WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019



'AAP will win all 7 Delhi seats without Congress NEW DELH

AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Tuesday that surveys conducted by the party has shown that it will win all seven Lok Sabha seats in the Capital without an alliance with the Congress.

Mamata surprises with 17 women, 17 new faces

DELHI METRO ▶ PAGE 1

Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee announced here on Tuesday the party's decision to field 17 women candidates for the Lok Sabha election, taking their representation to about 41%. The party replaced candidates in 18 Lok Sabha

constituencies. **NEWS** ▶ PAGE 11

OPPORTUNITIES PAGE 2 **DELHI METRO** ▶ 6 PAGES

+ CB-CID takes over Pollachi sex abuse case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Crime Branch CID of the Tamil Nadu police on Tuesday launched an investigation into the serial sexual assault and blackmailing of women in Pollachi. The four accused -- K. Thirunavukkarasu, 27; N. Sabarirajan, aka Rishwanth, 25; N. Sathish, 29; and T. Vasanthakumar, 24 -- were arrested for sexual harassment and various other charges.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 7

We cannot kill jobs in cracker industry: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court cannot kill the jobs of thousands of poor people working in the firecracker industry, driving them to starvation, Justice S.A. Bobde observed on Tuesday. He added that if the court could not generate jobs, its orders should not extinguish livelihoods.

"We cannot give money or jobs or support people who will lose their jobs if we shut down firecrackers manufacturing units... We do not want to generate unemployment," Justice Bobde said.

The Bench, led by Justice Bobde, was hearing the case for the first time as the matter was previously heard by another Bench headed by Justice A.K. Sikri, who retired recently. Justice Bobde is in line to be the next Chief Justice of India.

The court had on October 23 banned the manufacture, sale and use of loud and toxic firecrack-

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

No names removed based on draft NRC: Election Commission

Supreme Court wants list of names included in Assam poll rolls from 2017

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday assured the Supreme Court that names have not been deleted from the Assam electoral roll on the basis of their exclusion from the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was published in July last year.

However, a Bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi was not satisfied.

"But a question looms large in the light of the preparation of the final NRC, to be published on July 31, 2019. What would happen to those who do not appear there but are included in the electoral roll?" Chief Justice Gogoi asked the poll body.

The court further directed the ECI to furnish details of the names included in the electoral roll on January 1, 2017, 2018 and 2019 in Assam.

Seeks affidavit

The Bench quizzed the ECI secretary, who was present



Seeking clarity: The court has asked the Election Commission to file an affidavit by March 28.

in court, on electors in each constituency in Assam, addition and deletion. The court wanted an affidavit by March 28.

Secretary summoned

The Supreme Court had earlier asked the ECI Secretary to appear before it on March 12 in connection with this PIL petition, filed by Assam-based residents Gopal Seth and Susanta Sen, alleging that several categories of persons were deprived of voting rights ahead of the

Lok Sabha polls.

They claimed that one category included persons whose names figured in the draft NRC but not in the vo-

In another category, persons whose names were deleted from the voter list appeared in the draft NRC published on July 30, 2018.

The petition claimed these people had voted in the last Lok Sabha election

The plea also submitted that there were people whose names were not included in the complete draft NRC, but they subsequently filed claims for in-

They had voted in the earlier Lok Sabha election and were waiting for inclusion of their names.

Order stayed

The third category of people were those declared foreigners by the foreigners' tribunal as well as by the Guwahati High Court; the court order was stayed by the Supreme Court.

The petition said the fourth category comprised those already declared foreigners by the tribunal; this was set aside by the Supreme Court.

However, their names had been deleted from the voters list pursuant to the order of the tribunal.

In the fifth category were those whose names had not been included in the draft NRC, but their family members were included; these had filed a claim for the inclusion of their names.

Congress terms Modi years a period of false promises

'National security exploited to divert people's attention'

SANDEEP PHUKAN

The Congress on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "cynically exploiting the issue of national security to divert attention from his colossal failures."

A strongly worded resolution from the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Ahmedabad called the Modi years a betrayal of people's trust and urged democratic and progressive forces to come together and not allow the "nation's political narrative to be vitiated."

Sounding the bugle for the general election, the Congress said, "Five years of the Modi-BJP government Priyanka attacks PM

MAHESH LANGA

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi-Vadra made her maiden public speech on Tuesday, targeting the NDA government on its unfulfilled promises" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home State of

"Awareness is your weapon, vote is your weapon," she said at a rally

have been a period of false promises and betrayal of people's trust and confidence." The meeting started with

of party workers after the **Congress Working** Committee meeting in

Ahmedabad. Addressing the rally after her, party president Rahul Gandhi said, "It's a battle between two ideologies: one where you have Godse and hatred and the other where you have Mahatma Gandhi and love. And the latter will

triumph over the former." VOTE IS YOUR WEAPON, **SAYS PRIYANKA** ▶ PAGE 11

a minute's silence in homage to the martyrs of the Pulwama attack.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

DGCA bars Boeing 737 MAX 8 after global alarm

JAGRITI CHANDRA NEW DELHI

In a late night decision, India on Tuesday grounded all Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft "immediately." The move came after European aviation regulator EASA, the U.K, France, Germany, Aus-

tralia and Singapore joined a growing number of countries that have barred the aircraft from their airspace following Sunday's crash of an Ethiopian Airlines plane.

"The DGCA has taken the decision to ground the Boeing 737-MAX 8 planes immediately. These planes will be grounded till appropriate modifications and safety measures are undertaken," Minister for Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu announced

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

No tie-up, coordination with Cong.: Mayawati

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bahujan Samaj Party on Tuesday put to rest any possibility of the Congress becoming a part of the anti-BJP alliance in Uttar Pradesh or even a grand alliance at the

national level. ated that her party would not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha election with any form of "election pact or co-ordination" in any State with the Congress. The declaration came after a meeting she held with heads of the BSP State units and senior leaders on poll strategy.

As part of the BSP's al-

liance in Uttar Pradesh with the SP and the RLD, the party will contest 38 of the 80 seats. The SP has got 37, while the RLD has three, all in western parts.

Even after the BSP-SP-RLD alliance formally announced its division of 78 seats, speculation was rife of the gress getting a last-minute entry or entering into a tactical understanding to defeat the BJP. However, Ms. Mayawati publicly dismissed any possibility of such an understanding. She said the BSP's alliance with the SP was working with "mutual respect" and "honest intentions."

The alliance "fulfils the needs of social change" and is "capable of defeating" the BIP, which is "necessary in the national interest," Ms. Mayawati said.

Unperturbed

Responding to Ms. Mayawaspokesperson Rajiv Bakshi said it was not up to the BSP chief to decide whether the Congress wanted to enter in-

to an alliance with her party. The party's western Uttar Pradesh in charge, Jyotiraditya Scindia, told a news channel, "We respect the views of every party. This view also we respect."

OPPORTUNITIES

thehindu.com/jobs

FOR JOB LISTINGS

& ARTICLES

organisation

WEDNESDAY • MARCH 13, 2019

Gig economy: A work in progress

It has to develop more systems to inspire confidence in both employers and freelancers

¬ oftware engineer Roshini left the 9to5 grind for short-term contractual work as content writer. Going through a portal that lists content-writing projects, she signed up

gig workers.

says Rituparna.

seekers.

job postings.

we keep job listings from cer-

tain countries to the min-

imum, and the jobs posted

from there are diligently

checked for authenticity. We

also check the communica-

tion that is happening and

have a unique mobile num-

"The gig economy

is still nascent in

India. It does not

employer to hire

pool for an

from."

offer a ready talent

While on a Skype call with a representative of the company that had offered her this project, she received a rude shock

"They asked me to write unacceptable content. Appalled, I blocked the client, I realised I had made a mistake by sharing my contact details with the person," says Roshini.

Roshini says she has also come across scamster-companies in the gig economy; and here, the risk of not getting paid for the work one has done is high.

There are certain platforms that do due diligence and filter out fly-by-night operators and list only genuine jobs; but having a listing on these platforms is expensive, says Roshini.

Due to the lack of proper regulation, the gig economy offers both the employer and the gig worker, many challenges to deal with.

A study by Noble House, a human resource talent marketplace, found that 49% of the companies hesitate to hire a gig worker as they are not assured of the quality of the resource.



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH RAVIKUMAR

ber check, which allows for one to an have only one account," says Garg.

A rating system

Noble House uses algorithms to match requirements and the talent listed in the database that can meet them; this is then followed by shortlisting of candidates and scheduling interviews.

Most platforms now have a rating system that enables corporates to zero in on the gig workers who are more likely to meet their skill requirements

Simplilearn, a Bengalurubased certification provider, hires gig workers for certain projects. "We assess the technical skills of the available candidates and ask them to prepare a scenariobased case study and present it," says Archana Krishna, VP - HR and Organisation Development, Simplilearn.

Background checks

In India, as hiring of a gig worker is usually very quick, background checking is not prevalent.

When background verification company AuthBridge

team later decided to place it

Checklist for freelancers

- Try to establish personal contact before signing up for an assignment.
- Study the ratings of the clients before choosing
- Have your credentials validated by a background verification company.

did a screening for its clients, it found that 35 out of the every 1000 candidates screened had misrepresented themselves in their profiles. "Very few portals have integrated background checks into their processes. We have to work with job aggregators to bring in a system where, say, you will have a green tick on a resume that has been authenticated," says Ajay Trehan CEO and founder, AuthBridge.

He says there's a misconception that background verification is time-consuming and expensive.

"Some of the identity and criminal record checks can be done in six to seven hours. It does not cost much to do this," says Trehan.

Garg suggests that to avoid the risk of not getting paid, a gig worker can seek some payment at the beginning of the work, and subsequently, seek that small amounts be released from time to time.

"If a client is just posting requirements without hiring, we block them," says Garg

ing graduates and diploma holders are paid almost on par, across sectors. Non-engineering graduates are paid significantly higher than diploma holders in construction, banking and financial services and tourism and hospitality, says a release.

Key findings * Market stipends (as per Apprentice Act) are 23% higher for technical graduates than for non-technical apprentices; OEES stipends are higher for the Apprenticeship Act are responsible for this. Those untechnical graduates in six of the nine cities covered by the der the Other Employability Schemes (OEES) received 7.66% higher than the stipend paid under the Apprentice-

ship Act. Maharashtra topped the list (110%) and Automotive (82%). as the highest paying state. Construction & Real Estate (125%) topped the sectors that paid apprentices good sti-Gujarat (84%). pends. The report also states that the stipend increases in proportion to the apprentice's

educational qualification. Post

graduates and engineering

graduates are the best paid

* While a majority of the employers surveyed expect applicants to be aware of essential soft skills, 63% want applicants to possess greater

place safety. A minimum of details, 50 employees from the parwww.rainmaker.co.in The day of the apprentice **T**n a sign that the apprenacross sectors. Non-engineertices are much in demand,

place culture.

La study says that they are handed out handsome stipends that are a significant premium over minimum

The TeamLease Skill University Stipend Primer Report says that the median stipend paid to apprentices across India is around 41% higher than the applicable minimum wages. According to a press release listing the findings of the Report, a growing demand for skilled talent and revisions in

How safe is your workplace?

ticipating

should take the survey.

The top 10 corporates will

They will receive a report

that will contain an overall

score. The data will assist

employers to develop

strategies targeted at ad-

dressing sexual harassment

at the workplace, said the

release. Rainmaker will also

provide organisations with

support for effecting more

targeted interventions to

prevent sexual harassment,

meeting their legal obliga-

tions and changing work-

be listed as 'Safe Places to

Organisations are invited to participate in an online survey

ainmaker, an organisa-

ates create ethical and

compliant workplaces, is in-

viting companies to parti-

cipate in the 'Safe Places To

The online survey would

cover organisations from

different sectors and geo-

graphies across the country,

and with an employee

According to a press re-

lease, the survey can be

taken by employees an-

onymously, and would

cover questions on various

aspects of organisational

culture that ensure work-

strength of 500 or more.

Work' survey.

tion that helps corpor-

* Top-paying sectors are Construction and Real Estate (125%), IT & ITeS (122%), FMCG

* Top states: Maharashtra (159%), Andhra Pradesh (132%), Tamil Nadu (112%) and

"domain awareness".

NEWS BYTES

Women in leadership

DDI, a global leadership consulting firm, is organising a conference on 'Engendering diversity: Accelerating - women in leadership' on March 15 in Mumbai. The event will also include an allwomen panel discussion on 'Gender diversity: How it influences Talent ecosystem? with women leaders drawn

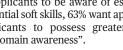
Understanding POSH

Simplilearn, a digital skills training company, has brought out a video to create awareness about the POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) Act.

The video, youtu.be/ V6CJCJAio2Y, talks about issues such as gender inequality at the workplace, the

Vishaka Guidelines, steps to prevent sexual harassment at workplace and redressal mechanisms that organisations must put in place. The video was initially created for purpose of internal training at the company; but the

in the public domain as doing so would benefit a lot of people. It also invites viewers to send in their questions relating to the topic. These questions will be answered



THE HINDU DELHI WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

DELHI **CTimings**

WEDNESDAY, MAR. 13 RISE 06:34 SET 18:28 RISE 10:44 SET 00:00

THURSDAY, MAR. 14 RISE 06:32 SET 18:29 RISE 11:31 SET 00:36

FRIDAY, MAR. 15 RISE 06:31 SET 18:29 RISE 12:24 SET 01:37

Delhi Weather Delhi City

Delhi Palam Today 28°C A cool/misty morning will Short spell of rain is possible

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 28°C Day will be cloudy and Rain/thundershower with gusty winds are expected.

AAP may ally with SAD breakaway outfit: Kejriwal

Final decision to be taken in a couple of days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party and a breakaway outfit of the Shiromani Akali Dal are in talks for an alliance in Punjab for the Lok Sabha election, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Tuesday.

He said a final decision on whether an alliance with the SAD (Taksali) would be formed or not would be taken in a couple of days.

"Bhagwat Mann [AAP Punjab convener] is in talks with the Akali Dal [Taksali]

Bhagwat Mann is in talks with the Akali Dal (Taksali)

ARVIND KEJRIWAL

sion would be taken soon," Mr. Keiriwal said.

The move came after talks for an alliance between the SAD (Taksali) and the Puniab Democratic Alliance failed over the sharing of seats.

Earlier, the SAD (Taksali) had been holding talks with the PDA that comprises former AAP leader Sukhpal Khaira's Punjab Ekta Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Lok Insaaf Party and Punjab Manch. The SAD (Taksali) wanted to field its candidate, Bir Devinder Singh, from the Anandpur Sahib seat, while the PDA insisted on this seat for the BSP.

The SAD (Taksali) was formed by MP Ranjit Singh Brahmpura and former MP Rattan Singh Ajnala and Sewa Singh Sekhwan after they were expelled from the Akali Dal for revolting against party chief Sukhbir Singh Badal. Punjab has 13 parliamen-

tary constituencies.

SAD names Jagir Kaur from Khadoor Sahib

Was Minister in earlier govt., resigned in 2012 when sentenced to jail by CBI court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Shiromani Akali Dal on Tuesday announced that Bibi Jagir Kaur, former president of the Shiromani Gurd-Prabandhak Committee, would be its candidate from the Khadoor

parliamentary

constituency. Jagir Kaur was a Cabinet Minister in the Akali Dal-led government in the State. She was acquitted by the Punjab and Haryana High Court last December in a case of forcible abortion and abduction of her daughter Harpreet Kaur, who had died under mysterious circumstances in April 2000. She had to re-



SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal and Bibi Jagir Kaur at a rally in Tarn Taran on Tuesday. • AFP

sign as a Minister from the Akali-BJP government in 2012 after a CBI court sentenced her and three others

to five years' imprisonment. Addressing a rally in Tarn Taran, SAD president Sukhbir Badal said Bibi Jagir Kaur

would be the voice of the people as well as the Sikh Panth in Parliament.

Failed promises

Mr. Badal accused the Congress government led by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh of failing to keep its promises made during the 2017 Assembly polls. "Never before had any political leader sworn on 'Gutka Sahib' at a public rally and then gone back on his words as Capt. Amarinder had on the issue of complete farm loan waiver as well as employment," he alleged.

"The Congress government has closed down all social welfare schemes," Mr. Badal said, adding that the government had not paid ₹100 crore to brides from underprivileged sections of society. He said the government had also not paid old age pension to the tune of ₹1,140 crore.

Ex-Minister Manju Verma granted bail by Patna HC

Arrested under Arms Act linked to the shelter home case

AMARNATH TEWARY

Former Bihar Social Welfare Minister Manju Verma, arrested under the Arms Act in connection with the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case, was on Tuesday granted bail by the Patna High Court.

Her husband Chandrashekhar Verma is currently lodged at Begusarai jail in the same case.

After hearing arguments from both sides, a Single Judge Bench of Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh granted regular bail to Manju Verma.

She had surrendered before a local court in Begusarai in connection with an Arms Act case and was sent to jail on November 20,

Illegal cartridges

The CBI, which was investigating the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse case involving 34 minor girls, had

Harassed for being a woman, Manju Verma had said.

tral house of Manju Verma and her husband Chandrashekhar Verma. As many as 50 illegal cartridges were recovered from the resi-

They were later booked under the Arms Act at the Cheria Bariyarpur police station in Begusarai district.

Phone call details

After the phone call details of Chandrashekhar Verma established his links with shelter home case accused Brajesh Thakur, he had gone

Later, he had surrendered at a local Majhaul court and was sent to jail on October 29, 2018.

No bail yet

Chandrashekhar Verma is yet to get bail in the case.

Manju Verma too was declared an "absconder" in the case and after she evaded arrest, her property was attached by the Begusarai

Earlier, after as many as 17 phone call details of Chandrashekhar Verma with Brajesh Thakur were made public, Manju Verma was forced to resign as a Minister from the Nitish Kumar government.

Later, she was suspended from the JD(U).

While facing trial in the case, Manju Verma in December 2018 had alleged that she was being harassed for being a woman and belonging to the weaker 'Kushwaha' community.

conducted raid at the ances-SC rejects miners' plea on coal transportation

NGT had banned rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has rejected pleas by miners in Meghalava to let trucks move coal in transit before a transportation ban came into effect.

The deadline for transportation of extracted coal was being extended since April 2014 when the National Green Tribunal banned rat-hole coal mining in Meghalava.

But after at least 16 miners were trapped in a flooded mine at Ksan in the East Jaintia Hills district on December 13, the apex court refused to allow the transportation of extracted and assessed coal beyond January 31. On January 15, the court further said there would be no transportation of coal lying at sites.

The State Coordination Committee of Coal Miners and Dealers' Forum had

subsequently filed a petition for allowing their trucks that were in transit as on January 15 to transport their coal and also to pass through government check posts and weigh bridges to their respective destinations.

The court also did not entertain the plea of another miner who wanted to transport coal he had procured legally from a dealer.

The court is likely to hear on March 28 a petition by one Lber Laloo for lifting the ban on coal mining by the NGT.

The Supreme Court hearing coincided with Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma informing the Assembly that over 1,000 cases of illegal coal mining have been registered since the NGT ban came into effect.

Meanwhile, on Monday an overloaded coal truck overturned in the district, reportedly killing four people. According to district SP V. Singh, the driver lost control due to high speed. But, he said, the local police did not find any bodies.

over an alliance and a deci-

DELHI THE HINDU WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

Sujay Vikhe-Patil joins BJP

CM recommends candidature from Ahmednagar South

ALOK DESHPANDE

In a major setback to the Congress in Maharashtra, Dr. Sujay Vikhe-Patil, son of senior Congressman and Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil on Tuesday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis who announced that his name was being recommended to the central Parliamentary Board as candidate from Ahmednagar South Lok Sabha seat.

"Joining BJP is my personal choice. I have taken this decision against the wishes of my father. But I consider this as a huge responsibility and promise to work tirelessly to ensure both the seats in my districts come to BJP," Dr. Vikhe-Patil said.

Mr. Fadnavis said he knows that Sujay had to rebel in the family to take this decision. "But in due course of time, the decision will prove to be right," he said.

"Youngsters of this country know that development and country's security can be taken care of Narendra Modiji. Sujay is a representative of that youth. His entry



Dr. Sujay Vikhe-Patil with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in Mumbai on Tuesday. • VIVEK BENDRE

stronger in Ahmednagar," said Mr. Fadnavis.

'Can't fulfil demands'

Commenting on statements that Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is responsible for Dr. Sujay Vikhe-Patil joining the BJP, party president Sharad Pawar said he is not entitled to fulfil demands of children from other families.

"I can look after my house. How can I fulfil demands of children from other families? If anyone is changing the route and

in our party will make us think that the journey will be smooth, then I have nothing but well-wishes," Mr. Pawar told reporters on Tuesday

> The Vikhe-Patil family is known to change sides gauging the turning tide. The late Balasaheb Vikhe-Patil, an arch-rival of NCP chief Sharad Pawar, had won the Lok Sabha in 1998 on Shiv Sena's ticket and even became Minister of state for Finance and later Union Minister for Heavy Industries in the NDA government, before returning to Congress in 2004.

More Oppn. leaders may join BJP

ALOK DESHPANDE

After Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil's son Dr. Sujay Vikhe-Patil joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday, talks of a son of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP and one Congress MLA joining the BJP was doing the rounds

Raniitsinh Mohite-Patil. son of NCP MP from Madha Vijaysinh Mohite-Patil, and Congress MLA from Vadala Kalidas Kolambkar are reportedly considering joining the BJP. Mr. Mohite-Patil on Tuesday held a meeting with BJP leader Girish Mahajan.

Talking to reporters Mr. Mahajan said, "The meeting was related to water issues in his area. It would not be proper to give it political connotations."

Asked whether more leaders would join the BJP, Mr. Mahajan replied, "Yes, you may see more entries." BJP's Maharashtra unit chief Raosaheb Danve said the Opposition is set to suffer many more tremors in due course of time.

VBA to contest all 48 Lok Sabha seats

Prakash Ambedkar virtually rules out any pre-poll alliance with Congress

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

Virtually ruling out any prepoll alliance with the Congress, Prakash Ambedkar, president of Bharipa Bahuian Mahasangh, announced on Tuesday that the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) would contest all 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra.

With an eye to securing the Dalit-Muslim votes, BBM forged an alliance with the Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) to form the VBA which also comprises of smaller outfits.



Prakash Ambedkar, not willing to wait.

Speaking in Akola district, Mr. Ambedkar, leader of the Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangh, said the proposals presented by Congress so far were unacceptable and that discussions about joining the 'anti-BJP front' led by the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) had hit a roadblock.

"I do not see this discussion [about a pre-poll alliance] moving any further. I consider all proposals presented to us by the Congress have been exhausted. We cannot take back the names of the 22 candidates we have finalised," said Ambedkar.

The BBM chief, a grand-

son of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, said that as the names of 22 VBA candidates had already been announced, the remaining would be announced in Mumbai on March 15.

"We had even offered Congress to choose among the 22 candidates we had announced. The candidates, too, had expressed no objection about contesting on a Congress symbol. But with no response forthcoming from the Congress, I do not see any headway in this discussion," Mr. Ambedkar

BJP ally meets Raju Shetti, sparks talk of 'fourth front'

RSP's Mahadev Jankar upset at shoddy treatment of smaller parties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Rashtriya Samaj Paksha (RSP) chief and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ally Mahadev Jankar met Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana leader Raju Shetti in Pune on Tuesday, setting rumour mills buzzing overtime as the election inches closer.

According to sources, Mr. Jankar, Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries Development in the Devendra Fadnavis cabinet, held an hour-long meeting with Mr. Shetti where the duo reportedly discussed possibilities of forming a 'fourth front'.

Mr. Jankar, who offered stiff competition to Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Supriya Sule from Baramati in 2014, is reportedly disgruntled with the BJP for sidelining smaller constituents like his RSP. Mr. Jankar, a tall leader from the



Raju Shetti, Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana leader.

Dhangar community, was elected MLC in 2015 and inducted into the State cabinet the next year.

Mr. Shetti, on his part, has been long frustrated with the slow response from Congress over seat-sharing.

"Both leaders have been disaffected with the shoddy treatment meted out by their respective alliance partners [the BJP in Mr. Jankar's case and the Congress-

NCP in Mr. Shetti's case] and deliberated on the possibility of opening a 'fourth front' consisting of smaller parties. However, nothing concrete has been decided as yet," said a Swabhimani Paksha leader, speaking to The Hinon condition of anonymity. Mr. Shetti, on his part,

said it was "a casual meeting", and added that there was no real discussion about opening up a 'fourth front' as Mr. Jankar would have to pull out of the NDA first.

Mr. Shetti also held a meeting of his party's core committee after which he said he had given the Congress time till March 13 to make up their minds.

In addition to the Hatkanangale Lok Sabha constituency in Kolhapur, Mr. Shetti has demanded the Buldhana and Wardha seats from the Congress-NCP

DGP reviews security in Vidarbha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Maharashtra Director General of Police Subodh Kumar Jaiswal on Tuesday took stock of security preparedness in Vidarbha region for the Lok Sabha elections.

The top cop also said police are well-prepared to handle any security threat arising in the form of IEDs or likewise. Mr. Jaiswal presided ov-

er a meeting with unit incharges of commissionarates of Nagpur, Amravati and Gadchiroli ranges, to discuss security steps as per the directives of the Election Commission.

The 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra will vote in four phases, beginning from Vidarbha region on April 11.

Addressing reporters here, the DGP said police would ensure that elections are conducted in a free and fair manner.

