

NEARBY

Gunmen kill three civilians in Baramulla

SRINAGAR
 Unidentified militants shot dead three civilians in north Kashmir's Baramulla on Monday evening, the Jammu and Kashmir police said. In another incident in Pulwama, two Hizbul Mujahideen militants and a civilian were killed during search operations by security forces. Two Army personnel and 15 others were injured.

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Kanhaiya Kumar set to turn full-time politician

NEW DELHI
 Two years after he was arrested by the Delhi police on the charge of sedition, turning him overnight into a symbol of the JNU students' movement, former students union president Kanhaiya Kumar is finally moving out of university politics to being a full-time politician. On Sunday, on the concluding day of the 23rd Congress of the CPI in Kollam, he was elected to the 126-member National Council of the party.

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DELHI METRO ▶ 4 PAGES

AFSPA will continue in Nagaland: Rijiju

Says the peace deal in the State hasn't been finalised yet

VIJAJTA SINGH
NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju said the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), 1958, will continue in Nagaland as it is a "special case" and the "peace agreement" hasn't been finalised yet.

Nagaland is the only State in the northeast India, apart from eight police stations in Arunachal Pradesh, where the AFSPA continues to be imposed by the Union Home Ministry.

Nagaland, Manipur and Assam are the only three States in northeast India that continue to be under the AFSPA.

Last year, the Home Ministry gave up its powers and asked Assam to take a decision on continuing the AFSPA in the State.

Wide powers

The AFSPA gives powers to the Army and the Central forces deployed in "disturbed areas" to kill anyone acting in contravention of law, arrest and search any premises without a warrant and provide cover to forces from prosecution and legal suits without the Centre's sanction.

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Y. Patton said the government would reiterate its request to the Centre to revoke the AFSPA.

Discussion on

"The discussion on the Naga political situation is on

Drawdown

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act gives power to the Army and central forces deployed in 'disturbed areas' to kill anyone acting in contravention of law, arrest and search any premises without a warrant and provide cover to forces from prosecution and legal suits without the Centre's sanction

Active areas as of November 2016:

- Nagaland | ■ Assam
- Manipur (excluding 7 Assembly seats of Imphal)
- Parts of Arunachal Pradesh
- A 20 km wide belt on the Meghalaya border
- Entire State of Jammu & Kashmir, except the districts of Kargil and Leh (Ladakh)

Changes on April 1, 2018:

AFSPA revoked from the State of Meghalaya entirely. In Arunachal Pradesh, it was imposed only in 8 police stations, instead of the earlier 16.

Revocation of AFSPA in Meghalaya is definitely related to the improvement of security scenario in the northeast

KIREN RIJIJU, Minister of State for home

and we are expecting the Government of India to solve the problem at the earliest.

"We have requested to lift the AFSPA, but we have been asked to wait for some time. When the solution [the Naga deal] comes, the AFSPA will go automatically," he said.

Framework agreement

The NSCN-IM signed a framework agreement with the Centre on August 3, 2015 to find a solution to the Naga issue.

The NSCN-IM has been fighting for 'Greater Nagaland' or Nagalim – it wants to extend Nagaland's borders by including the Naga-dominated areas in neighbouring Assam, Manipur

and Arunachal Pradesh, to unite 1.2 million Nagas.

The Minister told *The Hindu*, "Revocation of AFSPA in Meghalaya is definitely related to improvement of the security scenario in the northeast. AFSPA is imposed both by the State and the Centre. It was withdrawn by Tripura (in 2015).

Joint effort

"It is a joint effort by the State government and the Centre. Security is a subject where both the Centre and the State should come together without any politics. In Assam also the situation has improved, that is why the Home Ministry withdrew it but it is imposed by the State government."

25 killed in twin Afghan blasts

Islamic State claims responsibility for the attacks that left 10 journalists dead

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

At least 25 people were killed, including AFP chief photographer for Afghanistan Shah Marai and nine other journalists, when two suicide blasts ripped through Kabul on Monday.

Kabul police spokesman Hashmat Stanikzai said the second explosion came minutes after the first and targeted reporters at the scene. "The bomber disguised himself as a journalist and detonated himself among the crowd," he said.

In a separate attack, 11 children were killed and 16 persons wounded, when a suicide attacker exploded his bomb-laden car near a convoy in Kandahar, officials said.

MOUNTING INSECURITY ▶ PAGE 12



Double trouble: Security personnel scampering for cover at the site of the second suicide bomb attack in Kabul on Monday, which came just minutes after the first one. • AP

Trinamool wins 30% seats uncontested

SUVIJIT BAGCHI
KOLKATA

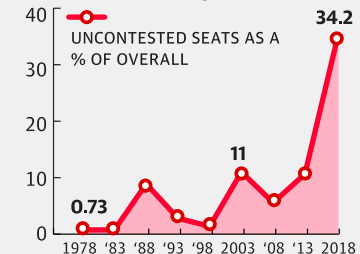
In one-third of the seats, the Opposition parties could not even put up a candidate in West Bengal's panchayat election – an all-time record since the first such exercise was held in the State in 1978.

In some districts like Birbhum, the Opposition failed to put up a candidate in nearly 90% of the seats, while over 50% of another four districts are also without Opposition candidates. The three-tier panchayat election is scheduled for May 14.

Data released by the State Election Commission indicate that at the lowest tier – the gram panchayat level – the Opposition failed to pro-

Whither grassroots democracy?

More than a third of the seats won't witness any contest in the forthcoming Panchayat polls in West Bengal. Over 34% of Trinamool Congress candidates will win by default, marking a new high



vide a candidate in 16,814 (34.56%) of the 48,650 seats. Altogether out of 58,792 seats, all three tiers put together, the Opposition could not put up candidates in 20,698 or 35.26% seats. In 2003, during the tenure of the sixth Left Front government, the Opposition could not put candidates in 11%

seats, which was a record till last night.

The maximum number of uncontested seats – at the gram panchayat level – are in seven of 20 districts. These are Murshidabad in the north and six other districts in south Bengal. The south Bengal districts are South 24 Paraganas, Hooghly, Banku-

ra, Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman and Birbhum.

In all of these districts, the percentage of uncontested gram panchayat seats is higher than the State average of 34.56. The highest percentage of uncontested seats, at the gram panchayat level, is in Birbhum, which is 87.53%, while in Murshidabad, Bankura, Purba and Paschim Bardhaman, it is 63-64%.

In the Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad, Trinamool Congress candidates have won in 33.18 and 24.60 seats respectively, without contest. However, the results will be declared following the counting on May 17, SEC sources said.

Juvenile among 4 held for stripping Bihar girl

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Four youth, including a juvenile, were arrested on Monday for the stripping and abuse of a minor girl in Jehanabad district of Bihar. A search is on for others in-

involved in the incident.

The youth allegedly shot a video of the incident on a mobile phone and posted it on social media, where it went viral. "As soon as the police got to know about the video going viral on the night

of Saturday [May 28], an FIR was filed by a police official. And within 24 hours, the four persons, whose involvement in the case has been established, were arrested... Some others are absconding but they will also be arrested

soon," said Inspector-General of Police (Patna Zone) Nayan Hasnain Khan.

Mr. Khan said, "Speedy trial will be initiated for the strictest punishment to the perpetrators." All the youth are said to be

in the age group of 14-18.

Accused Amar Kumar Yadav, Sunil Kumar Yadav, Dipak Kumar Yadav and the juvenile have allegedly confessed to the crime.

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AIIMS says he is fit, Lalu alleges conspiracy



Congress president Rahul Gandhi with RJD chief Lalu Prasad at the AIIMS in New Delhi on Monday. • PTI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

RJD chief Lalu Prasad left the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in a wheelchair on Monday afternoon after being discharged against his wishes.

The AIIMS said Mr. Prasad, who has been at the hospital since March, "has improved significantly", and that he is being referred back to the Ranchi Medical College for treatment of his chronic issues. "He is currently stable and is fit to travel," the hospital said.

Mr. Prasad, however, said he was not well enough to be sent back to Ranchi. "This is unfair; it is a conspiracy to worsen my health. I am being shifted to a place where there are no facilities.

It is a tough time, but I will face it. My health has not improved," he said, citing heart, kidney and blood sugar problems.

"My back hurts and I feel dizzy... I have fallen in the bathroom several times. My blood pressure and sugar keep shooting up," he said.

The RJD called the move a "conspiracy to murder him."

The former Bihar Chief Minister, who was jailed last year after being convicted in fodder scam cases, was shifted to the AIIMS from the Ranchi prison, for specialised treatment. On Monday morning, Congress president Rahul Gandhi visited him at the AIIMS. (With PTI inputs)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

PM's claim generates controversy

Timing of Modi's claim of listening to Rabindra Sangeet on radio draws criticism

STAFF REPORTER
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim in his monthly radio programme *Mann Ki Baat* that he used to listen to "Rabindra Sangeet" -- songs composed by Rabindranath Tagore -- at 5.30 a.m. has created a controversy in the bard's home State.

Former All India Radio (AIR) officials and Opposition party leaders have questioned the claim.

"Around 5.30 a.m., Rabindra Sangeet would play on radio and I had a habit of listening to Rabindra Sangeet waking up early in the morning. However, I didn't know the language (Bengali)," the

Prime Minister said in Sunday's *Mann Ki Baat*.

Former Assistant Director of AIR Kolkata Jagannath Basu said he was not aware of any radio station during that time (PM's childhood) that broadcasted Rabindra Sangeet at 5.30 a.m. He pointed out that AIR Kolkata broadcasts Rabindra Sangeet in a programme at 7.45 a.m.

'Casual remark'

"I am not aware whether any radio station broadcasts Rabindra Sangeet at that time (5.30 a.m). Everyone knows that Rabindra Sangeet is played on AIR Kolkata's programme at 7.45 a.m. It was very popular back then," Mr.

Basu told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Basu, however, added that perhaps the Prime Minister mentioned that time of 5.30 a.m. "casually" as it would be difficult for him to tell the specific time.

Scoffing at the Prime Minister's remarks, Trinamool Congress (TMC) general secretary and State Education Minister Partha Chatterjee said: "The Prime Minister's remarks show that he doesn't practice what he preaches. He should know when Rabindra Sangeet is played on radio. I really cannot understand what radio station he was talking about."

State Congress president

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was sceptical about the Prime Minister's comments. "I have never heard that Rabindra Sangeet was played on radio at 5.30 a.m. Hopefully, one can know through an RTI query," he told journalists.

'Left with no issues'

State BJP vice-president Sayantan Basu argued that the Opposition had no issues to speak about and hence were raising a hue and cry about the Prime Minister's remark. "How do they know when Rabindra Sangeet was played on radio at that time (during Prime Minister's childhood)," he asked.

DELHI ☀️ Timings

TUESDAY, MAY 01		
RISE	05:41	SET 18:56
MOON	20:13	SET 06:40
WEDNESDAY, MAY 02		
RISE	05:40	SET 18:57
MOON	21:08	SET 07:21
THURSDAY, MAY 03		
RISE	05:39	SET 18:57
MOON	22:01	SET 08:03

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	40	25
Safdarjang	40	25
Palam	41	25

Delhi Palam Today

40°C Light drizzle is expected with light winds. A partly cloudy sky to prevail with a warm morning. A hot day will prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

40°C Light rain is expected with very strong winds. A cloudy sky will persist with a warm morning. Day remains hot.

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Sexual exploitation allegation against school headmaster

Residential school is managed by Odisha SC/ST department

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Allegations of attempt to sexually exploit a Class VIII girl have been levelled against the headmaster of a residential school in Kandhamal district of Odisha.

According to Kandhamal District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Rashmita Karan, the father of the victim filed an FIR on Monday against the headmaster of the residential school managed by the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) Develop-

ment Department of the Odisha government. No one had been arrested till Monday evening.

Victim to be counselled

Ms. Karan said apart from the police investigation, a parallel inquiry would also be taken up by her department. The victim would also be properly counselled so that she does not stop her education because of the incident.

As per the complaint filed by the victim's father, she escaped a sexual harassment at-

tempt at the hands of the headmaster on April 22. Around 2.30 p.m. on that day, the headmaster had called the girl home and engaged her in some domestic work. Later he attempted to sexually exploit her, the father alleged.

But the girl escaped from his clutches and ran out of the house through the backdoor. She did not return to her hostel room but reached the Daringbadi bus stand. There she was located by a relative who took her to her village.

SIT to probe meat sourced from dumpyards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to examine the allegations of

processed meat being sourced from dumping grounds, a senior official said on Monday.

Last week, the government had seized 20 tonnes

of rotten meat, suspected to be of dead animals and sourced from dumping grounds, meant to be supplied to eateries and departmental stores in the State as

well as neighbouring Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.

So far, 10 people, including a leader of a political outfit, have been arrested in connection with the case.

Opposition charge on history book a lie, says Amarinder

Accuses them of playing politics on an issue involving religious sentiments

VIRAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

The ruling Congress in Punjab and the Opposition are at loggerheads over the issue of alleged removal of chapters related to the era of Sikh Gurus from the Class 12 history books of the Punjab School Education Board.



Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

While Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday dismissed the allegations of Opposition parties and accused them of playing politics on an issue involving religious sentiments, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) decided to convene a meeting of its core committee on May 3 to formulate an action plan for reinserting the removed chapters back in the books.

"Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal's baseless statements on the issue has

the potential to disturb peace and harmony in the State," said Capt. Amarinder, as he also condemned the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for joining the campaign against the government without bothering to verify the facts.

Countering the claims of the Opposition, the Chief Minister said: "It was during

the Akalis regime in 2014 when the decision to realign the courses with the NCERT syllabus was taken. Further, the SGPC was party to all the discussions on the issue since my government took over in March last year."

'SGPC invited'

The Chief Minister said that soon after taking over the State's reins, his government had written to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in March 2017 for discussion on the issue of the history course realignment, given the sensitive nature of the subject.

"In response, the SGPC had deputed Prof. Paramveer Singh of Panjabi University in Patiala, who attended all the meetings held to deliberate on the matter," said

Mr. Singh, adding that SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal was deliberately hiding the facts on the issue for the sake of promoting his vested political ambitions.

"Their (opposition) charges that the chapters on the Sikh Gurus were missing from the books were an obvious lie which they were trying to peddle as a truth with their false propaganda," he said.

'CM deceiving people'

Meanwhile, Akali Dal leader and former Education Minister Daljit Cheema said that instead of admitting the mistake, the Chief Minister was trying to deceive the Punjabis by stating that these chapters had been shifted to the education board's Class II history book.

U.P. Sugar Mills body alleges harassment by BJP MLAs

Asks Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to take action

STAFF REPORTER
MEERUT

The Uttar Pradesh Sugar Mills Association has alleged that legislators from the ruling party were issuing threats and harassing its local units. In a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Association's secretary general Deepak Gupta alleged that some BJP MLAs and workers had indulged in 'unreasonable behaviour, unlawful demands and physical harm and threats against its workers'.

In the letter, a copy of which is with *The Hindu*, Mr. Gupta said: "We regret to bring to your kind notice that there are repeated incidents of threats, manhandling and other cases of ha-

arrassment against our members sugar factories. What is of grave concern is that almost all these cases involve elected representatives of the ruling party. This offensive behaviour against bona fide employees of sugar factories have left them demoralised and insecure and in many cases the employees are threatening to quit and leave."

Mr. Gupta alleged that ruling party MLAs have been found involved in cases of threats and harassment in factories at Seohara (Bijnore), Babhanan (Gonda), Dhampur (Bijnore), Bundki (Bijnore) and Nigohi (Shahjehanpur).

He highlighted that the sugar mills were the biggest

organised industrial activity in the State, which faces deep crisis due to lowering of prices. But still the sugar mills were honouring their word on timely payment of the fixed support price for cane so that the farmers do not face any hardship.

'Deep unrest'

"The incidents of threats and harassment have the potential to cause deep unrest," he added.

Mr. Gupta requested the Chief Minister to send a "stern message to anti-social elements not to disturb industrial harmony in the State by exerting undue pressure on the sugarmill workers for meeting their unlawful demands."

'Violence over cow won't be tolerated'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Animal Husbandry Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Monday said violence in the name of cow protection would not be tolerated in the State.

"If anyone takes the law in his hands, he would face stern action according to the law," said Mr. Sidhu, during a meeting with officials of Animal Husbandry and Labour Department.

He said that if anyone found guilty of harming the interest of farmers in the name of cow protection, then such elements would be brought to book.

Mr. Sidhu, who reviewed various schemes and projects of his departments, instructed officials to complete the ongoing projects on time.

V-Day is now Mother-Father Puja Day

From 2019, State schools in Rajasthan will observe Feb 14 as 'Matr-Pitr Pujan Diwas'

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

All over the world, Valentine's Day may be synonymous with a celebration of romantic love. But not in Rajasthan, and certainly not from next year. The State's Education Department has issued an order declaring that from 2019, all the government schools will observe February 14 every year as Matr-Pitr Pujan Diwas (Mother-Father Puja Day).

The stated objective of the order is to counter the growing influence of Western culture among teenagers. The event finds mention in the Education Department's yearly calendar, 'Shivira Panchang'.

The order, which was issued last week, stated that on this special day, parents would be invited to the schools where their wards would honour them. They would also get an opportunity to spend some time on the

school campus and interact with the teachers.

Education Minister Vasudeo Devnani had recently said in the State Assembly that the decision would promote Indian culture and inculcate a sense of love among students for their parents. "Students should learn to love and respect their parents first before anyone else," he had said in the Assembly's Budget session.

Mr. Devnani, who pointed out that a similar event to felicitate parents was already being held annually in Chhattisgarh, had earlier courted controversy by his decisions to 'revise' the contents of school textbooks. It was reported that these 'revisions' included the removal of India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's name from the textbook for classes six to eight, and the

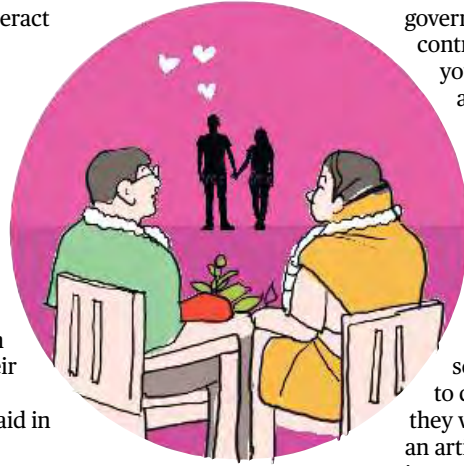


ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

insertion of a chapter on the Emergency.

Educationists have expressed outrage over the State government's move. "This clearly amounts to a forcible imposition of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's agenda on the pretext of promoting Indian culture," said Rajiv Gupta, retired professor of Sociology from Rajasthan University. He said the

government wanted to control the mindset of youngsters by enforcing a value system opposed to democratic culture and freedom of choice.

M.I. Siddiqui of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind's State unit said that the teenagers studying in schools should be free to celebrate the day as they wish. "The creation of an artificial festival and its imposition in State-run educational institutions violates all norms of democratic governance," he said.

In the recent past, Valentine's Day has witnessed violence and vandalism in several towns of Rajasthan. On February 14 this year, a 38-old man threw acid on a woman inside a mall in Jaipur's Jhotwara area. The 27-year-old victim received severe burn injuries.

Train coaches detach after coupling break

Nobody hurt as it was at slow speed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BILASPUR

The coupling mechanism of two coaches of a Mumbai-Howrah train broke at Saragaon station in Chhattisgarh's Jangjir-Champa district on Monday, causing panic among hundreds of passengers of the train and those crowding the platforms, officials said.

They added that no passenger was injured and the impact of the coupling giv-

ing way was minimised because the train was at a slow speed and the loco pilot had applied emergency brakes immediately.

"The incident of uncoupling of two coaches of the 12869 Mumbai-Howrah weekly superfast special occurred at 10 a.m. today. There is no injury reported to anyone and the train left for its destination after a delay of one hour," a Railway official said.

IN BRIEF

**'Will name district after NTR if voted to power'**

NIMMAKURU
Leader of the Opposition in the A.P. Assembly and YSR Congress president Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday sought to upstage the Telugu Desam Party by announcing that he would change the name of Krishna district to Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR) district if he was voted to power. He was interacting with relatives of the TDP founder and former Chief Minister at Nimmakuru village in the Pamaru Assembly constituency.

Naidu launches 'Dharma Poratam' against Centre

TIRUPATI
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu on Monday said that the 'Dharma Poratam' (fight for justice) against the Central government's 'betrayal and conspiratorial politics' would not end till the State secured the Special Category Status. He was launching the 'Dharma Poratam' at the SV University stadium's Tarakarama sports pavilion here.

Venkaiah opens 101st birthday fete of bishop

PATHANAMTHITTA
Vice-President M.Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 101st birthday celebrations of Metropolitan Emeritus Philipose Mar Chrysostom at Thiruvalla on Monday. Lauding the services of Mar Chrysostom, Mr. Naidu quoted a prayer in the Atharva Veda, "Let us live for a hundred years and beyond, with good health, intelligence and ever-widening thoughts". "Mar Chrysostom, possibly one of the longest living bishops in the world and a devout idealist, believes that the way to the creator is through the creations of God," Mr. Naidu said.



On the campaign trail: G.T. Deve Gowda, JD(S) candidate from Chamundeshwari constituency in Mysuru, at an election rally; and, right, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his party colleague Mallikarjun Kharge during a Congress campaign at Afzalpur in Kalaburagi district on Monday. ■ M.A.SRIRAM & ARUN KULKARNI



Pre-poll seizures touch ₹115 crore

Crackdown yields ₹41 cr. in cash in raids across Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The cumulative value of cash, liquor and other items seized by the enforcement agencies in the run-up to the Karnataka polls stands at over ₹115 crore.

After the Model Code of Conduct came into effect on March 27, the agencies have seized ₹41.48 crore in cash as part of the crackdown on the abuse of money power by political parties, which is more than eight times the amount seized in the 2013 State election.

False affidavit

Of the total cash, the Income Tax Department's investigation wing has seized ₹19.69 crore and jewellery worth ₹4.81 crore. In 2013, the total seizure made during the entire campaign period was only ₹4.97 crore in cash and jewellery worth ₹3.41 crore.

The Department also conducted searches against an

election candidate, based on verification of the affidavit filed by him. The candidate had not filed income tax returns since 2012-13. In his election affidavit, he declared that online filing of his returns had been blocked and, therefore, he had only paid self-assessment tax.

"There is no such thing called blocking the filing of returns. There are substantial discrepancies between the income declared by the candidate's wife to the Income Tax Department, the amount shown in the affidavit and the one actually detected during the search," said an official.

The candidate later accepted that five properties of his family members had not been declared in the affidavit. He also declared an income of about ₹18 crore for himself and his family members.

"Issues like valuation of

properties, which he claims to be worth ₹191 crore, are under investigation," the official said.

Based on intelligence inputs, I-T sleuths also carried out searches against several government contractors from April 24 to 26, which led to the seizure of unaccounted cash of ₹6.76 crore from four contractors in Mysuru. The entire amount was in higher denominations of ₹2,000 and ₹500. The cash was not reflected in the books of accounts maintained by the contractors and they could not explain its source, said the Commission.

On a tip-off, the I-T Department conducted searches against three persons in Bengaluru, Davangere and Mysuru from April 26 to 28 and seized over ₹4 crore in cash and gold jewellery worth ₹2.79 crore. Liquor worth about ₹22 crore was also seized.

Youth stopped from taking out rally

BENGALURU
Members of Karnataka for Employment, who were planning an overnight march from Mysuru to Santhamarahalli, were detained when they set out. They had planned the march as part of the Statewide 'Vote for Jobs' campaign, aimed at calling attention to Mr. Modi's promise of creating one crore jobs. "The NDA government has passed an amendment to the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946. This amendment by the Modi regime has erased all possibilities of job security in future," said campaign coordinator Rajashekhar Akki.

