



THE TIMES OF INDIA



TRUMP TO SKIP WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER, 1ST US PREZ IN 36 YRS TO DO SO 14

THERE'S AN 'ALLIANCE OF SUBVERSION' ON CAMPUSES, SAYS ARUN JAITLEY 10

HARDIK TO ADDRESS 1ST RALLY IN AHMEDABAD AFTER HIS SIX-MONTH EXTERMENT 9

HSC exams begin tomorrow

Lakhs of students across the state are set to take the HSC board exams starting on Tuesday even as counsellors are working overtime to help them. On February 28, nearly 3.4 lakh students in Mumbai division will appear for English paper. **P2**

White House staffer in hijab quits in 8 days

A hijab-wearing White House staffer of Bangladeshi origin has said she quit her job after President Donald Trump announced his travel ban, lasting just eight days in the new administration. Rumana Ahmed was hired in 2011. **P14**

Bar girls move SC against state law

An association of dancers, waitresses, singers and performers working in bars and hotels in Maharashtra has moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of a 2016 law prohibiting dances by women in these establishments. **P2**

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CBSE to now review textbooks

CBSE will now periodically review textbooks of private publishers prescribed by its affiliated schools. The decision was taken after several meetings between HRD ministry, CBSE and NCERT. **P10**

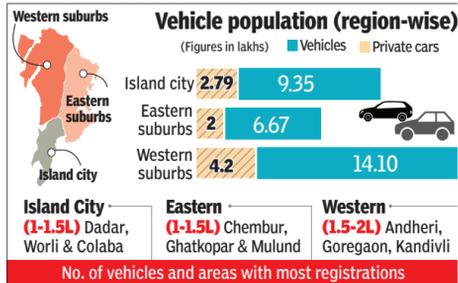
Dadar, Andheri & Chembur top in vehicle registrations

50% Surge In Past Five Years: RTO

Somit.Sen@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: With the city's vehicular population surging by up to 50% in five years, transport officials have identified "hotspots" in the island city, eastern and western suburbs which have maximum registrations of cars and two-wheelers. While there is no way one can stop registration of new vehicles here, these areas have been the biggest contributors to the vehicular burden on roads, whose total length has stagnated at

PVT CARS OCCUPY 85% OF ROAD SPACE



2,000km for many years. Officials said the "hotspots", defined in terms of burgeoning motor vehicle population, crossed the one lakh mark due to a surge in car sales or demand for more two-wheelers. In Andheri and Goregaon, in the western suburbs, it will touch the two lakh mark in few months, sources said. Topping the charts were Da-

dar (island city), Andheri (western suburbs) and Chembur (eastern suburbs), officials said. Deputy RTO Sanjay Sasane (eastern suburbs) said, "In upmarket localities like Powai, car registrations have gone up drastically in the past few years. We receive several applications for high-end cars and SUVs. Chembur has the most registrations, with almost every middle class household having a car or a bike/scooter. In many state housing board colonies in Ghatkopar and Mulund, residents want two-wheelers to commute to the railway station daily, which has led to a surge in the number of bikes and scooters."

► **Congested roads, P5**

At ₹450/quintal, onion prices dive to 5-yr low

The downward spiral of onion prices in the state continues with the kitchen essential touching a five-year low. The average price that farmers have received for one quintal of onions has been Rs 450 in recent days, reports Bhavika Jain.

The data from Lasalgaon APMC, the biggest market yard for onions in the country, shows that the average price for one quintal of onion was Rs740 in February 2016, when the state was reeling under a severe drought. The cost of production for one quintal is Rs950. The prices were the highest in 2013 with farmers getting Rs 1,424 per quintal. **P4**

Non-Marathies in BMC will ruin Mumbai: Sena

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Mumbai: Shiv Sena's mouthpiece Saamna has warned Marathi Mumbaiers that BJP's deep forays into Mumbai in the recently held civic elections could potentially sever the city from Maharashtra. Blaming lack of unity among Marathies for BJP's rise, Sena leader and executive editor of the paper Sanjay Raut accused the BJP of using its wealth and power to win seats in the corporation elections. The signed Saamna editorial charged the BJP with stitching a loose alliance of non-Marathies, including Gujaratis and Jains, to win an astounding number of seats—82, again-

“A large number of non-Marathies have been voted to the BMC...they flaunt their wealth and think they can buy out everything. For them, Mumbai is just an instrument to usurp wealth... It is a warning bell for Marathi Mumbaiers Sanjay Raut | SENA MP

st the Sena's 89—and said this could precipitate the process of cutting Mumbai off from the state. "The BJP's showing is a warning bell to all Marathi Mumbaiers," it said.

► **'BJP's gameplan', P5**

UP phase 5: Spotlight on 'bahubalis'

The fifth round of UP polls will be fought on Monday in 51 assembly constituencies of 11 districts in the Awadh-Terai belt and eastern UP where election discourse is dominated by bahubalis, royalty and local satraps. Besides Muslims, Brahmins and Thakurs, substantial number of non-Yadav backward classes and non-Jatav dalits will play a crucial role in this backward, but agriculturally rich region. Pollsters do not rule out the possibility of communal polarization following series of caustic remarks by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. In 2012, SP dominated by winning 36 out of 51 seats. **TNN P9**

Army jobs test paper leaked, retd officer held

Gitesh Shelke & Sandip Dighe | TNN

Mumbai: In a coordinated pre-dawn action, the police in Pune, Nagpur and Panaji detained 21 suspects for leaking the question paper of an army recruitment exam conducted on Sunday. The joint action was led by Thane police's crime branch, which detected the paper leak. The detainees include a retired army officer and a senior paramilitary officer.

