

**NATION 5**  
FADNAVIS TO EXPAND  
MAHA CABINET

**MONEY 6**  
DON'T REGULATE US FOR  
THE SAKE OF IT: PICHAI

**WORLD 7**  
TRUMP BLAMES IRAN FOR TANKER  
ATTACKS BUT CALLS FOR TALKS

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**USUALSUSPECTS**  
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

### MPs must respect popular mandate to let House run

An election campaign in India is a very long and exhausting affair. Although the formal campaign began much later, the past six months of 2019 has been preoccupied with the people's ultimate verdict. Now that the voters have spoken and given Narendra Modi's Government an unambiguous verdict to govern India for the next five years, it may be time to take a step back, stop the slugfest and devote our attention to the more pressing task of governance.

This week, following the oath-taking by the elected members of the Lok Sabha and the President of India's address to the joint session of Parliament, normal business is expected to resume. The previous session of Parliament was exceptionally acrimonious, with the Opposition doing its utmost to stall both the Budget and the Lok Sabha Bill. The Budget was limited because the Government had a clear majority. However, it succeeded in completely disrupting proceedings in the Rajya Sabha so much so that neither the debate on the President's address nor any discussion on the Interim Budget could be held. As for legislation, apart from a stray Bill on Leprosy, the Opposition did not allow any other Bill to be moved. For all practical purposes, except for Money Bills, Parliament has been dysfunctional since the end of 2018.

The list of Bills passed in the Lok Sabha but failed to be either discussed or voted upon in 2019 in the Rajya Sabha is very long: they total up to 33. They include controversial legislation such as the Triple Talaq Bill and the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. But they also include relatively non-contentious legislation such as Indian Medical Council Bill, the Extension of Municipalities Bill, the Seeds Bill, the Pesticides Management Bill, the Archaeological Monuments Bill and the Motor Vehicles Bill. At least three of the Bills had even been referred to Select Committees that had submitted their reports. To reintroduce these Bills will call for the entire process to be repeated in the Lok Sabha and then brought to the Rajya Sabha.

At one level, the environment for transacting normal parliamentary business looks encouraging. The BJP is of course quite buoyant after its electoral success. Simultaneously, the Congress, the largest Opposition party — which, however, narrowly missed its fourth consecutive number of Lok Sabha seats to get its leader formally recognised as Leader of Opposition — is dispirited and demoralised after an election it hoped to do much better in. As of now, the party hasn't chosen its new leader and there is strategic uncertainty in its ranks. Likewise, the regional parties in north India suffer from the same dispirited mood because of the twists and turns in local politics. Its closest numbers to make a mark in the Lok Sabha. However, in the smaller Rajya Sabha, it has the requisite lung power to disrupt proceedings. It may be recalled that on different occasions in the previous session, a small clutch of AIADMK and TDP members had successfully disrupted proceedings for over a week.

Although I would like to be proved wrong, it is my belief that the TMC is unlikely to play the role of a constructive and responsible Opposition in the Upper House. Its leader, Mamata Banerjee is in a belligerent mood and this is likely to impact the behaviour of its MPs in the Rajya Sabha. Symbolic protests and fiery speeches are a normal feature of parliamentary performance and it would be legitimate for the Opposition to proceed along that route. The more problematic issue is disruption. How should the Chairman or Deputy Chairman respond to the provocations?

In the Westminster tradition, the Speaker's command is sacrosanct and unruly behaviour is viewed as a horrifying and unacceptable aberration. Unfortunately, over the years, willfully disobeying the chair has become the norm and led to the breakdown of the consensus that should, ideally, surround the workings of Parliament. The temporary suspension of disruptive MPs is far from an injecting good sense, has been seen as additional provocation and has worsened matters.

This situation cannot continue indefinitely. The paralysis of Parliament will erode popular faith in democracy and encourage governments to try and bypass Parliament as much as possible. Political sparring is fine but a dysfunctional democracy is completely unacceptable. It is to be hoped that the presiding officers of both Houses and the Government will take the initiative to address the larger questions of dysfunctionality that gripped Parliament in the first half of 2019. The voters did their job and reposed faith in democracy as the most effective instrument of decision-making. Now it is for the MPs to live up to the popular faith. The alternatives are truly horrifying.

India needs more parliamentary time and more work for its MPs. But for that to happen, faith in parliamentary rules and conventions have to be immediately restored. The quality of Indian democracy is at stake, as is effective governance.

# Doctors reject parley offer at CM office

## Mamata says ready to fulfil demands, asks them to resume duty, but says no ESMA yet

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as the striking junior doctors defied Mamata Banerjee for the second time on Saturday turning down her offer for talks, the Bengal Chief Minister swore by her "patience" saying like the other Bengal Government she would let the legal means to invoke the coercive Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) but had thus far desisted from taking the extreme step on humanitarian grounds.

"The Government is showing patience, sympathy for the doctors but now it is time for them to act and resume duty. We have conceded to all the demands that the doctors had made," she said, wondering why the doctors refused to meet her at the State Secretariat.

In Kolkata, a representative of the striking doctors said, "This is an issue relating to thousands of doctors who are being attacked every day. The Government is calling a few of them to hold closed-door meeting. We are not ready to accept that. We want the CM to come here at the NRS Hospital and see for herself the condition we work in and give assurances in public to rectify them."

"We are eagerly waiting to start our duty but from the Chief Minister's side there is no such honest initiative to find a solution of the ongoing problem," a spokesperson of the joint forum of junior doctors told reporters.

Meanwhile, after giving a 48-hour ultimatum to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, doctors of Delhi's AIIMS said they have formally work for now but they will go on an indefinite strike if no action is taken against the attack on the doctor in Kolkata. "We condemn the hostile and unapologetic attitude of the Government of West Bengal. Our protest at AIIMS, New Delhi continues until justice is meted out," they said.

In what the striking doctors of NRS Hospital and Hospital said a "veiled threat", the Chief Minister said, "Though we have Supreme Court verdict in our favour and though we have previous instances of other State Governments invoking the ESMA, we have desisted from taking such strong actions as we do not want to take any coercive actions on the young boys and girls who are like our own children."

Mamata's renewed appeal to doctors to resume duty came close on the heels of a letter from West Bengal Governor KN Tripathi, who directed the Government to take adequate security measures for the doctors and restore normalcy in the health sector.

Referring to the earlier instances of ESMA being invoked, Mamata said, "In 2008/2009 the Narendra Modi Government of Gujarat had enforced ESMA and even arrested 150 doctors while in 2015 the AAP Government in Delhi too invoked the same Act. Again the BJP Governments of Rajasthan and Haryana implemented ESMA and the Government of Jammu & Kashmir too did the same thing. But here our Government is taking a soft approach towards the young doctors who have bright future ahead of them."

She said, "We believe in humanism and expect the doctors to do the same. They are into a noble profession," and reminded, "despite they heckled and abused me at the SSKM Hospital where I had gone to see whether the Emergency was functioning or not I did not take any action. Any other person in my place would have taken strong action as they did in the other States earlier."

The doctors' campaign earlier spread like wildfire after on-duty junior doctors of NRS Medical College were on Monday night brutally beaten up by hoodlums following the death of a patient.

Even as the NRSCH doctors struck work demanding adequate security measures and arrest of all the 200 people who had attacked the hospital, the protest spread and their colleagues from other hospitals and medical colleges struck work.



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee interacts with the media after the ongoing doctors' strike, in Howrah on Saturday

- The Government is showing patience, sympathy for the doctors, now it is time for them to act and resume duty, Mamata said wondering why the doctors refused to meet her at the Secretariat
- A representative of the striking doctors in Kolkata said, "We are not ready to accept closed-door meeting offer. We want the CM to come here at the NRS Hospital and see for herself the condition we work in and give assurances in public to rectify them"
- AIIMS in Delhi said the doctors have resumed work but they will go on an indefinite strike if no action is taken against the attack on the doctor in Kolkata

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### Govt asks States to enact law to prevent assault on doctors

#### Bengal Govt asked to report on strike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday sought a report "urgently" from the West Bengal Government on the ongoing strike by the doctors even as it wrote to all State Governments to consider enacting a specific legislation for protecting the medical professionals from any form of violence. The Centre also asked all the States to take strict action against any person who assaults doctors.

In its advisory to the West Bengal Government, the MHA said it has received a number of representations from doctors, healthcare professionals and medical associations from different parts of the country for their security in view of the ongoing strike by doctors. "It is requested that a detailed report be sent urgently to the representations and ongoing strike by the doctors," it said.

For his part Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan wrote to all the Chief Ministers regarding the law to protect the doctors and the need to take strict action against any person who assaults doctors.

Along with his letter, Harsh Vardhan attached a copy of the Draft Act provided by IMA — the Protection of Medical Service Persons and Medical Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss of Property) Act, 2017.



Junior doctors protest against an attack on an intern doctor, at Nii Ratan Sircar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on Saturday

While violence marred the recently-concluded Lok Sabha elections in the State, in the post-poll scenario too the TMC and the BJP, which has emerged as the principal law enforcement machinery to investigate the incidents of violence to bring the culprits to book as also the measures taken to contain and curb violence," the MHA's advisory to the Trinamool Congress Government said.

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# Farmers' number shrinking fast in State

## Despite several pro-cultivator schemes Number of landless on rise

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as the Odisha Government is trying to help farmers with several schemes, their numbers are shrinking fast and that of the landless are on the rise, reveals a latest report on the major constraints in the agriculture sector in the State.

The State Government has made an analysis of the causes of a lower growth in the primary sector, which is found to be a major factor in eroding the base of cultivators.

The number of cultivators having their own lands is now 41 lakh, which was 42 lakh earlier. Between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, one lakh farmers have lost their lands. The latest estimate shows that because of an increasing fragmentation of lands, the number of cultivators is falling and that of landless agriculture labourers number is rising. The numbers of landless or



labourers has increased to 67 lakh from 50 lakh during the 10-year period. The increasing pressure on land has led to further fragmentation, as a result of which average land holding size has decreased to 0.95 hectare recently as against 1.89 hectares in the 1970s. And moreover, the impact of natural calamities has added to the expansion of

lower than the State average. For example, a farmer in Jharsuguda district earned five times more than his counterpart in Keonjhar district.

Low fertiliser consumption is another major constraint. Odisha consumes 56.8 kg per hectare whereas the all-India average is 123 kg. Punjab consumes 198 kg of fertiliser per hectare.

Besides, a low rate of seed replacement is another constraint agriculture in Odisha is facing. The Seed Replacement Ratio (SRR) is much lower than a desired level of 33 per cent.

A high volatile agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is another major cause of concern for the State. Between 2000-01 and 2016-17, the State's agr. GDP grew at an average annual rate of 4.5 per cent compared to the country's average of 3.1 per cent.

The analysis report reveals that Odisha's growth is more

volatile than all-India; and that is due to impact of weather and climate variability on agriculture growth in the State.

The State is facing natural disasters almost every year; and the latest Super Storm Fani has wreaked havoc on agriculture in general and horticulture in particular.

Moreover, there is a growing gap between consumption and production in the agriculture sector in the State. While the State's economy is growing fast and the consumption basket is changing. Consumers are increasingly demanding more pulses, vegetables, dairy, eggs, fish and meat.

The consumption pattern should drive the production pattern, which is not happening in the State.

Orientation to produce more rice and less vegetables and high-value crops are forcing the State to import eggs, pulses, meat and other products from neighbouring States.

# 15% feel caring elderly people a severe burden

## HelpAge releases survey report conducted in 20 cities

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 29 per cent caregivers in family, mainly son, daughter-in-law, daughter, son-in-law, felt the burden of caregiving of an elder was moderate to severe, while 15 per cent felt a severe burden of caregiving regarding the elderly.

25.7 per cent caregivers felt fatigue and frustration result in aggressive behaviour towards their older relative while 35 per cent of the caregivers never felt happy looking after the elderly.

The HelpAge India released a nationwide report on Friday here on 'Elder Abuse in India: Role of Family in Caregiving: Challenges and Responses' on the eve of UN recognised 'World Elder Abuse Awareness Day' which falls on June 15.

The report focuses on the generation aged 30 to 50 years,



covering 20 Tier 1 and 2 cities which has to look after their elderly parents and their own children. It is also the generation which has been the primary abuser as highlighted in past surveys by HelpAge.

The report further reveals 29 per cent caregivers thought it better to put the elder in an old age home by paying money and visit them. Despite the burden felt, many adults fulfilled their duties of care. For example, up to 32 per cent of the caregivers reported to be extending physical care to elderly for Activities of Daily Living (ADL) such as help/ assistance in changing clothes,

walking, eating, bathing, toileting etc. The percentage of women (primarily daughter-in-laws, and daughters) looking after the ADL and IADL activities of elders at home is far more than that of their male counterparts that is the son in most cases with up to 68 per cent daughters-in-law caregivers providing physical care to elders for Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) such as help in using telephone, shopping, preparing meals, housekeeping, washing clothes, transportation, taking medicine, as against up to 51 per cent sons.

## Illegal arms unit unearthed in K'mal 1 HELD, 2 GUNS SEIZED

PNS ■ PHULBANI

Police on Saturday unearthed an illegal gun-manufacturing factory in the district and arrested a person in this connection. The cops seized two guns and a huge quantity of materials used for manufacturing arms.

The arrestee was identified as Kuna Pradhan, a resident of Sriniketa village of the district. The clandestine unit was operating from a house located near a jungle at Dandima village under the Daringbadi police station in the Maoist-infested district.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team conducted a raid at the house and seized the guns and other materials.

But two associates of Kuna managed to give the police a slip. Raids were also at various locations to nab the two fugitives, police said.

## KENDRA SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS 'Yuva Pursakar' for Shishir, 'Bal' for Birendra

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Odisha's youth writer Shishir Behera and senior children literature Birendra Samantray have been selected to get the Kendra Sahitya Akademi's 'Yuva Purskar' and 'Bal Puraskar', respectively.

The names of Behera and Samantray have figured in the lists of 22 'Bal Puraskar' and 23 'Yuva Purskar' winners announced by the Akademi on Friday.

While Behera will be conferred the coveted award for his overall contribution to the child literature, Samantray has been chosen for the youth segment award for his review-based book 'Bimughda Ucharan: 'Youth Purskar' to aged 35.

In the Odia segment, Paramita Satpathy, Jayanti Rath and Kshirod Behera were



jurists for the 'Yuva Puraskar' and Arabinid Patnaik, Prafulla Kumar Tripathy and Dash Behur were in the 'Bal Puraskar' sectors committee.

The names were decided at the Akademi's executive council meeting held under chair-

## In Ganjam: Criminal hurt while planning to kill Sarpanch

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A notorious criminal sustained serious injuries in a bomb explosion while allegedly planning to kill a Sarpanch at Bantpali panchayat under the Digapahadi police station in Ganjam district on Friday night.

The criminal was identified as Chhertu Gouda. He was admitted to the MKGG Medical College Hospital here. The bomb exploded while Cheru along with his associates was planning for the murder of Bantpali Sarpanch at night.

While Cheru received grievous injuries to his right hand in the blast during the murder plot, his associates fled from the spot following the incident. A case has been registered in the connection. A team has been formed to nab the accused involved in the attempt to attack the Sarpanch, said police.

## In Koraput: Couple, daughter die as truck ploughs into house

PNS ■ KORAPUT

Three persons in a family were killed when a truck ploughed into their roadside house in the district while they were sleeping late on Friday night.

The deceased included a man, his wife and their eight-year-old daughter. The incident took place at Bhejapat village in Damanjodi tehsil of the district.