Will disown son if he goes with BJP: Gowda

BENGALURU
Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Deve Gowda on Monday reiterated that there was no question of going with the BJP in case of a fractured mandate and that he and his family would disown his son H.D. Kumaraswamy if he chose to do so. Mr. Gowda speaking to an English news channel on Sunday had said that, "if it happens (Kumaraswamy joining hands with BJP in case of hung Assembly), me and my wife and family will totally boycott him."

Modi set to begin Karnataka tour

PM's popularity will be put to test

B.S. SATISH KUMAR
BENGALURU

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had stayed away from Karnataka after his last rally in Davangere on February 27, is back in the State from Tuesday for extensive tours in the last and crucial phase of campaigning for the Assembly election.

His visit gains significance with the election expected to be a cliffhanger and various pre-poll surveys predicting a fractured mandate.

Since February-end, several Central leaders of the BJP have been visiting the State. It was during this period that All India Congress Committee president Rahul Gandhi held roadshows and rallies in different regions of the State.

15 rallies, meetings

Now, Mr. Modi will visit the State for five days between May 1 and 8, during which he will address 15 rallies and public meetings.

This visit, political obser-



Narendra Modi

vers said, could also test his popularity ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Curiously, Mr. Modi is not visiting the high-profile constituencies of Chamundeshwari and Badami, from where Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is contesting.

The BJP's focus on Bengaluru, which has 28 Assembly constituencies, is evident, with Mr. Modi scheduled to attend two rallies in the city. While the first rally covering 14 Assembly segments will be held on May 3, the second one covering the remaining 14 seats has been scheduled for May 8.

Telangana seeks hike in Muslim, ST quota

M. RAJEEV
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has made a strong pitch for the Central government's nod to its Bill providing enhanced reservation to Muslims and Scheduled Tribes in admissions to educational institutions and government services.

The State had sent a representation to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, including responses to clarifications sought by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT). In the clarification sought by the DoPT on the 50% cap on reservations, the Telangana government quoted a Supreme Court judgment that said reservation under Clause (4) of Article 16 might exceed 50% of the appointments or posts by showing the existence of exceptional circumstances for exceeding the limit.

"It might happen that in far-flung and remote areas, the people inhabiting those areas might, on account of their being out of mainstream national life, need to be treated in a different way, and some relaxation in this strict rule might become imperative," the incumbent Telangana Rashtra Samithi-led government quoted the Supreme Court as saying in defence of its decision to hike the quota for STs.

On the observation that a nine-judge Bench of the Supreme Court spoke about "adequate reservation" and not "proportionate representation", the government said it was a policy decision to provide proportionate reservation to achieve social justice according to the directive principles of the Constitution.

IN BRIEF



Rajasthan Governor, CM hail labourers' hard work

JAIPUR
Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh and Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje greeted people on Monday, on the eve of Labour Day. Mr. Singh said labourers work for the nation's development and urged them to take the State forward through their hard work and dedication. Ms. Raje said the State's development is dependent on hard-working labourers. PTI

Three hurt in clash over land dispute in U.P. village

MUZAFFARNAGAR
Three persons in Goshar village of U.P.'s Shamli district were injured in firing over a land dispute. The incident happened on Sunday when a clash broke out between two groups following an argument. Lathi and firearms were used during the scuffle, in which Nitin, Amit Kumar and Shyam Lal sustained injuries, the police said. PTI

Child raped in Odisha village, accused held

KENDRAPARA
A 4-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 45-year-old man in Barunadiha village in Kendrapara district, the police said. The matter came to light on Sunday when the father of the girl lodged a complaint against one Ranjan Nayak of the same village. The accused was arrested the same evening. PTI

Woman raped by two youth in her house

MUZAFFARNAGAR
A 20-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by two youth at her residence in front of her minor brother in neighbouring Shamli district. The accused, identified as Umer Khan and Amanullah, barged into the house when the woman's parents were not present. The accused are absconding. PTI

Army rewinds to 1962 on reel

Special screening of *Subedar Joginder Singh*, a film on the India-China war hero, organised in Tezpur

RAHUL KARMAKAR
TEZPUR

A film on a martyr – the only soldier posted in the north-eastern sector to have been decorated with the Param Vir Chakra, the highest military honour – has made the Army rewind the clock to 1962 to inspire soldiers on the China frontier amid reports of infrastructure build-up in Tibet.

On Sunday, the Army organised a special screening of *Subedar Joginder Singh*, a "motivational movie", in Tezpur to take new-generation soldiers to the past. The screening follows Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping to take India-China ties forward.

The Hindi-Punjabi movie is based on the life, struggle and valour of Subedar Singh, who died in captivity of the Chinese Army on October 23, 1962, after he was grievously injured at Bumla in Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district. He was 41.

Much of Arunachal Pradesh falls under the command of the 4 Corps, headquartered in Tezpur, about 180 km north-east of Guwahati. "We arranged the screening of this film in Tezpur because Subedar Singh attained martyrdom in our area. The film was shown to



Overwhelmed: Subedar Joginder Singh's daughter Kulwant Kaur and her husband Surjeet Singh at the screening of the film in Tezpur. • RAHUL KARMAKAR

inspire our young soldiers to be as courageous as him while facing the enemy," Lieutenant-General Gurbal Singh Sangha, the 4 Corps Commander, told *The Hindu*.

Bumla is 385 km north of Tezpur. The Chinese aggression of 1962 has a special significance for 4 Corps, also known as Gajraj Corps; it was raised that year. The film was screened at Lance Naik Albert Ekka Auditorium, named after another soldier awarded the Param Vir Chakra for gallantry in the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

Invitation to daughter

The Army especially invited four Junior Commissioned Officers from 1 Sikh, the regiment Subedar Singh be-

longed to, from the northern sector as well as representatives from the unit presently posted in Bumla. Gallantry award winners of Gajraj Corps were also present.

But the cynosure of all eyes were Subedar Singh's daughter Kulwant Kaur and her husband Surjeet Singh, an inspector in the Punjab Police. The Army brought the couple to Tezpur from Mahla Kalan in Punjab.

"I was eight-month-old when my father died. It feels good that people have given a thought to a martyr like him after so many years, to rekindle patriotism among people and soldiers. I wish my siblings were here too," Ms. Kaur (56) said.

She is the youngest of Subedar Singh's three children.

His eldest daughter Sarjeet Kaur was so attached to him that she died after the family received the news of his death at the frontier. She was 11. The martyr's son Amarjeet died in an accident 35 years ago, while his wife Gurdial Kaur died in 2009.

Subedar Singh was the commander of a platoon of about 30 soldiers at Bumla when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops launched the attack in 1962.

At Bumla – now one of two locations in Arunachal Pradesh for border personnel meetings (BPMs) between Indian and Chinese armies – visitors ritually place pebbles on the Heap of Stones marking the boundary.

To the right of the Heap of Stones as one faces Tibet is the old Maitri Sthal (Friendship Centre), where BPMs were held till the new one was built on the opposite side a few years ago. The centre is located on the spot held by a section of 5 Assam Rifles personnel.

Subedar Singh's platoon charged the attackers as they ran over the Assam Rifles' section. His platoon thwarted several waves of Chinese soldiers before running out of ammunition. Severely wounded, he was taken captive but refused treatment by

Chinese soldiers.

His body was handed over to the Army, which later built a memorial for him about 500 metres from the Heap of Stones.

But Subedar Singh's feat was somewhat overshadowed by that of Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat of 4 Garhwal Rifles, who fought off 200 Chinese soldiers at Nuranang, deeper inside India from Bumla.

Temple for soldier

Rifleman Rawat was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, the second highest military honour, but was immortalised as a saint. Soldiers to and from Tawang routinely pay obeisance at a temple built in his honour near the spot where he died. The place, named Jaswantgarh, is 55 km from Tawang on the road to Tezpur.

Subedar Singh might not have attained sainthood but he is believed to be the motivation the Army has rediscovered through the film, directed by Simerjit Singh and produced by Sumeet Singh.

Army officers said the film is scheduled to be screened for soldiers in units across the domain under Gajraj Corps. These include units close to the McMahon Line demarcating the border between India and China.

Phone battery explodes, 4 kids hurt

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Four children were injured when a mobile phone battery exploded at Lunguri village in Ganjam district of Odisha on Monday.

According to police sources, the children were playing with a discarded mobile phone battery when the blast occurred. The injured children were between 10 and 12 years. Luckily none of

them received lethal injury in the blast, the sources said.

One of the children had found a discarded phone battery and they were trying to connect it to an LED bulb when it exploded.

Another incident

In a similar incident, a 13-year-old student of Class VIII was injured on Monday at Kalimatu village of Nupada district when the battery of a

mobile phone exploded. The incident happened when the boy was charging the phone. His right eye was completely damaged.

On March 17, a girl named Uma Oram (18) of Kheriakani village of Jharsuguda district died when the battery of her cell phone exploded while she was talking. The mobile phone was connected to the charger at the time of the incident.

Indefinite petrol pump strike begins in Nagaland

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOHIAMA

Petroleum transporters and retailers in Nagaland began an indefinite State-wide strike on Monday demanding rescue of a tanker driver and his handyman suspected to have been abducted eight days ago.

The State government al-

so appealed to the abductors to release the two persons. Four organisations have closed down petrol pumps across the State from Sunday midnight. The four bodies had served a 48-hour deadline to the State on April 27 for the rescue of driver Tularam Buragohain and his helper Adman Surin.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rain is likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, gangetic West Bengal and Odisha. Thunderstorm accompanied with squall/hail/gusty winds is likely at isolated places over West Bengal, Sikkim, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, west Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	11.6	23.0	20.1	Kozhikode	...	36.2	27.4
Ahmedabad	...	43.0	26.3	Kurnool	...	43.3	29.6
Aizawl	9	29.0	9.5	Lucknow	1.6	34.5	22.2
Allahabad	...	39.9	24.0	Madurai	...	39.7	26.3
Bengaluru	0.3	35.2	23.2	Mangaluru	...	35.7	25.8
Bhopal	...	42.3	28.0	Mumbai	...	33.1	27.4
Bhubaneswar	0.2	36.8	25.6	Mysuru	...	34.9	20.6
Chandigarh	...	40.0	24.4	New Delhi	1.1	40.0	25.0
Chennai	...	36.9	27.6	Patna	11.9	30.6	17.2
Coimbatore	...	36.6	25.2	Port Blair	0.6	33.6	25.6
Dehradun	...	35.2	21.1	Puducherry	...	38.4	26.6
Gangtok	57	15.0	12.1	Pune	...	38.1	22.1
Goa	...	34.3	27.0	Raipur	...	42.0	31.0
Guwahati	2.4	24.3	21.6	Ranchi	0.2	33.4	20.7
Hubballi	...	38.3	21.0	Shillong	3.7	17.5	12.6
Hyderabad	...	42.0	27.4	Shimla	...	26.3	14.5
Imphal	1	25.2	14.6	Srinagar	...	28.6	9.1
Jaipur	...	44.2	28.1	Trivandrum	...	35.2	26.8
Kochi	...	32.8	26.8	Tiruchi	...	41.1	27.4
Kohima	6.6	25.9	12.2	Vijayawada	...	39.7	27.6
Kolkata	...	32.1	27.8	Visakhapatnam	...	34.0	28.4

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	Yesterday
Ahmedabad	52	51	29	101	...	...	In observation made at
Bengaluru	7	38	37	140	...	...	4.00 p.m., Jodhpur,
Bangaluru	7	38	45	73	...	...	Rajasthan recorded an
Chennai	30	61	23	248	317	...	overall air quality index
Delhi	5	32	17	88	125	...	(AQI) score of 281
Hyderabad	...	...	...	...	...	...	indicating an unhealthy
Kolkata	...	...	...	...	...	...	level of pollution. In
Lucknow	8	85	28	185	...	...	contrast,
Mumbai	...	...	...	...	...	...	Rajamahendravaram,
Pune	61	44	24	75	79	...	Andhra Pradesh recorded a
Visakhapatnam	17	28	19	24	64	...	healthy AQI score of 52

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

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

(Individual pollutant data for various cities are averages for the previous day)

IN BRIEF



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to be held in Varanasi

WASHINGTON
The next Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in Varanasi in January with the Indian diaspora having an option to participate in 'Kumbh Snan' and attend the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, an Indian embassy official has said. The event would be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritius counterpart Pravin Jugnauth. PTI

13 killed, 25 injured after nor'wester strikes Bengal

KOLKATA
At least 13 people were killed and over 25 injured after lightning struck them during a nor'wester that hit different parts of West Bengal on Sunday night, an official of the State Disaster Management Department said on Monday. PTI

Girl, 3, dies after falling in pot of hot sugar syrup

NASHIK
A three-year-old girl died after falling into a cauldron of hot sugar syrup in Nashik district of Maharashtra, the police said on Monday. The girl's family members, who are into the catering business, had boiled the sugar syrup in a big aluminium pot to prepare gulab jamuns for an order at their residence in the Panchavati area here on Sunday. PTI

Pakistan returns man who crossed border by accident

LAHORE
An Indian national, who inadvertently crossed into Pakistani territory over a year ago, has been handed over to the Indian authorities at the Wagah border. Dalwinder Singh, 23, was handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) on Sunday after the Punjab Rangers completed the due legal process. PTI

Pregnant woman denied admission by hospital

MUZAFFARNAGAR
A woman delivered her baby in a night shelter, with her family alleging that she was denied admission to a district women's hospital here in Uttar Pradesh, a charge refuted by the medical facility's superintendent. The hospital has ordered an inquiry into the incident. PTI

Power Ministry feels no need to change electrification definition

Village is declared electrified if 10% of its households have connection

TCA SHARAD RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI

The government is not considering modifying the current, much-criticised definition of an electrified village, which counts a village as electrified if at least 10% of its households have an electricity connection, according to a senior official in the Ministry of Power.

According to the definition, in place since October 1997, a village is deemed to be electrified if basic infrastructure such as a distribution transformer and distribution lines are in place in the inhabited locality, electricity is provided to public places like schools, panchayat office, health centres, dispensaries, community centres, and at least 10% of the households in the village are electrified.

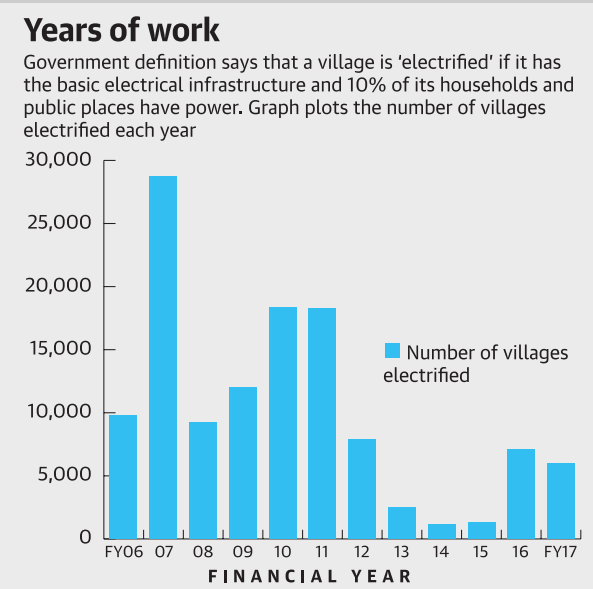
Target of 100%

"Obviously this does not complete the objective of electrification, we know it," Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Power Arun Kumar Verma told *The Hindu*. "As of today in India, the rural household electrification is about 83%. From State to State, it ranges from 47% to 100%, but on average about 83% of households are electrified. So, to say that electrification means only 10% households, that's no longer an issue."

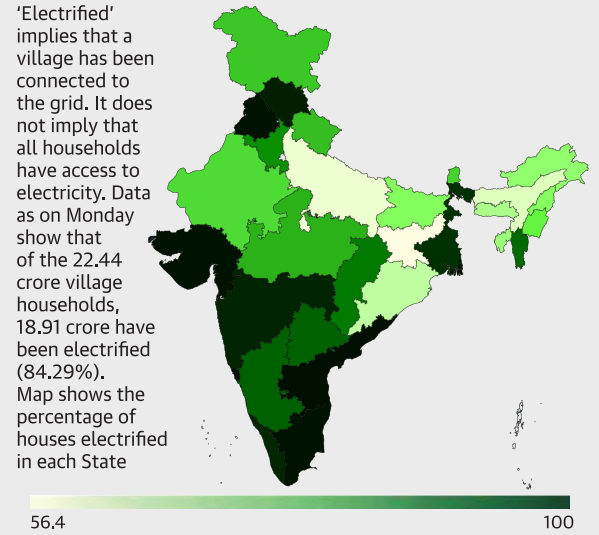
"To come out of this di-

More power to the people

Government data show that as on April 28, 2018, all of India's 5,97,464 census villages have been electrified. When the BJP government took office in 2014, 18,452 of them were without electricity. The graphs below capture the historical data as well as the proportion of households yet to be connected



Still off the grid



chotomy or contradiction, the government of India has already decided to go for full household electrification," Mr. Verma added. "Once you target 100% of households, what is the issue of this 10%?"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on Sunday tweeted that the country had achieved 100% electrification of villages on April 28, leading to criticism from various quarters about the deficiencies in the definition of electrification.

"28th April 2018 will be remembered as a historic day in the development journey of India. Yesterday, we fulfilled a commitment due to

hold level. The target for the scheme is March 31, 2019.

According to data from the Ministry of Power and the Central Electricity Authority, so far 84.3% of households have been electrified. The Saubhagya scheme defines the electrification of a household as including a service line cable, energy meter, and single point wiring.

For unelectrified households in remote areas, electrification will involve the provision of power packs of 200 to 300 W (with battery bank) with a maximum of 5 LED lights, 1 DC Fan, and 1 DC power plug.

According to Mr. Verma, 15% of the villages so far elec-

trified have been done so using off-grid solutions such as solar, while the remaining 85% are connected to the grid.

However, an in-depth analysis by *The Hindu* in March 2016 had found severe gaps between the on-ground reality and the numbers projected by the government.

Of the many deficiencies found, the analysis revealed that while several villages were deemed to be electrified in the official data, the on-ground engineers had registered complaints that key components such as transmission wires had been stolen, leaving the village unelectrified.

Modi's claim is just another 'lie', says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that all inhabited Indian villages were electrified after the last village in Manipur was networked with the grid on Sunday, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi described the claim as "one more lie".

Contesting the claims on Twitter, Mr. Gandhi tagged a

news report that said despite the Prime Minister's claim, many villages were still without electricity.

Counter claim

The Congress also challenged the Modi government's claim of fast tracking rural electrification compared with the UPA.

At a briefing of the Congress party, party spokesper-

son Pawan Khera claimed that between 2005 and 2014, more than 1,08,000 villages were electrified and only 18,452 villages remained to be electrified. While the number of villages electrified every year under the UPA regime worked out to 12,030, the Congress claimed the NDA track record is under 5,000 villages every year.

"If you look from 1947 when only 1500 out of six lakh villages were electrified to how far we have come...during the UPA's 2005-2014 period, over one lakh villages have been electrified. Just look at our average and the average of the Modi government in the past four years," said Mr. Khera.

In an explanatory note on their website, the Congress

said the definition of an electrified village requires only 10% of the households to have connections and power supply to common properties like schools, dispensary, among others. It said nearly three crore households were without electricity and in BJP-ruled States of Assam, U.P. and Jharkhand, less than 60% of the households had electricity.

Saradha case: ED summons Nalini Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate plans to record the witness statement of Nalini Chidambaram, wife of former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, in connection with the Saradha scam case.

The ED is learnt to have

asked Ms. Chidambaram to appear before the probe team on May 7.

Saradha scam 'mastermind' Sudipta Sen had, in his letter to the Central Bureau of Investigation in April 2013, mentioned her name as the lawyer of former Union Minister Matang Singh's

estranged wife Manoranjana. The main accused claimed that Ms. Chidambaram had prepared an agreement for Ms. Singh and for the legal consultancy services she had received over ₹1 crore in 18 months.

Last week, the Madras High Court had dismissed a

petition by Ms. Chidambaram that challenged the ED's summons. In September 2014, the CBI had sought clarifications from Ms. Chidambaram in the case. She had then told the media that the CBI officials wanted to know if Ms. Singh consulted her professionally.

Maoists issue warning to firms laying roads

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Maoists in Malkangiri district of Odisha erected posters and banners threatening construction firms involved in road laying in re-

mote pockets to stop the work immediately. Similarly they threatened tendu leaf procurers with dire consequences if they did not pay up adequate payment to tendu leaf pluckers.

SC eases procedure for case record transfer

Trial courts need to give only copies

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Trial courts need to give only photocopies of case records to higher courts. The transfer, to and fro, of original records impedes speedy trial, the Supreme Court ordered.

Accused persons usually move the High Courts in the middle of criminal proceedings in trial courts on various issues, ranging from quashing of charges to transfer of cases to appeal against interim orders, etc.

On all this, the High Courts are compelled to ask for the original records of the case concerned.

Comes to a halt

The original records are transferred from the trial court to the High Court, where the latter decides the question at hand. Meanwhile, the trial comes to a halt in the lower court till the outcome in the High Court is known. The original records are stuck in the High Court for months.

The recent order passed



The transfer of original records, impedes speedy trial, the court said.

by Justices A.K. Goel and R.F. Nariman changes all that. "We direct that if in future the trial court record is summoned, the trial courts may send photocopy/scanned copy of the record and retain the original so that the proceedings are not held up," the Supreme Court Bench directed. It directed a copy of its order be sent to all High Courts.

The order said that in specific cases where original records are required and a photocopy would not serve the purpose, the appellate/revisional court may call for the record only for perusal.

The order came on a plea filed by Asian Resurfacing of Road Agency P. Ltd. and another against the CBI.

After refund row, Minister promises 'Passenger Charter'

Social media storm as traveller gets ₹32 refund

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

Responding to a series of tweets from popular radio journalist Neesh Mishra on being refunded just ₹32 when he cancelled a ₹6,010 single trip air ticket, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha on Monday said the government would soon formulate a Passenger Charter.

"Here is the latest airline scam. Cancel a 6,000-rupee ticket and get 32 rupees as refund. I didn't cancel it. You can keep the change... Anyone can do what they want, consumers be damned," Mr. Mishra said, tagging the Minister in his tweet about the incident. The popular radio story teller and podcaster had cancelled his ticket around 8.15 a.m., a few hours before his 10.45 a.m. flight from Lucknow to Delhi on April 29.

As the issue snowballed on social media, Mr. Mishra



The passenger had cancelled a Lucknow - Delhi ticket.

and other travellers flagged the opaque processes faced by passengers, and the blame game between the airline and the travel portal on which he had booked the ticket. "Mystery deepens. Conflicting calls from @makemytrip + @IndiGo6E IndiGo says they charge ₹3,000 cancellation fee. MMT says IndiGo kept ₹5,800 in cancelled ₹6,000 ticket. Who's taking thousands of consumers' cancellation money?" Mr. Mishra tweeted.

Draft for consultation

Responding to the incident, Mr. Sinha said refund rules and booking charges, etc. would soon be provided in 'black and white'.

"We are going to address these matters through the Passenger Charter. A draft

will soon be released for public consultation. Airlines and travel agents have to provide full details on cancellation and other charges before you book any flight. If you have been charged without full disclosure, then you can file you complaint on AirSewa with necessary evidence."

Responding to queries from *The Hindu*, an Indigo spokesperson said the airline was not in the picture as the ticket had been booked and later cancelled on the travel portal itself. "As the passenger had entered the no-show period of booking, there was no scope for a refund," an airline official said.