Army and police sources confirmed that the leaked question paper matched the original one set by the army recruitment board.

The paper was being circulated on a cellphone messaging service to the beneficiaries, the police said. The exam was for the posts of soldiers (general duty, clerk and tradesmen). The educational qualifications for the

Vyapam: Agents shielded by 'dead'

The CBI probe into the Vyapam scam has found at least 96 instances in which candidates lied that the middlemen who hired proxies to appear for the test were dead. When the scam surfaced, candidates were asked to give the names of middlemen. But they gave the names of people unrelated to the scam to shield the proxies and the middlemen. **P8**

jobs range from Class 8 to Class 12-pass.

A lance naik with an army depot in Khadki and the director of a private academy for services job aspirants at Paltan in Satara district were among the nine suspects detained in Pune.

► **'Organised racket', P3**

17 churchgoers in truck killed in road mishap

Shillong: At least 17 people were killed and 62 injured when a truck ferrying them to a church service overturned after it hit a concrete railing in Meghalaya's West Khasi Hills district on Sunday.

The incident took place around 8.30am at Nongpung village, about 11 km from the district headquarters at Nongstoin. "The truck overturned after hitting

9 TOURISTS DROWN IN TN BOAT CAPSIZE: P8

the railing at the side of the road due to overspeeding," superintendent of police of West Khasi Hills Sylvester Nongtnger said.

Twelve people died at the accident spot, while five succumbed to their injuries at the Nongstoin Civil Hospital, the SP said.

Those seriously injured were taken to different hospitals including Shillong Civil Hospital and NEIGR-HIMS. People from three villages were travelling in the truck and were on their way to Nonglang village to attend a Synod. **AGENCIES**

Brothers, both comp science grads, held for IS plot in Guj

Sarfraz.Shahikh @timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat anti-terrorist squad (ATS) on Saturday night arrested two brothers—Waseem Ramodiya and Naeem Ramodiya—alleged to have links with Islamic State. The brothers belong to Rajkot. Sources in the Gujarat ATS claimed that the brothers had been under surveillance for nearly two years.

IS man from Kerala killed in Af drone hit

K Hafeesudheen, a Kerala youth who had left with 10 others last June to join Islamic State, has been killed in a drone strike in Afghanistan, a relative who got a message, said. **P8**

Senior ATS officials alleged that the Ramodiya brothers were planning a terror attack

on the famous Goddess Chamunda temple at Chotila near Rajkot. Naeem was arrested from Bhavnagar and his brother, Waseem, from Rajkot city in separate operations. This is the first instance of IS suspects being held in Gujarat.

The ATS also recovered chemical powder used in firecrackers, batteries, IS literature and several audio clips.

► **'Social media use', P10**

Shankaracharyas multiply, so do legal tangles

Sheo S Jaiswal | TNN

Haridwar: The recent episode of a Haridwar-based sadhu, Swami Achyutananda, who anointed himself as shankaracharya of the Dwarka Sharda peeth on Mahashivratri day has brought into focus the proliferation of shankaracharyas across the country. Adi

Shankaracharya who started the monastic order set up only four maths whose chiefs were to be ordained as shankaracharyas.

4 TO OVER 50

But it is estimated that over 50 seers have proclaimed themselves as shankaracharyas of various peeths, altho-

ugh exact numbers are hard to come by. Disputes and litigation are ongoing in many.

In the Dwarka Sharda peeth, for instance, there are currently three seers, including Achyutananda, who have declared themselves shankaracharya. Swami Swaroopananda, the incumbent shankaracharya of the peeth, soon after

Achyutananda's anointment, claimed he would file a criminal case against the seer.

Haridwar sadhus say that the move by "a few individuals who are desperate to grab high religious offices by any means" is giving the seer community a bad name.

► **'Stringent eligibility', P10**

Star not to bid for Team India jersey

Amid the ICC-BCCI standoff and the continuing tussle in the apex court, Star TV has decided not to bid for Team India jersey rights. "The commitments being asked for are too onerous without any clarity," Uday Shankar, Star India chairman and CEO, told TOI. **P17**

Trader molests 2 airhostesses, held

Two airhostesses of Jet flight 9S 24460 were allegedly molested by a 23-year-old drunk hardware trader, identified as Akash Gupta, on a Mumbai-Nagpur flight on Saturday. The duo gave a written complaint to the flight captain against the accused returning from Goa. **P8**

Oyo Rooms eyes unicorn club entry

Budget hotel aggregator Oyo Rooms is in talks with Japan's SoftBank—an existing investor—for a \$500-million round of financing, which is expected to catapult it into the so-called unicorn club of tech startups that are valued at \$1 billion or more. **P15**

BEST told to pay ₹24L in damages

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal has ordered BEST to pay compensation of around Rs 24 lakh to a youth who was left completely disabled after a bus hit the two-wheeler on which he was riding pillion in 2013. The biker was killed in the hit-and-run incident. **P5**

BEEES SHOW BRAIN POWER OF INSECTS



Intelligent insects? You wouldn't think so until you considered the humble bumblebee. In the latest triumph for one of humanity's favorite insects, bumblebees learned how to push a ball to the centre of a platform for an experiment. Now, it may be premature to train them to play chess, but scientists say the bees show that just because a brain is small doesn't mean it is simple

A GIANT STEP

- > In the experiment, reported in the journal *Science*, researchers trained bees to push a little ball to the centre of a platform
- > The task was completely arbitrary for the bees as they don't do anything like this in nature, where they seek out flowers for nectar and pollen
- > So, it was a brand new behaviour demanding some kind of general ability to learn

SMART LEARNERS

- > The bees learned best by watching a fellow bee perform the feat. That kind of imitation is social learning, say the researchers, more often seen in animals with much bigger brains, like monkeys
- > Honeybees use a tail-shaking behaviour called the waggle dance to tell each other where to fly for flowers with nectar, and to signal how good the nectar is
- > That's like twerking the address of the supermarket and also giving a review of its produce section

Bees have nearly a million brain cells, compared with about **250,000** brain cells in the fruit fly



SO, CAN INSECTS THINK?