The couple along with their children including a son were sleeping at their house when a sand-laden truck rammed into the house killing the three on the spot. But the couple's 14-year-old son though injured had a narrow escape. The irate locals blocked the Damanjodi-Bhejapat road on Saturday by burning tyres demanding compensation to the kin of the deceased persons. PNS

## ENGG GRADUATE COMMITS SUICIDE IN BBSR

Bhubaneswar: A youth was found hanging from the ceiling of a rented house at Shree Vihar here on Saturday. He was an engineering graduate and identified as Bibhu Prasad Moharana, a resident of Charitnagar under the Hala police station in Cuttack district. After completing his studies, Bibhu was desperately searching for a job. Getting information, the Chandrasekharpur police reached the spot. They seized a suicide note from the room and sent the body to the postmortem.

CINE JOURNALIST RABI SWAIN PASSES AWAY Bhubaneswar: Film journalist and media coordinator Rabi Swain passed away on Saturday following prolonged illness. He was undergoing treatment at the Capital Hospital here. He was 65 is survived by his wife and a daughter.

TWO BROTHERS INJURED IN BEAR ATTACK IN ANGUL Angul: Two brothers were critically injured when they were attacked by a wild bear at Rengali village under Barkote block in Dogarh district on Saturday. Identified as Bhavana Nayak and Dara Nayak, they were admitted to a hospital at Pallahra in Angul district. They had gone outside to defecate in the morning. On the way, the bear came out from nowhere and attacked Dara. When Bhubana tried to save him, the animal pounced on him.

AIDS EXPRESSES SOLIDARITY WITH WB DOCTORS Cuttack: The All India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) Cuttack district committee has strongly supported the junior doctors' agitation across the country, including West Bengal. AIDSO Cuttack district secretary Binod Sethy has demanded stringent measures for the safety and security of doctors and request infrastructure development of medical colleges and hospitals across the country.

FAKIR MOHAN'S DEATH ANNIV OBSERVED AT PALLAHARA Pallahra: The 102nd death anniversary of legendary Odia writer Fakir Mohan Senapati, the then Dewan of Pallahara State, was observed by the Sub-Divisional Retired Government Employees' Association, Pallahara, on Friday. Association members along with lawyers garlanded the statue of Fakir Mohan at the premises of Bar Association. A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Association president Sadashiv Behera with former Health Director Dr Swapneswar Garmayak as chief guest and retired Principal Dr Kishor Ch Pradhan as chief speaker, who spoke on Fakir Mohan's life and works. Association vice-president Netaranda Mahalik, secretary Jhasketan Pradhan and members Jagabandhu Behera, Bhimsen Sahu and Binsan Ch Sahu were present. Mahalik offered a vote of thanks.

HINDALCO GETS LEADERSHIP AWARD FOR SUSTAINABILITY Bhubaneswar: The Aditya Birla Group Company Hindalco has bagged the Leadership Award for sustainability recently at the Frost and Sullivan and TERI Sustainability 4.0 Awards 2019 held at Mumbai. The senior officials have received the award from UN Environment in India Country Head Atul Bagai. Among others, Hindalco MCOE head Bibhu Mishra, Sandeep R Patil, Sudarsan Dutta, Raghavendra Rao, Ashish Sharma, K Venkatesh, K Kumavel and Rajan Kumar were present.

FBB STARTS 'WEEKENDS ARE TRYDAYS' Bhubaneswar: The FBB brings to you a very exciting offer, 'Weekends are Trydays from June 14. From this weekend onwards, every weekend will be celebrated as a Fashion Shopping Weekend at the FBB. The popular fashion brand will promote one item from their latest fashion collection and offer weekend exclusive discounts on the products. The FBB will have offers on several categories like joggers, ladies summer dresses and jeggings every weekend for both men and women.

## SCRIBE ASSAULT CASE Anubhar's bro files counter FIR

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Even as trouble is mounting for Kendrapada MP and film actor Anubhar Mohanty for his alleged assault on and harassment to a woman journalist, his younger brother Anuprash Mohanty has filed a counter complaint against the scribe, which the Purighat police station here on Saturday registered as an FIR.

A day after the police booked the MP under several sections of IPC, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) on Saturday held a demonstration in the city demanding immediate arrest of the MP. Burning effigies of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Anubhar Mohanty, the protesters threatened State-wide agitation if the latter is not arrested within 24 hours.

Following a written complaint by the woman journalist, police have registered a criminal case against the MP. His brother Anuprash, the MP's actor-wife Varsha Priyadarshini.

The scribe has alleged that the MP and his wife had physically attacked her using filthy language on Wednesday evening when she had visited their house to complain against Anuprash for stalking her.

While the police had ques-



tioned the journalist and her husband on Friday and recorded their statements under Section 161 of CrPC, the MP and his kin named in the FIR are yet to be questioned.

"Since the MP has already left for New Delhi, we have examined at least three witnesses in the counter case filed by the MP's brother," informed Purighat police station IIC Rashmi Ranjan Sabu.

## IN JODA Bar owner, cook injured in customers' attack

PNS ■ CHAMPIUA

Two customers attacked Vijaya Singh Gandhi and Lulu Naik owner and cook of Sony Singh Bar and Restaurant, Joda town, under Joda police limits on Thursday.

Before departing, they had come to payment counter where they had some argument with cook Naik over quality of food and were getting ready to attack him. At that time, when owner Vijaya who was present there, protested, the two in inebriated condition smashed a soda bottle and attacked both on their head.

Due to excess blood flowing, the duo had been sent to local Tata Steel hospital for treatment.

It is also alleged that the attackers had looted cash from the counter. The police are inquiring the matter.

## No Raja for deceased Tata staffer's kin

PNS ■ CHAMPIUA

Raja has no meaning for family members of a former employee, Mohanty Karua, of Tata Sponge company who are sitting in dilemma for fulfillment of their demand in front of the main gate of the factory for the last 29 days. In the meanwhile, while

Secretary of President of India has issued letter to Chief Secretary of Odisha to inquire into the matter and send by a report to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued notice to Collector, Keonjhar to submit action taken report (ATR).

Mohanty Karua had died in a mysterious situation on duty in the plant 15 years back.

## Rabi Mishra named RBI Exe Director

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has promoted Odisha-born Rabi N Mishra, who was the Principal Chief General Manager of the central bank's Risk Management Department, as its Executive Director (ED).

The post had been lying vacant after Rosemary Sebastian's retirement. As the ED, Mishra will look after the bank's risk management, supervisory and regulatory cadre within the RBI. The creation of the cadre was decided at the central board meeting held in Chennai on May 21, sources said.

Besides, Mishra will supervise other departments, including cooperative banks and the non-banking financial companies, the sources added.



# Roadside parking leads to U'kote traffic snarls

## RESIDENTS FACE TROUBLE

MONOHAR MOHANTY ■ UMARKOT

In the absence of provision for parking of vehicles in special buildings and complexes, vehicle parking by the road on the Umarmarkot-Nabarangpur State Highway has resulted in traffic mess in the town.

It is this indiscriminate parking of government buses, turned out to be a parking zone for auto rickshaws. Auto rickshaw drivers illegally park their vehicles here putting the common people in utter trouble.

The administration, a few days back, had put restrictions on the private operators to park their vehicles in the area. It has become a regular affair to find that the shop owners and the owners of auto rick-

shaws are coming down to pick up a fight. Though for the sake of parking separate spaces are available for them, the operators are hardly following the rules and parking their vehicles anywhere they want.

Mukesh Kumar Jain, a shop owner, said the local vendors have reported to the police several times about the space crunch being created due to the illegal parking, but in vain. What is shocking is

that these auto drivers pay to park for parking," said an auto driver. As many as 100 auto rickshaws are parked here on a daily basis.

The monthly income goes to the leader of the union, affirmed a member of the auto drivers' union.

However, though the illegal practice continues to irk common people, but no action has been taken so far by the police.

Rabi Nayak, who uses the route to go to office every day, said, "It is extremely risky to walk on the road where vehicles are speeding. The auto drivers should not park their vehicles on the footpath and old bus stand encroaching upon the public places."

Bhubaneswar: The Aditya Birla Group Company Hindalco has bagged the Leadership Award for sustainability recently at the Frost and Sullivan and TERI Sustainability 4.0 Awards 2019 held at Mumbai. The senior officials have received the award from UN Environment in India Country Head Atul Bagai. Among others, Hindalco MCOE head Bibhu Mishra, Sandeep R Patil, Sudarsan Dutta, Raghavendra Rao, Ashish Sharma, K Venkatesh, K Kumavel and Rajan Kumar were present.

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# Manmohan briefs Congress MPs ahead of Niti Aayog meeting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday held a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the Congress and allied parties ahead of the crucial Niti Aayog meeting. They discussed the proposed agenda of the Niti Aayog and issues of the Congress and its allies governed States.

Congress leaders — Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy and Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayansamy and Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel — attended the meeting at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh skipped the meeting due to his health reasons.

Among the issues discussed were injecting life back in water bodies, fresh efforts needed from the Centre in the agricultural sector and investment in the Forest Act to bring about change and prosperity in the lives of the tribals.

Kamal Nath said that the AICC that all the Chief Ministers were briefed by Manmohan Singh. He said that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures and the formation of the Government should suggest



Former PM Manmohan Singh with Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, Karnataka CM HD Kumaraswamy and Puducherry CM V Narayansamy during a meeting at AICC on Saturday

measures in view of the grave economic situation. Kamal Nath also said that the severe drought conditions are prevailing in large parts of the country, rivers have dried up and so contingency measures are needed. The CM said agricultural distress also needs to be addressed urgently, adding that all these issues will be taken up during the Governing Council meeting.

The fifth meeting of the Niti Aayog's Governing Council focused on issues like the drought situation, farm distress, rain water harvesting and preparedness for kharif crops. It was the first meeting of the governing council of Niti Aayog since the formation of the Modi 2.0 Government.

# CM Rupani meets Union Agriculture Minister, discusses farmers' issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday called on Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar to discuss issues relating to farmers' welfare such as the Kisan Kalyan Nishitha Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

A delegation led by Rupani, Gujarat Agriculture Minister R C Faldia, Chief Secretary JN Singh, Chief Principal Secretary to CM K Kailashnathan, Additional Chief Secretary (Agr) Sanjay Prasad and officers of the agriculture department met Tomar.

Union Minister of State for Agriculture Parshottambhai Rupala was also present at the meeting. According to a statement, the issue on pending claims of interest substitution of crop loan advance by banks of the state and extension of date of purchase of mustard in the Price Support Scheme were also discussed in the meeting.

It was decided in the meeting that the last date for purchase of mustard under the Price Support Scheme shall be extended up to June 30. The Government also decided to expedite payment of interest subsidy to the cooperative banks and nationalised banks so that farmers do not face any inconvenience, according to the statement.



The discussion also focused on measures being jointly undertaken by the Union and State Governments to increase agriculture productivity to improve farmer income as well as on strengthening measures for farmer welfare.

# Thiruvananthapuram airport's privatisation: Pinarayi meets PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and cited the State's reservation on the privatisation of Thiruvananthapuram international airport. Vijayan was meeting Modi for the first time after the latter assumed the Prime Minister's office for the second time following the BJP-led NDA's victory in the Lok Sabha polls. Vijayan is here to attend the Niti Aayog meeting.

During the brief meeting, attended by State PWD Minister G Sudhakaran and Chief Secretary Tom Jose, Vijayan submitted a memorandum citing various demands including further aid for rebuilding the flood-hit State.

Official sources said the Chief Minister requested the Centre to retain the airport in the public sector and not to hand over its management to any private company.

Kerala's concern over its reported exclusion from the priority list of the national highway development and the need to get more central assistance



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan during a meeting in New Delhi on Saturday

for various projects also figured in the discussion, which lasted for around 15 minutes, they added.

The Adani group had, in February, won the bid to operate five out of six airports, including the one at Thiruvananthapuram, proposed for privatisation by the Central Government.

Earlier appealed to the Centre to reconsider its decision to lease out Thiruvananthapuram aerodrome for operation, management and development under the public-private partnership (PPP).

"Without the co-operation of the State Government, no private company can develop

the airport properly," Vijayan told the state Assembly earlier this week.

In a letter to the prime minister in March, Vijayan had demanded that the airport's operation be handed over to the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport Ltd (TIAL) floated by the government-run Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC).

The airport was established in 1932 on 258.06 acres of land owned by the princely state of Travancore, of which the state is the successor. The 258.06 acres of land had been entered into the revenue records as Government land.

# Impasse over RaGa resignation holding Cong back

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The deadlock over the resignation of Rahul Gandhi as the Congress president following the Lok Sabha debacle is affecting the day-to-day functioning of the grand old party. In the last few days, all the important notifications, which were earlier issued by the approval of the Congress president, are being released stating 'by the approval of AICC'.

On Friday, the notification regarding the appointment of MLAs and MLCs to the Maharashtra Biennial Assembly was approved by the AICC and marked to party General Secretary in-charge of State Mallikarjun Kharge and State Unit Chief Ashok Chavan.

"All the orders which were issued within the jurisdiction of the party chief are now being



done at AICC office bearer level. This is for the first time the organisation is functioning on this mode," said an AICC source.

On the other hand, crisis is deepening within the organisation with AK Antony turning down an offer to be the party's interim president. Antony, a trusted man for the Gandhi family, has cited health issues as a reason for not taking up the job.

# Antony, a trusted man for the Gandhi family, has cited health issues as a reason for not taking up the job

Senior party leaders Ahmed Patel and Ghulam Nabi Azad, who have been tasked to look for a face outside the Gandhi family to lead the party, had asked Antony to take up the job. Antony informed Patel and Azad that he has full respect for the Gandhi family but could not accept the post. Antony also said that in the given circumstances, AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal too has declined to

accept the post of Working President offered to him citing his other role of strengthening the party.

Senior leaders are in tizzy as UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and daughter and General Secretary AICC Priyanka Gandhi have spoken their minds at a rally in Rae Bareilly recently against the party's system which led to the drubbing in the last two General Elections.

The search for the new leader was initiated after Rahul Gandhi's decision to resign from the party's top post, following the dismal performance in the recently-held general elections. Although the Congress Working Committee, the party's highest decision-making body, had rejected Rahul's resignation, he has remained steadfast on giving up the post.

# Govt needs to draft new Naxal policy: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday sought the Government to draft a new Naxal policy to deal with left-wing-extremism (LWE) in the backdrop of the recent attack on a police team in Jharkhand.

Dr Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister of the Congress-led government at the Centre had time and again described the LWE as one of the biggest threats to the National Security, even though incidents linked to Maoist violence did not see a let-up in 10 years of UPA regime.

Condemning the attack in the Naxalite-Kharsawan area near the Jharkhand-Bengal border on Friday in which five police personnel were killed in an ambush by Maoists, Congress spokesperson

Randeep Surjewala Surjewala said the act was highly condemnable.

"The cowardly face of Naxalism has been spreading in Jharkhand. The government of this country needs to draft fresh its policy to deal with naxalism," he tweeted.

Two assistant sub-inspectors and three constables came under attack while patrolling the Tirulidhi police station area of the district. The LWE in several states including Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Maharashtra had kept the police and para-military forces on their toes and even though many top Naxal leaders have been eliminated in the past and several others surrendered themselves before the authorities, the strikes from the underground groups

have continued to take many a lives of police and para-military personnel.

From 2005 to 2011, Congress had experimented with 'Salwa Judum' (peace march or purification hunt) which involved countering Maoists by providing armed training to tribals. The so-called experiment carried out by Congress leader Mahendra Karma later turned highly controversial with alleged forcible evacuation of tribals from their land and their shift to armed camps.

