

WORLD 2
EGYPT KILLS 40
TERRORISTS IN CRACKDOWN

WORLD 6
TIGHT SECURITY IN
BANGLADESH FOR RE-ELCTION

SPORT 7
INDIA NEED 2 WICKETS
TO WIN 3RD TEST

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USUAL SUSPECTS
SWAPNA DASGUPTA

Visceral fear of Modi's 2nd term

One of the first public acts of the Narendra Modi Government after the BJP lost the three Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan was to reduce the Goods and Services Tax on a clutch of items. The move was quietly welcomed in all circles — including by the Congress that said it had suggested it first — but there was also a corresponding feeling that the move had come too late to shake off an impression that the Modi Government was losing its momentum. If the buzz in Opposition circles is any indication, there is a feeling that the BJP may not reach the majority mark in 2019. Of course, there is no corresponding agreement over what and who will replace Modi.

Writing premature obituaries is hazardous. No historical precedents are ever faithfully replicated. It is entirely possible that after five years, the grim memories of a coalition Government that struggled to take difficult decisions due to competitive political pressures may have faded. Additionally, the horrible experience of the two United Front Governments may have fallen out of the collective imagination. This may be a reason why quasi-scholastic articles upholding coalitions as representative of India's diversity are often to be found in the media. The underlying rationale is that the BJP and Modi must be prevented at all cost from having another five-year term.

It is instructive to explore some of the reasons why a section of the elite is unduly anxious to secure a change of Government. Just before and just after the BJP under Modi stormed to power in 2014, the fear was that such a Government, without the restraining influence of the benign Atal Bihari Vajpayee, would transform the very nature of the polity. Fears were expressed that majoritarian impulses would see minorities cowering in their ghettos and there would be tampering with the Constitution.

Despite the strictures against beef and the handful of excesses by cow vigilante squads, the social fabric of India has not really undergone any meaningful change since 2014. Yes, there is now some measure of official patronage for yoga, Sanskrit scholars don't feel completely marginal in universities and a

greater willingness of Hindus to assert their Hinduness without fear of inviting social condescension. Some academic institutions have also witnessed changes that invariably come about with changes of Government. But there has been, for example, no saffronisation of education in the same way as there was a red takeover of education in West Bengal under the Left Front. The anticipated changes in history books too have not materialised. As for institutions, the judiciary is today more powerful than it has ever been, the Constitution is firmly intact, the Election Commission robust and the Comptroller and Auditor General's office spared of controversy. The controversies over the Reserve Bank of India are real but disagreements over liquidity and interest rates don't jeopardise the much-touted idea of India.

The Modi Government has witnessed profound changes in governance. There has been a greater reliance on technology and a greater emphasis on delivery. Some of the schemes such as direct transfer of subsidies to beneficiaries and the road building and power generation programmes have yielded fantastic results and others less so. Indeed, Modi has been criticised for emphasising incremental shifts and managerial efficiency, rather than promoting systemic shifts in favour of a minimalist state. Modi has not emerged as a doctrinaire Margaret Thatcher. If he secures another term he will be remembered for complementing economic growth with social welfare. The Ayushman Health programme will be a landmark achievement.

So what explains the quantum of visceral hate — as opposed to normal disappointment that often creeps in with Governments — against Modi?

The first has to do with the decision-making process. What marks the Modi Government from its predecessors is that it cannot be pushed around. Normal political resistance to specific legislation — as with the Land Acquisition Bill and the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill — is a part of democracy. But what has invoked the ire of a small section is that the Government is firewalled against lobbying by interested groups. Delhi used to be at the centre of a lobbying industry dominated by fixers. That is now a sunset industry, seeking a rehabilitation package in 2019.

Secondly, while demonetisation may be contested, Modi has, for the first time since 1947, rolled back the tide of corruption. There is a quiet acknowledgement that while lower-level corruption may still be rampant, corruption in high places involving the Government has virtually come to an end. Modi's role as a disciplinarian may be resented in quarters used to permissiveness but it has resulted in the Government steering clear of irregularities. The taunt that the chowkidar has turned a thief doesn't carry credibility beyond the circle of those who loath Modi for reasons other than dodgy integrity.

Finally, Modi has effected a fundamental social shift in the global role of India. Previously, despite occasional bouts of muscle-flexing in the neighbourhood, the tone of Indian foreign policy was governed by the principle of niceness. It has been replaced by hard-nosed calculations based on the promotion of national interests and building the foundations of a future when, with greater economic advancement, India can play a global role.

Thus, we have witnessed a deepening of ties with some of the wealthier Arab States being complemented by a more uninhibited relationship with Israel. With Pakistan, following unsuccessful attempts to reach out, India's policy is more muscular and encapsulated in the principle: If you cause pain to us, we will answer by inflicting greater pain to you. No wonder Pakistan is awaiting a regime change in India.

Maybe it is not Modi's sole contribution, but today carrying an Indian passport is not associated with the same disabilities and suspicions it once was. It is indicative of a larger but quiet change India has witnessed.

Michel named Mrs Gandhi & R: ED

ED tells court Agusta fixer also named 'big man', seeks 7 more days of Michel's remand

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

The VVIP chopper scam probe took a serious turn on Saturday as the Enforcement Directorate told a special court that the European middleman and accused in the case Christian Michel has taken the name of "Mrs Gandhi" and referred about "the son of Italian lady" who is going to be the "next Prime Minister of India" besides a "big man" and "R".

In its application seeking seven-day extension of Michel's remand, the ED further told the court the European middleman is also trying to misuse the liberty of legal assistance during his interrogation by passing hints to his lawyers asking how to tackle questions on Congress leader Sonia Gandhi. The probe agency, however, said it is yet to ascertain in what reference Michel took "Mrs Gandhi's" name. After the agency's submissions, the court granted the extension and imposed restrictions on Michel meeting his lawyers and imposed restrictions on Michel meeting his lawyers during ED custody.

The agency had sought that Michel be barred from meeting his lawyers during his custody, alleging that he was being tutored from outside through his lawyers.

The ED told the court that Michel had made a reference to



AgustaWestland scam accused Michel Christian being taken back to the ED office after he was produced at Patiala House court on Saturday

- ♦ ED told the court that the European middleman was also trying to misuse the liberty of legal assistance during his interrogation by passing hints to his lawyers asking how to tackle questions on Congress leader Sonia Gandhi
- ♦ The agency had sought that Michel be barred from meeting his lawyers during its custody

"Mrs Gandhi" during interrogation on December 27. During medical examination, the accused had handed over a folded paper to his advocate Aljo K Joseph and it was noticed by ED officials. After perusal of the paper, it was revealed that it pertained to a set of follow-up questions on

"Mrs Gandhi"

The ED told the court that it is clear that there is a conspiracy to shield or to tamper with the evidence that could be brought forth from the questioning of the accused. The benefit given by the court to the accused of legal access is being misused. It should be stopped

henceforth," the agency contended.

The court directed that the three defence counsels will be able to meet Michel one at a time at a distance from the accused and legal assistance will be only for 15 minutes at 10 am and at 5 pm during a day. The direction came after Michel was produced before vacation judge Chandrashekhar.

Michel's custody was required for "unearthing the deep-rooted conspiracy and identification of all his accomplices, including the IAF officials, MoD (Ministry of Defence) officials, bureaucrats and politicians who gained undue advantage for getting the contract in favour of AgustaWestland," the ED said in the remand application.

Javadekar said the truth is coming out of the probe into the alleged corruption in purchase of VVIP choppers during the UPA Government, and that Michel's comments point towards one family. "The story of loot of public money is coming out. Everything went to one family," he alleged, accusing the Congress of compromising with national security during its rule.

Michel, who was extradited from Dubai recently, was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on December 22 and sent to seven days' custody of the agency over money laundering charges in the scam after he was produced in a court here. He was earlier lodged in Tihar Jail in the related CBI case.

Turn to Page 4

BJP raps family nexus, Cong slams evil plan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP lost no time in attacking the Congress with Union Minister Prakash Javadekar saying the "revelations point towards the 'family'. However, the ED's contents and Javadekar's claims were trashed by the Congress with senior party leader Anand Sharma saying the Modi Government is guilty of a malicious propaganda.



answer who all Michel was referring to and claimed that people know of one "R", a reference to Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who had torn an Ordinance of the Manmohan Singh Government.

Referring to Rahul's attack on the Narendra Modi Government over the Rafale deal, Javadekar described it as a case of "thief making noises" and claimed Michel has also spoken about the public sector firm, HAL being removed from the Rafale contract during the UPA rule.

Turn to Page 4

PM slams Cong on loan waiver

RAMESH K SINGH ■ GHAZIPUR

Terming the Congress as a "lollipop company" alluding to the loan waiver promise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked people how they could believe one who had always given them false promises for petty electoral gains. The PM was addressing a meeting of the Rajbhar community at Ghazipur on Saturday. Though it was a function to release the postal stamp on Rajbhar's ideal Maharaj Suheldev and laying the foundation stone of a medical college in Ghazipur, Modi was in full political colours, virtually kicking off election campaigning for forthcoming 2019 Lok Sabha by launching a scathing attack on Congress. "Be wary of the Congress and its lies," he said at a public meeting.

On a day's visit to the Purvanchal region, his second trip to Uttar Pradesh this month, Modi said the Congress promised loan waivers to lakhs of farmers, but the JD(S)-Congress coalition that came into power did not deliver. "Lollipops were handed over. The loan waiver was given to only 800 farmers," he claimed. He said the "lollipop company" had similarly "forgotten" the promises it made before the

2009 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress has in the past denied similar charges made by the Bharatiya Janata Party. Modi's recent remarks on farm loans follow the waivers announced by the Congress governments in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh after this month's assembly polls.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi recently said his party would not let Modi rest till he writes off farm loans across the country. Modi claimed that under the Congress rule, loans were given to people who were not eligible, while farmers were forced to go to private lenders and fall into debt traps. The PM described himself again as a "chowkidar" (watchman) of the people, a term ridiculed by Congress president Rahul Gandhi. "This chowkidar of yours is toiling very hard day and night, and with honesty, to brighten your future and that of your children," he said. "Because of this chowkidar, some thieves are having sleepless nights. It is your faith and blessings on me that will take the thieves to their rightful place one day," he said. He described Maharaja Suheldev as a brave warrior. "Maharaja Suheldev is among those bravehearts who had struggled for the honour of 'Maa Bharti,'" he said.

Turn to Page 4

Modi goes all out to woo Rajbhars



PM Narendra Modi, CM Yogi Adityanath, Governor Ram Naik and others at a rally in Ghazipur on Saturday

Constable killed as Nishad Party workers pelt stones

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A constable of the Uttar Pradesh Police was killed on Saturday in Ghazipur when protesters hurled stones at vehicles returning from the venue of a public meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Ghazipur Superintendent of Police Yashveer Singh said the protesters were workers of the Rashtriya Nishad Party who were prevented by the administration and the police from going to the rally venue.

"When the Prime Minister had left Ghazipur, the party workers blocked traffic at various places and started pelting stones on the vehicles returning from the programme venue," he said.

Constable Suresh Vats (48) from Karimnagar police station was hit on the head by a stone when he went to address the traffic jam caused by the protests.

"He was rushed to hospital where he succumbed to his injuries," the SP said.

The SP said about 15 party workers were detained. The police are trying to identify other protesters through the video footage of the incident.

The constable was from Raniganj in Pratappur district.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced a compensation of ₹40 lakh for the wife of the dead constable and ₹10 lakh for his parents, the State Government said.

Yogi also directed the district magistrate and the superintendent of police to take strict action against unruly elements and immediately arrest them.

The death comes less than a month after the killing of Inspector Subodh Kumar Singh, who was shot dead during a mob violence in Bulandshahr district over alleged cow slaughter.

Modi had addressed a rally after laying the foundation stone for a medical college and releasing a postal stamp on Maharaj Suheldev. He had left for Varanasi when the violence in Ghazipur took place.

Pakistan may push Afghan ultras in J&K

RAHUL DATTA MOHIT KANDHARI ■ NEW DELHI/JAMMU

With the terrorists facing heavy reverses in the Kashmir hinterland and the Pakistani Army increasing ceasefire violations from across the Line of Control (LoC) to aid fresh infiltrations, the security establishment is wary of the withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan as it fears Islamabad may push a large number of battle-hardened ultras from the strife-torn country to J&K to fuel terrorism in the poll year.

Given the void in terrorist ranks in Kashmir due to relentless operations, Pakistan may attempt and push terrorists from Afghanistan into Kashmir Valley to launch surprise attacks on the Indian security forces and places of strategic importance to thwart holding of Lok Sabha polls likely to be held in April-May. In the past also, Pakistan had adopted a similar tactic of pushing terrorists trained in guerrilla warfare, inside the Indian frontiers at the peak of terrorism between 1990 and 1996. Several independent observers

closely watching the prevailing security scenario in the State have started raising similar concerns warning the Indian Army and other anti-insurgency security forces to get ready to deal with up levels of violence.

Given this ground report, the security forces will increase the tempo of operations even during the winter months to deter terrorists from regrouping anticipating that if terrorist-related violence is brought within manageable limits in the next three months it will have a major positive effect in terms of restarting political activities. Relative normalcy in the hinterland may also prove to be conducive for having parliamentary polls in April or May next year, officials in the security establishment said on Saturday.

While all markers like neutralising of highest number of terrorists killed this year and declining infiltration favour holding polls including State and Lok Sabha, officials, however, admitted the situation on the LoC is precarious."

Elaborating upon this factor, they said ceasefire violations by the Pakistani Army continue in an apparent effort to neutralise the leadership of the major terrorist 'tanzeems (organizations)" in

trators into Kashmir Valley in the run up to the polls. In fact, a Pakistan High Commission official was summoned on Thursday in New Delhi and a strong protest was lodged at the incidents of cross LoC terrorist infiltration and targeting of Indian civilians and security forces on December 21 and 26 this year leading to loss of lives on the Indian side.

Pakistan forces have carried out over 1,962 incidents of unprovoked ceasefire violations in which 50 Indians have lost their lives, the External Affairs Ministry said.

Explaining the dynamics of LoC, sources said while the Pakistan Army violates ceasefire in North of Pir Panjal to give covering fire to the terrorists to sneak across into Kashmir, intense firing in South of Pir Panjal is carried out to dominate the Indian Army positions there and also push in ultras. On ground zero, the foot soldiers of the Indian Army are alert and Anti-Infiltration Obstacle System (AIOS) has also been bolstered with sophisticated gadgets to timely detect any breach along the 740 km long LoC.

Four JeM terrorists killed in Pulwama

Srinagar (PNS): Four terrorists belonging to banned Jaish-e-Mohammed outfit were killed in an encounter in Hanjin village of south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Saturday. With this, the security forces have killed 251 terrorists during 2018, the highest in a decade. At least a dozen villagers were injured.

Turn to Page 4



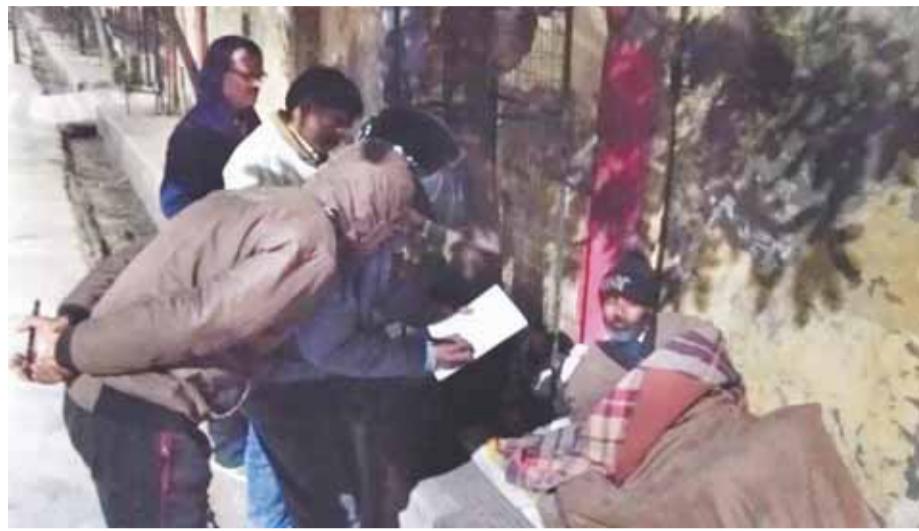
Cold keeps city in tenacious grip

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

It was an extremely cold day on Saturday with the city recording a minimum temperature of 5 degrees Celsius, three degrees below normal. The morning sun remained feeble and diluted and provided little relief to city folks and in the evening it was numbing cold which they had to face.

In the state, the coldest was Agra which recorded a minimum temperature of 1.7 degree Celsius. Other districts which recorded a low temperature included Muzaffarnagar with a minimum temperature of 2.6 degree Celsius, Bareilly 3.6 degree Celsius, Sultanpur 4.4 degree Celsius and Lakhimpur Kheri 3.4 degree Celsius.

The local forecast for Lucknow is clear sky and shallow to moderate fog is in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperature will be around 19 degree Celsius and 5 degree Celsius respectively.



LMC officials shifting a pavement-dweller to rain basera in Lucknow

The state forecast is that weather is most likely to be dry and shallow to moderate fog is very likely at few places over the state. There is warning for dense fog at isolated places

over the state. Cold wave condition is likely at isolated places over western Uttar Pradesh.

Mayor Sanyukta Bhatia said that Lucknow Municipal Corporation would be placing

wood for bonfires at crossings in the city from Sunday. "Earlier, we used to get this wood from the Forest department but now because there is a restriction on the cutting of

wood, we have purchased the wood from contractors," she said. The mayor said that LMC was daily shifting over 100 destitutes to the rain baseras and providing blankets to the poor. "We recently made an arrangement for people outside the KGMU by constructing a temporary shelter for them," she added.

Dr Neeraj Srivastava, a senior physician from the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital, while talking to *The Pioneer*, said that they were getting maximum patients of breathlessness along with high blood pressure, pneumonia and cardiac ailments in this cold weather. "One should keep one self adequately warm even inside the house. Both senior citizens and the small children should be protected from catching cold," he said. He also pointed out that those who spent long hours in front of the blower should drink adequate water because it led to dryness.

Vendor duped of ₹97K by conmen

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two men posing themselves as policemen duped a plastic box vendor of Rs 97,000 in Rakabganj locality under Bazaarkhala police station on Saturday. As per reports, the victim, identified as Chand of Rae Bareli, had gone for shopping in Rakabganj locality near a mosque around 10 am when he was intercepted by two persons who claimed to be policemen.

As Chand was carrying a bag with Rs 97,000 in it, the two tricksters asked him to show the goods inside it as a checking of suspects was going on in the city. The miscreants told him to hand over his bag for checking and took the cash out before returning the bag to him. Later, both told the victim not to move on the road and left the scene. A little later when Chand checked the bag,

he found the cash missing from his bag and was shocked. He sought help of some of the commuters and shared the incident. On their suggestion, he later lodged a case with the police. SP, West, Vikas Chandra Tripathi said that the police teams were engaged in tracking down the miscreants. "The teams are scanning the CCTV footages and we hope that the fraudsters would be nabbed soon," he said.

Meanwhile, unidentified miscreants withdrew Rs 40,000 from the bank account of a primary teacher in PGI police station area. Police made him do rounds of the bank and the police station for about a fortnight and registered a case on Saturday. Reports said Avinash Shukla is posted in Unnnao district and lives with his family in sector 9 of Vrindavan Colony in PGI police station area. On

December 15, he got a message of deduction of Rs 40,000 from his bank account. He was shocked after he read the message and later lodged a complaint with the police. In his complaint, Shukla stated that he immediately contacted the bank about the transaction and got his card blocked on the suggestion of bank officials. "I have to do several rounds of the bank and the police station to get my case registered," he said. Shukla added that his ATM card was with him and he did not share his PIN to anyone when the unauthorised money transaction took place.

Meanwhile, a common man misbehaved with a woman junior engineer and he also talked rough with a woman sub-inspector in PGI police station area on Saturday morning. The woman, identified as Maya, is employed with Irrigation department and lives in Irrigation colony. On Saturday morning, she got a call from an unidentified man who asked her to share the details of her ATM card number and PIN. The caller told her that her ATM would become inactive on December 31 and so she had to give details of the ATM card.

As Maya guessed the wrong, she refused to share the same. This irked the miscreant and he started abusing her and misbehaving her. Maya warned him of a police action at which he got further infuriated. Maya reached the police station and gave a complaint there. On the complaint, a woman sub-inspector talked on the number by which Maya had got a call. Much to the surprise of the woman S-I, the miscreant misbehaved with her too before disconnecting the phone.

Man immolates self in front of his wife

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

puter hacking. Thus, students will first hack into the system, and then create a cyber security network," said Mishra.

He said it was essential also because most of the systems in smart cities were manless. "Take for instance the Metro which may well be unmanned in future and someone can enter the system and create a major problem," he added.

Mishra said no other educational institute of the country had such a lab. "The lab has been established with the help of consultants and it has taken us a year at a cost of Rs 80 lakh. It is the brainchild of director of the Centre of Advanced Research Manish Gaur," he said, adding that currently, only MTech (Cyber Security) students were using the lab, but the technical university was planning to open it for general students in near future.

AKTU sets up Smart City Simulator Lab

Lucknow (PNS): Abdul Kalam Technical University (AKTU) has set up the first Smart City Simulator Lab of the country at its Centre for Advanced Research which deals with the issue of cyber security for a smart city.

AKTU media spokesperson Asheesh Mishra said the lab gives the complete simulation of a smart city with metros, airports, electric connections etc linked with computer network. Explaining the concept of the entire lab, he said it would focus on teaching students how to create a cyber security network for smart cities.

"The students will use computers and hack the various networks such as electricity, airports and metros and then find a solution. This is important as when we have smart cities, anyone sitting across the world can create problems through com-

puter hacking. Thus, students will first hack into the system, and then create a cyber security network," said Mishra.

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A tent shop-owner immolated himself in front of wife while people kept watching him burning and shooting the incident in their mobile phones in Madiara on Saturday. The man, identified as Manish Rajpoot (35) of Takrohi in Indira Nagar, reached the shop of his wife Anshu in Ghazipur Balram village of Madiara on Saturday. He was drenched in petrol and lit himself soon after he came before Anshu who deals in cosmetic items. Anshu told police that she cried but people did not come for help. "The shop-owners and commuters were present at the scene after hearing the commotion. But they remained riveted to their place instead of helping. Some of them even started shooting the incident. Some elders scolded those filming the incident and later some persons doused the flames," she told the police.

The cops rushed him to hospital where Manish was declared brought dead. The body was sent for autopsy.

As per Anshu's claim, Manish was drenched in petrol when he reached the shop. "I got panicked to see him and before I could guess the wrong, Manish set himself on fire," she said. She added that Manish had attempted suicide on two occasions in the past and was luckily saved. "On one occasion, he had burnt his bike too," she said. It surfaced that Manish and Anshu were married seven years back and they had a girl child from the marriage. In the due course of time, the couple developed differences reportedly after Manish took to alcohol. Following differences, Anshu started living at her parents' house in Ghazipur Balram locality and started running a shop selling cosmetic items. For the last few days, she was staying at her parents' house. He used to create ruckus outside Anshu's shop to coerce her to come back. Police said Manish took the extreme step due to family discord.

Meanwhile, Vishambhar of Itauna died after his hut caught fire under mysterious circumstances on Friday night. Reports said Vishambhar worked as a guard at the fish pond which his elder brother Ram Sagar had taken on rent for fish farming. Ram Sagar said that he found Vishambhar's charred body when he reached the spot around 9 pm on Friday. "I informed the police and a team reached the place. Vishambhar's charred body was recovered from the ashes," he told. He alleged the role of a sadhu in the fire case and accused him of culpable homicide. Police said Vishambhar and the unidentified sadhu were taking alcohol when the fire broke out. "The sadhu probably fled the scene while Vishambhar was trapped and charred to death," the police said.

Ruckus at LU's Law Hostel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow (PNS): Car-borne unidentified miscreants stormed the new campus of Lucknow University in Jankipuram police station area and created ruckus outside the Law Hostel damaging several vehicles on Friday midnight. The hostellers gave a chase to the miscreants making them flee the scene after abandoning their car. Police had recovered the car and were identifying the miscreants.

The group gatecrashed and abused the security guard when he objected to their entry. It would be around 12 night when they reached the gate and forcibly entered the campus. They reached the Law Hostel where they started throwing stones on bikes and cars damaging a number of them, the guard told police.

Police said the hostel provost had lodged a case in this connection against unidentified miscreants. The attackers fled the scene after abandoning the car. The police are finding the name and address of the owner of the car. The police said the car of the miscreants rammed into a road divider inside the campus and the miscreants fled the scene fearing an attack by hostel inmates.

Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma inaugurated the solar power project at Lucknow University on Saturday. Also present on the occasion were Vice-Chancellor SP Singh besides faculty and staff members. The work started in May and 1000 MW solar panels were set up at the university. The solar plant will produce 3,900 units of electricity which will be provided to the university at half of the current rates which will save Rs 80 lakh,* LU media spokesperson NK Pandey said.

Pioneer

to previous year (in the same time period) when the theft incidents were reported to be 39. "The data on theft cases does not seem convincing. Last year, the then SSP, Lucknow, had claimed a low number of thefts as compared to previous year (2016) and had presented a comparative chart. On an average, two cases of thefts were reported all across Lucknow per day. Some of the cases were not reported at the police station while in some cases the police deferred registering a case to keep the slate impressive," sources said.

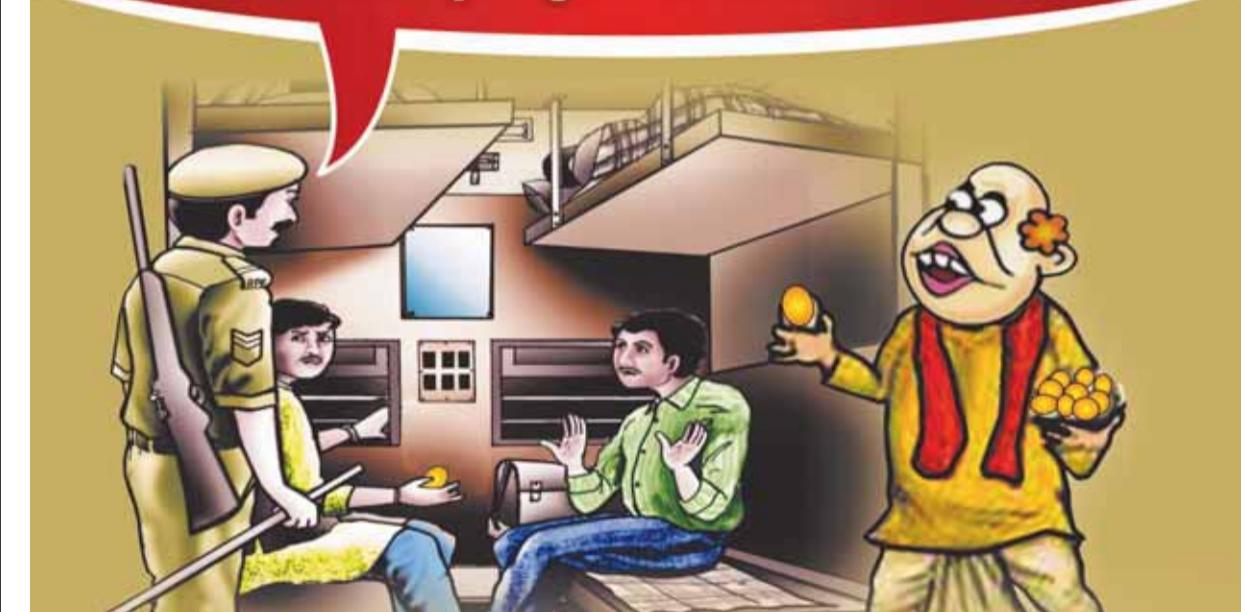
In Mohanlalganj, Himanshu of Sisodia is a jeweller and runs a shop in Sisodia market. On Saturday morning, he was informed by some shop-owners of the market about the guard and he reached the scene.

"I found the shutter of the shop lifted. When I checked, I found that all gold and silver ornaments were missing. I then called the police," he said. Himanshu added that he had closed the shop for the day on Friday night. The police spokesman said Himanshu was yet to give details of items/quantity of ornaments stolen from the shop. "The police will register a case soon after it gets a complaint," he said.

In Jankipuram, thieves struck at the house owned by a review officer at Secretariat and decamped with cash and jewellery. House-owner Satyapal Singh of Sector 1, Jankipuram, along with his family, had gone to Gorakhpur to see his mother on Friday after locking the doors. On Saturday, Singh got a call from the guard and reached the house only to see that his house was burgled and goods and cash missing. Singh sought help of his bosses at Secretariat after which a field unit of police reached the scene. Police are interrogating some of the domestic helps working at different houses. The police are also scanning the CCTV footages to get a clue about the miscreants.

Interestingly, the Lucknow police dossiers claim that only five cases of theft were reported during the last fortnight (between December 1 and December 15) in comparison

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SGPGIMS faculty united against govt for questioning salary structure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The SGPGI Faculty Forum on Saturday raised the issue of state government questioning salaries, perks and allowances at par with AIIMS, New Delhi. Forum's secretary Dr MS Ansari said SPGIMs was created as per SGPGIMS Act, 1983 and the salaries were justified as it is a superspeciality institute. At the general body meeting of the forum held on Saturday, all the faculty members unanimously said if the state government was finding it difficult to cope with the financial load, SGPGIMS should be taken over by the Central government.

Dr Ansari said the SGPGIMS director had already presented his case before the state government, but the Chief Secretary formed a committee and the director and heads of various state medical colleges



would have to make presentations in front of the Principal Secretary (Finance) regarding their expenditure.

He said that the faculty members had been getting their salaries as per SGPGIMS Act, 1983 for the past several years. "The Act is basically a

clearly states that salaries, allowances and perks to be given at par with AIIMS, New Delhi. Even the joining letter of an assistant professor in 1989 (the initial recruitments of SGPGIMS) and onward acknowledges that the candidate will enjoy all the pecuniary benefits at par with AIIMS, New Delhi. Similarly, in 2009, the implementation of the 6th Pay commission, it was reaffirmed, as did the 2011 UP government gazette, approved by the then UP Cabinet," he pointed out.