Clint Perry, a bumblebee trainer at Queen Mary University of London, says a number of recent experiments have shown that "insects can solve problems, they can learn"

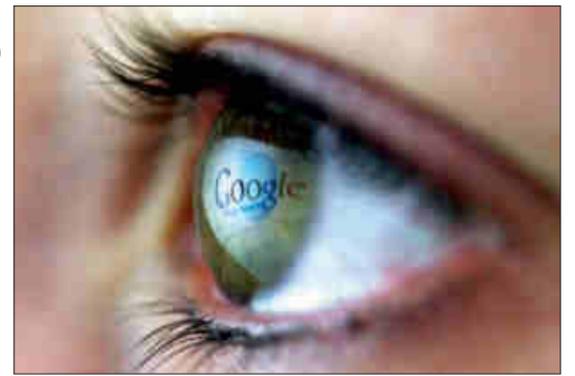
Evidence shows that even fruit flies remember and choose between alternative actions

But scientists have yet to define the limits of the mental abilities of insects, once thought to be little automatons, hard-wired to take certain specific actions

Source: NYT

Thousands of people on online forums have faced it in some form or the other, yet trolling as a phenomenon seemingly continues to grow unchecked. But Google has come up with an artificial intelligence tool designed to counter offensive posts. Here's how it could be of help

GOOGLE'S BUILT A WEAPON AGAINST TROLLS



Targeting Trolls

- > Google last week released an artificial intelligence tool, called Perspective, that scans online content and rates how "toxic" it is based on ratings by thousands of people
- > Nearly half of US internet users say they have experienced online intimidation
- > Women, particularly young women and women of color, are disproportionately targeted

Big Database

- > To build a model that can predict hate speech, the developers acquired a data set of 17 million reader comments from the New York Times
- > They also mined the comment sections of Wikipedia and collected data from victims of online harassment who had kept a record of their experiences
- > Several thousand people were then hired to rate the comments as toxic or



not toxic, and also say whether they thought such comments were personal attacks

- > Toxicity scores were determined based on the responses
- > Jared Cohen, president of Jigsaw, the Google think tank (previously called Google Ideas), said Perspective was a work in progress and would only improve if people contributed to it

How Does The Tool Work

- > You can feed an online comment board into Perspective and see the percentage of users that said it was toxic
- > The toxicity score can help people decide whether they want to participate in the conversation. News sites can also use the tool to monitor their comment boards
- > People can also feed specific words and phrases into Perspective to check how they've been rated



All-Round Efforts

- > Earlier this month, Twitter — a platform where trolling is rife — launched new tools to clamp down on it
- > It said it would begin retaining more user data so as to prevent people who have harassed other people from deleting their accounts and then reemerging under a new username
- > It also said it was tweaking its algorithms to flag certain tweets as "potentially abusive or low-quality"
- > Hack Harassment, a group founded by Intel, Vox Media and Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, is working to raise awareness on trolling



Source: The Washington Post

A ₹9 crore 'super' buffalo that earns ₹50 lakh a year

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Allahabad: His daily diet consists of 20 litres milk, 10kg fruit - mostly apple—carrot and beetroot, 5kg green fodder and 5kg hay and his daily exercise is a 5km walk. Super buffalo Yuvraj has turned into a centre of attraction at the ongoing Gramodaya Mela, Chitrakoot, on the border of UP and MP, organised by the Union government at Surendra Pal Gramodaya Field, Deendayal Campus.

Weighing 15 quintals, the nine-year-old buffalo is now a prize catch and worth Rs 9.25 crore. Kurukshetra (Harayana) resident owner of Yuvraj, Karamveer Singh told TOI on phone, "Yuvraj is like a family member and we have reared it like a child. I spend Rs



Yuvraj's owners spend up to Rs 4,000 a day in feeding the 'super' buffalo. His daily diet consists of 20 litres milk, 10kg fruit—mostly apple—carrot and beetroot, 5kg green fodder and 5kg hay

3,000 to 4,000 per day on its diet and other essentials." He added that Yuvraj's has helped in artificial insemination of several milch buffaloes—a single discharge of 10-14 ml is diluted to prepare 700 to 900 doses.

Asked how much revenue the buffalo generates, Karamvir said it was to the tune of Rs 50 lakh per year, though

a lot has to be spent on its upkeep too. "The money earned helps the family ensure a sound upkeep of other cattle, added Karamvir.

"People know me as the owner of Yuvraj. A South African company contacted me last year and appraised me about its actual value," said Karamveer.



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Justice after 43 yrs: HC reinstates, restores pension for RPF guard

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Mumbai: Three decades after being dismissed from service, despite an exoneration over a charge of assaulting a colleague in 1974, a former Railway Protection Force (RPF) guard with the Central Railway finally has his position, pension and rights restored with the Bombay high court coming to his rescue.