Human rights group criticized the move saying the 'Salwa Judum' has turned poor tribals more vulnerable to Maoist attacks rather securing them. Subsequently, the 'Salwa Judum' was declared illegal by the Supreme Court. Karma himself got killed in a Maoist

attack in 2013.

There has not been a marked change in Modi government's policy towards LWE with the former also seeing LWE as one of the biggest challenges to the National Security and insisting on 'zero tolerance' against it.

Development work across the LWE-impacted lands has not made speedy progress as Maoist repeatedly thwart it by perpetuating violence and try foiling the government attempts to bring tribals into the 'mainstream'. The corruption in developmental projects initiated by the central and state governments and alleged 'extortion racket' by LWE groups have further complicated the scenario which gets time and again alive with the burst of gun from both sides.

# By-elections for 6 vacant Rajya Sabha seats on July 5

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The by-elections to six vacant Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar, Odisha and Gujarat will be held on July 5, the Election Commission said on Saturday.

Six senior leaders from the Rajya Sabha, including Amit Shah, Ravindra Shankar Prasad and Smriti Irani have moved to the Lok Sabha with their recent election to the lower house, thus necessitating election for the said seats for the Upper House.

Irani's seat is the second from Gujarat apart from Amit Shah's which needs to be filled. Irani had defeated Congress president Rahul Gandhi from Amethi.

Of the six seats, two are from Gujarat, one from Bihar (Prasad) and three from Odisha—Achyutananda Samanta, Pratap Kishor Deb and Soumya Ranjan Patnaik (all from Biju Janta Dal). Congress had demanded

that election to the two seats of RS from Gujarat be conducted on the same time as resignations of the two BJP leaders from the Upper House on different dates sought to create conditions that election to the two seats are conducted on different dates thereby giving an advantage to the ruling BJP.

Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi, at a press conference on June 13, said they came to know that there could be a bid to hold elections for the two seats separately. The party will approach the Election Commission EC with its demand of holding elections for the two Rajya Sabha seats in Gujarat together, he said. Singhvi pointed out that simultaneous voting can bring one of the two Rajya Sabha seats to Congress. He alluded without naming the party that election to the two seats on different dates could help BJP pocket both the seats.

# J&K Bank now under RTI, CVC

Srinagar: The Jammu & Kashmir Bank will now come under the purview of Right to Information Act and Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) guidelines, an official spokesman said on Saturday.

He said the decision was taken by the Board of Directors of the Jammu & Kashmir Bank. The move will ensure greater transparency and accountability, the spokesman said here.

"J&K Bank Board of Directors today (Saturday) decided to bring the bank under the purview of CVC guidelines & J&K RTI Act-2009 to ensure greater transparency & accountability," he said.

On June 11, Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam had said the bank has no choice but to be under RTI as it is a government-owned bank.

"It is registered under the companies act as a government company. By the end of June, the bank will be brought under the RTI and CVC guidelines," he said. The decision comes after the bank was removed as the Chairman of the J&K Bank for alleged corruption, nepotism and favouritism.

# Vayu likely to hit Gujarat coast on Monday: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said that cyclonic storm 'Vayu' which is weak and, is likely to reach coastal Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat as a depression by Monday evening. In its latest update, the IMD said that 'Vayu' was spotted at 355 kms west-southwest of Porbandar coast, 380 kms west Veraval and 470 kms west of Diu.

The Met said that the cyclone is likely to be accompanied by strong winds speed of the order of 40-50 kmph gusting to 60 kmph over the sea coast. "The system is very likely to move westwards during next 24 to 36 hours with gradual weakening and recurve northwards thereafter and reach coastal Saurashtra and Kutch as a depression by the



evening of June 17" it further said. The sea conditions are likely to remain rough till June 17. In a fresh warning, the IMD said that a fresh warning to fishermen not to venture into rough seas and heavy rain activity is set to decrease along the coast and the interior parts of Gujarat, while the western parts of the state will continue to receive light to moderate rains. "Cyclone Vayu, which was to

make landfall on Thursday near the Gujarat coast, changed course on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday. It skirted the Gujarat coast affecting Gir-Somnath, Diu, Junagadh and Porbandar. On Friday, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has stated that Vayu is likely to recurve and come close to Gujarat coast.

Earlier, the cyclone, while not making landfall in Gujarat, brought moderate-to-heavy rain to 114 tehsils, the highest rainfall of 6.5 inches (160mm) being recorded in Talala tehsil of Gir-Somnath district since Thursday, a Met department release said.



Indian Air Force cadets march during their graduation parade at the Air Force Academy in Dundigudi on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Saturday

# Western Railway withdraws proposal for head, foot massages on trains

New Delhi/Mumbai: Mumbai-headquartered Western Railway on Saturday said it had withdrawn a proposal to provide head and foot massages to passengers on board 39 trains originating from Indore in Madhya Pradesh.

Indore is part of Ratlam division of Western Railway. In a press release issued here, WR Chief Spokesperson Ravindra Bhaskar said, "The proposal for introduction of head and/or foot massage services to be provided in the trains originating from Indore station was initiated by Ratlam Division of Western Railway."

"As soon as this proposal

the proposal.

"What arrangements will be made to provide this facility given that the service would throw up some questions regarding the safety and comfort of passengers, especially that of women passengers," Mahajan had asked.

On June 10, Lalwani had written a letter to the Railway Ministry on the issue, saying it would not be appropriate to provide massage to passengers on board, especially in the presence of women.

passengers medical aid, doctors are important for the railways not these standaleness services in my opinion," Lalwani had written.

After Lalwani's letter, Ratlam Railway Divisional Manager N Sunkar had clarified that the service would not include a 'full body massage' but only head and foot massages.

"The railways will ensure that the facility will not make passengers feel uncomfortable, he had claimed. According to railway officials, the proposal was part of an initiative to garner revenue from non-fare segments. PTI

# Fadnavis Cabinet expansion today

To induct 8-10 new Ministers • Erstwhile Cong leader, LOP Vikhe-Patil, Ex-NCP leader Kshirsagar set to join Cabinet • CM may drop tainted HSG Min Prakash Mehta from Cabinet

By RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Ahead of the Monsoon Session of the Maharashtra Legislature beginning on Monday, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will expand his Ministry on Sunday by inducting eight to ten new Ministers, including what is probably the erstwhile senior Congress leader and leader of the Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil and erstwhile NCP leader and now the State Sena leader Jaydutta Kshirsagar, into his Cabinet.

Among other things, Fadnavis may drop from his Cabinet State Housing Minister Prakash Mehta of the BJP, who is facing allegations of irregularities in the permissions given by a slum rehabilitation authority (SRA) project at MP Mills compound at Tardeo in South Mumbai. Lokayukta M. L.

Tahalyani, who looked into the allegations against the minister, has reportedly passed strictures against Mehta.

Sunday's expansion, which has been scheduled at 11 am at Raj Bhavan on Sunday, will be the last Cabinet restructuring that Fadnavis will undertake ahead of the State Assembly polls to be held in October this year.

Following the exit of State Food, Civil Supplies and Legislative affairs minister who resigned last week from the State Cabinet in the wake of his election to the Lok Sabha, the number of vacancies in the State Cabinet has gone up to seven.

The current strength of the Maharashtra Cabinet is 36, seven short of the stipulated 43 Ministers — a number that accounts for 15 per cent of 288 members in the State Assembly. Fadnavis may drop from his Cabinet at least three ministers,



including Mehta, taking the number of vacancies to be filled to 10.

Fadnavis, who is expanding the State Cabinet after a gap of three years, may accommodate in his Cabinet "two or three" MLAs from the Shiv Sena, which is a constituent of the BJP-led saffron alliance Government.

Informed sources in the BJP said that Radhakrishna Vikhe-Patil, whose son Sujay quit the Congress in March this year and won the Lok Sabha polls by a margin of 2.81 lakh votes from Ahmednagar constituency on a BJP ticket, would join the Devendra Fadnavis Cabinet in Sunday's Cabinet expansion.

Similarly, influential leader from Maharashtra region Jaydutta Kshirsagar who quit the NCP and joined the ruling Shiv Sena on May 22, will be

inducted into the State Cabinet.

Three other names that are making round as contenders for ministerial berths are BJP's Mumbai unit president Ashish Shelar, Sanjay and Anil Bonde, both from the BJP and Avinash Mahatekar of the RPI (Athavale).

Fadnavis had met BJP's national president and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday to seek clearance for his Cabinet expansion schedule. He also met Shiv Sena leader Prakash Mehta on July 8, 2016, by inducting 10 more ministers and promoting one minister from State Cabinet to Cabinet rank.

The current strength of the Maharashtra Cabinet is 39, six short of the stipulated 43 members — a number that accounts for 15 per cent of 288 members in the State Assembly.

## FIR registered against Srinagar Dy Mayor

By JAMMU

Cracking its whip Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Saturday registered a case against deputy Mayor Srinagar Municipal Corporation senior officers of J&K Bank and five Government officials for illegal appropriation of subsidy with inflated project cost for establishment of CA storage at Lassipora, Pulwama.

According to the statement issued by the spokesman of Anti Corruption Bureau, "a case FIR No. 3/2019 under section 5(1)(d) PC Act Samvat 2006, punishable u/s 5(2) of the Act r/w 420 & 120-B RPC has been registered in Police Station Anti Corruption Bureau, South Kashmir (Anantnag) against Sheikh Imran Director M/S Kelwa Square Pvt. Ltd. BohriKadal Srinagar, officers of J&K Bank and other govt officials, for illegal appropriation of subsidy with inflated project cost for establishment of CA storage at Lassipora, Pulwama."

Earlier, IT raids were conducted on the premises of Sheikh Imran on June 11 and several files pertaining to investments were seized.

## Yogi Govt to hold global investors' summit next year

By LUCKNOW

After the success of UP Investors' Summit in February 2018 that fetched investment proposals worth Rs 4.68 lakh crore, the Yogi Adityanath Government is now contemplating organising its maiden 'Global Investors' Summit' early next year.

The 2018 summit resulted in big investment as a fair share of MoUs matured into actual investment in the state.

The proposed 'Global Investors' Summit' would be held on a grand scale and position Uttar Pradesh as an ideal investment destination not only in India but globally.

While reviewing the progress of Industrial Development department this week, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked officials to start preparing for the 'Global Investors' Summit, proposed to be held in February 2020. He also directed the officials to hold the second groundbreaking ceremony for the pending industrial and infrastructure projects next month. During the two-day UP Investors' Summit in Lucknow on 21-22 February, 2018, the UP government had signed 1,047 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 4.68 lakh crore with private and public sector companies. The summit was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of honchos of corporate world, including Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani, Kumar Mangalam Birla, N Chandrababhan, Subhash Chandra, GM Rao, Shiv Nadar and many others. The State also hosted delegates from Mauritius, Japan, the Netherlands, Finland, Czech Republic, Thailand and Slovakia to explore investment opportunities in UP.

## Inclement weather hampers op to retrieve bodies of IAF aircraft crash victims

By ITANAGAR

Inclement weather on Saturday hampered rescue efforts to retrieve the mortal remains of 13 air-warriors who were on board the Indian Air Force aircraft that crashed in the mountains of Arunachal Pradesh, an IAF spokesman said.

Shillong-based IAF spokesman Ratan Singh said the rescue operation, which commenced early Saturday morning, could not progress further due to inclement weather at the crash site.

Cheetah and ALH helicopters are on standby and are waiting to commence operations once the weather improves. At present there are low clouds accompanied with rain in the area, the spokesman said in a statement.

The IAF is making all efforts to retrieve the mortal remains of the deceased air-warriors. IAF personnel are in constant contact with the families of these air-warriors and they are being updated regularly about the ongoing rescue operations. They are also being explained the weather conditions being faced by the rescue team, he added.

The rescue team on Friday recovered the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR) of the Russian-origin AN-32 aircraft.

The aircraft was going from Jorhat in Assam to Mechuka advanced landing ground in Shi-Yomi district in Arunachal Pradesh, near the border with China, on June 3 when it lost control and crashed half-an-hour after taking off.

The wreckage of the plane was spotted by an IAF chopper on Tuesday at a height of 12,000 ft near Gatte village on the border of Siang and Shi-Yomi districts, after eight days of a massive search operation involving a fleet of aircraft and choppers as well as ground



In this photo released by IAF, is seen the crash site of IAF AN-32 carrier aircraft.

forces. A 15-member team of rescuers were sent to look for survivors in the accident site on Wednesday and eight of them

## 'Jungle raj' prevailing in UP, says Akhilesh

By LUCKNOW

Alleging that "jungle raj" was prevailing in Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav met Governor Ram Naik on Saturday to discuss the poor law and order situation in the state and submitted a memorandum.

Akhilesh Yadav along with senior SP leader Anmad Hassan submitted a memorandum to the Governor and urged him to intervene and "wake up" the state government as he did during the SP regime.

Yadav said, "During SP regime, it was said that there were only Yadav officers. Now there is hardly any district police chief or district magistrate from the Yadav community. We have requested the Governor to wake up the state government and direct it to control the prevailing 'jungle raj'."

The SO chief further said, "Criminals are having a free hand and they are doing what ever they want in this regime. UP Bar Council president Darvesh Singh Yadav was the chief of the law bar in Agra court, while criminals were shot dead inside jail. How can people take firearms inside the lawyer's

chamber or inside the jail?"

During the present Yogi Adityanath government responsible for the deteriorating law and order in the state, the SP president said that the state government had failed to instil confidence among people of the state.

Akhilesh also tweeted: "Incidents of rape, killings and political attacks have been increasing in the state. The CM is busy in meetings but the law and order is getting worse."

Akhilesh Yadav also raised the issue of alleged harassment of senior SP leader Mohammad Azam Khan by Rampur district administration and said, "The Government should look into the matter immediately as fake criminal cases are being registered against the SP leader by officials to harass him."

Recently, a couple of senior Rampur district officials had sought protection from Azam Khan while cases were lodged against them in Agra court, which grabbing government land for Al Jahra University owned by Khan.



A car set ablaze reportedly by Kashi Hindu University students on the premises in Varanasi on Saturday.

## 4 youths who wanted to cross LoC to join militancy arrested

Srinagar: Four youths, who wanted to cross the Line of Control (LoC) to join militant ranks, were taken into custody in Uri sector of Jammu & Kashmir and later handed over to their families, the Army said on Saturday.

Addressing a Press conference in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, Commander 79 Mount Brigade

Girish Kalia said the youths were taken into custody by the Army near the LoC on Friday and were handed over to their respective families on Saturday.

He said the Army had received information that they were going to join the path of violence after being "misguided" by local militants and their accomplices.

"We acted swiftly to prevent them from choosing the wrong path and apprehended them along the LoC in Linber area of Boniyar on Friday," he said.

The Army officer said the youths were handed over to their respective families after proper counselling. He appealed to the youths to not get misguided by the propaganda of militants.

## Will go into AN-32 crash, ensure such incidents don't reoccur: IAF chief

Hyderabad: The Indian Air Force would ascertain the cause of the recent crash of an AN-32 aircraft in Arunachal Pradesh and take steps to ensure that such incidents do not recur, IAF chief BS Dhanoa said on Saturday.

His comments came days after the wreckage of the aircraft was found in a remote area in Arunachal Pradesh, more than a week after it went missing with 13 people on board.

"We have recovered the flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder. We will go into the detail (to ascertain) as to what happened and how do we make sure that it does not happen again," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Combined Graduation Parade at the Air Force Academy in Dundlind near here.

