen. The drummers flatmate commented on the situation saying, 'you guys are in ___ ___', alluding to their financial situation. They ended up using that as the band name and went on to become one of the world's biggest selling groups. What is their name and what is the full name of Mark, who is celebrating his 69th birthday today, and is still in the same walk of life?

A molecular biologist from Madurai, our quizmaster enjoys trivia and music, and is working on a rock ballad called 'Coffee is a Drink, Kaapi is an Emotion'. @bertyashley

Answers
1. Vikram Sarabhai
2. Sewing machine, Isaac M. Singer
3. Antiseptic, Joseph Lister (Listerine)
4. Erwin Schrödinger, 'Schrödinger's cat'
5. IBM, Personal Computer (PC)
6. 'Pistol' Pete Sampras
7. PLUTO
8. The phonograph
9. Youth
10. Dire Straits, Mark Knopfler

Notes from the Andamans



Black waters Cellular Jail in Port Blair. R. BALAJI

BY NAVMI KRISHNA

Until not so long ago, my guide tells me, "human safaris" were all too common

At first glance, Port Blair, the capital of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, looks pretty much like any village square in Kerala – uneven terrain, lush trees, modest shops, and the ubiquitous chai and meat shop at every junction. Even the buses are painted red and pale yellow, like Kerala's State buses. Move a little away from the central square and the differences start to emerge. For one, the sea is never far away.

The archipelago is dotted with hints of its murky past and subsequent revival – it towers over you particularly at 'Kala Pani' or Cellular Jail, the solitary confinement prison to which political dissenters were exiled by the British. The three-storeyed structure, shaped like a seven-spoke wheel with a watch tower in the centre, has withstood an earthquake that destroyed four wings and now, serves as a reminder of its grim past.

Once home almost exclusively to indigenous tribes, the island is today a potpourri of cultures, and has immigrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar, families of convicts and the armed forces, and those who migrated as part of the Indian government's efforts to promote agriculture in the islands in the first few decades after Independence.

Experience the exotic

As focus shifted from agriculture, the island too evolved, making infrastructure development and tourism its priorities. Along the way, commercial operators realised that nothing sells as much as the "experience of the exotic", resulting in a major tussle between tour companies and human rights groups batting for the Jarawas.

The Jarawas are one of the six main tribes of indigenous people inhabiting the islands since at least the 1850s. When the British came, the Jarawas, along with the Sentinelese, refused to fraternise with them. As years passed, the Sentinelese continued to isolate themselves from others. Meanwhile, the Jarawas' resistance to the outside world weakened, partly due to the construction of the Grand Andaman Trunk Road that connects Port Blair with Diglipur, the largest town in North Andaman, and cuts through Jarawa territory.

Today, at the entrance of the Jarawa Reserve Forest checkpoint, around 60 km by road from Port Blair, there is an information board with a list of dos and don'ts, which, among others, forbids tourists from stopping their vehicles in the area. Until not so long ago, my guide tells me, "human safaris" were all too common.

The connectivity conundrum

On Havelock Island, cut off from the main island if not for the ferries that operate less than half a dozen times a day, Internet and Wi-Fi connectivity is frustrating slow. Unlike the tower-to-tower connectivity in the mainland, the islands depend on a satellite link with a limited bandwidth. "It's like Mumbai traffic," jokes a guide at the government help centre. "Thousands of cars on a single, narrow road." A new project to lay submarine cables from Chennai to Port Blair is in the offing.

As I walk out of the help centre in search of a restaurant, a chalk board outside a cafe catches my eye. It says: 'We don't have Wi-fi. Talk to each other. Read a book. Pretend it is 1995.' I step in and do just that.

Mr. Mathrubootham too is holidaying in the Andamans but will, sadly, return soon to his city and his letters to us. — *Editor*