In a classic case of justice being slow, but sure, the HC directed Railways to give Amar Singh, now 74 years old, all his pension and dues within two months.

Justice M S Sonak criticized the manner in which the railway administration penalized the RPF man and upheld an order passed two decades ago by the city civil court to set aside Singh's 1984 dismissal. The subordinate court had, in 1997, ordered his reinstatement

with all consequential benefits. Two years later, the Centre moved HC to appeal against the reinstatement order.

"No finding of guilt can be recorded on the basis of mere suspicion," held the HC, while dismissing the appeal, and termed "perverse" an order of a disciplinary committee.

In April 1982, the railway served Singh, a rakshak in RPF since 1960, with a chargesheet alleging that on April 6, 1974, when posted at Kuria, he was found underneath a second-class coach in a western railway yard in suspicious circumstances at 2am, and when apprehended by a colleague for suspected theft, had fled after assaulting him. An inquiry committee had exonerated Singh after finding no evidence against him as the colleague had "totally

denied the incident of apprehending him or being assaulted" and said he had merely told another RPF colleague that he had seen "some outsider who appeared to be like Singh".

The Railways, after even delaying the service of appeal papers on Singh, cited three legal issues to challenge the reinstatement order,

each of which the HC said lacked merit. One was that Singh's plea against the dismissal had earlier been rejected by HC and thus barred from being heard again by any other court. But Singh's lawyer said there was no legal bar since it was not rejected on merit, but only to enable him to move the city civil court, which he did in 1985. The HC agreed. It also observed that "the chargesheet was issued after inordinate and unexplained delay of eight years" and its contents

were vague. The HC also observed that the inquiring authority had exonerated him, but a disciplinary authority, in breach of fair play and natural justice, chose to disagree with the findings and penalized him with pay reduction for two years in 1983. The HC said the disciplinary authority's decision was "legally infirm" and "also vitiated by non-application of mind and perversity".

A revisional authority then, on its own, dismissed him from service in 1984, an order which the court found lacked any merit.

There was a stay by the HC on the reinstatement order. Had he been reinstated, he would have retired 16 years ago and got all benefits. "To prolong his agony any further... will be neither just nor proper," said Justice Sonak and directed the railways to expedite handing him his terminal benefits.



30 fake docs' discharge pleas rejected in 2001 case

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Mumbai: Deprecating the act of 30 'fake' doctors of filing discharge applications in an attempt to protract the trial in a 16-year-old case, a magistrate's court rejected their pleas and imposed a penalty of Rs 5,000 on each of them.

In 2001, the EOW had arrested over 300 'bogus' doctors who allegedly procured 'fake' Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery degrees from other states, registered with Maharashtra Medical Council of India and were practising in Mumbai. Police had also arrested then registrar Mohammed Usmani for aiding and abetting the accused. Of the 300 accused, 30 were booked for cheating and forgery. The matter came up for trial before magistrate SV Sahare.

In December 2016, the magistrate observed that charges levelled against a few of the accused were not proper—IPC section 467 was not applicable to all—and said the charges need to be "modified". Defence lawyers said that if fresh charges were to be framed against the accused, all previous charges would stand vitiated and they could seek discharge under the Criminal Procedure Code.

In January, one of the accused, Sunil Patwardhan, filed a discharge application saying "the FIR was based on hearsay and filed with ulterior motive". It was signed by 29 co-accused.

The prosecutor opposed the plea saying it was a "serious offence" in which charges were framed in 2007 and altered in 2016. "It is nothing but protracting tactics. The conduct of accused persons shows they do not want to get the trial to proceed. Such conduct is deprecated," the magistrate observed.

Two booked for abetting colleague's suicide

Pradeep Gupta

Kalyan: Police on Saturday booked two senior Employee's State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) officials for abetting the suicide of a colleague, Ashok Pawar (58).

Pawar was found hanging from a nylon rope in his flat at Ashokdeep Society, Sakharam Complex, in Dombivli (E) on January 22. In his suicide note, Pawar, an assistant vigilance officer, blamed P V Pewekar and Rajshakar Singh for his death. Pawar's family alleged that he had unearthed irregularities in the department, after which he was being harassed by seniors. His wife Vandana told police her husband was upset as Pewekar and Singh threatened to transfer him.

Vishnu Nagar police had registered an accidental death report but after detailed investigations, they booked the two on the basis of the suicide note and statements of other staffers.

DRILL FALLS OFF TRAILER, LUCKILY AT NIGHT

Agniva Banerjee



WHAT IF THIS OCCURRED ON A HIGHWAY: This vehicle-mounted drill fell off a speeding trailer truck around 12.45am on Sunday at Mazgaon Circle, in front of the sales tax head office. No one was hurt in this bizarre accident, though civic property was damaged. The incident shows yet again that heavy loads on trailers are sometimes not clamped properly. Such loads are usually heavy sheet metal rolls and construction equipment

HSC students dial for help as exams begin tomorrow

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Mumbai: As lakhs of students across the state get set to take the HSC board exams starting on Tuesday, counsellors are working overtime to help them beyond the academics. Mental health experts have just one advice for the students: Relax.

On February 28, nearly 3.4 lakh students in Mumbai division, which also includes Thane, Raigad and Palghar, will appear for English paper. The board has set up 10 counselling helplines that have been ringing constantly over the past few days. Similarly, iCALL, a helpline of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), has been receiving 75 to 100 calls every day.