"SGPGIMS faculty members are getting salaries according to the 7th Pay Commission but the allowances such as LRA, CRA etc are only as per the 6th Pay Commission," he said. He added that in case of any such move by the government, they would take rigid steps without affecting patient care.

mimeo of AIIMS, New Delhi Act, which assures that the faculty members of SGPGIMS enjoy the same salary structure, perks and benefits at par with AIIMS, New Delhi. The UP government order for the implementation of 4th Pay Commission (Oct 17 1989)

Lucknow region of UPSRTC earns profit of ₹1 crore

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow region of Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) has earned a profit of Rs 1 crore since last year. Regional manager PK Bose told *The Pioneer* that most of the revenue (Rs 70 lakh) from the new Alambagh bus station. "The high-end station has seen several passengers shift from train to bus travel, thanks to large number of train cancellations. Most of the passengers have found out lately that buses take less time than trains in helping them reach their respective destinations," he said. He pointed out that ticketing section was getting over Rs 40 lakh per day at the Alambagh bus station. According to the

regional manager, the most preferred routes have been Lucknow-Delhi and Lucknow-Noida. "It takes seven hours for the buses to reach Delhi from Lucknow and 5 hours to reach Noida. We are running 40 bus services every day on the route with the peak time being 6:30 pm to 11 pm," Bose said.

The regional manager said Lucknow would soon get two other high-end terminals, one at Charbagh and another at Gomti Nagar. "We are in the process of floating tenders. The one at Gomti Nagar will help in a big way in decongesting the roads as buses will not be entering the city," he said. The tenders, he added, were likely to be floated in January next year.

Obra Power Station
OBRA-Sonebhadra-231219 Notice Inviting e-bid Tender No. T-17/SE(HQ)/HOPD/2018-19 Online e-Bids are invited for the work of "Work of Dismantling of 33/11KV Electrical line Poles (Including accessories) and 33/11.0.4KV Sub-Station element residing in Obra-C area." E-tender has been uploaded and published on 21.12.2018 at 18:00 Hrs. on UP Govt. e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Any bid shall be uploaded only on Technical Bid (Part-I) will be the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves updated. The last date of e-Bid submission is 10.01.2019 at 16:00 Hrs. or later. Estimated Cost of work will be approximately Rs. 3.64 Lacs only. The E.M.D. and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs.8,00,000 and Rs. 296.00 respectively. Total Quantity of work, tender specification and other terms & condition related to extension in due dates and corrigendum, if any, at UP Govt. e-tender portal shall be uploaded only on the <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Last date of e-bid submission on 16.01.2019 at 18:00 Hrs & Technical Bid (Part-II) will be opened on 05-01-2019 at 16:00 Hrs or later. Estimated Cost of supply will be approximately Rs. 3.50 Lac only. The E.M.D and Tender cost for e-bid submission is Rs. 5,00/- and Rs. 590/- respectively. Total Quantity of supply tender specification and other terms & condition is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal. It may please be noted that this is online bid and shall be accepted online only on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Information related to extension in due dates and corrigendum if any, at UP Govt. e-tender portal shall be uploaded only on the <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Any bid shall be uploaded only on Technical Bid (Part-I) will be the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves updated. The last date of e-Bid submission is 10.01.2019 upto 18:00 Hrs. **SUPERINTENDENT-ENGINEER Notice Inviting e-Bid Tender No. T-04/SE(HQ)/OTPS/TD/2018-19 Online e-Bids are invited for the Part (A):- Works of misc. body repairing & maintenance of truck/fire tender of OTPS, Obra (Part-B): Making of following seat & back of truck/fire tender/crane by replacement of the new banian foam Rexene of super quality of 1.5 mm thick black in color & 1" thickness wooden plank and providing 50 mm thick 40 density U-foam in seat & 25 mm 40 density in back & 2" thick rubberized coir matting. Part 'A' & Part 'B' works are required for next one year. E-tender has been uploaded on 20.12.2018 at 18:00 pm on UP Govt. e-tender portal <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Last date of e-bid submission on 14.01.2019 at 18:00 hrs. & hard copy of RTGS / NEFT receipt of tender fees & earnest money will be deposited in the office of 5.00 (Rs Five Lakhs) Approx. Last Date and Time For Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender Fee, Earnest Money and Tender Document in the Undersign Office : 29.01.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs Date And Time of Opening of e-Bids : 31.01.2019 up to 16:00 Hrs. Place of Opening of e-Bids : Office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I. 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra- Sonebhadra, U.P.-231219. E-mail Address : se.ommc_1_btps.obra@ uprvn.org Bid Document Cost : Rs. 500.00 + No. TO-1319/SE(MMC-I)/CPD-90.00 (GST)= Rs 590.00 II/ATPS/18-19 Online e-Bids are invited for the supply of (Rs. Ten Thousand only) Hydrochloric Acid for 'Obra' NOTE:- The tender documents Thermal Power Station, Obra, Sonebhadra (U.P.). E-tender specification is available on <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Tender will be accepted online only. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, O&MMC-I, BTPS, OBRA No - 321 Dt 28.12.2018 Hrs & Technical Bid (Part-I) will**

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Vaishno Devi shrine likely to receive 85L pilgrims

PTI ■ JAMMU

The number of pilgrims visiting the famous Vaishno Devi shrine atop the Trikuta hills in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir is likely to cross 85 lakh this year — the highest in the past five years.

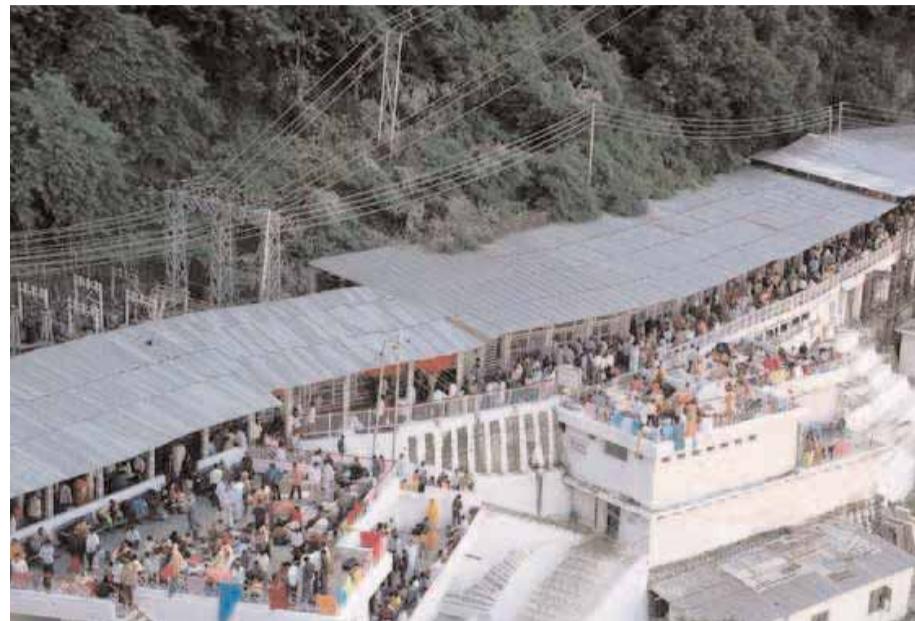
"We are expecting to cross 85 lakh turnout of pilgrims by December 31 midnight. We have already crossed 84.50 lakh and an estimated 50,000 pilgrims are expected to visit the shrine during the next 48 hours," Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board chief executive officer Simrandeep Singh told PTI.

He said last year's figure of 81.78 lakh pilgrims was crossed almost 20 days ago.

The pilgrim arrivals dropped from 93.24 lakh in 2013 to 78.03 lakh in 2014 and further to 77.76 lakh in 2015 and 77.23 lakh in 2016.

Singh attributed the increase in turnout to various factors including the efforts of the board to make the pilgrimage pleasant by adding new facilities for a hassle-free journey.

"The ropeway is functional while the seven-kilometre Tarakote track came up as an



alternate route with better facilities," he said.

On Dec 24, Jammu and

Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik inaugurated the Rs 85-crore Bhawan-Bhairon passenger ropeway, which reduced the travel time between Bhawan and Bhairon Temple (one-way journey) from one hour to just about three minutes.

The board has decided to keep the tickets affordable, with the to and fro journey costing ₹100 per passenger.

The alternate Tarakote Marg, which was completed in seven years at a cost of ₹80 crore, was opened for pilgrims in May.

The track, which is six metres wide and has a comfortable gradient and very

attractive wayside amenities, provides pedestrian pilgrims a cleaner and scenic route which has two bhojanalayas as well as seven toilet blocks equipped with facilities for the elderly and the disabled.

A medical unit with doctors, paramedics, medicines and equipment had been established to facilitate pilgrims round-the-clock. The track is

ADMK leader gets 10-yr jail for raping minor

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■

CHENNAI

ADMK leader, M Rajkumar, who is a former member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly was sent to 10 years rigorous imprisonment by a Special Court on Friday for rape and death of a 15-year-old girl at Perambalur, 277 km south west of Chennai.

This is the first verdict to be delivered by the exclusive court which was set up in September 2018 as per the directive of the Supreme Court to fast-track criminal cases involving serving and former MLAs and MPs in the country.

The prosecution case was that in June 2012, the girl's parents who were daily wage earners in an estate at Peerumedu in Keral's Idukki district sent her to the residence of Rajkumar who had assured them that he would look after her education and well-being.

The parents and the girl were brought to Rajkumar's residence at Perambalur on June 23, 2012 by Jaishankar, a close aide of the DMK leader. After two days, the parents were sent

back to Kerala. But the girl started calling her parents immediately after their return and pleaded with them to take her back to Kerala.

Before he could return to Perambalur to take the girl back home, her father received a call from the aide of Rajkumar stating that his daughter had consumed insecticide because of the delay in his arrival to take her home and they had admitted her to a private hospital at Tiruchi. The father rushed to Perambalur and got his daughter admitted to the Theni Government Hospital where she died on July 6, 2012.

During her final rites at Idukki in Kerala, the parents came across injuries on her body and they filed a complaint with the police. Following the complaint, the police ordered an autopsy which conclusively proved that the girl had been sexually abused many times.

The prosecution charge was that Rajkumar had repeatedly raped the girl many times between June 23 to June 26 2012 making use of her helplessness.

The initial trial was held at the Mahila Court and this was sub-

sequently transferred to the Special Court in September 2016.

J Shanti, the Special Judge, sentenced Rajkumar for 10 years rigorous imprisonment under sections 376 (rape), 304 (culpable homicide) and 120 (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code. Jaishankar, the close aide of the DMK leader too was sentenced for 10 years in abetting the rape and murder.

Though many witnesses turned hostile during the trial, the court relied on the autopsy report as a substantial piece of evidence. The sentencing of Rajkumar in the rape and murder has comes closely on the heels of a video of another DMK leader at Perambalur assaulting a woman beautician despite pleas from her associates to leave her alone going viral. The video had disturbed the viewers because of the cruelty shown by Selvaraj, the DMK leader, while kicking the lady.

Though party chief MK Stalin had removed Selvaraj from the membership of the party, the latter was readmitted into the DMK last month.

The Minister said that this year, the Government had launched "National Scholarship Portal Mobile App" (NSP

Dropout rate among Muslim girls reduced to 40%: Min

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said here on Saturday that the school dropout rate among Muslim girls, which was earlier more than 70 per cent, had now been reduced to about 35 to 40 per cent, owing to awareness and educational empowerment programmes of the Government.

"The Government is now working with a mission to bring it down to zero per cent in the coming years. Education is an effective step towards empowerment. The educational empowerment is an effective step to stop political exploitation of the minorities," Naqvi said.

While laying foundation stone for a new school building, library, lab and other facilities at the Anjuman-e-Islam-run Dr. MJ Girls High School and Junior College at Bandra (West) in north-west Mumbai on Saturday



Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi laying foundation stone for a new school building, library, lab and other facilities at the Anjuman-e-Islam-run Dr. MJ Girls High School and Junior College at Bandra (West) in north-west Mumbai on Saturday

connecting them with '3T-Teacher, Tiffin, Toilet', the minister said.

Naqvi said that more than 5.43 lakh youths and 1.5 lakh artisans had been provided employment and employment opportunities through job-oriented skill development schemes.

Anjuman-e-Islam chairman Jahir Kazi, Maulana Azad Education Foundation, Minority Affairs Ministry Govt of India, Secretary R Rehman, Foundation's Vice-Chairman Ashfaq Saifi and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The 144-year old Anjuman-e-Islam was founded by Dr. Badruddin Tyabji in 1874, who was the third President of Indian National Congress, and the first Indian Barrister to practice law at Bombay High Court, where he rose to become the first Acting Indian Chief Justice.

From a solitary school then, Anjuman-e-Islam has grown into a mega-educational institution running around 90 schools, colleges, professional courses colleges, sports complexes, etc., in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra benefitting over 1.10 lakh students of all communities.

Maintaining that the Narendra Modi Government was moving forward towards educational and social empowerment of all weaker and backward sections of the society, Naqvi said that his ministry was committed to "3E-Education, Employment & Empowerment".

"During the 2 years, thousands of educational institutions of all minority communities including madrasas, have been included in the mainstream education system by

Mobile App) to ensure a smooth, accessible and hassle-free scholarship system for students from poor and weaker sections." Scholarships have been given directly into bank accounts of the students though DBT mode in a transparent manner free from middlemen," he said.

He said that during the four years of the NDA, more than 3.11 crore students of minority communities, including 60 per cent girls, have been provided scholarships.

During the 2 years, thousands of educational institutions of all minority communities including madrasas, have been included in the mainstream education system by

manner in which ₹7 crore insurance was issued by that PSU insurance company.

Two pilots, two aircraft maintenance engineers, one bystander were killed and three persons were injured in the crash.

"The U.Y. Aviation Private Limited had entered into an agreement with Indambar Aviation Private Limited for carrying out the repairs and making the aircraft serviceable.

The flight carried two ground engineers in illegal manner (ground engineer are not supposed to fly in the test flight), the family of the deceased also stated which is confirmed by the officials that the pilot and ground engineer are pushed into the aircraft forcefully in an illegal manner," the panel questioned.

The Committee said that the Department of Financial Services should enquire in the

panel also expressed

concern over the casual behaviour of the aircraft company and MRO, the Civil Aviation Ministry, DGCA, and Mumbai Police which did not register any FIR in the accident.

The panel said it is of the considered opinion that such systemic deficiencies which delay the process of fact finding, fixing responsibility and award of compensation need to be simplified and speeded up. Otherwise, it becomes a case of delayed justice leading to denial of justice to the victim's families.

The panel, therefore, recommended that the Government take a fresh look into the vexed issue and ensure that a foolproof system is put in place to avert future occurrence of such incidents and to ensure the safety and security of employees associated.

It requires extensive surgical expertise and efficiency to safely handle an eight-month-old baby, weighing just 10 kg, which is why many people would hesitate to do this surgery on such a little baby, he said.

The Congress on Saturday said it was open to an alliance in Uttar Pradesh with any party that wants to "free" the people from BJP rule and urged all such forces to not weaken each other. The party also hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for accusing it of misleading farmers on loan waiver promises, saying that he is remembering farmers now after losing elections in five states.

Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Raj Babbar said the Congress moves forward keeping people's sentiments in mind and the people want to get rid of the BJP Government as the same feeling had manifested in the recently held State elections.

Asked if a grand alliance in UP was possible despite the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party making statements against the Congress, he said, "Whatever adverse comments that are being made, are their sentiments. It is not appropriate for me to comment on the remarks of the chiefs of SP and BSP. "The forces that are there to defeat the BJP, should not weaken each other, be it us or them," said Babbar.

He reiterated that all outfits which want to "free the state and people from BJP rule" are welcome to join hands with the grand old party. Babbar's remarks come days after SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had thanked "the Congress for not making his party's lone MLA in Madhya Pradesh a

losser, saying it has made the road ahead clear for his party. "In UP also, our leadership has made it clear and said that to defeat the BJP, people want that all of us should be together and we also want to be together," he said.

On BJP's allies such as Apna Dal(S) and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party airing their grievances with the saffron party, Babbar said it is now coming to the fore that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had cheated the people and allies with false promises in the run up to 2014 general elections.

At a separate Press conference in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's UP visit, Congress spokesperson asserted that neither will his party sleep, nor let the prime minister sleep until farmers' loans are waived and all facilities provided to them. "What was he (Modi) doing in 2008 when the Congress waived loans worth ₹77,000 crore. We did not make any propaganda about... We went and directly remitted the money into the accounts of farmers who had loans," Singh said.

The committee formed by the chairman in May 2018 comprising former Secretary-General, Rajya Sabha V K Aghnihotri and former additional secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, Dinesh Bhadravaj, submitted the 387-

page report which has also recommended 84 new directions to be issued by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha. It also made 25 other suggestions/observations, they said, without elaborating.

As per Article 118(1) of the Constitution, each House of Parliament makes rules for regulating its procedure and the conduct of its business. With a view to make the functioning of the Rajya Sabha more effective, a need was felt to review the existing rules of the Rajya Sabha and Naidu had constituted the two-member panel.

The mandate of the com-

mittee was to recommend amendments/ suggestions to Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) in the context of prevailing practices in Lok Sabha, other legislatures of the country and also the practices in the cohort of some of the Commonwealth countries, the sources said.

The report will now be considered by the Rules Committee and thereafter the recommendations of the Rules Committee will be placed before the House for its approval.

In K'taka, split wide open among coalition partners

KESTUR VASUKI ■ BENGALURU

Home Ministry, Revanna rubbed the reports blaming him for it. He, however, indicated that some people within the Congress party were behind it.

"I know what kind of pressure Parameshwara was under from his own party. Parameshwara is from the SC community, what (wrong) did he do as home minister? Was it necessary to remove him from the post? As deputy Chief Minister, he should have both," he said.

JD(S) workers are demanding the party leadership not to align with the Congress in the ensuing general elections and also to contest all the 28 seats. Many in the political circles are discussing about the timing of Revanna's outburst against the Congress and its impact on the coalition.

As per the recommendation sent to Chief Minister Kumaraswamy by Congress general secretary in-charge of Karnataka K C Venugopal, the Home Ministry has been allocated to MB Patil, who was inducted into the cabinet on Saturday.

Eight-month-old Delhi boy gets cochlear implant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An eight-month-old baby got a new lease of life after undergoing a challenging surgery for a simultaneous cochlear implant in both his ears at a city hospital, doctors said.

The baby, a resident of Punjabi Bagh area, was diagnosed with "severe hearing loss" in both his ears, they said.

He recently underwent a surgery at Apollo hospital here and doctors observed him over some period as it was a case of bilateral simultaneous cochlear implant, an electronic medical device that replaces the function of the damaged inner ear.

"At the hospital, his case was referred to Dr Ameet Kishore, Senior Consultant, ENT & Cochlear Implant Surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, and then assessed by audiologists at SpHear (Speech & Hearing) clinic (which supports the Apollo Cochlear Implant programme)," a spokesperson of the hospital said.

He was initially fitted with hearing aids to ascertain the level of benefit, as per international protocol. The team eventually confirmed that the child would not get normal hearing with hearing aids, and the family was counselled for cochlear implants. Even though his age presented a huge challenge, the doctors with the consent of parents decided to go ahead with the surgery, she said.

Kishore said: "When dealing with hearing loss in children at such a young age, the most important part is to restore the hearing of the child as early as possible. In this child's case the treatment of choice for good hearing restoration was cochlear implant, and on top of that, it was important to restore hearing in both his ears (bilateral simultaneous cochlear implant), which means that implantation was done in both ears at the same time."

It requires extensive surgical expertise and efficiency to safely handle an eight-month-old baby, weighing just 10 kg, which is why many people would hesitate to do this surgery on such a little baby, he said.

Test flight not cleared by DGCA: Report

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Beechcraft King Air C90 charter aircraft that crashed in Ghatkopar on June 28 this year not only went ahead with the test flight in bad weather but also without the mandatory legal sanction from the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

While undertaking any test flight in bad weather is prohibited, it was also found that the aircraft's Certificate of Airworthiness was already cancelled. In all, five persons including the crew and a bystander were killed in the crash.

A Parliamentary panel on Labour and Civil Aviation, headed by BJP MP Kirit Somaiya, found the shocking lapses, a report on which was tabled in the Parliament.

It was further found that

the aircraft was bought at ₹1.40 crore by UY Aviation Pvt Ltd in October 2016 from Silver Jubilee Pvt Ltd but it was insured for ₹7 crore in January 2017 in an illegal and non-transparent manner by an insurance company.

"It seems that the deceased employees will not get any insurance due to non-transparent and illegal insurance policy and as now it has come to the knowledge that the test flight itself is illegal," the panel said.

The panel discovered that the same aircraft was grounded due to an accident in February 2008 whose C of A (Certificate of Airworthiness) was cancelled and was repaired in non-scientific manner and was taken for test flight without getting completion/final

certificate from DGCA, which it stated is nothing but criminal negligence resulting into death of five employees/people.

The panel was "surprised" as to how the insurance company accepted the valuation of ₹7 crore in January 2017 and issued an insurance policy of ₹7 crore in January 2017. In practical terms, the cost/valuation of the aircraft should be ₹1.40 crore, then how and why the insurance company issued such insurance cover of ₹7 crore that too of an aircraft which did not have Certificate of Airworthiness at that time and was parked in a damage condition at Juhu Airport, Mumbai, the panel questioned.

The Committee said that the Department of Financial Services should enquire in the

panel also expressed

concern over the casual behaviour of the aircraft company and MRO, the Civil Aviation Ministry, DGCA, and Mumbai Police which did not register any FIR in the accident.

The panel said it is of the considered opinion that such systemic deficiencies which delay the process of fact finding, fixing responsibility and award of compensation need to be simplified and speeded up.

Otherwise, it becomes a case of delayed justice leading to denial of justice to the victim's families.

Bangladesh intensifies security as Hasina seeks re-election

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh stepped up security with thousands of army troops patrolling the streets along with paramilitary forces and police as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeks a record fourth term in Sunday's general elections. Over 600,000 security personnel including several thousand soldiers and paramilitary border guards have been deployed across the country to help conduct the election in which 10.41 crore people are eligible to vote. Security agencies have been asked to keep an extra vigil on religious minority communities as media reports said at least three Hindu households were set on fire by miscreants between December 16 and 26. Bangladesh's telecoms regulator also ordered the country's mobile operators to shut down 3G and 4G services until midnight on Sunday "to prevent the spread of rumours" that could trigger unrest during the elections, the 11th since Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan in 1971.

According to the Election Commission, 1,848 candidates are contesting for 299 out of 300 Parliament seats. The polls will be held at 40,183 polling stations. Thirteen people have been killed and thousands injured in clashes between supporters of Hasina's ruling Awami League and activists of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Hasina, who is seeking to return to power for a third consecutive time, on Saturday feared the opposition could boycott polls in the middle of voting as part of a "political trick" to evade a "humiliating defeat".

"I want to caution all about the character of (main opposition) BNP...they may say in the middle (of the elections) that we are boycotting the



Bangladeshi army soldiers sit inside a vehicle as they patrol the streets on the eve of the general elections in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Saturday. AP

polls," she said. "In that case (opposition boycott) I will ask our candidates and other contenders to continue polls until the voting is ended," Hasina, 71, said. The premier's comments came as the main opposition BNP is contesting the polls visibly in a dilapidated state in the absence of jailed party chief Zia, 73, and her fugitive son Tariq Rahman who is the acting party chief.

Zia, serving a 10-year prison term on graft charges, has been barred from contesting the polls while Rahman is living in London ostensibly to evade the law as a court has sentenced him to life imprisonment for masterminding a grenade attack on a rally in 2004 that killed 24 Awami League leaders and activists.

The BNP has stayed out of the parliamentary process since 2014 when it boycotted the general election over its demands for a poll-time non-party government. It has

returned to parliamentary politics as part of a new alliance - National Unity Front (NUF) - that was cobbled together three months ago by eminent lawyer Kamal Hossain as its convener. But the party is in a state of disarray in the absence of its two top leaders.

Election Commission last week allowed hardline Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami, a crucial ally of BNP, to contest the general elections, two months after it scraped the fundamentalist party's registration.

BNP earlier accused the election commission of being biased during the electoral campaign, a charge rejected by Chief Election Commissioner Nurul Huda.

Reacting on Hasina's remarks, BNP's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said "There is no dispute in our party about taking part in the polls." But what we see, there is no festive mood anywhere and rather a sense of

fright is prevailing across the country due to government intimidation," he said. Chief Election Commissioner Huda in a nationwide address on Saturday acknowledged a media report about arrests of some polling agents of BNP candidates and called such action "unwanted".

"Unless someone is wanted under certain case, police must not arrest anyone... maintain utmost neutrality in discharging your duties," he said. The opposition parties have alleged that thousands of its leaders and activists have been arrested to weaken them.

The Rapid Action Battalion or RAB on Friday night arrested eight people for circulating "provocative videos and rumours" on social media relating to parliamentary election.

Video-making materials, laptops and mobile phones were seized from the detainees, officials said.

Sirisena keeps control of police as Lanka political crisis festers

AFP ■ COLOMBO

citing the 19A said Sirisena had no power to sack him. After a 50-day standoff, Wickremesinghe was restored to office.

The country's highest court has termed Sirisena's action to dismiss parliament and his call for a fresh election as illegal.

Since Wickremesinghe's reinstatement a new Cabinet was sworn in. The UNP wants the Cabinet to consist of 30 members apart from Sirisena and Wickremesinghe.

"We have asked for the opinion of the attorney general on the number of ministers. The president and prime minister who hold portfolios must be excluded in our view," minister Mano Ganesan said.

The 19A amendment has restricted the Cabinet to 30 members when a single political party holds power without any coalition arrangement with another party.

Sirisena had ignored the names of those who had crossed over from his SLFP to join Wickremesinghe when the prime minister recommended them for ministerial posts.

Under the Constitution, Cabinet ministers are appointed by the president under advise from the prime minister. Significantly, Sirisena has also appointed his own representatives to state media directorates while giving Wickremesinghe's UNP control over institutions.

Egypt kills 40 'terrorists' in crackdown after Giza attack

AFP ■ GIZA (EGYPT)

Egyptian police killed 40 alleged "terrorists" in a crackdown on Saturday after a roadside bomb hit a tour bus claiming the lives of three Vietnamese holidaymakers and an Egyptian guide. The suspects were killed in separate raids in Giza governorate, home to Egypt's famed pyramids and the scene of Friday's deadly bombing, and in the restive Sinai Peninsula, the interior ministry said.

Thirty "terrorists" were killed in two raids in Giza and the remaining 10 were killed in the North Sinai, a statement said without directly linking them to the tour bus bombing. It said authorities had received information the suspects were preparing a spate of attacks against state and tourist institutions and churches.

"Information was received by the national security that a group of terrorists were planning to carry out a series of aggressive attacks targeting state institutions, particularly economic ones, as well as tourism, armed forces, police and Christian places of worship," the ministry said. A security source said the raids took place early Saturday morning, hours after Friday evening's roadside bombing which officials said hit a tour bus in the Al-Haram district near the Giza pyramids killing the three Vietnamese holidaymakers and their Egyptian guide.

Eleven other tourists from Vietnam and an Egyptian bus driver were wounded, the public prosecutor's office said. There was no immediate claim



The damaged tourist bus after a roadside bomb in an area near the Giza Pyramids in Cairo, Egypt on Friday. AP

of responsibility for the bombing, the first attack to target tourists since 2017. Saigon Tourist, the company that organised the trip, said the Vietnamese tourists were "on their way to a restaurant for dinner" when the bomb exploded.

Company officials were heading to Cairo on Saturday and plans were made to allow some relatives of the victims to also fly to Egypt. One of them was Nguyen Nguyen Vu whose sister Nguyen Thuy Quynh, 56, died in the bombing, while her husband, Le Duc Minh, was wounded.

Friday's bombing was the latest blow to Egypt's vital tourism industry, which has

Leaked video shows Mush seeking covert US support to regain power

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In an embarrassment to Pervez Musharraf, the former Pakistani dictator, in a leaked video, was purportedly seen seeking covert US support to regain power and telling American lawmakers that he was "ashamed" of the ISI being negligent about the al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden's whereabouts.

The undated video clips, which have been posted by dissident Pakistani columnist Gul Bukhari, also shows the self-exiled former president as saying that he thinks that the negligence of the ISI was "pardonable" as the CIA was also involved in same level of negligence on 9/11.

General (retd) Musharraf, 75, was Pakistan's president between 2001 and 2008, before resigning to avoid impeachment. The former army chief has been living in Dubai since March 2016 after he left for medical treatment and has not returned since, citing security and health reasons. He is facing the treason case for suspending the Constitution in 2007, a punishable offence for which he was indicted in 2014.

"All I am saying is, I have



certain credentials from the past. I need to come (to power) again and I need to be supported. Not overtly, but in a covert manner. So that we win again," Musharraf is seen as telling US lawmakers in one of the leaked video of the meeting.

When posed with tough questions, he ruled that US lawmakers "are too involved in minor tactics". He also claimed that Pakistan used the money, given by the US for fight against terrorist, to bring down the poverty from 34 per cent to 17 per cent.

To which, those present in the meeting, were quick to point out that none of the US Congress members voted for

USD 20 billion aid to Pakistan in the last 10 years because of poverty.

Money was given to Pakistan to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban, the lawmakers said, to which the former Pakistan president sought the US to help him get back to power. In the first video clip, he is seen walking in the corridors of the US House of Representatives. The video clips seems to be from 2012, after he was ousted from power.

In the third segment of the clip, Musharraf is seen in conversation with a lobbyist and Chairman of the powerful American Jewish Congress Jack Rosen during an informal get-

together. One of those present in that meeting was Congressman Gary Ackerman.

He argues that there was no complicity in Pakistan not being able to find out Osama bin Laden.