"In Arunachal Pradesh, the way we fly the terrain is very treacherous and most of

the time, it is cloudy...When you are flying in that terrain, in that cloudy weather, there have been many accidents. Not only Air Force, even otherwise, Pawan Hans and all, lot of accidents, because of controlled flight into terrain," he claimed.

Noting that there were procedures to make sure such accidents do not recur, he said, "Need to review what happened and we don't have such an accident again."

## Rui, Lawand's village in Pune's Indapur tehsil, falls in the backwater region of Ujani dam across the Bhima river.

As the backwater spreads through hundreds of small inlets and streams in the area, it is common for farmers to draw water from them using submersible pumps.

TMChT water, he said.

There are many reasons why the water level went down so much. Water was released for drinking purpose to Solapur and parts of Maharashtra. Water was also released for crops. Evaporation is another factor. But an important reason is uncontrolled water lifting in the backwater region," he said.

The dam was built to provide irrigation only for eight months, but unauthorised lifting of water for sugarcane fields goes on all-year-round, he said.

With the water level falling, the thousand-year-old Palamathi Shiva temple near Palasde village is now nearly invisible. Built in the 'Hemadpanthi' architectural style, most of it was submerged when the dam was built. "Now the temple is visible. Water Tourists are flocking here to see it," said a local farmer.

## No water to fall back on for farmers in Ujani's backwater area

By PUNE

Narayan Lawand, a 45-year-old farmer in Pune district of electricity during while using a submersible water pump to irrigate his fields last month. His death has brought into focus the plight of people living in the area around Ujani dam in western Maharashtra which was overflowing last monsoon.

Rui, Lawand's village in the backwater region of Ujani dam across the Bhima river. As the backwater spreads through hundreds of small inlets and streams in the area, it is common for farmers to draw water from them using submersible pumps. But the water level in the reservoir has depleted to such a precariously low level this year that small rivers and streams which flow off the main waterbody have gone dry.

Submersible pumps and pipes which draw water from them, thus, lie exposed.

In many places, farmers, who mainly grow sugarcane, have pooled money to dig



trenches or shallow wells alongside the parched streams. The water that percolates into these trenches is then pumped out.

"Rivers and streams have dried up. Our crops are withering," said Lawand's brother Tukaram. It forced his brother to lift water from a trench dug near a river. "He suffered electric shock while using a submersible pump and died," he said.

"The water level in the dam has gone down to an unprecedented level. But last monsoon the dam was full," said Sharad Kale, a farmer from nearby Palasde village.

"Mismanagement" of the reservoir is responsible for the situation, he claimed. Water for drinking purposes was released to Solapur and parts of

## BALGANGA IRRIGATION PROJECT — Maha to move tribunal to stop ₹287-crore loss to exchequer

By MUMBAI

Facing the prospect of paying a sum of Rs 287 crore to a private contractor and getting quashed its crucial resolution of terminating the Balganga construction contract, the Maharashtra Government will belatedly file an appeal before Raigad district court on Monday, challenging the ruling given by a Bombay High court-appointed Arbitration Tribunal in favour of a private firm.

The BJP-led Maharashtra government, which has suffered under severe flak for its failure to appear before the high court-appointed Arbitration Tribunal hearing a payment-related dispute, has belatedly moved in moving the Tribunal in appeal against the tribunal's order passed in April awarding Rs 287 crore to the State Water Resources department's "deliberate" failure to appear at the hearing before the tribunal.

The tribunal had set a 90-day deadline for the state government to file an appeal against its order. "It is shocking that the Maharashtra government has not bothered to move the Arbitration Tribunal even 70 days after the tribunal passed the order against it. It is only after I obtained the tribunal's order through an RTI query and shot off a letter to State Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta that the State Water Resources department has woken up and is moving the tribunal in appeal on Monday," RTI activist Pravin Wategaonkar said.

My information is that the State Chief Secretary, Water Resources Department, deliberately absented himself from



the tribunal's hearing in the payment related matter. This prompted the tribunal to pass an order against the State government," Wategaonkar said.

While awarding Rs 287 crore to private firm M/S FA Construction for the state water department's failure before it during the hearing, the Arbitration Tribunal — headed by retired high court judge V G Palshikar — had on April 6 quashed the State government payment dated September 23, 2016 terminating the contract awarded to M/S FA Construction for the construction of Balganga dam in Raigad district.

"Despite service of notice, the State government has chosen not to appear in the present proceedings. In the circumstances, we have no hesitation in holding that both, the GR dt. 23.06.2016, and the Notice dt. 28.10.2016 (by KIDC), suffer from the vice of non-applica-

tion of mind, failure to consider relevant facts, consideration of irrelevant facts and failure to comply with the elementary principles of natural justice, which amounts to malafides in law," the tribunal order stated.

"Hence, we hold that both, the GR dt. 23.06.2016 and (KIDC) notice dt. 28.10.2016, are not only invalid but are totally null and void in law," the tribunal noted.

Following a payment dispute between the state-run Konkarni Irrigation Development Corporation (KIDC) and M/S FA Construction, the contractor had moved the Bombay High Court in 2015. In turn, the high court had ordered the setting up of a five-member panel to look into the dispute.

Incidentally, the Balganga project was one of the 13 irrigation projects that the Government had scrapped on August 30, 2016, after the

## 'In dock' water resources dept to contest quashing of GR terminating construction contract

large-scale irregularities surfaced in the deputy chief minister's office.

On August 24, 2016, the State Anti Corruption Bureau had registered the first FIR in the irrigation scam, booking 11 people in connection with alleged irregularities in awarding the contract for Balganga dam to FA Enterprises.

The names of former deputy chief minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar and former Water Resources Minister Sumit Tatkare — also of the NCP — were investigated for alleged irregularities in 12 major irrigation projects undertaken during the previous Congress-NCP regime.

The multi-thousand irrigation scam, it may be recalled, had come to light in September 2012. Ajitdada had resigned from the deputy chief minister's post on September 25, 2012, attributing his decision to the media reports on the alleged irregularities in the awarding of 38 irrigation contracts worth Rs 20,000 crore in Vidharba region during 2009, without seeking the mandatory clearance from the governing council of the Vidharba Irrigation Development Corporation (VIDC).

Ajitdada was the State Irrigation Minister between 1999 and 2010, before he was elevated as the deputy chief minister and handed the portfolios of Finance and Energy. The irrigation scam had allegedly taken place during his tenure as the State Irrigation Minister.



Trump blames Iran for tanker attacks but calls for talks

Washington: President Donald Trump has blamed Iran for attacks on oil tankers near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, but he also held out hope that implicit US threats to force near-wield talks with the Islamic Republic as the Pentagon considers beefing up defenses in the Persian Gulf area.

A day after explosions blew holes in two oil tankers just outside Iran's territorial waters, rattling international oil markets, the administration seemed caught between pressure to punish Iran and reassure Washington's Gulf Arab allies without drawing the US closer to war.

"Iran did it," Trump said Friday on Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends."

He didn't offer evidence, but the US military released video it said showed Iran's Revolutionary Guard removing an unexploded mine from one of the oil tankers targeted near the Strait of Hormuz, suggesting Tehran wanted to cover its tracks.

By pointing the finger at Iran, Trump was keeping a special spotlight on an adversary he accuses of terrorism but also has invited to negotiate.

The approach is similar to his diplomacy with North Korea, which has quieted talk



President Donald Trump speaks in the Rose Garden of the White House on Friday AP

of war but not yet achieved his goal of nuclear disarmament. Iran has shown little sign of backing down, creating uncertainty about how far the Trump administration can go with its campaign of increasing pressure through sanctions.

Iran denied any involvement in the attacks and accused Washington of waging an "Iranophobic campaign" of economic warfare.

A US Navy team on Friday was aboard one of the tankers, the Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous, collecting forensic evidence, according to a US official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a sensitive operation.

Apparently alluding to the US video, Trump said Iran's culpability had been "exposed."

He did not say what he intended to do about it but suggested "very tough" US sanctions, including efforts to strangle Iranian oil revenues, would have the desired effect.

"They've been told in very strong terms we want to get them back to the table," Trump said. Just a day earlier, the president took the opposite view, tweeting that it was "too soon to even think about making a deal" with Iran's leaders.

They are not ready, and neither are we," Trump last year withdrew the United States from an international agreement to limit Iran's nuclear program that was signed in 2015 under his predecessor, President Barack Obama.

AP

Hong Kong Govt suspends divisive extradition bill

Hong Kong: Hong Kong's embattled leader on Saturday said a divisive bill that would allow extraditions to China would be "suspended" in a major climbdown from her government after a week of unprecedented protests.

The city's pro-Beijing leader Carrie Lam has come under huge pressure to abandon the controversial legislation, including from her own political allies and advisers.

"The Government has decided to suspend the legislative amendment exercise, restart our communication with all sectors of society, do more... Work and listen to different views of society," Lam told

reporters on Saturday.

"We have no intention to set a deadline for this work and promise to report to and consult members of the legislative council on security before we decide on the next step forward." The international finance hub was rocked by the worst political violence since its 1997 handover to China on Wednesday as tens of thousands of protesters were dispersed by riot police firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

As criticism mounted, signs also emerged of a growing dis-comfort among Communist Party leaders in Beijing, and Lam held her press conference on Saturday at the same Government complex that was

besieged by protesters earlier in the week. The South China Morning Post said Lam held an emergency meeting on Friday night with her advisers while Chinese officials were also meeting in the nearby city of Shenzhen to map a way out of the impasse.

"I feel very sorrow and regret that the deficiencies in our work and various other factors have stirred up substantial controversies and disputes in society following the relatively calm periods of the past two years," Lam said.

On Friday she found herself facing growing calls from within her own political camp to reverse course and tamp down spiralling public anger — including from her pro-Beijing lawmakers. "Shouldn't (we) cool the citizens down? I think to postpone it for a little bit is not a bad thing. At this moment, the

Government should self-examine," Ann Chang, a hardcore Beijing lawmaker, told i-Cable News.

But others were warned against Lam bending to the protesters. "If the Government caves in to violence and extortion, in the long run that would also make Hong Kong unmanageable," pro-Beijing lawmaker Regina Ip told reporters. AFP

China supports suspension of Hong Kong's controversial bill

Beijing: China on Saturday said it supports the Hong Kong leader's decision to suspend a controversial bill that would allow extraditions to China, following massive protests.

About an hour after Hong Kong Chief Executive of Carrie Lam announced the suspension of China's notoriously opaque and politicised courts as well as a hammer the city's reputation as a safe business hub.

The international finance hub was rocked by the worst political violence since its 1997 handover to China on Wednesday as tens of thousands of protesters were dispersed by riot police firing tear gas and rubber bullets. AFP

AP

Special Administrative Region (SAR) government decided to suspend work on the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said in statement.

China also expressed Beijing's backing for the beleaguered Lam who faced heavy criticism from local people, especially students, for attempting to push the bill disregarding special protests.

"The Chinese Central Government expresses its support, respect and understanding for the SAR government's decision and will continue its

staunch support for Chief Executive Carrie Lam and the SAR government in governing Hong Kong in accordance with law and upholding the SAR's prosperity and stability with people from all sectors," Geng said.

He said China continued to respect and faithfully implementing the 'one country, two systems' policy under which Hong Kong was returned from British rule to China in 1997.

The former British colony is being governed a high degree of autonomy and the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents have been fully guaranteed according to law, he said. PTI

Nepal's ethnic Newaris protest against Guthi bill

Kathmandu: Thousands of people belonging to the Newar community staged anti-government protests on Saturday, demanding withdrawal of a controversial bill, which they say has provisions in favour of land mafias and could jeopardise Sanatan Hindu culture and traditions.

Around 10,000 people from Newar community rallied in the major parts of the city Saturday morning raising slogans against the Oli Government demanding that the Government withdraw the Guthi bill from the Parliament.

The K P Sharma Oli-led Communist Party Government has tabled the bill in Parliament to amend the Guthi Act and nationalise both public and private guthis and regulate all religious sites under a powerful commission.

Guthis are socio-economic institutions (trusts), both public and private that fund their obligations from incomes from cultivated or leased land assets. Depending on their obligations, guthis

fulfil religious, public service or social roles and could either involve members from a common lineage, or several.

"Don't destroy heritage," "scrap Guthi Bill," "Our culture our identity," "down with KP Oli government," "stop invasion of Sanatan Dharma," read the placards the protesters carried during the rally.

"Our Sanatan Dharma and culture could be jeopardised if the Bill, tabled by the Communist Party led government in Parliament, gets endorsed," said Pavitra Bajracharya, a Newar activist and central member of Federal Socialist Party Nepal, which is also part of the ruling coalition.

The aim of the bill is to snatch the public and private land allocated for cultural trusts and distribute to others encroaching our age cultural heritages, he said.

Thousands of people also organised torch lit rallies in neighbouring Lalitpur and Bhaktapur districts on Friday night to oppose the Government's move to endorse the Bill that would destroy centuries old Sanatan culture. PTI

Syria flare-up kills 35 fighters

Beirut: At least 35 combatants including 26 pro-regime forces were killed on Saturday in clashes and air strikes that erupted at dawn in northwestern Syria, a war monitor said.

The flare-up came as Russian-backed regime forces tried to retake two villages seized by jihadists and allied rebels earlier this month, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

"Since this morning, the Syrian regime and allied fighters have launched five failed attempts to regain control of Jibine and Tal Malah in northwestern Hama province," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman.

Syrian regime and Russian air strikes killed nine jihadists and rebel fighters, the war monitor said.

Ensuing clashes in the north of Hama province left 26 pro-regime forces dead, including eight who were killed in a mine explosion, the Observatory said.

The Idlib region of some three million people is supposed to be protected from a massive regime offensive by a buffer zone deal that Russia and Turkey signed in September.

But it was never fully implemented, as jihadists refused to withdraw from a planned demilitarised zone.

In January, the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance led by Syria's former rebel affiliate extended its administrative control over the region, which includes most of Idlib province as well as adjacent slivers of Latakia, Hama and Aleppo provinces.

The Syrian Government and Russia have upped their bombardment of the region since late April, killing more than 360 civilians, according to the Observatory.

Turkey said Friday that it did not accept Russia's excuse that it had no ability to stop the Syrian regime's continued bombardments in the last rebel bastion of Idlib.

"In Syria, who are the regime's guarantors? Russia and Iran," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu told state news agency Anadolu in a televised interview.

"Thus we do not accept the excuse that 'We cannot make the regime listen to us'," he said.

His comments came as Turkey disagreed with Russia earlier this week after Moscow claimed a new ceasefire had been secured in the province following weeks of regime bombardments — a claim that was denied by Ankara. AFP

Iraq gets new extension for Iran energy sanctions waiver

Baghdad: Two Iraqi officials say the United States has given Iraq a new 90-day extension for an Iran sanctions waiver allowing Baghdad to import electricity and natural gas from Tehran.

An Iraqi official told The Associated Press on Saturday that Baghdad was informed about the waiver during a call the previous day between US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

Another official confirmed the waiver saying it will start June 19.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Iraq's power sector is in dire straits and generate enough electricity to meet domestic demand, especially during the scorching summer months. AP

10 Kenyan police officers killed in blast near Somalia

Nairobi: Kenyan officials say at least 10 police officers are dead after their vehicle struck an improvised explosive device near the Somali border in a suspected extremist attack.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to share the information, said those killed on Saturday in Wajir County were among 13 officers who were pursuing extremists who had kidnapped police reservists.