Reconsider decision, says Pawar's grand nephew

In a Facebook post, Rohit Pawar appeals to the NCP supremo to 'rethink'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

A day after Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar announced that he would not be contesting the coming Lok Sabha election from the Madha Lok Sabha constituency in Maharashtra's Solapur district, his grand nephew Rohit Pawar has requested him to reconsider his decision.

On Monday, Mr. Pawar had said he had decided to not contest and give chance

to the "younger generation" while endorsing the candidacy of another grand nephew, Parth Pawar from Maval Lok Sabha seat. Parth is the son of former Deputy Chief Minister and Sharad Pawar's nephew Ajit Pawar.

Now, another grand nephew Rohit Pawar, a third generation member of the Pawar clan and Parth Pawar's cousin, has urged the NCP supremo to 'rethink' his

decision to not contest polls.

In a Facebook post lauding Mr. Pawar's political career, he Rohit said, "We are aware of the pride felt by stalwarts in the political arena towards Mr. Pawar. Yet, he has always had his ear to the problems of the common man by making him the focal point of his political career for the last 52 years, transcending caste and religious considerations. We respect every decision made by him. But this respect is preceded

by great affection. It is because of this immense respect felt by countless workers like myself that I urge Pawar saheh to reconsider his decision of not contesting the Lok Sabha election."

In a thinly veiled jibe at Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Rohit further warned that those who indulged in frivolous remarks against Mr. Pawar would find their bubble exploding in the coming elections.

THE HINDU DELHI WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

IN BRIEF



TRS, AIMIM candidates win Council election

All the four candidates of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and the lone candidate of the ruling party's ally All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen were elected as Members of the Legislative Council under the MLAs quota with the Congress and the TDP boycotting the election. The four TRS candidates are Home Minister Mohd. Mahmood Ali, Satvavathi Rathod, Yegge Mallesham and Seri Subhash Reddy and the AIMIM candidate is Mirza Riyaz ul Hasan Effendi.

Security to be stepped up at TTD temples

In light of the theft of three small crowns from a subshrine at the Sri Govindaraja Swamy temple here, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has decided to enhance security at its temples by using radio frequency identity devices. The technology will be introduced on a trial basis at the temple. Sensormatic chips will be fixed to each piece of jewellery, which when taken through the main gate will raise an alarm.

Youth sets teenage girl on fire in Kerala

A youth doused petrol on an 18-year-old girl and set her on fire in Thiruvalla town in the district on Tuesday. The victim, a radiology student, sustained over 60% burns and is critical. She was taken to a private hospital and from there to a super-speciality hospital in Ernakulam with ventilator support. The youth had an argument with the girl and stabbed her before pouring two bottles of petrol on her and setting her afire, police said.

Keen on contesting: Sumalatha

Several Congress leaders in Karnataka continue to publicly support her

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Actor and aspiring politician Sumalatha, wife of former Karnataka Minister M.H. Ambareesh, said here on Tuesday that she would not step back from the electoral battle in Mandya come what

Ms. Sumalatha, who has been touring the district for the past two weeks to enhance her support base and to garner the backing of Congress leaders, met Congress leader H.N. Ravindra and his supporters near the statue of Sir M. Visvesvaraya off the Bengaluru-Mysuru highway.

Dr. Ravindra, former president of the Indian Medical Association who unsuccessfully contested the election to the Legislative Council from the South Graduates' constituency as the Congress nominee in 2016, has been on a fast along with some like-minded party workers



Shoring up support: Sumalatha with Congress leader H.N. Ravindra in Mandya on Tuesday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from Sunday opposing the candidature of Nikhil Kumaraswamy, son of Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy, in

The actor interacted with Dr. Ravindra and sought his support. He ended his fast after the interaction.

Later, speaking to pressgive importance to the propersons, Ms. Sumalatha paganda and online camsaid, "I have made up my paign against her launched

by "some vested interests". Although the Congress has announced that the Mandya seat will be given to its coalition partner, the Janata Dal (Secular), party workers continued to express solidarity with Ms. Sumalatha.

'Flex boards put up'

While the block Congress leaders in Nagamangala and Srirangapatna have put up flex boards with messages wishing her good luck, some party workers accompanied her when she met Dr. Ravindra.

According to reports, Ambareesh's fans have put up nearly 50 flex boards across Nagamangala and Srirangapatna towns.

"So far, I have not issued any notice or instruction to anyone for supporting Ms. Sumalatha," C.D. Gangadhar, Mandya District Congress Committee president, told The Hindu.

Naidu renominates eight candidates for LS election

Fate of 2 sitting MPs will be decided in a couple of days

STAFF REPORTER

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N. Chandrababu Naidu has finalised candidates for 8 Lok Sabha constituencies after hectic discussions with party leaders. The exercise for the remaining constituencies is on.

The fate of two sitting MPs Rayapati Sambasiva Rao (Narasaraopeta) and Sriram Malyadri (Bapatla) - is expected to be decided in a couple of days. MLC Dokka Manikya Varaparasad, who is keen on contesting from the Bapatla Lok Sabha constituency, has placed his proposal before the party national president.

Madiga candidate

He is optimistic that Mr. Naidu would respond positively to the request that the case



N. Chandrababu Naidu

of the Madiga community be considered. There is an argument that at least one candidate from the community should be given a chance as the party has decided to field three candidates from the Mala community, party sources say.

The TDP has plans to field candidates from the Mala community from Chittoor, Tirupati and Amalapuram.

N. Sivaprasad would be renominated from the Chittoor Lok Sabha seat. Amalapuram MP P. Ravindra quit the party to join the YSRCP.

Balayogi's son

There is speculation that Harsha Kumar would join the TDP to contest from this seat. But, Mr. Naidu is contemplating fielding Harish, son of former LS Speaker G.M.C. Balayogi, from the

constituency, sources say. Mr. Malyadri's candidature has been put on hold. There is talk that the party is planning to make him contest from the Tadikonda Assembly segment. Mr. Manikya Varaprasad has, sources say, requested the party national president, to field him from the Tadikonda Assembly segment if not from Bapatla LS.

STAFF REPORTER

Eminent personalities across est here on Tuesday and criticised the Central government for threatening to act against N. Ram, Chairman, The Hindu group of publications, and The Hindu for publishing investigative stories surrounding the controver-

threatened to book The Hin-

Actor Prakash Raj, who is contesting the Lok Sabha election from Bengaluru, called this an attempt to intimidate Mr. Ram and The

He warned the Central government and said people were watching these events closely and said "the cat would be out of the bag," referring to the stories on the

Freedom fighter and veteran Gandhian H.S. Doreswamy said there was no need for Mr. Ram to reveal who his sources were or how he got access to the documents as it was against the ethics of the profession

mind to contest the Lok Sab-

ha election from Mandya.

The only decision left is

whether to face the poll bat-

tle as an Independent or as

the nominee of a political

party. I will announce my de-

She asked her fans not to

cision on March 18."

Film-maker B. Suresh said the threat of being called anti-national hung over anyone who questioned the policies mocracy is where people sion of policies brought out

Emergency.

Annual festival begins at Sabarimala

'Aarat' ceremony will be held on March 21

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT PATHANAMTHITTA

The annual festival at the Lord Ayyappa Temple at Sabarimala began with the ceremonial 'kodiyettu' on Tuesday.

Hundreds of devotees thronged the temple to witness the ceremony.

The temple chief priest ('tantri'), assisted by the head priest ('melsanthi'), performed the rituals. They performed the 'bimbasudhikriya' and 'kodimarapuja' before hoisting the ceremonial flag on the temple mast.

The ceremonial flag was



Grand start: The 'Kodiyettu' ceremony held at the Sabarimala temple on Tuesday.

taken out in a procession with the accompaniment of a caparisoned elephant, sacred 'marappani', and traditional temple percussion prior to the 'kodiyettu' ceremony. The 'tantri' hoisted the flag at 7.30 a.m.

The 'utsavabali' ritual will

be performed on all days till March 20. The 'pallivetta' ceremony will be held at Saramkuthi on March 20 even-

'pallivetta' procession will set off from the Sannidhanam to Saramkuthi after the 'Athazhapuja' and will return to the temple by midnight. The 'aarat' ceremony,

marking the culmination of the 10-day festival, will be held at the specially prepared 'aarat kadavu' in the Pampa on March 21.

The 'tantri' will perform the 'aaratupuja' and 'utchapuja' at the 'aarat kadavu'.

The presiding deity will be seated on a specially prepared 'peedhom' at the 'nadapandal' of the Pampa Ganapati Temple till 3 p.m. The deity will be taken out in a procession to the 'sannidhanam' later. The 'tantri' will bring down the ceremonial flag as soon as the procession reaches the 'sannidhanam', marking the end of the annual festival.

Citizens protest against threat to use Official Secrets Act

Call it an attempt to intimidate *The Hindu*

Hindu.

different fields staged a protsies over the Rafale deal.

The Centre had recently du and others under the Official Secrets Act for publishing stories based on Defence Ministry documents.

of the BJP-led Centre. "The Constitution states that deshould participate in discusby the government. This is being curbed today," he said.

He condemned the trolling and censorship of journalists and cartoonists and compared the current scenario to Indira Gandhi's 1975

IN BRIEF



Shatrughan Sinha fires fresh salvo at Modi

Disgruntled BJP leader Shatrughan Sinha has fired the fresh salvo at Narendra Modi, highlighting the inconvenience caused to commuters whenever the Prime Minister's convoy passes through, notwithstanding his avowed dislike for 'VIP culture'. PTI

Milk vendor shot dead in Muzaffarnagar district

MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)
A milk vendor was allegedly shot dead by three unidentified men in
Muzaffarnagar district, the police said on Tuesday. The incident occurred in Khatauli town on Monday evening when three persons came on a bike and shot Ashfaq (30).
No arrest has been made so far, SSP Sudhir Kumar said. PTI

Tea adulteration racket busted in Kendrapara

KENDRAPARA (ODISHA)
A tea adulteration racket was unearthed in Kendrapara district on Tuesday with the seizure of spurious tea packed in sachets of reputed brands, the police said. Acting on a tip-off, the police raided a godown in Kharidasahi village and busted the adulteration racket. However, the miscreants managed to escape, they said. PTI

Missing woman's body found in river

The body of an 18-year-old woman, who went missing from a hospital last week, was spotted floating in the Chambal river in Kota district on Tuesday, the police said. Rescue team of the Kota Municipal Corporation recovered the body in the Kunhari area after it was spotted floating in the river in the morning, the police said.

Gripped by ennui



Inside Kolkata: Rickshaw pullers waiting for passengers at a market place in Kolkata on Tuesday • PTI

Not dependent on allies in Bihar, says Cong.; RJD hits back

If seat sharing does not work out, there will be no problems: Sadanand Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The opposition Grand Alliance in Bihar appeared under strain on Tuesday when a senior Congress leader asserted that his party was not dependent on allies in the State, drawing sharp reactions from the RJD, which questioned the national party's commitment to defeating the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections.

Congress Legislature Party leader Sadanand Singh, also a member of the recently constituted State election committee, said: "The party has emerged stronger under



Sadanand Singh

the leadership of Rahul Gandhi. If seat sharing does not work out, there will be no problem. *Ham kisi ke bhi mohtaj nahin hain* (We are not dependent on anybody)"

Mr. Singh cited the example of Uttar Pradesh, where the Congress is gearing up to go it alone after being dumped by the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party, arch-rivals who have buried the hatchet and formed an alliance to take on the BJP.

"Rahul Gandhi had said in the context of U.P. that the party will be playing on the front foot. We are game for that in Bihar as well," Mr. Singh added.

Reacting to the Congress leader's comments, RJD national vice-president Shivanand Tiwary said: "The grand old party must make up its mind on whom it wants to fight. Does it want to defeat the BJP or engage in a fight against those who are committed to thwarting the saffron party.

"Our party has the biggest janadhar (support base) in Bihar. The Congress can belittle us at its own peril. Moreover, it will also have to answer the voters who wish to get rid of the BJP," he said.

A senior Congress leader camping in New Delhi, meanwhile, told PTI over phone that the two parties could not reach a consensus over seat allocation.

Thakurani Jatra festival flagged off

STAFF REPORTER

Preparations for the famous biennial Thakurani Jatra festival in Odisha's Berhampur began on Monday with the hoisting of the holy mast or 'shubha khunti'.

According to Desibehera P. Durgaprasad, the traditional head of this festival, the celebrations will start from March 29 and continue for 32 days.

A colourful procession of devotees led by Mr. Durgaprasad carried the holy mast from Desibehera Street to the temple of goddess Budhi Thakurani, the reigning deity of the city. The holy mast returned back to Desibehera Street and it was fixed in front of the house of Mr. Durgaprasad. A makeshift thatched temple would be constructed at the place which would be the abode of the deity during the festival.

Goddess Budhi Thakurani is the traditional deity of silk handloom weavers or the Dera community of Berhampur. On March 29 night, an earthen pot representing the deity would be carried in a procession from the permanent temple to her temporary abode at Desibehera Street.

Carnival spirit

The period of outing of the deity is accompanied by a joyous carnival spirit that grips Berhampur city. As homage to the goddess, people of all ages, including children and the elderly, transform themselves into various characters from Indian mythology through body painting. The number of devotees in the garb of mythological characters increase towards the last days of the festival. Hundreds of them come out in processions with different themes making the city colourful.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL. TEMPERATURE & AIR OUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Wednesday: Thunderstorm accompanied with hailstorm, lightning & gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, north Rajasthan, north Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	–	32.8	. 23.1	Kozhikode	–	. 35.6	26.0
Ahmedabad	–	32.6	. 13.7	Kurnool	–	. 39.9	26.8
Aizawl	–	28.0	. 15.9	Lucknow	–	. 32.7	16.4
Allahabad	–	35.4	. 18.0	Madurai	–	. 37.5	23.7
Bengaluru	–	34.0	. 21.5	Mangaluru	–	. 35.0	24.8
Bhopal	–	. 32.7	. 15.0	Mumbai	–	. 30.8	21.6
 Bhubaneswar	–	37.0	. 23.6	Mysuru	–	. 34.6	19.1
Chandigarh	5.8	. 25.8	. 10.2	New Delhi	0.6	. 27.4	12.8
Chennai	–	33.6	. 25.1	Patna	–	. 34.5	16.2
Coimbatore	–	36.7	. 22.4	Port Blair	–	. 31.2	21.4
Dehradun	3.6	. 26.1	. 10.6	Puducherry	–	. 34.7	24.0
Gangtok	0.2	. 17.5	9.4	Pune	–	. 36.2	15.7
Goa	–	30.8	. 21.5	Raipur	–	. 35.5	25.0
Guwahati	–	31.9	. 15.7	Ranchi	–	. 34.0	17.5
Hubballi	–	33.0	. 22.0	Shillong	–	. 22.8	9.4
Hyderabad	–	37.4	. 23.2	Shimla	19.7	. 15.4	3.3
Imphal	–	28.6	. 10.0	Srinagar	–	. 13.3	2.4
Jaipur	–	. 29.0	. 17.3	Trivandrum	0.2	. 36.2	24.2
Kochi	–	33.8	. 26.0	Tiruchi	–	. 36.7	23.4
Kohima	–	. 21.2	8.8	Vijayawada	–	. 35.6	23.5
Kolkata				Visakhapatnam			
(Rainfall data i	n mm: t	emperat	ure in Cel	lsius)			

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsiu

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

	CITIES						
:	Ahmedabad	71	114	28	102		
:	Bengaluru	16	.42	51	73	.115	
:	Chennai	32	.48	40	171		
	Delhi	20	.51	26	178	.187	
	Hyderabad						
	Kolkata	21	.94	22	262	.174	
:	Lucknow	20	.49	36	338		
:	Mumbai	8	.11	78	32	91	
	Pune						

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Guwahati, Assam recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 298 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Panchkula, Haryana recorded a healthy AQI score of 33

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

NO:: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes,

PMIZ.5 & PMID: PARTICULATE MATTER POLIUTION CAN CAUSE ITRITATION OF the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

IN BRIEF



High Court grants bail to Nirmala Devi

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday granted bail to suspended assistant professor Nirmala Devi, 11 months after she was arrested on the charge of attempting to lure college girls in Virudhunagar to provide sexual favours to "high ranking" officials of the Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU). Ms. Devi has been restrained from issuing any public statement and has been asked to cooperate with the trial process.

ED attaches assets in coal block case

NEW DELHI The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹36.85 crore in connection with a coal block allocations case against Kamal Sponge Steel & Power Limited, and others. The total attachment now stands at ₹69 crore. The attached properties include a parcel of land, a plant and machinery, an office and a factory building located at Jaipur in Rajasthan and Satna in Madhya Pradesh. The action comes on a CBI FIR alleging that the company had misrepresented its net worth while seeking coal block allotments.

India test-fires guided rocket system 'Pinaka'

NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and **Development Organisation** successfully tested-fired the indigenously developed guided rocket system 'Pinaka' on Tuesday at Pokhran in Rajasthan, officials said. This was the third test conducted by the DRDO since Monday. "All the three trials were able to meet the mission objectives," the Defence Ministry said. PTI

EC nod for Lokayukta selection in Tamil Nadu

The Election Commission on Tuesday gave permission to the Tamil Nadu government for holding a meeting of selection committee for chairperson and members of the Lokayukta.The State government, in its communication to Chief **Electoral Officer Satyabrata** Sahoo on Monday, held that since the exercise was part of an "ongoing process" permission should be given.

Ravi Dubey and Jitendra Rathod hacked the supplier's email and got production house to divert fees into their own account

GAUTAM S. MENGLE

The Juhu police have arrested two fraudsters who allegedly cheated Yash Raj Films as well as their regular costume supplier by hacking the supplier's email and cheating the production house into sending their fees to their own accounts. The police have recovered evidence to indicate that the duo have made lakhs of rupees in this

manner so far. The police initiated investigations earlier this month, when the costume supplier approached them with a complaint.

"A week ago, the costume supplier approached Yash Raj Films to enquire about

Web of deceit

 The accused would hack email ids of commercial establishments or create similar email ids

 They would get in touch with the clients of the establishments to "inform" banking details"

■ The clients would unknowingly transfer money to the accounts of the

their pending dues of ₹1.75

lakh and the production

house responded saying they

had already transferred mo-

ney to a 'new' account speci-

fied by them in their email.

Upon verification, it was

found that someone had sent

accused without been cheated, while the targets would keep waiting for their dues to be

 Police said that the lack of proper scrutiny and the system of trust that businesses operate on would allow the accused to get away with the racket

police said.

received, the police made



Two held for cheating Yash Raj Films, costume supplier

an email from the costume supplier's official email with bank account details that do not belong to the supplier at all," an officer with the Juhu After the complaint was

enquiries with the bank where the money was transferred and found out the names of the two account holders. Acting on the instructions of the police, the bank officials called the ac-

count holders on Sunday,

saying there were some formalities they needed to complete. A police team was waiting in plain clothes at the bank and took the two, Ravi Dubey and Jitendra Rathod, into custody as soon as they showed up. After prelimininvestigations established their involvement, the two were arrested and charged with cheating and impersonation under the Indian Penal Code along with relevant sections of the Infor-

mation Technology Act. "We searched the homes of the accused and have seized 21 debit and credit cards from different banks, as well as documents to indicate deposits worth lakhs of rupees in numerous bank accounts. A team will soon be leaving for their native Rajasthan to conduct further enquiries. Prima facie investigations indicate that the duo have been active for several months," the officer said.

The accused would hack emails of commercial establishments or create similar IDs. They would get in touch with clients to "inform" them about "change in banking details". Police said that lack of

proper scrutiny and the system of trust that businesses operate on would allow the accused to get away with their racket.

Attempts are on to find out how the duo hacked the costume supplier's email account. "We have also found out that in some cases, the accused would create email IDs similar to those of commercial establishments, with the spelling differing by one or two alphabets, and get in touch with the clients of their targets, after which they would swindle the targets into paying money into their own accounts. We suspect that they had help from people inside their target establishments who fed them information about the clients, and this part is being verified further," the officer said.

Police inspector Pandharinath Wavhal confirmed the arrests and said that further investigations in the case

Freeze frame



Cold wave: Kalpa in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh recorded 24 cm of snowfall on Tuesday even as large parts of the State recorded sub-zero temperatures. • ANI

'10% quota a step towards casteless society'

It is meant to help a large section that is below the poverty line, Centre tells SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI

The 10% quota law is a step towards a classless and casteless society, the Union government has indicated in the Supreme Court.

The Centre referred to the court's past decisions that called for the "attainment of economic equality as the final and only solution to the besetting problems" of the country. The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, was meant "to benefit the economically weaker sections of society who were not covered by the existing schemes of reservation..."

It said the law was meant to benefit a "large section of the population of 135 crore

people," who are mostly lower middle class and below the poverty line. The government quoted the 2010 report of the Commission for Economically Backward Classes, chaired by Major General S.R. Sinho (retired), which said 18.2% of the general category came under the below poverty line (BPL).

In fact, the 13-page affidavit quoted from a 1985 Constitution Bench judgment in K.C. Vasanth Kumar vs Karnataka, which quotes Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to drive home the point that the economy of a family, and not its caste, should be the determining factor of social and educa-

The government argued that the new law was inspired by "quantifiable data" collected by "several committees" that underscored the need for the economically weaker sections to enjoy the benefits of reservation in order to access higher education and employment. It said unaided educational institutions should also comply with the state's wish to provide greater numbers access to higher education.

The government was responding to petitions that the Amendment to create 10% reservation for the poor in the unreserved category violated the basic structure of Constitution breached the 50% ceiling.

It argued that a "mere amendment" to an Article would not violate the basic structure of the Constitution. "Article 15(6) and Article 16(6) are enabling provisions for advancement of the economically weaker sections and are, in fact, in conformity with the principle of reservation and affirmative action," it reasoned. Furthermore, the 50% ceiling applied to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The new provision dealt with the economically weaker sections. "The limit of 50% is only applicable to reservation under Articles 15 (4), 15(5) and 16(4) and does not apply to Article 15(6)."

HC reserves verdict on plea against BCCI representing India

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Madras High Court on Tuesday reserved its verdict on a public interest litigation petition filed by a Delhibased woman seeking a direction to the Centre to restrain the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and its affiliated bodies as well as associations from claiming to be official representatives of the country during international

A Division Bench of Justices S. Manikumar and Subramonium Prasad deferred the judgment after doubting the locus standi of the petitioner R. Geeta Rani, a housewife, to file the case in which she had also sought directions to initiate legal action against BCCI members for having represented the country so far in a host of international

The petitioner had also urged the court to order the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to create a body of its own and register it with the International Cricket Council.

Locus in question

Only such body should be authorised to select cricket players for representing the Indian team in international matches, she insisted. However, opposing the case, senior counsel P.R. Raman representing the BCCI, questioned the locus standi of the petitioner to file such a case.

CB-CID takes over Pollachi sexual assault case

Woman IPS officer to head team; State govt. mulls handing over probe to CBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Crime Branch CID of the Tamil Nadu police on Tuesday launched an investigation into the serial sexual assault and blackmailing of

women in Pollachi. The four accused – K. Thirunavukkarasu, 27; N. Sabarirajan, aka Rishwanth, 25; N. Sathish, 29; and T. Vasanthakumar, 24 – who were arrested on charges of sexual harassment, use of criminal force and other Sections, were also detained under

the Goondas Act. A special team, led by Su-

tional backwardness.

perintendent of Police Nisha Parthiban, landed in Coimbatore late on Tuesday to commence investigations in the case that has sent shock waves across the State. The investigation was transferred from the Coimbatore Rural police to the CB-CID on Tuesday by the government as protests by political parties and students' groups continued.

Police sources said the State government was mulling transferring the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation, amid allegations that some senior functionaries of the ruling party were involved in the scandal, in which scores of women were allegedly sexually assaulted, videographed and black-

Victim's plea

Soon after DGP T.K. Rajendran issued orders transferring the case to the CB-CID, audio clips, purportedly of the complainant, were

shared on social media. The woman is heard appealing that the case not be politicised or sensationalised.

The young woman is also heard repeatedly mentioning that Deputy Speaker and Pollachi MLA Jayaraman had helped her file a case.

At the CB-CID headquarters, DGP M.S. Jaffar Sait instructed the special team, which comprises DSP R. Muthusamy, inspector R. Sumathy and others, to take possession of all documents and commence the probe.

HC extends relief from arrest to Teltumbde

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday extended protection from arrest to academic-activist Anand Teltumbde in the Bhima-Koregaon violence case till March 22.

A single-judge Bench of Justice P.N Deshmukh was hearing a petition filed by Mr. Teltumbde seeking anticipatory bail.

On February 11, another Bench not only extended his protection from arrest till February 22, but also directed the Pune Police to release him on ₹1lakh personal bond if they arrest him.

On February 5, the Pune police had informed another Bench that they would not arrest Mr. Teltumbde till February 12 midnight. The court had directed Addition-



Anand Teltumbde

al Public Prosecutor Aruna Kamat Pai, appearing for the Pune Police, to give an undertaking as a precondition to secure time to file an opposing the affidavit petition.

The affidavit contained the same reasons Ms. Kamat Pai had mentioned in the last hearing, of "incriminating evidence" against Mr. Teltumbde and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

SC sets deadline for HC on Navlakha plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Bombay High Court to decide within eight weeks on a plea moved by civil liberties activist Gautam Navlakha, seeking to quash the FIR against him in the 2017 Koregaon Bhima case.