"There are aspersions against Pakistan of hiding Osama bin Laden," Musharraf says in his meeting with US Congressmen.

"First of all, is the US against Pakistan, or annoyed with the Army and ISI, because they believe there was complicity? My view is that there was no complicity and I would like to say a few words on that," he told the lawmakers.

"There was negligence. Certainly. And we are all ashamed. Even, I, though I am not in the government now, I am ashamed that there was this level of negligence by the ISI that we did not know. I think negligence is pardonable," he said, adding that the CIA was also involved in same level of negligence on 9/11. Referring to the 18 people being trained in the US, Musharraf alleged that CIA being such a big organisation was sleeping. "ISI was also sleeping. Let's leave it at that," he said.

Strong quake hits Philippines

AFP ■ MANALI

A 6.9-magnitude earthquake struck off the Philippine island of Mindanao on Saturday triggering a brief tsunami warning. The quake struck southeast of Davao City at a depth of 59 kilometres, the US Geological Survey said, a week after a volcano-triggered tsunami killed more than 400 people in neighbouring Indonesia. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center warned "hazardous tsunami waves from this earthquake are possible" along the coasts of Indonesia and the Philippines. However, waves were forecast to be less than 30 cm above tide level, it said, while Philippine monitors warned that "minor sea level disturbances" were to be expected.

The Philippine government's seismology institute initially advised people to "stay away from the beach and not to go to the coast fronting the Philippine Sea" for about two hours after the quake.

But it later cancelled the tsunami advisory, saying that wave heights had returned to normal. Although people rushed out of buildings during the quake, the civil defence office said it expected no damage or aftershocks. The office said cities in the south of the country felt "moderately strong" shaking but the authorities in the affected areas said they had no immediate reports of damage or casualties from the quake.

The Philippines and Indonesia lie on the so-called Ring of Fire, a vast Pacific Ocean region where many earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur. The most recent major quake disaster to strike the Philippines was in 2013 when a 7.1-magnitude quake left more than 220 people dead and destroyed historic churches in the central islands.

Indonesia has been hit by two major tsunamis this year. More than 400 people were killed last weekend after an erupting volcano triggered a deadly wave that struck the coastlines of western Java island and south Sumatra. A quake-tsunami in September killed around 2,200 people in Palu on Sulawesi island, with thousands more missing and presumed dead.

On Saturday, Egyptian private and state media outlets carried blurred images purportedly of the jihadists killed in the raids, some appearing bloody and with weapons in their hands.

Sirisena keeps control of police as Lanka political crisis festers

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The sharp political differences between Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe have been further reflected in the allocation of key departments under various ministries. According to the subjects gazette published on Saturday, Sirisena has kept control of the police department under him as the minister of defence.

The UNP led by Wickremesinghe argues that the police cannot be controlled by Sirisena whereas the 19th amendment to the Constitution has restricted the president to just one ministry in addition to the defence ministry.

Sirisena had also kept the government printer under him which is the authority which publishes government-gazetted decrees. Sirisena's differences with Wickremesinghe led to a collapse of the unity government between the two leaders on October 26 as Sirisena sacked Wickremesinghe as premier and withdrew his UPFA alliance from the unity government, triggering a constitutional and political crisis never before seen in the island nation.

Both Wickremesinghe and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa who was appointed prime minister by Sirisena, were claiming the premiership. Wickremesinghe

had no power to sack him. After a 50-day standoff, Wickremesinghe was restored to office.

The country's highest court has termed Sirisena's action to dismiss parliament and his call for a fresh election as illegal.

Since Wickremesinghe's reinstatement a new Cabinet was sworn in. The UNP wants the Cabinet to consist of 30 members apart from Sirisena and Wickremesinghe.

"We have asked for the opinion of the attorney general on the number of ministers. The president and prime minister who hold portfolios must be excluded in our view," minister Mano Ganesan said.

The 19A amendment has restricted the Cabinet to 30 members when a single political party holds power without any coalition arrangement with another party.

Sirisena had ignored the names of those who had crossed over from his SLFP to join Wickremesinghe when the prime minister recommended them for ministerial posts.

Under the Constitution, Cabinet ministers are appointed by the president under advise from the prime minister. Significantly, Sirisena has also appointed his own representatives to state media directorates while giving Wickremesinghe's UNP control over institutions.

SRK's Pak fan returns home after 22 months in Indian jail

PTI ■ PESHAWAR

A 22-year-old Pakistani national, who crossed over the border to meet Bollywood stars Shahrukh Khan and Kajol, returned home after spending 22 months in Indian jail.

Abdullah, a resident of Mingora of scenic Swat district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was arrested by the Indian authorities on May 25, 2017 when he had come to witness the Beating Retreat Ceremony held every evening at the Wagah border gates. He crossed the Zero Line after the ceremony and told the Border Security Force officials that he



wanted to meet Shahrukh and Kajol. He was repatriated on Wednesday through the Attari-Wagah border on the basis of an emergency travel certificate issued by the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, officials said. Upon arrival at his native home he was

ed to a police station before being sent to Central Jail Amritsar, he said. "I wrote a letter to Indian Government through jail authorities for arranging a meeting with Shahrukh and Kajol but no reply was made to his request," he added.

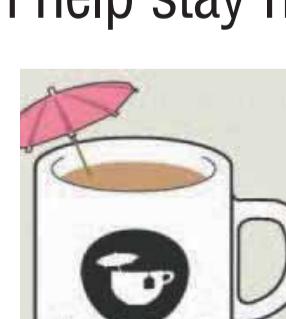
Stating that his wish of meeting the duo Bollywood stars could not be fulfilled, Abdullah said that earlier he had applied for Indian visa to meet the two Bollywood stars but the application was turned down. Abdullah appealed to the Pakistani citizens not to enter India through illegal ways. "I will not try again to enter India through illegal way," he said.

PTI ■ LONDON

Taking part in 'Dry January' challenge, which involves abstaining from alcohol for the first month of the new year, can help people regain control over their drinking and spending, as well as boost health, a study has found. Researchers from University of Sussex in the UK took data from over 800 people who took part in Dry January in 2018. The results showed that Dry January participants were drinking less in up to August. They reported that frequency of

being drunk dropped from 3.4 per month to 2.1 per month on average. "The simple act of taking a month off alcohol helps people drink less in the long term: by August people are reporting one extra dry day per week," said Richard de Visser, from the University of Sussex. "There are also considerable immediate benefits: nine in ten people save money, seven in ten sleep better and three in five lose weight," he said.

"These changes in alcohol consumption have also been seen in the participants who didn't manage to stay



alcohol-free for the whole month - although they are a bit smaller. This shows that there are real benefits to just trying to complete Dry January," said de Visser.

The research showed that 88 per cent saved money; 70 per cent had generally improved health; 71 per cent slept better; and 58 per cent lost weight. De Visser's findings come from three self-completed online surveys: 2,821 on registering for Dry January; 1,715 in the first week of February; and 816 participants in August.

INDIA CLOSE IN BUT DON'T SEE IT CUMMINS

India need two wickets on final day to secure 2-1 lead in four-match series

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

India came within sniffing distance of a defining victory before a stoic resistance by Australia's tail delayed the inevitable in the third Test here on Saturday.

Pat Cummins scored a heroic half-century as Australia finished at 258 for eight at stumps on day four after being reduced to 176 for seven after tea.

At end of play, he had scored an unbeaten 61 runs, facing 103 balls and hitting five fours as well as six, while Nathan Lyon was batting on 6, as they put on 43 runs for the ninth wicket.

Australia need another 141 runs for an improbable win, while India are two wickets away from a 2-1 series lead.

Post tea, Travis Head (34) and Tim Paine (26) took their sixth-wicket partnership to 22 runs. The duo cut down on risky scoring shots and played for time.

But they couldn't last long, as Head played on off Ishant Sharma (1-37) in the 51st over. Paine though continued his resistance and put on 19 runs with Mitchell Starc (18), seeing through 11 overs in this partnership.

Ravindra Jadeja (3-82) got the breakthrough with Paine caught behind and it seemed like Australia's last fight had gone out. But Cummins arrived at the crease to defy India, even as Starc was bowled off a rash swing against Mohammed Shami (2-71).

India tried everything possible to get the final two wickets, with skipper Virat Kohli even convincing the umpires to go for the extra half-hour/eight overs seeing the possibility of a result.

Cummins though stood defiant as he brought up his second Test half-century off 86 balls, capping a fine day of Test cricket after taking career-best figures of 6-27 in the morning session.

Earlier, at tea, Australia were reduced to 138 for five. Post lunch, Usman Khawaja (33) and Shaun Marsh



(44) came out playing attacking shots 51 runs with brother Mitchell Marsh (10), as Australia crossed 100 in the 37th over.



Looking good for a tall score, Shaun Marsh was unlucky to be given out lbw against Jasprit Bumrah (2-53) in the 33rd over. He went for DRS review as well and the ball was shown clipping the stumps only marginally, thus out on umpire's call.

Mitchell Marsh looked to attack Jadeja but it didn't work as Australia lost a third wicket in this session. He mishit the ball straight to Kohli at extra cover in a bid to clear the ropes.

Mitchell Marsh though continued to play his aggressive strokes and added

Australia were placed at 44 for two at lunch after India declared at 106 for eight in their second innings with Pat Cummins taking career-best figures of 6-27.

Needing to bat five and a half sessions to save the match, Australia didn't get off to the best start as Aaron Finch (3) edged Bumrah to second slip in the second over.

Mayank Agarwal couldn't latch on to a tough chance at short leg off Khawaja three balls later otherwise it would have been an even poorer start.

The batsmen then added 27 runs for the second wicket with Marcus Harris (13). The duo checked their shot selection, even as India wasted a review against Khawaja in Jadeja's first over. The spinner struck in the 10th over though as a bat-pad chance got stuck under Agarwal's arm at short leg and Harris had to walk back, causing further trouble for Australia.

In the morning, India had batted 52 minutes and extended their second innings from overnight 54 for five even as threat of rain loomed large.

Mayank (42) opened up with a couple sixes off Nathan Lyon (0-40) and made intentions clear, but was bowled off Cummins before he could get a second half-century in his maiden Test.

Rishabh Pant (33) and Ravindra Jadeja (5) threw their bats around to add 17 runs. They didn't waste time in farming strike, with Cummins missing out on his five-wicket haul when Tim Paine dropped Pant early in the session.

He returned to pick up his sixth wicket when Jadeja gloved a catch to gully, beating his previous best of 6-79 against South Africa back in 2011.

India declared with Pant's dismissal in the 38th over.



New Zealand players celebrate after dismissing Sri Lanka's batsman

Kiwis inch closer to historic win

AFP ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand were eyeing an historic victory as injury and a barrage of Neil Wagner bouncers left Sri Lanka in tatters at the close of day four of the second Test in Christchurch on Saturday.

Sri Lanka were 231 for six at stumps, 429 runs short of their improbable 660-run target, with doubt whether the injured Angelo Mathews would return. At the crease were Dilruwan Perera on 22 and Suranga Lakmal on 16. Wagner, who had enjoyed little success in the series, broke through stubborn Sri Lankan resistance to have figures of three for 47.

After rain ensured a drawn first Test in Wellington, a win in the Christchurch decider would give New Zealand a fourth consecutive series win for the first time after beating the West Indies, England and Pakistan earlier this year.

Despite losing both openers in the first two overs of their second innings, Sri Lanka fought to stay in the game until short-ball specialist

Wagner came into the frame.

Skipper Dinesh Chandimal and Kusal Mendis produced stubborn resistance for 53 overs for the third wicket before Mendis went for 67. They had seen off the swing and seam of New Zealand strike bowlers Tim Southee and Trent Boult at the start of the day, were untroubled by spinner Ajaz Patel, and initially they dodged the barrage aimed at the ribs by Wagner.

Wagner's first success came when he changed tack and lured Mendis into a false sense of security. Mendis, who in the course of his innings became only the second player behind India's Virat Kohli to score 1,000 runs this year, was frustrated as Wagner forced him on to the back foot with successive deliveries.

When the next ball was full length, the 23-year-old could not resist going for the drive and was smartly caught by substitute fielder Matt Henry diving to his left at extra cover.

Angelo Mathews, who in the first three innings of the series scored 236 runs and was dismissed only once, reached 22 when he was forced to retire at tea with a hamstring injury.

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Closing date: 28.01.2019 (up to 23:59 hrs.)

Online applications are invited from willing candidates having minimum Educational and Cultural Qualification for recruitment in Grade Pay ₹ 1900 / 2000 against Cultural Quota 2018-19 on North Central Railway, till 23:59 Hrs of closing date for the quota/vacancies, as indicated below:

SN	Stream	Scale of Pay/Pay Matrix Level	No. of Post
1	Singer-Hindustani Light (Male/Female)	PG-I, ₹5200-20200/- with corresponding Grade Pay ₹1900/2000	01
2	Flute Player (Male/Female)	(Revised Pay scale after 7th CPC Pay Matrix Level-02/03)	01

● The above quota is open to all candidates provided that they are fulfilling the prescribed norms.

● Employment Notice alongwith prescribed format of application and other details, such as-Educational qualification, Age, Mode of Selection, Examination Fee, How to apply and other Important instructions are available in the issue of *Rozgar Samachar/Employment News, New Delhi* dated 05 January, 2019 and also w.e.f 05.01.2019 at Railway Recruitment Cell / NCR / Ald's website-www.rrcaid.org & www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

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railway northcentral@CPRONCR

RAILWAY RECRUITMENT CELL NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Balmiki Chauraha, Nawab Yusuf Road, Allahabad-211001

RECRUITMENT AGAINST SPORTS QUOTA

Employment Notice No. SQ 2018-19 Dated: 05.01.2019

Closing date: 28.01.2019 (up to 23:59 hrs.)

Online applications are invited from talented and outstanding Sports persons having minimum Sports norms and Educational Qualification for recruitment in Grade Pay ₹ 1900/2000 and Grade Pay ₹ 2400/2800 against Sports Quota 2018-19 on North Central Railway, till 23:59 Hrs of closing date for the quota/vacancies, as indicated below:

A. Grade Pay ₹ 1900/2000:

S. No.	Discipline	Men/Women	Catg. No.	Position/Weight Catg. required	No. of vacancies
1	Cricket	Men	1	Batsman	02
			2	Pace Bowler	01
			3	All Rounder	01
	Hockey	Women	4	Medium Pace Bowler	01
			5	Batsman	01
			6	All Rounder	01
			7	Batsman/Wicket Keeper	01
2	Badminton	Women	8	Player	02
	Wrestling	Men	9	67 Kg. Free Style	01
		Men	10	Goalkeeper	01
4	Hockey	Men	11	Forward	01
			12	Goalkeeper	01
			13	Defender	01
5	Athletics	Women	14	5000 M	01
Total					16

B. Grade Pay ₹ 2400/2800:

S. No.	Discipline	Men/Women	Catg. No.	Position/Weight Catg. required	No. of vacancies
1	Gymnastics	Men	15	Player	02
2	Table Tennis	Men	16	Player	02
3	Wrestling	Men	17	92 Kg. Free Style	01

Total 05

NOTE: Applications complete in all respect should be submitted only ONLINE on <http://www.rrcaid.org>. Candidates willing to apply for more than one category should fill/tick the respective category number while applying. Examination fee has to be paid separately for each category.

● Employment Notice alongwith prescribed format of application and other details, such as-Educational qualification, Age, Mode of Selection, Examination Fee, How to apply and other Important instructions are available in the issue of *Rozgar Samachar/Employment News, New Delhi* dated 05 Jan. 2019 and also w.e.f 05.01.2019 at Railway Recruitment Cell / NCR / Ald's website www.rrcaid.org & www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

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INDIA PERFORMING EXCELLENTLY UNDER CONSTANTINE: AIFF

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation has not ruled out giving another contract extension to head coach Stephen Constantine after the Asian Cup in January, saying the national team has been "performing excellently" under him.

Terming some media reports which claimed that the AIFF is parting ways with Constantine after the January 5-February 1 Asian Cup in the United Arab Emirates as baseless, the national federation

said it was focussing on the performance of the team in continental showpiece event.

"It is completely baseless. We are completely focused on AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 and the team has been performing excellently under Stephen Constantine having risen to 97 from 173 in the FIFA ranking within less than 4 years," AIFF General Secretary Kushal Das said in the statement. "We all are focused on the massive tournament right now and we'll only sit together to discuss this once his contract ends on

31st January 2019," he added.

The 56-year-old Constantine was brought back as head coach in 2015 for a two year tenure after his first stint from 2002-05. He was given a contract extension of one year in 2017. Early this year, he again accepted another one year of extension of his contract till the end of the Asian Cup. "Back in 2015, when the Briton took the charge of the Blue Tigers, they were ranked 173 in the FIFA rankings. Since then, they have experienced a meteoric rise in the ladder to surge

up to 97 in the latest-released FIFA rankings," the AIFF said. India play Thailand in their opening match of the Asian Cup in Abu Dhabi on January 6.

Meanwhile, Sports scientist Danny Deigan, who has played a crucial role behind raising the fitness levels of the Indian football team, says the methods followed are very similar to the ones in leading clubs such as Arsenal. "After visiting a number of EPL clubs including Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur and Leicester City, I can say that the methods that we use in the Indian team are very similar to them," Deigan stated.

He claimed he went along with it "to fit in" and because he "didn't know any better".

Bancro

BALL TAMPERING SAGA

From infamous ball tampering scandal that led to the downfall of Australian cricket to Prithvi's sensational debut and CSK's stupendous comeback, PIONEER SPORT takes a look back at the major happenings that took place in between 22 yards

In one of the biggest controversies to rock cricket took place in March this year with then Australia captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner being involved in ball-tampering scandal during the Cape Town Test against South Africa. The image of Cameron Bancroft stuffing down yellow sandpaper became the iconic picture of shame for Australian cricket as the three accepted tampering with the ball to alter the ball condition.

As a consequence to the biggest cricket controversy in the sport in recent past, Darren Lehmann stepped down as coach, Smith and Warner received bans for a year and Bancroft got himself a ban of nine months from International cricket. Smith and Warner were also not allowed to participate in the Indian Premier League (IPL) last season.

This however, wasn't the only instance of ball-tampering this year. Sri Lankan captain Dinesh Chandimal was also found guilty of the same in June, and received a one-Test ban by the ICC for the same.



Australian skipper Steve Smith and David Warner were suspended from playing international cricket for 12 months for their involvement in ball tampering

Kohli's fan moment

India captain Virat Kohli was hugely criticised for his 'leave India' comment when he lashed out at a fan for saying he preferred English and Australian batsmen to Indian players.

"Why are you living in our country and loving other countries? I don't mind you not liking me, but I don't think you should live in our country and like other things," Kohli told him in a video recording, adding that the fan should get his "priorities straight".

The 30-year old cricketer was criticised for not being able to maintain his calm and for not handling the reaction with maturity.

He made his case worse by responding to the backlash by saying 'all for freedom of choice,' adding: "I guess trolling isn't for me guys, I'll stick to getting trolled!"



DOUBLE DONE & DUSTED

Rohit Sharma led India defeat Pakistan twice in span of four days at Asia Cup cricket tournament held in Dubai.

Riding on disciplined bowling performance by bowlers in group A match, India first restrict Pak for 162 runs courtesy three-wicket each by Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Kedar Jadhav and then skipper Sharma's quickfire 52 scripted India's easy triumph over its arch-rivals.

While in the super four tie on 23rd Sept, Shoaib Malik (78) guides Pak to 237 runs but the target seem too small in front of Rohit and Dhawan as both of them scored centuries to maul Sarfraz's men by 9 wickets to enter the tournament final.

These two back to back wins came an year after Pak beat India in the Champions Trophy final at Lord's.

In the tournament summit clash, India beat Bangladesh in the final ball of the match to win its record seventh Asia Cup title.

Batting first, Bangladesh rode on Liton Das 121 run innings to set 223 runs target for India to win.

Which India after few hiccups in between successfully chased down in the final ball of the innings.

Indeed Kedar Jadhav emerged as the saviour for India as after initially getting retired because of hamstring issue, the all-rounder returned back to the crease and scored the winning runs.

This was the second consecutive occasion when India beat Bangladesh in the tournament's final.

Earlier in March 2018 at the Nidahas Trophy final in Colombo, Dinesh Karthik's last ball six to Soumya Sarkar helped India beat its neighbours by 4 wickets.



Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan runs between wickets during Asia Cup clash against Pakistan in Dubai

KING KOHLI

VIRAT IN 2018

I	Runs	Avg	SR	HS	50	100	4s	6s
Test	22	1,240	56.4	55.7	153	4	5	135
ODI	14	1,202	133.6	102.6	160	3	6	123
T20I	9	211	30.1	122.0	61	1	0	10

Adding another feather to his over-crowded hat, India's captain in all formats Virat Kohli surpassed Sachin Tendulkar to become the fastest cricketer to cross the 10,000-run mark in the One Day Internationals (ODIs). The India captain reached the milestone in just 205 innings – 54 innings less than the now second-fastest, Tendulkar. Kohli became the 13th

cricketer and fifth Indian to achieve the feat during India's second ODI against the West Indies at Vizakapatnam. Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni are the only other Indian cricketers to have reached this milestone in their careers.

While during his 82 run innings against Australia in the first innings of Melbourne

Test, he surpassed Rahul Dravid's record of most runs scored by an Indian batsman at foreign soil in a calendar year.

In the summer of 2018, Virat also improved his record at English soil and compiled to score 593 runs in five Tests.

Also during the five match ODI series against West Indies in October, he scored three back to back centuries in the first three games of the series.

And after India's win at Adelaide by 31 runs, he also became the first Asian skipper to win Test matches in South Africa, England and Australia in a single year.



INTERNAL MATTERS



Indian ODI skipper Mithali Raj was left out of the playing XI against England in WC semis

ed by the coach. "My issues with the coach started immediately as we landed in the West Indies. At first there were small signs that his behaviour towards me was unfair and discriminatory. For instance, walking off if I am sitting anywhere around, watching in the nets when others bat and choosing to walk away when I am batting in nets, if I try to go up to him to talk to start looking into his phone and keep walking. It was embarrassing and very evident to everyone that I was being humiliated. Yet I never lost my cool," she said.

Drama unfolded after India lost the ICC Women's World T20 semifinal against England with their senior-most player and former captain Mithali Raj excluded from the squad in the crucial fixture. With the decision already being questioned by fans and critics, Mithali came out and accused BCCI Committee of Administrators (CoA) member and former player Diana Edulji of bias and slammed then coach Ramesh Powar for humiliating her.

She also narrated a series of instances where she had felt slighted and

TIME TO LET GO

AB DE VILLIERS



In a surprising decision on May 23, South Africa's star batsman AB de Villiers announced his retirement from international cricket with immediate effect. The right-handed batsman played 114 Test matches, 228 ODIs and 78 T20 internationals for South Africa and scored over 20,000 runs for his country.

De Villiers made the announcement on Twitter by posting a video message for the fans.

Elaborating on his decision, de Villiers said he was "tired" and "running out to gas", and thought it was the right time to move on. The decision has come just four days after he played for the Royal Challengers Bangalore in IPL 11.

ALASTAIR COOK

Former England captain and opener Alastair Cook on September 3 announced his retirement from international cricket. He, however, will continue to play T20 franchise cricket all over the world.

At 35 years of age, Bravo has mostly been out of the international West Indies side due to numerous issues with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

GAUTAM GAMBHIR

Cook endured a lean summer at the top of the order for England, averaging only 15.57 in seven innings against India. But he achieved a unique feat of making a fifty and a hundred in both his

debut and final Test match. He also surpassed Sri Lankan Kumar Sangakkara to become the fifth highest Test run scorer of all time.

DWAYNE BRAVO

West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo made a sudden announcement of his retirement from international cricket. He, however, will continue to play T20 franchise cricket all over the world.

At 35 years of age, Bravo has mostly been out of the international West Indies side due to numerous issues with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

GAUTAM GAMBHIR

India opener and hero of India's 2011 World Cup final against Sri Lanka, Gautam Gambhir on December 4 announced his retirement from all formats of the game. Gambhir last



played for India in Tests against England in November 2016. While his last appearance in ODIs was against the same opponents in January 2013 while in T20Is against Pakistan in December 2012. Gambhir made the announcement via a video message which was posted on his social media accounts.

In other major goodbyes, Rangana Herath, Mitchell Johnson, Kevin Pietersen and Paul Collingwood bid farewell to all forms of cricket, as did Niall O'Brien, Ed Joyce, Praveen Kumar, RP Singh, Munaf Patel, S Badrinath, Abdur Rehman and Nick Compton.

WC FOR DRAVID

Rahul Dravid's wait for winning World Cup trophy finally ended on 3rd February when under his coaching Prithvi Shaw led India beat Australia by 8 wickets in the U19 World Cup final in Mount Maunganui to lift record fourth title.

In his decorated career span as an international cricketer, Dravid played World Cup final in 2003 against Australia but had to settle with the runners medal.



RECORD TOTAL



England extended its own record in one-day international cricket by 37 runs after smashing the highest-ever total of 481-6 as it beat Australia by 242 runs in the third ODI on 19 June.

Alex Hales (147 off 92) and opener Jonny Bairstow (139 off 92) plundered Australian bowlers all around the park as England bettered their previous world's highest total of 444-3 set in 2016 against Pakistan.

What's interesting is that the very next day, the England women's team smashed a 250 for 3 against South Africa, setting the record for the highest total in Women's T20 Internationals.

Highest total in ODI

481-6 - England (v Australia) in Nottingham, 2018

444-3 - England (v Pakistan) in Nottingham, 2016

443-9 - Sri Lanka (v Netherlands) in Amstelveen, 2006



DAD'S ARMY WIN IPL

On their return to the league after serving a two-year ban, MS Dhoni and his army of dads' in yellow lifted Chennai Super Kings' third IPL trophy on 27 May.

The same reason why most people had written CSK off ahead of the season became the secret behind their success. With a core team comprising Dhoni (36), Ambati Rayudu (32), Suresh Raina (31), Dwayne Bravo (34), Shane Watson (37) and Harbhajan Singh (37), the average age of the squad was 34 and a half years.

CSK defeated Sunrisers Hyderabad by 8 wickets in their seventh final to become the joint-most successful team in the league, with Mumbai Indians.

TEST DEBUT

After being confirmed as 'Full Members' of ICC, Afghanistan and Ireland played their first-ever Tests this year. Afghanistan in their Test debut suffered a massive loss by an innings and 262 runs against India, in a match that wrapped-up in just two days in Bengaluru. Ireland on the other hand, lost by 5 wickets to Pakistan on the final day in Dublin.





the pioneer

agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



3

Whispers of undying glory

A skilled translation of KM Munshi's Gujarati novel, *Gujarat No Nath, The Lord and Master of Gujarat* is brilliant in its plot and narration



6

Protecting young minds

Games, iPads, and phones not only encroach on several elements of children's lives, they wield immense power over their mental well-being



7

Your money in 2019

Praveen Chauhan reveals how the new year will affect each zodiac sign monetarily and some remedies they can adopt for a smooth ride



We all lose ourselves in a fantasy or our jobs and forget how we feel about other things. It's important to check yourself, to spend time alone
—Amanda Seyfried



THE GUT INSTINCT

A healthy gut contributes to effective digestion, a strong immune system, and our overall health. All these factors in turn keep serious ailments, like cancer, under check. NAVNEET MENDIRATTA attempts to decode the latest wellness mantra of feeding in probiotics through fermented foods and discovers how modern India is taking to it in a big way

Wellness chef and *Masterchef India* finalist, Karishma Sakhrahi, likes to begin her day with ginger, turmeric and lemon tonic without fail. For someone who suffered from severe digestive issues about three years ago, she has come a long way, having made planned and systematic changes to nurture her gut health. What's that? A lot many of you would wonder. Focus on gut health is a very recent health trend that has benefitted many a those plagued by lifestyle-related ailments. "We are going back to the basics," says Sakhrahi. "Once you start getting older, you realise that you have to take care of your health and body. And it all begins with forming good habits. Good health cannot be attained in a day. You can't eat salad one day and expect to become skinny," she reasons.

In the same breath, she advocates that you begin by taking care of your gut. "I am a big believer of gut health. Gut is something you have got to nurture and take care of every day. My morning routine is nothing short of a ritual which is consciously planned according to Ayurveda principles. I call it 'going back to basics'. It is something that has helped me with my digestive issues. Not too long ago, I used to suffer from severe acidity and acid reflux that was almost incurable. Reworking how I looked at my food and gut health is what helped me out of that situation," she shares.

Depending on the time of the year, she does not hesitate to throw in some seasonal berries and herbs to maximise benefit, such as adding amla in winter. "Herbs like Ashwagandha, even spices like cumin and cinnamon help detoxify in a natural way," she quips.

BACK TO THE BASICS

"Thirty to forty per cent of our immune system is in our gastro-intestinal system," says nutritionist and health writer, Kavita Devgan. "So steering up the gut is a very good idea. Sometimes, more than big changes, all we need is one small change to net large health gains. Including fermented foods in the diet is that one change I wish everyone would make as they can help restore the natural state of health that a diet of excess sugar, meat, processed foods, and prescription drugs destroys on a daily basis for us," she adds. Her recent book, *Ultimate Grandmother Hacks: 50 Kickass Traditional Habits for a Fitter You*, addresses rising concern over lifestyle-aided maladies and advocates switching to time-tested ways to nurture good health.

"With the way we eat, and the way pollu-

tion is, and the amount of antibiotics we keep pumping in, the good bacteria in our gut need to be replenished regularly to keep their number up. And replenishing the good bacteria is the way to go," she says.

FEEDING THE BACTERIA

"We need to eat the right sort of foods for healthy bacteria (probiotic bacteria) to feed on. These foods are known as prebiotics, and consist of non-digestible food fibres and complex sugars that specifically stimulate the growth of good bacteria in the bowel. Prebiotics are found naturally in small amounts in foods such as wheat, oats, bananas, asparagus, leeks, garlic, and onions. Breast milk is also rich in prebiotics, which explains why breast-fed babies are healthier and less vulnerable to infections," she explains.