On Monday evening a customer care executive from MakeMytrip wrote to Mr. Mishra saying, "When you attempted the cancellation at 8.13 a.m., the ticket was already in the no-show window. This information is clearly mentioned in our e-ticket. The charges shown to you was what we received from the airlines considering booking was under no-show."

A.P. boy tops JEE for engineering admissions

2.3 lakh qualify for JEE Advanced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Bhogi Suraj Krishna from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, has topped the Joint Entrance Examination-Mains for admission to engineering colleges across the country.

The results of the exam were announced by the Central Board of Secondary Education on Monday.

A total of 10.74 lakh candidates appeared for the exam, with 2.3 lakh qualifying for the JEE-Advanced which is an entrance test for admission to IITs and Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad.

The second rank was bagged by Hemant Kumar Chodipilli, also from Andhra Pradesh, while the third rank was secured by Rajasthan's Parth Laturia.

A total of 1,80, 331 boys cleared the exam, with 50,693 girls qualifying for the next stage.

"The JEE question papers are prepared in original by over 100 item writers. These item writers are subject experts. They prepare over 1,500 items over a period of two months during the year of the exam.

"All these questions are prepared by the item writers in original and they are handwritten. After that, 90 questions are drawn randomly and 8-9 sets are created. Any one set is randomly picked for use in JEE," a senior board official said.

The exam was conducted at 1,621 centres (1,613 in India and 8 abroad).

Farmers' groups call for 10-day village shutdown

Won't supply vegetables, milk to cities



Hitting hard Former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha addressing a press conference in Delhi on Monday. ■ V. SUDERSHAN

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh, an umbrella body of 110 farmers' organisations, has declared a 10-day 'gaon bandh', or village shutdown, from June 1, to draw attention to the ongoing agrarian crisis. Farm produce, especially perishables such as vegetables and milk, will not be supplied to cities during this period, the leaders of the shutdown said.

Meanwhile, former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha joined the Mahasangh on Friday. Criticising the Centre at a press conference held here, Mr Sinha said, "I

can say that the Modi government has done nothing for them [farmers], not even fulfilled the promises written in the BJP manifesto. Whatever he [Modi] is promising is all a farce."

Different groups are still in the process of negotiating the details of the strike and a common minimum platform, and plan to hold a strategy meeting in Chandigarh on May 2.

Among the demands are a complete loan waiver and a higher minimum support price, at least 50% higher than the total cost of production.

(With PTI inputs)



Korean thaw

The stage is set for a truly historic meeting between Kim Jong-un and Donald Trump

The summit between the leaders of the two Koreas is perhaps the most significant step in decades towards securing peace on the peninsula. Kim Jong-un on Friday became the first North Korean leader since the 1953 armistice to step on South Korean soil. Not many had foreseen such a rapid turnaround in ties between the two Koreas, given the acrimony and war rhetoric of the recent past. Mr. Kim had stepped up his country's nuclear weapons programme since assuming power in 2011. Last year, U.S. President Donald Trump and he even exchanged nuclear threats. But it has become evident that Mr. Kim's primary goal may not be to maintain the North's nuclear capability or to live in a perpetually hostile environment. He has signalled that he is willing to barter the North's nuclear capability for economic and security assurances. At their summit, Mr. Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, whose persistence in breaking the ice was vital to the historic meeting, spared no words in expressing their desire for peace in a "nuclear-free" peninsula. They declared that there would be no more war on the peninsula. There are plans to transform the existing armistice into a peace treaty with the help of the U.S. and China, to formally end the Korean war by year-end.

The significance of the summit notwithstanding, peace is not a given. In the past, two South Korean Presidents had travelled to the North to meet its leader. The 2007 joint declaration after an inter-Korean summit had expressed almost similar goals as in the latest declaration, including on the nuclear issue. Yet relations deteriorated, with the international peace process failing to make any progress and the North going back to its nuclear weapons programme. What is different this time is that the inter-Korean summit is to be followed by a meeting between Mr. Kim and Mr. Trump. Mr. Kim first conveyed the promise of denuclearisation through visiting South Korean officials. And then he travelled to China to discuss the proposal with President Xi Jinping before meeting Mr. Moon. He announced a freeze on further nuclear tests and said North Korea's main test site would be shut down, all aimed to show his seriousness of purpose. Mr. Trump has welcomed the Panmunjom summit and said that he expects to meet Mr. Kim within four weeks. Despite his promises, Mr. Kim is unlikely to give up his nuclear weapons unless he gets credible guarantees from the U.S., China and other countries. He is likely to also press the U.S. to withdraw its nuclear umbrella from the South. But it is quite extraordinary to think that Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim may actually now get down to discussing, face-to-face, steps towards denuclearising the Korean peninsula.

Headline-grabber

Biplab Deb is completely out of his depth in ruling Tripura

Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb is a gift to headline writers. It is not even two months since he took over from Manik Sarkar, the CPI(M) veteran who was Chief Minister for 20 years. Yet, Mr. Deb has held the spotlight on himself for one gaffe after another. He has said, in a literal manner, that the Internet and satellite communication were in use in ancient India, and that instances of their use could be referenced in the Mahabharata. Freely jumping across themes, he has compared the Indianness of the beauty of Miss Worlds. He has most recently said, very seriously, that civil engineers are better trained to be in the civil services compared to mechanical engineers as the former "know how to build society". For some of these he has apologised – not for others. He has also made it a habit of doing ridiculous back-of-the-envelope calculations to ask the people of Tripura to, variously, consider how much richer they would be if they had kept a cow or sold *paan*. Mr. Deb is clearly revelling in his turn in the sun, as the BJP's young talent come good in a vital ideological face-off by hollowing out the Congress's State unit and humbling the CPI(M). In the days after the BJP swept the February Assembly election, winning 35 of the 60 seats on its own, with ally the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura bringing in another eight, it was said the victory in the State was as valuable to the party as its earlier achievement in Uttar Pradesh.

It is against this backdrop that Mr. Deb's irrational remarks reveal the BJP to be completely out of its depth after its historic victory. On Mr. Sarkar's watch, Tripura had moved up the development indices. According to the 2011 Census, with a literacy rate of about 87% it ranked fifth in India. Its sex ratio is a relatively respectable 960, and mortality rates for infants and children have been drastically reduced. On the flip side, Tripura's good social health indices are not matched by those on the economic front – its per capita income has languished below the national average, its infrastructure facilities are poor and unemployment rate is extremely high. This is what Mr. Deb seeks to mock. Rather than make laughable references to technological prowess in a mythical age, he would do better to envisage and execute a firm plan to strengthen the State's economic health. Rather than wade into needless controversies by talking about things such as how a 'quintessential' Indian woman looks like – which, given the manner the remark was couched, is something of an affront to Tripura's ethnic diversity – he should be urged by his political bosses to let his performance, rather than his loose tongue, to do the talking. His advice to people to increase household savings instead of hankering after a government job reflects an incapacity to address the youth constituency that is seen to have voted the BJP to power on the desire for better jobs. All around, Mr. Deb is letting down his office and the people of Tripura.

A dangerous incursion

The opposition of the government to the elevation of Justice K.M. Joseph is on specious grounds



KAPIL SIBAL

The government's opposition to the elevation of the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court, Justice K.M. Joseph, to the Supreme Court, as recommended by the Supreme Court collegium as far back as January 10, 2018, is per se unprincipled. Its logic is faulty, both statistically and otherwise.

Justice Joseph pronounced a historic judgment in April 2016 when he struck down the imposition of President's rule in Uttarakhand. Little did he know that his judgment would stand in the way of his elevation. This has created a situation where the very independence of the judiciary is now under attack. We will have to await the response of the collegium. I hope its members stand together and speak in one voice. That is the only way the Supreme Court can reassert its supremacy in the matter of judicial appointments.

Justice Joseph's request to be transferred to the Andhra Pradesh High Court on health grounds since he had undergone a bypass surgery was ignored. In May 2016, the collegium had cleared his transfer to the Andhra Pradesh High Court. For inexplicable reasons, the recommendation was not forwarded for approval to the then President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. In the normal course of events, recommendations for transfers are cleared within 10

days. The attitude of the Union government shows that he was being targeted. The Centre's obduracy by supplying unifying reasons for rejecting the collegium's recommendation can be clearly attributed to his judgment of April 2016.

Point of seniority

Let us analyse the reasons put forth in Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's letter of April 26, 2018 for rejecting the recommendation for Justice Joseph's elevation. The first is that in the All India High Court Judges Seniority List, Justice Joseph is placed at serial number 42 and that 11 Chief Justices of various High Courts in the said list are otherwise senior to him.

This reasoning is flawed. The first is that Justice Joseph was, obviously, elevated as Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court on account of his qualities as a judge over other judges who might otherwise have been senior. Second, seniority among High Court judges has never been the only benchmark for appointment as Chief Justice of a High Court or elevation to the Supreme Court. Ever since 2014, the government of the day has never considered seniority as the only basis for elevation. When Judges Deepak Gupta and Navin Sinha were appointed in February 2017 to the Supreme Court, there were 40 High Court judges across India senior to them. Similarly, in the case of Justices S. Abdul Nazeer and Mohan M. Shantanagoudar, who were also elevated to the Supreme Court in February 2017, there were 20 High Court judges who were senior to them. When Justice S.K. Kaul was elevated too,



there were 14 High Court judges senior to him. In denying Justice Joseph his due, the government has left itself without cover.

Regional representation

Another reason given by the Law Minister is that several High Courts including smaller high courts are not represented in the Supreme Court at present. It is true that High Courts in a few States are not represented. This has happened under the present regime as well as in the past. Justices K.G. Balakrishnan, C.Y. Chinnai and K.S.P. Radhakrishnan were all from the Kerala High Court despite the Law Minister calling it a relatively small High Court. This was at a time when the strength in the Kerala High Court was less than 40 judges. Justices K.S. Paripoornan and K.T. Thomas were also elevated to the Supreme Court from the Kerala High Court when its strength was just 21. So, a small High Court such as Kerala's has had a slew of elevations perhaps because of the outstanding quality of individual judges. The Delhi High Court, with a judge strength of 60, has three judges in the top court. The reason given by the Law Minister that in elevating Justice Joseph there

would be two judges from the Kerala High Court – which he considers inconsistent with the concept of adequate regional representation – is clearly specious.

The Law Minister ought to have disclosed that in February 2017, two judges from the Karnataka High Court, Justices Shantanagoudar and Abdul Nazeer, were elevated on the same day. If two judges can be elevated from Karnataka, especially in light of the fact that Justice Kurian Joseph, also from Kerala, is going to retire in the course of this year, the logic of not having two judges from the Kerala High Court is clearly manufactured only to oppose Justice Joseph's appointment.

If one looks at the aspect of regional representation made much of by the Law Minister and analyses the current representation of judges in the Supreme Court, then the Allahabad High Court, which has a sanctioned strength of 160, should have many more than two judges. This logic also applies to the Punjab and Haryana High Court as well as the Bombay High Court. While the Allahabad High Court has two judges in the Supreme Court, the Bombay High Court has three. Therefore, the opposition to Justice Joseph's elevation on the basis of inadequate regional representation is a bogey.

The third reason is that there is an inadequate representation of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Supreme Court. First, the total sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court is 31 judges. At the moment, there are 25. Six judges are to retire this year. Consequently, its strength, if no judges are appointed, will be reduced to 19. There

will be 12 vacancies. If the government so chooses, it can give representation to the SCs and STs consistent with its logic. But this logic cannot be advanced in opposing Justice Joseph's elevation. Such an argument only betrays the real intent behind the opposition.

Having demonstrated the fragility of the reasoning of the Law Minister, all the points for not elevating Justice Joseph – such as seniority at the level of the High Court, regional representation, representation of SCs and STs – become insignificant when there is an outstanding candidate for elevation. I only wish to reiterate the recommendation made by the collegium on January 10, 2018: "The Collegium considers that at present Mr. Justice K.M. Joseph, who hails from the Kerala High Court and is currently functioning as Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court, is more deserving and suitable in all respects than other Chief Justices and senior puisne Judges of High Courts for being appointed as Judge of the Supreme Court of India."

It is crystal clear that the opposition to Justice Joseph is mala fide. The executive is seeking to blatantly interfere in the appointment process. If the government's stand is legitimised, such incursions on the independence of the judiciary will become routine. We want our judges to be immune to extra-constitutional pressures. That immunity is the only way to protect our citizens. A judiciary that capitulates is the greatest danger to democracy.

Kapil Sibal is a Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), former Union Minister and a senior Congress leader

A shared hero for India and Pakistan?

If we consider Bhagat Singh to be our ideal, it should be reflected in our politics



S. IRFAN HABIB

It is gratifying to hear that Pakistan considers Bhagat Singh a shared hero. While there has always been popular support for him among the people in Pakistan, what is refreshing now is to have a meeting headed by the Chief Secretary of Pakistan's Punjab province call him a "hero of both India and Pakistan".

A special man

This is also a crucial moment to think about the possibility of projecting him as a shared hero in the midst of divisive politics, with narrow jingoistic nationalism overtaking everything else. It happened in Pakistan decades ago and now India seems to be following this destructive model. What's there in Bhagat Singh that can bring India and Pakistan together? Is it his ultimate martyrdom or something more that recommends him as a

common hero?

There are a few distinctive attributes in the persona of Bhagat Singh which make him acceptable crossing the limits of nationality, religion and culture. However, I will lay emphasis on his distinctive political and social ideals, which he espoused in his short but eventful life.

Singh is probably the only one from amongst our freedom struggle heroes who can be celebrated by both India and Pakistan. It is possibly because he stood for a non-sectarian and egalitarian world. He never espoused any divisive idea in his short life. And it is possible to make sense of his politics because he left behind a substantial written legacy to engage with. It is rare to find a young man in his early twenties developing the idea of universal brotherhood and articulating it in a detailed article. He imagined a world, in 1924, where "all of us being one and none is the other. It will really be a comforting time when the world will have no strangers." Singh could imagine such a world several decades ago, while today some of us are busy othering our own people. We do that using the pre-



SHU KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

text of religion, caste, language or culture. He can be our hero only if we care to go along with his vision where he stressed that we need to "start believing that we all are born equal and our vocation, as well, need not divide us. If someone is born in a sweeper's family that does not mean that he/she has to continue in the family profession cleaning **** all his life, with no right to participate in any developmental work".

Singh continued with the same spirit and went on to say something which should be remembered by all in India and Pakistan, if at all we accept him as our shared hero. He emphatically exclaimed: "As long as the words like black and white, civilized and uncivilized, ruler and the ruled, rich and poor,

touchable and untouchable, etc. are in vogue where is the scope for universal brotherhood? This can only be preached by free people. The slave India cannot refer to it." He goes further to appeal, "We will have to campaign for equality and equity. Will have to punish those who oppose the creation of such a world."

We in India mostly look up to Singh as a nationalist and a martyr, which is true but not enough. If Pakistanis also call him as their hero of the freedom struggle then he surely must be more than a territorial nationalist. He was a nationalist who stood for the freedom of all oppressed communities across the colonised world. He also vouched for a non-sectarian and inclusive nationalism which shall not discriminate on religious or any other ground. Both India and Pakistan need to ponder over Singh's revolutionary vision, if they sincerely venerate him as a shared hero.

Squaring with reality

There is a large section of people in Pakistan who seem to be inspired by Singh's ideals, but if the state calls him a shared hero, then

it should be reflected in its politics. Sadly, both countries are far away from his vision, and Pakistan in particular is terribly antithetical to his ideals of egalitarianism, pluralism and non-sectarian governance. While commenting on the role of the press, Singh spoke his mind about rising communalism and skewed nationalism, which sounds so contemporaneous: "The real duty of the newspapers is to educate, to cleanse the minds of people, to save them from narrow sectarian divisiveness, and to eradicate communal feelings to promote the idea of common nationalism. Instead, their main objective seems to be spreading ignorance, preaching and propagating sectarianism and chauvinism, communalising people's minds leading to the destruction of our composite culture and shared heritage."

We can't fabricate history to suit our present political concerns, the past can surely be interpreted on the basis of facts and not just fantasies to construct a "new India" or a "new Pakistan".

S. Irfan Habib is a historian based in New Delhi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Congress on BJP

In presuming that there is growing anger against the Narendra Modi government, Congress president Rahul Gandhi seems, on the contrary, to be ignorant and oblivious of the still unabated 'Jan Aakrosh' (People's Anger) against his party, the Congress, for having turned a blind eye to the unpardonable scale of corruption under the United Progressive Alliance ("At Delhi rally, Rahul throws an open challenge to BJP", April 30). Putting aside for a moment his rhetorical tirade against the Prime Minister, Mr. Gandhi sounds amusing, to put it mildly, when he says that people are angry with the government about corruption, among other issues. Mr. Gandhi should know that if people are tolerant of all the shortcomings of the Modi government, it is only because the Prime Minister is perceived to be clean and his government corruption free. For this point alone, they are prepared to trust him, post 2019. Mr. Gandhi should find better issues with substance to challenge Mr. Modi. After frittering away golden opportunities

to lead the nation to prosperity, the Congress does not seem to have learnt any lessons. It needs to go in for some soul-searching.

SIVAMANI VASUDEVAN,
Chennai

■ Mr. Gandhi has forgotten that the Prime Minister is working hard and trying to fix the chaos created after a decade of United Progressive Alliance rule, which is best known for unspeakable corruption. Mr. Gandhi's wild charges and challenges at the 'Jan Aakrosh' rally can be attributed to his playing to a gallery of sycophants.

V.S. GANESHAN,
Bengaluru

■ There seems to be renewed vigour in the spirited challenge thrown down by Mr. Gandhi to the Bharatiya Janata Party. The coinage 'Jan Aakrosh' is a fitting way to take down the BJP's slogan, "Acche din", of which there are no signs as yet. The BJP should not forget that its brute majority is not enough to pooh-pooh the questions posed by the Congress. What is the development that has taken place in the past four years? Why are we hearing the same old rhetoric of dynastic rule? After the BJP

took over the reins, there has only been a rise in difficult situations such as agrarian distress, growing unemployment, economic failures, flawed moves such as demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax, and increasing insecurity for women and children. Many of our institutions are under attack. With the general election drawing closer, the BJP needs to give us a credible account of its so-called achievements.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

Under India Inc.

Instead of being cynical, those who are vehemently opposed to the Centre's move to hand over maintenance of Delhi's Red Fort need to look at the issue in perspective ("Cong. slams 'Adopt a Heritage' project", April 29). We all know that most tourist spots across India lack basic infrastructure – signage, drinking water points, and clean washrooms. If a private entity provides these facilities, why should there be objection to this?

MUDGAL VENKATESH,
Kalaburagi, Karnataka

■ Despite protests by the Opposition that the

government is trying to "privatise" India's heritage, the move to allow private corporations to 'adopt' national monuments is welcome. What is being missed here is that this "Adopt a Heritage" programme is a repackaged version of the scheme initiated under the Vajpayee government. Several MoUs appear to have been signed with the Archaeological Survey of India, the Nature Conservation Foundation and the Hampi Foundation to conserve certain structures in Hampi. There is nothing wrong in a private entity making use of the heritage value of a structure. However, it should be done in keeping with the spirit of the place and in a manner that doesn't harm the structure.

J.S. ACHARYA,
Hyderabad

Judgment day

The court verdict against self-proclaimed godman Asaram Bapu has reinvigorated our faith in the judiciary which has come under severe attack. The courage and determination of the father of the survivor to overcome hurdles is laudable in the face of intimidation and threats.

Such godmen who exploit the naive appear to be having a free run in the country. The government needs to take steps to promote the scientific temper, which will be a crucial step in tackling such issues (Editorial - "Judgment day", April 27).

MUHAMMAD VASEEM P.P.,
Kannur, Kerala

Child nutrition

If there is to be progress in reducing the number of underweight and stunted children and improving the health of pregnant and lactating women, there should be concerted efforts to upgrade facilities of aanganwadi centres for better delivery of services, equip the ICDS with funds for better training of aanganwadi workers and incentivise participation of self-help groups and non-government organisations. There should also be regular feedback by parents of beneficiaries regarding the quality of food

served and supplied. This could be done through ICDS staff (Editorial - "Food first", April 30).

AIJAZ HUSSAIN MALIK,
Baramulla, Jammu & Kashmir

Cricketing notes

As an avid cricket fan, I have noticed that in cricket, especially the IPL matches, expletives are used against the batsman whenever a fielder takes a catch or a bowler a wicket. This "trend" was started by the current Indian captain. Will this now lead to a batsman abusing the bowler or the fielder every time he hits a four or a six? Where are we headed? It is surprising that players who are paid in lakhs stoop to such a low level. Passion for the game cannot be at the cost of maintaining decent standards of on-field behaviour.

A.R. RAMANARAYANAN,
Chennai

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CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The Hindu Magazine (April 29, 2018) quiz - 'Easy like Sunday morning' - erroneously gave the year of birth of Zubin Mehta (in question 1) as 1963. It should have been 1936.

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Local democracy in disarray

Twenty-five years after decentralised democratic governance was introduced, a look at why it has failed



M.A. OOMMEN

It's been 25 years since decentralised democratic governance was introduced in India by the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments, which came into force on April 24 and June 1, 1993, respectively. The structural reforms that followed heralded an inclusive, responsive, participatory democracy which was tasked to deliver economic development and social justice at the grass-roots level. These reforms did not mean de-concentration or delegation. They were not even variants of fiscal federalism, which is much-theorised by Western public finance pundits and generally endorsed by their Indian counterparts. The creation of lakhs of "self-governing" village panchayats and gram sabhas, with over three million elected representatives mandated to manage local development, was a unique democratic experiment in the contemporary world. Parts IX and IXA of the Constitution, introduced following the two Constitution Amendments, initiated a process with standardised features such as elections every five years; reservations for historically marginalised communities and women; the creation of participatory institutions; the establishment of State Finance Commissions (SFCs), a counterpart of the Finance Commission at the sub-national level; the creation of District Planning Committees (DPCs); and so on. Moving the 73rd Amendment Bill on December 1, 1992, the Minister of State in the Rural Development Ministry underscored the "duty on the Centre as well as the States to establish and nourish the village panchayats so as to make them effective self-governing institutions."

Today, the moot question is, what impact has this reform package had on democratic practices in India? Have these reforms ensured every citizen a comparable level of basic services irrespective of one's choice of residential jurisdiction? While the economic reforms that were launched almost simultaneously with the decentralisation reforms made tremendous headway, making



"The creation of lakhs of self-governing village panchayats and gram sabhas was a unique democratic experiment in the contemporary world." A gram sabha meeting at Neduvasal near Pudukkottai, Tamil Nadu. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

India the fastest-growing economy in the world today, local democracy has not much to write home about. Given the unprecedented growth of the economy over the last 25 years, its limited success in ensuring primary health care, access to drinking water supply, street lighting, education, food security, and so on is an enigma. The media and mainstream economists who get nervous when there is even a small slippage in the quarterly economic growth rate have been silent on this social failure in local democracy. Indeed, the village panchayats have not succeeded in enhancing the well-being, capabilities and freedom of citizens.

A systemic failure

What went wrong? Skipping the several success stories, which are exceptions, what happened to the third tier may be hypothesised as a systemic failure. While the economic reforms were championed by the political class and received support from the bureaucracy, there was no perceptible hand-holding and support by the States to foster decentralised governance. (The people's planning in Kerala is a conspicuous exception.) From the beginning, whether it was postponing elections or the failure to constitute SFCs and DPCs, it became evident that States can violate the various provisions of Parts IX and IXA with impunity. These are the provisions which envisage the delivery of social justice and economic development at the local level. It appears that the judiciary has been indifferent to the two momentous

amendments and their potential.