The court kept pending two appeals of the Maharashtra government filed against the orders of the Delhi High Court and the High Court Bombay respectively.

Time limit A bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna asked the Bombay High Court to decide on Mr. Navlakha's



Gautam Navlakha

pending plea expeditiously, preferably within eight

Appearing for the Maharashtra government, advocate Nishant R. Katneshwarkar said the Delhi High Court's October 2018 order quashing Mr. Navlakha's transit remand was not maintainable in the High Court, when a person was in lawful custody pursuant to the orders of the court.

CBI books Ranchi Expressway, others for fraud

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELH

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case against Ranchi Expressway Limited, its chairman-cummanaging director K. Srinivasa Rao and others for alleged irregularities in the use of ₹1,029 crore of funds borrowed from a consortium of lenders led by Canara Bank. A sum of ₹264 crore was allegedly diverted on various pretexts.

Among those named in

the case are the company directors N. Seethaiah and N. Prithvi Teja; Madhucon Project Limited, Madhucon Infra, Madhucon Toll Highway Limited and auditing firm "Kota and Company." Unknown bank officials are also under the scanner.

Project details

The case has been registered following a preliminary inquiry ordered by the Jharkhand High Court. It relates to a project for four-laning of a 163-km stretch on National Highway-33 linking Ranchi to Jamshedpur. The National Highways Authority of India had allocated the work to Madhucon Project Ltd on March 18, 2011. A special purpose vehicle,

Ranchi Expressway, was floated for the project worth ₹1,655 crore. A consortium of 15 banks agreed to lend ₹1151.6 crore. The Ranchi Exoffice-bearers pressway round-tripped ₹50 crore, diverted ₹22 crore, claimed ₹98 crore as maintenance and used ₹94 crore as mobilisation advance, as alleged by the Serious Fraud Investi-It is alleged that the direc-

tors had fraudulently got released a total loan of ₹1,029.39 crore, but there was no progress in the pro-

The National Highways Authority of India terminated the contract on January 31, 2019, and forfeited ₹73.95 crore.



The power of two

Assembly election campaigns could have a bearing on the parliamentary polls

arliamentary elections in India have increasingly been influenced by State-level political variables beyond the performance of the ruling parties and the Opposition at the Centre. And this factor is likely to be even more salient in the four States facing simultaneous elections to the Assemblies and the Lok Sabha: Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, the two main rivals are regional forces, the Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam Party and the Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy-led YSR Congress Party. In 2014, the TDP had successfully fought elections in alliance with the BJP, and the Congress faced a backlash because of the bifurcation of the State during its tenure. This time, however, with the TDP having broken its alliance with the BJP, the regional parties are in a direct contest, and the national parties relegated to being minor players. Andhra Pradesh has faced acute fiscal concerns after bifurcation, and the TDP government would be keen to reassure voters over concerns about the State's economy. It fared the best in the country on economic growth parameters, with a significant increase in per capita income during the last five years and successful delivery of irrigation schemes. On the flip side, delays in the construction of the new capital city and the ballooning public debt suggest that Andhra still has structural issues to overcome. The TDP and the YSRCP have tried a game of one-upmanship on relations with the Centre and the denial of "special category status" for the State, which it is argued is crucial to overcome fiscal issues. Both parties have significant support bases among OBCs and other landowning communities, and the lack of any substantive differentiation between them could make this a closely contested election. The two parties are also likely to be important players in a post-election scenario at the national level.

In Odisha, the Biju Janata Dal led by Naveen Patnaik has been in power for 19 years, having bucked anti-incumbency largely due to welfare-driven governance. Unlike in Andhra Pradesh, the Congress and particularly the BJP have a stronger presence. The BJP, buoyed by its performance in the 2017 local body elections, is expected to put up a stronger fight in the State's Assembly and Lok Sabha polls. In fact, the BJP is keen to make up for expected losses in its strongholds in the north with gains in the east. India's longest-serving Chief Minister, Pawan Kumar Chamling (in power since 1994), and his Sikkim Democratic Front are expected to face a more pronounced challenge from the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha and the new party launched by former footballer Bhaichung Bhutia, the Hamro Sikkim Party. In Arunachal Pradesh, the Permanent Resident Certificate issue will figure as a dominant narrative during the elections even as the ruling BJP seeks to link its campaign to the performance of the Central government.

Final showdown

The IS is facing defeat, but the search for a political solution in Syria should continue

he Islamic State, which at its peak controlled territories straddling the Iraq-Syria border of the size of Great Britain, is now fighting for half a square kilometre in eastern Syria. The Syrian Democratic Forces, the Kurdish-led rebel group assisted by the U.S., has effectively laid siege to Baghouz, the eastern Syrian village where about 500 IS jihadists along with 4,000 women and children are caught. When the IS lost bigger cities such as Raqqa and Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria, militants moved to Baghouz and the deserts in the south. After the SDF moved to Baghouz, several civilians fled the village. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates that nearly 59,000 people have left IS-held territory since December, and at least 4,000 jihadists have surrendered since February. Both President Donald Trump and the SDF commanders say victory against the IS is imminent. Victory in Baghouz will also mean the IS's territorial caliphate is shattered. Since the battle for Kobane in 2015, which marked the beginning of the end of the IS, Syrian Kurdish rebels have been in the forefront of the war. Naturally, the SDF would claim the final victory against the IS.

However, the liberation of Baghouz or the destruction of the territorial caliphate does not necessarily mean that the IS has been defeated. It is basically an insurgent-jihadist group. It has established cells, especially in Syria and Iraq, which have continued to carry out terror attacks even as IS territories kept shrinking. The group has a presence in Syria's vast deserts, a tactic its predecessor, al-Qaeda in Iraq, successfully used when it was in decline during 2006-2011 after its leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed by the U.S. When the Syrian civil war broke, the remnants of AQI found an opportunity for revival and rebranded themselves as the Jabhat al-Nusra, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria. The IS was born when al-Nusra split. The U.S., the Kurdish rebels, the Syrian government and other stakeholders in the region should be mindful of the geopolitical and sectarian minefields that groups such as the IS could exploit for their re-emergence. Mr. Trump has already announced the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria. The Turkish government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is wary of the rapid rise of the Syrian Kurds, who are organisationally and ideologically aligned with Kurdish rebels on the Turkish side. The Syrian regime, on its part, has vowed to re-establish its authority over the Kurdish autonomous region in the northeast. If Turkey and Syria attack Kurdish rebels, who were vital in the battle against the IS, that would throw northeastern Syria into chaos again, which would suit the jihadists. To avoid this, there must be an orderly U.S. withdrawal and a political solution to the Syrian civil war.

In the pursuit of four freedoms

The principles that inform a lived life of dignity must dictate choices in the great Indian election of 2019



NEERA CHANDHOKE

The schedule for the 2019 general election has been announced, and the political arena has once again been transformed into a gigantic market place. In this space political parties proceed to outbid and undercut each other, often in shocking ways, as they desperately buy a commodity called state power. Every political party pursues state power as frantically as the Knights of King Arthur searched for the Holy Grail in medieval England. This is their project and their rationale for existence. Power saturates every site of social interaction, from the household to the workplace, but state power is unique because it is a condensate of all power. The state decides whether our lives are led in good, bad or ugly ways. The holders of state power resolve what sort of opportunities are offered by society and the economy, and whether we can participate in multiple social transactions as equals.

All that's at stake

Understandably, politicians yearn to take over the state. Some of them might even agree to sell their souls, drive a Faustian bargain so that they can acquire, possess and relish power. We are a democracy, but citizens are unable to control the possession, exercise and implementation of power by their representatives.

A disturbing question haunts the corridors of our democracy. Are representatives responsive to their constituencies, to their wants, needs and aspirations? Or do they tend to subordinate the



lust for office? The latter is painful-

Democratically elected governments can and have divided society, kept people in penury, imprisoned and tortured civil liberty activists, destroyed civil societies, and threatened war against neighbours. Overt and covert violence stalks our heels. Violence may have become the new normal in India, but there is little that is noble about violence. "Each new morn" says Macduff of war in Shakespeare's Macbeth, "new widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows Strike heaven in the face, that it resounds.

Today, new sorrows follow us around like Mary's little lamb because the government refuses to respect our need for a decent life, lived with dignity and in peace. Consider the way the Indian government has responded to serious economic distress in the country. Refusing to address the grim crisis in the agrarian sector which has destroyed livelihoods and driven farmers to suicide, the government decides to offer petty pocket money to the agriculturalist. Instead of transforming educational institutions, or taking on the onerous task of creating jobs with some determination, the Modi government offers pitiful reservations to graduates and postgraduates who have been forced to compete for positions below their

well-being of citizens to their own capabilities. Worse, our government refuses to count how many Indian citizens are unemployed. It just does not acknowledge that poverty created through job losses does not only breed distress, it produces and reproduces discontent and anger, resentment and violence. Our representatives have failed us.

For when we vote, we expect that our representative government will provide the basic preconditions of a good life. We do not expect it to tap petty passions and irrational emotions through incendiary rhetoric that targets communities, regions and other countries in the name of the nation. Cynics might wonder whether elections bring about change at all, or whether the outcome results in more of the same.

Freedom from fear

Nevertheless, elections are significant. The opportunity to vote offers us choices, we can vote for the same violence that has left us with bloodied hands and torn feet. Or us freedom. At stake in the 2019 election are four kinds of freedoms. The first is freedom from fear, from the haunting feeling that someone, somewhere is watching how we behave, and that someone is ready to penalise us through words and deeds if we dare question the mockery that democracy gives power to the religious major-

ity. Our own people who belong to the minority community need to be reassured that they are citizens of this country by right, and no one has the right to make them feel that they are here on sufferance. All of us have to be free from the nagging worry that our neighbourhoods will be overrun by lumpens on their monstrous motorcycles baying for blood at the drop of a hat, that citizens of India will be lynched and left to die painfully on the mud tracks of our cities and villages. Above all, we have the right to vent criticism of representatives without being assaulted by crude, sexist abuse on social media that relentlessly intrudes into our everyday lives.

The second sort of freedom we should reinstall is freedom from want. Our farmers live in precarious conditions, our working class ekes out a bare existence steeped in misery and deprivation, our children are offered insecure and low paid jobs, and our minorities live under the constant threat that their livelihoods will be snatched from them. Seventy-one years after Independence, the government should be concerned about the quality of employment it offers our people, about suitable remuneration, about lives lived with dignity, and about the selfworth that people develop when they love what they do for a living.

It is not enough that the working classes are handed out a mere pittance instead of a living wage. It is not sufficient that our people work for a mess of porridge, or that they should merely have enough to eat. It is the task of a democratic government to provide for basic preconditions – health, education, employment and a sustainable wage – that enable people to stand up and speak back to a history not of their making. This is what democracy means, not a handout here and a handout

there. For this, we need to ask why should people remain poor.

The third freedom that we have to re-capture is freedom from discrimination. Ironically, upper castes have mobilised against protections provided to one of the most vulnerable groups in human history, Dalits. It is paradoxical that reservations, which are meant to secure respect for those who are doubly disadvantaged by reasons of caste and class, are offered to the upper castes, which are already over-represented in the public sphere. Reservations have become a mockery, a charade, used as a deliberate ploy to delegitimise the project of social

The fourth freedom is freedom from sexual violence, for women, for men, for transgenders, and for children. India must never witness with horror and pain another child mauled, raped and mutilated as in Kathua. We must never bear witness to the ignoble spectacle of lawyers demonstrating in favour of rapists. We must never again register the horrific phenomenon of women being beaten up merely because they wish to visit their god in a temple. If India cannot secure equality, which is the reason for democracy, let us at least opt for non-discrimination, a lesser form of equality.

A constitutional right

At stake in the elections that loom large on our collective imaginations is not delegation of power to representatives, so that they can live out their sick fantasies of controlling minds and bodies. We vote to recapture and protect the freedom that earlier generations fought for so strenuously. We vote because freedom is our constitutional right and we will reclaim it.

Neera Chandhoke is a former Professor of Political Science at Delhi University

To serve the governed

The Official Secrets Act has no place in a democracy, as the Goswami Commission had suggested in the late 1970s



FALIS. NARIMAN

The constitutional freedom to use and publicise information is directly affected by the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, which as with most of British India enactments followed the Official Secrets Act. 1920, passed by the British Parliament. It was strict enough then but after Independence in 'free India' we amended it and made it stricter in 1967, widening the scope of Section 5 ("Wrongful communication. etc., of information") and enlarging the scope of Section 8 ("Duty of giving information as to commission of offences").

Often misused

Whenever I think about the Official Secrets Act, 1923, I recall a scene from the son et lumière

(sound and light show) at the Red Fort enacted almost every evening where 100 years of Indian history is brilliantly encapsulated in a onehour show: in it the Emperor Aurangzeb (who reigned for 60 years) asks his courtiers, "What is this noise, that is troubling us from outside?" And the courtiers reply: "Your Majesty, it is music." And Aurangzeb's majestic response is: "Then bury it deep into the bowels of the earth."

I always thought – un-majestishould have been the fate of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, which has been so frequently misused, that it ought to have been repealed when India got independence. In fact when the Janata government which came to power at the end of the Internal Emergency, and set up what was then known (and is now forgotten) as the Second Press Commission, it was chaired by a great and good judge, Justice Goswami of the Supreme Court of India, whose common sense approach to all subjects greatly at-

tracted me to him. L.K. Advani, then Minister for



quested me to be a member of the cally, but seriously - that this Commission, and I agreed. The Commission proceeded in great earnestness for months, and ultimately, when its report was ready in December 1979, a report that implored the government of the day to immediately repeal the Official Secrets Act, 1923, it never saw the light of day. Indira Gandhi, who came back to power in January 1980, wrote to the members a polite letter of thanks for our deliberations and promptly dissolved and disbanded the Justice Goswami Commission. It was replaced by the now officially known Second Press Commission presided over by Justice K.K. Mathew.

The Goswami Commission and all its deliberations had been obliterated by a stroke of the pen. If Mrs. Gandhi had returned to power a few months later and our report had been accepted by the previous government, concerns in the context of The Hindu's exposé on the Rafale deal would probably not have arisen over what the Attorney General of India ought to have said or done or ought not to have said or done. The Official Second Press Commission (the Mathew Commission) did not recommend the repeal of the Official Secrets Act of 1923.

The press as champion

Since I still regard the press (and no longer the electronic media) as the champion of Article 19(1)(a) freedoms, I would like to say that the press must serve the governed, not those who govern. In his famous Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln described good governance as "of the people, by the people and for the people". Centuries later we do understand the "of", and are willing to tolerate the

forgetting the "for". If government is indeed for the people, it has a solemn obligation to keep the people well informed.

Fortunately, the modern trend in today's world is towards less secrecy and more information. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations way back in 1966, specifically includes the right to freedom of expression, defined as "the freedom to seek, receive and impart the information and ideas of all kinds"

The Janata government signed and ratified this Covenant in 1979, but none of the later Governments has lived up to its ideals. We have enacted Article 19(1)(a) in our 1950 Constitution with extremely limited restrictions - in Article 19(2) but again only paid lip service to speech and freedom of expression.

I am proud that *The Hindu* has not just preached but stuck its neck out in support of this cardinal freedom of ours. Bravo.

"by" but unfortunately we keep Fali S. Nariman is an eminent jurist

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

Tale of three sisters

The situation of the three sisters is a situation many individuals on either side of India-Pakistan border face (OpEd page, "Too afraid to make a phone call", March 12). The article shows us the mirror – how humanity, love and relationships get sidelined by excessive nationalism, now at a crescendo in India. This has led to divisions in the hearts of ordinary people. Let us not give terrorists a motive to escalate hatred, tension and fear. Borders dividing nations should not divide families, relations and humanity. ATUL JOSHI, Kedarpur, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

- The agony of the sisters cannot be fathomed. How unfair life is. The essay only shows the deep after-effects of Partition, made worse by terrorism and war. B. Prabha,
- Such a moving article in its sensitive portrayal of the dilemma and agony an ordinary family faces. But as a resident of India, I will still

say that India is a peaceful country where people can live without fear and in full freedom. V.T. SAMPATH KUMARAN,

- The essay made very disturbing reading as it highlighted the agony that the three sisters all undergo simultaneously. It reflected the pain of the wound that has still to heal and which continues to haunt relations between India and Pakistan. That a sensible section of civil society on both sides of the border is against war and continues to push for a halt to hate politics is heartwarming. Let a healthy political atmosphere be given a chance to blossom. S.V. VENUGOPALAN, Chennai
- It is agonising to come across such heart-wrenching stories. Even seven decades after Partition, the wound is still fresh. We are now in a state where expressing an opinion that contradicts the majority is labelled as being anti-national. As an individual, one should understand that nationalism

or patriotism is not just about being anti-Pakistan but also in empathising with and understanding the diversity of this great nation. The essay was enriching in making us understand better the sensitivities behind many situations that are created following adversity. SRI HARSHA VAKKALANKA,

■ It is unfortunate yet inevitable that conversations between siblings living on both sides of the border invite unnecessary attention when passions run high in a war-like situation. The writer has posed searching questions about the need to insulate the ordinary discourse of life from being poisoned by the suspicions and misunderstandings that surface when tensions escalate between India and Pakistan. However, it

appears that he has chosen the wrong audience to address. His pleas to restore the values of humanity are impassioned, but blaming the victim for the destructive agendas of an implacable adversary is disingenuous.

The writer should redirect his moral indignation to expose the root cause of the problem – Pakistan's treacherous and unstated doctrine of waging a covert war against India. V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,

The forgotten soldier The story of Sanju Ram, a former Indian Army soldier, was heart-rending ("Humiliating to be carried on palanguin: ex-armyman", March 12). The government has been spending crores on memorials and publicity material, but soldiers like Mr. Ram are forgotten. One hopes that with the report on his plight and his need for quality prosthetic implants, people will respond and help him lead a life with dignity. J.P. REDDY. Nalgonda, Telangana

■ It is a shame that precious little has been done for a soldier who has helped keep us safe. Perhaps the media should take up his case and ensure that he is able to lead a decent and dignified life. K. Joshi,

No politics here Social media has become so

powerful that it is capable of making even the wisest look vulnerable (Page 1, "Pollachi sex scandal triggers outrage among politicians", March 12). The heinous crimes perpetrated on unsuspecting women in Tamil Nadu leave one to wonder whether we still live in a civilised society. The case should be fasttracked and the culprits given the maximum punishment. The political games over the plight of the victims will divert attention from the need for a fair investigation. V. SUBRAMANIAN,

A hot house

Chennai

Bengaluru is often called the 'Garden City' but its airport, Kempegowda International Airport, has very scant tree cover. While there are some flowering plants, the need is for trees. The parking area is devoid of trees. Even the shelters for passengers waiting for buses appear to have been designed unscientifically; they aid in the collection and capture of heat. When there are a

number of shade-giving tree species that can be used, one wonders why the officials have not bothered to do anything. In an age of global warming, it is certainly not an offence to plant trees. S. YASHONATH,

Complete trash My wife and I were in India

for 22 days in February. We arrived in Chennai and drove down the coast to Kanyakumari, then round the corner into Kerala. Day after day the route was found covered with litter. At the sides of roads, in fields, in town and village streets, in alleyways, at the edge of rivers, in tourist spots and beaches, Tamil Nadu looked as if it was awash with litter. We saw a tea stall with 100plus paper cups trampled into the ground around it. The litter problem is shocking and someone has to address this. There is a beautiful and friendly country somewhere under the mess.

THE A. WALLACES,

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:

THE HINDU DELHI WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

THE WEDNESDAY INTERVIEW | GAUTAM BAMBAWALE

'India must work slowly on China so that it aligns itself with us on terror'

The former diplomat on India's next steps with Pakistan, the China-Pakistan relationship, and India's evolving ties with China

SUHASINI HAIDAR

As the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) deadline for allowing the listing of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar expires today, Gautam Bambawale, former Indian envoy to Pakistan and China, says it is important for India to keep focus on fighting terror from Pakistan, while keeping communication with China open. Excerpts:

In the immediate aftermath of the Pulwama terrorist attack and then the Indian Air Force strike in Balakot, the government has been garnering international support for its case against Pakistan and the need to take direct action against groups there. In the long run, what are the next steps for Indian diplomacy?

■ I think the focus lies in keeping the pressure going on Pakistan. In the next few months, we must ensure that pressure does not lessen. We should work to ensure that Masood Azhar is listed as a terrorist by the UNSC. We need to ensure that whatever steps Pakistan takes as a result of the pressure are real, not hogwash meant just to please public opinion. And we need to work with the Financial Action Task Force [FATF] to keep the lens on terror financing and choking off support that groups like the JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba

Do you think India often loses its focus on terror? Between the Uri and Pulwama attacks, for example, efforts to raise the Azhar issue waned. India didn't raise it with China after the Wuhan summit.

[LeT] receive in Pakistan.

■ No, I don't think that is the case. Even after the Wuhan summit, we have repeatedly raised the Azhar issue with the Chinese government. At the end of the day, the UNSC listing of Azhar is just a facet of the many ways we must work to ensure our core focross-border terror. We cannot afford to lose focus on

In the past week, Pakistan has announced some measures against the JeM and the Jamaat-ud-Dawa. How do you suggest India ensures real action?

■ Look, there is no alternative but to keep working on Pakistan through the international community. Let us remember that after the Pulwama attack, almost all major nations recognised India's right to protect itself and take action to prevent terror attacks on our soil wherever it is needed. In addition, it is the three Security Council members led by France that have taken up the listing of Azhar at the UNSC 1267 Committee again, and the case on terror funding at the FATF. This is the way forward.

Why is listing Azhar so important? LeT chief Hafiz Saeed was listed by the UNSC more than a decade ago and that has hampered neither his movements nor the LeT's ability to carry out attacks in India.

■ It is important. Once a group or a leader is listed, the entire world treats them as terrorists, regardless of what Pakistan does.

What is China's interest in ensuring that Azhar is not listed, and how can India get

■ Yes, China has said in the past that it doesn't have cus: that of Pakistan ending enough information to list



Azhar, despite the fact that on each occasion we have provided more information of his links to terror attacks. I think we must keep trying as we have, and this time we are very close to having Azhar on the list. The truth is, China does take Pakistan's interests into account, and that is the reason it has been hesitant to allow the listing. But this time the momentum is with us. I would also like to say that we must learn to be transactional with China, and see what it is that Beijing would

Are you saying that China's support for Pakistan, or in this case Azhar, is not ideological, and hence can be negotiated?

like in return for support at

the UN.

■ I am saying that China's objections are not insurmountable. Remember, we were able to bring China around to placing Pakistan on the FATF's 'grey list' by being transactional about it.

And if China decides to veto the listing this time as well?

■ Then it would mean that on this particular issue, at

It is for Pakistan to understand that it cannot keep lighting fires in its neighbour's territory and not be burnt by

them itself.

this particular time, we and other countries have not been able to convince China that this is in their best interest. But that doesn't mean

How do you think the government should approach the China-Pakistan relationship?

we should stop trying.

■ Look, China has a very strong relationship with Pakistan, as it has had for decades: on strategic issues, their military relationship, and on economic issues. Even so, where terror is concerned, China is very clear about where its interests lie, and particularly given concerns over groups in Xinjiang, an area that connects it to Pakistan. So India's approach must be to work slowly on China to align itself on terror with our concerns, and then for it to move Pakistan in the direction we want

So, do you think it is possible for China to effect the desired outcome from Pakistan?

■ Yes.

India has always said that international mediation is not acceptable. Do you think India should ask China to intercede on its behalf with Pakistan?

■ Well, that is the long-standing policy of India. But the fact is, just as we have received support from countries like the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and they have conveyed to Pakistan that it needs to crack down on terror groups there, we must also hope that China will do the same. China does not wish to be isolated from the rest of the world, especially on the issue of terror.

What kind of role have the U.S., Saudi Arabia and the UAE played in this?

■ A positive one. Clearly, after the strike on Balakot, and then the attempt by Pakistan to retaliate, they were con-

escalation. I think they all must have brought a lot of pressure on Pakistan to bring down the tensions, and to return the IAF pilot. But in the long run, it is for Pakistan to understand that it cannot keep lighting fires in its neighbour's territory and not be burnt by them itself. Even with these groups [JeM and LeT], it is only a matter of time before they turn on Pakistan and carry out attacks

cerned about the action-

reaction process leading to

You mentioned the concerns over escalation. Is one of India's biggest challenges in fighting cross-border terror the fact that ultimately the international community's focus shifts to reducing India-Pakistan tensions?

■ Yes, this is a constant challenge. But the fact remains that the international community has affirmed India's right to protect its citizens from attacks planned across its borders. That is a net gain.

Do you think the support will continue should India react the same way in the event of another attaack?

■ I think as long as India carries out non-military strikes that don't target military personnel and don't cause any civilian casualties, India will receive that support.

Since the 2016 Uri attack, the Modi government has also pursued a policy of 'isolating Pakistan'. How realistic is this idea?

■ We must understand that what the government means by isolating Pakistan is to isolate it on the issue of terrorism. This is not to say that countries should stop dialogue with Pakistan.

Is there any space for direct

dialogue between India and Pakistan at present?

■ It is for the government to decide if it wishes to open a dialogue with Pakistan. At present, the government has taken the view that talks and terror don't go together, and that is its prerogative. I can tell you this: the people of India are fully fed up with this issue. As we have shown in 2016 and 2019, we are willing to take action against those terror groups directly if Pakistan refuses to. So, Pakistan is left with only one choice if it wishes to avoid more such action: to stop the terrorist groups there.