However, upping the probiotic intake is what has caught the fancy of those swept by the healthy wave in a big way. "One type of food that I see missing extensively in our plates today are fermented foods," says Devgan. "Somewhere we have forgotten about them, and eat them only sparingly. This was not so earlier. In fact, our traditional diets were replete with fermented foods as people understood their importance," she says.

Bacteria are not all bad and fermented foods, reasons Devgan, are nature's way of showing us how to put them to good use. "Besides spicing up our taste buds with their rather exciting sour taste, they help us absorb the nutrients we're consuming better, are easy to digest, and are teeming with enhanced micronutrients," she informs.

Little wonder then that every culture in the world has its own versions of fermented foods: Kefir (Russia), Tempeh (Indonesia), Miso (Japanese), Kimchi (Korea), and Sauerkraut (German/European) are some of the popular versions. Back home, we have always had our own versions of fermented foods — yogurt, buttermilk, *kanji*, pickles, *dhokla*, *idli*, *dosa*, *appam*, *uttapam* are all made by fermentation, making them high in live cultures of the good bacteria.

FERMENTED FOOD IN MODERN KITCHENS
"Indians have been using fermented foods since as long as they can remember, says Dhruv Oberoi, Head Chef, Olive Qutub (Olive Bar & Kitchen, Delhi). "At Olive, we do our own Kombuchas and fermented foods, primarily for the reason that cause the Umami taste to develop. We love to play with fermentations and flavours and do our own black garlic, black



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EVERYTHING STARTS WITH GUT. AND IF YOUR GUT IS NOT HAPPY, YOUR SYSTEM IS NOT HAPPY, YOUR MIND, JOINTS, BODY IS NOT HAPPY, YOUR SKIN IS NOT HAPPY. BY ADDING PROBIOTICS IN YOUR DIET, YOU ARE PUTTING GOOD BACTERIA IN AND ELIMINATING BAD BACTERIA FROM YOUR SYSTEM. FERMENTED FOODS HELP BRING INFLAMMATION DOWN

“

onion, black pear, black apple, besides a whole lot of experimentation with the foods," he says. This is other than the fact that fermentation helps preserve what is not in the season.

"We started fermenting in-house about three years ago and took baby steps before adding more to our menu. One of our really popular dishes on the menu is White and Black Trumpets and Strawberries used as a variety of cures like fresh, pickled, fermented, dried, candied, and savory marmalades; fresh figs used in the salads as options of being vinegar, sun dried, brûléed, or used as fig seed crisp or smoked fig leaves," he shares. The other signature is a Corn Miso dish paired with fish, where miso is prepared in-house.

Chef Matteo Fontana, Chef de Cuisine, Le Cirque at The Leela Palace New Delhi recalls his grandmother's favourite Sunday preparation for the family. "Every Sunday, my grandmother would do a classic chicken liver pate with cognac for the family. It was a traditional recipe served with orange and apple jam, along with fresh bread, making for a wholesome family meal. Here, I am doing the same recipe but with a touch of truffles and styled to suit the restaurant where we present it in single portion. The other variation is that I do four kinds of jams — raspberry, mango, apple compote, and tomato jam. These jams are what act as probiotic aids to balance the heaviness of the dish," he shares.

Other than yeast that goes into the making of their breads, fermentation is not a big part of the Italian culinary cuisines. According to Fontana, in south Italy, people take their yeast very seriously. Some families are known to have nurtured a batch going back 200 years! Other than that, Italian cuisine is more about fresh ingredients. Pickle is not something you think about first when you picture Italian food.

FLAVOUR OF FRESHNESS

For someone who has been listing fermented foods as the big food trend to watch out for since the past three years, Vikramjit Roy, Group Corporate Chef, White Hat Hospitality (the parent company of Whisky Samba, The Wine Company, The Wine Rack and Antares), is happy to see that people are finally waking up to the advantages the process has to offer. "The tartness is not something everyone takes well to in the first go," observes Isha Singh Sawhney, the girl behind Bhu Kombucha, bottled Kombucha available at limited outlets and cafes in Delhi (Nature Basket, GreenR, Coast Café, to name a few).

any forced imports after this. I started making my own soya sauce, miso, gochujang, yellow bean paste, chili bean paste, black bean paste, among others. And I could now choose the consistency and tartness that I wanted in my end product, depending upon the recipe and what I am using it for," he says.

Other than the processes, he plays on the health benefits of fermentation too and as a responsible chef has incorporates the benefits in balancing the recipes in his kitchen. In his Kosha Mangsho, a traditional recipe from his mother's kitchen but not the easiest to be digested for all the mustard oil spices that go into it, he has paired it with spinach upma which has fermented mustard in the upma and lacto fermented spinach. The dish has three kinds of onion ferments to go with it, with three different ages.

"While lacto fermentation does nothing to the taste, it only incorporates good bacteria into those elements. So when you are eating it, you are unknowingly eating lacto fermented ingredients which when they go into your stomach aid digestion. So the Kosha Mangsho does not appear that heavy. You don't feel sluggish after eating a hearty meal," he explains.

Fermentation is a process that he uses big time in his kitchen. His kitchen is full of jars to store vegetables that are fermented to make them taste uniform at the same time not taking away from the freshness, rather perceived freshness. The other fermented flavour that he feels is underrated and would catch up big time is Kombucha. "The day people realise the benefits of Kombucha, the impact would be amazing," he says. At Whisky Samba, they do Kombuchas with sparkling and fresh juice for Sunday brunches. "It is not the best way to drink kombucha but it is a start," he says.

GETTING FRIENDLY WITH KOMBUCHA

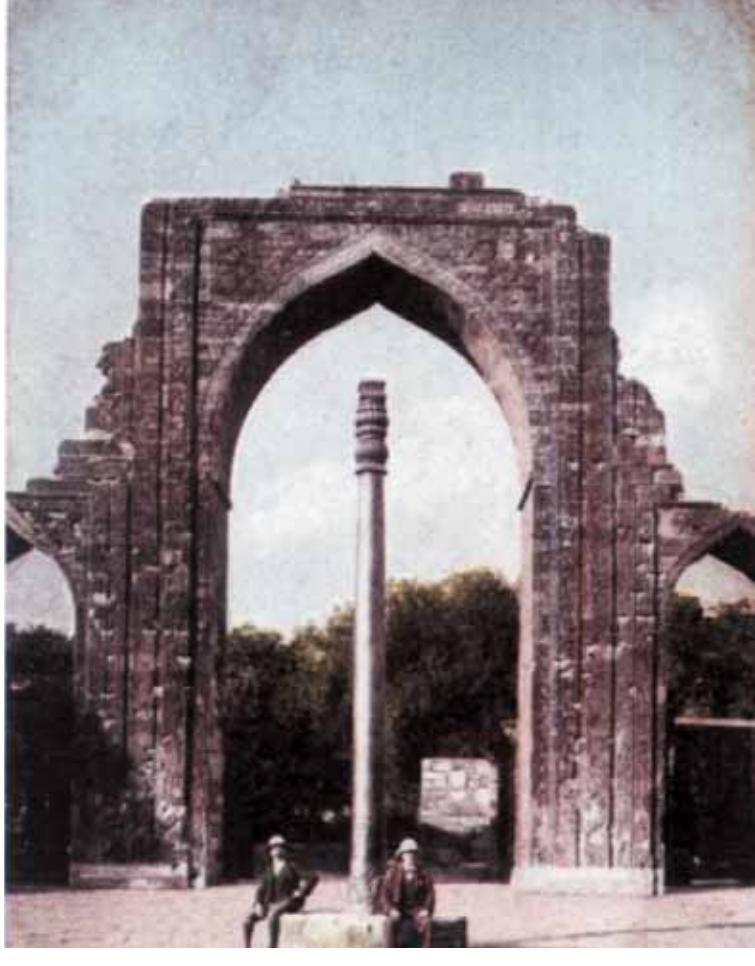
In the past two years, this ancient Chinese recipe has been slowly but steadily making inroads into the Indian palate in quest for probiotic flavours. Individuals grew their own SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture Of Bacteria And Yeast) passionately and savoured the health benefits these bacteria had to offer to the gut. "The tartness is not something everyone takes well to in the first go," observes Isha Singh Sawhney, the girl behind Bhu Kombucha, bottled Kombucha available at limited outlets and cafes in Delhi (Nature Basket, GreenR, Coast Café, to name a few).



THE WORLD'S OLDEST
POSTCARD IS BELIEVED TO HAVE
BEEN SENT IN 1840 TO THE
WRITER THEODORE HOOK FROM
FULHAM IN LONDON, ENGLAND

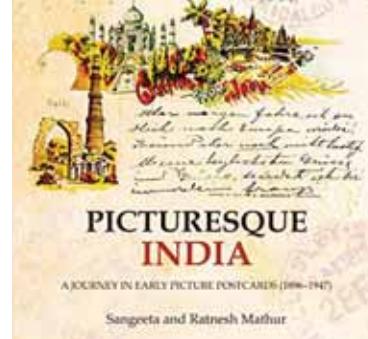
Viewing Delhi through postcards

Seven decades after Independence, when one looks around in Delhi, they might fail to realise that each building is like a time capsule in itself. Sangeeta and Ratnesh Mathur's *Picturesque India: A Journey In Early Picture Postcards* is a timely reminder



Most people in the age group of 20-40 years communicate through emails and/or text messages several times a day. It's almost redundant for them to even think about how convenient this uber quick means of written communication is. The only thing that is missing from it, however, is the charm that letters and postcards carry. People who have lived through the times when postcards were popular almost always have stories to share about how sending someone a postcard was quite an entertaining activity in itself. Today, practicability and convenience has justifiably taken precedence over a sense of slow but personal charm that communication would earlier have. But picture postcards have managed to find space in museums and cultural exhibitions and continue to intrigue people interested in history and culture.

Picturesque India: A Journey In Early Picture Postcards (1896-1947) published by Niyogi Books (₹1,995) is quite a treat for history buffs — particularly India's — as the authors of this book have put together 550 Indian postcards from the colonial era. The period chosen by authors Sangeeta and Ratnesh Mathur is particularly significant as it gives rare and invaluable insights into the formation of modern India. The book has been divided into six chapters that show through pictures, supported with



text, how much India changed during the British period. It takes the readers through the formation of new capital cities, hill retreats, cultural centres, education hubs, cantonment towns, trade routes, and railway lines with its collection of picture postcards. A sense of resentful wonderment is bound to take one over as they look at picture postcards from Lahore, Karachi, and Rawalpindi and think about what pre-Partition India must have been like.

This package carries selected pictures from this collection to give the readers a sense of the aspects of history that this book opens the gates to. The selection has Delhi and its development under the British administration at its focus. The postcards speak volumes about Connaught Place, New Delhi Railway Station, old bazaars, and more.

— Umang Aggarwal



FROM PAGE 1

THE GUT INSTINCT



For someone who started making, rather bottling, Kombucha commercially a year and a half ago, the response she got from the farmers' markets and pop-ups has been encouraging. "Even in spaces where people are kind of informed, people were like what the hell is it?" she recounts. "Most people, who approach it from a perspective that this is needed to fix a digestive issue they have had for years, don't know how it works," she says.

Sawhney's first SCOBY came from Boston through a cousin and she just nurtured it and made it grow. "I am not here to tell people what Kombucha is but that is where my efforts are going," she says, adding, "Definitely it has changed a lot over the last year."

"When I started out, my Kombucha was a lot more

tart. But over the past year, I have tried to make it more palatable, less sour," she shares. The fun part about Kombucha is that you can play with it and flavour it. You can make smoothies out of them or play them in cocktails. It is an acquired taste though.

Bhu Kombucha offers six flavours, including two new ones. These are as interesting as cucumber mint, pineapple, ginger, cinnamon and star anise, apple cinnamon and kefir lime. "Everything starts with gut. And if your gut is not happy, your system is not happy, your mind,

joints, body is not happy, your skin is not happy. By adding probiotics in your diet, you are putting good bacteria in and eliminating bad bacteria out of your system. Fermented food bring inflammation down," Sawhney avers. For those who wish to benefit from the

brew should drink it once in two days, about 250 ml. It's a great digestion aid.

BEAUTY BYTES

When it comes to gut health and skin, the two are interrelated. Leaky gut is a way for the preservatives and toxic stuff to get into your system.

And the more toxic stuff gets into the system, the more inflammation occurs. And this shows upon skin as rosacea, eczema, and ageing.

According to Dr Kiran Sethi, beauty and wellness expert, the only way out is to improve your gut health.

"You can do that by intro-

ducing prebiotic foods like eating six to eight servings of vegetables a day and fermented foods like appams, daal, achaar, at least three days a week. Probiotics is the last option. Changing the food that you eat is the way to go," she says.

Other than eating fer-

mented food, for a good gut health and a healthier skin, she suggests one take away sugar and dairy and observe intermittent fasting.

"Intermittent fasting is recommended for improving gut health. Stop eating at 8 at night and not eat before 8 in the morning. Overload of food causes gut to function overtime, making it sluggish and weak," she says.

For a good skin, she also advocates including more of Vitamin C in the diet. "Amla is a great source, as is Moringa and even, bone broth, that we had as children," she suggests.

"Sprinkling superfoods in your diet is not going to change your life, it is the way you eat that would bring about the change," she points out. In short, you are as healthy as the lifestyle changes that you choose to make. Every little change you make would positively affect your gut health and eventually your overall health. So eat sensibly and listen to your gut. The gut is always right."



PEOPLE LIKE MY GRANDMOTHER,
WHO HAVE NO HOME BUT IN MEMORY,
LEARN TO BE VERY SKILLED IN
THE ART OF RECOLLECTION

— AMITAV GHOSH

It would have felt better if one was reviewing this book in the aftermath of a triumph at the recently held Assembly Elections. But alas, it was not to be, at least for the ruling dispensation, that managed to lose all three States in the Hindi heartland in a straight contest with the Congress. This impressive book is the best effort yet by the intellectual engines of the Modi Government and its sympathisers to articulate its achievements and challenges. It has been anchored and edited by the BJP think-tank Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation (SPMRF), through its Director Dr Anirban Ganguly, and Niti Aayog using the services of Dr Bibek Debroy, Chairman, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, and his OSD Kishore Desai.

Its given importance is underlined by the fact that it was launched by presenting the first copy from the hands of the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley to the President of India Ram Nath Kovind on November 27, 2018, at a formal occasion at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Unveiled before an audience of some of the 56 individual contributors, Union Ministers, Members of Parliament, and a



THE TRANSFORMATION UNDERWAY

This book offers insights into the many achievements of the Modi Government since it came to power in 2014. Instead of ignoring the arguments made against the BJP, the book attempts to narrate the 'whole story', says GAUTAM MUKHERJEE

select few invited guests, the nearly 600-page hardbound book has come at the four-and-a-half-year mark of the Modi Government. While its tone is self-congratulatory, the stark realities of the angry rural and urban voters, once ardent fans of Narendra Modi, not being impressed by the apparent non-delivery of *ache din* hangs like a shadow over the exercise.

The Finance Minister made the point in his introductory address, that nearly 80 per cent of the country's revenue was now flowing to the States, in an unstated but exemplary push towards greater federalism and empowerment of the States.

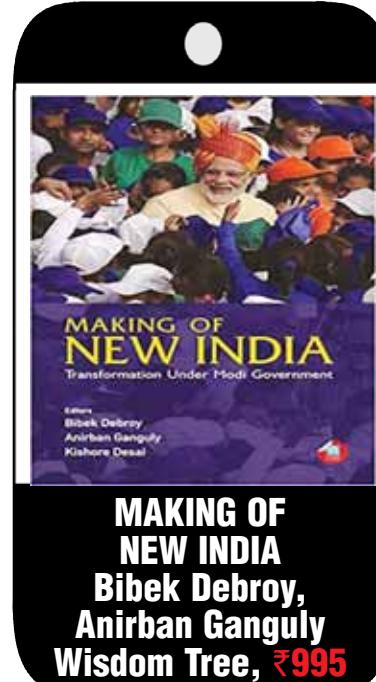
Presumably, this will make it easier for the newly won Congress States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh and the earlier win in Karnataka to waive off small farmer loans as promised. But, this, as we know, is easier said than done.

Notwithstanding the fact that a large number of the states now have BJP Governments, even as the bulk of the Opposition derives its salience from one or the other of the remaining ones, there is a deep-seated problem of fiscal extravagance in the states of the Indian Union.

Sajid Chinoy of Morgan Stanley, one of the able contributors to this book, makes the telling point that the states were responsible for an ever widening fiscal deficit, which, in turn, was impacting the excellent fiscal management of the centre. It was driving up overall borrowing costs and making the private sector and foreign investors wary. This excess of borrow and spend, needs to be better managed. Of course, a few months before the General Elections, this is unpopular advice.

Having said this, the Modi Government has succeeded in putting the country on a sound economic footing with robust growth trajectories. This, after coming to power in May 2014, with a very strong political mandate, but a correspondingly weak economy with a huge bad debt problem. India's economy was dubbed, at the time, as being part of the "fragile five" emerging market economies by international observers.

But poised as it is politically, with a strong and credible challenge after the five State "semi-finals", the BJP and the NDA must perform a look at greater populism in its final budget presentation on February 1, 2019. This may not



**MAKING OF
NEW INDIA**
Bibek Debroy,
Anirban Ganguly
Wisdom Tree, ₹995

be good news for the economy, but survival is likely to come first.

So is this book already out-of-date? Is it looking in the rear-view mirror or the road ahead? There has been disappointment on the creation of jobs, rural distress, anger at the ignoring of long pending Hindutva issues, lack of effective action against the corrupt and so on. It is also true that no BJP Government, or for that matter, any Government, other than one led by Congress has ever enjoyed two consecutive terms. To change this "default position", as Rahul Gandhi put it, is going to take some doing.

It is interesting how there is an immobile defensiveness that permeates essay after essay in this book, as the writers first state and then argue against various Opposition accusations. This even though it was written when there were no threatening clouds in the sky. However, the "revival of nationalism" as Professor Makarand Paranjape put it, is definitely an endeavour of this Modi Government.

Another widely acknowledged plank of a "corruption-free Government", at least at the top, has many takers. It has sections where senior journalists praise

the mass connect of using *Mann Ki Baat* on a retro medium like the radio. Then there are those who extol the massive gains made by the wide implementation of the Aadhaar Cards as identity authenticators. The Bankruptcy Act is lauded by famed economist Arvind Virmani. Somdutt Singh argues the Government's thrust towards "skill development" will, in time, bring on the jobs. Sadly, this is probably too slow for the voters.

There is an implied criticism in the way "employment is measured" in the article by TCA Anant and the one after it by Pulak Ghosh and Somya Kanti Ghosh that speaks of gathering "payroll data" from the informal sector. The Government's controversial targeting of "black money" and its achievements of better tax compliance is written about by Mukesh Butani. The tackling of "benami transactions" in real estate and the promulgation of RERA is the subject of Suparna Jain's article. The visionary Sagarmala project seeks to implement port based development as per Vishwampati Trivedi's essay. Hardeep Singh Puri writes on the "Smart Cities". Kishore Desai, one of the editors of this volume, points out the strides made in

the electrical power sector. The Ganga clean-up effort is written about by Harikishan Sharma.

Education, Health, Nutrition, the Swach Bharat Mission, rural modernisation has largely remained a set of good intentions, but not if you read the chapters related to it. The Opposition likes to argue that 'Make in India' has not progressed beyond cellphones and cars. But this book has a different picture to present. It also drawing the micro lending of the Mudra scheme into its purview. Defence and national security get quite a few chapters and perhaps deservedly so, because the Modi Government has shifted the inertia that plagued this area. Foreign policy and India's soft power gets good marks since the Modi Government took over. There has been a positive rebooting of India's relationship with multiple countries and several chapters dwell on this aspect.

All in all, though parts of the book seem hagiographic, what is obvious is the enormous scope of works undertaken by this Government in what is just four and a half years. It is, in the end, a very good reference book to have in one's library on Modi's first term in office.

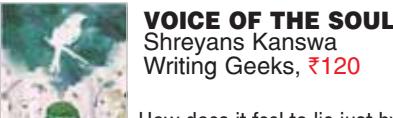
NEW ARRIVALS



INDIA IN CHAOS
KC AGRAWAL

Crusade India, ₹1,165

This book is a rare interpretation of India's Constitution. It attempts at comprehensive diagnosis of India's maladies and their total cure. It provides a unique opportunity to transform the nation by establishing Governments that are sensitive to human sufferings and capable of fulfilling the 'basic objectives' of the Constitution.



VOICE OF THE SOUL
Shreyans Kanswa
Writing Geeks, ₹120

How does it feel to lie just by yourself and delve into the silence? The silence that is a path to deeper self, a self that is unexplored. That same unexplored self can also be regarded as the soul. While the time ticks on the clock, a bond with your soul is timeless. Such metaphors are rendered powerless when a conversation is created with oneself. These poems mean more than just words, they scream soulfulness.

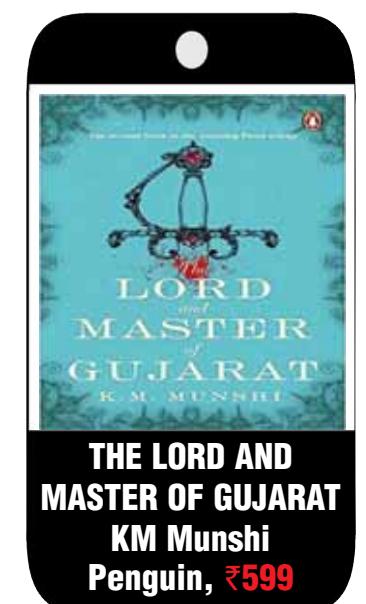


THE INTERNET TRAP
Ashesh Mukherjee
Rupa, ₹295

Whether we are checking emails, following friends on social media platforms, planning holidays on online travel portals, arranging dates on dating apps, watching viral videos, or simply shopping online, the internet pervades our professional and personal environments. It has revolutionised our lives, but at what cost? *The Internet Trap* uses consumer psychology to highlight five hidden costs of living online: too many temptations, too much information, too much customisation, too many comparisons, and too little privacy.

The whispers of undying glory

A skilled and compelling translation of KM Munshi's celebrated Gujarati novel, *Gujarat No Nath, The Lord and Master of Gujarat* is brilliant in its plot and narration, writes ANUBHAV PRADHAN



**THE LORD AND
MASTER OF GUJARAT**
KM Munshi
Penguin, ₹599

hood as we know it, Munshi's Patan trilogy shines bright with the iridescence of a timeless masterpiece. Rita Kothari and Abhijit Kothari's translation of this classic has created a gem in its own right, likely to become a beacon in the annals of Indian historical fiction in English. This dashing, thrilling saga of romance, adventure, statecraft, and war will excite and inspire readers of all ages for many generations yet to come. No, I myself am at fault for not being adequately impressed by the novel. I've ruined it for myself by reading it in probably the worst possible place.

Consider: Patan, the small capital of a young princely confederacy. Patan, a provincial power amongst a subcontinent of warlike giants. Patan,

a name stained with the shadow of defeat and dissonance. Consider again: Shanghai, a mercantile capital built in steady defiance of marsh and mud. Shanghai, a colossal growth engine tipping the globe's balance of power. Shanghai, a name conjuring strength, wealth, and ingenuity.

None of this undermines the brilliance of the plot or the vigour of the narration though. Leaving behind *The Glory of Patan*, *The Lord and Master of Gujarat* creates such a charged atmosphere of high suspense and courtly drama that I hurtled breathlessly through the book till the last four hundred and eighty-fifth page had been flipped over to a tensely tranquil close. Kaak and Manjari's layered relationship, the blossoming of their mutual

love, pales into insignificance the great allegorical archetypes of romance, while Kirtidev's zeal and Krishnadev's zest lends a rich depth of meaning to the text. Unlike its predecessor, *The Lord and Master of Gujarat* is a carefully nuanced and keenly animated portrait of these figures of lore and legend who shaped the destiny of Gujarat.

No, what undid Munshi for me this time was that I was reading him in China. Even as the narrative thrills the heart into a frenzy of anticipation, the mind is left perturbed with the confident superiority of the text. The overwhelming, overarching sense of cultural parochialism of Munshi's Patan seems eminently uncalled for, the mark of a weak and vulnerable people prone, consequently, to brash boasting. In the

larger scheme of history, of the rise and fall of civilisations, it also feels futile: True, both Kirtidev and Krishnadev are reflective enough to imagine the fall of Patan, but both are still too bound in their ambitions as monarchs and rulers to realise the smallness of their hopes.

To persevere against the blows of cruel time, to reach for immortality even in the shadow of death, this in writing is the mark of greatness. It is futile, it is vain, it is impossible, but it has a certain beauty which illuminates the soul with a whisper of undying glory. Munshi's enduring charm lies in conjuring this ethereal, ephemeral sense of grandeur, even if it is simultaneously undermined by the anxious fragility of its evocation.



MAKHAN SAIKIA

Can Macron survive Yellow Vest storm?

As the leaderless movement is taking on the French 'President of the elite,' Macron faces an uphill task to placate the poor and middle class protesters whose demands entail massive capitulation on his part

The Yellow Vests Movement, also known as "Mouvement des gilets jaunes," broke out in France in mid-November. It started against the Emmanuel Macron Government's decision to hike fuel prices from January 1 next year. By the first week of December, the popular movement spilled on to Belgium and the Netherlands.

The movement's focus is to highlight the frustration on the economic front, and the working class and poor families' deep distrust of the political bosses of their respective countries.

The writing on the wall is clear: "Not only France, but entire Europe is unhappy with its elite."

The moot point is why the protesters are donning "yellow vests"? It is interesting to note that this year the Macron Government made a law that requires all French motorists to wear high visibility vests while driving on the road. Therefore, these vests have become widely available, cheap and easily identifiable in public. This might be the sole reason why the protesters have practically nailed their colours to the mast.

Initially, developed as a social media movement, the *Gilet Jones* has gradually graduated from a simple fuel price protest against the Government to a movement led by leaderless spectrum of interest groups across France. But it has taken a record high, indeed historical, momentum of rage against the authority in the capital city of Paris.

The worst part of the *Gilet Jones* is that the movement has been hijacked by the ultra-violent protesters. People have viewed the most destructive scenes in public. Destroying public properties in the name of rising against the elite or the Macron Government is definitely scuttling popular appeal towards the uprising. And this is pressing the security agencies to crack down on rioters and law breakers.

Why the *Gilet Jones* are so angry? Since the onset of the debt crisis in Europe, a galaxy of problems relating to politics, economic, security and bilateral as well as multi-lateral has had serious impact

on the lives and living conditions of the people.

The crisis led to the loss of vitality and vigour of most of the corporate biggies. And in turn, it snowballed into major setbacks in the form of joblessness, leading to the sharp fall of family and individual incomes.

Today, the Macron Government has conceded to the demands of the protesters and is scrapping the unpopular fuel tax hike in its upcoming Budget and has dropped the prices of electricity and gas.

Trying to placate the protesters, Macron promised, "I am determined to recognise and take into account all the feelings and resentments expressed in this crisis".

However, Macron's statement has not yet abated the Yellow Vest protest.

It seems the promise came too late. But it is good that Macron has admitted that he underestimated the distress of the ordinary people of his country. Meanwhile, European Union (EU) leaders have backed Macron. The EU Budget Commissioner, Gunther Oettinger, has said that Macron has "lost authority with his Budget for 2019" by upping his spending in response to the Yellow Vest protests, "but he remains a strong supporter of the European Union".

Macron may find it much easier to wade through this crisis for the time being as the EU has agreed to accept a budget deficit of his country over the organisation's three per cent ceiling in 2018 as one-time exception.

Oettinger's expectation is very high: "It is crucial now that Macron continues his reform agenda, especially in the labour market and that France remains on reform track."

However, what will seriously bring pressure on Macron is that continuing reforms would be difficult amid such upheavals facing Europe time and again.

The post-globalised scenario as predicted by many experts, not only of France but for many other countries, would be a clash of civilisations simply because of millions of migrants, particularly from the



Demonstrators wearing their yellow vests protest in Marseille, southern France, on December 29

month? The French capitalists are surely going to play safe as this will hardly cost them anything because they will recalculate only the full-time hours of work.

That means the workers will not be paid for the overtime. It has been going around that the year-end bonus for the employees would be at the discretion of the company bosses. Many of the protesters are saying Macron is worse than former conservative President Sarkozy.

But what worries Macron more is that the Gilet Jones are not at all happy about his announcement of concessions.

Granting concessions in special areas is not mollifying all the protesters, some of them are demanding higher wages, better pensions, lower taxes, easier requirements for entering into universities and above all, the resignation of the President.

Truly speaking the last one is disturbing. It appears that Macron leaving office will not solve the current crisis. To survive the European project, Macron needs help, not scorn. A young reformist who has promised a "European Renaissance" is struggling to save his country from populists.

And each passing day, his country is passing on to become the "Sick Man of Europe". It is indeed disheartening to note that the Gilet Jones have disfigured the statue of Marianne, the French Republic's symbol. What does all mean?

Simply put, what the protesters want is that Macron must give in. Bring an immediate end to the existing unjust taxes, make the elite pay, increase the level of income and let the poor and the middle classes come out of the tax burden.

Now the question is that whether a leaderless and unstructured movement is strong enough to take on the French President. It is not. Dubbed as the "President of the elite," Macron might lose more than enough of his political constituency over his social insensitivity.

Will the wages of workers going to increase to 100 Euros every

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

PERSPECTIVE

Stereotyping for lynching in Manipur!



MD CHINGIZ KHAN

MOHAMMAD IMTIYAJ KHAN

The State Assembly on December 21 passed the Manipur Protection from Mob Violence Bill to prevent lynching by providing exemplary punishment like public humiliation, social boycott, and rigorous life behind bars

Though Manipur has become the first State in India to pass a Bill which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence if it results in the death of a person, there are many who strongly feel that more needs to be done on the ground considering spate of lynchings incidents in a peaceful State.

A wave of lynching of the members of lower and marginalised sections of society has swept the country for various reasons, including alleged theft, child lifting, cow protection and caste-related violence.