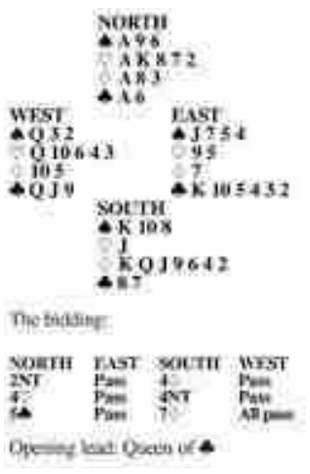
GOREN BRIDGE

Keep trying



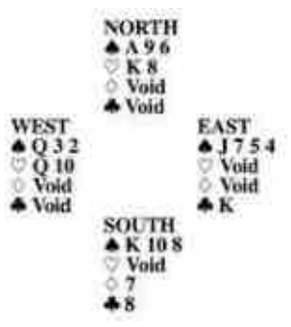
North-South vulnerable, North deals

BY BOB JONES



The four-diamond bid was a natural slam try for this North-South pair. North had a point-count minimum, but great potential for slam. The four heart cue bid led to a Blackwood inquiry, and South jumped to the grand slam when North showed all four aces. This contract would have been cold had the EastWest hearts split 4-3.

South won the opening club lead with dummy's ace, cashed the ace of hearts, and ruffed a heart with the king of diamonds. Declarer crossed to dummy with the ace of diamonds and led another low heart. East's club discard was a disappointment, but South ruffed and cashed three rounds of trumps, leaving this position:



Everyone discarded a spade on the last trump, and dummy was entered with the ace of spades. The king of hearts finished East, who had to part with another spade to keep the king of clubs. South then discarded the seven of clubs and took the last two tricks with the king and 10 of spades. Well played!

A-N-A-T-O-M-I-Z-E

Vindigo blue wine

- The wine is actually a white chardonnay, passed through red grape peels for the colour
- Bottled in Spain's Almeria region, the wine is said to have "pleasant aromas of cherry, raspberry and passion fruit".
- An initial batch of 35,000 has been manufactured, with each bottle selling for €12



VINDIGO

BY SAURYA SENGUPTA

Wine-makers are chomping their way through the colour palette now. For the longest time, we've had red, white, and the in-between: rose. Now, it's time for quite the tectonic shift in the vino world: a completely naturally occurring blue wine. The drink, in the 'colours of the sea', is on sale in Sète, a port city in France.

Conceptualised by entrepreneuer René Le Bail, the idea had to face some stiff resistance from the militantly-passionate-about-wine country, and Le Bail had to go out of his way to convince people that this pale blue goodness was worth the punt.

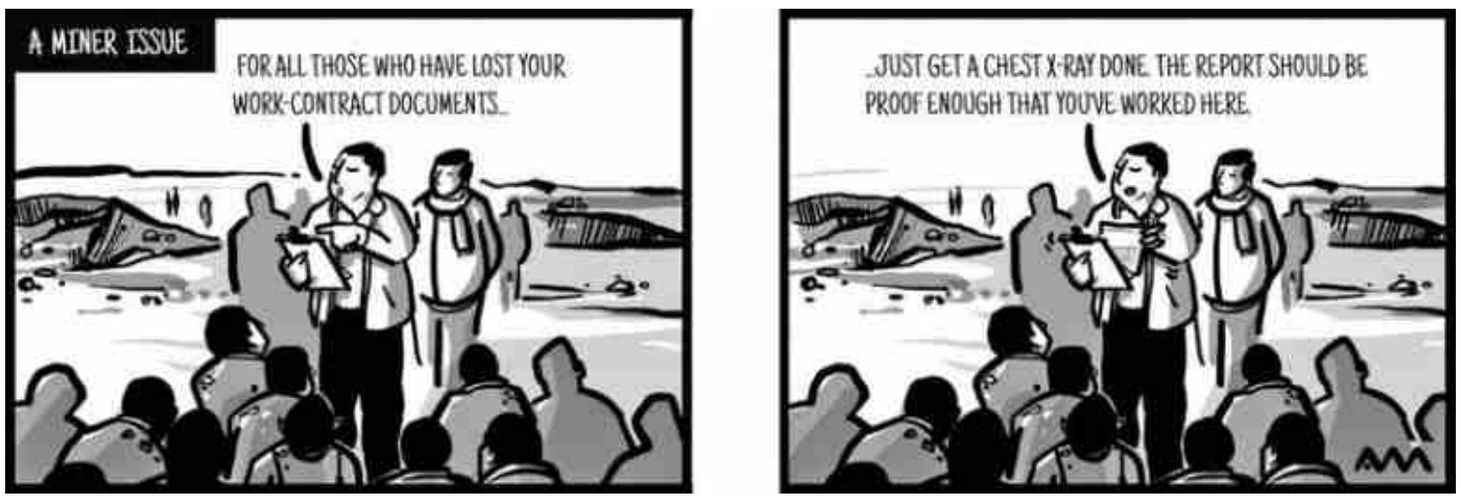
As a result of this opposition, Le Bail has had to bottle Vindigo in Spain's Almeria region. The almost-Curaçao coloured Vindigo is actually a chardonnay that's been put through red grape skin pulp for a natural blue hue.