When it comes to China, however, despite all that has happened, including the Doklam crisis, the government opted for talks. You were the Ambassador to Beijing last year. How did the Wuhan summit come about?

■ I think the important takeaway from the Wuhan summit was that two ancient civilisations in a relationship with major potential decided that it was important to find a way to talk to each other rather than past each other. With the Wuhan summit, the idea was to allow the two leaders [Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping] to talk for as long as possible on any number of issues between the two countries. And the main outcome of the summit was that they would increase ways of communicating with each other.

Does that mean that the kind of conflict we saw at Doklam will not recur? I ask especially since before your postings in Pakistan and China, you were India's Ambassador to Bhutan.

■ Look, I don't want to speak about the China-Bhutan

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 13, 1969

D.P. Mishra's election held void

FROM The Mindu. ARCHIVES

The political future of Madhya Pradesh Congress Legislature

Party Leader D.P. Mishra came under a cloud to-day [March

tion to the Assembly on grounds of corrupt practice. As a re-

sult of the judgment, Mr. Mishra, who had advanced the Congress claim to be invited to form a Ministry in the wake of S.V

D. Chief Minister G. N. Singh's resignation yesterday [March

11], faces the risk of losing the seat he won in the last General

Election. The Representation of the People Act disqualifies a

person found guilty of corrupt practice from seeking re-elec-

tion for six years. The Division Bench, consisting of Mr. Justice

Shiv Dayal and Mr. Justice S.P. Bhargava, said the election of

Mr. Mishra, was void under Section 100 (1) (3) of the Represen-

tation the People Act. 1951. Their Lordships said that it had

been proved that Mr. Mishra had incurred or authorised ex-

boundary as that is not our issue. We must see the Doklam conflict in terms of the India-China boundary issue, where boundary lines have not been delimited yet. Add to that, Indian and Chinese military patrols are coming closer and closer to each other in terms of physical proximity, and all the boundary conflicts in previous years have been a result of this. If we want to avoid these kinds of incidents, we need more confidence-building measures, more SOPs [standard operating procedures]. Our ties with China have poten-

Why do you think it is possible to envisage this forward-looking relationship with China, while with Pakistan it is impossible to move beyond its sponsorship of terror?

■ I think we must realise the

tial beyond these conflicts

and we must seize this.

multi-faceted relationship that we have with China. We have problems, but we have also been able to make great strides in ties, particularly when we take our emotions out of the relationship and focus on our interests. With Pakistan, it is difficult to take the emotions out after we are hit with one terror attack after another. Still, I must say here that I believe it is necessary to separate some things. For example, I would advocate that we don't boycott the ICC World Cup simply because we don't want to play Pakistan, given that we have a good chance of winning. In such issues, it is best not to mix emotions and policy. We must find a way to tackle terrorism, to tackle our problems, but without mixing emotions in them. It is only when we think through the situation in a cool-headed manner that our responses will be most effective with

SINGLE FILE

Pulwama and after

India lost the battle of perceptions, but it won the war of interests

MICHAEL KUGELMAN



Something curious happened during the recent India-Pakistan crisis: India may have lost the battle of perceptions, but it still won the war of interests. Consider New Delhi's performance. Its rhetoric was bombastic and at times sarcastic. It struggled to bring clarity to the

conflicting details surrounding its retaliatory strike on Pakistan. And Prime Minister Narendra Modi never addressed the nation during India's worst security crisis in years.

Now consider Islamabad's performance. After India's strike on Balakot (in picture), Pakistan responded swiftly with its own strike that generated little confusion. Soon thereafter, Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was front and centre during the entire crisis, called on Mr. Modi to "give peace a chance" and announced the release of the Indian pilot captured by Pakistan. Unsurprisingly, international media coverage described Mr. Khan as "deft and steely" and spoke of "clumsy Indian information management".

Yet, for India, its interests have been ably served. The strike on Balakot was widely supported by the international community. Few countries expressed public opposition. Many governments are now calling on Pakistan to act more robustly against terrorist groups, and Islamabad has pledged to do so. While this promise, made many times before, will understandably be treated with scepticism in New Delhi, fresh global pressure may give India some new hope.

Meanwhile, except for a strongly worded statement from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, few countries, as Pakistan would have liked them to do, have pushed for a greater focus on Kashmir and how India's brutal tactics there stir unrest, spark bilateral tensions, and help produce extremists. One possible factor behind this broad international support is the strong resonance of the Islamist terror threat around the world. In recent years, al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and their affiliates have wreaked havoc globally. While both groups are now weakened, they remain potent – and the world doesn't want to let down its guard, particularly with entities like the Jaish-e-Mohammad enjoying a resurgence. A second factor is Pakistan's image problem. Though Islamabad has sought for years to get Kashmir on the agendas of nation states and international fora, it has had limited success, particularly in the West, outside of discussions at the UN and EU. India, meanwhile, has had no trouble getting countries and global groupings to amplify the problem of Pakistan-based terrorism.

In effect, Pakistan isn't isolated, and it has powerful friends, but India has been more successful in getting the international community to support its interests. This, in part, can be attributed to India's reputation overseas as a more responsible and credible global player than Pakistan.

The writer is Deputy Director and Senior Associate for South Asia with the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington, DC



DATA POINT

Withdrawal symptoms

The U.S. government has decided to withdraw trade concessions granted to India under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). Vignesh Radhakrishnan takes a look at what and how much India exported in the last two decades under the programme, which allows duty-free entry for certain products into the U.S. market

Flourishing business | No other country's export value under

the GSP exceeded India's in the last two decades cumulatively.

The graph shows the export value for the top nine countries

under the GSP between 1999 and 2008, and 2009 and 2018

Programme history | India exported goods worth \$6.2 bn in 2018 under the GSP, the highest since 1997. However, the GSP's share in India's total exports to the U.S. has come down recently after peaking in the

Cumulative export value between 1999 & 2008 in \$ bn GSP'S SHARE IN INDIA'S EXPORTS TO U.S. (%) 11.25 Turkey Russia 33.75 Thaila Philippines 11 25 Cumulative export value between 2009 & 2018 in \$ bn

ctors at stake | Though India has played down the GSP benefits, some sectors such as 'gem and jewellery' and 'apparel' are bound to take a hit. The tree map shows the top **25 sectors** based on the *cumulative export* value of goods in the last 20 years under the GSP programme

Petroleum oils (other than crude) \$31.4 bn 13 10 12 \$30.3 bn 17 18 19 20 14 Textile materials \$28.4 bn 22 6. Women's apparel (woven): \$19.84 bn 23 24

fabrics: \$16.42 bn 8. Crustaceans molluscs: \$13.37 bn 9. Crude vegetable materials: \$13.23 bn 10. Floor coverings: 11. Organo-inorganic compounds: \$10.75

7. Apparel, textile

12. Parts for tractors motor cars: \$10.3 bn **13.** Men's apparel (woven): \$9.9 bn 14. Iron and steel tubes, pipes: \$9.5 bn **15.** Men's apparel (knitted): \$6.49 bn

24. Nitrogen-function compounds: \$4.37 bn

16. Manufactures of base

17. Furniture and parts

construction materials

19. Special commodities: \$4.67 bn

21. Fruit and nuts: \$4.44 bn

23. Household equipment:

20. Footwear: \$4.63 bn

22. Taps, cocks, valves:

metal: \$6.25 bn

thereof: \$5.86 br

18. Lime, cement,

\$5.08 bn

\$4.42 bn

\$4.41 bn

Source: United States International Trade Commission

penditure in contravention of Section 77 of the Act and thus was guilty of a corrupt practice as defined in Section 123 (b) of

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 13, 1919.

Tramway Strike. Another Mass Meeting.

There was another mass meeting yesterday evening [March 12] when a few of the men of the Traffic Department, addressed their brethren. They depicted a vivid and horrible picture of their hard lot, and dilated upon the righteousness of their cause. One of the speakers, in exonerating the leaders whom the Tramway authorities considered as irresponsible advisers and but for whom the men would have no grievances to put forward, recounted the story of a deputation which was asked to wait upon the Joint Managers, and how that deputation was prevented by a high placed official of the Company from having an interview; so much so that the Tramway authorities' statement that no representatives responded to their invitation was falsified. In the end the men were advised to keep up their "esprit de corps" and never get disbanded even at the slightest temptation.

POLL CALL

Proportional representation

This refers to an electoral system in which the distribution of seats corresponds closely with the proportion of the total votes cast for each party. This is a more complicated but representative system than the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, which is used in India. If a party gets 40% of the total votes, for example, a perfectly proportional system would allow it to get 40% of the seats. Some countries use a combination of the proportional representation system and the FPTP

MORE ON THE WEB

N. Ram on the Bofors scandal

http://bit.ly/RamBofors

FROM PAGE ONE

Modi years a period of false promises: Cong.

"The CWC sends a stern and unequivocal message to India's enemies that India stands united and resolute as one nation to confront and defeat their nefarious agenda. India is a resilient democracy, proud of its brave armed forces. It shall never be defeated by forces of violence and terror," the resolution said.

In his opening remarks, party president Rahul Gandhi expressed confidence that a united Opposition would be able to defeat the BJP, and tweeted that "no sacrifice is too great" for that goal.

"On the anniversary of Gandhi ji's historic Dandi March, the Congress Working Committee in Ahmedabad, resolved to defeat the RSS/ BIP ideology of fascism, hatred, anger & divisiveness. No sacrifice is too great in this endeavour; no effort too little; this battle will be won," he tweeted during the meeting.

Staying on track

Mr. Gandhi also urged his colleagues not to get diverted by BJP's narrative on national security and keep the focus on issues such as unemployment, farm distress, demonetisation and a flawed GST, among others.

Tuesday's meeting marked the debut of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as a CWC member. She suggested an acronym for Rahul Gandhi's promise of minimum income guarantee (MIG) scheme as "NYAY or Nyuntam Aay Yojana" that also connotes justice in Hindi.

On the specific question of the CWC's direction on alliances, senior leader Anand Sharma said the Congress president had already been empowered to do so.

In an aggressive address, former Congress chief Sonia Gandhi took on the Prime Minister and spoke of putting forward the party's vision. "The Prime Minister harbours an imaginary sense of victimhood without realising that the people of this country are the real victims of his wrong policies," Ms. Gandhi said. She also alleged that the BJP thrived on "delusion and division and sought to divide every section of the society"

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, "the Modi government was selling lies and coming up with half-baked policies but the truth cannot be hidden."

Talking about ending BJP rule, former Finance Minister P. Chidamabaram said the Congress should aim to win 150 Lok Sabha and its allies another 150.

The former Finance Minister, who heads the Congress Manifesto Committee, also informed party leaders that first draft of the manifesto was almost ready.

"The Congress Party will approach the people of India with humility to seek their support in the forthcoming elections for itself and its allies in different States. A mandate for better governance and accountability, to repair the grave damage caused to our democratic polity, economy and society by the Modi Government, a mandate for change to restore the health of Indian economy, for job creation, social justice and harmony," the CWC resolu-

lines - Aero Mexico, Aeroli-

neas, GOL - as well as Icelan-

dair, Oman Air, Turkish

Airlines, Morocco's Royal

Air Maroc, South Korean

Airline Eastar Jet, an-

nounced that they were sus-

pending operations of the

the Boeing 737 MAX 8,

spoke to The Hindu on the

condition of anonymity, to

say: "I am fatalistic. Pilots

don't have a choice and

need to fly the plane to keep

their job, but I feel sorry for

passengers, who may be un-

aware of the safety con-

cerns." He added that air-

lines continuing to fly the

aircraft were "turning a

Earlier in the day, Spice-

Jet had played down safety

concerns with aircraft. "The

Boeing 737 MAX 8 is a highly

sophisticated aircraft. It has

flown hundreds of thou-

sands of hours globally and

some of the world's largest

airlines are flying this air-

craft," it said in its

blind eye" to safety.

An Indian pilot who flies

Boeing 737 MAX 8s.

DGCA bars Boeing 737 MAX 8 after global alarm

SpiceJet is the only Indian airline that operates 12 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. While Jet Airways has five of these planes, they are grounded because of the airline's financial issues.

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency said it was suspending all flight operations of the two variants by airlines "entering into, flying within and out of

Germany, France, Austria, Netherlands, Ireland and Malaysia, too, barred the Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft from their airspace.

Aerospace manufacturer Boeing, meanwhile, reiterated its "full confidence in the safety of the 737 MAX." The manufacturer said it " did not have any basis to issue a fresh guidance to operators".

According to reports, the Malaysian government is considering a review its order of 25 Boeing 737 MAX 8 for its flagship Malaysia

Three Latin American air-

cracker industry: SC

We cannot kill jobs in

The court, while allowing only green and improved crackers, on Tuesday asked how it could possibly feel empowered to bring the shutters down on an occupation which was both legal and licensed.

The ban was based on petitions filed by a six-monthold and a 14-month-old, through their fathers in

The petitioners said the air pollution caused by various factors, especially firecrackers, had made Delhi a gas chamber and pleaded for their right to life.

"People are gunning for firecrackers, but the bigger pollutant is vehicles," Justice Bobde observed. "Had the normal pollution level been low, then we could have managed better," he added. To a lawyer who said other countries also used crackers with stringent safeguards, Justice Bobde said firecrackmuch as "we do in India".

Cracker manufacturers, strongly backed by the Tamil Nadu government, have argued that there was no definite study to show that use of firecrackers made the air quality worse during festivals like Diwali.

The fundamental right to occupation of those working in the cracker industry could not be put in peril on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations that crackers pollute, they have contended.

The industry has argued that the revenue generated from the manufacturing and sale of fireworks is to the tune of ₹6,000 crore p.a. and that the industry sup-

ported five lakh families. "Such a revenue to the State as well as employment to a large number of workers cannot be put in jeopardy by imposing a total ban," the manufacturers had argued.

D-day for Azhar's UNSC listing: all eyes on China

It will be a major break from the past if the permanent member of the Security Council doesn't place a 'hold'

SUHASINI HAIDAR

If China decides not to place a hold on the listing of Masood Azhar at the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, and the Jaish e Mohammad (JeM) chief is listed as a terrorist sanctioned by the "1267 Al Oaeda Committee", it would be a major break from the past two decades.

Since 2001, when the JeM was first listed as an entity, to 2008 in the wake of the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, to 2016, after the Pathankot airbase attack, the UNSC has failed to put Azhar on its list, mainly due to opposition from

"China has in the past said it doesn't have enough information to list Masood Azhar, despite the fact that on each occasion we have provided more information of his links to terror attacks," said Gautam Bambawale, a former Ambassador to China who led the most recent efforts to convince the permanent member on the Security Council to withdraw its objections to listing Azhar.

"I think we must keep try ing as we have, and this time around I think we are very close to having Masood Azhar on the list," Mr. Bambawale told The Hindu in an interview.

Significantly, when the JeM was first listed on October 17, 2001, its listing actually named Masood Azhar as its founder, but didn't include

China has in the past said it doesn't have enough information to list Masood Azhar, despite the fact that on each occasion we have provided more information of his links to terror attacks. I think we must keep trying as we have, and this time around I think we are very close to having Masood Azhar on the list GAUTAM BAMBAWALE

Azhar as a "designated individual". According to the listing, "Azhar formed [JeM] with support from Osama Bin Laden, the Taliban and several other extremist organisations", and the organisation was listed after it

claimed responsibility for the attack on the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly building.

However, despite being named, Azhar escaped being targeted for sanctions, which under the UNSC 1267 rules means he would not be allowed to travel, access weapons or funding.

War footing

After the Mumbai attacks of November 26, 2008, India decided to take up the issue on a war footing, and the effort met with remarkably similar responses as the more recent attempts have.

In March 2009, India decided to request the designation of Azhar, along with two Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) operatives Abdur Rahman Makki and Azam Cheema, but on April 28 China put a hold on the listings, requesting "additional information". This was in contrast to China's support for the designation of Hafiz Saeed, Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi and other LeT

leaders Arif Qasmani and Yahya Mujahid just a few months earlier.

After the Pathankot airbase attack in January 2016, India revived its move to list Azhar, with the same result: China first placed a technical hold, citing "inadequate information" and followed it with a veto in December. In 2017 and 2018, France led the effort supported by the U.S. and U.K. to try and list Azhar, with no shift in China's position. If China doesn't raise an objection by the deadline on March 13, it will be a marked departure from the past. If, however, it does raise a technical hold on the listing, it would only be following an old and well-

Don't help the Maduro regime: U.S.

Mike Pompeo urges India to stop importing oil from Venezuela

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN WASHINGTON

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale discussed the situation in Venezuela and Venezuelan oil purchases with U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo during their meeting on Monday, Mr Pompeo told the press at a briefing in the afternoon.

Asked if there was a discussion on India's oil purchases Mr. Pompeo said, "Yeah, so we're asking the same thing of India as we are of every country: Do not be the economic lifeline for the Maduro regime."

" So we talked about - I certainly won't characterise the conversations; they're private conversations. But I'm very confident – in the same way that India has been incredibly supportive



Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale with U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo in Washington on Monday. • PTI

of our efforts on Iran, I'm confident that they, too, understand the real threat to the Venezuelan people. And so we had a good conversation around that." India and seven other countries were given a six month exemption from U.S. sanctions on trade chase a limited quantity of Iranian oil without facing sanctions. Mr Gokhale's discussions in Washington are expected to cover the renewal of the sanction exemption.

Twitter warning

Regarding Venezuela, U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton had warned India and other countries on Twitter last month against purchasing oil from Venezuela in response to Venezuelan Oil Minister Manuel Quevedo making a trip to India to pitch for more oil sales. "Nations and firms that support Maduro's theft of Venezuelan resources will not be forgotten," Mr Bolton had tweeted above a link to a report on Mr. Ouevedo's visit

Expelled Trinamool MP joins BJP

After poaching Anupam Hazra, Mukul Roy says "many more are in the offing"

NISTULA HEBBAR

It is no secret that the BJP hopes to improve its tally in 42-seat West Bengal, which will see a seven-phase poll, and in its efforts has degard to recruitments to the party from across the political spectrum in the State.

The party on Tuesday inducted Trinamool Congress MP from Bolpur, Anupam Hazra, and MLAs Dulal Bar (Congress) and Khagen Murmu (CPI-M), with senior West Bengal BJP leader Mukul Roy promising that "more were in the offing".

Undoubtedly, the biggest catch for the BJP had been Mr. Roy himself, who, as a former trusted lieutenant of



Shifting loyalties: Kailash Vijayvargiya, Anupam Hazra, Mukul Roy and Saumitra Khan in New Delhi. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, was in the know of much of the Trina-

mool election machinery. Mr. Roy has been working hard to prise away leaders from other parties, as the BJP's stable of leaders in the State had come up wanting. Introducing Mr. Bar at a press conference held to facilitate his joining the BJP,

Mr. Rov described him as a "real fighting element" and that the three inductions were only a "trailer before the real film".

The exercise of these inductions hasn't necessarily been very smooth. On Tuesday morning, Trinamool MLA Arjun Singh, who was supposed to join the BJP, failed to do so. Mr. Singh is considered a strongman from Barrackpore and was supposed to take on former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi, who is a sitting Trinamool MP from that seat.

There was also talk that former Congress MP from Raiganj, Deepa Dasmunshi, might cross over to the BJP, but she has vehemently de-

Cong. synonymous with corruption: PM

worn script.

'Party is going against Gandhian ideals'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

On the 89th anniversary of the historic Dandi salt march, and on a day when the Congress was holding a meeting of the party's working committee in Ahmedabad. Prime Minister Narendra Modi penned a blog criticising the current culture in the Congress party as being the "antithesis of Gandhian thought".

The blog, released online via Mr. Modi's Twitter handle, said that the Congress, in its current form, had become synonymous with corruption. Mahatma Gandhi, the Prime Minister said, had "taught us to think of the plight of the poorest person we have seen and think about how our work impacts that person".

Speaking of his own government's record, he said, he was "proud to say that in all aspects of our government's work, the guiding consideration is to see how it will alleviate poverty and bring prosperity. Sadly, the antithesis of Gandhian thought is the Congress culture.'

'Society divided'

He added that the Mahatma did not believe in inequality and caste divisions but, "Sadly, the Congress has never hesitated from dividing society. The worst caste riots and anti-Dalit massacres happened under Congress rule."

By going against Gandhi's teachings that held that detachment and staying away from excess wealth was important, "all that the Congress has done is to fill their own bank accounts and lead luxurious lifestyles at the cost of providing basic ne-



antithesis of Gandhian thought is the Congress culture

cessities to the poor," Mr. Modi said.

"The nation has seen how Congress and corruption have become synonyms. Name the sector and there will be a Congress scam from defence, telecom, irrigation, sporting events to agriculture, rural development and more," he said.

He also said that while 'Bapu' (Mahatma Gandhi) despised dynastic politics, "dynasty first" was the way for the Congress today.

Hitting out at the Opposition party on the issue of people's rights, he said that Gandhi believed that de mocracy gave the weak the same chance as the strong. but the Congress "gave the nation the Emergency, when our democratic spirit was trampled over."

"Gandhi ji had understood the Congress culture very well, which is why he wanted the Congress disbanded, especially after 1947," the Prime Minister said, adding "Thankfully, today we have a government at the Centre that is working on Bapu's path."

ED says Nirav Modi owns jewellery store chain in U.S.

'He bought the property for \$25 million in 2017'

DEVESH K. PANDEY NEW DELHI

Punjab National Bank fraud accused Nirav Modi owns another jewellery store chain named Bailey Bank & Biddle in the U.S. A diversion of fraudulent Letters of Undertaking (LoU) for \$47 million to the company has been established, the Enforcement Directorate has said.

These details have been submitted in the court through a supplementary charge sheet filed against Nirav Modi, his wife Ami and eight other individuals, besides 17 entities.

The ED alleges that Nirav Modi bought the U.S. property for \$25 million in 2017, through "The Ithaca Trust," set up by his sister Purvi. His children were its beneficiaries. The funds came from the fiduciary account of "The Commonwealth Trust

Company" in the U.S. This account is alleged to



have received funds through a circuitous route. It initially appeared to have come from Purvi's accounts in Singapore, but had been transferred from Ami's in the U.S. The financial trail linked the funds back to another account in Barbados. "This AmiCorp account got most of the funds from Fine Classic FZE, a Dubai-based dummy company of Purvi," said the agency.

Fine Classic had got the money from Dubai and

Hong Kong-based dummy firms of Nirav Modi, which were recipients of fraudu-

According to the ED, after the scam was unearthed in January 2018, Nirav Modi's brother Nehal had a secure server located in the UAE, through which the accused persons communicated secretly with their associates, destroyed. The agency has obtained printouts of email exchanges from Dubai.

The agency found that re-

payment of advances taken by Nirav Modi and his father Deepak Modi from the dummy recipients of LoUs worth \$18 million and \$92 million were shown as settled in lieu of receipts from Pacific Diamonds, purportedly on their behalf. The source of funds for Pacific Diamond was also "illegal." A similar liability of \$22 million towards Panamabased Chang Jiang SA was

cleared by Pacific Diamond.

for attachment of assets: ED

Refutes media report alleging inaction in Nirav Modi case

U.K. yet to act on our requests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The United Kingdom is yet to take action on the requests for provisional attachment of assets belonging to the Punjab National Bank fraud accused Nirav Modi and sharing relevant documents pertaining to the case, the Enforcement Directorate said on Tuesday.

As part of the ongoing money laundering investigations, the Directorate had sent a request under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) to the U.K. Authorities on March 17, 2018, for collection of relevant docu-

ments and other details. A supplementary MLAT request was sent on October 3 last year for the execution of an order for provisional attachment of Mr. Modi's assets located there.

"In response to these MLAT requests, the U.K. authorities had raised quer-

ies from time to time, which were promptly examined and detailed replies were sent by the Enforcement Directorate. These MLAT requests are yet to be executed by the U.K. authorities," said the agency.

Refuting a media report alleging inaction by the enforcement agencies in pursuing the Nirav Modi case with the U.K. authorities, the Directorate said the report was contrary to the facts.

'Facts distorted'

"The report also appears to be bereft of knowledge of law and procedure. The facts have been distorted with speculative writing and wrong conclusions have been drawn," it said.

The ED said the U.K. government's consistent stand regarding a non-bailable warrant was that it could be executed only through an extradition request and not

via any Letter Rogatory (judicial request) sent under the MLAT.

Extradition request

Extradition request can only be sent after the charge sheet is filed, the court takes cognisance of it and an open-ended non-bailable warrant is issued.

"Accordingly, upon initiation of investigations by the Enforcement Directorate on February 14, 2018, against Nirav Modi and others, the first non-bailable warrant issued on March 5, 2018, was not acted upon by the U.K. government," the ED said.

The ED filed the first charge sheet in May last year and then an open-ended warrant was issued in June.

The Interpol published a Red Notice against Nirav Modi on June 29, 2018, following which a request for his extradition was sent to the U.K. on July 31, 2018.

ers were not loved there as

INTERVIEW | SHIVNATH THUKRAL

'We are taking every step to prevent abuse, spread of misinformation'

Facebook's public policy director in India says the social media giant's ad-consultancy tool has ensured that no political advertisement is run without a disclaimer

SUVOJIT BAGCHI

Facebook's public policy director in India and South Asia Shivnath Thukral says the social media giant is gearing up to track political advertising and limit fake news with significant fact-checking to reduce misinformation on its platform during the Lok Sabha election.