This prompted the Supreme Court to direct Parliament on July 17 to enact a law to curb mob lynching and the State Governments to take certain measures. From July 17 to September 7, only 9 States and two UTs in the country complied with the order of the court.

Therefore, on September 7, the court asked the remaining States and UTs to file compliance reports within a week.

Before the Manipur Government could comply with the Supreme Court order, on September 13, Md Farooque Khan was lynched creating one of the most brutal and unfathomable episodes in the contemporary history of Manipur.

The news became a flashpoint, in both electronic and the print media, because of the barbarity with which the mob took the life of Farooque son of Md Nasib Ali (a retired deputy inspector of education under Lilong sub-division) from the Pangal-inhabited Lilong

Mayai Leikai in Thoubal District, Manipur.

Also, the Statewide high-decibel protests against the lynching had never happened before, indicating that Manipuris were fed up with such crimes. The heinous crime was perpetrated by a mob in the Meitei-inhabited Tharoljam village, Patsoi Police Station, Imphal West, Manipur over an issue of alleged bike lifting.

The mob flogged the victim and then left him to die even as police remained a mute spectator. The victim was a MBA graduate. He was into entrepreneurship and recently established Palem Foods Private Limited near Wangoi bazaar, Imphal West district.

Here is a systematic analysis of the incident based on the media reports. Firstly, the probable reason of why he went to Tharoljam village with two companions is not clearly established yet. According to the media reports, locals alleged that the two companions of Farooque tried to lift a bike in the late evening of September 12, on which Gerani Singh alarmed his neighbours, and, following that, the two fled the scene but Farooque was caught "red-handed". The ensuing mob allegedly branded him as a thief, though other sources claimed he was waiting outside for his companions who were in Gerani's house for some personal business.

There has been an animosity between the majority (Meiteis) and the minority (Pangals) since the 1980s. It is believed that the animosity is an outcome of the social



engineering by some Meitei politicians and ultras that emerged from the crucible of insurgency but had got disoriented for reasons best known to them.

It may be safely presumed that those ultras were repurposed or oriented to carry forward ethnocentric ideals and inculcate Meitei chauvinism in the name of civil society organisations. As a consequence of the social engineering, on May 3, 1993, a riot broke out between the Pangals and the Meiteis in Manipur, resulting in the death of around one hundred Pangals.

In addition, Pangals have disproportionate representation in every sphere in Manipur, including

the Assembly, higher education, workforce and Government jobs, even after they were allotted four percent reservation.

Second, was the stereotyping of the Pangals as *hurumba* (thief) the reason behind the lynching of a Pangal man in a Meitei-only village? A misconstrued perception of the Pangals of being vehicle lifters, petty criminals, drug lords or peddlers has been propagated by some people with vested interest.

Against this backdrop and the prevailing animosity that gets boosted intermittently by the hate comments on social media, it is plausible that Farooque was lynched. Tharoljam villagers' murderous

streak was activated by the stereotyping of Pangals as petty criminals as corroborated by the noted journalist and editor of Imphal Free Press Pradip Phanjoobam (https://www.bbc.com/hindi/media-45590653?ocid=wshindi.chat-a-p-p-s-i-n-a-p-p-msg.whatsapp.trial.link1_aun) and the engineered communal revolution, both of which shot the non-district village to infamy.

Third, what made the Tharoljam mob resort to that degree of brutality and barbarity? It is apparent that the superiority complex of Meiteis granted them a licence to lynch the victim which could be allegorically compared to

a hunter's self-granted licence to hunt. The degree of brutality and barbarity committed by the mob was unmatched. When the victim asked for drinking water and all that he got was "does a dying person also feel thirsty" jibe (as seen in one of the viral videos of the lynching).

They allegedly started flogging and torturing by piercing his body with iron rods around midnight and continued till the morning even in the presence of Manipur Police personnel, as seen in some viral videos of the incident.

Fourth, are the law enforcers serious enough to curb such inhuman crimes? The law enforcers have so far arrested six culprits, including the main accused, M Gerani Singh (a sepoy with the Indian Reserve Battalion or IRB), and the case is being investigated. Some policemen, who were seen waiting for the victim to die in one of the videos posted on social media, have been either suspended or dismissed from the job. The Government also has entered into a memorandum of agreement with the victim's side.

Further, an Ordinance was reportedly approved to curb lynching in Manipur in compliance with the Supreme Court's July 17 order. But how about conducting an in-camera trial in a fast-track court of all lynching cases in Manipur in the past five years, as ordered by the Supreme Court, and initiate an academic discourse to get to the socio-politico-historical factors contributing to lynching?

No compensation for Farooque's

life has been officially announced by the Government, although the Supreme Court in its July 17 order had ordered a compensation to be paid within 30 days after computing the amount giving "due regard to... bodily injury, psychological injury and loss of earnings including loss of opportunities of employment and education and... legal and medical expenses".

An academic discourse is needed because in the lynchings in Manipur, a pattern of blaming the victims as thieves could be observed. Md Hasmad Ali, a primary school headmaster, was killed allegedly for cow theft. Mohammad Sadam and Mohammad Farooque (Imphal), both school students, were lynched in a communal-like incident in April 2016 at Mayang Imphal Yangbi Garden, Imphal West. In June 2017, Md Rakib Ali (20 years) and Md Anish (20 years) were lynched by a mob in Thoubal district, and many more cases of lynching in Manipur happened at Yairipok, Khangabok, Heingang Ahallup and Iram Sipha.

It is high time we eliminated stereotyping and stigmatisation from society to uproot the lynching culture. For this, the Government should desist from 'manufacturing insecurity' (May 21, 2018, Indian Express).

(Md Chingiz Khan is a PhD Scholar at the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, New Delhi; and Mohammad Imtiyaj Khan is an Assistant Professor, Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam)



THE GOVERNMENT WILL
RENAME THREE POPULAR
ISLANDS OF ANDAMAN AND
NICOBAR — ROSS ISLAND, NEIL
ISLAND, AND HAVELOCK ISLAND

Bolstered by poll victory, Rahul keen on solo fight

sunday
gupshup

HARI SHANKAR VYAS



After emerging victorious in three BJP-ruled States, it appears that Rahul Gandhi is ready to fight alone in other States. He recently instructed party leaders from West Bengal to start preparations for fighting on all 42 seats of the State. The State Congress leaders have convinced him that they can win more seats on their own than after going into an alliance. They argued that if the party goes alone in the State, at least its cadre will be revived in all districts. On the other hand, Rahul does not see any possibility of an alliance in West Bengal. The Left parties have suffered a huge loss after going into an alliance with the Congress and will not repeat the mistake. At the same time, the TMC will not leave a single seat for anyone else, so the Congress doesn't really have any other option.

Apart from West Bengal, the Congress will also fight alone in Uttar Pradesh. It is being said that the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party are not ready to take the Congress along with them. Both parties have almost reached a consensus on seat-sharing and have kept the RLD with them, leaving just two seats for the Congress. They think that if the Congress fights alone, they will benefit more. So, in UP too the Congress will find no alternative.

Apart from these two States, Rahul is gearing up to contest on his own in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh as well. In the Telangana Assembly Elections, the Congress had gone with the TDP, but results proved that both parties would not go into an alliance ever again. Even in Assam, the Congress will go solo, as Rahul has learnt his party will suffer if it joins hands with Badruddin Ajmal.

MAYAWATI'S BIG PLANS

Mayawati has offered unconditional support to the Congress in Rajasthan as soon as the results were out. But before elections, she left no stone unturned to defeat the Congress. In Chhattisgarh, she went with Ajit Jogi's Janta Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC) and tried her best to create problems for the Congress. Though clearly her efforts were in vain, as the Congress only reaped benefits while the BJP suffered. After the alliance, Jogi's party is established. The JCC and BSP got 11.5 per cent votes and won a total of seven seats.

Now, it is being said that both parties will go together in the Lok Sabha Elections as well, and sources say alliance talks are already under way. Of the total 11 seats, Jogi's JCC will fight on seven, and Mayawati will fight on four. This also proves that Mayawati is not ready to



keep the Congress with her in UP. She believes that the party will not give her a single seat in any other State, whereas going alone or getting into an alliance on the State level might get her some seats. That is why she is gearing up for either going alone or into a State-level alliance.

MAHARASHTRA SEAT FORMULA

In Maharashtra, the seat-sharing formula has been finalised between the Congress and NCP. There are total 48 seats and the fate of 40 seats is almost decided. Decision is still pending on eight seats. There are some seats out of those eight where both parties have staked claim. For some seats, the parties are waiting for a green signal from the regional stalwarts. The Congress and NCP are waiting for farmers' leader and MP of the Swabhimani Paksha, Raju Shetti, for the seats in Maratha-dominated areas. Shetti broke away from the BJP

and is demanding six seats from the Congress-NCP alliance, while both parties want to give him only one. They might leave the Hatkanangale seat, from where Shetti is an MP. In the same manner, the Akola seat can be left for Dr Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar. The Congress and NCP might leave one seat for the BSP also. So, the two parties will declare their seat-sharing arrangement only after talks with Shetti, Ambedkar, and Mayawati.

FRESH APPOINTMENTS IN CONG

Ashok Gehlot is the new CM of Rajasthan, but he is still holding the additional responsibility of the Congress General Secretary. Recently, when Rahul Gandhi appointed KH Patel as the chief of the campaign committee in Karnataka, the letter had Gehlot's signature. But this is an interim measure only. The Congress President will soon appoint a new

General Secretary. This can't be deferred for long like the decision on the Deputy Leader in the Lok Sabha had been deferred. Captain Amarinder Singh had become the Punjab CM in March 2017 and he had stopped attending Parliament much earlier, but still no appointment has been made in his place.

Hopefully, things will be different this time around. Sources in the party say a new General Secretary for the organisation will be appointed very soon. There is speculation that Janardan Dwivedi might come to the forefront again. It is being said that the Congress is trying to grab its old vote bank of Brahmins. If a Brahmin leader is made the General Secretary, a positive message will be sent to Haryana, Delhi, and UP. Though many leaders feel that he was neither given any other responsibility after his removal nor was he given a place in the CWC, so his comeback might be problematic.

Apart from Dwivedi, five other names are being discussed. Two are old guards of the Congress and three are part of Rahul's team. Mukul Wasnik seems to be the most obvious choice amongst veterans. He is currently the General Secretary, in-charge of the Central Election Committee, and a member of the CWC. Ghulam Nabi Azad is also in the running, but since Ahmed Patel is the treasurer and Azad is leader of the party in the Rajya Sabha, his chances are dim.

Among new leaders, Ajay Maken, Randeep Surjewala, and Jitendra Singh are in the race. Maken was General Secretary of the party and is now President of the Delhi unit. Surjewala and Singh are in-charge General Secretaries and permanent invited member of the CWC. Apart from them, there are other contenders too and an appointment can be expected soon. Other State Presidents will also be appointed soon.

Rahul Gandhi recently instructed party leaders in West Bengal to start preparations for fighting on all 42 seats. The State leaders have convinced him that they can win more seats on their own than after going into an alliance. They argued that if the party goes alone in the State, at least its cadre will be revived in all districts

US Govt shutdown over border wall funding row

The border wall was a key campaign promise for Trump in the 2016 election, and he continues to view it as a winning issue for his 2020 re-election, writes NICK ALLEN

The US Government has begun a partial shutdown after Republican Senators failed to muster the votes needed to approve \$5 billion that Donald Trump wants for a border wall fiercely opposed by the Democrats. The US President sought to blame the Democrats, who responded by reminding him that he said he would be "proud" to shut down key parts of the federal Government in order to get funding for a wall on the US border with Mexico.

Talks between Trump's team and Republican and Democratic leaders were expected to continue over the weekend. The Senate was set to return from recess at midday on Saturday, although it was not clear if it would have any new proposals to consider.

"We're going to have a shutdown," Trump said in a video posted to his Twitter account about two hours before a midnight deadline to pass a stop-gap spending Bill. "There's nothing we can do about that because we need the Democrats to give us their votes. The shutdown hopefully will not last long."

The shutdown is the third this year and it remained unclear how long it would last. Operations for several key agencies ceased at 12:01 am on Saturday (5:01 GMT), despite last-ditch talks that continued on Capitol Hill between White House officials and Congressional leaders in both parties.

White House budget chief Mick Mulvaney instructed agencies "to execute plans for

an orderly shutdown". Mulvaney said in a memo for Government executives that "we are hopeful that this lapse in appropriations will be of short duration" but that employees should report to work when scheduled to "undertake orderly shutdown activities".

Nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies will temporarily lose funding, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks and forests.

Initial Republican reaction to the shutdown was muted. Among the few GOP lawmakers who issued statements as it began were Sen Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who expressed disappointment at the lack of a deal, and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee. "This is a complete failure of negotiations and a success for no one," Alexander said.

"Instead of honouring his responsibility to the American people, President Trump threw a temper tantrum and convinced House Republicans to push our nation into a destructive Trump Shutdown in the middle of the holiday season," said a joint statement by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. Republicans and Democrats in



Congress made last-minute efforts to avoid a Christmas shutdown but appeared poles apart from agreeing on a new spending Bill. Without an agreed Bill funding for large swathes of the Government ran out at midnight, meaning 800,000 public workers would

go without pay over Christmas. The shutdown means the closure of national parks, the Internal Revenue Service, and 95 per cent of NASA's operations. However, special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation would be among the Government-funded projects not affected.

Trump had initially agreed to a spending Bill that did not include funding for the wall, but was targeted by a severe backlash from some of his most prominent supporters. The President then decided he would not sign a spending Bill without money for the wall.

WHAT IS A FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN?

■ What happens if the Government shuts down?

Many federal Government functions are closed and a large portion of employees are furloughed. During a shutdown, close to 40 per cent of the workforce are told not to work

■ Which Govt functions cease?

National parks, monuments, Smithsonian museums

■ Which Govt functions continue?

National security (FBI, military and Department of Homeland Security); safety and order (air traffic control, law enforcement); medical care (veterans' hospitals); US mail

■ How common is a shutdown?

There have been 12 shutdowns since 1981, ranging in duration from a single day to 21

■ What are the consequences?

S&P Global analysts estimate the cost to the US at roughly \$6.5bn a week

On Thursday night, the House of Representatives passed a new Republican Bill which included the \$5 billion. Before voting on it, the Senate was waiting for the return to Washington of some Senators who had already left for Christmas. However, the Bill

was still highly unlikely to pass in the face of strong Democrat opposition.

Chuck Schumer, the Democrat leader in the Senate, speaking on the Senate floor, said: "Mr President, you will not get your wall. President Trump, you own the shutdown."

Trump, in the Oval Office, said: "It's up to the Democrats as to whether or not we have a shutdown tonight. I hope we don't, but we're totally prepared for a very long shutdown. I would say the chances are probably very good. Unfortunately, the Democrats have devoted their lives to making sure it [the wall] doesn't happen."

In a series of early morning tweets on Friday, Trump had called on Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader in the Senate, to use the "nuclear option". That would require only a simple majority of 51, rather than a "supermajority" of 60 votes, to pass the spending Bill. However, McConnell said there was not enough support among Republicans to introduce that option. The uncertainty over the shutdown contributed to further losses on the stock market. Government departments affected by the shutdown would include the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, and the Agriculture Department.

The border wall was a key campaign promise for Trump in the 2016 election, and he continues to view it as a winning issue for his 2020 re-election.

The Daily Telegraph



AROUND 50 MILLION GOOGLE SEARCHES IN THE US BETWEEN OCTOBER 2017 AND JUNE 2018 WERE ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT, A NEW STUDY HAS FOUND

PROTECTING YOUNG MINDS

Games, iPads, and phones can end up encroaching on many elements of kids' lives. NAOMI GREENAWAY suggests how you can protect their mental health

Scrabble, Monopoly, and Trivial Pursuit — that's what I wanted to buy my children this year. But in reality, their wish lists were more Apple stocklist than 1990s Argos catalogue. Many parents might have had shiny new devices wrapped and ready for kids to open for Christmas. But buying an electronic device comes with a level of trepidation that ordering item 383/6754 on p854 never would. Perhaps it's because, unlike the bicycle that might end up in the shed over winter, or this year's wonder toy, which will probably run out of appeal (and batteries) by Easter, the screens we gave our kids at Christmas are likely to have more profound and far-reaching effects. Games consoles, iPads and smartphones can end up encroaching on so many other elements of children's lives — schoolwork, family time and sleep included. But most worrying, perhaps, is the power they can also wield over their mental well-being.

It's an issue that's been on my mind of late, as my daughter recently entered her last year of primary school, which according to the national norms means she has come of smartphone age. Countless recent studies have linked the rise of smartphones and social-media usage with anxiety and depression in tweens and teens, the rates of which have skyrocketed recently.

It's something that mental-health charity Young Minds, one of the causes chosen for this year's Telegraph Christmas appeal, is working hard to understand. Many factors are at play when it comes to young people's well-being, says Emma Thomas, the charity's CEO, but the rise in social media is not to be ignored. And it's not only children whose mental state tips over the diagnosable line about whom we need to worry. It's all those who are just missing that little spark of happiness, too.

Just a few weeks ago, England's Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, addressed the Commons and spoke of the "avalanche of pressure" children and teenagers feel under to be popular and successful on social media. And a recent groundbreaking study by the University of Sheffield found increased social-media usage causes

lower happiness levels in children. "We found that as the time spent chatting on a social network increased, there was a comparable reduction in happiness reported across several different areas of young people's lives, which included their appearance, their family, their school and also their life overall," explains the study's lead author, child-psychologist Dr Philip Powell.

But most parents of teens don't need the experts to highlight the power of smartphones and social media. One friend, mother to an 11-year-old boy who recently received his first phone, admits it has been the most challenging time of her parenting life. "Since he's had his phone, his mood has been constantly up and down," she says of her son. "If he puts his phone down for five minutes, he feels like he's missing out. Often the chatting goes on until midnight, then when he gets to school the next day he still feels he's missed out. It's heartbreaking to see how it pulls him down."

"My son's groups get quite nasty," says the mother of a 13-year-old. "They post far ruder things than they would say, and my son can't escape it even at home." Another mother describes how her 15-year-old daughter falls victim to FOMO (fear of missing out). "She's a sensible girl but it's constant," she says. "She'll see a picture of her friends somewhere she's not been invited to and it can change her mood for the whole weekend."

Her 12-year-old son, meanwhile, spends every waking minute on his phone. "If I could turn back time and set boundaries from the start then I would. I want my son back."

"Once screens are in hands it's much harder — although not impossible — to get into good habits," says Noël Janis-Norton, author of *Calmer, Easier, Happier Screen Time*. "But ideally set boundaries and expectations before giving a device, so it doesn't become a source of conflict."

Discussing screen-time boundaries on Christmas morning, however, doesn't feel very 'ho-ho-ho', which is why Rachel Vecht, parenting expert and founder of educatingmatters.co.uk, advises talking these over before the big day: "Make any reservations known

beforehand — the potential for homework or family time to suffer — and ask children what guidelines they might follow. Get them to make the case. And don't have to ruin the surprise. Keep it hypothetical."

So what are these habits and boundaries that will help your children live digitally healthy lives? Read on:

STICK TO THIS ONE RULE

"My top tip if you're a parent giving a phone or device for the first time is that it should be switched off in the evening and charged downstairs, not in bedrooms," says Sarah Berman, an ambassador for CEOP (the Government's Child Exploitation and Online Protection agency) and a trainer at Young Minds. Lack of sleep has a big impact on well-being and physically switching off also gives teens and tweens the psychological switch-off they need. "There has to be somewhere that feels safe and private," says Prof Sonia Livingstone, a social psychologist at LSE, who has advised the Government on digital safety. Research also shows that blue light affects sleep, so turn off 30-60 minutes before lights out.

HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS

From sexting to FOMO, it's good to talk. Being honest about our own feelings, says Berman, helps children open up about theirs, and being non-judgmental and supportive is key. Janis-Norton's advice? Be proactive rather than reactive: Bust the myths of Instagram perfection before they sign up, talk about sexting before they have a serious boyfriend or girlfriend and discuss FOMO before they hit the peak socialising years. "Ask, 'If you saw pictures of your friends on Instagram at a party you didn't know was happening, what would that feel like?'" It won't make them immune to feeling left out, but it will create better coping mechanisms when those feelings do occur — and make it more likely that they'll turn to you if they find themselves in trouble.

Research has found that teens who have a more satisfactory relationship with their parents are less susceptible to FOMO," says Janis-Norton.

FOCUS ON THEIR OFFLINE LIVES

"Encourage balance in their lives," says Sarah, because any activities that boost self-esteem offline, will be mirrored online. "Higher self-esteem makes them less likely to be adversely affected by any negatives in their online lives."

DON'T GO 007 ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Should you follow your kids on social media and check their phones? "Lots of kids feel comforted by that," says Prof Livingstone. But going undercover, she believes, is a big no. "The whole principle of the parent-child relationship is trust, so snooping can do much more damage than good," she says. If you have serious concerns, ask for access.

FIND THE SWEET SPOT

We know too much can increase irritability, hyperactivity, aggression and even depression, but how much is too much? "A certain amount of screen time may be positive for well-being — enabling communication, creativity and engagement," says Dr Powell. "But too much becomes negative. It's called the Goldilocks effect." According to Prof Jean Twenge, author of a landmark study on this topic, the sweet spot is one hour per day for children aged two to five and similar limits — perhaps up to two hours — for school-aged children and adolescents. Prof Livingstone advises parents to be thoughtful when it comes to switching off. "Lots of games, for example, have an internal drama. If you walk away in the middle, there might be consequences in terms of relationships with friends as well as the prowess of your avatar," she says.

LOWER THEIR DEPENDENCY

"Part of the way to handle screen time with less dependency is for children to earn it," advises Janis-Norton. That can be through chores, homework or music practice, but should also be linked to behaviour. "You get a lot of dopamine from electronics, which is why it's so easy to become dependent on them. But when you get a dopamine hit without having to earn it, your brain processes the activity in the reptilian part of the brain, and it's more addictive."

The Daily Telegraph

ODDLY ENOUGH

AQUARIUM APOLOGISES FOR TWEETS ABOUT SEA OTTER

California's Monterey Bay Aquarium has apologised after some people perceived a tweet about a sea otter as body-shaming. The aquarium on Tuesday tweeted a picture of Abby, an otter who helps train orphaned otters how to survive in the wild. The tweet featured social media words and phrases such as "thick," "chonk" and "OH LAWD SHE COMIN" which are often used to describe someone who is overweight. People took offense. The aquarium on Wednesday tweeted a multipart apology that it called a "learning moment." It apologised and said it was unaware of the connotations associated with some of the memes. The aquarium says "Abby is looking fit."



(AP)

LAWYER TRADES GIFT CARDS FOR PLEDGES NOT TO DRIVE DRUNK

A Houston lawyer is offering local residents free \$40 Uber gift cards if they pledge not to drink and drive on New Year's Eve. Brian White announced he is hosting an event December 28 called "Sober Ride Houston," where he will promote alternatives to drunk driving. He said the first 195 people to pledge not to drink and drive on New Year's Eve will receive \$40 Uber gift cards at the event — a total \$7,800.

"Houston has had more fatal drunk-driving accidents over the last 16 years than any other major metropolitan area," White told KTRK-TV.

(UPI)

WHAT'S THE POINT OF HERSHEY'S MISSING TIPS?

Hershey's Kisses are falling flat with home bakers. They have been complaining that the pointy tip on many pieces of the signature candy made by the

Hershey Company have been smashed or missing points. The Wedding Cookie Table, a Pittsburgh-based baking group, had noted imperfections of the candy on its Facebook page.

"I just opened a few bags today for cookies I'm making next week ... every single one is missing the tip," wrote one member.

Another person said: "This is crazy!!! Looks like way more have broken tips than not!! Unacceptable Hershey!!" And one member of the Facebook group wrote: "I really don't believe they are snipping the tops off. I think there was a problem at the factory. Call and complain! I haven't purchased yet because of this but I will this week and see what I get."

The Hershey Co. issued a response Thursday. "We love our Kisses as much as our consumers," Jeff Beckman, a Hershey spokesman, said in a statement obtained by Penn Live. "We make more than 70 million Kisses a day here in Hershey, Pa., and we want each of them looking as great as they taste."



The spokesman explained the desire to improve the appearance. "The iconic, conical shape is one of the reasons families have loved Kisses for generations,"

Beckman said. "We shape the tip on our classic, solid Milk and Dark Chocolate Kisses to create that iconic appearance. And while there has always been some variability in that process, we are working to improve the appearance because it's as important to us as it is to our fans."

But the company didn't explain why tips are missing. On Wednesday, Hershey showed off an advertising campaign that encouraged consumers to embrace the broken Kisses. In a photo of a variety of Kisses, some with their tops missing, it includes the message: "Warm hearts this holiday season and take the time to celebrate our differences."

(UPI)

LONDON COPS: NON-EMERGENCY CALLS INCLUDE KFC COMPLAINT

Police in London said a man who called the 999 emergency line to

complain that KFC was out of chicken was among the most frivolous calls of 2018.

The London Metropolitan Police said more than 20,000 of the about 2 million calls that came into the 999 emergency line during the past year were for non-emergency situations,

including a man who called to complain that KFC was out of chicken.

The department tweeted audio from the KFC call, as well as others including a person complaining about a bus being broken down. Police said they also took calls about how long it took a pub breakfast to be served, a call complaining about a whistling bus driver and a call from a woman demanding a taxi cab be sent to pick her up.

A woman called 999

on New Year's Day to wish police a happy new year, the Met said. "During the time that our call handlers are dealing with these time-wasting calls, a member of the public could be in real danger or have built up the confidence to call with an important piece of information that could take a dangerous person off the streets," Chief Superintendent David Jackson said.

"Imagine if one of your friends or loved ones was in need of the police as quickly as possible and it turned out we could not help because we were having to deal with one of these hoax calls — I'm sure that you, like us, would be devastated and extremely annoyed," Jackson said.

(UPI)

CULTURE LANE

Unauthorised Beyoncé albums surface

Five years ago, Beyoncé "changed the game with that digital drop," as she would later describe it, when she released a surprise album on December 13, 2013. On Thursday night, fans wondered if history was repeating itself when two 10-track projects accredited to Queen Carter — titled Have Your Way and Back Up, Rewind — appeared on Spotify and Apple Music. They were, however, swiftly removed — apparently unauthorised leaks appearing to compile old songs and unreleased demos. Representatives for Beyoncé and Spotify offered no comment. The Guardian has contacted Apple Music.

One song, Hey Goldmember, is taken from the singer's film debut in Austin Powers in Goldmember, released in 2002 — and presumably, not material that Beyoncé, now critically acclaimed for her 2013 self-titled album and 2016's Lemonade, would be keen to revisit. In June this year, Beyoncé and husband Jay-Z, billed as the Carters, released a surprise album, Everything Is Love. Beyoncé was not the only musician affected by the unauthorised leak to streaming services yesterday. An album titled Comethet, credited to Sister Solana, was attributed to Grammy-nominated R&B singer SZA. She addressed the swiftly removed leak in an Instagram story: "These are random scratches from 2015. Def not new! But ... creative? And Scary?" In November, unreleased and obscure music by Ariana Grande appeared on Spotify credited to the name Zandhr.



Ruthless leak to streaming services yesterday. An album titled Comethet, credited to Sister Solana, was attributed to Grammy-nominated R&B singer SZA. She addressed the swiftly removed leak in an Instagram story: "These are random scratches from 2015. Def not new! But ... creative? And Scary?" In November, unreleased and obscure music by Ariana Grande appeared on Spotify credited to the name Zandhr.

Aquaman sinks Spider-Man at Box Office



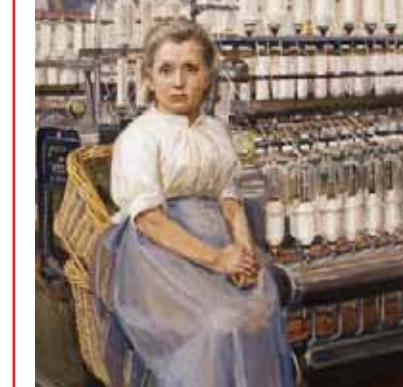
Warner Bros proclaimed *Aquaman* "king of the box office as well as the seven seas," as its oceanic superhero ended the two-week reign of *Ralph Breaks the Internet* at the top of the UK box office, taking £5.23m, including previews. However, *Aquaman* delivered only the 16th-biggest opening of 2018; strip out the previews and it achieved £3.82m. Excluding previews from the totals for all films, *Aquaman* delivered the year's 19th-biggest debut. For comparison with other DC Films titles, *Justice League* began in November 2017 with £7.26m (no previews), while, five months earlier, *Wonder Woman* kicked off with £4.96m (£6.18m including previews). Globally, *Aquaman* stands at a decent \$266m, and with North America yet to open.

With £2.28m including previews, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* lands in second place. However, that number is inflated by significant previews — strip them out and the superhero animation achieved £1.24m.

In addition to *Spider-Verse* and

Ralph Breaks the Internet, the third animation in the Top 5 is *The Grinch*. Its festive hook meant it saw only a modest decline, down just 13 per cent, and it now stands at a handy £21.7m. Audiences will be aiming to catch this one in the runup to Christmas Day, rather than afterwards. *Ralph* and *Spider-Verse* should enjoy longer playability into January.

Sylvia paintings acquired by Tate



Four watercolours of working women by the suffragette and human rights campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst have been acquired by Tate using funds from the billionaire Denise Coates. The paintings show women at work in the cotton mills of Glasgow and the potteries of Staffordshire, and are part of a series that Pankhurst made as she toured industrial working environments in 1907. They have been acquired directly from the Pankhurst family for an undisclosed sum. Funds have come from the Denise Coates Foundation, a

charity set up by the founder and chief executive of the Stoke-on-Trent-based online betting firm Bet365. Last month Coates was revealed to be the world's best-paid female executive, with an annual pay packet of £265m. Helen Pankhurst, Sylvia's granddaughter, said the family was delighted that Tate had acquired some of the paintings. "Sylvia was an artist as well as a champion of working women's rights, her first passion not as well known as her second. In these beautiful pieces these interests are powerfully combined."