"We have been receiving over 100 calls every day. A lot of them are from students who are prepared for the exam but are still scared. There are students who want tips on time management and then there is a section of students calling with technical doubts," said Pawan Gaikwad, a counsellor appointed by the state board. He added that they are also attending to stressed parents and pranks calls.

Mental health professionals said it is necessary that students understand that the board exam is not the most important exam in life. "The board exam marks do not count down the line. Once a student is successful in life, which they can be irrespective of what they score in SSC and HSC, nobody is bothered about the boards. Parents need to help children understand this. With less pressure, the students will only perform better," said clinical psychologist Seema Hingorany.

Psychiatrists say parents should create an environment at home that would allow students to relax before the big day. "Discussions on studies should be avoided at dinner table and parents

TESTING TIME FOR KIDS

557 Exam centres
HSC students in Mumbai: 3,39,672

GIRLS 1,82,293
BOYS 1,57,379

Science: 96,658
Commerce: 1,83,392
Arts: 54,364

EVALUATORS' PROTEST
The junior college teachers' federation has decided to correct only one paper a day if their pending demands are not met before March 3.

HELPLINES (8am to 8pm) 9922453235
9763667416 | 9665192156 | 9403358998
8087800155 | 9422053391 | 9960760114
9890054518 | 9923800937 | 9881849042

MUMBAI DIVISION (10 am to 6pm)
022-27881075, 022-27893756

After paper leaks in 2 yrs, board asks teachers not to use mobiles

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Mumbai: The HSC exams are a big test for the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education as the book-keeping and accounts question papers got leaked in the last two years. Board officials want to ensure there isn't a repeat.

"The papers were circulated on WhatsApp, so we are asking supervisors and cent-

re heads not to use mobile phones," said Siddheshwar Chandekar, secretary of the Mumbai division. Last year, students had images of question paper almost half an hour before the exam.

The board has also reduced the number of sub-centres. "This year, we have sub-centres only if a centre cannot accommodate the students assigned to them. This will ensure papers don't travel through too many hands," said Chandekar.

must try to crack jokes with the children so they can unwind. Parents must also avoid angry outbursts which could stress the child. Besides, they should also keep

children away from calls by curious relatives and avoid discussing the paper after the student has appeared for it," said psychiatrist Dr Harish Shetty.

Now, Sena 'contacts' Bandra MIM corporator

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Mumbai: After the BMC election results, parties have begun wooing corporators to add to their kitty. One of the two MIM corporators is currently in touch with Shiv Sena

Sources told TOI on Sunday that Sena has approached Gulnaz Salim Qureishi, the newly elected corporator from ward 92 (Bharat Nagar, Bandra east). "Senior Sena leaders met Gulnaz's husband Salim Qureishi on Sunday," said a source. However, Salim denied being in touch with the Sena. "We are waiting for directions from our leaders in Hyderabad. We will do whatever our leaders say," said Salim.

CORP CONTROL

Salim left Congress a couple of years ago and has been an active member of MIM. MIM legislator Waris Pathan said MIM corporators would not ditch the party.

"I don't think any of our corporators will switch sides. We have fought and won these two seats with hard work. Both our representatives are committed members of the party," said Pathan. After MIM's dismal performance, Pathan had said Muslims backed Congress in a big way. If an MIM corporator joins the Shiv Sena, it will be a big blow to the Hyderabad-headquartered party.

MIM has two seats in the state assembly, Byculla and Aurangabad. Its leader Akbaruddin Owaisi had addressed over 30 meetings in the city during the campaign for the BMC polls. But the party won just two seats, Bharat Nagar and Cheetah Camp.

Over 50% in the fray for BMC seats lost deposits

More Than 1,100 Aspirants Forfeited ₹43L

VijayV.Singh@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The Shiv Sena and BJP may boast that they have secured more than half the total votes polled in the BMC polls, but their candidates have been resoundingly trounced in many electoral wards to the extent that they have lost their deposits.

Aspirants lose their deposit if they are unable to get 1/8th of the votes polled. While as many as 2,244 candidates fought the civic polls, 1,162 lost their deposits to the tune of Rs 43.63 lakh. Each candidate has to deposit Rs 5,000 (Rs 2,500 for reserved category candidates) to contest the civic polls.

Candidates losing their deposits implies that they don't have adequate public support, or worse, they are "non-serious", say political observers. Many candidates from the BJP, Shiv Sena, Congress, MNS and NCP lost their deposits, which indicates that their parties have negligible presence in some wards. The five major parties secured 84% of the total 51,03,913 votes polled in the civic election held on February 21. In the wards where candidates from major parties lost their deposits, most of votes polled went to the winning candidate and runner-up.

More NCP and MNS aspirants had their deposits forfeited compared to those from the Shiv Sena, BJP and Congress. For instance in ward 25 (Kandivali east) a total of 15,466 votes were cast, out of which Shiv Sena candidate Madhuri Bhoir won after securing 7,185 and the BJP aspirant secured 6,792 votes, hopefuls from the Congress (778 votes), MNS (275 votes) and NCP (105 votes) lost their deposits. In

VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE



Tense moments for aspirants at a counting station in Dadar

IGNOMINIOUS DEFEATS			
Seats where maximum number of candidates got less than the requisite number of votes			
WARD NO.	AREA	TOTAL NO. CANDIDATES WHO LOST DEPOSITS	
139	Lotus Colony-Shivaji Nagar junction	19	> Each candidate needs to deposit ₹5,000 (₹2,500 for aspirants in reserved categories) with the BMC's election department to contest the civic polls > An aspirant's deposit is forfeited, if he/she is unable to secure unable to get 1/8th of the total votes polled
141	Annabhau Sathe Nagar, Mankhurd	18	
184	Dharavi	17	
150	Garib Janta Nagar, Chembur	17	
108	Rahul Nagar, Mulund	17	
23	Thakur Village, Kandivli east	17	

Sena may file PIL in missing voters row

The Shiv Sena, which has taken a serious note of names missing from the voters' list, is likely to file a PIL. The party has urged aggrieved citizens to lodge a complaint on the Election Commission's helpline or approach the local shakha.