Police on Friday said an unknown number of gunmen stormed Konton center in Wajir East and kidnapped three reservists.

There was no claim of responsibility for the latest attack.

The Somalia-based al-Shabab extremist group often targets Kenyan security forces, vowing retribution after Kenya deployed troops to Somalia in 2011 to combat the extremists. AP



Women in traditional dress perform in a parade of the Bali Arts Festival in Bali, Indonesia on Saturday AP

Journalists resign after pro-Russia MP buys Ukraine TV channel

Kiev: A Ukrainian MP with ties to Russia has bought a national Ukrainian news channel, prompting a round of resignations from journalists who fear his ownership will mean coverage influenced by Moscow.

Taras Kozak of the pro-Moscow party "Opposition Platform" already owned two national TV stations before he took over the channel ZIK this week. Kozak is a close ally of politician Viktor Medvedchuk, a controversial figure in Ukraine because of his close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin while Kiev is fighting a Moscow-backed separatist war.

Journalist Roman Nedzelski, one of five journalists to resign from the channel along with its CEO, said Medvedchuk now essentially controls ZIK. "Tomorrow I will be on the air with the last broadcast of the weekly show 'Details' and then I will start looking for a job," he said on Facebook late Friday.

"Medvedchuk is an enemy of my country, a murderer of his colleague Vahktang Kipiani who he announced his resignation. Mustafa Nayem, a Ukrainian MP, wrote on social media that the takeover would be a challenge for new President Volodymyr Zelensky. AFP

Husband says British woman held in Iran begins hunger strike

London: A British-Iranian woman jailed in Tehran for more than three years has begun a hunger strike to protest her detention, her husband said on Saturday.

Richard Ratcliffe said Nazamin Zaghari-Ratcliffe has told judicial officials she will refuse food but will drink water until she is granted "unconditional release." Ratcliffe said he would hold a vigil outside Iran's London embassy, and would fast in support of his wife.

Ratcliffe said his wife "had vowed that if we passed (laughter) Gabriel's fifth birthday with her still inside, then she would do something — to make her to both Governments that enough is enough. This really

has gone on too long," Zaghari-Ratcliffe, who worked for the charity arm of news agency Thomson Reuters, was detained at Tehran airport in April 2016 on charges of plotting against the Iranian Govt. Her family denies the allegations. High-level diplomatic attempts to secure her release have so far failed. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt granted 40-year-old Zaghari-Ratcliffe diplomatic asylum in March, but Iranian officials refuse to recognize her dual nationality. The hunger strike comes amid heightened tensions between the West and Iran, which the US and UK blame for attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman this week. Iran denies involvement. AP

'We are trapped': Zimbabwe's economic crunch snags passports

Harare: With Zimbabwe's economy in shambles and political tensions rising, leaving the country seems the best option for many who are desperate for jobs. But those dreams often end at the passport office, which doesn't have enough foreign currency to import proper paper and ink.

A passport now takes no less than a year to be issued. An emergency passport can take months amid a backlog of 280,000 applications, never mind recent ones.

Zimbabweans at the main office in the capital, Harare, have taken to sleeping in line for any chance at being served the following day — and that's just to submit an application.

Several million Zimbabweans already left for neighboring South Africa and other countries during years of economic turmoil under former leader Robert Mugabe. The hardships have only deepened under current President Emmerson Mnangagwa, who took over after Mugabe's forced resignation in late 2017.

The new Government's slogan "austerity for prosperity" now has a bitter ring. Unemployment is rampant and inflation is at 75%, the highest since 2009, when Zimbabwe's currency collapsed under the weight of hyperinflation.

Rapid devaluation of the local currency against the US dollar — also used as official currency — has seen basic items such as cooking oil changing prices several times a day. The health sector is collapsing, forcing those who can afford it to seek treatment abroad.

At the passport office, the desperation to escape is all too clear. "Guys, it's either we jump the queue or we will have to clear the border," one teenager told a group of friends plotting

to sneak to the front of the line. Another teen, 19-year-old Brian Ndlovu, said coming to the office makes him "feel like there's really no way out of this country. We are trapped." The

teens' plot to jump the queue failed, in large part because those at the front had carried there for days and knew each other by name. Emma Chipwera said she only reached the front



People wait in a queue to submit an application for a passport at the main office in Harare on Friday AP

of the line because she had been sleeping outside the office since June 5. "I was No. 34 on Friday. They served no one. On Thursday, they served 12 people," she said, huddled in a

blanket on Sunday night.

In the biting cold of the Southern Hemisphere winter, dozens of people, including women with toddlers, slept on cardboard boxes or in the dust, holding their places. Around midnight, one man parked his motorcycle and joined his wife in blankets on the line. People laughed.

Some huddled around a fire of scrap wood taken from the grounds of an adjacent school. A small enterprise has emerged, where young men hawked the places in the line for a fee. Others sell pens, food items and foreign currency while a generator powered a photocopy machine. By daylight, the line snaked for more than a kilometer and included school children in uniform. A preacher holding a Bible took advantage of the queue to deliver sermons about resilience and hope. But for many, the night is slipping.

For those seeking an emergency passport, the task requires multiple lines and a week of sleeping outside the office. One applies for an ordinary passport, then waits for a chance to upgrade the application to an emergency passport. Those who are booked for a date in 2020 have to join another line to plead for an earlier date.

The delays are due to a lack of foreign currency to import special paper, ink and other materials, as well as machine breakdowns, according to the national passport agency's registrar-general, Clemence Masango. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, a watchdog body, has described the passport crisis as "a major human rights challenge" and launched an investigation. In response, officials are promising that "we will solve the problem of the foreign currency, and the machine is now working, so the

backlog will be cleared soon. We have been doing this to our people," Home Affairs Minister Cain Mathema told The Associated Press on Wednesday, vowing "a return to normalcy" in a month.

But for those badly in need of a legal way out of Zimbabwe, such official statements count for little without action.

In a busy cramped corridor, people clutching envelopes waited in yet another line outside what they mockingly called the "mercy office." It is where they plead with senior officials that their situations are dire enough for their emergency passport applications to be processed in days.

One woman said the date she can upgrade her passport application to an emergency one is May 20. "My mother needs it to get her medical operation in India," she said. "She will be dead by then." AP

# Combustion Point

## Only rain can douse the flying fireworks at India-Pak clash

**TODAY LIVE**

India vs Pakistan  
3:00 pm IST

VENUE: Old Trafford, Manchester

PNS ■ OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER)

Yeah... no pressure at all, only 1.5 billion people waiting for you to win," said Hardik Pandya the other day in his usual laconic manner. But that quite well summarises the traditional frenzy around any high voltage India-Pakistan clash, more so in the World Cup, even if emerging statesman Virat Kohli refuses to rise to the bait and add some of his own banter to the occasion.

With the match rated as big as Football World Cup Final with a 1.5 billion viewership count, it is quite unusual - and unfortunate - that all the mid-field contest, combination, chipping, strategizing and what not kind of exciting talk has taken a backseat to the more mundane and entirely unrequired chance of rain cutting short the proceedings today when a well sorted India high on self-belief, performance and wins, meet a relatively new, cornered and edgy Pakistan facing near ouster from the tournament.

Kohli says that a 50-over both sides match would be outstanding for combination and strategy, but flexibility would be required if the rain cuts it short, of which chances are high. As per the latest on the weather chart - which has been changing since morning - there is now a 20 per cent rain chance at 10 am and 80 per cent in the afternoon around 2, for at least an hour-and-a-half. The match is slated to begin at 10.30 am local time.

How much of a truncated contest it will become remains to be discussed in emergent morning huddles in both the dressing rooms, but with the kind of conditions in the air, a three-man pace battery with the inclusion of Mohammed Sami is a distinct possibility. Bumrah and Bhuvni are bowling well. It is important for them to stay in prime condition and the

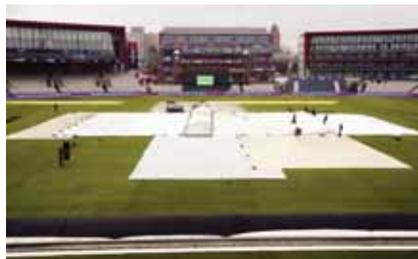


Indian players attend a training session ahead of their World Cup match against Pakistan at Old Trafford in Manchester

mental side of things will take care of itself, more so where conditions are like this, they'll get a lot more help than the first two games," skipper Virat Kohli said at his pre-match Press conference.

Statistics tell you, and the entire world quotes them with joy and concern depending on which side of the border the chirp is coming from, Pakistan is yet to record a victory against India in a World Cup. They broke this traditional ICC event barrier in the Champions Trophy Final which they won, but as their coach Mickey Arthur says, "that was a long time ago."

More than anything in a game of this proportion, where emotions get overly stoked, especially in young dressing rooms on either side, the need is to draw from focus more than precedent, calm more than passion and self-belief over all else.



Groundsmen cover the field with plastic sheets as it rains ahead of the India-Pakistan at Old Trafford

HEAD TO HEAD				
	Played	IND	PAK	N/R
Matches	131	54	73	4
Day matches	89	34	51	4
In World Cup	6	—	—	—
Last 5 matches	5	1	4	—

HIGHEST TOTALS		
India	356-9 in 50 overs at Visakhapatnam	05-04-2005
Pakistan	344-8 in 50 overs at Karachi	13-03-2004

PERFORMANCE IN WC						
Team	P	W	L	T	N/R	Success%
India	77	48	27	1	1	63.63
Pakistan	74	41	31	—	2	56.75

FAISEL FEATURES

Kohli knows that Aamir is in top gear having torn through the Australians with his fiercer and Wahab comes with his own brand of pace and risk. But he, like Arthur, has also seen that the three disciplines of batting, bowling and fielding are yet to come together for the green brigade. While Arthur is looking at creating havoc upfront to unsettle the famed Indian batting order, Kohli is confident that the shock of a seasoned Shikhar Dhawan being unavailable would be duly dealt with by KL Rahul who is in keen nick.

and all one needs is a plan that works, a belief that propels it and conditions that give India the wings to fly to another two points.

Flare or not, in the end, it is just about two points, like from any other game, isn't it? The tournament will go on and tomorrow will be yet another day for Kohli. For Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed though, a defeat would mean, well, Gone With The Wind, without the Scarlet O'Hara kind of optimism in defeat and misery.

### SQUADS

**India:** Virat Kohli (captain), KL Rahul, Rohit Sharma, Vijay Shankar, MS Dhoni (wk), Hardik Pandya, Kedar Jadhav, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Dinesh Karthik, Ravindra Jadeja, Shikhar Dhawan.  
**Pakistan:** Sarfaraz Ahmed (captain), Fakhar Zaman, Imam ul Haq, Babar Azam, Haris Sohail, Hasan Ali, Shahab Khan, Mohammed Hafeez, Mohammad Haseen, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Wahab Riaz, Mohammed Amir, Shoab Malik, Imad Wasim, Asif Ali.

# For us, no one is a threat: Kohli

Despite more than a dozen questions thrown at him about the high tension around an India-Pakistan clash, skipper Virat Kohli refused to rise to the bait and said he would not say anything at all to push the TRPs. He insisted that the team would be treating it as any other game in World Cup cricket, giving their 100 per cent because that's the only thing that wins matches. Excerpts from the Press conference:

PNS ■ OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER)

**How tough is it for India to prepare and plan for an unpredictable side like Pakistan?**

We know they have talent, but we play well as a team. In the first two games we gave clinical performances and focused on what we need to do. We're not focusing too much on what the opposition has to do or what it will bring to the table. We need to believe in our strengths. If we play well as a team we can beat any side in the world. That's the type of confidence we have carried in the first two games and we want to continue in the same manner in the next whatever coming games we have.

**Considering Pakistan's proficiency against spinners and the wicket, any strategic changes needed?**

The conditions and the length of the game will make us think about a few combinations. The kind of spinners and the kind of bowlers we have, it's difficult for any team to just come out and attack these guys. There's a certain level of risk involved when you have world class bowlers bowling at you.

**Do you have to plan something different for Pakistan?**

We have to be flexible. We can't be rigid in our approach because if the conditions are different from what we played in the last game then we'll have to think of different combinations, areas to strengthen in the bowling attack. If pace becomes a more important option, we'll look to explore that. If not, if the length of the game is going to be full and we expect the game to be 50 overs both sides, then we'll probably think of another combination. We'll have to see how today pans out, how tomorrow the conditions are. All players are in a zone to be ready to play, that helps in selecting the combination you need, depending on the conditions.

**Who's the real threat in the Pakistan team for you considering the weather?**

We're not focusing on the opposition, so for us no one's a threat. No one player matters more than the other. It's about going into the park as the Indian cricket team and taking on whichever team is in front of you. If we play well, we can beat any side in the world. If you don't, teams are going to beat you. That's how simple the game of cricket is, and should be.

**Any message for the fans?**

For us, a professional approach is most important. We can't get too emotional or excited. But for the fans, looking at the atmosphere and



Virat Kohli bats in the nets during a training session at Old Trafford on Saturday

frenzy around the game, I wouldn't say it's easy to think like a player. The fans should enjoy the atmosphere, the occasion the way they want to and the way it's been enjoyed for years, but the players obviously have to maintain the mindset which we have for years approaching any game, whether it's against Pakistan, Australia, England or South Africa. We need to go out, be professional and execute what

we're expected to. **■ We have not played this team very often. How much of a challenge that is?** I don't see it as a massive challenge because even the teams that you know well, you have to play good cricket against. If you play good cricket, if you do the basics better than the opponent, then invariably you win, unless someone

**MY MOST TENSE MOMENT AGAINST PAKISTAN WAS CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2009. YUVI FRACTURED A FINGER AND I WAS LITERALLY FLOWN IN.**

**IN TWO DAYS' TIME I WAS PLAYING AGAINST PAKISTAN AT CENTURION. I PLAYED A VERY BAD SHOT AND COULDN'T SLEEP UNTIL 6 AM.**

**I WAS LOOKING AT THE CEILING AND THINKING, THAT'S IT, I'VE FLOWN IN AND NOW I'M FINISHED. THERE HAS BEEN FUNNY INCIDENT HAPPENED DURING THE WORLD CUP IN MOHALI. I CAN'T ELABORATE BUT IT WAS QUITE FUNNY. IT WAS INVOLVING SHAHID AFRIDI AND WAHAB. I WAS STANDING WITH THE STRIKERS, AND I HEARD A CONVERSATION WHICH, IN A HIGH-PRESSURE GAME, MADE ME LAUGH**

**■ When it is a game against Pakistan that do you tell your young camp?** We have discussed nothing different from the time we came to England. The mood in the dressing room hasn't changed. We understand that any game you play for your country can be emotional, adrenaline filled, so no one game is more important or more special for us than the other. We are a top side in the world because of the cricket we play and we always need to remember that.

**■ You have had outstanding success under pressure. But how difficult is it as a captain to keep the youngsters away from the hustle-bustle of an Indo-Pak meet?** The best way to approach something like this is to understand that the game starts tomorrow at a certain time and it finishes at a certain time, it's not going to last a lifetime, whether you do well or don't. The tournament goes on. As a unit, 11 guys share responsibility. That's been our message from day one.

**■ If it rains, then what?** It's in no one's hands. We've been in these situations many times. We'll just have to wait and see how the weather pans out. Whatever amount of game we get

creates a match-winning magical performance all by himself. Familiar oppositions, unfamiliar oppositions don't matter because you understand that if you don't play well, you don't win, and if you play well, you win against anyone. If we do our strengths well it will be good enough for anyone in the world. We need to have that belief.