What are Facebook's recent initiatives to combat fake

■ For Facebook, election is a priority to make sure that we are able to keep the community safe [and] correct any abuse which can affect the safety and security of the Indian election. One of the biggest abuses that we are trying to address is the spread of misinformation. [For this] one has to look at the reduction of fake news. Two, make sure we maintain highest standards of transparency in political advertising. Three, our ability to disrupt bad access...[to keep away those who] are coming to the platform with the intent of causing problem. Four, [to stop spread of] fake accounts and fake profiles, where it all starts. And fifth, to encourage the community, more and more, to take part in the democratic process and our ability to learn and engage with the electores.

Regarding reduction of fake news, we do [that] with the help of the independent fact-checkers who help us to keep the platform safe. Since we do not own the information, we use independent fact-checkers.

Our performance indicator shows we have managed to address the problem.

[When addressed, such news] goes down significantly. Besides, when we see a political advertisement, [the questions are] who are paying for those ... how long it has been active and who has it targeted, how the money was spent. Our job is to see that the advertisers in some way comply to give this information.

The launch of our ad-consultancy tool on December 1 indicated that no political advertisement on our platform is without a disclaimer or without a person who is authorised to it. All that information is available in what we call ad-archive and library, which we issued last week and we will be tracking the top spenders and how much is spent.

Another factor is disrupting bad actors. Our teams look at what is called coordinated inauthentic behaviour, where people are trying [to

Our teams look at 'coordinated inauthentic behaviour' where people try to create spam ... groups who spread hate

create] spam, fake profiles, groups who spread hate and violate our community standards. We go after those bad actors and remove them.

Worldwide, more than 40 teams are working on this. We set up what we call New Delhi operations centre which is coordinating with

our global headquarters [in] Singapore, Dublin, to make 24/7 publishing and to ensure nothing goes wrong.

Could you tell us about Facebook's fact-checking

There is BoomLive, India Today, Dainik Jagran, Factly, AFP ... seven in all. [Facebook's press release mentions two more – Newsmobile and Fact Crescendo].

If we take BoomLive, one of your oldest fact-checking partners, why is it doing so badly on traffic?

■ When you say traffic is not going to the BoomLive website, what do you mean by that?

I mean BoomLive's traffic is low. People are not seeing it. The whole point of factchecking is to ensure that a large number of people can access it. But in this case, they are not.

■ Our partnership is not about whether a fact-checked story is from their website. Our partnership is about when you see a story [about which] the user thinks it is false, we allow the user to report the story. It is fact-checked on the platform

We are not trying to get the traffic to Boom. Now, if the user is not getting that fact-checked story, the person will have to visit the Boom website ... another issue. But the fact that a story can no longer be seen as much is an indicator that we have reduced the virality of

Some of the fact checkers that you have are in the forefront of misinformation and unethical practices with serious complaints against

■ We follow international norms of fact-checking; we do not decide on our own. They need to have what is the internationally recognised IFCN [International Fact-Checking Network] or the Poynter Badge [to be a fact-checker]. We use that filter. An independent board issues the Poynter Badge and we go by that. [It is an] internationally accepted norm applied on all countries and we are hoping it will work here as well.

Snopes.com, a fact-checking partner of Facebook, left you last month, saying there is too much manual checking and that you should use more technology...

■ The fact-checking programme is one significant ef-

fort to check the problem of misinformation. There are learnings from that. We are constantly evolving. As we go along, there will be many more initiatives in the fact-checking or misinformation space.

So you are indicating that in this election, we are going to see less of news which are polarising, divisive, violent

I did not say that. If that is the question, my answer is that we are taking every step to prevent abuse and spread of misinformation. We do not live in a perfect world; we cannot check the human behaviour in real life society. What we can be prepared for is what happens on the platform. We are making sure that all efforts are done so that [misinformation] does not manifest and affect the

IN BRIEF



Manmohan will not contest poll: Amarinder

CHANDIGARE Amid speculation that former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh may contest the Amritsar Lok Sabha seat, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder on Tuesday said Dr. Singh was never in the reckoning for candidature. "He [Manmohan Singh] had made it clear that he was not interested in contesting the election," Capt. Amarinder told presspersons here. He described his meeting with Dr. Singh in Delhi on Saturday as a courtesy call, where he briefed the former Prime Minister on the plans of the Congress in Punjab.

Contempt plea against govt., poll panel

The Supreme Court on Tuesday listed for hearing on March 14 a contempt petition against the government and the Election Commission (EC) for alleged violation of the court's September 25, 2018 judgment directing candidates to declare their criminal past to the poll panel before contesting elections. A five-judge Constitution Bench had in September last year unanimously held that candidates should be transparent about their criminal record, if any, and called for wider publicity about the antecedents of

Transgender people to vote in Punjab

A total of 507 voters in Punjab have enrolled themselves as belonging to the third gender, Punjab CEO S. Karuna Raiu said on Tuesday. "A campaign was launched to reach out to Deras and other places where they (transgender community) reside to register them as voters," Mr. Raju said. The number of voters who have declared themselves as belonging to the transgender community has increased considerably, he said. The State has also seen a considerable rise in the number of young, first-time voters. PTI

'BJD to contest LS, Assembly polls on its own'

BHUBANESWAR

Biju Janata Dal president and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday said his party will contest the Lok Sabha and State Assembly polls on its own. Mr. Patnaik's ruling out a pre-poll alliance is in line with the BJD's known policy of keeping equal distance from national parties, the BJP and the Congress, and groups led by them. "We will fight the elections on our own," he told reporters when asked if there was any likelihood of the BJD entering into a tie-up with other political parties for the parliamentary and Assembly elections in the State. PTI

Vote is your weapon: Priyanka

Accuses BJP-led government of destroying institutions, spreading hatred

MAHESH LANGA

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh, said on Tuesday that the upcoming general election was "nothing less than a second Independence movement."

"This nation is based on love and brotherhood. It is sad to see what is happening in the country these days,' she said in her maiden speech after assuming charge as party general secretary. "There is no bigger patriotism than awareness. Your awareness is a weapon, your vote is a weapon. It is a weapon that will not hurt or harm anyone. It is a weapon that will strengthen you and the country," she told workers at a party rally here.

"Think and decide. There are those who talk big in front of you.... Where are the two crore jobs they promised? What about the ₹15 lakh in every bank account that they talked about? What about women's safety?" the 47-year-old newly appointed Congress general secretary told the rally of Congress party workers from across the State.



Maiden speech: Congress general secretary in charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addressing a rally in Gandhinagar on Tuesday. •VIJAY SONEJI

She targeted the BJP-led government, without naming the Prime Minister or any other BJP leader, for destroying institutions and spreading hatred in the country. "Institutions are being demolished, hatred is being spread... there can be no bigger service than guarding the country and moving ahead together," she said.

"To those who talk about fitrat (nature), the fitrat of this nation is to seek the truth, the fitrat of this nation is to blow away the winds of

hate with love," she said. She was responding to Mr. Modi who had said in Ahmedabad after the recent air strikes on terror camps in Pakistan that "it was his *fitrat* to avenge every wrongdoing and he will hunt down terrorists in their own backyard."

Battle of ideologies

Addressing the rally after her, Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the coming election was a battle between two ideologies. "One where you have Godse and hatred and another where you have Mahatma Gandhi and love. And the latter will triumph over the former."

He said institutions were coming under attack and cited the unprecedented press briefing by four Supreme Court judges and the mysterious death of judge Loya.

Hardik joins Congress
Patidar agitation leader Hardik Patel joined the Congress at the rally. He said he may contest the Lok Sabha election as Congress candidate.

Mamata surprises with 17 women, 17 new faces

Says will remove BJP from power in 'most challenging' polls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee announced here on Tuesday the party's decision to field 17 women candidates for the Lok Sabha election, taking their representation to about 41%.

"Everyone is talking about 33% reservation for women; this time, about 41% of our candidates are women," Ms. Banerjee said announcing the party's candidates for the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal. "It is a proud moment for all of us," she told presspersons. In 2014, 35% of the candidates were women.

The Trinamool replaced candidates in 18 Lok Sabha constituencies. While 17 of them are new faces, actor Sreemati Dev Verma, popularly known as Moon Moon Sen, was moved from Bankura in south Bengal to Asansol, a seat won by Union Minister Babul Supriyo in 2014.

On the party's choice of candidates, Ms. Banerjee described the election as the



Mamata Banerjee releasing the list of candidates.

"most challenging", and vowed to remove the BJP from power at the Centre.

"19 May 2019 will be the end of Modi's rule. A person who has instilled a sense of fear among the people must go. This is our challenge," she said.

From political greenhorns like actor Mimi Chakraborty contesting from the prestigious Jadavpur seat, once represented by Speaker Somnath Chatterjee and Ms. Banerjee, and Nusrat Jahan from Basirhat, the new women faces include political heavyweights like Mala Roy in the prestigious Kolkata South seat, held by the

Chief Minister for decades.

Another surprise candi-

date is Rupali Biswas, whose husband, Satyajit Biswas, and a Trinamool MLA, was killed recently in Nadia district. Ms. Biswas, a homemaker, will be contesting the Ranaghat seat. Ms. Banerjee said that Ms. Biswas would turn 25 "days before" nomination and would be eligible to contest the polls.

For the Jhargram seat, Uma Soren, the Trinamool's tribal face and sitting MP, is replaced by another tribal woman candidate, Birbaha

Among the notable omissions is Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grandnephew and Harvard historian Sugata Bose, who was elected in 2014 from Jadavpur. "He [Mr. Bose] told me that he is not getting permission to contest from his university," Ms. Banerjee said.

She said Trinamool State president Subrata Bakshi had opted not to contest to devote more attention to the party.

The party would field candidates in Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha and Andaman and Nicobar islands.

BJP may win, but second term for Modi unlikely, says Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said the BJP might emerge as the single largest party in the Lok Sabha election, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi was unlikely to get a second term in office.

"The BJP may emerge as the single largest party and will have to seek support of allies [to form the government]. In that scenario, Narendra Modi is unlikely to get a second term," Mr. Pawar said.

The former Union Minister said he would meet some regional parties across the country on March 14 and 15 in New Delhi, where the strategy of 'mahagathbandhan' (grand alliance) would be discussed.

Asked about some regional parties going away from the Congress-NCP alliance in Maharashtra, Mr. Pawar said, "I appreciate the PWP for extending support to the NCP. NCP has also held talks with the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana for seatsharing, but the farmers' front has some expectations from the Congress. It will be decided by the two parties."

SC questions govt. on tracking assets

Poll candidates will be under scanner

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has asked the government to confirm within two weeks whether its February 2018 judgment to set up a permanent mechanism to track unnatural increase in the assets of electoral candidates had been complied with.

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi on Tuesday directed the government to state whether there was any mechanism to deal with the non-disclosure of assets and income sources by a candidate.

The court has asked the government to clarify whether it has made the ne-

cessary amendments in Form 26, mandating submission by the candidates of information whether they suffer from any disqualification under the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The Bench directed the Secretary of the Legislative Department to file his reply within two weeks.

The order came on a contempt petition filed by NGO Lok Prahari. It was a petition by this NGO that had led to the February 16, 2018 verdict. The judgment had trained the spotlight on the exponential rise in the assets of politicians within a span of just five years.

Brexit could be lost, warns Theresa May

Seeks to persuade lawmakers to back her withdrawal deal as Parliament is set to vote again

VIDYA RAM

Theresa May warned MPs that "Brexit could be lost" unless they backed her deal, as she sought to persuade them to back her deal.

Meanwhile, she suffered a major political blow on Tuesday as Britain's Attornev-General said that despite legally binding changes to the EU withdrawal deal, the legal risk of the U.K. being locked in an indefinite backstop with the EU remained "unchanged."

The advice published by Geoffrey Cox QC on three changes to the withdrawal deal (not included in the withdrawal agreement itself) said the legal risk had been reduced but not eliminated entirely, and that the U.K. had no "internationally lawful means of exiting the protocol's arrangements, save by agreement."

"We could end up in a situation where we have no Brexit at all," Ms. May warned MPs at a heated session of the House of Commons on Tuesday afternoon. While Mr. Cox called on MPs to back the deal, insisting it was a "political decision" for MPs to make, lawmakers across the political spectrum made plain their reservations with the deal.

Crucially, the influential European Research Group of MPs have said they can't vote with the Prime Minister, as have the government's supply and confidence partners, the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland.

A crucial vote is set to take place on Tuesday evening on the wider withdrawal deal in Parliament, in which the issue of the backstop has taken centre stage

Should Ms. May lose the vote, she has pledged to allow a vote the next day on ruling out a no-deal Brexit. If



Making her point: British PM Theresa May speaking in Parliament on Tuesday. • REUTERS

MPs opt to rule out a no-deal Brexit, a third vote will take place on Thursday at which they will be able to push for a delay to Britain's exit to the EU, due to take place in just over two weeks time.

Final round of talks

Amid predictions of a major defeat for Ms. May in the past couple of weeks, in a dramatic turn of events, she flew to the French city of Strasbourg on Monday evening to hold talks with Jean Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, and in a joint press conference spelt out "legally binding' chang-

terpretive instrument" stating that the EU could not act with the intent of applying the backstop indefinitely. If they did break the good faith, Britain would be able to challenge them through arbitration and could suspend the backstop. There's also a joint statement with a

legal commitment that the

These include a joint "in-

two sides would work to replace the backstop with alternative arrangements by the end of next year, and there's a unilateral declaration from the U.K. that there could be nothing to stop the U.K. from instigating measures to get out of the backstop if the EU didn't act in good faith.

"Having an insurance policy to guarantee that there will never be a hard border in Northern Ireland is absolutely right... But if we ever have to use that insurance policy, it cannot become a permanent arrangement and it is not the template for our future relationship," said Ms.

However, speaking at a parliamentary select committee, Britain's Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay acknowledged that there had been no changes to the text of the agreement itself.

The developments add a new level of uncertainty to Tuesday night's vote. While

extension to enable further discussions to attempt to get the deal through again. Should she lose by a large majority, it will be harder for her to push on with the current deal.

However, one thing is certain: change will have to come from the U.K. side. Ahead of the vote, Mr. Juncker urged MPs to vote for the

Key issue

The Northern Irish backstop remains the key issue: the effective insurance policy would put the U.K. in a temporary customs union with the EU in the event of future talks breaking down in order to avoid a hard border developing on the island of Ireland and thereby maintain an open border there.

It would also require the U.K. to remain aligned with specific EU rules on a number of sectors. Complicating the situation have been the various objections of different political groupings in the U.K.: while the government is adamant it wants to exit the customs union, the right-wing European Research Group of MPs have all along wanted a guaranteed legal means for the U.K. to exit the backstop unilaterally to avoid becoming "trapped" in indefinite customs arrangement, which would prevent the U.K. from negotiating other trade deals.

However, the Democratic Unionist Party of won't allow for any differences between the rules that Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales), and Northern Ireland will be subjected to, which means the suggestion from the European Commission that they could allow Great Britain to exit the backstop unilaterally but not Northern Ireland has not been an option either.

Uncertain future for IS returnees As the final territory held by the so-called Islamic State is recaptured in Syria, the international community is faced with the question of what to do with the returning Baghouz, Syria IS AFFILIATES IN SYRIA AND IRAO RETURNEES TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN 4,640 1,180 WOMEN **Affiliates** Returnees CHILDREN 4,761 Western Europe Eastern Europe The majority of the returnees are from West Asia and North by Europe Americas Australia and

IS crumbling in last bastion

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BAGHOUZ Kurdish-led forces said around 2,000 people, mostly jihadists, surrendered from the Islamic State group's last scrap of territory in Syria on Tuesday, as air raids and shelling resumed after a brief lull.

A ragged tent encampment in the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz is all that remains of a once-sprawling IS "caliphate" declared in 2014 across large swathes of Syria and neighbouring Iraq.

The U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces have been trying to crush holdout

IS fighters for weeks but the mass outpouring of men, women and children from the riverside hamlet has bogged down their advance.

Backed by the U.S.-led coalition, the SDF renewed their assault on Sunday after warning remaining IS fighters that time was up. Airstrikes and shelling have since pummelled Baghouz for three nights in a row, killing scores of fighters and prompting hundreds of jihadists and their relatives to surrender.

Thousands handed themselves over on Tuesday, after campment the previous night. "Around 2,000 people, mostly fighters, have handed themselves over today," SDF spokesman Adnan Afrin said, without adding how many remain inside.

Dozens of SDF fighters massed at the entrance of the village of Baghouz on Tuesday evening. Sherif, the unit commander, said his force was preparing to storm the jihadist redoubt.

"We readied ourselves today and our spirits are high," he said. "We will enter with full force and we will be at the forefront (of the advance)," said the fighter.

+ 'Xinjiang camps for jobs, education'

They will gradually disappear when society no longer needs them, says China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A Chinese official on Tuesday rejected international criticism of internment camps in the restive Xinjiang region, calling them job training centres that will "gradually disappear" if "one day society no longer needs it". Nearly one million Uigh-

urs and other mostly Muslim Turkic minorities are being held in detention centres in Xinjiang, according to estimates cited by a UN panel.

But Beijing has denied the accusations, saying people are attending "vocational education centres" to rid them of any extremist thoughts in a region that was hit by deadly riots and attacks in recent years.

"Our education and training centres have been set up according to our needs. The students that come in to learn, it's a dynamic number that changes," Shohrat Zakir,

IN BRIEF

Hawking's nurse struck

British regulators have barred Stephen Hawking's former

nurse from practising after

provide appropriate care to

Council said on Tuesday that

Dowdy for failing "to provide

finding that she failed to

the late physicist. The

Nursing and Midwifery

it had struck off Patricia

the standards of good,

expect and Professor

misconduct charges

"including, financial

the council. AP

professional care that we

Hawking deserved." It said

Ms. Dowdy faced multiple

misconduct, dishonesty, not

and failing to cooperate" with

providing appropriate care

off over care failings



Industrial Park in Artux in China's Xiniiang region. • AP

chairman of Xinjiang's government, told journalists on the sidelines of China's annual parliamentary meet-

"As a whole, the number of people in the education centres should be less and less, and if one day society no longer needs it, these education centres can gradually disappear," he said, without providing the number of people at the facilities. In an 18-minute-long reply

to a journalist's question, Mr. Zakir defended the centres, saying that they taught Xinjiang residents Chinese. helped them gain awareness of the law, improved vocational skills, and were vital in the region's fight against extremism. "When (students) are able to distinguish between right and wrong and able to resist the infiltration of extreme thoughts... they have a strong desire to get rid of poverty and get rich,

actively pursuing a better life," he added.

pleased with the lack of

change, it still remains a pos-

sibility that enough MPs will

vote with Ms. May, fearful of

the votes that could follow

on Tuesday and Wednesday

that could rule out a no-deal

Brexit, and lead to an exten-

However, Labour has said

it will vote against the deal,

as have the Liberal Demo-

crats, the Greens, and the in-

dependent group of former

Conservative and Labour

Should Ms. May win, there

will still be a number of addi-

tional steps, including legis-

lation that would have to

pass through Parliament.

With the deadline of March

29, even if Ms. May's deal is

passed, a technical exten-

sion might be needed, Mr.

the vote is likely to be deter-

mined by the scale of the de-

feat. Should she lose narrow-

ly, she could push for a brief

What happens if she loses

Additional steps

Barclay admitted.

Being brainwashed

Former inmates have said they found themselves incarcerated for transgressions such as wearing long beards and face veils or sharing Islamic holiday greetings on social media.

Critics allege Uighurs in the camps are being brainwashed in a massive campaign to enforce conformity with Chinese society and the abandonment of Islam.

Mr. Zakir also hit out at "certain individuals", whom he says "sensationalised" the number of people in these centres. "It's not like that," he said, calling on reporters to visit Xinjiang.

But, journalists are harassed and surveilled by local authorities when reporting in the region. "I think, a horrific situation there." U.S. envoy on religious freedom Sam Brownback said.

Pak. assured U.S. that it will deal 'firmly' with terrorists: Bolton

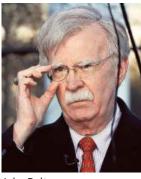
'It will also continue steps to de-escalate tensions with India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON

Pakistan has assured the U.S. that it would deal "firmly with all terrorists operating from the country, and take steps to de-escalate tensions with India, according to National Security Advisor John Bolton.

The assurance was given by Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi during a phone call on Monday, Mr. Bolton said on a day when Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale called on U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo here and discussed the need to bring those responsible for the Pulwama attack to justice and the urgency of Pakistan taking meaningful action against terrorist groups operating on its soil.

"Spoke with Pakistani FM Qureshi to encourage meaningful steps against JeM



John Bolton

and other terrorist groups operating from Pakistan," Mr. Bolton said in a tweet.

"The FM assured me that Pakistan would deal firmly with all terrorists and will continue steps to de-escalate tensions with India," he said.

Tensions flared up between India and Pakistan after a suicide bomber of the Pakistan-based Jaish- e-Muhammed (JeM) killed 40

asked, a spokesman declined

elaborate on the

Pakistan's Information Mi-

civilian authorities in the in-

surgency-hit southwestern

province of Baluchistan were

in charge of Reko Diq and,

along with Mr. Khan, would

take a decision, but added

that the military "and all oth-

er stakeholders are obvious-

ly important players".

CRPF personnel in Kashmir's Pulwama district on

Pakistan's perspective In Islamabad, Pakistan's Foreign Office said the purpose of Mr. Qureshi's call was to provide Mr. Bolton Pakistan's perspective on the "reregional developcent ments.

Mr. Qureshi said that Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan decided to hand over the Indian Air Force pilot as a gesture of goodwill towards India.

Pakistan wished peace and stability in the region, he was quoted as telling the U.S. National Security Advisor.

The Foreign Minister also informed Mr. Bolton that Pakistan's High Commissioner to India had returned to Delhi after consultations.

Hollywood stars in college entrance scam

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NEW YORK

Desperate Housewives star Felicity Huffman and fellow Hollywood actor Lori Loughlin were among 50 people indicted on Tues day in a multi-million dollar scam to help children of the American elite cheat their way into top universities.

The accused, who also include chief executives, financiers, a winemaker and fashion designer, allegedly cheated in admissions tests or arranged for bribes to get their children into prestigious schools including Yale, Stanford, Georgetown and the University of Southern California, federal prosecutors said.

They paid a bogus charity run by Californian William Rick Singer millions both to arrange for people to fix SAT and ACT entrance exams for their children, and also to bribe university administrators and sports coaches to recruit their children, even when the children were not qualified to play university-level sports.

Ms. Huffman, 56, and Ms. Loughlin, the 54-yearold star of Full House, were among 33 parents accused of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and honest services mail fraud in joining the scheme.

Ms. Loughlin's fashion designer husband Mossimo Giannulli was also on

Four people accused of running the scam, and 13 officials associated with university sports and the testing system were also charged. The payments ranged

from \$200,000 to \$6.5 million, according to Andrew Lelling, the U.S. attorney in Boston, Massachusetts, where the case was filed.

None of the students were charged and most remain at the universities, he

Pak. Army eyes key role in developing giant copper & gold mine

Show of strength: Tanks taking part in the Pakistan Day parade

The military is leveraging its sway over the civilian government to carve a growing role in the nation's business affairs

REUTERS ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's military is taking a key role in the development of one of the world's biggest untapped copper and gold deposits, which is currently stalled by a multi-billion dollar legal wrangle with foreign mining firms, multiple sources familiar with the situation said.

The Reko Diq mine, buried at the foot of an extinct volcano near the frontier with Iran and Afghanistan, has become a test case for Prime Minister Imran Khan's ability to attract foreign investment to Pakistan as it struggles to stave off an economic crisis that has forced it to seek an International Mo-

netary Fund bailout. Ten current and former provincial and federal government officials and mining sources familiar with the project in the Baluchistan region say the military has become the most important voice on the future of Reko Diq, which it sees as a strategic national asset.

The military will not only be in a position to decide which investors develop the deposit, but an army-controlled engineering firm, Frontier Works Organization (FWO), is positioning itself to be a member of any consorti-

"This has been taken over by GHQ," said a senior Baluchistan government official, referring to the Pakistan army's General Headquarters

in Rawalpindi. In a statement in response to Reuters' questions about its role in Reko Diq, the mili-

tary spokesman's office said: "(The military) may only participate in government's plan of development of Reko Diq, national per requirements."

in Islamabad, in this file photo. ■ REUTERS

But it acknowledged that FWO, best known for building roads through Pakistan's rugged and lawless border regions, has developed "substantial" mining capability in recent years and would be interested in taking a role in the project. "If an opportunity arises of participating in developing Reko Diq, FWO may work at par with other competitors (or) companies provided the project is financially viable (or) suitable," the statement said. When

FWO referred questions to the military spokesman's office. Mr. Khan's spokesman

Iftikhar Durrani said Baluchistan province was in charge of Reko Diq, and referred questions to the provincial government and the military spokesman's office.

The manoeuvring behind the project shows how the military, which has histori-

curity and foreign policy, is leveraging its sway over the civilian government at federnister Fawad Chaudhry said al and provincial level to carve a growing role in the nation's business affairs.

cally dictated Pakistan's se-

The army has ruled the nuclear-armed nation for nearly half its history and is considered to have a major influence over Mr. Khan's recently elected government.