"We intend to gather information on those who voted during the last assembly election, but did not find their names in the voters' list during the BMC polls. More than 12 lakh names went missing from the electoral list and this has affected voting. We have decided to approach the court as many people were deprived of their fundamental right," Sena MP Anil Desai told TOI. Meanwhile, the Sena plans to move the Bombay high court in connection the victory of BJP candidate Atul Shah from ward 220, where due to a tie, a four-year-old picked the winner. TNN

ward 211 (Madanpura-Byculla), 21,772 votes were cast, of which SP candidate Rais Shaikh won the election with 9,455 votes and the Congress

candidate got 7,081. Nominees of the Shiv Sena and BJP lost their deposits as they secured 714 and 761 votes respectively.

Sena stalwarts begin jockeying for positions of power in BMC

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Mumbai: There is more trouble ahead for the Shiv Sena. Besides the battle to get the numbers to win the mayoral elections, the party is having a tough time accommodating heavyweights who have won the civic elections. Party insiders fear ego clashes and infighting as senior corporators have staked claim on the two key positions in the BMC, the mayor's chair and the post of standing committee chairperson.

Some party stalwarts in the new BMC House are former mayors Vishakha Raut, Milind Vaidya, Shradha Jadhav, two-term corporator and vibhag pramukh Mangesh Satamkar, Ashish Chemburkar and three-term corporator Kishori Pednekar and incumbent mayor Snehal Ambekar.

KEY POSTS UP FOR GRABS

> **Mayor** | This a crucial post, though it doesn't have any executive powers, it is considered to be a prestigious position. The mayor is the ambassador of the city and his/her word carries weight in the BMC

> **Standing committee chairperson** | The panel is the most important committee in the BMC. It controls the treasury of the BMC, which has a budget of ₹37,000 crore. The committee has

the power to allot tenders for developmental works in the city

> **Improvements committee** | It deals with the land under the BMC and proposals related to reservation, selling and purchase of the civic plots

> **BEST committee** | Just like the standing committee in the BMC, the committee controls treasury of the transport undertaking's, presides over proposals for any kind of purchases to be made or tenders to be issued

Even before an alliance has been forged by any other party, lobbying has begun for the post of the mayor. Feelers are being sent to Matoshree,

the residence of Uddhav Thackeray, by some of these heavyweights.

"There will be so much lobbying and infighting this

Bar girls' association moves apex court, challenges state law prohibiting dances

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Association of women dancers, waitresses, singers and other performers working in bars and hotels in the state has moved the Supreme Court, challenging the constitutional validity of a 2016 state law prohibiting dances by women in these establishments.

Though members of this association sniggered at being derogatorily referred to as 'bar girls', they under the banner 'Bharatiya Bargirls Union', termed Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dances in Hotels, Restaurants and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (working the rein) Act, 2016, as arbitrary and violative of their right to earn a livelihood through legitimate means. The apex court will hear their writ petition on Monday.

In its petition filed through advocate Nikhil Nayyar, the association said the law unreasonably interferes with free choice of expression through dramatic performances and the right of women to practise occupation of self-expression through such



LEGAL RECOURSE: The writ petition by bar girls is slated for hearing on Monday

dramatic performances. The law stigmatised their work, it added.

The state's concern that dancers promoted obscenity was based on "popular" belief which was divorced from the ground situation and facts, the association said.

The 2016 Act would completely prohibit dance performances in bars as the definition of 'obscene dance' provided under the law had been deliberately kept vague to al-

low law enforcing agencies to target women performers and harass them, it said. The petitioner said dances in bars were often choreographed to imitate performances of mainstream music, especially of Bollywood. "As a matter of fact, such performances are common in weddings and other functions," it said.

It also questioned the law for prohibiting tipping by customers. "The act of tipping or giving gifts as a token of appreciation has been customary and an integral part of traditional dance culture. This decades-old practice is akin to those performing Mujra, Lavani (traditional Marathi song and dance) or Tamasha (traditional Marathi theatre) where performers earn their living through 'bakshishi' offered by the audience as token of appreciation of the performances..." the association said.

The state government had enacted a new law to overcome the apex court judgement, quashing an earlier ban on dance bars but imposing certain restrictions while permitting these performances by women to keep out obscenity and immoral practices.

Snooping on businessmen: Suspect 'destroys' data

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Mumbai: The crime branch's probe into private detectives illegally accessing call detail records (CDRs) of businessmen has suffered a setback as the main suspect claims to have disposed of his laptop and mobile phones, which could have provided investigators with details about the racket.

The main suspect, Saurabh Sahu, was arrested from Delhi last week. Sources said he snooped on several businessmen at the behest of their rivals. Sahu told investigators that when he heard about raids on detective agencies in Mumbai, he immediately deleted the data from his laptop and broke his mobile phones and SIM cards and threw them in Ganga river.