**■ Fast bowlers haven't had an ideal preparation for this big game...** They are in a good head space and have bowled well in the first two games. If physically they can stay fresh and their bodies are feeling good, mentally they're just fine. They should take care of their bodies, recovery and energy levels. Bumrah and Bhuvni are bowling well. It is important for them to stay in prime condition and the mental side of things will take care of itself, more so where conditions are like this, they'll get a lot more help than the first two games.

**■ Can you take us through some tense and funny moments against Pakistan in Mohali?** Tense was Champions Trophy 2009 where Yuvi fractured a finger and I was literally flown in and in two days' time I was playing against Pakistan at Centurion. I hadn't experienced anything like that before and I played a very bad shot. I couldn't sleep until 6 am. I was looking at the ceiling and thinking, that's it, I've flown in and now I'm finished.

**■ There have been many funny moments over the years The incident happened during the World Cup in Mohali. I can't really elaborate here. That was quite funny. It was involving Shahid Afridi and Wahab. I was standing with the strikers, and I heard a conversation, which as I say, I can't elaborate here, but in a high-pressure game, that made me laugh.**

People are always searching for that high, and they don't realise that they can get that same high with that same person again  
Christina Applegate



## FROM THE INSIDE

**An all-too-possible future**  
In Yudhanjanja Wijeratne's new book, *Numbercaste*, people's importance is distilled into an all-powerful number



**The paradox called life**  
We are all aware of the concept of death, but it is still difficult to bear with the loss of a loved one



With an impressive squad comprising maverick ex-captain Dhoni, the phenomenon called Captain Kohli, all-rounders like Pandya and Jadhav, and destroyer-in-chief bowler Bumrah, Team India's chances in the 12th edition of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 look bright. Could this be the third time the Men in Blue will lift the Cup? Only time will tell

**T**his is it. We've come full circle. We're back to where our journey as a cricket crazy nation began: England. Lords. Here we go again. From complete underdogs then to absolute world dominators and financial powerhouse now. We've come a long way since that fine day in 1983 when Kapil Dev — an all-rounder from Punjab with an erstwhile ordinary individual record — lifted that trophy and ushered in an era of frantic following to the point of raising the status of the sport to that of a religion and its most revered son, Sachin Tendulkar, to that of a God.

A lot has happened between that iconic moment in the balcony of Lords to the iconic six hit by Mahendra Singh Dhoni to win India's second World Cup in 2011. But all of that later. First, let's celebrate the fact that our Sharma ji ka ladka, Rohit Sharma, is living up to expectations, and that *Koffee With Karan* came way before the World Cup and IPL and is a thing of the past. If only it will serve to ignite the fuel to perform better for Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul. And we still have our maverick ex-captain, Dhoni, albeit for most likely the last tournament of his stellar trophy-laden career.

So let's get down to business and examine with utmost scrutiny our beloved Team India's chances in the 12th edition of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019. Starting with our very own captain furious, Virat Kohli. He has come a long way since leading India to the U19 Cricket World Cup in 2008, and being a part, but not a key man, of the 2011 World Cup winning squad. He was handed over the ODI captaincy in 2017 and has only taken India to newer heights since. His personal accolades are a statistician's dream. In ODIs, he holds the world record for the fastest batsman to 10,000 runs in 205 innings. He has the highest number of centuries in run chases in the world and is only nine centuries away from breaking Tendulkar's record (49) in style, which I'm sure all us thought would never be broken.

Kookaburra), changed power play rules, and pitches generally favouring batsmen etc. So it's only natural that India would feature heavily amongst those records being a batting heavy team predominantly. But recently, trends have changed and for the better. India has become a force to reckon with when it comes to the ball. The destroyer-in-chief being Jasprit Bumrah, who is atop the ICC world rankings for bowlers. He is supported by Kuldeep Yadav (7), Yuzvendra Chahal (8), Bhuvnesh Kumar (17) — who are all amongst the top 20. While amongst the top 20 batsmen, only three Indians feature, namely Kohli (1), Rohit Sharma (2), and Shikhar Dhawan (14). The next best batsman is Dhoni at number 24. Talking of the all-rounders, they are what many believe to be the X factor in India's chances for progressing to the last four. Pandya is fresh off a *Koffee* controversy and fresher off an IPL showing he should be proud of — he ended the tournament with 402 runs at a strike rate of over 190, smashing 38 boundaries and 29 sixes in 15 matches. He also claimed 14 wickets in 16 games. He has so far played 45 ODIs and has taken 44 wickets with an economy of 5.53 and batting lower down the order, he has scored 731 runs in 29 innings. He can field well too and can bowl six to seven crucial overs, picking up wickets. His role is akin to that of Yuvraj Singh in the 2011 World Cup. And if he can channelise that embarrassing, unnecessary media scrutiny and a wonderful IPL showing, he can very much be the most important player of the team and a potential Man of the Tournament just like Yuvraj Singh. The other player who could be as effective is Kedar Jadhav. He might not be as exuberant and controversial but he has proved himself many a time not just with the bat but also with the ball. A solid middle order batsman and good finisher, he is also the man with the "golden arm". His side arm action and the angle at which he delivers makes it difficult for batsmen to pick the ball. KL Rahul has also shown his mettle and not let controversies affect him. It's good to see that both Pandya and Rahul took the negative media attention in a positive way and came out of it stronger and more determined. Rahul looks confident and reliable to call upon in any situation. He has made the crucial number 4 position his own. And being an opener originally, it's an advantage when the ball is moving around and causing problems. Talking of how the controversy affected him, he said: "In life, in cricket, you make mistakes. You have bad days, you learn from them and try to be a better person. I never doubt myself, my personality, never doubted who I am. I was strong in my head. I got through it and am happy to be back and enjoying my cricket." I think we all have something to learn from him in the sense that it's not the blow

that gets you down, it's the mettle to get back up and fight for what you believe in. This is the fifth time that cricket's most prestigious tournament is being held in England and Wales. The previous winners of those editions have been West Indies (1975, 1979), India (1983), and Australia (1999). The format for the tournament is quite different from the previous editions we are used to seeing. It's played in a round-robin manner in a single group of 10 teams, with each team playing the other nine once, and the top four at the end of the group phase progressing to the semi-finals. The 1992 World Cup in Australia and New Zealand was also played in a round-robin format, with nine teams participating. The 10-team tournament this time has gained criticism due to the lack of Associate teams in the tournament. Given the increase of the 'Test' playing nations from 10 to 12, with the admission of Ireland and Afghanistan in June 2017, it is the first World Cup to be contested without all of the Test playing nations being present. After the elimination of all Associate teams at the qualifying tournament, this is also the first World Cup to feature no Associate members. There's no tournament without a bit of controversy. A few days ago, Dhoni was asked by the ICC to remove the dagger insignia from his wicket-keeping gloves despite the Indian cricket board's assertion that it was not a military symbol. The BCCI had sought permission for the star wicketkeeper batsman from the world governing body (ICC), but it was denied citing regulations that no individual message or logo can be displayed on any item of clothing or equipment. In addition, the logo also breaches the rule that allows only one sponsor's logo on the wicket-keeping gloves. In Dhoni's case, he already sports an SG logo on his gloves. Another talking point is the big match for all Indians — cricket fans or not — at Old Trafford, Manchester, on June 16. It's the one game that brings every Indian together (if cricket didn't do a good enough job of it already). It's India v Pakistan. With the same old rivalry and passion, but with renewed fervor and political context. Following the 2019 Pulwama attack, several former Indian players and the BCCI called for the boycott of this group match fixture, wanting to ban the Pakistan team from playing in the tournament. However, after conducting a board meeting in Dubai, the ICC rejected the BCCI's proposal and confirmed that the scheduled match would go ahead as planned, despite the ongoing stand-off between the two nations. The match being held today will most likely be viewed the world over by a record audience as is usually expected for an India-Pakistan encounter, but made extra tense by the recent political relationship of the two nations.

Talking of India, Pakistan and the many reasons this cannot be viewed as just a sport. It's an extension of everything we stand for and believe in — personally, politically, morally. Ever wondered why Team India's jersey colour is blue and not the usual suspected patriotic colours, saffron or green? It had to be taken from the Indian Flag as a symbolic gesture for patriotism. While saffron stands for courage and selflessness, green signifies faith, fertility, and prosperity. The blue in the Ashoka Chakra stands for the colour of the sky and ocean. The selection of saffron or green colours for the jerseys would have created controversies of religious or political favoritism as saffron is heavily associated with Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism as well as the political parties we all know by now, while green is affiliated with Islam. Thus, it wouldn't have been a wise decision to choose those to represent a nation which prides itself to be secular. The blue colour then automatically became the first choice to represent the nation and its warriors on the field with its symbolic meaning of the "most truth of the universe". And "Bleed Blue" has recently become an anthem of the youth, again symbolically signifying the passion and dedication of batting till you bleed and staying true to your talents and virtues. And nobody embodies that never-say-die attitude and fighter mentality than our current and former captains, Kohli and Dhoni.

In the 2011 World Cup hosted by India, we were one of the favourites and definitely one of the most pressure to perform on our home ground with the final being in Mumbai. This time, that mantle is taken by England with the final being at the Mecca of cricket — Lords. And unlike India, they're not that adept at handling the undue pressure of expectations, with the 2013 Champions Trophy final being a case in point. India sure has good memories of playing finals at the Mecca of cricket (cue Sourav Ganguly's shirt waving at Lord's balcony), the Nat West Series Final in 2002, and, of course, the 1983 World Cup win. But for that to happen again, India will have to beat the best of the best to first come in the top four and then it's all down to the semi-finals and the finale at Lord's. England, meanwhile, will be looking to win their first ever World Cup, which is ironic since they're the inventors of the game. They have been losing finalists in 1979, 1987, and 1992. In the 2015 World Cup, Bangladesh knocked out England from the group stage, which raised questions on the latter's relevance as an ODI team. Since then, they have completely turned over a new leaf and have become the number 1 ranked team in the world in ODIs. They have defeated several top teams, including India and Australia, this year and their batsmen also broke the record for the highest total in an ODI innings. With a plethora of match winners in their squad, they are certainly not the team they were in the previous World Cups and are viewed by most as 'the team to watch out for. But whether or not they have shed their chokey status and weak mentality remains to be seen. Lord's was the Queen!

The writer is a doctor by profession and an amateur cricketer



# A MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

In *India Positive*, CHETAN BHAGAT reflects on what we can do right to move forward and become a truly modern and progressive country. He believes that if we want to see reform, we — as citizens — need to be the solution. An excerpt:

For India to truly change, there needs to be a change in our society and culture. The internet is playing a big part in it. The rise of internet penetration also means that things are now more equal, since people who didn't have a voice before now do. 'The Great Opinion Wars' talks about how social media has allowed aspirational Indians to voice their opinions on topics that have always been the domain of the privileged class.

However, social media has also birthed a strange new phenomenon in India — the *bhaktis*, and there is advice for both. *Bhaktis* are those at the receiving end of their abuse in 'Anatomy of an Internet Troll'. Another phenomenon that social media has caused is 'virtue signalling' — those people who have to show that they are so virtuous, so noble and so good that they sense communal intolerance in a statement even when others don't. 'Look, I'm so Secular!': The Rise of Virtue Signaling on Social Media' talks about this and how it distorts national public debate on a range of important issues.

But do these phenomena indicate that India is getting more intolerant? There are endless debates about this, but I think that we are a mixed society, tolerant and intolerant at the same time, as explained in 'Fifty Shades of Intolerance'. I don't believe that intolerance has anything to do with the request from Hindus that a temple be built in Ayodhya, and 'Why We Need a Ram Temple in Ayodhya' talks about why restoring the temple on its original site and building an even grander mosque nearby will be a great act of religious cooperation.

A crucial aspect of what makes India the country it is, is the fact that we are a democracy, and any attempt to undermine that is dangerous. The essay on blind *bhaktis* talks about how unquestioning support of a leader, rather than the country, can actually harm the leader. The essay on the Supreme Court's order regarding the playing

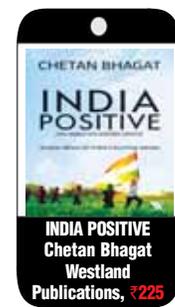


of the National Anthem before a movie screening ('Anthem Order: The Intention's Good but Imposition Isn't') argues that authoritarianism can never create patriotism. The Government's ban on pornography is a similar curtailment of basic freedoms, as explained in 'Hypocritical and Impractical: With the Porn Ban, the Government Has Flaunted Its Control Freak Instincts'. I think the key to becoming an awesome nation is to defend individual lib-

**THE REASON FOR MODI'S APPEAL IS OBVIOUS. AFTER ALL, HE IS A LEADER WHO HAS CREATED SOME HOPE. HE SPEAKS A LANGUAGE THAT CONNECTS US**

erties. Related to this is the need to stop mixing religion and law, and 'Too Many Holy Cows' talks about how it is time to discuss what it means to be a secular republic, and revise the Constitution to reflect it. Social change means that we need to look at the infrastructures in our cities, and the essay on Mumbai rains talks about this and what needs to be done so that the country's financial capital does not come to a grinding halt every monsoon. This overriding indiffer-

ence that seems to inflict Indians is also reflected in our views on corruption, and our don't-care attitude to corruption is addressed in the essay on the 2G 'non-scam'. It's important for one to be proud of the country we live in, and 'Will You Spend ₹80 to See India Win a Dozen Olympic Golds?' suggests ways that we can improve our gold medal tally at the Olympics at the micro and macro level. Finally, 'Creaming the People' suggests a move from caste-based reserva-



tions to economic-based ones in order to create a truly fair society.

**HOW BLIND BHAKTS CAN ACTUALLY HARM INDIA'S DEMOCRACY**

If you are a true nationalist, put the nation before individuals, even if that individual happens to be your favourite leader.

I recently conducted a Twitter poll to test the hypothesis that Narendra Modi enjoys an insane amount of support among his fans. The poll asked this question: If Modi wanted to declare a national emergency to eliminate corruption, would you support it? Out of nearly 10,000 participants, 57 per cent said they would support such a decision.

The usual Twitter poll disclaimers apply: It's a highly skewed sample, polls aren't scientific, etc. Also, the poll does not indicate my own views in any way, nor does it claim that such a proposal is on the Government's anvil. However, the results do give us a sense of what some of Modi's hardcore fans (the *bhaktis*) feel. It is worth noting that the participants were almost all young, educated, digitally savvy

people who understand English. Yes, a significant number of progressive young Indians are apparently happy to give up democracy, and vote themselves votesless.

Stunned? Well, I admit that the question was a tad unfair. After all, there is nothing in the air that suggests an emergency is in the offing. Nor does one need to make such harsh choices in order to proclaim their support, or lack of it, for a leader. Still, the numbers do show (a) the enormous popularity of Modi in his core fan base and/or (b) a possible ignorance of what a national emergency and giving up democracy could mean. They also indicate a huge lack of confidence in the current political system and the kind of leaders it generates.

The reason for Modi's appeal is obvious. After all, he is a leader who has created some hope. He speaks a language that connects us. Modi takes steps — big, bold ones — to fix India. Whether or not they solve problems is a separate story. Making the effort and having good intentions counts for a lot. Demonstration is a case in point. Many experts have questioned the benefits of the move. They diligently quote members of fact to show that the actual advantages of demonstration could be marginal. Of course, these are wasted efforts. All this economic mumbo-jumbo is irrelevant to the Modi fan. If fans are ready to support an emergency in their leader's name, do you really think they give a damn about falling GDP or actual data about black money being back by in circulation?