There was no institutional decentralisation except in Kerala. The roles and responsibilities of local governments remain ill-defined despite activity mapping in several States. States control funds, functions and functionaries, making autonomous governance almost impossible. Most States continue to create parallel bodies (often fiefdoms of ministers and senior bureaucrats) that make inroads into the functional domain of local governments. For example, Haryana has created a Rural Development Agency, presided over by the Chief Minister, to enter into the functional domain of panchayats. Legislative approval of these parallel bodies legitimised the process of weakening decentralised democracy. Increasing allocations to Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme, or MPLADS, which started in 1993, and their State-level counterparts, known as the MLALADS, hastened the process of euthanasia. There is no mandate to create a DPC tasked to draft a district development plan that takes into account spatial planning, environmental conservation, rural-urban integration, etc. In States like Gujarat, the DPC has not been constituted. A potential instrument to reduce growing regional imbalances is left to rot.

Continuity and change

Looking back, there was a clear lack of continuity, and change for the better. Following the Constitution Amendments, Article 280, establishing the Finance Commission, was

amended to add 280 (3) (bb) and (c), designed to empower the third tier. Following the recommendation of the 11th Finance Commission, there were reforms in budget and accounting, and efforts towards streamlining the financial reporting system at the local level. Even so, there is no credible fiscal data base and budget system among local governments now. That accountability arrangements remain very weak even after 25 years shows a lack of will. The 13th Finance Commission made significant steps to carry forward decentralised governance by linking the grants to local governments to the divisible pool via Article 275 besides taking various measures to incentivise the process of decentralisation. The 14th Finance Commission enhanced the grant substantially but did not take the change forward. The Terms of Reference of the 15th Finance Commission, which sought to abolish Article 275 and ignore an integrated public finance regime, do not seem to opt for continuity.

Despite the reservation of seats for Adivasis, Dalits and women, these categories remain on the periphery, often as victims of atrocities and caste oppression rather than as active agents of social change. This means that involving women's agencies and the marginalised to lead social transformation at the grass-roots level remains an uphill task.

Even after 25 years, local government expenditure as a percentage of total public sector expenditure comprising Union, State and local governments is only around 7% as compared to 24% in Europe, 27% in North America and 55% in Denmark. The own source revenue of local governments as a share of total public sector own source revenue is only a little over 2% and if disaggregated, the Panchayat share is a negligible 0.3% (several States like Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana have abolished property taxes and others do not collect taxes). This speaks of the fiscal weakness of village panchayats.

Local democracy in India is in deep disarray. Will the Prime Minister take time to look into this pathology and take remedial action in the interest of democracy, social inclusion and cooperative federalism?

M.A. Oommen is Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

The cost of pollution

It adversely impacts both the economy and our health



PRAKASH NELLIYAAT

Pollution is a challenge to developing countries which try to achieve rapid economic development without adequately managing the environment. In recent years, the pollution load has increased, sometimes beyond the carrying capacity of the environment. Though various measures have been adopted to manage pollution, significant progress has not been achieved.

The environmental Kuznets curve

India's developmental activities are affecting the environment to a considerable extent, through over-exploitation of natural resources and indiscriminate discharge of waste. This has been interpreted by the environmental Kuznets curve (EKC) hypothesis which suggests that as per capita income grows, the increase in environmental impact hits the maximum and thereafter declines. According to the hypothesis, in the initial stages of economic growth, when more resources are used, there is greater waste generation and more emissions. But when a country has achieved a certain level of development, pollution reduces with greater protection of the environment, technological improvements, diversification of the economy from manufacturing to services, and increasing scarcity and prices of environmental resources, leading to lower consumption.

India is on the upward part of the EKC. For achieving sustainable development, it must move to the second stage. However, it is not wise to wait for that stage. India can't ignore the environmental consequences of its rapid growth. Over the last few decades, water-intensive and polluting industries such as textiles, leather, sugar and paper have shifted from developed to developing countries. They withdraw huge quantities of water and discharge effluents without adequate treatment. Before 1980, countries like the U.K. and the U.S. played a vital role in textile production and export. But by 2000, their dominance had substantially reduced and the share of developing countries like India and China had increased. One of the factors attributed to this shift is that there are relatively less stringent environmental policies in developing nations. Countries like India are now manufacturing products which contribute to pollution for domestic and in-

ternational markets.

At the household level, the economic loss on account of pollution includes the cost of treatment and wage loss during sickness. Pollution impacts ecosystems and related economic activities like agriculture and livestock. Air pollution causes climate change. Hence, pollution leads to the real and potential loss of the overall development opportunity in an economy. Generally, pollution impacts the socially vulnerable and poor communities more due to their weak coping resources. When traditional drinking water sources get contaminated, the rich can buy packaged water. But the poor cannot afford it and are hence compelled to use contaminated water. They are also less aware of the health hazards caused by pollution.

Pollution is not a disease, it is only a symptom. Hence, its root cause should be investigated. For instance, in developing countries, water pollution has not been a major topic of political debate, but political instruments including Environmental Quality Objectives and Uniform Standards are in the political agendas of Western countries. Natural resource management agencies have centralised structures and function without the consultation of multi stakeholders. Emission-based standards have not been very effective so far, since they are rarely monitored and only occasionally enforced. The 'polluters pay' principle is not in force. For the most part, polluters are not willing to internalise the external and social costs. Pollution is also neglected by funding agencies worldwide and by governments in budgets. However, experiences from the U.S. and Europe reveal that pollution mitigation can yield large gains to human health and the economy.

Remedial measures

Economic growth is an inevitable requirement, but it need not be at the cost of health. To tackle pollution, there should be public awareness about its consequences, adequate pollution-linked databases, integration of pollution prevention policies into the development sector, strict enforcement of pollution control policies, eco-friendly inputs in production, reliance on renewable energy, introduction of market-based/economic instruments (charges/taxes/levies, tradable permits, subsidies and soft loans), and increase in ecosystem resilience through the conservation of biodiversity.

Prakash Nelliyaat works with the Centre for Biodiversity Policy and Law, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai. The views expressed are personal

SINGLE FILE

Conclave of southern States

Why regional parties are joining hands on an organised platform

TRIDIVESH SINGH MAINI



While recent months have seen calls for the creation of a "Dravida Nadu" and angry statements by south Indian leaders about how New Delhi is ignoring their interests, it was the south Indian Finance Ministers' conclave, held in Thiruvananthapuram in early April, which marked a formal expression of southern solidarity. While there were representatives from Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry, there were no representatives from Tamil Nadu and Telangana at the meeting.

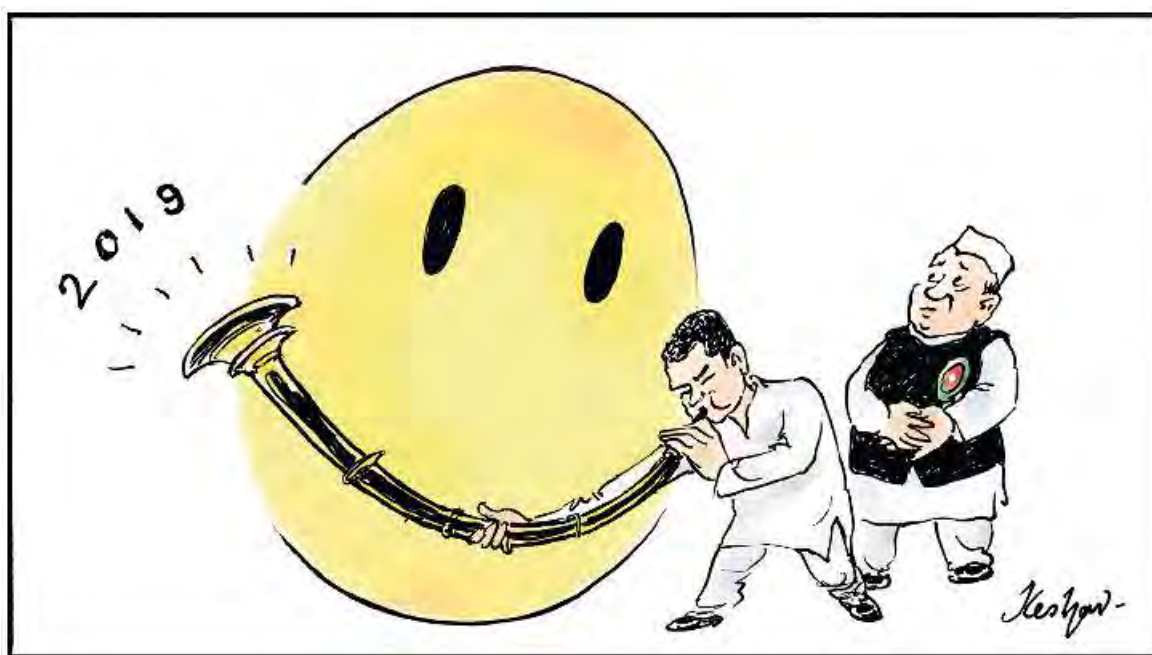
A bone of contention between southern leaders and the Central government has been the use of the 2011 Census, as opposed to the 1971 Census, as the base year for determining revenue distribution. These leaders feel that they have managed to control their population growth and are being penalised for their success. During the conclave, there was a clear consensus that this provision of the 15th Finance Commission was unfair towards southern States. Further, Kerala's Finance Minister, T.M. Thomas Isaac, said that representatives from Tamil Nadu and Telangana, along with representatives from other States, would be invited to the next meeting in early May at Visakhapatnam. This is an interesting dynamic which will test the limits of boiling down the range of quibbles that the southern States have with the Central government into a simple north/south clash.

Several non-southern leaders have backed the southern States in this venture, including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, even if her support was viewed by some as a political move in the context of 'Third Front' alliance grouping for the 2019 general election. Similarly, the decision to invite Finance Ministers from non-BJP-ruled States appeared to acquire a political tinge.

There are good reasons to encourage the creation of a finance ministerial forum with representatives from different parts of India. The Inter-State Council (ISC), set up in accordance with Article 263 of the Constitution, could have emerged as such a forum - even though the initial aim was to resolve disputes among different States - to examine issues of common importance in a timely manner. Even though by November 2017 the ISC was reconstituted with the Prime Minister as its Chairman, and with membership comprising six Union ministers and all Chief Ministers, no effort has been made to widen its functions. Zonal Councils too are restricted in terms of their geographical scope.

In the 1960s and '70s, regional parties joined hands on issues relating to federalism. For instance, the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, as a result of the close rapport between the late Gurnam Singh and M. Karunanidhi, had strong ties. With the emergence of coalition governments, regional parties have got together at times, but there has been no concerted effort to set up an organised platform - until now.

The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst associated with O.P. Jindal Global University



CONCEPTUAL

Labour hoarding ECONOMICS

This refers to an economic phenomenon wherein a business chooses to retain its employees, rather than laying them off, during an economic downturn or recession. A company may choose to retain workers on its payroll even though it is not making as much profits as before. Labour hoarding has been attributed to various reasons, including the fact that a business may find it difficult to hire workers again when economic conditions change for the better. Legal complications and emotional hardship involved in firing employees may also explain the prevalence of labour hoarding in the modern economy.

MORE ON THE WEB

Red Fort longed row: The long list of Monument Mitras

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ABSTRACT

Disadvantage for the incumbent or not?

There is no correlation between voter turnout and incumbency

SRINIVASAN RAMANI

Conventional wisdom has always been that a higher voter turnout corresponds with a greater anti-incumbency effect in India. One of the many reasons noted in the loss of the UPA in the 2014 elections was the presence of a higher voter turnout in comparison to 2009. But in the last decade and a half, more incumbent governments have been re-elected even as voter turnout has risen. Is there any correlation between voter turnout and incumbency?

In the U.S., there is a clear negative association between incumbency and turnout. One explanation for this is the competition effect - greater the competition in a bipolar election, higher the participation, which will include more dissatisfied voters. While the hypothesis of high partisanship in a bipolar political party system holds true for the

U.S., it does not for India. Milan Vaishnav and Johnathan Guy in a paper titled 'Does Higher Turnout Hurt Incumbents?', published in the journal *Studies in Indian Politics* (April 2018), look at Assembly elections in 18 major States between 1980 and 2012 to answer the question of correlation. They find that an increase in turnout has no statistically meaningful relationship with incumbent performance - either in the re-election of the incumbent or in the change in vote and seat shares from the previous election for the party.

A cursory look at the overall relationship between voter turnout and the three variables - re-election, changes in vote share and seat share - for the 128 elections held in that period shows that this is skewed towards anti-incumbency due to outlier elections in States such as J&K and Punjab which

went through periods of insurgency. The authors omit these State elections (as outliers) and then study the same relationship. They find that there is no clear pattern. They look at political contexts when anti-incumbency is related to voter turnout and find no correlation there either.

What is interesting is that State elections in India have tended to return more incumbents since the 2000s (42.6%), a number closer to the trend in the 1980s (44.7%), which fell to 21.1% in the 1990s. The nineties was a period of significant political turmoil and greater regionalism and federalisation of the Indian polity. The authors suggest looking at structural changes in voting behaviour that seem to support greater incumbency rather than looking at incorrect and simplistic assumptions about higher turnout indicating greater anti-incumbency.

FROM The Hindu ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1968

Desai rebuts charges against his son

Mr. Morarji Desai, Finance Minister, to-day [April 30, New Delhi] characterised as "highly irresponsible" the remarks of Mr. R. Umanath (CPI-M) about his son. Mr. Desai was replying to the general discussion on the Finance Bill. He said his son had given up all business since 1964, and joined him as Private Secretary after he resigned his Ministership in 1964. From then on, his son had been with him. When his son accompanied him on his foreign tour, he was not paid by the Government. He came at his own expense. He did not incur any unauthorised expenditure either. Mr. Desai said that when he went to Japan, his son, who had proceeded earlier on a separate invitation, met him at Manila. Mr. Desai disclosed that his son was never given a diplomatic passport. In fact, his son had refused to take such a passport. He wondered why the members should make allegations without any verification. "Is our politics going down to this wretched level?", he asked.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1918.

Export of Pearls

A representative meeting of pearls merchants held on Monday evening [on April 29 in Bombay] with Mr. Gulabchand Devedhand in the chair strongly protested against the order of the Government of India prohibiting export of pearls. It was contended that pearl merchants who were holding large stocks were hit by the sudden prohibition and that the entire export of pearls from British India amounted to less than one per cent of the total value of exports from India and was not therefore calculated to increase any difficulty in the exchange situation. A resolution was passed drawing the attention of the Government to their memorial and urging the withdrawal of prohibition at an early date. The speakers at the meeting laid particular stress on the fact that the markets of the world were still open to diamond trade.

DATA POINT

Calypto super hit

Jamaican and West Indian batsman Chris Gayle has hit the most number of sixes in all editions of the IPL combined. His six-hit-rate (sixes per over) of 0.65 is second only to his countryman Andre Russell (0.8) among those who have hit at least 60 sixes overall

Player	Total number of sixes	Total number of balls	Sixes/Over
C.H. Gayle	289	2,688	0.65
R.G. Sharma	182	3,409	0.32
AB de Villiers	181	2,554	0.43
S.K. Raina	181	3,515	0.31
M.S. Dhoni	171	2,827	0.36
V. Kohli	168	3,676	0.27
D.A. Warner	160	2,902	0.33
Y.K. Pathan	156	2,192	0.43
K.A. Pollard	152	1,731	0.53

Compiled by The Hindu data team from ball-by-ball data. Data as of April 28, 2018

FROM PAGE ONE

AIIMS says he is fit, Lalu alleges conspiracy

The Rashtriya Janata Dal president had earlier written to the AIIMS director, asking that his treatment be continued at the hospital till he recovered.

Supporters of the RJD president created a ruckus in the hospital premises protesting the AIIMS decision, with his party alleging that there is a conspiracy to “murder” its leader by “forcing him out” of the premier hospital even though he continues to suffer from various ailments.

In the melee, RJD workers broke a glass door resulting in injury to a security

guard, and abused administration officials, including the director, hospital sources alleged, adding a police complaint has been lodged against unidentified people over the matter.

Sources said the medical team formed to decide on the course of his treatment, had decided to discharge Mr. Prasad on Saturday and had prepared the discharge summary, but the RJD chief requested the doctors that he be kept in the hospital till Monday as he wanted to travel by Ranchi Rajdhani Express. Mr. Prasad left the AIIMS around 3.25 p.m.

Four held for stripping Bihar girl

They have also disclosed the names of the others involved.

“Among the four arrested, the faces of two youth have been matched in the video and two others, including a juvenile, were found filming the incident on their mobile phone,” said Mr. Khan. “Anybody found circulating the video clip will face stern action,” he warned.

In the video 7-8 youth, mostly in vest and jeans, were shown molesting, stripping and abusing a minor girl, seen crying and

begging for mercy. “Though the identity of the girl has not been verified she appears to be a minor,” said Mr. Khan.

The suspects belong to Bharathua village, near the district headquarters of Jehanabad, where the incident is said to have taken place.

Jehanabad Superintendent of Police Manish Kumar formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and launched a hunt for the suspects soon after the video went viral.

Kamal Haasan launches ‘Maiaam Whistle’ app

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Makkal Needhi Maiaam leader Kamal Haasan on Monday launched ‘Maiaam Whistle’, a mobile application that could be used to flag civic and socio-political issues.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the app at his party office in Alwarpet, Mr. Haasan made it clear that it

cannot be used as a “magic wand” to solve all problems, but would be a listening tool “for us, even for Makkal Needhi Maiaam, to see and listen to [the State’s] problems.”

It was promised that the app would be launched in January, but its launch was delayed because of his intention to release a “working app”, he said.

Just a matter of record: WB poll panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The West Bengal State Election Commission refused to comment on the fact that one in every three seats in the panchayat polls has gone to the Trinamool Congress without a contest. Secretary of State Election Commission [SEC] Nilanjan Shandilya said that it is only “a matter of record” that the number of uncontested seats is as high as 34%.

But psephologist and political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty said such a high number of uncontested victories posed a “threat to democracy”.

“There are about 5.08 crore voters... With no contest in 34% seats about 1.75 crore electorate will not be able to vote. This is a dangerous trend for democracy as it will alienate the people from electoral process,” he said.

Scribe charged with sedition over FB post

PAVAN DAHAT
NAGPUR

The Chhattisgarh police have booked a journalist under sedition charges for sharing an allegedly inflammatory and defamatory cartoon on the judiciary on a social media site.

Kamal Shukla, a senior journalist based in Kanker district of Bastar, is known for his reports on human rights violation of tribal people in the Bastar region.

“An FIR has been registered against Kamal Shukla under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The FIR has been registered on a complaint filed by a Rajasthan resident, who objected to Mr. Shukla’s Facebook post. We will now investigate the case before taking any action,” Superintendent of Police, Kanker, K.L.Dhruv told *The Hindu*.

However, the post, for which Mr. Shukla had been booked, was not available on his Facebook page. He

J&K Ministry reshuffle triggers controversy

Opposition condemns inclusion of MLA who attended ‘pro-rapist rally’; new Deputy CM calls Kathua incident ‘minor’

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Six BJP legislators, including the Kathua MLA spotted in the Hindu Ekta Manch rally after the rape-and-murder of a minor girl, were sworn in as Ministers in Jammu on Monday. Two Peoples Democratic Party MLAs too, were among those administered the oath of office by Governor N.N. Vohra. The Opposition condemned the promotion to the MLA.

Kathua MLA Rajeev Jasrotia was seen in the rally along with Choudhary Lal Singh and Chandra Prakash Ganga, who were dropped from the Ministry following a country-wide furor over their presence at the rally.

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and senior Cabinet Ministers were present at the swearing-in.

Barely hours after taking



J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti with the newly appointed Ministers in Jammu. •PTI

oath, the new Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta, triggered a controversy by calling the Kathua rape a

“small thing”. “It [Kathua rape and murder] was a small thing. We have to think over it so that

such incidents are not repeated,” he said.

The portfolios allocated to the new BJP Ministers in-

clude Industries and Transport to Kavinder Gupta, Housing and Urban Development to Sat Paul Sharma, Forest and Environment to Rajeev Jasrotia, Health and Medical Education to D.K. Manyal and Power Development Department to Sunil Sharma. Shakti Raj Parihar is MoS Education, Tourism, Tribal Affairs, R&B, Information, Rural Development, Revenue, Culture and Technical Education.

The PDP assigned Muhammad Ashraf Mir the portfolio of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, Khalil Bandh gets Agriculture, Abdul Rehman Veeri Rural Development, Choudhary Zulfiqar School Education, Imran Raza Ansari Higher Education, Technical Education and Youth Services and Sports, Gulam Nabi Lone Revenue and Bashrat

Bukhari Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs.

‘BJP, Mufti confused’

National Conference working president and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said: “Two BJP Ministers were removed for attending a pro-rapist rally and an MLA who attended it is promoted as Minister. Why are the BJP and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti confused about where they stand on the Kathua rape.”

However, BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav said, “The Cabinet reshuffle has nothing to do with the Kathua incident.”

In a major reshuffle, the BJP interchanged the positions of Nirmal Singh and veteran RSS member Kavinder Gupta, with Mr. Singh appointed Speaker and Mr. Gupta the new Deputy CM.

Congress keeps up pressure on Goyal

Asks Union Minister to come clean

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday kept up its attack on Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and demanded that he make public the report of the “independent” valuation of his company, Flashnet Info Solution Ltd.

Party president Rahul Gandhi had raised the issue at a rally here on Sunday and said: “For the first time, a Power Minister had sold off his company to a power company, but Prime Minister Narendra Modi didn’t utter a word.”

The Congress alleged that not only was the company sold to the Piramal Group, which has interests in the power sector, but Mr. Goyal had also not disclosed the sale in his declaration of assets submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office in 2014.

But the BJP strongly defended him, and said the



Piyush Goyal

company was sold in July 2014, before the Ministers declared their assets.

“But the director’s report mentions that the shares of Seema Goyal [the Minister’s wife] and Mr. Goyal were transferred on September 29, 2014. And as per the company law, until the shares are transferred, the ownership rests with the original owners,” Congress spokesperson Pawan Khara said at a press conference on Monday.

Gunmen kill 3 in Baramulla

Two Hizb militants killed in Pulwama gunfight; two Army men injured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Unidentified militants shot dead three civilians in north Kashmir’s Baramulla on Monday evening, the Jammu and Kashmir police said.

In another incident in Pulwama, two Hizbul Mujahideen militants and a civilian were killed during search operations by security forces. Two Army personnel and 15 others were injured.

Motive unclear

The victims of the Baramulla incident were identified as Asif Ahmad Sheikh, Haseeb Ahmad Khan and Mohammad Asgar, all residents of Kakar Hamam. The incident took place after the sunset when the unknown gunman fired at close range on the three civilians near Iqbal Market Khanpora.

The police, however, refused to speculate on the motive for the attack. “Preliminary investigation reveals the role of the Lashkar-e-Tai-



Burned down: Flames emerging from the site of the encounter at Pulwama district on Monday. •NISSAR AHMAD

ba. One Pakistan-based and two other local militants of Baramulla are the principal suspects in this case and are already wanted by law. The police have started investigation into the matter,” the police spokesman said.

Two Hizbul Mujahideen militants, one of them a wanted “commander”, were

of Rajpora were trapped during the operation. A Major and another Army man were injured in the initial exchange of fire.

Shahid Ahmad Dar, 25, of Arihal died of gunshot wounds, as hundreds of local people clashed with the security forces near the encounter site. Of 15 injured, five were shifted to Srinagar hospitals with serious injuries.

The local people alleged that the security forces “fired directly into the crowds” converging on the encounter site.

Separatist leaders Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Yasin Malik have called a shutdown for Tuesday to condemn the death of Shahid Dar.