"Shahu's laptop and mobile phones would have provided us names of his clients as well as private detective agencies involved in snooping. But he claims that he threw mobiles and SIM card in Ganga river. So, we have invoked IPC section 201 (destruction of evidence) against him," said an official. Sahu has already been booked under IPC section 420 (cheating) and the Indian Telegraphic Act.

Last month, the crime branch unit 9 had busted an illegal CDR sale racket with the arrest of private detectives, Laxman Thakur, Kirtest Kavi and Satish Manjrekar. Manjrekar spilled the beans on Shahu's two aides, Fazal Ul Rahman alias Pappubhai and Siraj Khan, from Mumbai. Police said they were intermediaries for the detectives in Mumbai and Shahu in Delhi. Shahu, in turn, would procure CDR of businessmen with the help of service providers, sources said.

Fat-shamed cop arrives in city for treatment

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Mumbai: Police inspector Daulat Ram Jogawat (58) from Madhya Pradesh, a victim of fat-shaming on Twitter, arrived in the city on Sunday to undergo treatment for obesity. While several hospitals and clinics from across the country dashed to treat him, the Centre for Obesity and Digestive Surgery (CODS) almost-dramatically beat the others.

Jogawat, who weighs around 180 kilos, has been a victim of social media banter for three years. He came back into limelight after author Shobhaa De posted his picture with the caption "Heavy police bandobast in Mumbai..." Netizens slammed her for "fat-shaming" Jogawat, who is set to retire in 2019. He has won over 200 awards, his superiors said.

Neemuch district superintendent of police Manoj Singh said, "The MP police was planning to take care of his treatment, but we were swarmed by offers from hospitals across the country. We got offers from VLCC, a clinic in Indore and bariatric surgeon Dr Mufazzal Lakdawala, among several others."

Earlier, Jogawat had said, "I became fat when my gall bladder was removed in 1993. She (Shobhaa De) posted my picture on her account but will she pay for my treatment". Sources said he was also suffering from an insulin-related disorder. (Inputs by Prateek Goyal)

Music honcho's ₹2cr Maybach seized by RTO

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: A special RTO squad on Sunday seized a Mercedes-Maybach S500 belonging to the owner of a Hindi film music company for allegedly evading Rs 40 lakh road tax in the state.

The Maybach, registered at Pondicherry RTO, is valued at approximately Rs 2 crore, officials said adding that the owner would be asked to pay the tax and penalty.

In the last one month, RTO officials have seized over 450 high-end cars registered in other states and Union territories. Registering vehicles in such places help owners save a lot of money due to lower taxes there.

"The seizure is part of our drive under transport commissioner Praveen Gedam. On Sunday, our team from Andheri RTO intercepted a car registered in Pondicherry," a senior transport official said refusing to identify the owner. The car is in the name of his company.

Investigators suspect insiders' role in organized Army recruitment scam

Phone App Used To Send Paper From Nagpur

Gitesh Shelke & Sandip Dighe | TNN

Seven of the nine suspects from Pune in the army exam paper leak case are agents and drivers who assisted the key suspects, a lance naik and the director of a coaching academy. Another nine suspects were detained in Nagpur; one of them, from the district's Katol tehsil, is already charged in an earlier leak case.

The police rounded up 210 candidates, who were found huddled in a marriage hall in Pune's Hudkeshwar and mugging up the answers for the questions from the paper given to them by the agents. The candidates were released after questioning.

A BSF jawan was among the three suspects detained in Goa. "All the suspects are being handed over to the Thane police for further action, including arrests," a police officer said.

Investigators suspect the paper leak to be the handiwork of an organised racket involving people running coaching academies for army job recruitments and some "insiders" familiar with the handling of exam papers.

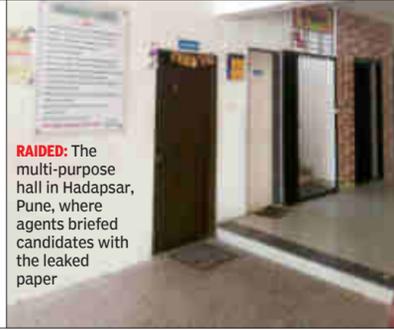
In Pune, 79 alleged beneficiaries of the leaked paper were allowed to appear for the exam considering the paucity of time and a continuing investigation. Of these, eight were taken by the police to their exam centre in Ahmednagar and brought back after the exam. "A decision about these candidates and beneficiaries from other centres will be taken by army headquarters in Delhi," an army source said.

"The two key suspects behind the activity in Pune (the Paltan academy director and the lance naik) were found dictating questions from the leaked paper to the beneficiaries at a mul-

LEAK STARTED AS JAWAN GOT PAPER FOR NEPHEWS

- A lance naik with an army depot in Khadki and the director of a private academy for services job aspirants at Phaltan in Satara district are the two key suspects among the 21 people detained for the army exam paper leak
- A preliminary probe has revealed that the lance naik got the paper from someone in Nagpur on a cellphone messaging app for two nephews
- He then spread the ambit of the leak

- Agents from coaching centres picked up exam candidates at railway stations on Saturday night
- They were offered a copy of the exam paper for ₹2 lakh each, though the self-imposed condition for payment was recruitment
- As collateral, the agents kept the candidates' original documents, supposed to be submitted at the time of joining



RAIDED: The multi-purpose hall in Hadapsar, Pune, where agents briefed candidates with the leaked paper