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Met said. "During the time that our call handlers are dealing with these time-wasting calls, a member of the public could be in real danger or have built up the confidence to call with an important piece of information that could take a dangerous person off the streets," Chief Superintendent David Jackson said.

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(UPI)

EMOTIONS
AND SCHIZOPHRENIA

People with schizophrenia experience emotion through their bodies differently from those who do not suffer from the disorder, a study has found. Researchers from the Vanderbilt University in the US compared individuals with schizophrenia with matched control participants, asking each to fill in a "body map" in a way that correlates to the way they physically experience emotion. They used a computerised colouring task to locate where participants feel sensations when they experience, for example, anger or depression. The outcomes differed radically between groups, with the control group showing distinct maps of sensations for 13 different emotions, indicating specific patterns of increased arousal and decreased energy across the body for each emotion. The study also found that individuals with schizophrenia do not differentiate on their body maps for varying emotions. That may pose a problem for them in identifying, recognising and verbalising their emotions or trying to understand the emotions of others.

DRINKING
AND SOCIAL MEDIA

College students who binge drink frequently post on social media in an intoxicated condition and show signs of social media addiction, a new study has warned. The findings suggested that when compared to those students who had never binged, those who did were more likely to have posted on any social media platform while drinking and while intoxicated. "During these times when young students are feeling disinhibited by alcohol, they may be even more likely than usual to post inappropriate material without considering the future impact," said lead author Natalie A Ceballos from the Texas State University in San Marcos. For the study, the research team recruited 425 undergraduate students aged between 18 and 25.

THE RISK IN
UROLOGY PROCEDURES

Antibiotics are being overused in patients undergoing common urological procedures, which exposes them to potential harm including an increased risk of infection by *C. difficile* bacteria, researchers warned.

Clostridium difficile, often called *C. difficile*, is a bacterium that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhoea to potentially fatal inflammation of the colon. The study showed that almost 60 per cent of patients were prescribed antibiotics in a way that did not follow the American Urological Association (AUA) guidelines, which recommends that antibiotics should be given for no more than 24 hours following most urological procedures. According to author Daniel Livorsi from the University of Iowa in the US, "Reducing unnecessary antibiotic use in this setting is just one example of how physicians can be better stewards of antibiotics," said Livorsi.

YOUR
MONEY
IN 2019

ACHARYA PRAVEEN CHAUHAN predicts the ups and downs that people born under each sun sign need to prepare themselves for in the year 2019

ARIES

I suggest that you keep heart and don't get upset by failure. This year, all your decisions would be very wise. Just make sure that you don't get swayed by sycophantic appreciation. There will be boon in disguise for you this year as your partner will support you be it an issue related to matrimony or finance. Aries are suggested to pay sincere service and obeisance to elders as a remedy.

TAURUS

It is likely that you may face some upheaval in your business during this period. In all probability, your business will touch an expected height in the latter half of 2019. But the dictum says: "Nothing is gained without striving hard." It is a certainty that you would witness an exceptional spurt in your endeavour. Try to be calm in your attitude and donate lentils to the needy as a remedy.

GEMINI

In all likelihood, people who were born under this sign may start a new venture which may be as successful. My prediction for you is that fortune is siding with you. But still, the graph of success is likely to go zigzag for some time. But, it will be sweet in the end. For investors, caution is the need of the hour. Meditative practice is must for maintaining inner confidence. It is advisable for Geminis to worship Maa Kali and give sweets and fruits to eunuchs and to the needy as a remedy.

CANCER

You should experience colossal success this year. For those who work in a niche field or run unusual business, I predict immense success. Your perception of competition with your rivals can be fructified. But your own independent vision will bring laurels to you. Compassion towards the deprived shall be a boon from the heavens. Try to control your tongue as your unpleasant speech may adversely affect your relationships. Cancerians are advised to give yellow



clothes to the needy as a remedy.

LEO

You may overcome all the obstacles which I foresee that you all have to cross during this period. But, your immense inherent talent can enable you to finally land in a rewarding position. Stress-free personal regimen is suggested. Successful overseas business tours and new financial connections are in the offing. Leo people are suggested to worship Lord Shiva and feed green fodder to the cows as a remedy.

VIRGO

You shall feel that this is the most congenial period to start a venture which you were planning since long. The relations you culminated during your active years will thrust you onto the top of the hill. Resolve that you, too, will be kind and will help others even if it is beyond your means. Utmost care of health is strongly suggested. Praying in holy places will definitely help. Helping the poor and

needy is a remedy.

LIBRA

You will expand your business in various spheres. Yes, you may be on top but I am afraid that your personal relations can hamper your esteem. Beware! You may be trapped by the multitude of opportunities. Unfortunately, you would be in poor health; take care. Offering water to the trees, particularly on Wednesday morning, shall be a good remedy for you at this juncture.

SCORPIO

Entering into a partnership will not be fruitful in 2019. Be careful and don't be greedy. Even in the existing partnership, try to become rational. Never mind the fluctuating profits throughout the year. It will be better to focus on new ventures. My personal suggestion: It is better to devote the year to personal appeasement. Also, it is very important to give to charity; donate liberally to the needy.

PISCES

Have faith in yourself and never be beguiled by the circumstances as stars tell to me that you will be on the top in the second half. Don't enter into any litigation during this planetary position. Take care of your own life and karma. Be very prudent when spending money. Now will be the time for you to donate clothes and firewood to the needy.

SAGITTARIUS

Don't approach life the easy way; follow and comply with the whims of all concerned. Finding pleasure in work shall be your mantra of success. Stars tell that Sagittarians would be amplified with all the desired success in all aspects. Foreign connections would certainly offer positivity and satisfaction. As usual, health should be priority. Offering rice to the needy and watering a flowering plant shall be an auspicious remedy for you.

CAPRICORN

It is up to you to decide what you value more — work, success, gratification, appeasement, relationships, sex or financial success. I am afraid that majority of you do not realise that life and success is not dependent on your personal whims. Follow the rules of life. Giving edible oil and vegetables to the needy shall be a remedy for you.

AQUARIUS

If you have been planning a venture, this would be the time to go ahead. But, if you don't begin with it in the beginning of this year, you could end up frustrated. Why? Because you are always inquisitive and suspicious about your own brilliant moves. Worshiping Lord Shiva and giving monetary help to the needy will be a great remedy for you.

PICTURES

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A word of caution for all: The above descriptions are general in nature. These may be very from person to person. Specific calculation of the individual constellation chart is required for more accuracy. These are only broad guidelines.

The writer is a Delhi-based astrologist and can be reached at info@astropraveen.com

HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

FOR A BETTER WORLD



World Marketing Summit was recently organised in New Delhi. Supposed to be an initiative backed by Philip Kotler, a globally acclaimed professor of Marketing from the US, the underlying theme of the summit hinged around the objective of creating "a better world through marketing". It could not have been timed better. We are deeply mired in an era driven by commerce. Everything is commerce and commerce is everything. It is this preeminence of commerce that probably would have made the people behind the idea of the Marketing Summit think about the changed role of marketing. Marketing, interestingly, is a creation of commerce. It is also a very potent tool of commerce. Naturally, then, too much of commerce would have led to the thinking that it is the time to change the goal of marketing. But can it create a better world? A big question and perhaps a very difficult one to answer: Isn't the very idea of creating a better world through marketing an antithesis to the purpose of marketing as it is commonly understood and practiced? But the idea certainly merits consideration. Marketing has given many things to this world. One view is that marketing has given God to this world. For the atheists as well as the agnostics, the very idea of God is a creation of marketing. That, however, is for the non-believers. Coming to the believers, marketing gave man to this world. Had it not been for Satan's design in the guise of a serpent to coax Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, man would still have been in heaven, enjoying the fruits of the Garden of Eden. That apart, marketing has certainly changed lives and lifestyles, tastes and preferences, perceptions and perspectives, ideas and attitudes and most significantly, consumption patterns. Converting needs into wants, marketing has flared desires and aspirations, wishes and dreams. So, that was what marketing could do and what it has done. But as we the humankind come of age, a realisation dawns that marketing could have done something more. Rather, something else. It is this that needs to be pondered over. What does marketing need to do? How it needs to change the world? The answer would come from our reflection, an introspection to find out what the next goal of marketing needs to be. The answer certainly would come from within. There is need to change this world from commerce driven to conscience driven. In Freudian terms, transform the world from Id and Ego driven to Super Ego driven. From want driven to need driven. From impulse driven to reason driven. From the so called realism to idealism. From the apparently right approach to an appropriately righteous approach. There is need to change from consumption orientation to redemption orientation. And for this, the marketing process must now change its basic objective. Marketing was aimed at increasing sales volumes through creating wants and desires. It has to change its role to sell values now. There is need to redefine and reorient marketing. From creating consumption needs to arousing higher order needs. The aim should be to make people believe in the ultimate goodness of humanity where integrity and honesty become the fashion and greed and consumption are relegated to back seat.

Pathak is a professor of management, writer, and an acclaimed public speaker. He can be reached at ppathak.ism@gmail.com

How can suffering be avoided?

The holy texts say that suffering is a necessary part of the lives of all human beings. The only aspect of it that can be controlled is the degree to which one lets it affect his/her goals as a being, says AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI



facts which help me. You can do likewise. I have referred to them in my earlier articles. One must gain spiritual knowledge; *Gita* is an important source. One should clear one's doubts by asking questions and discussing things with spiritually wise persons. In short, one's intelligence should be connected to God. Gradually, consciousness should become godly. Progressively, one will begin to depend upon God. This happens when we do spiritual practices like meditation. Slowly, our senses will come under control. Our minds are likewise controlled. Sinful tendencies need to be eradicated, and spiritual nature achieved.

Now, we turn to what we shouldn't be doing besides getting rid of sinful tendencies. The first step should be to avoid the three gates to hell. These are lust, greed and anger. Lust is of many kinds, the most common being lust for eating. What is the single most cause of bad health? Improper eating. Then, there is lust for power, fame, etc. They all cause lots of trouble. Greed is not far behind. One seeks more than one needs and gets oneself into all sorts of problems. Also, anger has suffering written all over it; one helplessly invites trouble.

Being jealous of others can take one step further down. One may end up in demon species. What brought down Ravana, who was very knowledgeable and powerful? His ego, as he admitted when he was lying mortally wounded in the battlefield. We can do all of the above if we know what is appropriate to do in various circumstances.

We can do so by reading *Gita*. Good *samskars* are important, and humility helps greatly.

Now, we come to the third part — being tolerant. As mentioned earlier, misery is an integral part of this material world. In *Gita*, Lord Krishna states that in spite of being appropriate in eating, recreation, and sleep, one can only reduce one's suffering which must still be tolerated. Therefore, one should not be surprised if problems come. Then, we are humans, susceptible to make mistakes, which according to the *karmaphala* principle will bring suffering. Saintly persons maintain their equanimity even in the face of adversities. Suffering is unavoidable, but it can be reduced and tolerated if one has higher consciousness.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

AFTER BECOMING FAMOUS,
I HAVE REALISED HOW
OVERRATED FAME IS. IT GETS
IN THE WAY OF NORMAL LIFE
— RANVEER SINGH

Antibiotics are being overused in patients undergoing common urological procedures, which exposes them to potential harm including an increased risk of infection by *C. difficile* bacteria, researchers warned.

Clostridium difficile, often called *C. difficile*, is a bacterium that can cause symptoms ranging from diarrhoea to potentially fatal inflammation of the colon. The study showed that almost 60 per cent of patients were prescribed antibiotics in a way that did not follow the American Urological Association (AUA) guidelines, which recommends that antibiotics should be given for no more than 24 hours following most urological procedures. According to author Daniel Livorsi from the University of Iowa in the US, "Reducing unnecessary antibiotic use in this setting is just one example of how physicians can be better stewards of antibiotics," said Livorsi.

The first and natural requirement is to have faith in God. To gain faith, I have collected thirty



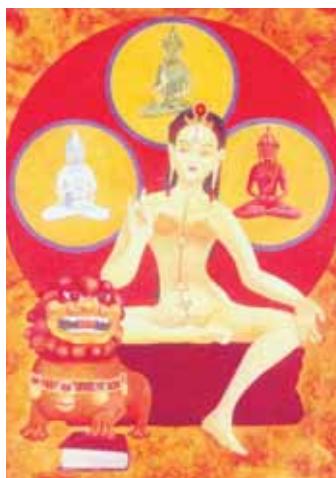
YOUR YEAR AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA

**ARIES** March 21-April 19

Relationship wise, the harmony and joy in your life will be affected due to workload. You need to protect your emotional life. In order to maintain balance in your life, you may require to dismantle the current work cycle and start afresh. On the career front, you will take a stand for your rights. Don't worry as you will be living a content life and will also find new work avenues. If you are looking for change, you should take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way and try to get some experience. Financially, you will be worried about the future. But, you need to trust that good times await you. To stand by what is right doesn't mean you have to make a sacrifice. Consider making space for your wishes to come true.

Lucky colour Indigo, pink, yellow
Lucky number 2, 6, 23
Lucky day Sunday, Thursday, Friday

LEO July 23-Aug 22

Due to depleting finances, you may have to experience disharmony at home. Although everything is well within your heart, it would be best to keep your eyes and ears open around others. This will help you might avoid potential argument before they come to a boiling point. On the career front, everything will be manageable. Make sure that you do not overspend. You have more than one source of income and you choose to walk away from one of those income streams, but you will soon replace it with another one and start walking on a more productive path. It will take time, but you will embrace victory. Financially, you will do well. It is indicated that a news might come to create a stir in your life, but your calm, wise actions will lead you towards much needed freedom.

Lucky colour Pink, peach, white
Lucky number 10, 11, 12
Lucky day Monday, Tuesday, Friday

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You will slowly come out of a phase where you have become exhausted by giving all out to your loved ones. Although your heart is with them, you are losing track of your own requirements, both emotional and physical. You need to regain lifestyle balance. At work, something amazing is going to happen. You put your heart and soul into your work and the more independence you have the happier you are. Travel is on the cards. It will be either associated with work or further studies. Overall, it will be a good year career wise. Financially, you will be doing well. It is likely that you may venture into something good within your financial sphere. This new opportunity has an excellent potential of success. The tiny seed you plant now will grow into a mighty tree. It's certainly a fulsome year for you.

Lucky colour Yellow, brown, baby pink
Lucky number 7, 12, 13
Lucky day Monday, Wednesday, Saturday

TAURUS April 20-May 20

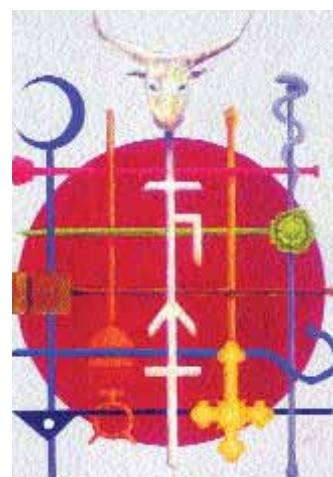
This year, you will explore new paths in your life which will allow you to creatively use your skills at home and in relationships. Those who are single will focus all their attention on the family. Career wise, this year you will be overburdened with work. You have to delegate the work. Ensure a positive attitude to maintain a pleasant working environment. Travel is indicated and this will initiate new projects that will strengthen the already strong undertakings. Financially, you will emerge from the dark phase and will experience hope. You will have more than one source of income and all of them will yield you good. In terms of your well being, you are likely to gather strength in order to walk away from a spiritual or religious avenue that has ceased to hold true for you.

Lucky colour Orange, purple, red
Lucky number 3, 6, 10
Lucky day Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Your creative visualisation will help you to turn your lifestyle wishes into reality. You will enjoy a comfort zone in relationships which is in your near vicinity. You are likely to walk away from a negative phase of your life. You will find reasons to celebrate with loved ones. Work wise, you are in the right position to make some career oriented decisions. You might walk away from some avenue of work that no longer excites you. As per the cards, new beginnings will be very productive. This year will put you on a new path of financial attainment. You are likely to undertake something new that offers a substantial increase in your financial status and security. Something might disturb your spiritual and intuitive vision. You should try to attain spiritual balance.

Lucky colour Brown, grey, green
Lucky number 9, 12, 17
Lucky day Friday, Saturday, Sunday

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This year, you will sit back and witness how your assets and investment in home appreciates. But, your heart has a longing and it wishes for healing as it's been a long time since your heart has been at peace, or felt joy. At work, you will experience nervousness despite encouragement. For some, it will be about a possible promotion, or raise. For others who have more than one career avenue to manage, things seem complicated. The fear is purely based on past negative experiences. So, relax. Financially, you are likely to start something new. Whatever finances you need will come to you easily. You may face various interpersonal ups and downs associated with these assets. Success from real estate is indicated, but it's accompanied by some bad behaviour by someone else who's involved.

Lucky colour Pastel colours, magenta, brown
Lucky number 8, 18, 20
Lucky day Wednesday, Friday, Saturday

GEMINI May 21-June 20

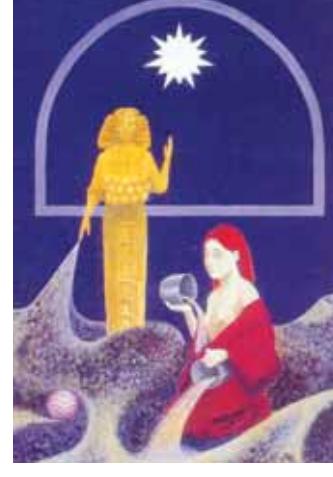
This year, your relationship with your family, friends or beloved look good. Your heart is likely to be filled with joy and it will keep growing. You will be surrounded by those you love and will be delighted with what's happening around you. This year, it is all about love, relationship and emotional harmony and peace. Your professional life will be enriched and leave you with a sense of contentment. Career wise, you can also expect some new perks; you will do exceptionally well. After a brief financially dull phase, you will get exciting opportunities which will be financially beneficial for you. On the emotional and spiritual fronts, the cards indicate growth. You are likely to be liberated from some burdens.

Lucky colour Parrot green, silver, grey
Lucky number 13, 15, 18
Lucky day Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

In the past few months, you had to defend your rights in terms of relationship. It seems worth the effort as this year, you will breathe a sigh of relief. You are likely to enjoy a happy and a secure relationship with friends, family and the beloved. Career wise, you have more than two work avenues that establish your career and a significant income. The combination of your creativity and your business acumen keeps you going. You are likely to find that one specific avenue is the least stable and this will make you a little anxious. Relax; things will grow into something more stable and reliable. An existing money issue has been dragging on for a while. It will continue for some more time. Just when you think you might give up, the situation will change in your favour.

Lucky colour Red, mauve, golden
Lucky number 7, 20, 22
Lucky day Monday, Saturday, Sunday

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This year, you will be carrying an emotional burden on yourself. You are trying to make room for the behaviour of someone else at the expense of your own well being. You need to convey the message to the significant one to carry their fair share of the emotional exchange. If things are out of control, you need to consult a professional. In the career sector, you may take a chance which is in all good intention, but it may not work out as hoped. As a result, you will withdraw, regroup and then happily walk away from the circumstance. New opportunities will open its doors as soon as you close the old one. Financially, you will be overburdened but you will find someone who will help you out.

Lucky colour Green, sky blue, indigo
Lucky number 15, 23, 31
Lucky day Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

CANCER June 21-July 22

You will be enjoying peace in your relationship with friends and family. You may be forced into a big change for no fault of your own. But, try to be patient as this change will bring you success. Career wise, travel and growth are on the cards. Altogether, a new world of opportunities will open up for you. Even though it might be a bit difficult to juggle between personal and professional life initially, you will overcome all hurdles and your life will turn into a dream come true. Financially, this year will be little challenging. Don't panic; you will be able to stand your ground with all your strength. This is because you have the hand of destiny over you. This year, follow logic rather than gut feeling in terms of money.

Lucky colour Peach, green, sky blue
Lucky number 14, 18, 26
Lucky day Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

A dishonesty, probably around money, causes you to make a clean sweep of things and walk a whole new path away from the dilemmas and the distress of the past. This will create a new you full of energy and positive vibes. You will create a life that everyone around you dreamt of. Your career is likely to get affected by some changes in your area of romance and relationship. You may walk away from the career situation as you will find the misery unreasonable. You may dismantle the things you depended on and will soon create something new and even better. Like your career sector, your financial situation is also affected by your personal life. Slowly and with the help of friends and loved ones, you will move forward.

Lucky colour Black, gauge, peach
Lucky number 4, 11, 19
Lucky day Thursday, Saturday, Sunday

PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This year, you are likely to take an emotional chance and a big leap into the unknown. Due to this, there will be much contentment as well as financial assistance. Be cautious, as there will be someone who will try to disrupt your plans. On the career front, you need to be very careful as there is someone who will deceive you in order to take away various work opportunities that you want. Stand your ground. A partner or a colleague will support you and soon you will be on a new and a better work path that cannot be interfered with.

Financially, you will remain secure because you have more than one avenue of income. And even when specific aspects of support get vulnerable, you will still sail through. You will realise that it's a divine right to live in a harmonious environment.

Lucky colour Grey, white, turquoise

Lucky number 9, 19, 30

Lucky day Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

**ASTROTURF**

BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMAADEO

Picking up threads from the previous issue, it comes out that if we were to come out with our best, we need to rise above the preconditioning of mind caused by Karmic imprints carried over from the past. To go about it, one needs to self-reflect and become aware of inherent fault lines, acknowledge them, and then consciously address them through fresh educative inputs. Having thus freed our minds of its limitations, full landscape of mind with its wholesome powers becomes accessible. Different faculties of mind as detailed in the previous issue then begin to operate in a coordinated manner as a collective whole. Following this, the faculty of discriminate intelligence spontaneously comes into play for due diligence, before we take any call. Obviously, then, mind presents itself with its optimum best.

What follows thereafter is that one begins to look at issues in hand with an open mind and so, is able to see issues in hand in the right perspective due, and pick up the right lead. Also, one could monitor inherent thought trends and identify the negative and undesirable thought trends. Accordingly, one could redefine the thought process in a

way that offers a sense of purpose and right direction to mind. One could also dispassionately evaluate the 'Karmic promptings' and consciously deny the ground needed by unwanted thought-seeds for raising their heads. And, opt for 'what is worth'. Also, one will be able to put in qualitative efforts towards the task in hand in a focused way.

Preparatory to all that is to bring the monkey-like wandering mind in check. For, it does not allow the focus and space necessary to objectively attend to any fresh thought. It also stands in the way of indwelling potential from coming into full play. The irony, however, is that more often than not *ahamkara* identifies itself with indwelling tendencies, which makes it difficult to dispassionately monitor the thought trends for necessary correction. Here, astrology comes handy as an effective diagnostic tool. For, it is premised on study of energy construct of a being. And energy knows no bias.

But all said and done, even after becoming aware of our limitations, it is not easy to rise above them. For, habits die hard. Here comes the role of an enlightened Guru. For, they first put you face to face with your mirror image.



They then lead you through meditative and other proven techniques to free yourself from the limitations of mind. Having thus prepared, they then help you unfold your full human potential so as to come out of your best. You then become a master of your own mind rather than playing second fiddle to its usual tendencies.

It may not be out of place to mention here that it is our choice option that binds us to cause-effect chain. But then it also enjoins upon us the capacity to discriminate upon and make such wilful choice as would undo the implications of unbecoming implication of the cause-effect chain. Also, consciously feed fresh educative inputs in mind, and lend it fresh direction. It implies that initiatives if any, taken as of now, could bear fruits during the present life itself. If you unmindfully fail to put to use your own empowerment, how can you put the blame on destiny for your failures?

Now to further loosen and untie the hardened knot of ignorance, a brief look into the energy dynamics of existence may come handy. Both modern science and Indian Philosophy agree on one count that energy streams excited by the Primordial-Source set into motion the

creation chain that manifested into plural world with name and form. So, all existences in the mortal world, live or inert, are nothing but manifestation of nature driven energies.

The obvious implication is that when seen at subtle level, a being with a solid body framework remains nothing but a web of pulsating energy pattern. Mind and intelligence are again energy platforms at other levels. Even thoughts flowing through the mind are nothing but energy formations. And we know that energy cannot be destroyed but changes forms. Given our choice option, we could consciously give a fresh turn to thought energy. Say for instance, through recitation of mantra, which is essentially a set of syllables placed in a logical sequence to bring about a particular sound effect, which is again nothing but energy formation.

As the year closes, let us resolve to modify our Karmic tendencies, and set the terms of a better tomorrow.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Write to him at G-102, Bharat Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi – 110 025
Tel: 91-11-4984875/9818037273
Email: pioneerqueries@bharatastro.com
Website: www.bharatastro.com

Sunday, December 30, 2018

foray

<<< 2018



My real strength is my will power. An athlete needs to be mentally strong.
— MC Mary Kom,
Six-time World Boxing Champion

MOST SEARCHED FOR OVERALL

- FIFA World Cup 2018 Live score
- IPL 2018
- Karnataka election results
- Baal Veer
- Bigg Boss
- Robot 2.0
- Asia Cup 2018
- Motu Patlu
- Asian Games 2018



INSIGHT



NIDA KHAN

on Triple Talaq

Men will go back to old ways unless there is a strict punishment

2



TRUPTI DESAI

on Sabarimala

It's time women were allowed to exercise their rights. God doesn't belong to men.

3



TANUSHREE DUTTA

on #MeToo

Ignorance destroys our souls. The veil of unpleasant experiences has to be lifted.

4



VIKRAM BHATT

on celeb weddings

I admire today's heroines for getting married in the summer of their careers.

5



DR KABERI BANERJEE

on Surrogacy

Instead of banning commercial surrogacy, the Government should introduce regulations.

6



SHUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

7

Can the load of bad loans from banks cost an election victory?

See also Fake News



ONIR

on Section 377

I don't see an effort in my industry to act on the void of LGBTQI narratives.

8



The year 2018. How would you define it? Character *dheela*? Yes with #MeToo raging, definitely so. Menopausal? What with mood-swings, highs peaking and lows drowning you summarily. Paisa *vasool*? If space odyssey announcements of its Gaganauts were anything to go by, yes again. Or just entirely fake with all kinds of news fooling you as never before? Entirely fraudulent? Indeed so, with bank defaulters walking away with scams as vertical as vertical can be and the taxpayers watching helplessly.

Or, all this and yet insipid enough to not record a single dizzying moment all its life? Yes, 2018 was entirely dichotomous and yet largely ripple free, but for path-breaking judgements changing the way India thinks.

All this when the Oxford dictionary announced that "Toxic" was the word of the year. Meanwhile, as you choose your tag, let's go down the year with a tooth comb.

Petrol breached ₹90 a litre. High or low? RBI governor Urjit Patel quit amid reports of the Government trying to ensnare the trillion reserve fund. Low or alarmingly low? Pulses sold at ₹100 plus a kg. High or low? Mukesh Ambani's daughter wore a ₹11-crore *choli* for her wedding. High or low? Prime Minister Narendra Modi guided BJP to a 21 out of 29 States grab and then lost three major ones in MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. A classic example of high and low tide, isn't it. A Pune-based engineer got an Oscar for his technique to aid mid-air filming as never before. High or very high?

Yes, there were moments but few and far between, nothing mind-blowing if you took away the historic judgement on gaydom and the Government banning commercial surrogacy, of course much after Abram and Karan Johar's twins populated the Indian landscape as inspirational examples.

January started off the proceedings with a Modish splash of making an international statement, having 10 international Heads of State as chief guests at the Republic Day Parade for the first time ever. But while on Modi, it was the Year of the Big Dent for him as this people's Prime Minister lost much of his sheen with voters questioning his leadership for the first time in five years. The loss of the three big states of MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, in a year preceding the big election gala, had people talking about an alternate leader if at all the BJP succeeds in renewing its power membership at the Centre. With names like Nitin Gadkari doing the grapevine rounds, in 2018 Modisms have indeed started fading.

Instead of banning commercial surrogacy, the Government should introduce regulations.

What is Section 377
What is happening in Syria
What is Kiki challenge
What is #MeToo campaign
What is ball tampering
What is Nipah virus
What is cardiac arrest
What is lunar eclipse
What is no confidence motion
What is SC ST Act
What is Punj National Bank
Punjab National Bank
Shubhomoy Bhattacharjee
on Bank scams
Can the load of bad loans from banks cost an election victory?
See also Fake News

Personalities
Priya Prakash Varrier (the wink girl)
Nick Jonas
Sapna Choudhary
Priyanka Chopra
Anand Ahuja
Sara Ali Khan
Salman Khan
Meghan Markle
Anup Jalota
Boney Kapoor



- How to send stickers on WhatsApp
- How to link Aadhaar with mobile number
- How to make rangoli
- How to port mobile number
- How to invest in bitcoin
- Ayushman Bharat Yojana how to apply
- How to remove holi colour from face
- How to check 10th result 2018
- How to solve Rubik's cube
- How to check name in NRC Assam

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMISED

Near me

- Mobile stores near me
- Supermarkets near me
- Gas stations near me
- Cashpoint near me
- Car dealers near me
- Massage near me
- Pharmacies near me
- Gynae near me
- Convenience stores near me
- Jobs near me

News

- 1. FIFA World Cup 2018
- 2. Karnataka election results
- 3. Priyanka Chopra Nick Jonas Wedding
- 4. Statue of Unity
- 5. Nipah Virus
- 6. Bitcoin price
- 7. Budget 2018
- 8. Deepika Padukone wedding
- 9. Section 377
- 10. Sonam's marriage

Songs

- Dilbar Dilbar
- Daru Badnaam
- Tera Fitoor
- Kya Baat Hai
- Dekhte Dekhte
- Dil Diyan Gallan
- Long Lachi
- Buzz song
- Despacito
- Prada



Sports

- 1. FIFA World Cup 2018
- 2. IPL 2018
- 3. Asia Cup 2018
- 4. Asian Games 2018
- 5. Winter Olympics
- 6. Commonwealth 2018
- 7. Wimbledon 2018
- 8. Pro Kabaddi 2018
- 9. Indian Super League
- 10. Australian Open 2018

Movies

- Robot 2.0
- Baaghi 2
- Race 3
- Avengers Infinity War
- Tiger Zinda Hai
- Sanju
- Padmavati
- Black Panther
- Dhadak
- Deadpool 2





BY NIDA KHAN



Social activist and victim of Triple Talaq

Before Triple Talaq was criminalised, there was no marriage security for the woman. There was a sword always hanging over her head. She didn't know if she would continue to stay married once the husband came home in the evening.