“Under the pretext of encounter, the security forces have unleashed a reign of terror. They resorted to indiscriminate firing and killed a civilian,” they said in a joint statement.

‘Judges’ press meet was Black Friday of judiciary’

Plea seeks removal of four Justices for ‘contemptuous’ act

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

In a case of shifting goal posts, Asok Pande, who once challenged the Chief Justice of India’s role as master of roster, has now filed a PIL petition for removal of four senior-most Supreme Court judges for their “contemptuous” act of holding the January 12 press conference against their “boss” CJI Dipak Misra.

In the press conference, the four judges – Justices J. Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Madan B. Lokur and Kurian Joseph – had red-flagged the virtually unchecked powers of the CJI as master of roster to allocate sensitive cases to his preferred Benches.

Previous petition

Mr. Pande had initially challenged the Chief Justice’s “arbitrary” powers as mas-



with the view to save democracy ... no doubt, to come forward to save the democracy and to uphold the Constitution is duty of every citizen. But that does not mean that in the name of saving democracy, one can break the law and start beating/abusing/misbehaving his boss,” the petition said.

The petition, which was mentioned before Chief Justice Misra on April 27, said steps should be taken to initiate contempt proceedings against the four judges – who have been made parties in the case – “for committing wilful and deliberate contempt of the court by addressing the press conference against the Chief Justice of India.”

The petition said the day of the press meet was the “Black Friday of the Indian judiciary.”

“The judges gave an impression as if they are crusaders and have come to address the press conference

Take oath of office in given time: SC

Bench issues order to legislatures

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Elect representatives should face “serious consequences” for not taking the oath of office within a specified time, the Supreme Court urged State Legislatures in a judgment.

A Bench of Justices Madan B. Lokur and Deepak Gupta said measures should be taken to videograph the swearing in or oath taking so that no dispute arises in the future. The court’s judgment focuses on elected representatives of local bodies and their swearing-in.

No-confidence motion

The case concerned a no-confidence motion against Uttar Pradesh’s Kshettra panchayat pramukh. The pramukh said some of the elected members had not taken oath and their votes were invalid.

Dismissing the contention in its recent judgment, Justice Lokur, however, wrote that such disputes would erupt unless State legislatures provide provisions specifying consequences against elected

Measures should be taken to videograph the swearing in so that no dispute arises in future

members who do not take their oath of allegiance.

Justice Lokur said the Constitution attached a great degree of solemnity to the oath of office. For example, Article 60 provides that before entering upon his office, the President shall make and subscribe the oath or affirmation.

Similarly, Article 69 requires the Vice-President to make and subscribe the oath or affirmation before entering upon his office.

“It should be appreciated that apart from requiring elected representatives of a panchayat attaching seriousness to taking the oath of office, an impeccable record of the elected representatives taking the oath of office should be maintained by officials of the State government,” the Supreme Court observed in its judgment.

Twitter also sold data to CA, says report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

After Facebook, another major social media outlet Twitter has now been caught up in the data scandal involving Cambridge Analytica (CA), the British political consulting firm which collected the data of nearly 87 million Facebook users without their knowledge and permission, according to a media report.

Aleksandr Kogan, who created tools for CA that allowed the political consul-

tancy to psychologically profile and target voters, bought the data from the microblogging website in 2015, before the recent scandal came to light, *The Sunday Telegraph* reported.

Mr. Kogan had established Global Science Research (GSR), which was granted access to Twitter data. The academic said the information was used to create “brand reports” and “survey extender tools” and “Twitter’s policies were not violated.

BJP has ‘casteist attitude’, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Rahul Gandhi took to Twitter to accuse the BJP of “stabbing” the country’s heart with its “casteist attitude”, and attached a photo of job aspirants who had had their caste categories written on their chests in Madhya Pradesh.

The photograph, which has become viral on social media, shows two applicants for the post of constables in the State police, with the alphabets ‘SC’ (Scheduled Castes) and ‘ST’ (Sche-

duled Tribes) written on their body.

The State government has ordered an inquiry to find out how and why such a system of marking was done during the medical examination of the candidates in Dhar district on Sunday.

Tweeting in Hindi, Mr. Gandhi said, “They have attacked the Constitution by writing SC/ST on the chest of the youths in Madhya Pradesh.”

“This is the BJP/RSS thought, that sometimes suspends a vessel from the neck of a Dalit or ties a



Rahul Gandhi

broom on their bodies and stops them from entering a temple. We will defeat this thought,” he said.

An online debate has

raged on ever since photographs showing candidates marked with SC, ST and G (General) on their chests went viral on social media.

“The BJP has set new standards to dominate SCs and STs. First, they try to end the SC/ST Act. In Uttar Pradesh, they are bathed with soap and perfume sprinkled on them. And now, in M.P., they have forcibly written SC/ST on their chests,” said Randeep Surjewala, Congress’ communication head.

Elections are scheduled in Madhya Pradesh later this year.

[IN FOCUS: REGIONAL SENTIMENT]

Flying the flag of Kannada pride

Siddaramaiah is fashioning himself as a champion of regional sentiment. Will this translate into votes for the Congress?

MURALIDHARA KHAJANE
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in a recent tweet, mocked the BJP's reliance on "north Indian imports" for the election campaign, and compared himself to the Chalukya king Pulikeshi, who stopped the march of Emperor Harshavardhana from the north in the 7th century.

Karnataka has never been ruled by a party that defines itself in terms of linguistic or regional identity, unlike in some neighbouring States. But now, the Chief Minister, who is from a national party, is sparing no opportunity to underline issues of State identity and federalism.

He has been doing so on multiple fronts — pushing for a State flag, fighting "imposition" of Hindi, opposing the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission that are "unfair" to southern States such as Karnataka and so on.

Some political observers view Mr. Siddaramaiah's move of combining regional identity, Kannada pride and federalism into the Congress's election plank as a master ploy to counter the BJP's Hindutva-nationalism narrative.

In June 2017, he constituted an expert committee to recommend if Karnataka should have a State flag. Coinciding with the announcement of the election calendar, the State Cabinet approved the recommendation to have a State flag as an emblem of regional identity.



Chief Minister Siddaramaiah releasing the proposed Karnataka flag in Bengaluru on March 8.

Mr. Siddaramaiah, who started his political career as the head of the Kannada Kalu Samiti (Kannada Surveillance Committee) in the 1980s and is now projecting himself as a champion of Kannada pride, says the regional sentiment only helps build a strong India.

The BJP too, during its rule from 2008 to 2013 in the State, promoted similar ideas. But the Janata Dal(S), a State-level party, has been silent. BJP State president B.S. Yeddyurappa has slammed the Chief Minister for taking a unilateral decision on the State flag and "politicising" the issue, while not opposing the idea upfront.

Over the past year, the present and former chairper-

sons of the Kannada Development Authority have added strength to the "regional pride" arguments of Mr. Siddaramaiah by questioning the "imposition" of Hindi in Kannada heartland. There have been protests against not allowing Kannada as an optional language in banking recruitment tests and Hindi signage in metro trains.

Lingayat status

According to the status of a separate religion and the minority tag to the Lingayat community is being viewed as part of the regional identity plan.

The highlight here is on the native origin of Lingayatism, which was founded in the present-day Hyderabad

Karnataka region by the 12th century saint-reformer Basavanna.

Literary figures and Kannada activists form one support base of Mr. Siddaramaiah's strategy. In his presidential address at the Akhila Bharata Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in Mysuru in November, Chandrashekhara Patil, writer, urged people to support a "secular party". Litterateur K. Marulasiddappa, president of the Kuvempu Bhasha Bharati Prathisthana, says neither the BJP nor its president Amit Shah has supported pro-Kannada issues. He is among the Kannada writers to have openly expressed support for the Congress "in the interest of preserving secularism and

democracy."

M.S. Sriram, Visiting Professor, Centre for Public Policy, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, says the BJP's narrative that any devolution of funds to the States is the Centre's "largesse" is only adding to heightened regional sentiment.

But now, even Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Shah are tweeting in Kannada and visiting memorials of Kannada poets.

Kuvempu's ideals

S.G. Siddaramaiah, writer and Chairman of the Kannada Development Authority, questioned Mr. Shah's visit to Kuvempu's home and memorial Kavishaila. He said Kuvempu, revered as the

State's poet laureate, believed in universal humanism and abhorred communal or social divisions.

Kannada scholar Chidanda Murthy and Dalit poet Siddalingaiah urged Mr. Shah during meetings to demonstrate his love for Kannada by giving it primacy and allowing it as an optional language in Central recruitment tests.

Political scientist Muzaffar Assadi acknowledges the resonance of regionalism, but says its effect on an election is unpredictable. "It is difficult to negotiate an undercurrent of cultural identity. However, it is also difficult to quantify it in terms of getting translated to votes," he says.

Acting local

The Congress government in Karnataka has taken several steps to advance the language and culture of the State

- Cabinet approves a tricolour State flag. The proposal is now pending before the Centre
- State has approved a cultural policy to promote language and culture. The policy includes a clause on curbing moral policing and vigilantism
- Proposal for 100% reservation for local people in D group employment in the private sector
- Opposition to the use of Hindi signage in Metro trains and stations
- Push to conduct all Central recruitment exams in Kannada also
- Setting up of a Kannada Chair at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi
- Pushes for more financial autonomy to the State. Opposes the terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission

POLL POURRI



Full steam ahead: A rally in support of Revu Naik Belamagi in Kalaburagi. • ARUN KULKARNI

Unseen trouble

KALABURAGI

The pre-poll alliance between the JD(S) and the BSP has suffered a blow in Kalaburagi. Under the seat-sharing deal, Gulbarga Rural was among the 20 constituencies where the JD(S) was to support BSP candidates. The JD(S) had not fielded its candidate there. However, the scene changed after senior BJP leader Revu Naik Belamagi joined the JD(S). The party fielded him from Gulbarga Rural and offered the BSP Gulbarga Dakshin instead. But JD(S) candidate Basavaraj Diggavi has refused to withdraw the nomination as he has 'already invested heavily' there.

Not living up to the word

BENGALURU

The Congress may be going all out to invoke Kannada pride over the past few months, but the Kannada version of its manifesto showed the Kannada knowledge of its party workers in a poor light. The manifesto released had grammatical bloopers, and the party chose to call it by the English word 'manifesto' rather than the Kannada word *pranaalike*. This has given ammunition for the BJP and the JD(S) to poke fun at Siddaramaiah's love of Kannada.

MES MLA in a tight spot

BELAGAVI

Khanapur MLA Aravind Patil of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti finds himself in a tight spot. In the affidavit he filed, he has claimed that his wife was a homemaker. But an RTI activist learned that his claims were far from the truth. His wife, Sujata Patil, is a teacher in a government Marathi primary school. The MLA's detractors say that Mr. Patil must have felt embarrassed to declare that his wife worked for the government of Karnataka while his party, the MES, has been promoting the idea of merging Belagavi with Maharashtra.

Citizens! Lend me your money, give me your vote

Several candidates are into crowd-funding this time

K.C. DEEPIKA
BENGALURU

The underdog in Indian elections is the candidate whose nomination paper does not boast astronomical figures in the "assets" column. Now, many such candidates urge voters to "invest" in them — with their money as well as valuable vote.

A big success story in crowd-funding in elections was of Dalit activist Jignesh Mewani in Gujarat. Taking a cue, many candidates in the fray for the May 12 Karnataka elections are turning to the common man to fuel their political journey.

P. Ramesh Chander, an engineer-turned-entrepreneur, is contesting on Swaraj India ticket in Mahadevapura, touted as one of the highest "revenue-generating" constituencies. Taking on the incumbent two-time MLA Aravind Limbavali of the BJP and A.C. Srinivas of the Congress, Mr. Chander, 41, has set a target of ₹20 lakh and received ₹44,000 so far.

"Even the ₹5,000 deposit for submitting my nomination was a result of crowd-funding. These people are my investors. They are looking for a change, and there is an obligation and attachment for me to give back as they have invested in me," he says. An episode that



touched his heart, he says, was of a roadside vendor handing over everything she could from her cash box when he was asking for contributions.

"She did not even count how much money she was giving me," he says.

Not just an urban trend

The concept is catching on not just in urban areas. Advocate Sharanappa Sajjihola, 40, Aam Aadmi Party candidate from Gangavathi, says, "The village folk may not know the word 'crowd-funding', but the culture of 'crowd-funding' is there. We have been working here for over a year-and-a-half, and our campaign is generating positive reactions."

"Someone has given his two-wheeler for our use. Another person volunteers to fill fuel in it. People are also donating groceries and their services for our cam-

paign, which is another form of crowd-funding," he says. They have collected ₹1 lakh in cash so far.

Would it not have been easier to take a loan? "I am a common man too. I already have EMIs to pay, loans to repay. If I lose in the elections, I cannot afford to lose everything I have," says a candidate, requesting anonymity.

Big picture

In a few cases, debutants have been pitted against political heavyweights. Do they fear losing people's money if they lose the elections? "I am asking for money to be able to work for the people, give them good governance. It is a small contribution towards a big picture," a candidate says.

Ravi Krishna Reddy, who is contesting as an Independent from Jayanagar in Bengaluru against the incumbent two-time MLA B.N. Vijayakumar and Home Minister Ramalinga Reddy's daughter Sowmya Reddy, started crowd-funding in 2008 and continued it in 2013 and 2014.

"People are funding a movement, honesty and hard work," he says. Having collected nearly ₹6.2 lakh, he is confident of raising ₹25 lakh.

"Back in 2008, 140 people had contributed to my campaign," he says.

Two States, and a multitude of problems

In Belagavi and Bidar, many voters have a Maharashtra link

RISHIKESH BAHADUR DESAI
BELAGAVI

Farmers of Kudrimani village in Belagavi district cross the boundary of two States several times a day. Their homes are in Karnataka, while their farmlands are in villages such as Satrani and Shinoli in Maharashtra.

Every morning, they set out to their fields, carrying ploughs and pickaxes, and cross the boundary to reach their farms. Many of them come home for lunch, have a nap and go back. It is for dinner that they return to Karnataka again.

Living in two States poses several problems — they have to deal with officials of two governments even to sell farm produce or, for instance, to sell or buy land and build houses.

"If we have work in the Revenue Department, we have to go to Karnataka officials, but if we have work in the Agriculture Department, we have to go to Maharashtra," says Madhusudhan Pundalik, who lives in Kudrimani. They have been leading such a life for five decades now.

This predicament has dictated the political choices of the villagers too. At Kudrimani in the Belagavi Rural constituency, which has a population of nearly 4,000 and 2,500 voters, people have for long been suppor-



In a state of flux: Kallappa and Savita Tayi, a farmer couple of Kudrimani in Belagavi, work in their farm across the boundary in Maharashtra. • P.K. BADIGER

ters of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES), hoping that a merger with Maharashtra will put an end to this hassle. "We no longer believe this will happen and changed our loyalties," says B.T. Ramanrao, a BJP supporter for the past two elections.

The general impression here is that rural governance and the cooperative movement is better in Maharashtra.

It's an island

Similar is the story of Chondi Mukhed in Bidar district. It is surrounded by Maharashtra villages, the only connection with Karnataka being a

single road laid by the State Panchayat Raj Department. Civic amenities such as power and water supply are provided by Maharashtra, which gets paid by the Karnataka government. In 2011, Maharashtra's power supply company disconnected supply saying Karnataka had not paid the bills for three years.

However, Chondi Mukhed's unusual positioning between two States does not seem to be a poll issue here. The MES does not have a presence in Bidar district, and the village has generally not acted any differently from the political attitude of Aurad taluk to which it belongs.

Modi honours Tibetan institute

₹360 crore to develop Buddhist circuit in 5 States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday honoured a prominent institute of Tibetan studies as part of celebrations to mark Buddha Purnima. At an event held in New Delhi, Mr. Modi said the issues facing the world can be solved by following the path of the Buddha.

"We are fortunate to have the teachings of Lord Buddha among us even after 2,500 years. Government has allocated ₹360 crore for the development of the Buddhist circuit. This will help in developing Buddhist spots in U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and A.P.," Mr. Modi said after honouring the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies with the Vaisakh Samman Prasasti Patra. He also honoured the All India Bhikshu Sangha of Bodhi Gaya.



Narendra Modi offers Sangh Dana at the inauguration of the Buddha Jayanti celebrations in New Delhi on Monday. • PTI

Expelled RLD MLA joins BJP in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The MLA from Chaprauli seat in Baghat district of western Uttar Pradesh joined the BJP on Monday.

Sahendra Singh Ramala was inducted into the BJP here a month after he was expelled by Ajit Singh's RLD on charges of "indiscipline" during the Rajya Sabha polls.

Mr. Ramala was the sole RLD MLA in the U.P. Assembly. Mr. Ajit Singh expelled him from the party

when he hobbled with the BJP during the crucial Rajya Sabha polls in which the BJP managed to push through all its candidates due to cross-voting.

Symbolic significance
The Chaprauli seat has a symbolic significance for the RLD as it was held by both Mr. Ajit Singh and his father, former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh.

While inducting Mr. Ramala and his supporters in-

to the party, BJP U.P. president Mahendra Nath Pandey referred to the legacy of the late Charan Singh. "Chaudhary Sahab has deep roots in the constituency," he said.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Ramala said he wanted the BJP because he picked to stay close to the ruling party. "Keeping in mind the development of my constituency and to fulfil the expectations of people who voted for me, I had only one option, to stay with

the government," he said. Asked about the RLD, Mr. Ramala said, "I feel that Chaudhary Ajit Singhji does not have any issues or thought of his own. That's why he squandered the legacy of Chaudhary Charan Singhji's ideals."

In the 2017 U.P. Assembly polls, Mr. Ramala had defeated the BJP's Satendra Singh by 3,800 votes to secure Chaprauli.

British Home Secretary Rudd steps down

Her abrupt resignation throws the Theresa May government's tough approach to immigration into uncertainty

VIDYA RAM
LONDON
Britain's tough approach to immigration was thrown into uncertainty as the Minister in charge of the Home Office, Amber Rudd, stepped down late on Sunday, following several weeks of intense scrutiny of her policies both towards illegal immigration and Commonwealth nations.

This is the fifth governmental resignation since last May's general election, adding to the tumult at the heart of government with less than a year to Brexit and weeks before talks on Britain's involvement in the EU customs union are set to take place. She was replaced by Sajid Javid, a Cabinet member who will be the first South Asian to head the Home Office.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Ms. Rudd acknowledged that she had "inadvertently misled" MPs on a parliamentary committee when testifying last week that she had not been aware of departmental targets for the deportation of illegal migrants. Following the testimony, several documents were leaked to the press that suggested targets had indeed been set by the department as part of efforts to cut net migration to the U.K.

There were targets

On Sunday, *The Guardian* revealed that Ms. Rudd had written to Prime Minister Theresa May in 2017 outlining "ambitious but deliverable" plans to increase the number of illegal migrants deported by over 10% in coming years.

"Clearly there were targets, and Amber Rudd was

aware of them," said Labour's spokesperson on Home Affairs, Dianne Abbott, who called on the government to change its "hostile environment" towards immigration that had created the context of the crisis.

"The architect of this crisis, Theresa May, must now step forward to give an immediate, full and honest account of how this inexcusable situation happened on her watch," she added. Ms. May preceded Ms. Rudd as Home Minister.

Windrush generation

The crisis has unfolded rapidly over the past few weeks after it emerged that changes to Britain's immigration system had resulted in injustices to members of the Windrush generation – men and women largely from former British colonies in the Caribbean whose families had been encouraged to come to the U.K. to fill labour shortages before legislation in 1971 no longer gave Commonwealth nationals the right to remain in the U.K.

Because new rules required individuals to produce documentation to receive a host of public services, and treated anyone without documentation as illegal, many who were British citizens were treated as illegals. Some were unable to work, some were denied life-saving medical treatment, or were unable to return to Britain from holiday abroad or even deported.

It is not known exactly how many could have been impacted though there are fears that it could have affected others from across the Commonwealth, including

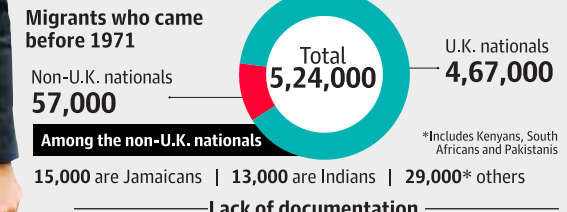


Revelations by The Guardian
• Documents show that there was communication between Rudd and her officials and also Rudd and the Prime Minister on increasing the number of enforced deportations by 10% over the next few years

Policy backlash

Amber Rudd, Home Secretary and one of the most 'pro-Remain' voices in Theresa May's Cabinet, resigned over the question of whether she knew of the immigration targets in her Ministry

• The U.K. kept its doors open to people from the Commonwealth nations till 1971. About 57,000 of them face deportation now



*Includes Kenyans, South Africans and Pakistanis

- Lack of documentation**
- Some children, travelling on their parents' passports, were never formally naturalised
 - Some of them moved to the U.K. before the countries in which they were born became independent, so they assumed they were British
 - The Home Office did not keep a record
 - In 2010, landing cards belonging to the Windrush migrants were destroyed



Hostile approach

• Theresa May as Home Secretary had vowed to create a 'very hostile environment' for immigrants, setting an annual migration target of 1,00,000

• Her policy forces people living in the country to prove their right to reside there at every turn, including while renting a home and while availing health care. This makes them vulnerable to abuse at the hands of employers, government personnel and other officials

from India. According to the Oxford Migration Observatory, an estimated 57,000 non-U.K. nationals arrived in Britain before 1971, including 13,000 from India. Many may have documentation to demonstrate their status and therefore do not face the difficulties of the Windrush generation. Sources at the Indian High Commission in London said they had not been contacted by anyone over such difficulties.

Ms. Rudd's departure raises wider challenges for the government. She was a close ally of Ms. May. She was also one of the Cabinet Ministers most outspoken in favour of a "soft" Brexit, so her departure will threaten the fragile balance in the Cabinet ahead of a crucial period for policy-making.

Sajid Javid is new Home Minister

VIDYA RAM
LONDON

A South Asian will head Britain's Home Office for the first time as the government sought to contain an escalating crisis over its treatment of Commonwealth citizens and its tough immigration regime more widely.

Sajid Javid, the son of a bus driver who emigrated to Britain from Pakistan, is a former banker and MD at Deutsche Bank, who became an MP in 2009 and a Cabinet Minister in 2014.

He has been Britain's Minister in charge of Communities and local government since 2016, remaining in the Cabinet despite his clear



Britain's newly appointed Home Secretary Sajid Javid. •AFP

government (also including Prime Minister, head of the Treasury and head of the Foreign office).

Mr. Javid has divided opinion since entering politics. Whereas the no-nonsense approach he brought to the government following his experience in banking won him plaudits early on, his handling of the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower tragedy has faced criticism.

Last month, he was forced to admit that the government would not be able to fulfill their pledge to permanently rehouse all survivors of the fire, which killed 71 people, within the space of a year.

Afghan attacks add to growing insecurity

Taliban and IS both remain strong

REUTERS
KABUL

Monday's attacks in Afghanistan, a week after 60 people were killed at a voter registration centre in the city, underlined mounting insecurity despite repeated government pledges to tighten defences.

"These attacks caused untold human suffering to Afghan families," said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the top UN official in Afghanistan.

The attacks in rapid succession were a grim reminder of the strength of both the Taliban and Islamic State (IS)'s emerging Afghanistan branch to wreak violence despite stepped up U.S. air attacks under President Donald Trump's new policy.

Taliban offensive

Taliban militants announced their usual spring offensive last week and there has been heavy fighting in several areas of the country since.