"The military has taken a front seat," said Avesha Siddiqa, author of the book Military Inc., which analyses the army's business interests and influence in Pakistan. "They've understood that the economy is important for having a strong military," she said. "Control of the economy also gives the military a handle over expanding

their business interests."

MARKET WATCH

	12-03-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,536	1.3
US Dollar	69.71	0.26
Gold	33,150	-0.3
Bront oil	66.61	0.20

NIFTY 50		
Adani Ports		CHANG
Asian Paints		
Axis Bank		
Bajaj Auto		
Bajaj Finserv		
Bajaj Finance		
Bharti Airtel		
BPCL	390.20.	3.1
Cipla		
Coal India		
Dr Reddys Lab	2666.85	40.70
Eicher Motors	. 22461.95	510.50
GAIL (India)	353.90.	2.1
Grasim Ind	830.80	3.30
HCL Tech	1013.35	8.9
HDFC		
HDFC Bank	2171.00	42.5
Hero MotoCorp		
Hindalco		
HPCL	261.85	-1.5
Hind Unilever		
ndiabulls HFL		
CICI Bank		
IndusInd Bank	1 5 6 0 0 5	12.3:
Bharti Infratel	310.33.	3.3
nfosys		
ndian OilCorp		
TC		
JSW Steel		
Kotak Bank		
L&T		
M&M		
Maurti Suzuki		
NTPC	151.25	-0.1
ONGC	151.85	-1.1
PowerGrid Corp	196.35	2.0
Reliance Ind	1331.35	27.2
State Bank	286.90	-0.4
Sun Pharma		
Tata Motors		
Tata Steel		
TCS		
Tech Mahindra		
Titan		
UltraTech Cement		
UPL		
Vedanta		
Wipro		
YES Bank		
Zee Entertainment	463.60.	10.6

Indicative direct rate except yen at 4 p.m.	on March	112
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	69.50	69.82
Euro	78.22	78.58
British Pound	90.66	91.08
Japanese Yen (100).	62.47	62.76
Chinese Yuan	10.35	10.40
Swiss Franc	68.86	69.18
Singapore Dollar	51.21	51.45
Canadian Dollar	51.83	52.07
Malaysian Ringitt	17.01	17.09

BULLION RATES	5 CHENNA	d .
March 12 rates in rup rates in parentheses	oees with	previous
Retail Silver (1g) 22 ct gold (1 g)		

NMDC to pay interim dividend

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Iron ore miner NMDC Ltd. will pay an interim dividend of ₹5.52 per equity share (face value of ₹1 each) for 2018-19.

In a regulatory filing on the interim dividend declared by the board at its meeting on Tuesday, the public sector enterprise said March 25 had been set as the record date for the purpose of payment of the same. NMDC had recently completed the buyback of over 10.20 crore shares each at a price of ₹98 for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹1,000 crore.

IIP growth slows to 1.7%, retail inflation rises to 2.57%

Manufacturing growth moderates to 1.3% in January from 2.65% in December; CPI rises on firming food prices

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Industrial activity slowed in January 2019 growing by just 1.7% due in large part to a deturing, electricity, and capital goods sectors, official data released on Tuesday showed. In a separate release, government data showed that retail inflation in February snapped a fourmonth declining trend by rising to 2.57%

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) saw growth slip below the 2% for the second time in three months in January, with the previous occurrence being the 0.32% growth seen in November 2018. Growth in the IIP was at 2.6 in December.

Within the IIP, the mining and quarrying sector was one of the only major sectors that saw growth accelerating, from a contraction of 0.39% in December to a

growth of 3.9% in January.

"The slowdown in the IIP only confirms the national income data which also indicated a continuing slowdown," D.K. Srivastava, chief policy advisor, EY India, said. "The sectors where the slowdown is happening are manufacturing and industry. Apart from services, all the sectors seem to be slowing."

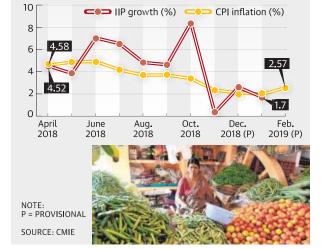
The manufacturing sector saw growth slowing to 1.3% in January from 2.65% in December. The electricity sector saw growth slowing to 0.8% from 4.45% over the same period. The capital goods sector contracted 3.2% in January, down from a growth of 5.9% in the previous month.

The construction sector witnessed the strongest growth of all the major sectors, of 7.9%, but this was still significantly slower than the 10% seen in December.

The consumer sector also nuary, from 2.93% and

Double whammy

The moderation in IIP indicates a continuing slowdown while there was sequential rise in food prices



saw growth slowing, with growth in the consumer durables sector slowing to 1.8% and in the consumer nondurables sector to 3.8% in Ja-

5.35%, respectively, in the previous month.

"By March, government spending usually expands, but this time the signs of that are not very prominent because they are trying to cut down on capital expenditure to meet the revised fiscal deficit target," Mr. Srivastava added, saying an expansion in government spending would have meant a recovery in IIP growth in coming months.

Declining inflation

Retail inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI),quickened for the first time in five months in February to 2.57% from 1.97% in January, mainly due to firming food prices, official data showed. Inflation in food and beverages sector stood at -0.07% in February compared with -1.29% in January. "The upward movement was driven primarily by a sequential rise seen in various food groups, except in vegetables," B. Prasanna, head, global markets group, ICICI Bank said

"Core inflation moved down slightly as expected, reflecting easing of input costs, pricing powers and growing slack in the economy. The earlier spikes seen in rural health and education seem to have stabilised."

The housing sector saw inflation slowing marginally to 5.1% from 5.2% over the same period. The fuel and light sector saw inflation slowing to 1.24% in February from 2.12% in January.

"With inflation remaining below RBI's target, inflationary expectations declining and growth profile weakening, RBI may front-load its monetary easing in the beginning of FY20," said Devendra Kumar Pant, chief economist and senior director, India Ratings and Research. "However, with capacity utilisation still being low at 74.8% (2QFY18) and pending elections in April-May 2019, it is unlikely to spur investment demand in the economy."

Cairn holding in Vedanta down to 0.1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

British oil firm Cairn Energy Plc. on Tuesday said its holding in Vedanta Ltd. has dropped to just 0.1% after the Income Tax Department sold most of its 4.9% stake in the company to recover a retrospective tax demand.

Besides realising about ₹5,000 crore from selling the shares together with redemption proceeds on Vedanta's preference shares, the I-T Department also seized ₹1,140 crore of dividend due to the company as well as ₹1,590 crore of tax refund in an unrelated case, Cairn said in its 2018 earnings statement.

The company reported a net loss of \$1.1 billion in the year ending December 31, 2018 "resulting principally from a write-down of Cairn's investments in India", it said.

Indices rise for second straight session

Global cues, foreign fund flows boost sentiment; rupee gains 18 paise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Equities continued to register a strong rally for the second consecutive day on Tuesday with the benchmarks gaining more than 1% each to close at near sixmonth high levels. Strong global cues and a steady flow from foreign investors boosted sentiments at a time when investor confidence is already high on expectations of political stability as the general elections near.

The 30-share Sensex gained 481.56 point,s or 1.30%, to close at 37,535.66. The Sensex pack saw 20 constituents gaining ground with the gainers led by financial and energy stocks. The broader Nifty ended the day above the 11,300-mark at 11,301.20, gaining 133.15 points or 1.19%.

This is the highest close



Riding a crest: With NPA pressures peaking out, some banks too are likely to see improved performance. • PAUL NORONHA

for the benchmarks since September 17, 2018.

Meanwhile, the rupee gained 18 paise on Tuesday to close at a more than twomonth high of 69.71 against the dollar with the gains primarily fuelled by foreign inflows and a weaker dollar in the overseas markets.

The rally, though broad-

toral and broader indices fall from intraday highs as the trading session progressed.

Reasonable valuations "We believe that prospects of a weak government at the Centre have receded significantly over the past few weeks, which are being factored in by the markets. Mid and small cap stocks are now

available at very reasonable valuations and we expect them to lead the pre-election rally," said Jyoti Roy of Angel

Meanwhile, the gains in Sensex were led by stocks such as Bharti Airtel, Indusind Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, HDFC and Kotak Mahindra

"Banking sector has been a forerunner in the market rally since 2014 given the trend of financialisation leading to a structural growth story for the sector." said Lalitabh Shrivastawa, AVP-research, Sharekhan.

"We believe that not only is there a big opportunity in the retail banking space, but also, with the peaking out of NPA pressures, some of the corporate banks too are likely to see improved perfor-

Govt. to raise ₹3,500 cr. via **CPSE ETF sale**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The government is likely to launch an additional offering of CPSE-Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) on March 19 to raise at least ₹3,500 crore, officials said Tuesday. The ETF sale through follow-on fund offer will come with the option of retaining up to ₹5,000 crore via the green shoe option, they said.

During the last offering in November, the Centre mopped up ₹17,000 crore, the biggest disinvestment through the ETF. The proceeds from the ETF sale will help the Centre move towards the ₹80,000-crore disinvestment target set for this fiscal. As on February 28, the Centre had realised ₹56,473.32 crore as disinvestment proceeds.

Bidders seek extension for Pawan Hans bids

'Govt. yet to take decision on the plea'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has received a request from bidders seeking an extension of the last date for submission of financial bids for the disinvestment of Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited, according to a senior official.

Tuesday was the last date for submission of financial bids as well as the date for opening of bids.

"The transaction adviser had sought an extension on the request of shortlisted bidders," said the official, adding that the Ministry is yet to take a decision on this

Asked about the impact of the model code of conduct kicking in after the an-



for submission of financial

dates on the disinvestment process, the official said, "There is an official from

the law department who is part of the evaluating committee. When the highest bidder is announced, we will see whether it violates + the model code of conduct

Lenders' forum claims first right to tax refunds of RCom

Settlement with Jio did not fail because of lenders: counsel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Lenders of Reliance Communications (RCom) on Tuesday contended before the NCLAT that they have the first right over ₹260 crore, which the debt-ridden company has received as the Income Tax refund.

The SBI, along with other members of the Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF), said under RBI guidelines, they had the right over the retention

and trust account in which the refunds had been deposited. A two-member bench headed by Chairman Justice S.J. Mukhopadhaya would continue with the hearing on Wednesday in the matter.

'Jio declined to pay'

Senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, representing the SBI, submitted that JLF could not be blamed for not recovering ₹37,000 crore from sales of assets of RCom.

"Settlement did not fail because of JLF. It failed because Jio declined to pay RCom's past debt," he said. Lenders also said that the

retention and trust account had been set up before the insolvency process against RCom, and thus it had to be kept out of the current pro-

"RCom cannot saddle the responsibility of paying Ericsson on the banks," the counsel said.

Jet Airways grounds four more planes

Lessors ground the aircraft due to non-payment of lease rentals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Jet Airways, at the instruction of aircraft lessors, on Tuesday grounded four more aircraft due to nonpayment of lease rentals.

With this, as per Jet Airways own admission, a total of 32 aircraft have been grounded as the airline could not mobilise funds to meet the financial commitment.

Over 50 planes idling? But according to employees, more than 50 aircraft are not



On a wing and prayer: Focus is now on the bank-led resolution plan to save the airline from sinking. • REUTERS

flying due to various reasons and are parked at various airports across the country. The large scale grounding of planes has severely curtailed

the airline's flight schedule, inconveniencing passengers. However, Jet Airways said that it has been providing prior information to passen-

gers to minimise their Reportedly Jet Airways

chairman Naresh Goyal had asked for immediate funding of ₹750 crore from Etihad Airways which holds 24% stake in the airline. However, Etihad had indicated that as a minority partner it had a limited role to play.

"As a minority shareholder, Etihad continues to work constructively with the Jet Airways board, management team and other stakeholders," an Etihad Airways spokesperson said.

Titan seals strategic pact with FTS USA

Indian major to supply movement kits

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Titan Company Limited, one of the world's largest watch manufacturers, has entered into a strategic alliance with an American watch manufacturing company FTS USA LLC located at Phoenix, Arizona. This alliance equips FTS

USA by setting up a quartz movement assembly unit in the U.S. to manufacture 'Made in USA' for American watch brands, said the company in a statement. It added that Titan would further extend its support

by supplying movement kits and setting up of the movement assembly facility, training of U.S. engineers at the Titan facility alongside Titan's engineers visiting the facility.

Portfolio review

Commenting on the alliance, S. Ravi Kant, CEO, watches and accessories, Titan Company Limited, said,



"This alliance with FTS signifies Titan's three-decade long expertise and passion for watch making. With the advent of smart watches in the world market, traditional watch manufacturers are facing the heat to relook at their portfolio.

"However, the opportunity for growing the traditional watch market through differentiated designs and superior quality still exists. We are happy to support FTS in helping them revive the American watch manufacturing industry."

bonds for FPIs

NEW DELHI

Markets regulator SEBI on Tuesday withdrew the 20% limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in corporate bonds of an entity.

In a notification, the regulator said the restriction is being withdrawn in accordance with a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In June last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India had mandated that no FPI shall have an exposure of more than 20% of its corporate bond portfolio to a single

corporate. However, the central bank, in February, lifted the restriction in view of market feedback.

To give effect to the directions of the RBI, the regulator said provisions of its June 2018 circulars with respect to exposure of more than 20% "stands withdrawn with immediate effect".

Capitalism under attack from left and right: Rajan

'Caused by rising inequalities globally'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raghuram Rajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank, on Tuesday warned that capitalism was under attack from both the populist of the left and of the right due to the rising economic and social inequalities that communities across the globe have been facing for long.

It may be noted that since the 2008 global financial crisis, the poor have become poorer, while the minuscule rich who constitute under 1% of the global population, have become richer.

Job losses

He also blamed rising inequalities to technological changes which have been very disruptive both in terms of creating job losses due to automation and also increasing the ability to trade and manufacture globally, which has affected some communities very adversely across the world.



"In these communities, which are in many ways losing economic activity, there is a search for alternatives. Sometimes politicians provide those alternatives and what we see increasingly is that across the globe, capitalism is under attack from populist of the left and the populist of the right," Mr. Rajan said via a video link, after being conferred the Yashwantrao Chavan award for his contribution to national integration, democratic values and social and economic development.

DELHI THE HINDU WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019



Bol raises ₹660 cr. via employee shares scheme

State-owned Bank of India (BoI) Tuesday said it had raised ₹660.80 crore by issuing shares to employees under Employee Share Purchase Scheme (ESPS). The bank issued 6,25,52,188 shares of ₹10 each to eligible employees, BoI said in a statement. It offered a discount of 24.28% on the applicable price to the employees and about 94.70% of total employees participated, it said. PT

Centre defers bid deadline for OALP-II

NEW DELHI The government has deferred by a month, the last date for bidding for the 14 oil and gas exploration blocks offered in the second round of Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP). Bids for the 14 blocks offered in OALP-II bid round, covering an area of 29,333 sq.km., were to close Tuesday. "Bid submission closing date for OALP Bid Round-II stands extended up to April 10, 2019," the Directorate General of

TVS Motor Co. invests ₹30 cr. in NBFC arm

Hydrocarbon said. PTI

TVS Motor Company Ltd. has made an additional investment of ₹30 crore in the equity capital of its subsidiary firm, TVS Credit Services Ltd. Consequent to the above investment, the company's direct holding in the non-banking finance company increased to 10.29%, it said in a regulatory filing. TVS CS has been financing purchase of two- and three-wheelers, used cars, tractors and used commercial vehicles.

OYO plans ₹1,400-cr. expansion

Branded hotel network plans to pump funds into technology, renovation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

OYO Hotels & Homes on Tuesday said it will invest ₹1,400 crore (about \$200 million) during the current year for expansion of its India and south Asia business while improving customer experience.

The hospitality chain also announced the addition of its sixth brand – 'Collection O'– under its portfolio.

More funds, if needed

"We are committing over ₹1,400 crore for technology investments, renovation, and managing investments for the calendar year, and will provide more, if needed. to help the team ensure continued economically efficient growth," said Ritesh Agarwal, founder and group



Dragon calling: The company had earlier committed \$600 million in China, says CEO Ritesh Agarwal. • SOMASHEKAR GRN

"With a strong balance sheet, today we can go to more places than ever, introduce new categories, invest in our assets, while maintaining our high quality standards, without raising any further capital," he added.

The company is currently present in over 259 cities in India with over 8,700 hotels and homes, and more than 1,73,000 rooms. On expansion plans outside India, Mr. Agarwal said that OYO already has large operations within their home markets of India and China, along with south east Asia, Europe and West Asia.

"We have already committed to invest \$600 million in China... we still have a large balance sheet to invest

With a strong balance sheet, we can go to more places than ever

RITESH AGARWAL, founder & group CEO, OYO

across other geographies and we will continue to expand across middle east and south east Asia actively. We have seen good results in London, and if we continue seeing these results, we will double down in Europe as well."

The firm's CEO, India and south Asia, Aditya Ghosh said, "Today, with the further investment of ₹1,400 crore and the launch of midmarket brand 'Collection O' hotels, I think we are all set to ensure our customers get the best experience and prices like always - but just a

little better than yesterday.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Facebook on Tuesday launched 'Facebook Hubs' at 20 locations in India to support the start-up eco-

"These hubs will help foster innovation and support for the community by hosting mentor hours and trainings, workshops, discussions, roundtable across," Satyajeet Singh, head of Product Partnerships, Facebook India and South Asia said. The company has partnered with co-working company 91springboard. These hubs will be part of a global network for training and mentoring facilities for startups, among others.

Facebook unveils hubs

to aid start-ups

system in the country.

McLeod Russel to sell Assam tea estate to Jatinga Agro

Aims to source more from its subsidiaries, small growers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

McLeod Russel India Ltd. (MRIL), a bulk tea producer in the B.M. Khaitan group has decided to sell its Boroi Tea Estate in Assam to the city-based Jatinga Agro Tech Private Ltd.

In a regulatory filing, the firm said that it had decided to sell the estates and bearer plants and other assets of the Assam estate. With a turnover of ₹23.2 crore, this tea estate contributed 1.5% to MRIL's turnover in 2017-18, the company said. The deal consideration is ₹28.2 crore.

Among the biggest bulk tea producers in India, MRIL's crop (118 million kg in 2017-18) came from its own gardens, from small tea



growers and its overseas subsidiaries in Africa and Vietnam.

Higher finance costs

MRIL felt that its own output segment at 67 million kg is disproportionately heavy compared to the other two segments which require 'alignment / rationalisation to achieve better results', the company said. Its finance costs stood at ₹170.5 crore in 2017-18 against ₹127.6 crore on a standalone basis. Vivek Goenka, chairman, the India Tea Association, recently said that while costs continue to rise for the industry, prices at which they sell have gone up only marginally.

In the last 5-odd years, input costs have risen by about 11% (CAGR) but the growth in tea prices have been below 2%. Assam tea prices have increased only by about 3% from ₹152.75 per kg in 2017 to ₹157.69 in 2018, he said, adding that as a result a majority of tea producers sell teas at prices lower than their cost of production.

'Polls, BS VI may hit bus sales'

Daimler Buses bullish despite challenges, says its MD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Daimler Buses India, a unit of Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV), remains bullish on its business despite the prospects of facing a challenging 2019, according to a top official.

"The Indian bus sector is set to grow 4% annually. The year 2018 was better than 2017," said Thomas Fricke, managing director, Daimler Buses India.

"We foresee the general elections and BS VI emission standards impacting us in 2019. However, the outlook remains positive due to some pre-buying that might happen after June 2019." BS VI norms have been mandated for vehicles starting April 1, 2020.



Thomas Fricke

Pointing out that India was the second-largest market for Daimler Buses globally after China, he said the country was expected to catch up with the Asian giant and added that in India, the firm was still in the growth

During 2018, the firm sold 2,171 buses, including exports of 616 units, marking

an increase of 65.6% over the year-earlier period. While the domestic market sales grew 72%, exports rose 50%. The sales volume in 2019 would be driven both by domestic and exports businesses, he said.

To launch new products

Mr. Fricke said the firm was committed to stay 'strong' in India with new product launches every year. About 70% of the buses produced were sold in India and the balance, exported.

On the BS VI front, he said the firm was on track to upgrade the entire portfolio to BS VI standard for Bharat-Benz 9-tonne buses, Mercedez-Benz coaches and bus chassis for the 9-, 16- and 24tonne segments.

Uniphore Software eyes \$100 mn revenue in 3 years

Conversational AI company grew 300% last year

LALATENDU MISHRA

Uniphore Software Systems, a global conversational artificial intelligence (AI) technology company with customers in the U.S. and Asia, is eyeing \$100 million revenue in three years with the objective of becoming an unicorn (a firm with more than \$1 billion in value).

The company, which was incubated in IIT Madras 10 years ago, reported a 300% growth last year and this rate of growth would continue for many more years, a

top executive said. "I always want to remain focused on my team to be heads down and deliver,"

Umesh Sachdev, co-founder and CEO, Uniphore Software Systems, said in an interview. "We want to get to the \$100 million revenue run rate in the next three years. If we reach there, from the valuation perspective, we will be more than a unicorn," he said. Speaking about the firm,

John Chambers, chairman

emeritus, Cisco, who had also invested in Uniphore said, "The way they are growing, they will grow to \$100 million in the next three years. At that rate, it is very easy for them to become a unicorn quickly. It will be the first enterprise software company located in India to ever hit that number and go beyond

Scaling up business The company is planning to

scale up fast around the world. "We don't want to be a shallow player in each market. Every county we will go to, we want to be number one or number two in that market," Mr. Sachdev said.

"In the next five to seven years, most of the large call centre companies will potentially be not around because of this technology change. We are getting machines to understand human voice and talk to people and that is the opportunity we are after," he said.

Advantage Australia as India battles self-doubt

The visitors have gained in strength even as the hosts' middle-order, sans Dhoni, looks vulnerable

AUS IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

It just took two strong performances from Australia to sow the seeds of self-doubt in the minds of the Virat Kohliled Team India.

Each victory, riding on 300+ totals, chipped away at India's confidence, gained after pulling itself out of difficult situations in the first two One-Day Internationals.

Standing taller

Though the series stands at 2-2, Australia stands taller as an improving side. Without doubt, the visiting team has played better cricket.

Following the Australian triumphs, first by setting the target and then by scripting a successful, historic chase, Kohli is less sure of the series

Moreover, given the possibility of dew on Wednesday evening, the toss could prove crucial.

Indeed, its rare to find the home captain pointing to conditions - misreading the possibility of dew, or the lack of it – that played its part in two defeats.

Kohli looks rattled when the bowlers get the stick or don't bowl to the field. No bowler likes the sight of a visibly-angry captain. In Mohali, the bowlers faced Kohli's burning glare while Ashton Turner turned on the heat.

Even the spinners have fallen short of expectations in familiar conditions. Conversely, the Australians have dealt with the slower bowlers admirably well.

Consistently, the Indians have not realised their batting potential. Barring the match-winning stand involving Kedar Jadhav and M.S. Dhoni in the opener, effec**Breaking** the deadlock India shares the honours with Australia (4-4) in the eight ODI series held at home prior to this one. Only two of them have gone down to the wire, with the winner decided in the final match of the series. Here too, the teams have emerged victors once each. With Finch's men storming back from a 2-0 deficit to pull level, the current series is poised for an exciting finale



tive partnerships have deserted India, particularly once the opposition makes

In Mohali, despite a 193run start, the momentum was lost on a pitch where even 358 appeared – and eventually proved - inadequate. India cannot always expect at least two, among Shikhar Dhawan, Rohit Sharma and Kohli, to score big.

Even when they did, as seen

on Sunday night, K.L. Rahul's batting pushed the team back.

This immensely-gifted batsman struggled on a battingpitch against an attack softened up by the Indian openers. Eventually, Rahul's 31-ball 26 stood out like a sore thumb in background of some clean hitting from the Australians.

In the middle-order, in varying degrees, Jadhav, Vijay Shankar and Rishabh Pant do not inspire much confidence. After all, none is sure of being a first-choice in the World Cup's starting XI.

Without Dhoni's reassuring presence, the middle-order looks vulnerable.

Never-say-die approach

In contrast, the Australian batting looks assured. Usman Khawaja (283 runs), part of two 190-plus partnerships resulting in victories, and Peter Handscomb (184) have scored centuries.

Skipper Aaron Finch, Marcus Stoinis (nursing a broken thumb) and his worthy replacement Ashton Turner have all scored a half-century each. Others, like Glenn Maxwell and Alex Carey have agthree-figure gregated contributions.

The never-say-die approach of Australian bowlers is hard to miss. Pat Cummins (12 wickets) always looks to strike.

The spinners, led by Adam Zampa, have gained from the fact that almost all members of the Indian ODI squad shun domestic competitions and thereby lack the skill against the turning ball on home pitches.

In all, it's advantage Australia.

The teams (from):

India: Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, Ambati Rayudu, K.L. Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Kedar Jadhav, Vijav Shankar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Yuzvendra Chahal and Ravindra Jadeja. Australia: Aaron Finch (Capt.), Alex Carey, Usman Khawaja, Shaun Marsh, Peter Handscomb, Marcus Stoinis, Glenn Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Ashton Turner, Pat Cummins, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Jason Behrendorff. Nathan Lvon. Adam Zampa and Andrew Tye

Match begins at 1.30 p.m.

We did not bowl as planned: Arun

Success has started to come: Carey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Though the Indian team is reeling under two successive defeats, bowling coach B. Arun pointed to the brighter side and said, "I am happy it has happened now. It throws open a lot of factors where we can improve before the World Cup.'