No, we are talking about love here. Love doesn't, and is not meant to, see reason. And speaking of demonisation, the experts, though not wrong, miss a key point. A huge intangible benefit of the note ban has been its unifying effect on an otherwise divided country. Imagine a bickering joint family.

Excerpted with permission from Chetan Bhagat's *India Positive: New Essays and Selected Columns* published by Westland Publications, ₹225

## NEW ARRIVALS

**SIEGE: TRUMP UNDER FIRE**  
Michael Wolff  
Hachette, ₹699



Michael Wolff, author of *Fire and Fury*, once again takes us inside Trump presidency to reveal a White House under siege. In *Siege*, he has written an equally essential and explosive book about the White House that is under fire from almost every side. A stunningly fresh narrative that begins just as Trump's second year as President is getting underway and ends with the delivery of the Mueller report. *Siege* reveals an administration that is beleaguered by investigations and a President who is increasingly volatile, erratic, and exposed.

**THE DEATH OF HITLER**  
Jean-Christophe Brisard  
and Lana Parshina  
Hodder, ₹399

On April 30, 1945, Hitler committed suicide in his bunker as the Red Army closed in on Berlin. Within four days, the Soviets had recovered his body. But the truth about what the Russian secret services found was hidden from history, when, three months later, Stalin officially declared to Truman and Churchill that Hitler was still alive and had escaped abroad. Reckless rumours about what really happened to Hitler began to spread like wildfire and, even today, they have not been put to rest. Until now.

**RAIN DROPS AND CATERPILAR**  
Anuradha Prasad  
Leadstar, ₹199



This book is dedicated to all those who have created a paradigm shift for others. To those too, who are standing at the helm ready to jump to make bigger changes possible. A pet is lost! Was it stolen or has it just wandered? Her owner is searching. Is it in the wilderness or dead? What life throws at a 13-year-old girl during her search; he is tall, dark, handsome a proverbial 'bachelor'. But he has a dark secret. What is it, his life was charted and planned. Till he found something about his love that turned it upside down. The stories run on sublimity, acceptance, courage, compassion, devotion, and deceit.

The James Bond movies of the 1960s genre were our first exposure to science fiction. At a time when television or satellite television channels were unheard of and even telephones and cars were rare items (at least in Kanjirakkadu in Ernakulam district where I grew up), the scenes which portrayed Sean Connery — who immortalised Bond — speaking to his sources at far away places through the contraption attached to his wrist watch and driving around in that Aston Martin still linger in the mind. Sridhar, a theatre at Ernakulam, was the window to this world of sci-fi for my generation. Sridhar theatre has given way to a shopping mall and the interest in James Bond movies, too, came to an end with Connery leaving the field and making way for the new generation actors.

But interest in science fiction continued because of television series like *Cosmos: A Personal Voyage* anchored by Carl Sagan and the works penned by Arthur C. Clarke whose *2001: Space Odyssey* remains fresh in the mind. Through his science writings, Clarke told us that the world would use space science and satellites from the geostationary orbit for communication services. He had written in one of his science papers in 1945 about the 'extra-terrestrial relays' that would revolutionise the world of communication. Conventional science teachers had scoffed at such ideas and told us not to be carried away by such prophecies! See what has happened to the telecommunication sector, which has transformed the world into a global village.

In *Ramayana*, the great Indian epic which is portrayed by progressive elements as a work of fiction, the war between Lord Rama and the demon king Ravana is described by author Sage Valmiki as a spot report from the theatre of war. Valmiki gave an account of the myriad arrows deployed by the Lord and his enemy, Aageyam, Varuna, Kaubera, Indrastram, Nairyathastram, Yaamyastram, Gandharvastram, Gaubhikamstram, Aasuramstram, Vaishnavamstram are some of the arrows used by the Lord and his rival in the war, which lasted many days. It was Brahmastra, provided by Lord Indra through Matali, the charioteer, which came to the rescue of Lord Rama in finishing off Ravana once and forever.

Rationalists may laugh at the names of arrows deployed in the great Ramayana war. But the truth is that modern missiles developed by Indian scientists and which could be categorised based on their properties (surface to air or SAM, Agni, Prithvi, Akash etc) were all inspired by the arrows mentioned in the great epic. This underlines the role played by science-fiction in

# Looking into the future

*Numbercaste* talks of a world where how much a man means depends on not just his money, but his worth as a member of the species, writes KUMAR CHELLAPPAN



developing the technological know-how.

Science fiction is what strengthens the foundation for strong and robust science and technology sector. Scientific temper should not be used to demean and ridicule the facts mentioned in India specific epis and great literary works. The dreams espoused by the great science-fiction authors are slowly but steadily becoming a reality. Recent news coming out of China is that scientists in that country have succeeded in developing the Invisible Coat, a subject that has inspired many books and films.

*Numbercaste*, authored by Sri Lanka-born Yudhanjaya Wijeratne, is an exciting piece of work. We are mute witnesses to the role played by Artificial Intelligence and Information Technology in moulding the new world. These technological marvels are like double-edged swords, similar to the

internet as well as mobile phones. How the internet and cellphones cause disasters and development in human lives is a part of modern folklore.

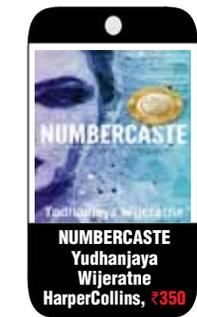
We live in an era where human beings have lost their relevance and identity and have been compressed into 10 or 12 digit numbers. The Aadhaar number controversy is raging all over India, with people debating heatedly about personal privacy being violated with the help of Aadhaar numbers, making the humans "niradahaar".

What Wijeratne portrays in this work of fiction is how a technology developed by *Numbercaste*, a digital startup launched in Silicon Valley by Julius Commion, an entrepreneur with strange habits, takes on IT giants like Facebook, Google, and other social media outlets and emerges as the global monopoly. The events unfold in our

immediate future, say in 2030 or so.

The Twitter is dead and gone. *Numbercaste* starts from where Twitter ends. "People used hashtags, 140 characters, and you send a message out and the people who follow you could read it. We are building something like that. The plan is you are in the area and people are talking about it, then you know it. It could be anything from a revolution to armed robbery to a party happening two lanes away. It doesn't matter. If it's something you can benefit from, we'll point you that way. *Numbercaste*'s got you covered."

Common, owner of *Numbercaste*, tells Patrick Udo, the main protagonist who has been hired by Common for the job. Common explains to Patrick his idea of the perfect world. "A world where you can name a man and I can tell you exactly how much he means to us... Not



just the money in his bank, but his actual worth as a member of his species. You can drive your expensive cars and roll out your stupid make-up, but in 10 years' time, none of that will matter. I am going to take this world and I am going to goddamn grind it into something more real," declares Common. He lives up to his word. It is a thrilling mission. If the reviewer reveals more, the suspense associated with the book would vanish. Since this book is a must-read for all who are interested in the future of the world, it is not advisable to disclose more than this.

The *Numbercaste* brought back memories of 1984, the dystopian novel authored by George Orwell in 1949. Though 1984 has come and gone, possibilities of the chances of the scenario portrayed by Orwell continue to haunt us. If there are some similarities between 1984 and *Numbercaste*, it could be coincidental. Time to go for a re-read of 1984 too. Sir Arjuna, who lives up to his part of his life in Sri Lanka and crafted some of the best sci-fi works while staying in the island. Who knows, Wijeratne may have a lot to offer the readers in the coming days. The climate and ambience of the island nation could be ideal for such literary pursuits.

# DU a guinea pig for UG curriculum reforms

Higher education in general and Delhi University in particular have undergone a lot of changes in undergraduate study pattern during the last eight years. Starting with a shift from annual mode to semester mode in 2010, semester mode to four-year undergraduate programme (better known as FYUP) in 2013, FYUP to again semester mode in 2014, and semester mode to "choice based credit system" (CBCS) in 2015. Latest in the loop is ongoing revision of all undergraduate courses in Delhi University based on UGC's learning outcome-based curriculum framework (LOCF) for the 2019-20 academic session. All the departments concerned have been given three months to complete this process. Interestingly, all these "reforms" have been announced all at a sudden and implemented in the very next year of the announcement.

However, the purpose of this article is to draw the attention of Delhi University's undergraduate curriculum committee towards some issues related to ongoing CBCS pattern that requires immediate attention.

As per the University Grants Commission (UGC), CBCS provides "a deft and type approach in which the students can take courses of their choice, learn at their own

pace, undertake additional courses and acquire more than the required credits and adopt an interdisciplinary approach to learning."

As CBCS enters its fourth year, a critical evaluation of the programme is in order, especially when the first batch of the CBCS passed out last year. Delhi University can be the best institution for the purpose of evaluation since it has been treated as guinea pig for all experiments related to "reforms" in higher education.

## CBCS and implications of interdisciplinary approach

Unlike all previous pattern of the undergraduate programme, CBCS is different due to its infusion of compulsory interdisciplinary approach in papers apart from compulsory language courses. The generic elective (GE, hereafter) is a course that needs to be compulsorily chosen from an unrelated discipline/subject. Every discipline is entitled to offer some papers as generic elective for honours students for the first four semesters and for non-honours students in the last two semesters.

CBCS necessitates all honours students to choose one generic paper from discipline other than their own in each of first four (1 to 4) semesters. Similarly students of non-honours courses are supposed to

choose one generic paper from discipline other than their own in each of last two semesters i.e. 5th semester and 6th semester. For instance every student of B.Com (Hons) is required to opt a generic paper each for first four semesters out of a pool of disciplines other than commerce i.e. maths, economics, business economics, history, political science, psychology, Hindi, English, etc.

In order to understand the problem, let us take an example of generic paper offered by department of commerce at undergraduate level in Delhi University. According to CBCS syllabus, department of commerce offered following papers for generic elective: microeconomics in the first semester, macroeconomics in the second semester, business statistics in the third semester and Indian economy in the fourth semester. These papers can be taken by students enrolled in any honours course other than B.Com (honours).

The experience of last three years of CBCS indicates that commerce generic was mostly opted by the students of Bachelor in Business Economics (BBE). There is an astonishing co-incidence that all those BBE students who opted for commerce discipline as generic paper were studying same papers as their core papers in

same semester for first three semesters, and one in the fifth semester. Similarly, the students of BA(Hons) Economics, BBA(FIA) and BMS were studying almost similar compulsory core paper(s) as they were studying (or studied) in their commerce generic.

In this way opting commerce as generic paper by the students of BBE and many other courses will not add anything to their knowledge but the repetition of same papers in the same semesters. Interestingly, students of BBE opt commerce generic mainly to lessen their burden. While preparing for one paper, other automatically gets prepared. However the question still remains: Will lessening burden at the cost of the other paper be helpful in long run?

## Teaching a group of heterogeneous students

Other significant problem lies in the fact that when students of different disciplines opt generic elective of a particular discipline, it brings together students of highly heterogeneous nature in terms of attitude, knowledge, aptitude and exposure. This makes teaching and learning even more challenging. For instance teaching generic of commerce discipline to the students of economics and BBE requires different skills than teaching

the same to the students of Hindi journalism, English, History, Sanskrit, etc. Unfortunately, these students of different disciplines are taught commerce generic together in the same class, where it is easier for some to grasp and very difficult for others.

It is not the case that concerns raised here are being faced only by commerce discipline, while offering its generic paper to the students of different disciplines or when students of commerce discipline are opting generic elective offered by other disciplines. But more or less similar problems are being faced by many disciplines since inception of CBCS pattern in 2015-16.

## CBCS and synchronisation of papers

The provision of introduction of a generic paper may have been with a noble cause but the lack of synchronisation during syllabus formulation is going to have a far-reaching impact on teaching learning process. For instance, prior to the introduction of CBCS, four compulsory papers of economics were being taught to the students pursuing BCom(Hons), but post CBCS, there is no compulsory paper of economics to be studied by them. However, students can opt economics as their generic

paper if they wish so, and they can also drop it anytime in the upcoming semester if they wish so.

Problem might arise when a student doesn't opt for economics as his generic elective, as in that particular case he will be exposed to mathematical applications without gaining any knowledge in the field of economics. In the absence of basic knowledge of economics, how fruitful that degree in commerce would be for the student is all together another matter of concern.

However, problems do not get over by avoiding economics by commerce students as they are required to study a compulsory core paper, Business Mathematics in their fourth semester. Interestingly this paper covers various mathematical tools related to maximisation and minimisation i.e. differentiation, integration, linear programming, simplex, input-output, etc. The application of differential calculus is used to find out maxima of revenue, output and profit functions, utility maximisation, minimisation of costs, marginal propensity to consume (MPC), marginal propensity to save (MPS), etc. Similarly integral calculus is used to obtain consumer's surplus, producer's surplus, etc. All these concepts are related to either microeconomics or macroeconomics, which were earlier compulso-

riety being taught to students of commerce before they were introduced the paper of Business Mathematics and Statistics. Since studying economics has been left on the choice of student in CBCS, they are being exposed to mathematical applications without gaining any concepts related to economics without being acquainted with related basic concepts of economics. This has resulted in mechanical way studying business mathematics without knowing the reason for using a particular application.

However, irrespective of the people responsible for poor formulation of syllabus while ignoring harmonisation of the syllabus offered by various departments, the ultimate loser are the students who lost the opportunity to study one additional paper by studying two same papers for four semesters or study some papers mechanically or the teachers who are required to teach a paper which is simultaneously being taught in other classroom to the same students.

This is the high time any new change in the CBCS format carried out homework with due consultation with all stakeholders rather than doing another exercise in haste.

(The writer is Assistant Professor of economics in Delhi University)

The provision of introduction of a generic paper may have been with a noble cause but the lack of synchronisation between various disciplines during syllabus formulation is going to have a far-reaching impact on teaching learning process



ANISH GUPTA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Erasing Tiananmen memories

China justifies its brutal Tiananmen actions in the name of maintaining stability. The Communist Party has used both algorithm and human editors to erase every sign of the massacre from China's history. Even posting a photo of the 1989 to commemorate the anniversary can land a person behind bars in China



MARKHAN SAIKIA

Just before the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests on June 4 this year, the Chinese State — considered by many as world's biggest censorship authority — removed all references of the historic event from the web pages in the country.

The most point is whether the Communist leadership is wary of the revival of such democratic uprisings in the mainland. Many political experts opine that deep inside Communist China, the fear of the explosion of the wrath of the Socialist State remains high.

What led to the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown? How the Communist bosses in Beijing responded? And how the international community wanted them to deal with this democratic awakening? The immediate cause of this uprising was no other than the demise of isolated Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang in April 1989. The main reason for his isolation was his strong views about economic and political liberalisation in China.

In fact, Yaobang was the one who helped navigate China away from orthodox Marxism and led the world's largest Communist Party for six years. His death triggered a spontaneous outpouring of public grief, with millions of youth coming out in protests seeking to restore his reputation and legacy for wide ranging reforms in areas such as free press, freedom of assembly and an end to official corruption across China.

However in a remarkable twist, this simple demand of the youngsters and ordinary people gradually transformed into a massive protest movement not only in the heart of capital city Beijing but across China. As many as one million people occupied the Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, making it one of the

largest protests in the history of modern China. The demonstrators refused to leave the Square for nearly seven weeks, until their demands for democratic reform were met by the authority. Throughout the day i.e. on June 3, the Government warned the protesters that it would do whatever is required to quell, what it described, the "social chaos".