The Afghan Journalists Safety Committee (AFJSC) said nine journalists were killed in Kabul, the worst toll for media workers in a single attack in the country. Afghanistan was already considered one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, with at least 20 killed last year. Last week, unidentified gunmen shot a journalist in the southern city of Kandahar.

Monday's attack was the most serious on the Afghan media since 2016, when seven workers for Tolo News were killed in an attack claimed by the Taliban.



AFP photographer Shah Marai who was killed on Monday. •AFP

Eight of the journalists were from Afghan outlets: two reporters from the Mashal TV, a cameraman and a reporter working for ITV, three reporters from Radio Azadi and one from Tolo News, the AFJSC said.

The French news agency Agence France-Presse said its chief photographer in Afghanistan, Shah Marai, was killed.

A Reuters photographer was slightly hurt by shrapnel.

In Khost, Ahmad Shah, who worked for the BBC's Pashto language service as well as for Reuters, was killed on the outskirts of the city, according to Talib Mangal, spokesman for Khost's provincial governor. The BBC confirmed the death in a statement on Twitter. There was no indication of any direct link between the attacks in Kabul and Khost.

Globally, it was the worst attack on journalists in a single incident since 31 reporters and photographers were killed in a massacre in the southern Philippines in 2009.

26 pro-regime fighters killed in Syria raid

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT

Missile strikes on central Syria killed 26 pro-regime fighters, most of them Iranians, a monitor said on Monday, in a raid that bore the hallmarks of Israel.

The Syrian regime, which denounced a "fresh aggression" after the strikes, meanwhile continued to flush out armed groups from the capital with more deals to transfer fighters to the country's north.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, missile strikes hit two military targets in Aleppo and Hama provinces late Sunday. The strike on Hama province hit a base known as the 47th Brigade where pro-regime fighters are stationed. Both hits destroyed surface-to-surface missiles, the monitor said.

"At least 26 fighters were killed, including four Syrians," in the Hama strike, said Rami Abdel Rahman, who heads the Britain-based monitoring organisation.

"The others are foreign fighters, a vast majority of them Iranians," he said. "Given the nature of the target, it is likely to have been an Israeli strike."

Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz told army radio on Monday morning that he was "not aware" of the latest strikes.

The latest strikes came amid heightened tensions in Syria after Damascus and its ally Iran accused Israel on April 9 of conducting deadly strikes against a military base in the centre of the country. At least 14 soldiers, including seven Iranians, were killed in the strike on a military base in Homs province.

Putin, Macron urge strict observance of Iran n-deal

There is no alternative to the agreement, says Russia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin and French leader Emmanuel Macron on Monday called for the "strict observance" of the current Iran nuclear accord, with U.S. President Donald Trump still deciding whether to scrap the agreement.

"The Presidents of Russia and France spoke in favour of keeping the Plan and its strict observance," the Kremlin said, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Macron calls Putin

The statement was released after Mr. Macron called Mr. Putin to inform him of his talks with Mr. Trump in the United States.

Mr. Trump faces a May 12



Emmanuel Macron with Vladimir Putin in Paris in May 2017. •REUTERS

deadline to decide on the fate of the Iran nuclear accord and is demanding changes that European capitals believe would represent a legal breach.

On Sunday, U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton said Mr. Trump had not yet decided whether to scrap the accord. Mr. Macron, who

held talks with Mr. Trump last week, has positioned himself as an emissary for European officials seeking a compromise that would keep the deal intact.

Russia has said that there was "no alternative" to the agreement and that Iran's position was on the issue was paramount. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani rejected any hopes of rewriting the nuclear deal.

Meanwhile, warning Mr. Trump against quitting the deal, Iran's Atomic Energy organisation Ali Akbar Salehi told the state TV that Tehran has the technical capability to enrich uranium to a higher level than it could before the deal was reached.

"I hope Trump comes to his senses and stays in the deal," he said

NY blaze kills 3 Indian-origin people

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW YORK

An Indian-origin woman and her grandparents died and her two children were injured after a fast-moving blaze swept through their home in Queens, New York City, a media report said.

Harleen Maggo and her paternal grandparents Ragvir Kaur-Kainth, 82, and Pyara Kainth, 87, died in the incident late on Saturday.

Ms. Maggo's two children,

an eight-year-old girl and a six-year-old boy, were trapped inside the building as it burnt. Firefighters rescued both of them. The girl was in a critical condition and the boy in a stable condition at the Nassau University Medical Center, fire officials said. Seven others were taken to local hospitals with serious but not life-threatening injuries, New York City Fire Department Deputy Chief Michael Gala said in

the report. Fire officials are investigating the cause of the blaze and are still unsure where it started.

Ms. Maggo was staying over with her grandparents as part of a family gathering to celebrate a cousin's upcoming marriage, neighbours said. Her brother Param Singh said that she had originally made it out of the home but went back inside with her uncle to try to save her grandparents.

ELSEWHERE



'Iran lied about not seeking n-weapons'

REUTERS
AMMAN
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday that Iran had lied about not pursuing nuclear weapons and had continued to preserve and expand its nuclear weapons knowledge after signing a 2015 deal with global powers. "...In 2017 Iran moved its nuclear weapons files to a highly secret location in Tehran," he said. •REUTERS

'Press Myanmar to take back Rohingya migrants'

DHAKA
Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday urged the UN Security Council to press Myanmar to take back its Rohingya nationals even as she called on India, Russia, China and Japan to play a stronger role in resolving the crisis. "They want to go back... So the [UNSC] can play a very pivotal role," she said. •PTI

U.S. is open to a two-party solution in West Asia: Pompeo

Secretary urges Palestine to return to the peace process

REUTERS
AMMAN

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo suggested on Monday that he was open to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, saying a "two-party solution" was likely in his first extensive comments on peace efforts since taking the job last week. "With respect to the two-state solution, the parties will ultimately make the decision. We are certainly open to a two-party solution as a likely outcome," he said at a news conference in Jordan after a visit to Israel.

"The Israelis and Palestinians need to have political engagement. We urge the Palestinians to return to that political dialogue," he added.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said he would support a two-state solution if the two sides agree. The White House is preparing a new Israeli-Palestinian



Mike Pompeo with Jordan Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi in Amman. •AFP

peace plan. Palestinians have rejected U.S. peace-making efforts since Mr. Trump decided to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move its Embassy to the city, wanted by Palestinians as capital of their own state.

Jordan, the final stop

Amman was Mr. Pompeo's last stop before he returns to Washington DC, where he has not yet entered the State Department. Moments after being sworn in as Secretary of State on Thursday, Mr. Pompeo immediately left for

a meeting in Brussels, followed by a visit to allies in West Asia.

"(The peace process) is an incredible priority for the United States to provide whatever assistance we can to allow the two parties to come to a resolution on this incredibly long standing and important conflict," Mr. Pompeo said, standing alongside Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi.

Mr. Pompeo also made his first comments on the violence along the Israel-Gaza Strip border, where Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinians in two separate incidents on Sunday after a month of Palestinian protests. "We do believe the Israelis have a right to defend themselves," he said.

Turning to Syria, he said the United States was "in perfect accord" with Jordan on Syria, including the preservation of a "de-escalation zone" in the south.

'Korea truce village could host summit'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump suggested on Monday that his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un be held in the truce village that straddles the border separating the two Koreas.

This is his first public comment on a potential site.

"Numerous countries are being considered for the MEETING, but would Peace House/Freedom House, on the Border of North & South Korea, be a more Representative, Important and Lasting site than a third party country? Just asking!" Mr. Trump tweeted.

The Peace House in Panmunjom, the truce village in the Demilitarised Zone that separates the two Koreas, was where Mr. Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met on Friday for a historic summit.

MARKET WATCH

	30-04-2018	% CHANGE
Sensex	35,160	0.55
Gold	32,200	-0.37
Brent oil	74.80	0.32

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	407.30	-4.85
Asian Paints	1201.70	-20.10
Axis Bank	517.30	-21.90
Bajaj Auto	2952.60	5.45
Bajaj Finserv	5482.60	47.35
Bajaj Finance	1907.70	6.55
Bharti Airtel	409.55	0.80
BPCL	387.35	-2.80
Cipla	607.40	7.55
Coal India	285.00	-1.75
Dr Reddys Lab	2109.85	12.10
Eicher Motors	31188.60	-410.70
GAIL (India)	325.10	-5.70
Grasim Ind	1093.70	6.90
HCL Tech	1052.75	11.10
HDFC	1883.25	29.50
HDFC Bank	1944.30	20.90
Hero MotoCorp	3732.25	18.75
Hindalco	235.65	0.70
HPCL	304.50	-1.45
Hind Unilever	1508.90	34.95
Indiabulls NPL	1307.00	-9.55
ICICI Bank	284.20	-3.70
IndusInd Bank	1898.00	13.30
Bharti Infratel	313.10	-7.15
Infosys	1199.50	14.30
Indian Oil Corp	162.30	-2.05
ITC	281.45	2.05
Kotak Bank	1211.10	22.35
L&T	1400.90	23.15
Lupin	811.55	10.10
M&M	873.30	10.60
Mauriti Suzuki	8814.95	31.60
NTPC	172.15	1.40
ONGC	180.55	-0.15
PowerGrid Corp	207.85	-0.05
Reliance Ind	963.30	-33.00
State Bank	246.40	3.80
Sun Pharma	528.40	4.25
Tata Motors	340.40	3.50
Tata Steel	594.95	5.15
TCS	3532.10	80.15
Tech Mahindra	670.60	0.10
Titan	981.80	11.80
UltraTech Cement	4108.85	46.50
UPL	729.85	-24.50
Vedanta	298.40	4.35
Wipro	278.75	2.60
YES Bank	362.00	13.10
Zee Entertainment	588.05	-3.60

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

April 30 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	42.2	(42.8)
22 ct gold (1g)	2966	(2990)

RIL falls 3%, Jio ARPU a concern

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Shares of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) declined more than 3% on Monday amid investor concern over the operational performance at the conglomerate's Jio telecom unit.

RIL on Friday reported a 17.3% increase in fourth-quarter net profit to ₹9,435 crore. Profit at Jio, however, rose a marginal 1.2% to ₹510 crore as average revenue per user (ARPU) shrank to ₹137 from ₹154 in the preceding quarter.

On the BSE, RIL shares closed at ₹963.10, down 3.18%. RIL was the biggest loser among Sensex stocks after Axis Bank.

"Elevated capex, high effective debt and Jio's balance sheet take the sheen away from RIL's remarkable 17% growth in EPS to ₹59 in FY2018," Kotak Institutional Equities said in a report. "We expect growth trajectory to slow down from exit-quarter EPS of ₹16 until Jio picks up, given (1) near full utilisation of petchem projects, (2) limited upside to downstream margins," Kotak said, while maintaining a 'reduce' rating on the stock with a target price of ₹930.

'No excise duty cut on fuels for now'

Every rupee slashed on petrol, diesel will result in a loss of ₹13,000 crore: Economic Affairs Secretary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The government is not considering cutting excise duty on petrol and diesel yet as rates have not touched levels that could trigger such an action, said Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg.

State oil firms have not revised petrol and diesel price for almost a week now. This, after petrol price hit a 55-month high of ₹74.63 a litre and diesel rates climbed to a record high of ₹65.93.



Fuelling costs: The Centre levies ₹19.48 excise duty on a litre of petrol and ₹15.33 per litre on diesel. • VIJAY SONEJI

In an interview to PTI, Mr. Garg said that oil prices can impact the government's fiscal maths if they result in a spike in rates of domestic cooking gas (LPG) – the only commodity that is subsidised now.

"Otherwise there is no direct subsidy any longer," he

said. "Indirect subsidy/impact comes, if crude oil prices reach a certain level (and there might be some rethink about excise duty, etc. That's not happened so far."

Without indicating the level of oil prices that could trigger an excise duty cut, he said, "If the level [of prices now] does not go up, there is no reason [for excise duty cut]." Every rupee cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel will result in a revenue loss of ₹13,000 crore.

Asked if there is any thinking of cutting excise duty or asking PSU oil firms to hold rates till the elections in Karnataka, he said, "We have not seen anything [on it]."

The Central Government levies ₹19.48 excise duty on a litre of petrol and ₹15.33 per litre on diesel. State sales tax or VAT varies from state to state. In Delhi, VAT on petrol is ₹15.84 and ₹9.68 a litre on diesel.

Korea. "I think demand-supply situation is also turning alright. I think those [geopolitical issues] are also getting out of the way. So I don't expect prices to go up further and that's why I said ideally it should come down," he said. State-owned oil firms, which have been since June last year revising auto fuel prices daily, kept petrol and diesel rates unchanged for the sixth day in a row on Monday.

Global scenario

The government is hoping that geopolitical tensions would ease and U.S. shale oil would help ease oil prices that are near three-year high. "Fundamental reasons, to my mind, don't exist for oil prices to go up further from both demand and supply situation," Mr. Garg said.

The recent spurt may have been because of stock drawdowns, trade tensions and geopolitics around Syria and

For a new prescription

India's pharma exports have grown by 2.43% in FY2018 compared with the prior period. Among regions, North America continues to be the top destination in terms of absolute value of exports despite a dip in the last fiscal

Top three regions (in terms of absolute value)			Top three regions (in terms of change %)		
Region	FY 18*	Change %	Region	FY 18*	Change %
North America	4,831.5	-8.04	CIS	659.41	16.79
Africa	3,016.09	4.99	Other European Countries	136.94	16.59
EU	2,464.08	7.65	Other America	45.46	12.6

*Data shows exports from April-February in \$mn and the change in value in FY 2018 compared with year-earlier period

Pharma exports climb to \$17.25 bn

'Negative growth in U.S. no dampener'

N. RAVI KUMAR HYDERABAD

Pharmaceutical exports from India, a key component of the country's foreign trade basket, are estimated to have grown to \$17.25 billion in the financial year ended March 31 or almost 2.5% higher than the previous fiscal. The growth assumes significance in the context of challenges under which it was achieved, from increased competition in the mainstay generics space, particularly in the U.S., pricing pressure as well as heightened regulatory scrutiny.

GST hiccups

The run-up and roll-out of Goods and Services Tax (GST) also did not make things easy for the industry. "Overall, it was \$17.25 billion," Pharmexcil director general Ravi Uday Bhaskar said, pointing out that this was the first time the exports increased despite a negative growth in the U.S., the largest market contributing to over 31% of the revenue. During the 11 months up to February, pharma ex-

ports to North America totalled \$4.83 billion or 8.04% lower compared with \$5.25 billion achieved during the same period of the previous fiscal. This is also the first time pharma exports have raced past the \$17 billion mark. In 2016-17, it was \$16.84 billion and in 2015-16 \$16.89 billion. Markets wise, the major growth drivers were Asia (excluding West Asia), CIS and Latin American countries, according to details made available by Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council of India.

Giving details, he said after an initial setback, the exports have been growing and March was the fifth consecutive month of growth. During the 11 months ended February, the exports increased 2.32% to \$15.51 billion, with the change in revenue being \$351.35 million.

According to the April-February figures, export of bulk drugs and formulations – together constituting 92% of the total exports – grew by 5.29% and 19.95% respectively. A cause for concern was the negative growth in vaccine exports.

Interest, fee income, fall in bad loans lift Kotak Mahindra Bank's profit 15%

Vice-Chairman Uday Kotak redesignated as managing director and CEO

REUTERS MUMBAI

Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. reported a 15% rise in fourth-quarter net profit on higher interest and fee incomes and as its bad loans fell.



total loans dropped to 2.22% as of end-March from 2.31% in the preceding quarter and 2.59% a year earlier. Net non-performing loans, after provisions, were 0.98% of total loans as of end-March.

Net profit rose to ₹1,124 crore (\$169.34 million) for the three months ended March 31 from ₹976 crore a year earlier, the Mumbai-based bank, fifth-biggest among the country's private sector lenders, said in a statement.

That was in line with analysts' expectations of ₹1,129 crore net profit for the lender, which is 30% owned by its CEO Uday Kotak.

Kotak Mahindra's gross bad loans as a percentage of

year ago to ₹2,580 crore as loans as of end-March grew 25% from a year earlier. Net interest margin, however, fell to 4.35% in the March quarter from 4.63%.

Governance move

Meanwhile, the bank's board of directors redesignated Uday Kotak as managing director and chief executive officer with effect from May 1, 2018. Mr. Kotak was earlier executive vice-chairman and managing director.

"The Board of Directors has redesignated Mr. Uday Kotak as managing director and CEO with effect from 1 May 2018, in line with good governance practice," the

bank said in a notification to the exchanges. Mr. Kotak was the only private bank official to have a vice-chairman designation. The other bank chiefs were designated as MD and CEO. Mr. Kotak had headed a SEBI panel that had recommended the splitting of CEO, MD and chairman posts. The markets regulator had accepted the recommendation.

The bank also said Shankar Acharya, part-time chairman, would retire on July 19. The bank's board appointed Prakash Apte, 63, as the part-time chairman to succeed Dr. Acharya.

(With Manojit Saha in Mumbai)

Panel to take up telecom issues today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Telecom Commission, the highest decision making body in the Department of Telecommunications, is likely to discuss key issues, including in-flight connectivity and net neutrality, at its meeting on Tuesday.

The panel may also take up for examination the need for an ombudsman to address grievances of consumers. TRAI had submitted its recommendations on the most of the issues to be taken up on Tuesday. The method for allocation spectrum bands, E and V, which are capable of transmitting data at 1000 megabit per second, is expected to be taken up for approval.

HDFC Q4 net profit rises 29%

Consolidated net profit at ₹3,961.17 cr. against ₹3,079.33 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Mortgage lender HDFC on Monday posted a 28.63% rise in its consolidated net profit at ₹3,961.17 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2018. The company had a net profit of ₹3,079.33 crore in the January-March quarter of 2016-17.



Keki Mistry

Total income during the quarter grew 17.78% to ₹21,248.79 crore as against ₹18,040.59 crore in the year-earlier period, HDFC said in a regulatory filing. For the entire 2017-18 fiscal, the lender's net profit rose 47% to ₹16,254.96 crore from ₹11,051.12 crore in 2016-17.

On standalone basis, HDFC posted a 39.23% rise in net profit to ₹2,846.22 crore in the reported quarter as compared with ₹2,044.2 crore in the year-earlier period.

Total standalone income

HDFC's gross non-performing loans as on March 31, 2018 stood at ₹4,019 crore. This is equivalent to 1.11% of the loan portfolio.

The non-performing loans of the individual portfolio stood at 0.64%, while that of the non-individual portfolio stood at 2.18%, it added. Net interest margin for the year ended March 31, 2018 was 4%.

Loan disbursements rise

HDFC's total individual loan disbursements grew by 29% during the year ended March 31, 2018.

HDFC's board has approved raising up to ₹85,000 crore through issuance of debt securities. It also approved the reappointment of Keki Mistry as the managing director (designated as vice-chairman and chief executive officer) of the firm for a period of three years.

Maruti shifts gear on CNG, hybrids

Automaker won't wait for electric vehicle prices to decline: chairman Bhargava

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) plans to go full throttle to develop various kinds of alternate technologies, including CNG powered cars and hybrid vehicles, and not just electric vehicles (EVs), a top company official said.



R.C. Bhargava

'Keen to partner govt.'

The carmaker, which already has a market share of 50% in the domestic passenger vehicle segment, is keen to partner government or oil companies to push for CNG powered vehicles in the country.

"We are going to try and push this acceleration in use of CNG, hybrid and other alternate technologies. We are going to push all technologies and not limit ourselves to one technology," MSI chairman R.C. Bhargava said. He said the company

gava said. Without waiting for the cost of electric vehicles to come down, MSI wants to go out for alternatives like CNG in the country.

"The government has already put the use of CNG for transportation at higher priority than its use for power generation. We would like to use CNG for cars as far as possible. CNG is best suited for small cars," he said.

If small cars were to be electrified, it would require substantial reduction in battery cost which means technology of some sort has to come to the rescue.

He added that the Indian market was different from any other market in the world, with 75% of its cars costing less than ₹5 lakh.

"There is no market in the world where there is such dominance of small cars. The implication for electric cars is that, at today's battery

costs, price of the vehicle goes up by ₹6-7 lakh. Now, on ₹5 lakh cars YoY, add another ₹6-7 lakh; do you think anybody would buy? Affordability becomes a huge problem," Mr. Bhargava said. "While certainly we need to push electric cars, we should not forget CNG, hybrids, ethanol and methanol. Our view is to keep all options open, put all these options in front of customer, and then let him/her decide what is best suited for his/her requirements," he said.

All such vehicles run on alternative fuels and technologies, help in reducing oil imports and air pollution. "So it doesn't matter if it is achieved by electric vehicle or CNG car," he added.

Mr. Bhargava said the company would even try to work out a joint programme with oil companies for CNG push in the country.

IN BRIEF

**Biologics, research to drive Biocon's growth**

NEW DELHI
Biotechnology major Biocon has said biologics and research services would continue to be the main drivers of growth for the firm in the current fiscal year. The biologics and research services businesses grew 47% and 45%, respectively, in the fourth quarter of the last fiscal. The firm crossed a milestone with its insulin Glargine receiving regulatory approvals in Europe and Australia and biosimilar Trastuzumab in Turkey. PTI

Rane (Madras) profit doubles to ₹41.8 crore

CHENNAI
Rane (Madras) Ltd., a leading manufacturer of steering and suspension products and die casting components, has reported a standalone net profit of ₹41.8 crore for the year ended March 31, 2018, against ₹20.7 crore for the year-earlier period led by robust demand from Indian original equipment customers and improved operational performance. The board declared final dividend of ₹7.50 per share.

Cut clearance time for food cargoes: Ministry

NEW DELHI
The Commerce Ministry has asked the FSSAI and customs authorities to clear import consignments of food products in about 48 hours at ports. The move would help India improve its ranking in Trading Across Borders, one of the 10 parameters of ease of doing business. India ranked 146th in Trading Across Borders component, out of 190 countries ranked by World Bank in its latest report. PTI

Walmart eyes overseas reset

Retailer aims to partner with players in U.K., India in a bid to regain market share

**REUTERS
NEW YORK**

Walmart Inc.'s urgency to stem market share losses to rivals around the world is driving it to partner with local players in the U.K. and India, even as it scales back in some other markets like Brazil.

The world's largest retailer is in talks to merge its U.K. arm ASDA with J Sainsbury Plc in which it will hold a minority stake. Walmart is also looking to acquire a majority stake in India's leading online retailer Flipkart for \$10 billion to \$12 billion after years of underperformance there.

The moves underscore Walmart's renewed focus on catching up with competitors, ranging from grocer Aldi Inc. to Amazon.com Inc., in key international markets. The retailers underperforming international business contributed less than a quarter to its total revenue of \$500.3 billion in fiscal 2018.

"Walmart has simply been too slow to react when it comes to their overseas business," said Burt Flickinger, managing director, Strategic Resource Group. "They have finally started taking corrective action and are now dedicating their resources to where they think they can grow," he said.

Shift in approach

It also marks a shift in Walmart's traditional approach of building a business on its own.

"Walmart is clearly moving away from trying to crack tough foreign markets by itself to striking partnerships because it realises that is the fastest way to bridge the gap with competitors," said Laura Kennedy, vice president, retail sales and shopper practice at Kantar Consulting. A Walmart spokesman



Premium buy: Investors see a Flipkart deal as Walmart's best chance to have a fair fight with Amazon in India. ■REUTERS

declined to comment on the negotiations in the U.K. and India.

Overall, sales from Walmart International, which runs about 6,300 stores globally, stood at \$118.07 billion in the fiscal year ended 2018, down nearly 14% from \$136.5 billion in 2014. This was in large part due to adverse currency movements, which hurt the money repatriated from its foreign arms, but also because of a series of missteps in major markets around the world. In an effort to fix its international performance, Walmart in January appointed COO Judith McKenna to run its international unit and has indicated it will focus on its core North American markets and growth markets like China and India.