Learning experience

Elaborating on the point, he said, "Definitely, there are certain areas we need to address, both in bowling and batting. "We have to stay positive irrespective of whatever has happened. It's a great learning experience from the way series has gone."

Speaking to mediapersons on the eve of India's final One-day International, against Australia, before the World Cup, Arun reflected on the team's series-levelling defeat on Sunday night.

"We did not bowl as well we had planned for him (Ashton Turner). I am sure we'll do well if a similar situation arises. We had plans ready. I



B. Arun. SANDEEP SAXENA

am not going to give excuses. Dew was a part of the game. You have to accept and try to overcome the situation."

Wicketkeeper Alex Carey, formerly Australian rule footballer, was far more upbeat when asked about the team's preparedness before the series-decider.

"We've been working hard in the past 12-18 months and there are some successes starting to come our away.

"We have tomorrow [Wednesday] to focus on, and we're really confident about it. It is pressure-cricket and I'm looking forward to it," said the opener for South Australia and Adelaide Strikers but playing the role in the middle-order in the ODI squad. I've really enjoyed my role batting down the middle or lower order.

"Obviously, the scoreboard will dictate my role in the game, if it's trying to set up a target or try and get the side over the line.'

BCCI sounds an alert

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The BCCI has issued an 'al-

ert notice' for an alleged "imposter" who has been posing as an official BCCI representative for striking marketing and branding deal at various venues.

In an unsigned press release, the Board said the said person is "neither an employee nor connected in official capacity" with BCCI and has asked the affected associations "to report the matter to the pol-

_ Pant should fill the one slot up for grooming at the WC

To persist with talent is as much a selector's duty as to discover it



BETWEEN WICKETS

Indian cricket hasn't quite worked Lout how to deal with its outliers, the batsmen who don't fit in because of attitude, approach or manner of stroke-play.

Despite T20 and its innovations, selectors, like many Indians, worship at the altar of orthodoxy; those outside the bounds of the straight bat and high front elbow have needed either more runs to be accepted or an understanding captain who recognises merit even if it is shaded in colours he doesn't identify with.

Curious case of Kambli

Vinod Kambli, a gifted left-hander who once made two double centuries in successive home Tests, finished with just 17 Tests (at an average of 54) despite two other centuries. He had technical issues with the short ball, and he was a flashy young player who talked big and upset the suits.

But the fact remains that Indian cricket did not know how to handle him, and he did not have the

strength personally to take a U-turn into acceptable behaviour marked by batting consistency.

Sourav Ganguly, another player with technical issues initially, sorted them out, sorted himself out and finished as one of India's top captains. On his first Australian tour he was treated indifferently by the team management who followed the time-tested philosophy of "every man for himself, and the devil get

It is possible that the IPL helped smoothen the rough edges of another talent – Virat Kohli. It wasn't so long ago that he was seen as a "bad boy" on the verge of chucking it all away. Yet the player found strength within. And when it could still have gone either way, he was made captain of Royal Challengers in anticipation of the bigger job to come.

Is it about to happen again? To score Test centuries in both

England and Australia before the age of 22 speaks of a special talent. Rishabh Pant accomplished that with a smile on his face, both metaphorically and literally.

He also conceded an embarrassing number of byes in England and equalled the world record for the most catches in a Test in Australia. His first scoring stroke in Test cricket was a six, off only the second ball he faced.

He averages nearly 50 in his nine

Tests, but it is his one-day record that is causing concern ahead of the World Cup. He has played just four matches, with a highest of 36, and a performance behind the stumps at Mohali against Australia that caused the crowd to chant Dhoni's name. It was cruel, but sport has become cruel and hell, as Sartre observed, is other people.

Pant should be a shoo-in for the World Cup despite his lack of experience in the format and his brief record till now.

Problems and positives

Yes, there are problems. Poor shot selection, for one. Incomplete game awareness, for another. But on the positive side of the ledger, there is the natural stroke-play that often deposits the ball into the crowd, and a willingness to learn quickly.

Pant's left-handedness might see him play in the middle order as a pure batsman; at worst he is second wicketkeeper. His wicketkeeping is an area that needs improvement, but it is the one slot where a team can afford to groom somebody at the World Cup – all other slots having to be filled by experience, for the aim is to win now, not perform well

While Pant's work behind the stumps isn't as exciting as in front of it, there is consolation (for the moment) in the fact that he might not

have to keep at the World Cup. The understudy can spend time with the master, and that can only be good

for Indian cricket. Former England captain Mike Brearley believes that wicketkeeping has evolved the least in the past two decades. In that time, Mahendra Singh Dhoni has certainly been the most innovative.

His ploy of standing back to India's spinners some years ago, caused at least one county team to play a portion of its T20 match without a wicketkeeper who, after taking off his pads and gloves, fielded at the edge of the circle at an angle to where second slip might have been. The team, Worcestershire, won conceding only one bye in that period. It works when keeping the runs down is the main intent.

Expanding the craft

Dhoni has expanded the craft too, both with his short arm jab of a stumping which works brilliantly to spinners, saving time and effort, as well as in his near-infallible back flip which hits the stumps from nearby leading to surprised batsmen being run out. It was something Pant tried out in Mohali, and failed comically at, but the lessons will continue.

To persist with talent is as much a selector's duty as to discover it. Sometimes you go by record, at other times by potential.

A lot of positives from 'Tests' and Quadrangular, says Dravid

M.R. PRAVEEN CHANDRAN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India under-19 coach Rahul Dravid said the biggest gain from the two youth 'Tests' and Quadrangular one-day series was the chance to give exposure to a larger group of players and an opportunity to access their talent and

The former India captain said there was lot of positives from the tournament and he was thrilled to see some exciting talent, especially in the bowling depart-

"We almost saw close to 45 boys through the course of the four-day and one-day games. All these boys had performed well in the domestic season. So it was good for us to see what kind of talents were available.

"There are a lot of positives for us from this tournament and there are some exciting talents, especially in the bowling department.

'Challenging wickets' "The wickets were a bit challenging so we didn't get to see good performances with



Rahul Dravid. • FILE PHOTO

the bat but we saw some talent there as well. It is a good exciting bunch to work with in the next seven or eight months before the World Cup," he said while speaking to the media at the end of the Quadrangular series.

Dravid said the Youth Test and One-Day series served the purpose of identifying the core group for the Under-19 World Cup.

"This is the stage where we are looking to identify players and narrow in on the top 30 to 40 kids. This is a slightly younger bunch we picked keeping the next year in mind and it was sort of se-

them. From here they will be going for zonal camps in summer for a month, there will be zonal tournaments, the Asia Cup and then their domestic cricket after this There is a lot of time to work to with them," he said.

lection tournament for

Readying the players Dravid also said the under-19

tournaments could be used to make players ready for domestic cricket as well and the idea of selecting a larger pool of players was make them part and beneficiaries of the system and make them better players.

"We wanted to expose more and more on players to this level. I'm not very keen on zeroing down on fewer numbers very quickly.

"We want more people to feel they are part of the system and get the benefit; working with the coaches, the physios and I think that builds a much broader pool. Even if they don't play the World Cup, they can go back as better players and get into first class teams for their respective States," said Dravid.



Making merry: Cheteshwar Pujara says he gained a lot of confidence after the Australia series. • M. KARUNAKARAN

Pujara feels his peak is yet to come

'People are beginning to notice that I can do well in the shorter formats'

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Be it international cricket or a club-level game, teams can rely on Cheteshwar Pujara to bail them out from difficult situations. After having dominated in Australia, Pujara showed no let up in his intensity while making his debut in the TNCA first division league. He walked in to bat in the fourth ball of the innings and slammed a brilliant 163 (232b, 18x4, 1x6), conducting a masterclass to league

After the day's play, the 31year-old spoke to reporters.

cricketers here on how to

Excerpts

Quick thoughts on your dream run in Australia and today's game?

I have been batting well this season. 2018 and 2019 have been fantastic, especially the Australia series which was verv important. Personally, I gained a lot of confidence. After that, I have realised my game even better. I have been scoring runs but there was a phase when I didn't make a lot in Test cricket. But the last two years have been good and I would like to continue from where I left. I was playing some matches for Sau-

rashtra in the Syed Mushtaq

Ali Trophy and scored runs there. Things are changing. I am scoring in the shorter format also (smiles).

What brings you here?

Basically for some match practice and to be in touch with the game. Ashwin said it was an important match for us so I thought I will come. When you are playing good cricket, you need to play an odd match and then take a few steps forward.

Do you feel you are at the peak of your career?

My peak is yet to come. I am batting well and enjoying my game. But there have been instances where I have played

some exceptional innings in domestic cricket and I want to do that in international cricket as well. Australia was one example

games.

but going forward, I would like to continue to do that wherever we play Test cricket.

Your thoughts on the local league?

I have been hearing things about the Chennai league from players from Saurashtra and few others. Before an international match or First Class season, sometimes you need match practice, so this is the right platform for some

This gives a chance to be in touch with the game. If you are trying something in the nets and want to execute such things in a game, this is the right platform, especially if you are playing for India. Do you feel hurt when people

brand you as a Test cricketer? Sometimes it is difficult to accept things but I am someone who moves on. I am not worried about what people think. Perceptions are changing and people are beginning to notice that I can do well in the shorter formats, now that I have scored runs in T20s. If I can repeat such performances, I can be a good T20 player.

Knight happy for

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Heather Knight was plea-

santly surprised to find ex-

cellent crowds coming out

to watch the women's T20I

series between India and

England at the Barsapara

Cricket Stadium. Women's

cricket wasn't so popular

when she first came to In-

dia, in 2010, to make her En-

players like Smriti Mandha-

na are being recognised for

their efforts," the England

captain told The Hindu. "I

know the 2017 World Cup

made a big impact on the

She had captained En-

gland to triumph in that

World Cup, beating India by

nine runs in the humdinger

of a final. The Women in

Blue had shocked the host

"Winning the World Cup

in the first round.

women's game in India."

"It is great to see that

gland debut.

TV PICKS

India v Australia: Fifth ODI, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 South Africa v Sri Lanka: Fourth ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m. **UEFA Champions League:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD),

IN BRIEF

1.30 a.m. (Thursday).



Joshna stuns Nicol

India's leading squash player Joshna Chinappa pulled off a sensational win over eighttime world champion Nicol David in the first round match of the \$107,000 Women's Black Ball Squash Open here. The Indian, playing with a lot of fire and purpose, got the better of the Malaysian legend 11-8, 11-6, 12-10 on Monday night. It was Joshna's third win over the 21st-ranked Nicol. PTI

Chess set for a comeback at 2022 Asian Games

NEW DELHI Chess will be back at the next edition of the Asian Games in China's Hangzhou after the Olympic Council of Asia decided to reinstate the sport in its programme scheduled from September 10 to 25 in 2022. Chess was part of the Asian Games programme at the 2006 edition in Doha and 2010 in Guangzhou). PTI

Lara opens up about his humble beginning



Brian Lara. • FILE PHOTO ANI

Brian Lara, one of the greatest entertainers of the game, revealed he started made out of a palm frond.

In an interaction with the International Cricket Council (ICC), Lara shared how his family supported and inspirited him to grow as a cricketer.

The ICC quoted Lara as saying that his brother shaved a cricket bat out of a palm frond for him when he was just four.

"We played cricket with anything we put our hands on – a hard orange, a lime, a marble – anything we could use in the backyard or the streets," he added.

Unbeaten Karnataka marches into final

Mumbai fails to make it despite easy victory over Uttar Pradesh



fashioning Karnataka's decisive win. • FILE РНОТО

MUSHTAQ ALI

G. VISWANATH

Karnataka has had an extraordinary run in the Twenty20 Syed Mushtag Ali cricket tournament. The only team from South Zone to qualify for the Super league, Karnataka scored its 11th straight win and will clash with Maharashtra in the final at the Holkar Stadium here on Thursday.

Balanced attack

Equipped with a balanced seam and spin attack and dependable batting, Karnataka beat Vidarbha by six wickets on Tuesday and finished the Super League with 16 points.

There was the possibility of a three-way tie in the group involving Karnataka, Mumbai and Vidarbha. But Manish Pandey (49 not out, 35b, 3x4, 2x6) led his team to a decisive win. Mumbai lost out despite posting the Super League's highest score and an easy win over Uttar

Karnataka chose to field

and restricted Vidarbha to a low score with R. Vinay Kumar striking early blows.

Vidarbha was tottering at 46 for five in the 10th over, when Apoorv Wankhade (56 not out, 41b, 3x4, 3x6) and Akshay Karnewar pulled their team to a respectable total.

Needing a fraction under seven runs an over, Karnataka lost opener B.R. Sharath in the third over and Mayank Agarwal in the sixth, but Rohan Kadam, Karun Nair and Pandey swung the match in their favour.

Maharashtra had already confirmed its final spot with three wins, and on Tuesday scored its fourth, against Railways and topped Group A with 16 points.

Maharashtra lost openers Ruturaj Gaikwad and Rahul Tripathi well inside the PowerPlayer overs, but Nikhil Naik scored a 58-ball unbeaten 95 with four 4s and eight 6s. Naik and Naushad Shaikh (59, 39b, 6x4, 2x6) put on 119 runs for the third wicket off

Later, seamers Samad Fal-

lah and Divyang Hinganeskar and spinners Satyajeet Bachhav and Shaikh caused a Railways collapse after its openers Mrunal Devdhar and Pratham Singh had raised 68 in 7.1 overs.

The scores:

Group A: Maharastra 177 for five in 20 overs (Nikhil Naik 95 n.o., Naushad Shaikh 59, Manjeet Chaudhary three for 36) bt Railways 156 in 20 overs (Mrunal Devdhar 55. Pratham Singh 29, Gandhar Bhatawadekar 25, Samad Fallah three for 37).

Gujarat 121 in 19.3 overs (Axar Patel 53. Pivush Tanwar 29. Savan Ghosh five for 15) lost to Bengal 125 for three in 18.2 overs (Wriddhiman Saha 53 n.o., Vivek Singh 28 n.o.).

Group B: Mumbai 183 for seven in 20 overs (Eknath Kerkar 46, Siddhesh Lad 62, Shreyas Iyer 43, Ankit Rajpoot three for 47) bt Uttar Pradesh 137 in 19 overs (Shardul Thakur three for 15, Shivam Dube three for 31, Siddhesh Lad three for 23).

Vidarbha 138 for seven in 20 overs (Apoorv Wankhade 56 n.o., Akshay Karnewar 33, Ath-140 for four in 19.2 overs (Rohan Kadam 39, Manish Pandey

is the greatest moment of my life," Knight said. "I was arva Taide 28) lost to Karnataka only a year into the job; we weren't the favourites," she said.

"India played brilliantly in the semifinal (against Australia). It was almost perfect – the host against India in the final, that too at Lord's, my favourite ground; it's just on this. It was a personal de-

> On this tour, however, England lost the ODI series played in Mumbai before the T20s.

> five or six miles from where

Women in Blue "It was disappointing to lose the ODI series, in which I thought seamer Shikha Pandey bowled really well and was unlucky not to win Player-of-the-Series award," she said. "But I am

> back and won the T20s." The second match of the series was her 150th as a Lioness.

happy that we bounced

"I wasn't aware of that, until my father mailed me a picture of him raising a glass for my 150th game," she

"I didn't expect to play this many games when I made my debut at the Bandra Kurla Complex Ground in Mumbai nine years ago, along with Danielle Wyatt, who, too, is still with the

From her 151 games, Knight has made 3,419 runs across formats. She would have loved to play more than the six Tests she has. The 157 she made in the

2013 Test against Australia in the Wormsley Test remains her most satisfying innings. She had batted for 417 minutes and faced 338 balls. "I have never been men-

tally more drained in my life," she said. "And I had the worst night's sleep ever, too; I was playing cover drives in my sleep. But it felt great that I could help England draw that Test and win the



players like Smriti Mandhana getting due recognition.

BCCI should go back to its members, says Sanjay Jagdale

G. VISWANATH

Sanjay Jagdale was elected secretary at the BCCI AGM in September 2011. The outgoing president Shashank Manohar and the incoming president N. Srinivasan backed him. A former First Class cricketer of Madhya Pradesh and a man known for his integrity, Jagdale's election was welcomed by the cricketing fraternity.

But in less than two years, Jagdale resigned following allegations of malpractices in the IPL and the arrest of Gurunath Meiyappan, a Chennai Super Kings official and son-in-law of the BCCI president.

Talking to The Hindu while watching a Mushtaq Ali Trophy match between Mumbai and Vidarbha at the Holkar Stadium on Monday, Jagdale, now 68, said that the BCCI became a respected organisation because of honest people, it should go back to its members and the game should not suffer. Excerpts:

When you resigned, the BCCI had 29 full members, now there are 36, but it's actually run by the three-member Committee of Administrators..

It's very unfortunate. It (implementation of Lodha reforms) is taking a long time. A lot of credit has to be given to people like M.A. Chidambaram, S. Sriraman, Jagmohan Dalmiya and I.S. Bindra for making major contributions to the BCCI.

If this cricket body has become financially sound and runs many tournaments, there must have been some honesty in people. There could be one or two wrongdoings, but one cannot make sweeping charges against the

I am not saying everything



Sanjay Jagdale. • VIVEK BENDRE

was good in the BCCI, but a lot of good things were being done in the past and even

The BCCI tournaments were being run in a most professional manner. What has happened is very unfortunate, because the State associations are nowhere now.

You talked about honest people in the BCCI. Do you regret having resigned? Many people say it was a knee-jerk reaction and things would have been better if you two (Jagdale and treasurer Ajay

Shirke) had not quit...

I don't think there would have been any change even if I had continued. I could not digest whatever happened. I was the secretary, but I was not directly involved with the IPL, there was the Governing Council. I felt that someone needed to take responsibility happened.

I became secretary only because of Manohar and Srinivasan. I was never keen, but they persuaded me. I had a very good understanding with Srinivasan, he always supported me for cricket. He gave me a free hand.

You and Shirke quit. Do you think the then BCCI president (N. Srinivasan) should also have resigned and probably the BCCI members would have still been running the daily affairs in a normal manner?

I would not like to comment

It's one of the BCCI officebearers who recommended to the Lodha Panel to bring the 'one State, one member, one vote' rule. Do vou think the members could have responded in a more meaningful way to the Supreme Court order?

cision, what I thought, I did.

It was for the then president

to decide. I was not feeling

comfortable staying as secre-

tary. As it is, I was never

much involved in the IPL

which was run in a profes-

sional manner.

I actually don't know what's happening. I have been out of the BCCI for a long time now. It all depends on the State associations.

I want the BCCI members to take control of all activities. It is the BCCI members who have made the BCCI what it is and so it should go back to them.

Friendly foes: Heather Knight says it feels great to see

AIFF inquiry over CCFC-Minerva game

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELH

The All India Football Federation (AIFF), on Tuesday, launched an inquiry into the final-day I-League championship decider between Chennai City and Minerva Punjab, after an expression of suspicion by the match commissioner.

"The AIFF is looking into the matter and the federation's integrity officer has already got down to work. Though, in the match commissioner's report to the federation, nothing suspicious was mentioned," an AIFF official said on condition of anonymity.

Minerva pulls out

Meanwhile, Minerva claimed it had pulled out of the Super Cup, slated to begin on Thursday, along with seven other I-League teams citing unfair treatment to the clubs by the AIFF.

This could well throw the schedule into disarray.

ISL PLAYOFFS NANDAKUMAR MARAR

FC Goa, playing at full strength as promised by coach Sergio Lobera, qualified for its second final in five seasons of the ISL.

Breathing free after the tearaway 5-1 win in the away leg against Mumbai City FC, the hosts went down by a stunning Rafael Bastos goal at home in the Nehru stadium on Tuesday. The fans let out a roar at the final whistle, buoyed by the 5-2 aggregate.

Mumbai City changed its approach, executing the tactics designed by coach Jorge Costa. Needing to win by a five-goal margin, the visitors did beat Goa goalkeeper Naveen Kumar once on an exciting night under the lights and exited after playing the right game in the wrong

Issoko's assist

Mumbai City, in blue, silenced a sea of orange in the stands just six minutes into the game. Arnold Issoko, the most dangerous player in the first leg, picked up the ball off a misspass, darted ahead, leaped over a defensive challenge before rolling it along the turf for teammate Bastos to glide in on cue and guide the ball into the net.

A 1-0 win not enough for Mumbai City as FC Goa progresses

The Congo playmaker and the Brazilian sniper had teamed up to strike first for the visitors in the Mumbai leg, but this time the script took a different twist in the face of a determined Mumbai City rearguard.

The defence played close to deny the eager bunch of Goa ball-players a clear view of the target. The home team, applying pressure around the rival goalmouth, earned two free-kicks within striking distance of goal but Brandon Fernandes could not find his man in the goal-A stream of corner kicks,

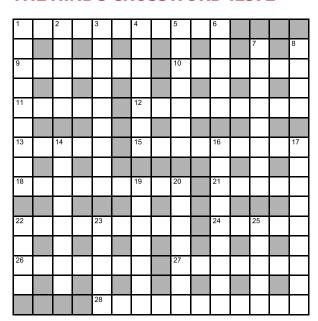
too, did not yield results. Lobera was forced to take out creative ace Ahmed Jahouh, suffering a hand injury, and introduced Edu Be-

Subashish Bose was a big name missing in the Mumbai defence, paying the price for

a collective below-par show by the backline in the first leg when Goa ran riot. The first half saw frenetic action, and the flow changed after the breather as Lobera's team slowed down the pace and cashed in on speed with the ball to attack in waves.

Skipper Amrinder, in the Mumbai City goal, was taken off and the armband given to Paulo Machado. The latter rescued his team twice as the home team came close to equalising in the second half. The result: FC Goa O lost to Mumbai City FC 1 (Bastos 6).

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12572



ACROSS

- 1 Extremes of error bandicoot made? Where to find info
- 9 Old instrument church doctor has a look (7)
- 10 Quaint, yet a grandfather should not show this (3-4) 11 Sound tip for composer (5)
- updates? (6,5)

- 12 Unable to hear of East End riots (5-4)
- 13 Highlander's fling (5) 15 Less out of French musical -
- it's wretched (9)
- 18 Gaur's muddied skin by dressing make it pleasant! (9)

21 Nation not out with help

- withdrawn (5) 22 Beg repeatedly to bring in 'Le
- Monde' article (9) 24 Info by a team of spirits (5)

26 City where army officer's gone

- secretively? (7) 27 With hemp, acquire floor
- 28 Dinettes far neglected become

so overrun by pests (3-8)

DOWN

top ties and ornaments (9)

1 Boy's recall about Chennai's

- 2 Frequencies of the paper (5)
- 3 Mad person in church, beginning to rage - what a gossip! (9)

(set by Gridman)

- 4 Mature crowd beaten back without damage (7)
- 5 Loving a moor disentangled by American (7) **6** Get out of the way of car (5)
- 7 Banker's sleeping place where dredging may take place (8)
- 8 Head of rescuers gets charge raised for offshore hazard (4)
- 14 New York City where a visit would be quite fruitful? (3,5) 16 Vehemently arguing about a

principal error in instrument

measuring drops (4,5) 17 Ma, iced tea that's prepared is terribly thin (9)

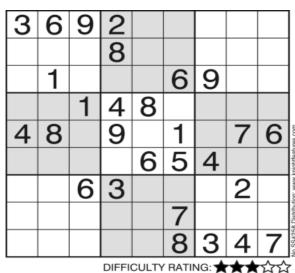
19 Work university gave is rich

- 20 Continue to walk having a lot
- 23 Man's name? Got it! (5) 25 That is when thing dissipates

leave and move slowly (4)

22 Something easy, about to

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12571 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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FAITH Significance of Matsya

When the Vedas were stolen from Brahma, Lord Mahavishnu took the Matsya avatara to retrieve them. We find in the Vishnu Sahasranama many names of the Lord that signify this avatara, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse. One of the names is Gururgurutamah. Guru and guruta-

mah are not to be taken as two names, but as one. It means that He is the highest among all preceptors, because He imparted jnana to Brahma. During the deluge, He steers the ship (earth), which holds the seeds of all that is dissolved during the floods. Hence, He is dhAmah. He is satyah, because He helped good people like Manu and others who sought His help. He is satyaparAkramah - His actions towards Manu and other virtuous people were in keeping with His prowess. He is nimishah, for He does not look with benevolence upon the enemies of His devotees. He is animishah. that is in the case of His devotees, He never closes His eyes. The name animishah fits the Matsya avatara perfectly, because fishes never blink. He is sragvee, the One adorned with a garland. Even when He takes the form of a fish, He is adorned with the Vyajayanthi garland. In the Matsya avatara, He gave to Brahma, Vedic knowledge that he had lost. Hence, He is vAchaspatih - the Lord of speech. He is udAradhI, because His jnana fills people with awe. He is agraNI, because He leads people to moksha. He is grAmaNI, because in Paramapada, He leads the Nityasuris. Lotus eyes are a feature of the Supreme One, and even in the Matsya avatara He has lotus eyes, thereby showing His Supremacy. Hence, He has the name SreemAn.

Desika, in Dasavatara stotra, says that the Lord's movement in the ocean created the rise and fall of the waves resembling the movement of a swing, which the Lord enjoyed.



renewal perfectly timed

Spain left-back Jordi Alba has said renewing his contract with La Liga powerhouse FC Barcelona till the summer of 2024 has come at the perfect time as he was at the peak of his career. Earlier in the day. Alba and club vice-president Jordi Mestre signed the contract extension that is to link the international defender to the team for another five years, with a €500 million buyout clause.