The Communist bosses reacted by rolling Army tanks over these unarmed young protesters in the Tiananmen Square. According to a secret diplomatic cable, as many as 10,000 were killed on that fateful day. Many of the leading young leaders of the movement are now living in the US, according to information compiled by human rights in China, an NGO, based in Hong Kong and New York that promotes fundamental rights and freedoms in China.

No event like the Tiananmen Square protests has stirred such emotional outpouring from all walks of life around China and no event like it has brought so vehement condemnation upon China from the international community then and even now.

The Tiananmen Square protests remain a permanent taint on China. Then US President George Bush had said he deplored the use of force. And then UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher said she was shocked and appalled by the shootings.

While the entire world commemorated the 30th anniversary of this horrible clamdowner on non-violent human rights activists in Beijing, China keeps online mention of the historic incident within the country virtually non-existent.



In this June 1, 2019, file photo, a Taiwanese man takes a selfie with an inflatable tank man at the Liberty Square of Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. An artist erected the inflatable display in Taiwan's capital to mark an iconic moment in the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests in China

"horrible force". Kevin McCarthy, the current House Minority leader in the US House of Representatives, expressed his deep concern which truly symbolises what took place in China on June 4, 1989. "Thirty years later, the horrors of the Tiananmen Square Massacre continue to symbolise the Chinese Communist Party's inhuman grip on power. Today, the citizens of China have less freedom and their leadership remains opposed to the most basic of human rights. China suppresses the truth by attempting to sanitise its dark history. It runs concentration camps for religious minorities

and political dissidents. And it boasts of its imperial designs for global trade and disputed territory. That is what the generations of Chinese leadership is continuously doing to make the party precisely the only affair in every citizen's life.

However, unfortunately, it is not happening and many are not responding to its machinations today.

The secrecy and grand censorship machine of the Communist State makes it difficult to know even how many actually died in the Tiananmen Square movement. The party has used both algorithm and human editors to erase every sign of the massacre from

China's history.

Commemorating the anniversary, even by reposting a photo can land a person in detention across China. One of those memorable photos is that of "Tank Man" who played a game of chicken with an Army tank on June 5, just one day after the dreaded massacre in Tiananmen Square. But his fate is unknown as of today.

The most recent imprisonment related to the Tiananmen movement occurred on April 4 this year. A court in the South Western city of Chengdu sentenced activist Chen Bing to three and half years in prison for picking quarrels and provoking trouble. His main

offence was that he labeled bottles of "baijiu" alcohol with the iconic image of the lone protester who stared down tanks near the Tiananmen Square.

Much more than this, what the Chinese State does to the relatives and families of activists of this movement is really surprising and terrible. Each year, when the Tiananmen anniversary approaches, these families and their dear ones are placed under strict surveillance or taken on enforced tours outside the town.

Besides killing thousands in the Tiananmen Square protests, many thousands were put behind bars across China.

However, the authorities never acknowledged that the arrests were part of the "counter-revolutionary" drive.

Ironically, this month also, China defended the crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen protesters in a rare public acknowledgement of events. Defence Minister Wei Fenghe told in a regional forum in Singapore that the "incident was a political turbulence and the Central Government took measures to stop the turbulence, which is a correct policy". He further said, "The past thirty years have proved that China has undergone major changes because of the Government's action at that

time. China has enjoyed stability and development."

The statement from the Government functionary epitomises the brutal face of China that can do anything in the name of maintaining "stability" and "development". How far this madness of urbanisation and inhuman development would take China to is nobody guess. Development bereft of basic freedoms may not boost the Communist regime. Even iron curtains fall when its time comes.

The historic Tiananmen Square protests tarnished the image of the Communist Party like never before. Equally it undermined the legitimacy of its rule both within and outside China. Beijing needs to undertake democratic reform at the earliest. And it should embrace a new system based purely on "rule of law".

After decades of economic reform, Chinese people could realise their dream of national rejuvenation only when basic political freedoms are guaranteed to them.

The problem with China today is that they do not want to change as the liberal West wanted it to be. The successive Chinese leaders want the West to believe that they rule China with willful acceptance by the majority of people.

The nationalist Chinese autocracy, currently consolidated under Xi Jinping, would be a real terror both for its populace and for the rest of the world. When their revered leaders boast about China preaching and practicing "peaceful rise", why they are not allowing its own people to speak up against the party in non-violent manner? Crushing innocent and unarmed civilians does not qualify China to a dignified seat in the comity of global leadership.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

EVERYONE HAS INSIDE OF HIM A PIECE OF GOOD NEWS. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GREAT YOU CAN BE, HOW MUCH YOU CAN LOVE!  
— ANNE FRANK



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19  
You will have an inflexible approach towards health. View your method of dealing with health issues because chances are you are resistant to changing your ways for the better. All is well on the work front. Opportunities will be coming your way. Throughout the week, you will be full of inspiration, but you need to work as well to get the result. Forget the failures in the past, look ahead for a promising and bright future. Those looking for employment are likely to get the desired position. On the relationship front, those who are committed will find a deeper spiritual meaning with their partner. Those single should first consider where you are going before starting a new relationship. You should be careful as you have the tendency to become careless; this will put you in an adverse situation.  
**Lucky number 3**  
**Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22  
You will enjoy good health this week. If you are facing any health issues, be caring and loving towards your body. Women with strong feminine energy — could be your wife, mother, or a friend — will help you heal in this situation. Maintain a positive attitude and trust the universe's healing energy. Even if you are healthy, continue to take care of yourself. This is a crucial period on the career front. You will be excited about taking up a new project. This is a promising opportunity and will maximise your potential in the long term. Those looking for a new position, be assured it will be yours. Your romantic life is likely to go well. It is time to embrace change and take a long-term view of your future. It is recommended that you have a conversation with your partner. Singles should take some time out for their personal life.  
**Lucky number 10**  
**Lucky colour Yellow**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21  
Being in control of your emotions will be beneficial. It is crucial to treat your body with care and compassion. If you face any health issues, consult a doctor and trust him completely. An older male — your doctor, father, or a relative — will help you deal with health matters or motivate you to follow a fitness plan. You should have the determination to achieve your goals. Others may try to limit your capabilities, but you have to be confident to overcome any opposition. A few of you will undertake a new project. Those looking for jobs may face competition. Those in a relationship, do not hesitate to speak your mind to your partner as this will help strengthen your relationship. Those who are having issues must stand firm on their ground as there can be no compromise at this time. Singles might meet someone special.  
**Lucky number 10**  
**Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20  
This week, you need to pay close attention to your emotions. Better not to avoid any decision related to your health like getting a test done or surgery. Get key information that you need in moving ahead with decision-making. Make sure you have positive thinking and balanced behaviour. Work wise, things will go well. Chances of promotion are indicated. Don't hesitate to negotiate for what you are worthy, you might be surprised at the positive response. Use your abilities to harness your thoughts and conquer your fears for everyone's good. Those looking for a new job may find one. In your love life, you are aware of the existing issues. And the best part is you are not letting it disturb your relation, but in case it does, make changes to sort out the differences. It is a good time to start a new relationship.  
**Lucky number 21**  
**Lucky colour Purple**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22  
You will have all the positive energy to take good care of yourself and elevate your health. You should be open to new ideas for growth and development. Try to get a fresh perspective on life and be open to any kind of healing. At work, a situation may arise where you are about to complete a project/task, but at the end moment, you face a setback. Use your inner resources to overcome difficulties. Your hidden enemies will oppose you, so be strong. If you are thinking about whether you will be removed from a project or your job, expect the worst. It is an apt time to renew your love life. Express yourself to your partner and see how it strengthens your relationship. You are likely to explore other aspects of your relationship, which you haven't done earlier. Singles, before you enter a new relationship, be sure of what you want and then proceed.  
**Lucky number 28**  
**Lucky colour Red**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19  
This week, you are likely to neglect your physical as well as emotional health. Change this pattern and think about healthy lifestyle options. It is important to take rest and regain your physical, mental, and spiritual energies. You tend to become negative, which you need to get over to deal with health challenges. This week, your work-related goals or a certain project will be accomplished. With this, you will be weighed down by the responsibilities that come with it. You can delegate work and apply some time management ideas and take time out for some relaxation. This week is an excellent time for love. You are about to enter a loving phase in your life, filled with calm energy and deeper understanding. Those who are committed will find their relationship going to higher levels. Singles, this is the time to go out and mingle.  
**Lucky number 25**  
**Lucky colour Indigo**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20  
Healthwise, your biggest payoff lies in the routine. Make slow and steady progress. You have to take up responsibility and take charge of a situation. You have it in you to be thorough and deal with issues successfully. You may face a dilemma at your workplace, which demands action or decision. Before you go ahead with your decision, analyse all the available information as it is of great importance. Your own value system may be challenged, if that is the case, then stay true to yourself. You may need to choose right looking upon long-term benefits. With regard to your love life, this is a very good time. Those who are committed will move to the next level. You are likely to have a peaceful and happy love life. Overall, you will be content and so will be others around you.  
**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour Brown**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22  
This week, you will experience an upswing in terms of your health. With positive health comes happiness. You will realise that you have come a full circle, whether it is in career or relationships. Your health will be good, so be grateful for what you have. To continue this feeling, contribute to the world with what you have now. Things are not that perfect in your workplace. Practise active listening to ensure that you and your co-workers know each other perfectly. Some of you may feel disconnected as you are unsure of your destination. You need to let go of your mental blocks or negativity. Be calm and let your inner voice guide you. You are at that point in your relationship where you need to decide whether or not to stay with your beloved or move on. The decision will surely affect your future.  
**Lucky number 8**  
**Lucky colour Black**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18  
You will have strong vitality this week. Advancing the level of your fitness regime will fetch you great results. You will be able to address any health issue that arises at this time and mental energies are in control. Your determination will help you lead a healthy life. Career-wise, you will be able to achieve a lot in a short time. Even in the time of difficulties, you will be active and sustain your creative vision. It is indicated that you will be focussed on your goals while being friendly to those around you. Ensure that you don't burn yourself out with your over-ambitious attitude. A woman will be helpful in your current situation at work. Pay attention to your ideas and your partner's as well. This approach will put you in harmony with your partner. Singles may find someone really special.  
**Lucky number 6**  
**Lucky colour Off-white**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22  
This week, your health will be overshadowed by worry. Even a minor health challenge will make you feel low. Your psychological state will be better if you, therefore, need to stop worrying about the future and think what needs to be done now. Draw upon your inner strength to maintain your flexibility. On the career front, things will be going good for you. This is the time when issues related to your interaction with others will come to an end. A certain compromise will create a harmonious environment. Those who are experiencing stress need to take some time off and spend quality time with close ones. With regard to your love life, this week you will be inspired and motivated about your relationship with your partner. Those who are single, the start of a new love relationship is indicated. Make yourself available for love, whichever way possible.  
**Lucky number 7**  
**Lucky colour Peach**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21  
You will be disciplined when it comes to health. Those who are suffering from an ailment, plan a health regime which suits your body. You are going to have full control over your emotional energies, so enjoy this time. On the career front, you will trust yourself and your abilities. Those who are unhappy with their current position can expect a bright future as new opportunities are likely to come your way. Your strong desire to make changes will open up a path to success. These seeking jobs may find one. In romance, you are likely to face some challenges. You should convey your feelings to your partner and spend some time apart. When difficult times are over, you can make the important decision of whether or not to continue your relationship. This decision will affect your future as well. Singles should not rush into a relationship.  
**Lucky number 23**  
**Lucky colour Magenta**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20  
You will receive good news related to your health and will feel extremely well at this time. You should be thankful for good health and stay positive. You will be feeling optimistic about your future. Don't be laidback and continue working towards your good health. On the career front, things are not that great. At this time, you need to stay calm and reassess your situation and what you are expecting from your job. Chances are that you might achieve your goal. Still, you should consult a trusted friend or a career counsellor as it will help you have a new perspective on your current situation. Love life seems to be confusing as you are questioning whether or not to stay in a relationship. The decision will affect your present and your future. Singles, this may not be a good time to get into a relationship.  
**Lucky number 24**  
**Lucky colour Parrot green**  
**Lucky day Saturday**

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# Life is nothing but paradoxical

Life in its usual run is subject to twists and turns — sometimes pleasant and at other times full of pain. It is ever on its run, continuously undergoing change, as the conditions within and beyond keep varying. There is no scope for having a perfect situation in life. There comes a time when the gross body loses its dynamism and turns into a dead matter. It is true about every finite existence. The duration of stay may, though, vary from person to person. There is no standard of measure worth the name to account for one's life span in finite terms. We all are aware of this existential truth. Yet, it is difficult to bear with when a near and dear one departs from the world. It is still more shocking if it comes about at a young age. Life, therefore, is paradoxical. The other day, a grieving father sent a heart touching message: "Big brother, my dear son left us today. Feeling totally lifeless. Prayer and everything failed to keep him alive." The message left me shivering for a few moments. If this news could knock me down so badly, one can only imagine the plight of the grieving father who lost his only son at the young age of 23. I knew that no pep talk

could assuage the feelings of someone faced with such a devastating happening. So, I thought of trying to refresh him with the existential truth. Even that may not so easily calm down his emotional volatility. It may, however, offer him grounds that may help him come out of this sooner than later. Remember my friend, going by ancient India's philosophic perception, the run of life doesn't end with gross body becoming a dead matter. In fact, death is an opportunity to shed the incapacitated body and reincarnate with a fresh encasement in all strength. Your son had to bear with excruciating pain during the last one year of his chronic ailment. You need to appreciate that with his death, having discharged his Karmic debt of being faced with such a harrowing ordeal, he has moved beyond, and so stands relieved. Bear in mind: A *jeevatma* (a live being) with form and name is structured in three layers — gross, subtle, and causal bodies, the three driven by soul (the element of consciousness). On death, it is just the gross body, which is nothing but agglomeration of matter, disintegrates. Its five con-



stituents — space, air, fire, water, and earthly matter — merge with their primal source. The subtle and causal bodies that are pure energy platforms do not withdraw away, as would the laws of conservation of energy mean. The soul carries along the causal and subtle bodies, having in store all the memory imprints picked up during live existence, to reincarnate with a fresh gross body encasement. So, life needs to be seen in succession. Should you grieve, the *jeevatma's* attention is drawn, which may disturb its onward journey. Better pray for his smooth transition. "I appreciate your point and shall try to follow your advisory. But don't you think that this unforeseen happening puts a question mark on the very relevance of Astrology? For, with whatever knowledge of Astrology I have, Jupiter being the 6th lord was just indicative of health issues but not death as it doesn't happen to be seen in succession. Should you grieve, not questioning you, couldn't you see in his chart the possibility of departure from the world so early?" the man asked. Well, going by the traditional norms of Astrology, his death didn't seem likely. But the death-inflicting 8th curpy sub-lord Saturn (as per Krishnamurthy

system) did indicate the possibility of death during Jupiter's period. For, Jupiter occupying the *nakshatra* owned by Saturn, would act as latter's agent, potent enough to make it happen. Even the progressed Sun having become square (adverse 90 degrees placement) to natal Moon, carries the probability of losing life. Even transit Saturn conjunct unpredictable Neptune, and also square to its dire enemy Mars did not augur well for his survival either. Here again, Jupiter simultaneously signified recovery from ailment in strong terms. For, Jupiter's *nakshatra* lord Saturn happens to be the 5th lord, which being 12th from the 6th, will serve as latter's antidote. With such contrasting indicators in place, what would one be tempted to lay importance to — raise the hope of survival so that one tries to combat the situation in all strength, or indicate death and make the person lose the battle much before it even happens? 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  
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