Walmart's international woes have been exacerbated by slow decision-making over the years and even initial talks with Flipkart began as far back as 2016.

Walmart initially entered the Indian market in 2007 through a joint venture with Bharti Enterprises, years before Amazon debuted there. That venture was called off in 2013 and its presence in

India has remained largely static since then, at least in part due to restrictions around foreign investment in physical retail in India.

Meanwhile, Amazon jumped in with a less regulated online marketplace offering, retail consultants and investors said. Amazon now holds about 27% of India's burgeoning e-commerce market, according to Euro-monitor, where Walmart remains a footnote and only operates 21 cash-and-carry wholesale stores that sell to businesses.

Walmart's slow-footedness means if a deal is announced, Flipkart could be Walmart's largest acquisition to date, potentially at a steep premium to what SoftBank Group paid for a stake in the company less than a year ago.

International blunders

Walmart's international moves over the years have involved a series of blunders.

For example, Walmart bet on an unprofitable, second-tier online retailer in China in 2011 and has since been behind Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. In 2016, Walmart

sold its online business in China to pick up a stake in the country's second-ranked retailer JD.com.

In Brazil, Walmart has struggled to gain traction after a decade, while in the U.K. it has been unable to stem market share declines to hard discounters like Aldi Inc. and Lidl. Now, Walmart is trying to offload a majority stake in its Brazilian operations to private equity firm Advent International. And on Saturday, Sainsbury said it and Walmart's British unit Asda are in talks to create the country's biggest super-market group.

Their combination, which some said shows Walmart's retrenching in the market, would surpass Tesco's grocery market share and be worth up to £15 billions (\$20.7 billion).

Jump-start global growth

Whether Walmart's latest moves will turn Walmart International into the growth engine it once was remains to be seen, consultants said. For now at least, investors have largely supported the decisions to jump-start global growth made by Chief Executive Doug McMillon as exemplified by the market reaction to the talks in India.

"In the short term, the Flipkart deal may look pricey, but the markets haven't punished Walmart because investors realise this is probably their best chance to have a fair fight with Amazon in India," Ken Murphy, portfolio manager at Aberdeen Standard Investments, said.

Walmart's shares fell 20% from an all-time high in January largely due to concerns around its online performance in the U.S. They have, however, risen 27% in the past year, outperforming the S&P 500 index, which rose 12% during the same period.

Constantia aims to double India revenue in five years

Austrian flexible packaging firm to focus on organic growth

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI**

Having acquired a majority stake in Kolkata-based Creative Polypack Ltd. for an unspecified amount, Constantia Flexibles, the world's fourth-largest producer of flexible packaging, said it planned to double sales revenue in India in five years.

While the Austrian company acquired majority control in Creative Polypack and its group companies recently, it had acquired majority stake in Parikh Packaging of Ahmedabad in 2013.

€100 mn sales

"Through our subsidiaries Parikh Packaging and Creative Polypack, we have already reached sales revenue of



Alexander Baumgartner

€100 million and have become the third-largest player in India," said Alexander Baumgartner, CEO, Constantia Flexibles.

"We have now set a target to double our revenue to €200 million by 2022." "The flexible packing market in India is expected to grow by more than 10% in the next five years and we can

achieve our target through organic growth and investment in new technologies," he said.

So far, the company had invested €18 million (₹150 crore) in Parikh Packaging. Currently, Parikh Packaging is investing €12 million (₹100 crore) in a new greenfield plant at Ahmedabad to produce sustainable laminates.

This facility would start production in 2019. Besides, Creative Polypack with facilities at Kolkata and Puducherry, among others, would be investing €6 million on an average every year for four to five years to add capacity. With these two acquisitions, Constantia is eyeing the top position in India, senior officials said.

Engineering exports rise 17% to \$76 billion

U.S. remained the top market in FY18

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA**

India's engineering exports, which account for 25% of the country's total merchandise shipments, touched \$76 billion during 2017-18, growing almost 17% year-on-year.

The performance had been attributed to the metal sector with the U.S. remaining a top market, according to Ravi Sehgal, chairman, Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) of India

Iron and steel

Iron and steel exports rose 29.4% during April-March 2017-18 to \$11.2 billion. The shipments to the U.S. rose 14.8% to \$6.8 billion during the period.

The U.S. continued to re-

main the topmost exporting destination for India's engineering products, registering 44.3% growth during the last fiscal.

Mr. Sehgal said since the U.S. economy was growing at a steady and rapid pace, "we should be able to take advantage. However, at the policy level, we are expecting lot more support from the government, including faster clearance of tax refunds."

The U.S. was also the largest importer of Indian 'Industrial machinery' for 2017-18 recording 25% growth followed by the U.K., Bangladesh and Germany, which were the other key markets for such machinery, the council said.

SBI not to hold Kolkata meeting

**INDRANI DUTTA
KOLKATA**

India's largest lender, the State Bank of India (SBI), will not hold its annual meeting at Kolkata this year, breaking from the decades-old practice, officials said.

It had been the SBI's tradition to announce fourth-quarter and annual results in the city. There would be a break from the tradition this year. This was confirmed by senior officials.

Incidentally there is no legal binding on the SBI to hold the meet in the city as it is not based here.

However, this was a time-honoured tradition, maintained for sentimental reasons. The practice may now come to an end.

Dhoni, Watson set up another thrilling win for Super Kings

Pant and Vijay Shankar threaten to take Daredevils over the line but the target of 212 proves too big



S. DIPAK RAGAV
PUNE

Chennai Super Kings turned the clock back in scripting its textbook style of matchplay – posting a huge total and applying the squeeze with the help of scoreboard pressure – to edge Delhi Daredevils by 13 runs.

Put in, CSK made 211 for four after Shane Watson's quickfire 78 off 40 balls set it

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Chennai Super Kings	8	6	2	12	0.553
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	6	2	12	0.514
Kings XI Punjab	7	5	2	10	0.228
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	4	4	8	0.110
Rajasthan Royals	7	3	4	6	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	7	2	5	4	0.033
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	2	5	4	-0.447
Delhi Daredevils	8	2	6	4	-0.509

*till the CSK-DD match on April 30

up for skipper M.S. Dhoni and Ambati Rayudu to flourish at the end.

In reply, Rishabh Pant made a match of it with a 45-ball 79 after Daredevils were reduced to 74 for four. Pant added 88 runs for the fifth wicket with Vijay Shankar, who played a very good supporting role with an unbeaten 54.

Pant began his innings with a six and a four off Watson to get going immediately, but was involved in an awful mix-up with skipper Shreyas Iyer that accounted for the latter.

The Delhi boy kept his side in the hunt as he played

to his strengths, going across and swatting over the leg-side at every given opportunity.

After a few quiet overs, he smashed a six and a four off Ravindra Jadeja through the leg-side to recharge his innings.

The big push came when Pant went after youngster K.M. Asif, slamming him for two boundaries and a six in the 15th over.

With 55 required off the last three, Lungi Ngidi, making his IPL debut, bowled a brilliant over, dismissing Pant and giving away only six runs which sealed the match for CSK.

Earlier, CSK rung in four changes with Sam Billings, Imran Tahir, Deepak Chahar (injured) and Shardul Thakur making way for Faf du Plessis, Karn Sharma, Asif and Ngidi.

Watson was lucky to survive a leg-before appeal off the first ball of the match from Trent Boult, with the third umpire adjudging he had got an inside edge, though the replays were inconclusive. Watson sent the

SCOREBOARD SUPER KINGS VS DELHI DAREDEVILS

Chennai Super Kings: S. Watson c Plunkett b Mishra 78 (40b, 4x4, 7x6), F. du Plessis c Boult b Vijay Shankar 33 (33b, 3x4, 1x6), S. Raina b Maxwell 1 (2b), A. Rayudu run out 41 (24b, 5x4, 1x6), M.S. Dhoni (not out) 51 (22b, 2x4, 5x6), R. Jadeja (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-3, nb-1): 7; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 211.
Fall of wickets: 1-102 (du Plessis, 10.5 overs), 2-103 (Raina, 11.1), 3-130 (Watson, 13.5), 4-209 (Rayudu, 19.5).
Delhi Daredevils bowling: Boult 4-0-48-0, Avesh 4-0-28-0, Tewatia 2-0-23-0, Plunkett 3-0-52-0, Mishra 4-0-30-1, Vijay Shankar 2-0-22-1, Maxwell 1-0-5-1.
Delhi Daredevils: P. Shaw c

Jadeja b Asif 9 (5b, 2x4), C. Munro c Karn b Asif 26 (16b, 3x4, 2x6), Shreyas run out 13 (14b, 1x4), R. Pant c Jadeja b Ngidi 79 (45b, 7x4, 4x6), G. Maxwell b Jadeja 6 (5b, 1x4), Vijay Shankar (not out) 54 (31b, 1x4, 5x6), R. Tewatia (not out) 3 (4b); Extras (lb-2, w-6): 8; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 198.
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Shaw, 1.4), 2-46 (Munro, 4.6), 3-64 (Shreyas, 6.6), 4-74 (Maxwell, 8.5), 5-162 (Pant, 17.4).

Chennai Super Kings bowling: Ngidi 4-0-26-1, Asif 3-0-43-2, Watson 2-0-27-0, Jadeja 4-0-31-1, Harbhajan 4-0-26-0, Bravo 3-0-43-0.
Toss: Delhi Daredevils.
Man-of-the-match: Watson.

Super Kings won by 13 runs.

next ball off his pads for a boundary and from there on never gave the Daredevils bowlers a chance.

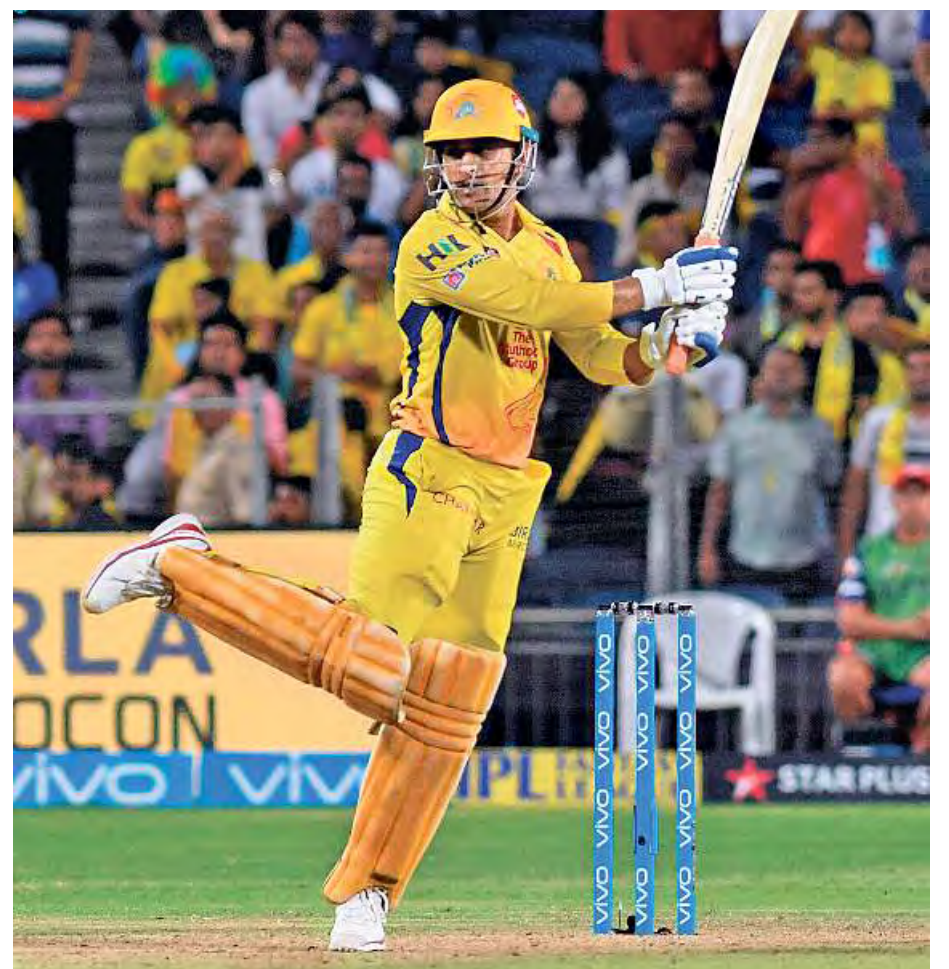
Liam Plunkett felt Watson's wrath, being slammed for four sixes over two overs, as CSK raced from 25 for no loss after four overs to 71 in seven. Watson got two more sixes off leg-spinner Rahul Tewatia to get to his fifty.

From 102 for one, CSK

slumped to 131 for three at the end of 14 overs, but Dhoni launched into the Daredevils bowlers, cracking an unbeaten 51 off just 22 balls with five sixes.

Rayudu joined the party alongside Dhoni, coming in at No. 4 and contributing 41.

The duo added 79 for the fourth wicket off just 36 balls that set the match up for the two-time champion.



Dancing Maharajah: Skipper M.S. Dhoni's flamboyance saw Chennai Super Kings post an insurmountable total. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

A duel between two desperate teams

Starved of points, RCB and MI need to draw inspiration from campaigns past

SHREEDUTTA CHIDANANDA
BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore is not out of the running for a play-off spot yet, but its hopes are evaporating rather quickly.

In the last three seasons, teams have needed a minimum of 16 points to advance; with two wins to its name, RCB is some distance away from that figure.

A target of eight victories would mean that RCB can afford to lose only one more game. With five of its last seven matches from home, it is an uphill task.

Such a comeback would not be unprecedented, though.

Indeed RCB was in the same mathematical situation at the halfway point of the 2016 season; it famously won six of the last seven league games and was only eight runs away from winning the whole tournament.

In 2015, Mumbai Indians had won only one of its first six games, a run of results so wretched that Ricky Ponting – then the team's coach – later admitted he had been “expecting the boarding pass to be slipped under the door any moment”.

As it was, his side went on



Good call: The decision by skipper Rohit Sharma, seen prepping for the match against RCB with some football, to drop down the order has paid dividends for MI. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

to lift the trophy. RCB and Mumbai find themselves in need of similar heroics yet again.

The two teams – both on four points from seven games – meet at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Tuesday, hoping to draw inspiration from campaigns past.

Mumbai arrives on the back of victory over Chennai

Super Kings, Rohit Sharma's promotion to one-drop bearing fruit instantly.

“It was a great thing that he put his hand up in the pressure situation,” said Suryakumar Yadav here on Monday. “We are very happy. In the coming games, we can see more of it.”

Mayank Markande and Krunal Pandya have had a

good season so far for Mumbai and if the surface rolled out for this game is anything like the turner on which RCB and KKR played, the two spinners will be thrilled.

RCB, meanwhile, will be desperate to have A.B. de Villiers back after the South African sat out the previous fixture with a viral fever.

“We definitely missed

UTHRA GANESAN
JAIPUR

It isn't easy being Siddarth Kaul.

The 27-year-old seamer belongs to Virat Kohli's team from his Under-19 World Cup days but the career graphs of his and his then captain have been too diverse to even compare. A spate of injuries from 2007-2012 meant he missed out on the game for almost five years at a point where he has been the peak of his career.

It took a long while but the speed, accuracy and rhythm that made him a success in age-group cricket finally returned in 2013, made more potent with wisdom and maturity, and the pacer has only been improving since then. With exceptional performances on the domestic circuit, he finally got a

“It's always tough when you're losing a few games and not getting the results you want,” he said.

“But you just have to be strong and keep turning up every day. Some people may doubt you, but none of that matters.”

“You just have to believe among the group that you have the ability to be standing at the end of the tournament with the trophy in your hand.”

Mumbai has beaten RCB in their last five encounters; the resolve McCullum spoke of will be sternly tested on Tuesday.

‘It's all about your attitude’

Kaul muses on the approach that has repeated success

national call up.

His contribution in making Sunrisers Hyderabad the table-topper this season has been immense, and the latest purple cap holder showed why he was so important to the team's plans.

“I don't rate pitches as good or bad, helpful or not. It's all about doing your best in the middle. If the pitch is seaming, good. If it isn't, you still have to give your best, use variations on it.”

“It is all about your attitude towards pitches, not the pitch itself. You are doing what you have to do on

it, the pitch doesn't do it. It's only you at the top of your run-up and your wanting to give 100%,” he said nonchalantly after helping SRH to yet another victory defending a below-par total.

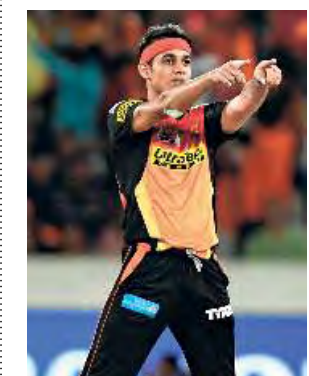
Team game

“It's a team game and everyone is doing their homework well. Everyone knows when and where to bowl, it's all about how much hard work you put in practice but most importantly, it is about clicking at the right time, which we are doing this time,” he said.

RACE FOR THE CAPS: ORANGE							
Player	Team	M	NO	R	HS	Avg	SR
A. Rayudu	CSK	8	0	370	82	46.25	156.11
K. Williamson	SRH	8	1	322	84	46.00	133.05
V. Kohli	RCB	7	2	317	92*	63.40	140.26
R. Pant	DD	8	0	306	85	38.25	170.94
M.S. Dhoni	CSK	8	4	286	79*	71.50	169.23

PURPLE							
Player	Team	M	Overs	Wkts	BB	Avg	Econ
S. Kaul	SRH	8	32.0	11	3/23	20.00	6.87
T. Boult	DD	8	29.5	11	2/21	24.90	9.18
M. Markande	MI	7	23.0	10	4/23	17.30	7.52
Rashid Khan	SRH	8	32.0	10	3/19	23.20	7.25
A. Tye	KXIP	7	28.0	9	2/23	24.22	7.78

*till the CSK-DD match on April 30



Siddarth Kaul. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Australia wants India to play D/N Test at Adelaide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY

Cricket Australia is trying to convince India to begin its four-match Test series of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a day-night game at Adelaide from December 6-10.

“It is our preference that we play India in a day-night Test match in Adelaide, but we are still working through this detail and hope to have an answer on this in the coming weeks,” said CA CEO James Sutherland while releasing Australia's international playing schedule on Monday.

India has not played a Test under lights though

India tour of Australia 2018-19			
Date	Match	Venue	
November 21	1st T20I	Brisbane	
November 23	2nd T20I	Melbourne	
November 25	3rd T20I	Sydney	
December 6-10	1st Test	Adelaide	
December 14-18	2nd Test	Perth	
December 26-30	3rd Test	Melbourne	
January 3-7, 2019	4th Test	Sydney	
January 12	1st ODI	Sydney	
January 15	2nd ODI	Adelaide	
January 18	3rd ODI	Melbourne	

there is speculation that it might play a D/N Test against West Indies later in the year.

Adelaide has hosted D/N Tests in the last three years against New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan and England.

India will begin its Australia tour with a three-match T20 series from November 21 to 25, before competing in the four Tests.

The Tests will be followed by a three-ODI series from January 12 to 18.

No one packed my kit bag out of love, says Ganguly

Sehwag recalls how the players had the protection of the skipper

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

It was an evening laced with humour and lot of cricket talk as Virender Sehwag and Yuvraj Singh joined former India captain Sourav Ganguly to promote his memoirs ‘A Century Is Not Enough’ here on Monday.

“We had to pack his kit bag after the game. He would go for the post-match press conference and ask us to pack his bag. We were new faces. We had to obey,” said Sehwag as he opened the lively evening to a well-attended audience.

Even as Ganguly laughed off Sehwag's anecdote, the audience was treated to some lively times from their playing days. “No one



True leader: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly had Yuvraj Singh and Virender Sehwag in his side and ensured they played without the fear of failure. ■ FILE PHOTO

packed my kit bag out of love. They all had to rush after the game and this was their contribution,” Ganguly said.

Sehwag endorsed Ganguly.

had the protection of the skipper.”

Reflecting on his captaincy, Ganguly said, “I had a wonderful bunch and I just ensured that they played without any pressure.”

“I gave them time to succeed. I wanted to take away the fear of failure from the youngsters because when I came into the Indian team I faced that pressure.”

Recalling the incident in the Lord's balcony in 2002 when he took off his shirt, Ganguly said, “Few would have noticed V.V.S. Laxman trying to pull my shirt down. And Harbhajan (Singh) asking me whether he should also remove his shirt.”

“There was diverse culture in the dressing room

with Anil (Kumble), Rahul (Dravid) and Laxman on one side, and Sehwag, Yuvraj, Harbhajan and I on the other.”

Former BCCI president Anurag Thakur, part of the panel, called Ganguly the “flag-bearer of Indian cricket. He brought attitude and aggression to the dressing room.”

“He did an exceptional job by leading the team soon after the match-fixing controversy (in 2000).”

Host Rajdeep Sardesai did his best to try and get the cricketers to make a political statement on resumption of India-Pakistan cricket. But, Sehwag, Ganguly and Yuvraj played the question with a dead bat.

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 5 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 & 5S Select 1 (SD & HD), 8 p.m.
UEFA Champions League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



Aditi Ashok finishes T-7, Lydia Ko triumphs

SAN FRANCISCO
Aditi Ashok registered her career-best finish on the LPGA with a superb Tied-7 finish at the Medihealth championship after shooting a three-under 69 in the final round. Aditi, whose previous best finish was T-8 at the Marathon Classic in 2017, finished at 7-under 281 and took home \$35,956 even as Lydia Ko ended a 22-month winless drought. PTI



Prajnesh leaps to career-best 176

NEW DELHI
Following his maiden triumph on the ATP Challenger circuit, Prajnesh Gunneswaran on Monday leapfrogged 84 places to a career-best 176 in the ATP rankings. Yuki Bhambri leads India's chart at 85, a loss of two places, and is followed by Ramkumar Ramanathan (120). PTI



Mourinho hopes to face Wenger again

MANCHESTER
Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho (right) hopes he gets the chance to face Arsene Wenger again. "I hope I play against him again," said Mourinho, who has a history of spats with Wenger. "I hope that can happen again. If not in the Premier League, who knows (where) we can have a big match somewhere else," he said. AFP

La Liga No. 25 for Barcelona, courtesy Messi



Sealed in style: Lionel Messi was his usual self, slotting in three goals, as Barcelona captured La Liga with a thumping win over Deportivo. • AP

Valverde's squad has gone 41 matches unbeaten in the league

REUTERS & AFP
CORUNA

Lionel Messi scored a hat-trick as Barcelona clinched a 25th La Liga title on Sunday after winning 4-2 at Deportivo La Coruna despite throwing away a two-goal lead in a thrilling game which also confirmed Depor's relegation. It wrapped up the title with four games to spare, 11 points ahead of Atletico Madrid and 15 clear of Real Madrid.

Barcelona, which has been top since beating Espanyol in its third game on September 9, is 41 league matches unbeaten and four away from becoming the first ever side to finish a single Liga calendar as invincibles.

La Liga Top 5

	Team	M	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	Barcelona	34	26	8	0	66	86
2	Atletico Madrid	35	22	9	4	37	75
3	Real Madrid	34	21	8	5	45	71
4	Valencia	35	20	7	8	26	67
5	Real Betis	34	17	5	12	1	56

Barca, which only needed a draw to seal the title, made a perfect start when record signing Philippe Coutinho scored with a stylish chipped shot in the seventh minute while Messi doubled the lead in the 38th by volleying home an outrageous cross by Luis Suarez.