McGregor arrested after run-in with fan

Mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor was arrested on Monday for allegedly smashing a fan's cell phone outside a Florida nightclub. The 30-year-old Irishman was charged with criminal mischief and strong-armed robbery after Miami police said he allegedly slapped the phone out of the fan's hand and then stomped on it. According to the arrest report, the fan tried to take a photo of McGregor using his mobile phone, valued at \$1,000, AFP



Australian citizen

Refugee footballer Hakeem al-Araibi, who was detained in Thailand and threatened with extradition to Bahrain, became an Australian citizen on Tuesday. The 25-year-old was arrested while on honeymoon in Thailand last year. He was wanted by Bahrain on offences linked to the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. Amid a worldwide outcry, he was eventually allowed back to Melbourne, where he plays semiprofessional football. AFP

Indian men draw with Azerbaijan

WORLD TEAM CHESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ASTANA

Drawing on all four boards, the Indian men played out a 2-2 draw with Azerbaijan in the seventh round of the World team chess championship here on Tuesday.

B. Adhiban played a rock-solid game with black pieces on the top board against in-form Arkadij Naiditsch, while Surva Shekhar Ganguly, also playing black on the third board, signed peace with Safarli

S.P. Sethuraman was the first to end his game against Nidjat Mamedov and it was left to K. Sasikiran to provide the breakthrough. However, Sasikiran stood better for the major part of the game but with the clock ticking away decided taking against undue risk and split the point. The results (seventh round): Open: Azerbaijan (5) drew with India (10) 2-2 (Arkadij Naiditsch drew with B. Adhiban; Gadir Guseinov drew with K. Sasikiran; Safarli Eltaj drew with Surva Shekhar Ganguly: Nidiat Mamedom drew with S.P. Sethurman): China (8) bt Sweden (4) 2.5-1.5; England (11) bt Egypt (1) 2.5-1.5; Kazakhstan (4) lost to Iran (7) 1.5-2.5; USA (8) lost to Russia (12) 1.5-2.5

Women: India (8) bt USA (5) 4-0 (Eesha Karavade bt Tatev Abrahamyan; Soumya Swaminathan bt Katerina Nemcova; Padmini Rout bt Carissa Yip; Bhakti Kulkarni bt Sabina-Francesca Foisor); China (14) bt Egypt (0) 4-0; Ukraine (10) drew with Russia (11) 2-2; Hungary (3) drew with Armenia (3) 2-2; Georgia (10) bt Kazakhstan (6) 3.5-0.5.

Karlovic halts Prajnesh's terrific run

Struff sends ailing Zverev crashing out

INDIAN WELLS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA INDIAN WELLS

Prajnesh Gunneswaran's terrific run at the Indian Wells Masters came to an end following a straight-set defeat to big-serving Ivo Karlovic on Monday.

The Indian qualifier fought hard before losing 6-3, 7-6(4) to the tall Croat, who fired 16 aces in the one hour-13-minute contest.

"It was very difficult to return his big serve. I had some chances, I did not take them and that's pretty much what decided the match," Prajnesh, ranked 97, said as he could not convert two break chances he got.

It was Prajnesh's maiden appearance at an ATP Masters event and he bagged 61 ranking points with his stupendous effort, which will catapult him to a career-best rank of 82.

"Overall, it was a very good run.

"I am confident I will be able to do this again. Over a period of time I should be able to deliver such results consistently.

"I am not sure if it will always be at the Masters, or a 250 (tournament) or a Grand Slam. I hope it happens at the bigger events.

"At the end of the day, If I am consistently competing against these players and finding success then I am on the right track," said the Chennai player, who earned

Meanwhile, ailing World No. 3 Alexander Zverev crashed out, while Novak Djokovic's third round match was suspended by rain with one game completed.

Struff, Ian-Lennard ranked 55th in the world, notched up his first victory



Prize scalp: Jan-Lennard Struff notched up his first victory over Alexander Zverev in five tries. • AFP

over Zverev in five tries, breaking him once in the first set and three times in the second for a 6-3, 6-1

"I've been sick for a week," said the 21-year-old Zverev, who lost the Acapulco final to Australian Nick Kyrgios the week before Indian Wells began. World No. 1 Djokovic,

playing his first tournament since grabbing a record seventh Australian Open title in January, completed just one game against unseeded German Philipp Kohlschreiber before rain swept across the California desert.

The winner will face inform Frenchman Gael Monfils, who rolled past Albert Ramos Vinolas 6-0, 6-3.

Gael Monfils bt Albert Ramos 6-0, 6-3; Ivo Karlovic bt Prajnesh Gunneswaran 6-3, 7-6(3); Dominic Thiem bt Gilles Simon 6-3, 6-1; Jan-Lennard Struff bt Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-1; Milos Raonic bt Marcos Giron 4-6, 6-4, 6-4; Yoshihito Nishioka bt Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-7(2), 6-4, 7-6(5); Miomir Kecmanovic bt Laslo Djere 6-2, 7-6(3).

The results: Men: Third round:

Women: Third round: Naomi Osaka bt Danielle Collins 6-4, 6-2; Belinda Bencic bt Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-4, 6-2; Anett Kontaveit bt Anastasia Sevastova 5-0 (retd.); Karolina Pliskova bt Ysaline Bonaventure 6-3, 6-2; Venus Williams bt Christina McHale 6-2, 7-5; Mona Barthel bt Julia Goerges 7-5, 1-6, 6-4; Aryna Sabalenka bt Lesia Tsurenko 6-2, 7-5: Angelique Kerber bt Natalia Vik-

Zidane's challenge — finding the balance between reform and revolution

The Frenchman has three months to decide what needs restructuring at Real

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MADRID

Zinedine Zidane stood for 29 minutes fielding questions but all of them really came down to two: Why now? And, what next?

Santiago Solari had been sacked as coach of Real Madrid and in his place Zidane would return, 284 days after he had left.

Real failed to win without him, first under Julen Lopetegui, the sacked Spain coach, and then Solari, the interim-turned-permanent coach, who watched on as Madrid's season went up in smoke in six days. Solari's exit was inevitable

but the idea any suitable replacement would take over for 11 La Liga games, with nothing to preside over except the aftermath of a crisis, seemed fanciful.

"When the president called me the first thing I



Veronique at the press conference on Monday, has a big task on hand to change Real Madrid's fortunes • AFP

thought was: go," said Zidane. Which begs the question: what has changed?

"I returned because the president called me. I love him and I love this club," he said. "We will change things, for sure, for the years to

Zidane knew he would return with more authority

than ever, far more even than after he had hoisted a third consecutive Champions League trophy.

The suspicion then was that he was just a face, a popular manager to keep the ship steady while star players engineered their own success.

As two coaches came and

went, Zidane's stock rose with every chance missed, every seat left empty and every point that Barcelona moved further away.

Zidane could have waited until the summer but the job might not have been available. Jose Mourinho, speaking on his increasingly regular public appearances, seemed

Perez was under fire from all directions, from the fans, many of whom blamed the board more than Solari in the newspaper polls, and from the players, led by Sergio Ramos. "We need to start working on a new glorious era," said Perez.

Zidane has three months to decide what needs changing. He arrives under no illusions. Madrid triumphed in Europe but in La Liga last season, Barcelona finished 17 points ahead. Now the gap

Anjali Rathi rallies past Nandini Dixit

Aditya and Manas win two matches in boys section

ROAD TO WIMBLEDON

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Anjali Rathi fought her way past Nandini Dixit 6-1, 3-6, 7-6(5) in a group-A league match of the Road to Wimbledon under-14 girls' tennis tournament on the grass courts of the Gymkhana Club here on Tuesday.

Watched by some of the leading coaches of Britain, Jamie Delgado who has been with Andy Murray for nearly four years, and Dan Bloxham, the girls tried to be at their competitive best, hitting fluent strokes.

With the league phase leading to the knock-out stage, the onus will be on An-

jali Rathi to sustain her good work, especially against the top seed Pari Singh, who blanked Chandni Srinivasan.

In Group-B, Veda Raju Prapurna subdued Apurva Vemuri 7-6(2), 6-4, while Chahana Budhbhatti bounced back from a slow start to tame Sukhmani Bhandari in three sets.

Kundana Sri Bandaru and

Amishi Shukla won their matches in contrasting style in group-C; and so did Suhitha Maruri and Abhaya Vermuri in Group-D. The two finalists will get to compete in the UK under-14 championship in Wimbledon in August.

Meanwhile in the boys' tournament in Chandigarh, Aditya Rathi and Manas Manoj Dhamne won two matches each in the five-member Group-D.

In group-C, Skandha Prasanna Rao beat sixth seed Jasmeet Duhan 6-4,1-6, 6-0. With two players qualify-

ing from each group for the knock-out stage, the competition will hot up from quarterfinals as the players aspire to grab the two slots for the UK under-14 championship to be played in Wimbledon in August.

The results (league): Girls: **Group-A:** Pari Singh bt Chandni Srinivasan 6-0, 6-0; Anjali Rathi bt Nandini Dixit 6-1, 3-6, Group-B: Veda Raju Prapurna

bt Apurva Vemuri 7-6(2), 6-4; Chahana Budhbhatti bt Sukhmani Bhandari 2-6, 6-2, 6-2. Group-C: Kundana Sri Bandaru bt Lakshmi Gowda 6-1, 6-0; Amishi Shukla bt Suryanshi Tanwar 3-6, 6-1, 6-3. Group-D: Suhitha Maruri bt

Prabha Arunkumar 6-1, 6-0; Abhaya Vemuri bt Sweta Samanta 3-6, 6-3, 6-1. Boys: Group-A: Ayushmaan Arjeria bt Wyatt Rowan Obrien

6-3, 6-1; Dhananjay Athreya bt Navya Verma 6-0, 6-0. Group-B: Yuval Nandal bt Cahir Sameer Warik 7-5, 6-3; Bushan Haobam bt Omaansh Choud-

hary Saharia 6-1, 6-1. Group-C: Agriya Yadav bt Mohith Sai Charan Reddy 6-1, 6-2; Skandha Prasanna Rao bt Jas-

meet Duhan 6-4, 1-6, 6-0. Group-D: Aditya Rathi bt NIthish Balaji 3-6, 6-4, 6-3; Aditya Rathi bt Krishang Raghuvanshi 6-1, 6-1; Manas Manoj Dhamne bt Nithish Balaji 6-4, 7-5; Manas Manoj Dhamne bt Vansh

Ranking tournaments from next year

AAI contemplating a system to oversee coaching camps

Y.B. SARANGI

ARCHERY

After ensuring that there is 'no threat of suspension' from World Archery, and the Archery Association of India (AAI) is in 'good standing,' the National federation has decided to streamline the domestic calendar and re-introduce prize-money ranking tournaments.

"We have negotiated with NTPC; we will have five prize money ranking tournaments after the next Nationals (in December). This year we have to do both Nationals for 2018 and 2019. January, February and March will be for the ranking tournaments

"We are doing a test-ranking event in one or two months. That will give us an idea about how we do our introduction of a system to five ranking tournaments next year," AAI president B.V.P. Rao told *The Hindu*.

Transparent selection The newly-elected AAI put out a National calendar within two months and followed the models of the USA, France and some other countries to put in place a transparent selection process.

"I was told there were certain practices in the past with the senior archers conceding some matches so their friends come in the team in the Olympic round.

"So we tried to prevent that as much as possible by giving bonus points for good scores and penalty for bad scores. We will tighten it further," said Rao.

The AAI is contemplating

oversee coaching camps.

"A bit of indiscipline has crept into senior archers in the camps, I believe. Some people go out of the camp without permission. I have already started sounding out but till the World championships I don't want to take any radical decision.

"Once we bring out the calendar for next year, we will set up a monitoring committee for the coaching camps. We have already constituted an ethics and disciplinary committee."

Wagner bounces out Bangladesh

Innings win helps Kiwis wrap up series

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Short-ball specialist Neil Wagner engineered an innings victory over Bangla desh in what New Zealand called "an ideal two days" in the rain-shortened second Test to wrap up the series with a game to spare.

After the first two days were washed out, the match finished in the first session of the final dayas New Zealand completed a fifth consecutive series win for the first

In the face of Wagner's relentless bouncer barrage, Bangladesh was all out for 209 to give New Zealand victory by an innings and 12 runs to go with its innings

LAST 16, 2ND LEG - MAR 13

Most passes between players

and 52-run win in the first

"It was an ideal two days," said Tim Southee, who took over the New Zealand captain's armband after Kane Williamson left for treatment to an injured shoulder.

"With the amount of time that was lost through rain, a lot of people thought it was going to be tough to win a Test inside three days but we knew there was always going to be a little bit of assistance in the wicket.

The scores: Bangladesh 211 & 209 in 56 overs (Shadman Islam 29, M. Mithun 47, Soumya Sarkar 28, Mahmudullah Riyad 67, Trent Boult four for 52, Neil Wagner five for 45) lost to New Zealand 432 for six decl.



Ranieri starts well at Roma

Nandal 6-0, 6-7(6), 6-3.

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

Claudio Ranieri got off to a winning start as Roma coach with a 2-1 win over Empoli on Monday

The result: Roma 2 (Stephan El Shaarawy 9, Patrik Schick 33) bt Empoli 1 (Juan Jesus

India U-23 loses to Oatar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Indian u-23 football team couldn't convert chances and suffered a narrow 1-0 loss to Qatar in a preparatory match ahead of the AFC Championship qualifiers in Uzbekistan.

Top archers for recurve trials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Top 24 archers from recurve men and women's sections will be seen action in the final leg of the selection trials, to be held at the KIIT University ground, Bhubaneswar, for the upcoming World Cups and championships.

Even as action in the NTPC National archery championships at the Barabati Stadium here will switch to the compound division on Wednesday, elite recurve archers would be engaged in another crucial tussle with the primary objective of making it to the squad for the World championships.

The Worlds, to be held in 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, from June 3 to 9, will offer nearly half of the total quota places (128) in the Olympics.

As per the new selection process, the Archery Association of India (AAI) has ta-

ken the top 16 from the Open selection trials held in Rohtak in January and added the top-ranked eight from the National championships (after excluding the 16 from Rohtak) to prepare a list of 24 in each category. Following a ranking

round, 12 of the 24 will go through a head-to-head round robin league. The top four will qualify for World Cups I and III and the next four for World Cup II. The top three will make

the cut for the World championships. "This is a sound process. Those who win something

ed," said seasoned archer Tarundeep Rai. Three-time Olympian L. Bombayala Devi also favoured the process.

by fluke cannot get select-

"This is a better way to select a team as you get good archers," said Bombayala. Shortlisted archers for trials: Men: Tarundeep Rai (SSCB), Ata**Monitoring committee**

Rao acknowledged the need to improve capacity building of coaches and technical staff and overhauling of the federation's web-

nu Das (PSPB), Mangal Singh

Champia (RSPB), Pravin Jadhav

(SSCB), Sukhchain Singh (SSCB),

Sanjay Boro (Asm), Gora Ho

(SSCB), Atul Verma (SSCB), Sukh-

mani Babrekar (Mah), Vakil Raj

Indrachand Swami (SSCB), Ka-

Jagdish Choudhary

pil (RSPB), Akash (Har), Yashden

(SSCB), Chaman Singh (AIP),

Vishwash (SSCB), Gurucharan

Besra (Jha), Basant (Har) Ajay

(Del), Hurdub Tiriya (AIP), Pri-

yank (UP) and Gaurab Lambe

Women: Deepika Kumari (Jha),

Himani (Har), L.Bombavala Devi

(RSPB). Madhu Vedwan (UP),

Sakshi Shitole (Mah), Preeti

(RSPB), Ankita Bhakat (Jha), Mo-

nika Saran (RSPB), Suparna Singh

Dindor (SSCB), B. Dhiraj (AP)

Camp Nou First leg result: **0-0** Won 4 Drawn 3 Won 0 Form •••••
Goals for / against 12 / 12 / 11 First leg statistics Shots on target Shots wide Passes Crosses Possession Allianz Arena First leg result: 0-0 Head-to-head Won 1 Drawn 5 Won 2 ••••• Form ••••• First leg statistics Shots on target Shots wide Passes

UEFA Champions League 2018-19

(WB), Sangeeta (Har) Sehajpreet Kaur (Pun), Promila Daimary (Asm), Amanpreet Kaur (Pun), V. Sharda (AIP), Komolika Bari (Jha), Himani Boro (AIP), Ridhi Phor (Har), Kelmit Lepcha (Cht), Susmita Biruly (Jha), Sumandeep Kaur (AIP), Rimil Biruily (RSPB), Ishita (AIP), Simranjeet Kaur (Pun) and Asha Rani Horo (AIP).

Form W D L

Crosses Jordan Henderson DEFENSIVE STALEMATE: Liverpool travel to only ten of 31 teams have progressed after drawing first leg 0-0 at home AWAY DAYS Reds are unbeaten in last four matches in Liverpool v Bayern: Passes attempted Niklas Süle Completion: 96% Jordan Henderson 83% 71 at home in

Sandeep on top

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Sandeep Singh of the Army continued to show his class in air rifle finals, as he beat Tejas Krishna Prasad of Karnataka by 1.6 point in winning the fourth National shooting selection trials at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Tuesday.

The 23-year-old Sandeep, who had a hat-trick of gold medals in the recent Intershoot international competition at the Hague in the Netherlands, was able to assert himself in a highly competitive field that had Deepak Kumar, Ravi Kumar and Divyansh Singh Panwar who had represented the country in the World Cup at the same venue.

Divyansh delights

(D9)

© GRAPHIC NEWS

Divyansh who had won the earlier trial, settled for the sixth place. Satyam Chauhan, Sahil, Himanshu Varma and Olympian Chain Singh were the others to make the final. Divyansh was able to top both the junior and youth sections as he had done earlier.

In the women's 50-metre rifle 3-position event, former World Champion Tejaswini Sawant beat world record holder Anjum Moudgil by 0.9 point, after a modest qualification score of 1157.

Olympian Gurpreet Singh climbed to the top spot with 583 in men's centre fire pistol, and was followed two points behind by the Olympic silver medallist Vijay Kumar. The results: 10m air rifle: Men:

Sandeep Singh 250.0 (627.5); 2. Tejas Krishna Prasad 248.4 (628.6); 3. Deepak Kumar 227.7 (626.7). Junior men: 1. Divyansh Singh Panwar 628.7: 2. Sheersh Aditva Kashyap 623.3; 3. Shuvam Basu 621.0. Youth men: 1. Divvansh Singh Panwar 628.7; 2 Sheersh Aditya Kashyap 623.3; 3. N. Srikrishna 617.8.

Kumar 581; 3. Wazeer Singh Rathee 580. 50m rifle 3-position: Women:

25m centre fire pistol: Men:

Gurpreet Singh 583; 2. Vijay

1. Tejaswini Sawant 458.0 (1157); 2. Anjum Moudgil 457.1 (1172); 3. Lajja Gauswami

DELHI THE HINDU WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13, 2019

IN BRIEF



Indian Ocean mission makes first broadcast

ALPHONSE ISLAND A British-led mission to document changes taking place beneath the Indian Ocean has broadcast its first live, television-quality video transmission from a twoperson submersible off the Seychelles. AP



Eye check-up to detect Alzheimer's disease

A future non-invasive eve test may allow early detection of Alzheimer's disease before memory loss kicks in, says a study. The optical coherence tomography angiography will check patients' vision as well as brain health. IANS



Disney-Fox mega-deal set to close on March 20

Walt Disney has said it would close the \$71 billion deal for the film and television assets of 21st Century Fox on March 20, a deal to reshape the media landscape. AFP

India's newest frog evolved 60 million years ago

The starry dwarf frog, named after Wayanad's Kurichiya tribe, is found outside protected areas

AATHIRA PERINCHERY

It is just 2 cm long and sports pale blue spots and brilliant orange thighs. The discovery of the starry dwarf frog, a nocturnal amphibian that lives under leaf litter on a mountaintop in Kerala's Wayanad, has been published on March 13 in PeerJ, an international multidisciplinary journal.

It was in June 2010 that frog researcher Vijayakumar S.P. first laid his eyes on the odd-looking frog and picked it up from atop Wayanad's Kurichiyarmala.

"I knew that it was a new species, it had many interesting morphological characters... shape and colour patterns that I haven't seen in other Western Ghats frogs," wrote Dr. Vijayakumar, from the Centre for Ecological Sciences at Bengaluru's Indian Institute of Science, in an email to *The Hindu*.

Recently, Dr. Vijayakumar and his co-workers, includ-



Astrobatrachus kurichiyana

ing from the George Washington University in the U.S., studied its physical, skeletal and genetic characteristics. They also compared the frog with specimens of similar

species in museum collections across the world. While scans of its skeletons showed it to be completely different from any other similar-sized frog seen in Wayanad, some of its physical characteristics (such as its triangular fingerand toe tips) closely resembled frogs in South America and Africa. Genetic studies, however, revealed a different story: its closest relatives are the Nycibatrachinae group of frogs that dwell in the streams of Western Ghats, and the Lankanectinae frogs of Sri Lanka.

The team named the new species the starry dwarf frog Astrobatrachus kurichiyana (genus Astrobatrachus after its starry spots and kurichiyana in honour of the Kurichiya tribal community who live in the area). It is not only a new species but different enough to be assigned to a new 'subfamily'. Genetic analysis reveal that the species is at least 60 million years old.

YouTube launches its music service

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

YouTube on Tuesday announced the launch of its new music streaming service - YouTube Music, in

While users can stream the music for free in the adsupported version of the application, the company is also offering paid membership with features such as option of playing songs in the background, offline downloads and an ad-free experience for ₹99 per month. Additionally, at a monthly price of ₹129, users can gain access to You-Tube Premium that will give allow them to ad-free access to millions of videos

Pigcasso hogs the limelight at this farm



Painting is so fun! Pigcasso painting on a canvas. • REUTERS

REUTERS FRANSCHHOEK

Brandishing a paintbrush in her snout, Pigcasso enthusiastically tosses her head to create bright, bold strokes across a canvas propped up in her sty.

The sow, called Pigcasso,

was rescued from an abattoir and brought to an animal sanctuary in Franschhoek, in South Africa.

Swatch announced a collaboration with the pig last month. The limited edition "Flying Pig by Ms. Pigcasso"

Flight returns after mother forgets baby

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

A Saudi Arabian Airlines flight had to make a last minute turn-around because a passenger forgot her baby behind at the airport.

The flight to Kuala Lumpur returned to its gate at the King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, after the panicked woman alerted the cabin crew that she forgot to bring her child on board.

A video clip of the pilot requesting permission from the Air Traffic Control is going viral on the social media. He is heard murmuring: "May God be with us. Can we come back or

Biodiversity-rich zones also 'hotspots' of human impacts

It ranks 16th in the world with 35 species affected on an average

AATHIRA PERINCHERY

Human impacts on species occur across 84% of the earth's surface, finds a study published on March 13 in PLOS Biology, an international journal dedicated to biological science. Southeast Asian tropical forests - including India's biodiversityrich Western Ghats, Himalaya and the north-east - also fall in this category; India ranks 16th in such human impacts, with 35 species im-

pacted on average. A team of scientists led by James Allan (University of Queensland) found this when they mapped the distribution of eight human activities - including hunting and conversion of natural habitats for agriculture - in areas occupied by 5,457 threatened birds, mammals and amphibians worldwide.

Using sources, including the recently-updated Human Footprint data, they found that a staggering 1,237 species are impacted by



the Kudremukh National Park. ANII KUMAR SASTRY

threats in more than 90% of their habitat; 395 species are affected by threats across their entire range. While the impact of roads is highest (affecting 72% of terrestrial areas), crop lands affect the highest number of threatened species: 3,834.

Malaysia ranks among the countries with the highest number of impacted species (125). India ranks 16th (35 threatened species affected on average). Southeast Asian tropical forests - including those in India's Western Ghats, Himalayas and north-east - are among the 'hotspots' of

threatened species. For instance, the average number of species impacted in the South Western Ghats montane rainforests is 60 and in the Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests, 53. The maps show that roads and croplands are extensive in India and conversion of habitat for such activities could be a main threat, wrote Dr. Allan in an email.

Cool spots However, these areas are al-

so 'cool-spots' (the world's last refuges where high numbers of threatened species still persist). Cool-spots could be the result of protection or because of intact habitat, said Dr. Allan, adding that India still has crucial refuges that need protecting. Identifying such areas could aid conservation. However, these refugia do not necessarily have to be off-limits to human development, just free of the actions that directly threaten species there, add the scientists.

Yachtsman inflates trousers to survive 3 hours in sea

REUTERS

Knocked overboard in rough seas off New Zealand, a German yachtsman credited his jeans with saving his life after

fashioning them into a makeshift life jacket that kept him afloat for over three hours before his rescue coastguards.

Arne Murke, 30, was sail-

ing with his brother in Tolaga Bay, on March 6, when the yacht's boom swung unexpectedly, whacking him into the water. Unable to reach the life jacket thrown by his brother, Mr. Murke was soon carried far off by the swell. "Luckily, I knew the trick

with the jeans," Mr. Murke said. "Without the jeans I wouldn't be here today.'

He made knots at the end of the legs and pulled them over water to get air inside and then forced them under to trap the air and create an improvised life vest.