The company claims the drink has "pleasant aromas of cherry, raspberry and passion fruit," which we'll just have to take their word for, because this smurf-wine hasn't yet made its way outside France.

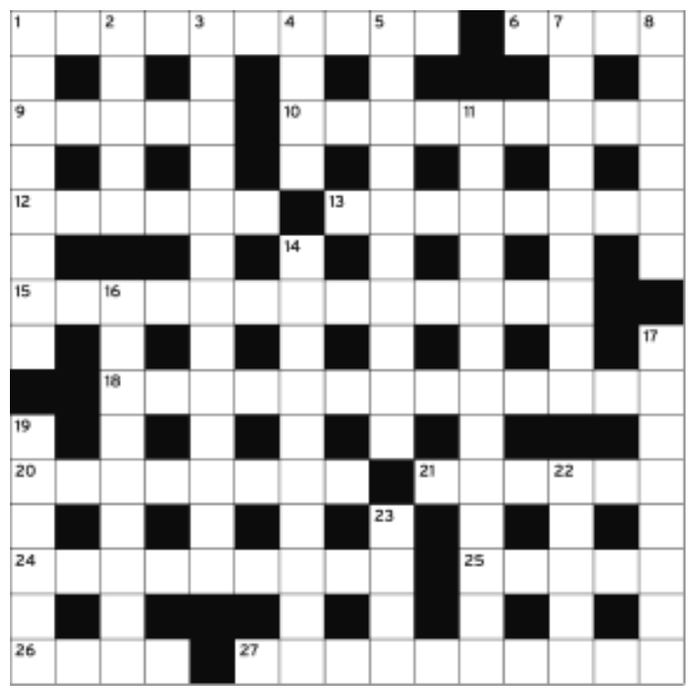
EU rules don't currently recognise 'blue wine', and last year, Gik, a wine made blue by using food dye, was disallowed by the EU from labelling it a wine. Le Bail is confident this won't be the case with Vindigo. But seriously, knowing France, don't expect much clamour or a Frexit in the pursuit of this bottle.

It is said that approximately 35,000 bottles of Vindigo have gone on sale in Sète, at €12 a bottle, and the company claims sales have already surpassed expectations. Now, there are plans to take this to the U.K., Belgium, and even Indonesia and China. But can you imagine sitting on the French Riviera, with a lilting Henri Renaud in the background, and a glass of pale-blue wine in a glass?

ECOTISM BY ASHVINI MENON



THE SUNDAY CROSSWORD NO. 3008



Across

1 In direction of current ambition, securing private street (10)
6 Seabird's wings in storybook turning gold (4)
9 Crew took food according to report(5)
10 Get lost, drained and muddled (9)
12 Track back and pinch vegetable (6)
13 Stocked by fantastic inn, amontillado's spicy stuff (8)
15 Extra nervous beginner, last of intake in row taken round (6,7)
18 Cat getting little horse so agitated (13)
20 Open with silly run, upset(8)
21 Hurtful obstacle followed by plot(6)
24 Article, canny one stirring anger(9)
25 Question for children (5)
26 Sailing boat left course, going west(4)
27 Healthy and popular, with good weight? Capital (10)

Down

1 Colourant below standard? Certainly time to go into that(8)
2 Gamble from composer dropping name (5)
3 Smart about appeal, fairly well placed (7,6)
4 Unwind remaining part(4)
5 Run into trouble over testimony lacking weight and expertise (10)
7 Outfit infiltrated by devious mole supported by engineers in distance (9)
8 Passionate in study, enthralled by technique (6)
11 Display from person providing website's latest post(13)
14 Sailor, leader of heroes previously, admitting sin, raised disgust(10)
16 We think differently about number possessing inside information (2,3,4)
17 Learner in shift working for club (8)
19 Study of plants in colour occupying child (6)
22 Live group, harassed (5)
23 Agreement necessary to provide alibi (4)

Solution No. 3007