Deportivo had been unlucky to go two goals down and it deservedly pulled one back through Lucas Perez five minutes before halftime before Turkish midfielder Emre Colak equalised in the 68th.

lead, striking from close range in the 82nd minute after being teed up by Suarez.

Messi claimed his 32nd league goal of the season with the help of another pass from Suarez to round off the victory and give Barca a seventh Liga title in 10 years, completing a fourth domestic double in that same period after beating Sevilla 5-0 in the King's Cup final last week.

The results:

Getafe 1 (Diedhiou 18) drew with Girona 1 (Stuani 45-pen). Alaves 0 lost to Atletico Madrid 1 (Gameiro 78-pen); Valencia 0 drew with Eibar 0; Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Perez 40, Colak 64) lost to Barcelona 4 (Coutinho 7, Messi 38, 82, 85).

From Germany, on a mission

Borussia Dortmund will visit India to help in grassroots development programme

SHYAM VASUDEVAN
DORTMUND

For long football in India remained popular only in certain pockets, namely Kerala, Goa, West Bengal and parts of northeast India.

The introduction of the Indian Super League in 2014 and the emergence of clubs like Aizawl FC and Minerva Punjab FC have begun to provide the game a wider horizon.

The country, however, is yet to have a structured grassroots programme and is lagging behind in identifying and nurturing talent.

The arrival of Bundesliga giant Borussia Dortmund could help address the issue. Dortmund is widely known for its youth development programme – which has seen the emergence of many promising stars such as Marco Reus, Mario Gotze and Nuri Sahin – and looks to apply the same approach in India and is already in talks with the All India Football Federation.

"We are looking at India. We met the AIFF general secretary (Kushal Das) two weeks ago in Dusseldorf," revealed Dortmund chief mar-



Carsten Cramer.

• JEFF SPICER/GETTY IMAGES

keting officer Carsten Cramer during a select media interaction at the club's office here.

"We will think of a partnership with an ISL club, but we have to look for an authentic and natural connection. We will discuss it with our main sponsors, Puma and Evonik, who have some connections in India.

"I'll be in India in early June and will visit Mumbai and Bengaluru to collect more information," he said.

European clubs have already ventured down this path, but the partnerships have failed to stand the test of time. Leicester City's tie-up with East Bengal didn't

take off and Feyenoord and Atletico de Madrid's relationships with Delhi Dynamos (one season) and Atletico de Kolkata (three seasons) were cut short.

Bottom-to-top approach

"Ours is always a bottom-up approach. It's more of a grassroots start than rushing into the country, playing some friendlies with the professionals and saying we have established a presence. That's not the Dortmund way.

"It will be easy for us to increase awareness in India by hiring a talented Indian player for the youth or second team, but we are not a marketing club, we are a football club," said Cramer.

"We will take it step by step. It might take time, but I'm sure this is the right way. We don't have to be the first ones. Even if 10 others (clubs) are there, there will be space for our story because our story is not a copy-and-paste of the others," he said.

(The writer was in Germany as part of the Bundesliga Experience with Star Sports Select)

Real worried in spite of first-leg lead

They are not invincible despite what many may think, says Heynckes

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCIES
MADRID

Despite a 2-1 victory at Bayern Munich in the first leg of the Champions League semifinals, Real Madrid is worried. Real hosts Bayern in the second leg on Tuesday, but the European champion has struggled in decisive matches at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium and is wary of more surprises.

Sloppy defence was key to the struggles by Real at home. Real didn't play poorly but couldn't stop its opponents on the few chances they created.

Defence could be a problem for Madrid again on Tuesday as right back Dani Carvajal is out injured and Zidane has few options to replace him. Youngster Achraf Hakimi is Carvajal's immediate substitute but he has not impressed.

Nacho Fernandez, a central defender who has played at right back on other occasions, is coming off an injury and it's not clear if he will be available to play.

Zidane said he may consider using forward Lucas Vazquez in defence, as he



Getting ready: Real's travails at home this season will haunt it when Bayern comes calling on Tuesday. • REUTERS

did after Carvajal had to leave the first leg because of his injury.

Real captain Sergio Ramos, who used to play as a right back, could also end up on the flank. "It could be an option," Ramos said. "I can adapt. It wouldn't be a problem for me."

"Real Madrid has shown that it can be vulnerable even when playing at home," Bayern coach Jupp Heynckes said. "They are not invincible despite what many people may think."

Bayern, a five-time European champion, is looking to return to the final after four seasons. To compound its problems, Bayern has lost

both key defender Jerome Boateng and creative winger Arjen Robben with groin injuries.

Nevertheless, the Germans jetted to Madrid on Monday determined to pull off an unlikely win.

Possible line-ups: Real Madrid: Navas; Nacho, Ramos, Varane, Marcelo; Modric, Kroos, Casemiro; Asensio, Benzema, Ronaldo.

Out: Carvajal (hamstring); **Doubtful:** Isco (shoulder), Nacho (thigh).

Bayern: Ulrich; Kimmich, Hummels, Sule, Alaba; Martinez, Thiago, James, Muller, Ribery; Lewandowski.

Out: Boateng (hamstring), Vidal (knee), Robben (adductor), Coman (ankle).

I don't know how significant the first-leg advantage will be. We know what happened against Juventus and against Bayern last year

ZINEDINE ZIDANE,
Real Madrid coach

■ Marcelo has scored in all three knockout ties this season; the full-back's last five CL goals have all come in the knockout rounds.

First-leg stats

Bayern		Real
1	Goals	2
13	Total Attempts	7
5	On target	4
59	Possession (%)	41
87	Passing Accuracy (%)	84
546	Passes completed	341
111.6	Distance covered	107.5
47	Balls recovered	47
4	Tackles	2
8	Fouls committed	14

CoA wants SC to pull up MCA

G. VISWANATH
MUMBAI

In the matter related to the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA), the Committee of Administrators (CoA) has asked the Supreme Court to issue directions to initiate contempt proceedings against officials of the MCA and such persons at whose instance the amended constitution has been approved during the SGM of MCA held on April 7 and to appoint a CoA to take charge of the MCA to ensure that its constitution is brought in terms with the Justice Lodha

reforms accepted by the apex court in July 2016.

The CoA has mentioned in its eighth Status Report that it has received representations from aggrieved members who do not have the wherewithal to approach the Bombay High Court.

No intention

The CoA has also told the Supreme Court that the MCA has no intention of implementing the Lodha Committee recommendations and the affidavit filed in the apex court was done only for the purposes of disbursement of

accessing funds which would not otherwise have been available to the MCA.

"The actions of those who attended the SGM of the MCA held on April 7, 2018 and voted in favour of adopting the Amended Constitution are a flagrant violation of the resolution/undertaking filed in this Hon'ble Court vide affidavit dated December 29, 2017 and ought to be regarded as contempt," said the CoA in its report.

The Supreme Court is likely to hear the matter on Tuesday.

Sharath stars for India; third straight loss for women

SPORTS BUREAU
HALMSTAD (SWEDEN)

Inspired by A. Sharath Kamal's performance, India put it across Poland 3-2 in the men's Group-D Championship Division match of the World team table tennis championships here on Monday.

On Sunday, India lost to France 3-2 in its opening match despite Sharath notching up victories over two World top-30 players – Emmanuel Lebossion (28) and Simon Gauzy (10).

Indian women went down to Singapore 3-0 in the



Sharath Kamal. • FILE PHOTO

Group-A championship match. This was India's third straight defeat after losing to

China and Sweden.

The results: Championship Division: Men: Group-D: India bt

Poland 3-2 (Harmeet Desai lost to Jakob Dyjas 8-11, 11-7, 10-12, 13-11, 7-11; Sharath Kamal bt Pawel Fertikowski 7-11, 12-10, 14-12, 7-11, 11-6; G. Sathiyar lost to Marek Badowski 6-11, 10-12, 11-7, 9-11; Sharath bt Dyjas 7-11, 11-9, 13-11, 21-19; Harmeet bt Fertikowski 11-8, 11-7, 11-13, 14-12).

Women: Group-A: India lost to Singapore 3-0 (Madhurika Patkar lost to Tianwei Feng 12-10, 12-10, 11-3; Manika Batra lost to Mengyu Yu 10-12, 11-8, 11-8, 5-11, 8-11; Mouma Das lost to Ye Lin 8-11, 2-11, 5-11).

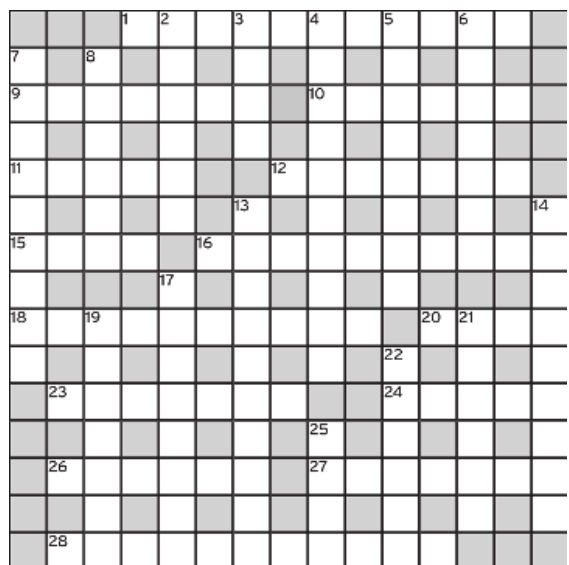
On Sunday: Men: India lost to France 3-2 (Sathiyar lost to Simon Gauzy 13-11, 7-11, 11-7, 10-12, 10-12; Sharath bt Emmanuel

Lebossion 9-11, 11-5, 11-9, 13-11; A. Amalraj lost to Quentin Robinot 7-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-5, 6-11; Sharath bt Gauzy 11-8, 11-7, 10-12, 14-12; Sathiyar lost to Lebossion 11-13, 4-11, 9-11, 3-11).

Women: India lost to China 3-0 (Mouma lost to Ding Ning 11-6, 11-2, 11-4; Manika lost to Manyu Wang 12-10, 11-9, 11-5; Madhurika lost to Meng Chen 11-8, 11-1, 11-5).

India lost to Sweden 3-1 (Manika lost to Linda Bergstrom 7-11, 11-9, 5-11, 9-11; Mouma lost to Matilda Ekholm 11-13, 5-11, 7-11; Madhurika bt Jennifer Jonsson 8-11, 9-11, 12-10, 12-10, 11-7; Manika lost to Matilda Ekholm 6-11, 9-11, 3-11).

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12305



(set by Anon)

- 12 Fish, caught in odd spear, to flee (7)
- 15 Manufactured new form of mead (4)
- 16 Increased support for one to access first door (10)
- 18 Trouble of retirement overwhelms heads of Channel Islands (10)
- 20 Tennis player won cricket tournament? Almost! (4)
- 23 One thinking of entertaining (7)
- 24 Heartless heretic from South stumbles (5)
- 26 Italian house loses last three drugs (6)
- 27 Stifle parents from end to end (7)
- 28 New form of song therapy in shorthand (11)
- 2 One handles principles (6)
- 3 Conceal skin (4)
- 4 Cook loved piece of tricycle (10)
- 5 Purchase at bar, a regular Glen (8)
- 6 Pixies lose ends of laces, lie on mountain (7)
- 7 Emoticons confuse Keynes, for one (9)
- 8 Acted as cashier from first to last (6)
- 13 Going through the motions before moving (10)
- 14 Leader exited graveyards, confused by competitor (9)
- 17 Cut three scientists on first ship to Israel (8)
- 19 Sheep specialist is aglow (7)
- 21 Rage in Parsée theatre (6)
- 22 Pin children, all but one, to church (6)
- 25 Starts asking student insights about continent (4)

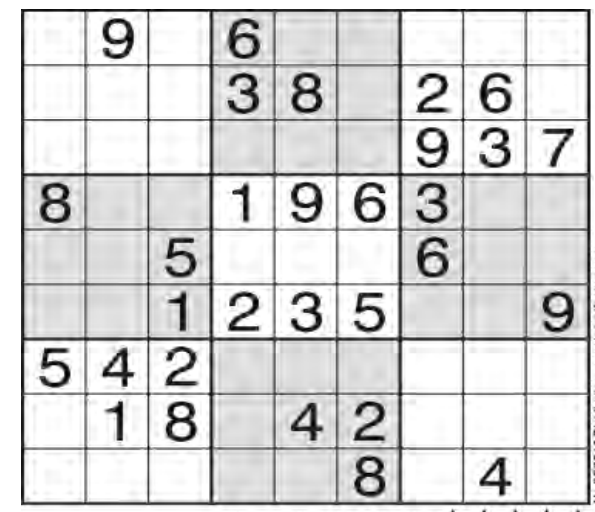
ACROSS

- 1 Messy food first lady, learner produced (11)
- 9 Firm man to rectify salute (7)
- 10 Destroyed silver French coin (6)
- 11 Relating to birth of South Africa region (5)

DOWN

- 2 One handles principles (6)
- 3 Conceal skin (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12304

W	A	R	D	R	O	B	E	I	D	I	O	M	S
A	I	E	E	I	M	P							
N	O	S	E	B	A	N	D	D	A	M	A	G	E
G	K	E	E	P	R	A	S	H	A	C			
L	O	A	L	F	L	A	S	H	B	A	C	K	
E	M	C	O	M	B	I	S	R	L	L			
C	O	M	B	A	T	S	E	A	T	T	L	E	
D	E	V	R	I	S	G	R	A	D				
F	E	L	E	M	E	N	T	S	A	M	B	A	R
S	A	O	C	E	N	B							
T	R	I	C	K	S	T	E	R	P	A	S	T	A
R	L	I	C	K	E	E	I	P	A	S	T	A	
U	N	I	S	O	N	C	R	E	M	O	N	A	
C	A	W	C	C	R	O	N	A					
T	I	D	I	N	G	T	H	R	E	A	T	E	I

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

His message lives on

April 30 this year marked Buddha Purnima, also known as Vesak, the day that denotes the birth, enlightenment and passing of the Lord Buddha. The day has a special resonance in India, the country where Buddhism was founded. Gautama the Buddha appeared on earth some 25 centuries ago to bring the message of mercy and non-violence towards all living beings, although he was born in the lap of luxury in a palace. The day reminded us of the eternal message of peace, truth and compassion that was the hallmark of the life of Gautama the Buddha. This message ought to inspire all of humanity to follow the path of righteousness and respect for all other beings on this earth in their day-to-day conduct, actions and thoughts. The principles of universal love, compassion and tolerance that were upheld and exemplified by the Buddha would appear to be more relevant today than at any time in the history of humankind. The dharmachakra, a wooden wheel, often seen during Vesak, represents the Buddha's teachings on the path to enlightenment, the spokes symbolising the noble eight-fold path of Buddhism. It is significant that celebrating Vesak also means making extra efforts to bring happiness to the less privileged and suffering sections of humankind, such as the aged, the physically challenged and the sick. Following the teachings of the Buddha, members of the Buddhist community celebrate the day by utilising the opportunity to reiterate their determination to lead noble lives, to develop their minds in harmony, to practise loving-kindness and to bring peace and harmony to humanity as a whole. Tradition has it that the Buddha himself left instructions to his followers on how to pay homage to him: primarily by following the Dhamma truth. That message lives on.

IN BRIEF



German midfielder Stindl out of World Cup

BERLIN
Borussia Monchengladbach's German attacking midfielder Lars Stindl will miss the World Cup after suffering a high-grade injury in his left ankle on Saturday, according to his club. He will undergo a surgery in the coming days and will be ruled out for "several weeks". IANS

We're WADA-compliant, claims AIBA

LAUSANNE
The International Boxing Association (AIBA) on Monday claimed that it has become WADA-compliant since adopting a revamped anti-doping programme, which was cited as an area of concern by the IOC when it threatened to expel the sport from the 2020 Olympics. After outsourcing the management of its anti-doping programme, the AIBA is likely to join the Independent Testing Authority by June. PTI



Corominas extends stay with FC Goa

PANAJI
FC Goa has announced that ISL top-scorer Ferran 'Coro' Corominas has extended his stay with the club till the next edition of the tournament. The Spanish striker was in superb form through the season, netting a record-breaking 18 goals, including back-to-back hat-tricks against Bengaluru FC and Kerala Blasters FC. IANS



Setting the pace: Lewis Hamilton, trailing Sebastian Vettel at Baku, feels that the Ferraris are revving it up more than Mercedes despite his first win of the season. • CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES

Ferraris are faster, admits Hamilton

Says he is struggling to find Mercedes' potential

FORMULA ONE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAKU

A subdued Lewis Hamilton admitted on Monday he had been lucky after taking the drivers' championship lead with his opportunistic victory in Sunday's chaotic crash-strewn Azerbaijan Grand Prix.

There were no whoops of delight and no celebrations following his first win in seven races dating back to last October, but a serious realisation that he and his Mercedes team have their work cut out to stay on top.

On a day of gusty wind, unlikely accidents, abandoned debris interventions and two safety cars, the defending four-time World champion had struggled for pace, but avoided serious trouble.

While his team-mate Valtteri Bottas fell victim to a puncture caused by a piece of metal debris and title rival Sebastian Vettel of Ferrari

out-braked himself in a wild lunge for glory, Hamilton tipped through the mayhem.

As Red Bull's two battling tyros Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen resolved their tussle by crashing and others banged wheels, hit walls and ran off, the 33-year-old Englishman relied on concentration and perseverance.

"I remember my dad always told me 'never give up, always keep going'," he said afterwards as others wept and argued. "I never expected it, but I had to take it.

"Valtteri deserved to win. That's why I went to see him and console him straight after the race. He was so unfortunate."

It was Hamilton's 63rd victory and curiously confirmed that he is not racing with the same raw élan as his youth, but with a more measured sense of craft and aplomb – a mixture that may be less spectacular, but could assist him more in gathering the points for a

fifth title.

He knows, however, that in Sunday's race he was hardly the leading man and that his car was unable to match the Ferraris in an unpredictable contest that maintained the craziness of the season to date.

"We've got a lot of work to do, definitely," said Hamilton. "We are still behind. Today I was lucky. I struggled all weekend and I am struggling to find the car's potential. Their pure pace is ahead of ours at the moment.

"There were a lot of faults in the race, which is rare for me. I struggled with the car, struggled with the tyres.

"I've definitely got to go away from here and work even harder to make sure that there's not a repeat performance-wise of this weekend. The biggest issue is the tyres," he added.

"I don't believe their car is much better than ours, if at all, it's just that they are using their tyres better."

Lakshmanan passes away

A. VINOD
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With the passing away of P.P. Lakshmanan, 83, in the wee hours of Monday, the country has lost an administrator who will be remembered for his pioneering work to bring about professionalism in Indian football.

Lakshmanan was associated with the game for nearly five decades, starting his innings as president of the Kannur District Football Association in the 1970s on his return from East Africa.

He rose to the position of president of the Kerala Football Association and thereafter treasurer of the All India Football Federation in 1980. He managed the AIFF finances till 1988.

Ankita-Guo duo loses

SPORTS BUREAU
ANNING

Ankita Raina and Guo Shanshan lost to top seeds Dalila Jakupovic of Slovenia and Irina Khomacheva of Russia in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$125,000 WTA Open on Monday.

The results:
\$125,000 WTA Open, Anning, China: Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Dalila Jakupovic (Slo) & Irina Khomacheva (Rus) bt Guo Shanshan (Chn) & Ankita Raina 6-3, 6-3.

\$25,000 ITF men, Abuja, Nigeria: First round: Arjun Kadhe bt Diego Matos (Bra) 6-0, 7-6(4).

\$15,000 ITF women, Hua Hin, Thailand: First round: Sowjanya Bavisetti bt Patcharin Cheapchandej (Tha) 1-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Bunyawit Thamchaiwat (Tha) & Zeel Desai bt Mariana Correa (Ecu) & Chang Liu (Chn) 6-3, 7-5; Sowjanya Bavisetti & Ramya Natarajan bt M. Tamachan & Chanikam Silakul (Tha) 6-2, 6-4; Lorraine Guillerme (USA) & Natasha Palha bt Ni Wang (Chn) & Amy Zhu (USA) 6-3, 6-2.

ONGC will face stiff competition

FED CUP

A. JOSEPH ANTONY
CHITTOOR

The cream of Indian basketball will be in action at the Chittoor District Sports Authority stadium courts during the senior Federation Cup from May 1 to 6.

It will be the last major tournament before the Asiad and will be streamed live on Youtube for the first time.

It will be no cakewalk for defending men's champion Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), Dehradun. It will have to contend with Indian Overseas Bank and Punjab Police that look formidable.

The title-holder's campaign may be short of much of its steam if Vishesh Bhri-guvanshi doesn't take the court as he couldn't during India's Commonwealth Games recent effort in Gold

Coast and World Cup qualifiers, owing to injury.

There would however be excitement around Muin Bek, the Tamil Nadu forward, now turning out for ONGC. Officials say he's capable of jumping over a car! Following his stint at the IMG Academy in Florida, he has proved a regular nightmare for rival defences.

Arshpreet Singh and Amjyot Singh will add muscle to Punjab Police, the former a jump shot specialist who watches NBA's Stephen Curry before every major match.

The groups:
Men: Group A: ONGC, Dehradun; BSF, Jodhpur; Customs & Excise, Kochi; MEG, Bangalore; SAAP.

Group B: IOB, Chennai; Punjab Police; Hissar Club; Western Railway.

Women: Group A: Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh.

Group B: Telangana, Eastern Railway, Delhi, Maharashtra.

'Hope medal puts fencing in limelight'

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

C.A. Bhavani Devi hopes the sabre silver medal she won at the Tournoi World Cup Satellite fencing championship in Reykjavik would bring more attention to the sport in the country.

In fact, Bhavani had won gold at the same event last year to become the first Indian to do so in an international event.

The journey

The Tamil Nadu fencer, who went down 15-10 to USA's Alexis Browne in the final, had beaten Guila Arpino (Italy) 15-10 in the semifinals and Parede Torres (Venezuela) 15-9 in the quarterfinals.

Bhavani is of the view that fencing is on the right track. "I hope my medal puts the sport in the limelight," she told *The Hindu*.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP



Slick success: The triumphant ONGC team. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Hiten, Bobby excel as ONGC takes honours

Hiten Dalal and Bobby Yadav guided Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to a four-wicket victory over Dena Bank in the final of the 28th all-India Volga Om Nath Sood memorial cricket tournament at the St. Stephen's ground here on Monday.

After seamer Bobby claimed three for 34, along with Suhail Sharma (two for 39) and Saurabh Kumar (two for 45), to restrict Dena Bank to 189 for eight, Hiten led the run-chase with a 65-ball 82 (5x4, 4x6) to finish the job in style.

Bobby was declared the man-of-the-match' while the other awards went to Hiten (best batsman), Saurabh

Kumar (best bowler), Arun Chaprana (player of the tournament) and Priyansh Arya (most promising player).

The scores:

Dena Bank 189 for eight in 40 overs (Arun Chaprana 37, Ajay Kukna 35 not out, Sanjay Sharma 31, Bobby Yadav three for 34) lost to ONGC 191 for six in 30.4 overs (Hiten Dalal 82, Tanmay Shrivastav 45).

Fit-again Ajay and Sourabh eye good run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AUCKLAND

After recovering from their respective injuries, Indian shuttlers Ajay Jayaram and Sourabh Verma will look to regain form when they compete at the \$150,000 New Zealand Super 300 tournament starting here on Tuesday.

"It's been a long recovery

process for me. I played in China but it didn't go well. But my leg seemed fine. Training has gone better during the last two weeks.

"Hopefully, these two tournaments will turn out better for me," said Ajay.

"I'm fit again to play. Let's see how it goes," said Sourabh.