If we go with the Sharia Law, we are divorced. There are other Sections under which I have filed a complaint. Herein lies the problem. The court doesn't accept this divorce. How is this even possible? A crime has been committed but the man is not punished for it. Where is the justice for the woman? Here is a man who has divorced the woman but the law doesn't accept it since there is no paperwork to prove if the woman is married to the man or not. This is the loophole that men are taking advantage of. When I took the pictures of the paper to *ulema*, he told me that he doesn't need to utter the words. If, in his mind, he has divorced the woman, she stands divorced.

The problem before

I was visiting my family in Bareilly when I came to know that my husband was planning to get married for the second time. I immediately went to meet this girl's parents and told them the entire story — how he was already married to me. My husband told me that he had divorced me and put in papers — the *Talaq Nama*. The court rejected this application. So I am lawfully his wife. But he insists he is not married to me and gives me a maintenance amount of ₹12,000 every month.

Since Triple Talaq has been declared an offence, I have not heard of any woman who has been divorced. Earlier, I would hear of at least two cases of Triple Talaq every month. It was as if there was a trend. How else would you explain situations where the man divorced the woman because there was less salt in a dish or she had not done some household chore?

All this stems from the mentality that men have. As long as the woman does what the man wants, they are happy but if she tries to assert her rights in the relationship, he wants to get rid of her. So much so that he would even call the police to throw the woman out of the house on the grounds that since she had been divorced and was no longer welcome to live in his house. The police had no option but to take the woman back to her parental home.

The foremost problem facing these women is how to explain to the society why she was a divorcee to begin with. Second, if the man has

not agreed to keep the children, the big question facing her is how to earn so that she can educate them. Third, if the woman is young, she has a chance to get married again. But who is going to marry a 50-year-old?

As a social activist, my job is to first understand what the woman wants. Does she want revenge? Does she need a lawyer? Does she need funds? However, I

have to file a case for maintenance in the fast track court which usually takes less than a year. Once this is taken care of, then comes dealing with other issues.

The one positive thing for women is that they are secure. They no longer live in constant fear. There is fear for men too. They are wary of uttering the words as of now. But there is an urgent need to ensure that action is taken against the man who would utter the words. Men will have to be punished if they use Triple Talaq as an easy tool to divorce.

If the divorce is mutual, there is no problem. But if a woman is wrongfully divorced, the man has to be punished. Otherwise, the Ordinance will become weak and men will go back to doing whatever pleases them.

If the interest of the Muslim women has to be looked at, this can't be allowed to happen.

Most women so divorced belong to low-income families who have had little or no education at all. These women have no clue about how to fend for themselves. They need financial security which, for them comes from a marriage. They don't even know about their most basic rights — that they need to get their marriage registered as required by law. There is a

THE AMENDS

■ According to the new amendment, a crime of triple talaq (FIR) will be cognizable only if the victim or her blood relatives or someone associated with the marriage files the complaint. A complaint filed by an agency or outside entity will not be cognizable. In the earlier version, any person could have initiated criminal proceedings against a Muslim man, who pronounces instant triple talaq on his wife.

■ As per the second amendment, the crime remains non-bailable but a magistrate can grant bail after hearing the victim. Provision of bail was one of the demands of the opposition parties.

always tell these women that the first step is to file a case for maintenance in the fast track court which usually takes less than a year. Once this is taken care of, then comes dealing with other issues.

The one positive thing for women is that they are secure. They no longer live in constant fear. There is fear for men too. They are wary of uttering the words as of now. But there is an urgent need to ensure that action is taken against the man who would utter the words. Men will have to be punished if they use Triple Talaq as an easy tool to divorce.

If the divorce is mutual,

total lack of awareness.

Take the case of this woman who came to me for help. Her husband used Triple Talaq to divorce her. The woman was young and married again. Four years later, the first husband found out that the woman was leading a happy and comfortable life. He came and claimed her as his wife. Since there was no paperwork to prove that he had divorced her, the woman had no option but to return to her first husband.

It is all about the man. What about the rights of the woman? Where is her consent? Where is the security for her?

Before Triple Talaq was criminalised, there was no marriage security for the woman. There was a sword always hanging over her head. She didn't know if she would continue to stay married once the husband came home in the evening. There have been cases where the man has gone to work in the morning and returned in the evening only to divorce her.

Take this example. A woman was sleeping and her husband was watching her sleep and a thought came to him — what if I divorced her? The minute she woman opens her eyes, she found herself to divorced and thrown out of the house. The ordinance will prevent such frivolous acts from now on.

THE TRIVIALITIES

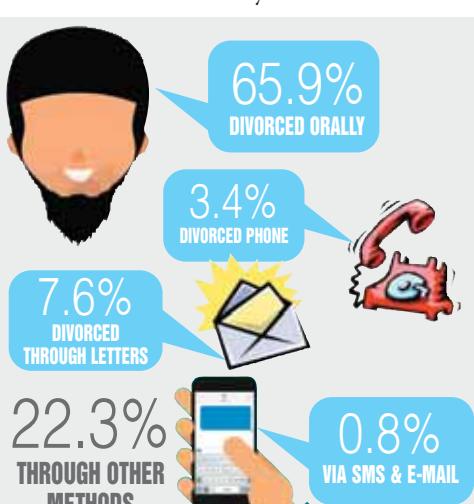
- A UP-based Muslim man divorced his wife orally after she asked for ₹20 to give to the couple's two daughters.
- In January this year, a Haryana man divorced his wife after she refused to give him a packet of *beedis*. When she insisted she would not give it to him, he beat her up, kicked her out and gave her oral, instant talaq.
- A newly-wed husband pronounced triple talaq just two hours after his nikah in UP's Baghpat village last year just because he didn't receive a car in dowry as demanded.
- A Saudi Arabian man divorced his wife though an advertisement in an Urdu daily. She came to know about it only when someone brought the paper to show her what had happened.
- In January this year, 22-year-old Shahjahanpur resident Afraim was scrolling down her Facebook timeline when a post hit her. It was from her husband and said : Talaq, talaq, talaq. This was duly followed by the same message on her phone.
- Talaq has happened over phone, text and email as well. Two women living in Hyderabad were divorced over WhatsApp by their respective husbands. In 2015, an NRI man from Kerala sent his wife a Triple Talaq message on WhatsApp from Dubai hardly 10 days after the wedding.

BIG SCREEN SPLASH

Road to Sangam director Amit Rai is working on a neo-noir thriller Mansuba which will explore the subject of how victims of Triple Talaq become prey to social anarchy. The film, according to the director, underlines the weakening social fabric of the nation. It also presents a perfected version of the truth as it gets venomously distorted, perversely manipulated and then suddenly turned over on its head.

FIGURATIVELY

- The Supreme Court Bench heard seven petitions filed by Muslim women challenging the 1,400-year-old practice, including by one who was divorced on WhatsApp.
- In India, for every divorced Muslim man, there are four divorced Muslim women, according to an analysis of the 2011 Census data.
- The number of divorced Muslim women in 2011 touched almost half a million, a 40% increase as compared to 2001.
- Muslim women in India who cross the age of 25, are more likely to be divorced by their husbands. Census figures show that the number of divorced Muslim women between the ages of 10 to 25 was just about 70,000 as compared to 0.22 million between 25 and 39 age.
- A survey by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan revealed that 95 per cent divorced women received no maintenance from their husbands.
- Oral divorce has been the easiest and most common method of taking a divorce among Muslims. Out of all divorced women, 65.9 per cent were divorced orally.



Why criminalise triple talaq?

BY SHABNAM HASHMI



Human rights campaigner

Triple Talaq is not the only important and problematic issue besetting Muslim women. I campaigned against Triple Talaq and once the Supreme Court gave the verdict that it no longer exists, there was no need to bring in any other Act to criminalise it. Yes, it will bring relief to some Muslim women. But what has mainly done is brought together Hindu and Muslim rights.

Over the past 15 years, whatever democratic space within the Muslim community the women had created has slowly vanished. When we raised the issue of Triple Talaq, Muslim radicals termed it anti-Islam. The result? Women's groups supporting the cause receded in fear

Democratic space for women within the Muslim community has shrunk. When we raised the issue of Triple Talaq, Muslim radicals termed it anti-Islam. The result? Women's groups supporting the cause receded in fear

Once the Supreme Court deemed Triple Talaq illegal, it became illegal. I don't understand

why there was a need to make it an offence? There are provisions available in the law which are applicable to all. Women can seek redress under the Domestic Violence Act. If a woman has been wrongfully divorced, she can challenge it in a court of law. Why should the civil matter be dragged into criminal law?

Making Triple Talaq a criminal offence is not going to help anyone, men nor women. What the SC did was celebrated — just the fact that Triple Talaq is not allowed in 'one go'. The SC has only stopped one kind of talaq which was being misused. Women who faced the problem rejoiced but I didn't see any woman celebrating once it was declared a criminal offence.

THE CASE

Shayara Bano, the 35-year-old native of Uttarakhand, is the face of the battle against the discriminatory talaq practice.

The mother of two endured physical and mental agony for over 10 years and was made to undergo as many as six abortions by her husband. Her battle against triple talaq was spurred by her own experience.

Mariad in April 2001 to the Allahabad-based property dealer Rizwan Ahmed, she endured domestic violence and physical torture at the hands of her husband

and in-laws, who allegedly demanded additional dowry and a car from her parents which her father was unable to afford.

She was often beaten up and kept hungry in a closed room for days. The final cut came in October 2015, when her husband sent her a divorce note by speed post. The letter contained a pronouncement of instant Triple Talaq. The custody of her two children, 11 and 13, was kept by the husband. When something so wrong happened, she thought that there must be a law to prevent this.

“
TRIPLE TALAQ IS THERE SINCE 637 AD. WHO ARE WE TO SAY THAT THIS IS UN-ISLAMIC. MUSLIMS ARE PRACTISING IT FOR THE LAST 1,400 YEARS
— LAWYER AND CONGRESSMAN KAPIL SIBAL
”

TAKE 5 'Not beneficial for anyone'

MAULANA KHALID SAIFULLAH RAHMANI
Founder member of All India Muslim Personal Law Board



There are a few things that one needs to understand. First, the percentage of *teen talaq* is very low — the 2011 Census puts the divorce rate among Muslims at 0.56%. Second, triple talaq is not a social issue for the Muslims. A few reasons why triple talaq in its present form will not benefit the community.

The Supreme Court made triple talaq illegal, it should have been left at that. The move to criminalise it will harm all the parties concerned. It is like saying a man who has not committed murder, yet he is being punished for it. Why punish a man for a crime he has yet to commit? Also, when the man is behind bars, he has to pay his wife and children maintenance. How will he do this?

Why drag a civil matter — that of a divorce — with a criminal case? This is wrong. Divorce happens in other communities as well. Why make it a criminal offense for Muslims?

Since the law says that the wife is still married to the man as triple talaq is invalid, look at the situation from the woman's point of view. According to the law she is still married to the man and will have to go back to him. In such a scenario will it be possible for the man to behave properly with the woman?

There will be more atrocities towards women, domestic violence will increase. The man will not give such a woman the respect that is due to her. Because the woman is still lawfully his wife, she can't leave him and nor will the man accept her. She will be neither here or there. Should the woman not have a shot at happiness?

Why a jail term? Why not keep a monetary compensation that will benefit the woman in case she is wrongly divorced? If the Government wants to ensure that the interest of the woman is taken care of, why not make sure that the courts grant relief in such cases at the earliest?



WITH FOLDED HANDS

BY TRUPTI DESAI



Author of the right of women to pray movement

Men need to change their mindset. After all, they take birth from a womb. If a mother, daughter, wife or sister is being discriminated against, they need to stand by them and start fighting for women's rights

Sabarimala is not the only temple in India where women above the age of 12 and under 60 are not allowed into the precincts. It doesn't take a genius to know the reason for this strange practice. Women are barred from these places as they are considered to be impure due to a natural bodily function - the menstrual cycle. This is an age-old practice. But we live in the 21st century. We need to change with the times. However, the men in our society still live in a world that we inhabited hundreds of years ago. They are of the opinion that if there is a practice that has been followed for centuries, it needs to be carried forward in the name of tradition and culture.

They forget the root of religion. No God or, for that matter, religious books differentiate between a man and a woman. A *bhakti* is a *bhakti*. He is not discriminating between a man and a woman. Each one of us has a one-on-one relationship with God and nobody can take that away or have the power to keep anyone from a place of worship.

People feel that to carry forward what was done in the past, there is need to do the same in this day and age despite the advancements that have been made. The problem lies with the so-called contractors of religion. To dominate women, they continue to follow certain rituals. Fear is used as a tool. Followers are regaled with stories of horror that would not only fall on the individual but also religion if there is a deviation from a norm adhered to in the past.

Let us take another case. Our fight in Shani Shignapur was on similar lines. Women were debarred from entering the inner sanctum of this temple. We were told that untold horrors would befall upon us like Shani Dev would get angry and wreak havoc in our lives if we even attempted to enter it. We were

threatened. A fear psychosis was used to deter us. The local police prevented us from entering the sanctum. The villagers, too, were against us. The temple trustees told us that what women were doing was wrong. We had no authority to enter the temple and that we were breaking a 400-year-old practice.

But there was one good thing that stood in our favour after the High Court order in April 2016. While the villagers still don't enter the sanctum, they don't prevent other women from entering. There was a complete change in the mindset of the people. They understood that women too have the right to pray. Since then, several thousand women have visited the temple and prayed inside the Shila.

Unfortunately, this has not happened in Sabarimala where the *dham* contractors and those opposing it have failed to change their mindset. Our (women) only request to them is that if they don't want their womenfolk in that particular age group to enter the temple premises, they can follow the age-old rule but let other women who want to pray enter.

India is not run on what religion says. It is run on Constitutional guidelines. Our Constitution has given us Right to Equality so why not let us exercise this right? In Sabarimala, people continue to follow a draconian attitude and are not willing to follow the Supreme Court order, the highest court of law in the country. There is no way that the order can be ignored. We talk and read of new India. How do people in this country achieve this, if we don't change our mindset?

If it is all about following traditions and practices that are over 400 years old, why are these people using mobiles? They should go back to the days when pigeons were used to send messages. Why are these

IN PRAYER

- **The Sabarimala temple** is open for worship only during the days of Mandalapooja (approximately 15 November to 26 December), Makaravilakku (14 January — Makar Sankranti) and Maha Vishuva Sankranti (14 April), and the first five days of each Malayalam month.
- Hundreds of devotees still follow the traditional mountainous forest path (approximately 61 km) from Erumeli, 12.8 km from Vandiperiyar and 8 km from Chalakayam, believed to be taken by Ayyappa himself.
- **Thazhamon Madom** is the traditional priest family who has power over the matters to be decided in Sabarimala Temple. Tantri is the highest priest and is the head of the temple.

people travelling in fancy cars? Why not travel in bullock-carts?

Women today hold high positions — from being the President of the country to winning medals at the Olympics to being CEOs of companies. This is the kind of change in new India. Was all this possible if we had continued to follow practices that are wrong. Did we not stop Sati and Johar? They were wrong practices and were rightly discontinued.

This doesn't mean that I am not

in favour in keeping our traditions and culture alive. I follow all traditions that are progressive in nature. There are several good practices that have put India on the global map. All wrong needs to be corrected. Take our Gods. Shiv is always equated with Shakti. We take the name of Krishna with Radha. Somewhere down the line, we have forgotten the essence of what was written in the *Vedas*.

This doesn't mean that all men have a mindset that women need to be subjugated. There were several hundreds of men who were with us in our *andolan*. They opine that if they have the right to pray why should their wives, mothers, daughters or sisters not be given the same right. It is just 10 per cent of men who still want to keep women away from temples where they are not allowed.

I, too, was not allowed to enter the premises and stopped 155 km from the Sabarimala temple. The way the Sabarimala issue has been handled is all wrong. Why target the families of the women who tried to enter the temple? Why trash their homes? Why threaten them?

Women need to understand the importance of equality that has been given to us. Praying is just a small part of the bigger picture. If there is any place where we are not treated equally, we need to assert ourselves. There will be challenges and roadblocks but we need to stand firm and fight for our rights. We can't give up because there are problems. No one will come forward to fight our wars. We have to do that ourselves.

Men need to change their mindset. After all, they take birth from a womb. If a mother, daughter, wife or sister is being discriminated against, they need to stand by them and start fighting for women's rights. They can do so by showing respect to their womenfolk at home.

TREK TRAVALIS

The issue surrounding age restrictions on entry of women to Sabarimala Temple came up for the first time in Kerala High Court in 1990 when S Mahendran of Perunna in Kottayam moved a petition, alleging that young women were trekking to Sabarimala and offering prayers at the temple. The court converted the petition into a public interest litigation and had then ruled that the age restrictions do not violate fundamental rights and directed the temple board to allow women in the 10-50 years age group to trek to the temple.

Another controversy surfaced in 2006, when Jayamala, a Kannada actor, claimed that she had entered the sanctum sanctorum and touched the idol of the presiding deity in Sabarimala. The incident created a storm. The Kerala Government had to order a probe but the case was later dropped.



DIVINE INTERVENTION

The shrine of Sabarimala is an ancient temple. It is believed that the prince of Pandalama dynasty, an avatar of Ayyappan, meditated at Sabarimala temple and became one with the divine. As per the temple history, the Sastha temple at Sabarimala is one of the five temples founded by Lord Parasurama.



Judgement Day

- Lord Ayappa is not a separate denomination
- To treat women as lesser children of God is blinking at the Constitution
- Rules based on biological characteristics will not muster constitution
- If a Constitution has a meaning can it allow what's derogatory to women?
- Social exclusion of women on menstruation is untouchability and is anathema to the Constitution
- In earlier days, prohibition was because of nature and the notion of women as the weaker sex
- The practice of age restriction on women's entry to Sabarimala Temple can't be treated as an essential religious practice
- Impose man's celibacy on women is to deny women rights and the constitution doesn't recognize such rights
- Dignity of individual is an unwavering nature of fundamental rights
- Path for the future: Whether Constitution will permit which is derogatory to women

SEASONALLY BIG

Sabarimala is the second largest seasonal pilgrimage after the Islamic holy site of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. An estimated 3.5 crore pilgrims visited the shrine last year and the total revenue collection of the Lord Ayyappa temple

for the 2016-17 festival season was ₹243.69 crore, according to the Government.

It is said that the pilgrims have to fast for 41 days to cleanse their minds before going to Sabarimala.

END OF LINE

The temple has witnessed two major stampedes that have claimed over 200 lives. On January 14, 1999, a stampede on the foothills of Sabarimala killed 53 and another 104 pilgrims died on Makara Jyothi Day at Sabarimala in 2011.

At least 20 Sabarimala pilgrims were injured in a 'minor stampede' in December, 2016 due to a heavy rush of devotees.

AYYAPPA'S RAM CONNECT



The Sabarimala temple is also connected to Lord Ram. According to a legend, the name Sabarimala is derived from Shabari, a tribal devotee of Lord Ram mentioned in the Ramayana. Sabarimala literally means the hill of Sabari. Lord Ram had come to meet Shabari as her Guru Rishi Matanga had predicted. Lord Rama noticed a divine person doing penance and asked Shabari who it was. Shabari said it was Sastha (Lord Ayyappa).

MEN NOT ALLOWED



Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Kerala worships women. It finds a mention in Guinness Book of World Records for hosting the Pongala festival which sees around three million women participate. Men are not allowed to enter the temple.



Chakkulathukavu Temple in Kerala that worships Goddess Bhagavathi observes an annual ritual called Naari Puja. Male priest washes the feet of women devotees fasting for 10 days on the first Friday of December. The day is called Dhanu. During Naari Puja only women are allowed to enter the temple.



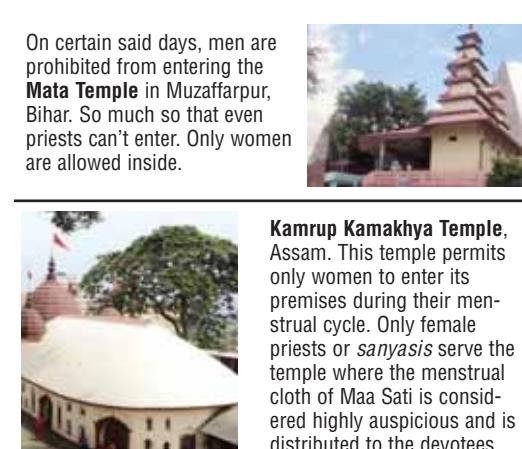
Lord Brahma Temple in Pushkar in Rajasthan prohibits married men from entering its premises. This is the only Brahma temple in the world. The Puranas suggest that Lord Brahma had performed a *yagna* at Pushkar Lake with his wife Goddess Saraswati who got late for the event. Therefore, Lord Brahma married Goddess Gayatri and performed the ritual due to which Goddess Saraswati cursed the temple saying that no married man is allowed to visit the inner sanctum otherwise a trouble will arise in his marital life.



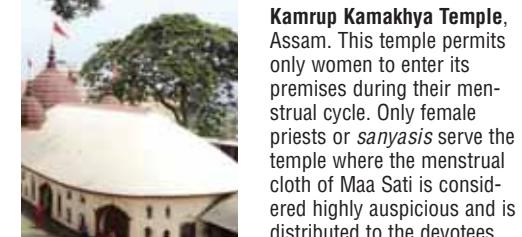
Bhagati Maa Temple in Kanyakumari, worships Kanya Maa Bhagavati Durga who is said to have gone to an isolated area in the middle of the ocean for *tapasya* so that she could ask for Lord Shiva as her husband. According to the Puranas, the spine of a Sati fell on the shrine. The goddess is also known as the Goddess of Sanyasa. Therefore, while sanyasi men are allowed till the gate of the temple, married men are prohibited from entering the premises.



Trimbakeshwar Temple, Nasik in Maharashtra. Women were not allowed to enter the inner sanctum of this temple devoted to Lord Shiva till 2016. Therefore, the Bombay High Court passed an order saying that even men shouldn't be allowed to enter the inner sanctum if women are not allowed.



On certain said days, men are prohibited from entering the Mata Temple in Muzaffarpur, Bihar. So much so that even priests can't enter. Only women are allowed inside.



Kamrup Kamakhya Temple, Assam. This temple permits only women to enter its premises during their menstrual cycle. Only female priests or sanyasis serve the temple where the menstrual cloth of Maa Sati is considered highly auspicious and is distributed to the devotees.



PREGNANT WITH ISSUES

BY DR KABERI BANERJEE



Medical Director,
Advance Fertility and
Gynae Centre, New Delhi

Banning commercial surrogacy is an ill-thought, knee-jerk reaction of the Government which has erroneously equated it with something like organ donation and transplant. The two are totally different and the basic premise of equating surrogacy with an organ trading law is born out of confusion and misinformation. Commercial surrogacy is entirely different from organ donation and trading. In the latter, you subject the patient to high risk surgeries and anesthesia procedures. The surrogate is exposed only to the normal risk of pregnancy. As for exploitation, the commercial aspect is taken care of so where is the exploitation?

The Bill is trying to protect the rights of the surrogate but it is in many ways not looking into aspects of personal choice both of the intended parents and the surrogate. Infertility being a growing case in India, putting a cordon around childless couples is a draconian measure and full of potential to push the so-called "trade" into the black market zone.

The other fear of children born thus, being left behind is also unfounded as that is a rarest of rare occurrence, especially in the wake of detailed contracts and legal arrangements being made in all surrogacy procedures much before the embryo transplant is done.

Surrogates mostly come from lower middle class backgrounds and a weak socio-economic structure. They often have to work for unregulated hours as maids with meager salaries and vulnerability to mental and physical abuse. Isn't that exploitation? On the other hand, the handsome consensual surrogacy amount drastically changes their lives, gives them the means to educate their children and upgrade their life comprehensively.

When we started the surrogacy programme back in 2009, I ensured that the surrogate knew all aspects of the programme she was signing up for and that there was consent by not just her but also her husband. When I talked to them about it, they were quite happy to get into this in the name of altruism and also because the compensation is pretty handsome and life altering for them. If it is with their consent, it cannot be deemed exploitation. Each doctor takes into account the surrogate's health, takes care of her needs, examines risks if any to her and only then drafts her into the surrogacy programme.

I wonder why the Government is yet to act in regulating the maid business which is a national scourge. Cleaning toilets is exploitation, washing other people's dirty linen to make ends meet is exploitation staring in your face. What is the Government doing about that? Why take surrogacy, why virtually equate it to something as dastardly as human trafficking? Why were the ART committee, mandated to study the issue and lay down recommendations for the Government to follow, so completely ignored? There are some answers that the Government needs to give.

What the Government needs to do is look at the entire issue of surrogacy in a more holistic way. In its rush to ban commercial surrogacy, it has not thought about the childless couples. Getting a known surrogate, which the Bill proposes, is very difficult. In India, nobody talks of fertility openly, more so when donor eggs and sperms are involved. So bringing someone from the family as a surrogate is not happening. In my long association with this subject, I have seen couples sometimes bringing in their friends or co-workers as surrogates but only once I have seen a case in which a couple came with a

sister-in-law as proposed surrogate. Then there is this huge issue of how do we ascertain the authenticity of a known surrogate? A sister-in-law has no blood connect with the couple. Where is this known surrogate coming from? How do we know she is, indeed, a relative? With this strict norm that the Bill propagates, coercion is definitely going to be more and legal coverage less. So, why go into a realm where exploitation will be more? The thing to do is regulate, not ban commercial surrogacy.

We should legalise surrogacy. There should be checks & balances so that all parties are doing what the promise is. A legalisation on validity of IVF centres is needed. Effort should be to strictly regulate standards & procedural programmes

It is not as if the Bill will close down fertility clinics completely. Surrogacy is just a part of assisted reproductive treatments. So other fertility managements will continue even if surrogacy will stop.

Then there is issue of a jail term and stiff penalty. Doctors, as a community, are all very worried about this. As of now, fertility clinics are being run under the IMCR guidelines which were revised some years ago but are still to attain legal sanction. Think of it. An egg donor gets complications or suffers a health casualty & the doctor will be jailed immediately. This is not fair at all.

Till it is proven it is due to medical negligence, how can you penalise the doctor? The doctor community is getting very peeved with the presumptions made on them, that they are prone to corruption, that they are prone to negligence.

Instead of banning commercial surrogacy, the Government would have been prudent had it introduced some regulations. There are two aspects to the issue: Regulation of IVF centres, proper accreditations & ensuring that people with proper training & facilities run centres.

In the UK, for example, there is the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act which monitors IVF clinics. In India, we do not know if the many mushroomed centres follow the norms. The effort should be to regulate healthcare, both at the provider and service levels and not ban a practice that surely benefits the growing lot of childless couples. I am completely for commercial surrogacy. We should legalise it. There should be checks and balances so that all parties are doing what the promise is. A legalisation on validity of IVF centres is needed. Effort should be to strictly regulate their standards and procedural programmes.

Surrogacy is not just about gay couples, single parents and celebrities. It deals with the serious medical problems of women who cannot procreate. Tuberculosis in the uterus is a major problem which leads to permanent infertility. Then there are several women who are born with ovaries but no uterus. How do they have a baby? You can check the data regarding severe defects in the uterus, heart disease and secondary pregnancy complications, all of which can be addressed by surrogacy.

Having said this, you can't limit choices. Any law that is anti-choice, is not principally right. The same goes for the commercial surrogacy Bill which is all set to become law.

BUSINESSUNUSUAL

The Indian Council of Medical Research estimates the business of Surrogacy in India to be worth 450 million dollars annually, while private estimates suggest that this service is worth approximately 2.3 billion dollars

India has more than 2,000 commercial surrogacy clinics that will have now to be registered under the National Surrogacy Board

STIFF BILL TO PAY

- The surrogate mother must be a 'close relative' of the intending couple. The Bill doesn't define the term 'close relative'.
- The intending couple must be Indian citizens & married for at least five years with at least one of them being infertile.
- The Bill permits surrogacy only for couples who cannot conceive a child. This procedure isn't allowed in case of any other medical conditions which could prevent a woman from giving birth to a child.
- The surrogate mother & the intending couple need eligibility certificates from the appropriate authority.
- No payment other than reasonable medical expenses can be made to the surrogate.
- Undertaking surrogacy for a fee, advertising it or exploiting the surrogate mother will be punishable with imprisonment for 10 years and a fine of up to ₹10 lakh
- For an abortion, in addition to complying with the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971, the approval of the appropriate authority and the consent of the surrogate mother is required.

Even NGOs and civil society were of the opinion that commercial surrogacy must be stopped. Exploitation of surrogate mothers was also an issue. The government decided to come out with the Bill keeping the Indian ethos in mind so that exploitation of surrogate mothers could be stopped

— JP Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare



I've delivered close to 1,400 babies through surrogacy and in those, there were merely 25-30 cases of altruistic surrogacy. Couples don't even let their nearest family members

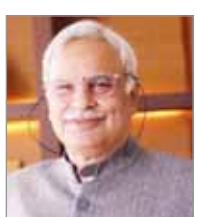
know that they're opting for surrogacy. The new bill completely misses out on the critical aspect of privacy. Allowing only the 'altruistic' form of surrogacy will increase the cases of exploitation of close relatives, and can escalate underground surrogacies

— Dr Nayana Patel, Surrogacy & Infertility Expert, Akanksha Hospital & Research Centre, Gujarat



Going viral

BY DR NAVIN DANG



Consultant Microbiologist &
Founder of Dr Dang's Labs

The 2018 has been a healthy year for India as far as viruses and bacteria are concerned as we didn't have a major impact of any of the virus outbreak as compared to the previous years. Be it Nipah, Dengue, Chikungunya, Influenza or Japanese Encephalitis (JE) viruses, we have had a few sporadic cases but it seems to have gone now.

The credit goes to the awareness. The major causes of such epidemic are unhealthy living conditions, unawareness about the disease and over population. The population has to be made aware about how to prevent it and protect themselves too. Simple measures like planting lemongrass can prevent mosquito breeding. We need to have such sustained educational awareness programmes.

It is such an irony. Two years back, Sri Lanka was declared malaria free and at the same time, malaria was creating havoc in Delhi with people's deaths. Once the monsoon season starts, everybody gets scared of having malaria or any other water borne diseases to arise.

The success of Swachh Bharat Mission will contribute to strengthening the healthcare sector. It not just means creating more toilets and other amenities but to stop waterlogging, cover potholes and maintaining the drains so that there is no scope for mosquito breeding.

In foreign countries, vector borne diseases have been curtailed because their emphasis was on cleanliness and leaving no space for mosquito breeding. We should run initiatives like donating mosquito repellents to people.

Dengue

Kerala witnessed 42% of all dengue deaths this year. A report by National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme says that till September 30, 2018, the total number of dengue cases in India was 40868 with 83 deaths. As per South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the total number of cases of the vector-borne disease in Delhi this year has gone up to 2,798, out of which 141 were reported in December. So far, 473 malaria cases and 165 chikungunya cases have come to light in Delhi so far this year.

Malaria

According to WHO World Malaria Report 2018, India has turned out as the only country among the 11 highest-burden countries to make progress in reducing disease burden. It registered a 24% decrease in 2017 compared to 2016. In 2017, a five-year National Strategic Plan was launched for its elimination to end it in 571 districts out of 678 by 2022

There should be more money put in for the research and development to create genetically modified (GM) mosquitoes that are being used in other countries to combat mosquito-borne pathogens, including viruses like Malaria, Dengue and Zika. These scientific measures have to be taken to prevent mosquitoes breeding. We are still far away from producing vaccines for such diseases.

It is also important to have a proper system in place to make sure no viruses are imported from abroad. Especially the ones like Nipah which was imported and had a handful of cases in India. If anyone enters India which has an outbreak of such viruses, all you will be asked you if you have fever or not, get a form filled and

enter. But if you will go to countries like China and New Zealand, you have to go through proper scanning.

This is for the first time we are witnessing the present Government trying to use health of the people as a plank for getting votes. This is a healthy trend because economic health and physical health are related. A healthy country means less number of patients not available for work and getting to greater economic growth.

One of the biggest highlight this year in healthcare sector is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's declaration of having India TB free by 2025. One of the greatest medical issues in our country is TB. There is an urgent need to promote affordable and quality testing facility for tuberculosis.

Another highlight was the launch of Ayushman Bharat Scheme. The intentions of the Government are good but they have to have the support from the doctors and other stakeholders.

There are a few points which I am unhappy about. First, dependence on the private sector. This has been happening for 40 years. The Government gives the land for a private hospital at a low cost with a commitment that they will be a certain number of beds for the poor patients which was never taken care of.

Second, Government's Central Government Health Scheme, which was applicable in Government hospitals, is now accepted in private hospitals. The Government hospitals need

sprucing while private hospitals have prospered. This is not helping the patients and the doctors. If you will look at the budgets of all the corporate hospitals, the maximum amount is spent in marketing and business strategy with doctors getting little amount. It is going to be a great shift if Ayushman Bharat prospers.

Third, the Government has to have doctors from the private and Government hospitals on the same table and make them go through the whole New National Medical Commission Bill and proper implementation of the Medical Establishment Act and other Healthcare policies. If the policies are not implemented effectively at the grassroot level, all of this will not make any difference.



Zika

Over 280 cases of Zika virus infection, including two deaths, were reported from Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh & Gujarat from September to November.



Swine Flu

This year, till December 9, the H1N1 had killed 969 people across India and the total number of reported cases stood at 13,447. The number of influenza cases and deaths in a few western and southern States was higher than the rest. Around 204 people died due to H1N1 in Rajasthan and 2,116 have been admitted in hospitals. Also, 2,053 cases of H1N1 have been reported in Gujarat & of those, 88 people have died. In the south, Karnataka and Kerala are the most affected States with 59 and 40 H1N1 virus deaths.

Nipah Virus (NiV) outbreak that occurred in the state of Kerala during the months of May-June 2018, reported 18 confirmed cases of Nipah virus infection and 17 deaths

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BY SUBHOMOY BHATTACHARJEE



Senior journalist & writer



BANK DEFAULTLINES

Not exactly serendipitously, but January 2018 had begun on a quiet note for the banking sector. Within a month, however, as the Nirav Modi affair roiled Punjab National Bank, events piled up through the year culminating in the change of the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India at the end of the year. Except possibly the year of nationalisation of 14 banks in 1969, no other year compares with the changes in the sector that have happened in 2018.

It was coming, though. The flurry of events threw up the basic problem of banks. For decades these banks had dished out loans and omitted to ask the borrowers to pay back.

To stretch the story back, the only difference that nationalisation had introduced was about who gave the orders to give loans. It was the political executive instead of the erstwhile industrialists. The pile of non-performing assets told the story in numbers.

Through this year as more sordid details tumbled out, the bank owner and the Government hunted for excuses while the regulator, caught equally napping, pointed fingers at the owner.

The details were follow through of the asset quality review that banks were forced to do in 2015 by former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan. He had asked them to run a fine tooth comb through the tangled loan books and share the outcome.

The State-owned banks got into this mess since they have always looked up

to their owner to advise them on whom to lend to. There is a disconnect between the top management of the banks and their ownership. The Government, for instance, has for years told them to offer 40 per cent of their loan books to the priority sector. The sector includes agriculture, small scale industries and just about anything else which is the flavour of the day. It is a disastrous policy.

Loans to the small-scale sector or farmers is necessary but not when practised as a one-size-fits-all. The banks should have been encouraged to set targets and create customised solutions. The difference in capacity between say SBI and that of Dena Bank should have been recognised. None of the banks offered a good reason to their officers why they should scour the countryside looking for farmers to lend to.

If the officers had instead been rewarded for their initiative and in their subsequent postings placed at key positions in credit departments offering loans to the corporate sector, the results would have been impressive. No bank tried anything of this sort for decades. Instead, the banks were encouraged to create shortcuts.

Tenant farmers who needed the loans but did not have the land to offer as collateral found the banks were not interested. Bank credit to this sector never exceeded 10 per cent. Successive Governments made up the difference by asking the banks to subscribe to the bonds issued by the Nabard. It is gam-

ing of the system that made the loan book to the farmers look impressive.

This weakness in curating a promising army of motivated bank employees with a system of rewards encouraged the banks to readily adopt directed lending in their business with industry.

While the staff do get training in reading the balance sheets of companies, what they do not get to read is the degree of cosiness of the business with the political leadership of the day. If a company knows it can extract a better deal from the banks by engaging with the party in power than with the chairman of the bank who is just an employee, why wouldn't it.

In cases like that of Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya, or that of IL&FS, it is a combination of lack of due diligence by banks and some element of nudge from New Delhi that did the damage.

It is difficult to assert which element played a larger part in the mess, but the trend never changes. For instance, there is no doubt that banks anywhere face an asset liability mismatch when they lend to infrastructure projects, but NPAs occur when the officers are not motivated to point out when a loan book for such project should be closed. In Indian State-owned banks, the employees would opt for ever greening instead and leave the mess for the next person in charge of the desk to sort out.

Can the load of bad loans from banks cost an election victory? With India squarely in the middle of the election, this is the elephant in the room.

Eleven of the 19 State-owned banks are in the equivalent of intensive care unit, the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework. Yet by March 2019, their ratio of non-performing assets is likely to worsen to 22.3 per cent, according to an RBI report. The total NPA with Indian banks is estimated at ₹10.2 trillion. The provisioning needs for these loans has eroded the capital base of the banks, especially the 11 banks in the PCA. The Government data says that the Finance Ministry has recapitalised banks for ₹1.69 trillion through budget support and mobilisation of capital from the market, including the latest tranche announced.

As these banks have stopped lending, it has soured the mood among the borrowers leading to cascading problem of retrenchment of employees. Unlike the US where companies depend on equity markets, Indian industry depends on bank loans to finance all of their capital. When those taps are turned off, industry sputters especially the small and micro enterprise sector.

Worsening of the NPA has two effects. First, it makes loans go dry, mostly for those sectors which can ill afford such withdrawals. Second, the lower disbursal of credit impacts the growth rate of the economy. Since the ownership of most of the banks is with the Government, it also creates a political problem and it is election season.

In the New Year these concerns could shape the nature of political discourse in the General Election.

SCAMS TABLE



PNB MASTER SCANDAL

On February 14 this year, the state-run lender PNB shocked the entire banking industry of India by revealing that it had been defrauded by ₹11,400 crore allegedly by billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi, his family members and business partner Mehul Choksi, owner of the Gitanjali Gems at PNB's Brady House Branch in Mumbai. Following the scam, employees of PNB including people at the general manager level were suspended from their post for their suspected involvement in the biggest scam in the Indian banking sector. Also, the government has revoked passports of Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

ROTOMAC PENPOINT

₹3,700 Rotomac fraud unearthed after the sensational PNB scam. Kanpur based Rotomac Global is being probed by the CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) for allegedly cheating a consortium of seven banks of ₹3,700 crore. The investigation agency filed case against Vikram Kothari and Rahul Kothari, directors of the business group for misusing credit sanctions provided by Bank of Baroda (BoB), the member of consortium banks at its International Business Branch (IBB) at The Mall Kanpur to the tune of ₹456.63 crore.

SBI GOLD CASE

State Bank of India (SBI) is at the forefront of a bank scam involving jewellery network Kanishk Gold Pvt Ltd (KGPL). The KGPL has been accused of defrauding a consortium of 14 banks amounting ₹824.15 crore bank fraud led by the SBI. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) and CBI registered a case against Kanishk Gold.



RP INFOSYSTEM FABRICATION

In January the CBI has booked two directors of R P Info Systems and its directors for allegedly cheating a consortium of banks, including PNB, SBI and Canara Bank to the tune of ₹515.15 crore. The banks alleged that loans were taken on the basis of fabricated documents.

PNB 91 MILLION

After witnessing a scam of ₹12,000 crore allegedly committed by Nirav Modi, the PNB has unearthed another 91 million fraud in March. It involves officials of a little-known company called Chandri Paper and Allied Products Pvt Ltd. The fraud has been spotted at the PNB's Brady House Branch in Mumbai where the Nirav Modi scam had unfolded.

KARNATAKA WORKING CAPITAL CASE

Private sector lender Karnataka Bank on March 28 reported a fraud worth ₹86.47 crore in the fund based working capital facilities extended to Gitanjali Gems Limited, the jewelry network which has been under the scanner in connection to the alleged involvement of the promoter Mehul Choksi in the mega banking scam.

DISPROPORTIONATE ASSETS

On March first week the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a disproportionate assets (DA) case against Archana Bhargava, former chairperson and managing director of United Bank of India (UBI). The CBI alleges that Archana Bhargava acquired movable and immovable assets disproportionate to her income between 2004 and 2014.

Can the load of bad loans from banks cost an election victory?

With India squarely in the middle of the election, this is the elephant in the room



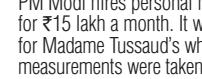
FAKE & HAPPENING



A photoshopped picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi touching Owaisi's feet



PM Modi hires personal make-up artist for ₹15 lakh a month. It was an old photo for Madame Tussaud's wherein Modi's measurements were taken.



BJP MLA Ram Kadam courted a controversy after he tweeted the fake news of Bollywood actor Sonali Bendre's death. Kadam posted a message in Marathi that translated to "Sonali Bendre, the actress who ruled Hindi and Marathi cinema, is no more." In no time, Kadam issued an apology.



A Marathi song 'Ala visavayacha kshan' (it is time to rest now) sung by Lata Mangeshkar, which was posted in the social media, triggered off fake news about her retirement.

BY DR PAVAN DUGGAL



The publication & dissemination of fake news will be made a serious crime punishable with seven years of imprisonment and a fine

REAL THREAT OF FAKE

Fake news in India is turning out to be a massive challenge for all. What began at innocuous levels has today presumed disastrous heights. Fake news was initially never considered seriously. As a result, the kind of measures that should have been there as part of legal framework for addressing the same were non-existent.

We began to see how the advent of the Over-The-Top (OTT) applications transformed the society. These applications made people global authors, transmitters and broadcasters of data.

With users being different levels of maturity in terms of Internet, it was bound to happen that people would misuse the facility of computer systems for the purposes of transmitting illegitimate & malicious content which has been prepared with vested interests to cause harm in the society.

A study by Oxford University has warned India of a fake-news epidemic as elections approach. The background behind such an epidemic is indeed very fertile. India's General Elections are slated to take place in the mid of 2019. We are currently seeing a political environment where parties are doing all things possible to gather support for themselves. Consequently, we are beginning to find that all kinds of content to be distributed as genuine content without any prior verification.

The scenario, where India has seen a couple of dozen deaths caused by lynchings due to rumours on WhatsApp, is likely to see more disastrous ramifications of this. Thus, it is very important for the Government to start taking cogent steps in the direction of enforcing discipline to prevent fake news, amongst various activities of service providers.

When one looks at the legal position in India, one finds that the legal frameworks are in place for the Government to take action. All activities pertaining to use of computers, net-

works, resources and communication devices and also data and information in the electronic form are governed under the IT Act, 2000. The 2008 amendments to the Act came up with a new concept of an "intermediary".

It is a broad concept that includes all legal entities, who, on behalf of other persons, receive, store or transmit any particular electronic records or provide services with respect to that record and includes Network Service Providers, Internet Service Providers, Web Hosting Service Providers, Search Engines, Online Payment Sites, Online-Auction Sites, Online Market Places and Cyber Cafes. Hence, all of the OTT applications and social media are intermediaries within the meaning of Section 21(w) of the IT Act.

Once, they become intermediaries, the law mandates them to exercise due diligence while discharging their obligations under the law. Various parameters of due diligence have been defined under the law. The law provides an exit route for an intermediary from potential legal liability as much that if the intermediary exercises requisite due diligence, it could be exempted from exposure of potential legal consequences, both civil and criminal under the Act.

Such an approach is going to put a responsibility on intermediaries so

The Government has notified the IT Rules, 2011 under which various parameters pertaining to due diligence have been defined which are relevant from the perspective of fake news. It is the right time that the Government has to come up with new guidelines and legal frameworks to regulate dissemination and publication of fake news. The Government has the power under Section 87 of the Act to come up with these guidelines. These guidelines need to specifically stipulate the various rights, duties and responsibilities of various stakeholders in preventing the dissemination of fake news. The previous experience of intermediaries having grievance officers and the grievances of affected persons to be completed within 30 days, was a failed experience.

With the onslaught of fake news, the Government needs to come up with stringent parameters that once any instance of fake news publication or transmission is identified then at once the same needs to be reported to the concerned intermediary. The intermediary should be under a legal duty to instantaneously block the transmission and dissemination of the same within two to four hours.

The publication and dissemination of fake news to be made a serious crime punishable with seven years imprisonment and fine. Not only does India need to come up with stringent provisions restricting the publication of also come up with appropriate enforcement of such provisions.

that they can't be mere spectators. Intermediaries have been extensively misinterpreting the judgment of the Supreme Court and have been adopting the role of a mere spectator. Just to reiterate, Shreyas Singhal judgment mandated the service providers not to act on their own and only act once they are notified by the Governmental agency or by an order of a competent jurisdiction.

The misinterpretation of the judgment has complicated the scenario. Hence, it is all the more necessary that the Government needs to come up with strict guidelines mandating all intermediaries to follow the same.

India is behind other countries like Malaysia who earlier had come up with a legislation on fake news. We require a dedicated legislation and stringent legal provisions on fake news with the amendment to IT Act, 2000 and rules and regulations to fight this menace effectively and efficaciously.

The publication and dissemination of fake news to be made a serious crime punishable with seven years imprisonment and fine. Not only does India need to come up with stringent provisions restricting the publication of also come up with appropriate enforcement of such provisions.



LAWFULLY GAY

SEPTEMBER 6, 2018 will always remain as one of the most significant date in the history of LGBTQ rights. The world's largest democracy finally decriminalised the sexual act between two consenting adults. It is not just about the LGBTQ movement in India but an important step and a sign of hope for millions more living under repressive laws in different parts of the world, largely made possible thanks to regressive religious arguments supported by distortion of history and science.

Of course we are still a long way from having equal rights as every other citizen of this country. Many more battles have to be fought on various levels, social, political, legal and most importantly, the mind space.

On September 6, I was kind of trying not to think, felt numb with anticipation. The shock and hurt caused due to the Supreme Court Verdict of 2013 against the 2009 Delhi High Court ruling on IPC 377 had still not healed. There was a time that I started to believe that it would not happen in my lifetime. The 2013 verdict has disempowered me not only at a personal level but as a filmmaker too.

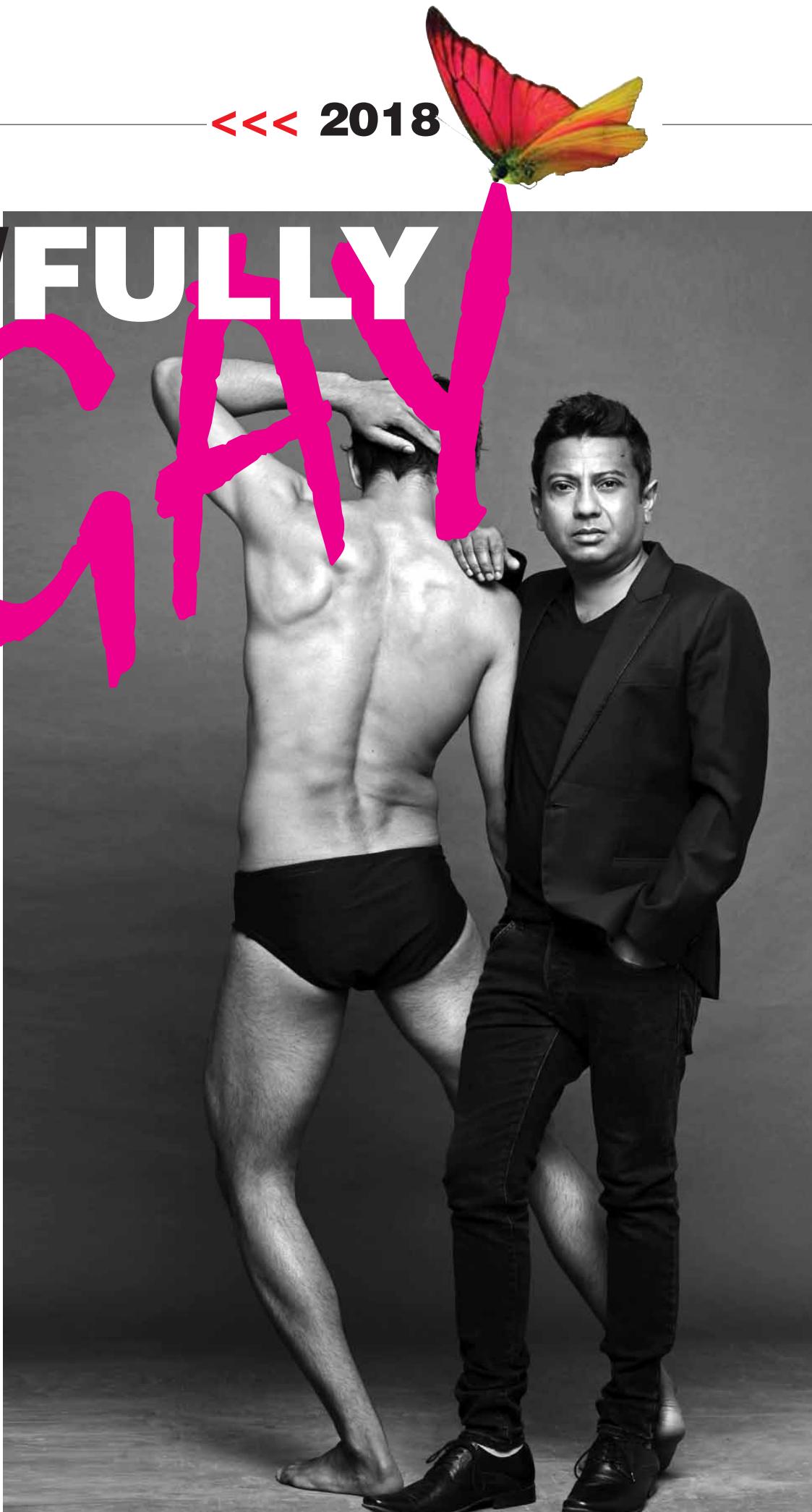
I could not fight and defend my film when some members of the screening committee of the CBFC Board in 2017 said that I was sending across a wrong message to youngsters that being gay was normal through my film. What haunts me still is the audacity of one of the members looking at me, someone who has been open all my life and saying "but you have showed 'them' as normal."

Now I feel empowered as a filmmaker to be able to fight discrimination. A gay kiss is as normal and cannot be the reason for a film being certified as adults only. I feel empowered as a filmmaker to once again start trying to tell the stories I want to, the untold stories from the large spectrum of the LGBTQI lives.

I have been doing a lot of talks at corporates about inclusion and feel sad that I do not see that effort in my own industry to recognise and act on the void of LGBTQI narratives, or recognize the people who have been working to use this medium to spread the message of acceptance. Somehow, we have never owned up to it that our industry has very often than not promoted stereotypes and harmed not only the perception of the LGBTQI community but also women. I hope this changes, and changes fast.

I feel empowered personally that I have the same rights to desire, love and express myself sexually as any other citizen of the country. My expression of desire is no longer criminalised, no longer shamed. This judgment is going to give courage to so many people to slowly come to respect their identity and lead honest lives. Shame has very often been the reason for many to lead a dishonest life of a heterosexual marriage. This dishonesty not only hurts them but their unsuspecting spouse.

With homosexuality being decriminalised, it empowers various NGOs working in this space to legally and more openly spread the message of health, rights and acceptance. Hopefully media and cinema, too, will play their role. Property rights, insurance, health



72 other countries and territories worldwide continue to criminalise same-sex relationships, including 45 in which sexual relationships between women are outlawed

care, adoption rights are many of the other concerns.

Sometimes, when people start talking of marriage rights, I question, do we really need to appropriate everything that a hetero normative patriarchal society perpetuated into our space? But then why should my views deny the rights to marriage to many who find beauty in the act, the symbol? Sometimes I feel the need to get married just to prove a point. To say 'we are.'

Today, what matters most is to collectively work towards a more inclusive society. For that it's important how children are trained to recognise the importance of not only accepting but also celebrating diversity. To use the very tools of since and history that has been used to discriminate and humiliate. We as a culture have the good fortune to be able to look back at our own glorious history, a history that celebrated diversity. That celebrated desire and sex as a form of art and science, not of shame.

We need to educate our children by

telling them the narratives we always excluded from our curriculum. That homosexuality is prevalent in various animal and plant kingdom and that it is a part of nature. Just like food is not only for survival, sex is not only about procreation. For those who misuse religion to justify atrocities against anyone who does not fit their scheme of things, to impress upon them that religion was formed to serve humanity and not the other way round, and it cannot be something we cannot question.

Like life, this too needs to change, evolve and be a part of the process of a kinder world, rather than that continues to dehumanise and destroy and perpetuate hate.

But as of now this year is to celebrate the right to desire. I have told myself that I will no longer go through the agony of being in a relationship with someone who can't be open and respect it. I want to walk hand in hand with someone I love and as Tagore would have said, "with our heads held high."

UNSHACKLED



UNDERLINING THE SUPREMACY OF CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY OVER SOCIETAL MORALITY, THE SUPREME COURT HAD SCRAPPED A 158-YEAR-OLD BRITISH-ERA LAW THAT BANNED SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSENTING ADULTS IN PRIVATE AND PUNISHED THEM WITH A JAIL TERM FOR LIFE OR UP TO 10 YEARS

With the scrapping of Section 377, India joins Vatican City (1890), the US (2003), Fiji (2010), Nepal (2007), Seychelles (2018) and Canada (1969) to decriminalise homosexuality. It has never been illegal in countries like Indonesia, North Korea, South Korea, Poland, Taiwan and even Vietnam



ACCORDING TO NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU DATA, BETWEEN 2014 AND 2016, THERE WERE 4,690 CASES OF PERSONS BEING BOOKED UNDER SECTION 377, A LAW ENACTED IN 1861 THAT CRIMINALISED SEXUAL ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE ORDER OF NATURE AND ENDED UP BEING APPLIED EVEN TO CONSENSUAL HOMOSEXUAL SEX BETWEEN ADULTS. ADJUSTING FOR THE TOTAL POPULATION OF A STATE, DELHI TOPPED WITH A RATE OF 0.8 CASES REGISTERED UNDER SECTION 377 PER 1 LAKH. IT WAS FOLLOWED BY KERALA, UP, HARYANA AND PUNJAB.

VOX POP

FIGHT CONTINUES FOR OUR RIGHTS

The scrapping of Section 377 is the beginning of a new journey for the LGBTQ community in India. This verdict comes after sustained advocacy for over 18 years on the issue. At long last, the law does not criminalise consensual sexual acts between adults, occurring in private. The LGBTQ Indians can finally enjoy equality before the law, freedom of expression, personal autonomy and right to dignity as expressed in Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India. It is now time to gear up for our fight towards further rights including legal recognition, marriage rights, employment rights, anti-discrimination laws, adoption and other legal rights which have been historically denied to us.

— Ashok Row Kavi, founder-chairperson, Humsafar Trust

SENSITISE MASSES FOR ACCEPTANCE

The society needs to understand that LGBTQ are just people with different sexual orientation or gender identity. There is nothing different about them. One's identity is not just being gay or lesbian or bisexual. One's identity is one's personality, nature and the kind of work we do. We are hoping to get social acceptance at a larger level. This will give confidence to the families to support their children. We need to understand that same-sex has been part



of India for centuries. It is not a western import. It is as natural as anything else. That is the change we would like to see in the people. We should talk to religious groups, Government officials, doctors, All of them have to be sensitised. Youth's minds are open to imbibe new ideas. I have also been a part of a group — Swikaar — which supports and connects parents in accepting their homosexual child. Children feel more confident to reach out and talk to other parents. Being gay or lesbian is not a disease

— Filmmaker Sridhar Rangayan

AWARENESS ON SAFE SEX

I've been working with Lakshay Trust, the first organisation which started working with transgenders and gays in Gujarat. We have been contacted by the Government for HIV prevention and when our workers would go to distribute contraceptives for safe sex practices, they would be harassed by the police and tortured on grounds that we were violating Section 377. So this kind of misuse will stop and scrapping this law is definitely going to help us to fight HIV. It has also been notified by the Health Ministry that Section 377 has been an impediment to HIV control. We have to work towards implementing this judgment so that it reaches to the masses. For this, we need the support from the Government and other stakeholders to ensure equal rights and zero discrimination. We need to do advocacy at all levels and create more and more allies to get the support and acceptance from people who are not from the community.

— Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil, an LGBT activist



NO MORE BLACKMAILING LGBTQ PEOPLE

People should have liberties. If two men and/or women want to live together they should be allowed. More freedom should be given. For a country to progress, it is necessary for the society to progress. We must learn something from the scrapping of Section 377. We must move beyond archaic thinking. And the good is that now LGBTQ people will not be blackmailed by unscrupulous elements

— Social activist and advocate Ashok Agarwal

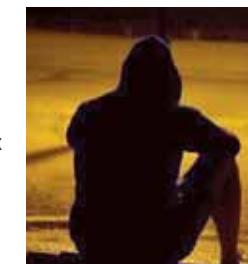
SOCIETY NEEDS TO CHANGE MINDSET

First, Section 377 was used to criminalise the expression of one's sexuality and personality because there was no distinction between consensual and non-consensual. This is gone. Second, because of this, two people of the same sex engaging in an intimate act have the same right as heterosexual people. The LGBTQ community faced blackmail, violence and extortion. This happened to them every day and they couldn't report it. If they did, the police would label them criminals. Now, the community can report a crime against it and seek justice. Third, the court says that LGBTQs are entitled to a full spectrum of rights. This is very powerful. It will mean that LGBTQ people can enjoy all rights like other citizens in every sphere, work or education. No discrimination will be tolerated. This is the reason why the SC has urged the society to change its mindset and standing up in support and this cause

— Tripti Tandon, lawyer with Lawyers Collective

CRISIS CALLS

Between 2016–2018, Humsafar Trust's crisis response team attended to 83 crises cases in Mumbai out of which, six cases involved an adult, homosexual male being blackmailed by the police under the fear of Section 377, IPC. In 12 cases, adult, homosexual males were threatened of a false accusation under Section 377, IPC and victims of extortion by ordinary persons, sometimes up to ₹1,00,000.



An online survey conducted by HST involving gay men and transgender persons revealed that around 57 per cent had been subject to the fear and misuse of law under Section 377, IPC at least once in their lifetime in varying degrees, with 37 per cent having experienced victimisation within the last 12 months.

Crisis data reports by HST found 52 independent instances where LGBTQ persons have faced harassment and discrimination in workplace and healthcare settings because of their identity but none of these individuals sought or could seek legal recourse.

In 2016, HST's study titled "Understanding the Impact of the Supreme Court Judgment on Section 377 on LGBTQ Communities" revealed two in five LGBTQ persons had faced blackmail or know someone who has been a victim of blackmail since the Supreme Court's decision to decriminalise homosexuality.

Around 59 per cent of transwomen experienced violence.

Between 2017 and 2018, the Humsafar Trust, through its LBT support group Umang, handled four cases of lesbian couples facing harassment from the police and their families for wanting to be in a same sex relationship.

HETEROSEXUALS ONLY

A 2016 survey by the Mission for Indian Gay and Lesbian Empowerment revealed one in five LGBT employees were discriminated against at the workplace. Such discrimination has economic costs. A 2014 World Bank report said India loses \$31 billion due to stigma.