MAPPING THE TEST

- The Common Entrance Exam (CEE) was for army general duty and technician posts
- It was held at 10am on Sunday at seven places in Maharashtra and Goa, including Bombay



JCP Ashutosh Dumbre with a copy of the paper

Engineering Group and Centre at Khadki in Pune, Mechanised Infantry Regimental Centre in Ahmednagar and in Nagpur

- The 100-mark exam was divided into three sections: general knowledge, English and mathematics. It had questions testing basic knowledge as per standard X syllabi

- The recruitment process goes through multiple layers, from physical fitness test to appearance in the CEE. Every candidate's education certificate and other documents are checked thoroughly
- The army had taken steps to create awareness among aspirants not to fall prey to touts and tricksters during recruitment rallies

ti-purpose hall at Phursungi, Hadapsar; when we moved in around 1.30am," a police officer, who was part of the action, told TOI.

It appears that the lance naik secured the leaked paper from someone in Nagpur on a cellphone messaging service for two nephews taking the CEE, and then extended the ambit of the leak. "The academy's director was reading out the questions while the other man stood nearby. We have recovered two cellphones containing photographs of the leaked papers," the police officer said.

He said the academy's director verified the CEE hall tickets of each candidate and collected the original academic documents from them as collateral for payment on passing the

exam. The agents were promised Rs 1 lakh each. The candidates, mainly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and parts of Maharashtra, arrived at Pune railway station on Saturday night. "They were taken to the multi-purpose hall on a private bus. The key suspects were briefing them about the questions and the correct answers," he said.

Apart from the two key suspects, the remaining seven detained in Pune are agents and drivers who aided the duo in drawing the beneficiaries. A senior army officer said, "By the time the paper that Thane cops possessed was matched with the original set by the army board, the exam had started on Sunday morning. So, all candidates were allowed to take the test."

Army sources said their vigilance branch has been pressed into action to investigate the matter.

Thane police's additional commissioner Makrand Ranade said, "After confirming an informant's tip-off, we shared intelligence with commissionerates in Maharashtra and Goa. The army branch concerned was alerted in advance."

A case has been registered at Kalyan police station under the IPC for cheating (section 420), criminal breach of trust (409), and criminal conspiracy (120 B), the IT Act for breach of confidentiality and privacy (section 72), and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

(With inputs from: Shrutika Sukhi, Thane; Murari Shetye, Panaji; and Shishir Arya, Nagpur)

Woman who blamed sons for killing hubby held for murder

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Mumbai: Two days after a driver was found dead at his house in Dharavi early on Friday, his wife was arrested on Sunday for murdering him. The woman, Halimunisa Khan (48), who had also sustained head injuries, had told the police that her sons had attacked her and her husband, Shafiq Khan (56).

It was in the wee hours of Friday that the couple was found lying in a pool of blood at their house. Shafiq was declared dead, Halimunisa was admitted to Sion hospital.

The police said that Halimunisa's changing statements and inconsistencies in her statements had led them to call her bluff. An officer from Shahu Nagar police station said that Halimunisa will be arrested once she is discharged from hospital.

During the initial inquiry, Halimunisa had told the police that some unidentified people had barged into their house and

FIGHT OVER MONEY

- Shafiq Khan (56) and his wife Halimunisa (48) were found in a pool of blood at their Dharavi house early on Friday. While Shafiq is declared dead, Halimunisa has head injuries
- At first, she claims that some unidentified people attacked them, but later blames their sons for the attack
- Her changing statements and inconsistencies in her statements nail her lies

attacked her and her husband. "But later she said that two of her sons had attacked them. We verified her statement but found some holes in it and so we grilled her thoroughly," said deputy commissioner of police Paranjit Dahiya. "Once cornered, she spilled the beans. She has told us that she ended up murdering her husband unintentionally after they got into an argument."

Senior inspector of Shahu Nagar police station, Dilip Thorat, said that the couple fought frequently over financial issues. "Halimunisa had married off two of their daughters in one family in Kurla, and Shafiq was not too happy about this. Also, Shafiq had taken a loan of Rs 3.5 lakh from his daughters' in-laws," said Thorat. Around midnight on Thursday, the couple got into a heated argument which lasted for at least a couple of hours, said a police officer. "In a fit of rage, Shafiq picked up a loose tile, which was lying around in the house, and threw it at Halimunisa. The injured woman hurled the same tile back at Shafiq, injuring him on the head. She rushed to pick up the fallen tile and threw it at him another time, which led to his death," said this officer.

The police also said that they are verifying if Halimunisa's injuries were self-inflicted.

Bar raid: 23 held, 16 girls rescued

Nagpada police on Sunday morning raided Samudra Bar and Restaurant in Mumbai Central and arrested 23 people including hotel manager and other staffers for violation of bar timings and indecent behaviour. Police also rescued 16 girls from the bar. The accused have been booked under IPC section of 294 and Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurants and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (working therein) Act. They were granted cash bail of Rs 3,000 each. TNN

Housewife jumps to death from SoBo bldg

Mumbai: A 40-year-old housewife from Dhobi Talao committed suicide by jumping from her brother-in-law's fourth floor flat around 12.30 pm on Sunday, the police said. The deceased, Roopa Shah, was found lying in a pool of blood on the ground floor of Ramnaam Mansion near Metro Cinema.

Roopa lived right next to her brother-in-law's flat with her husband, Vikas, a chartered accountant, and a school-going

son. Her husband had stepped out of their house at the time of the incident, the police said.

Roopa was declared dead before admission to GT Hospital near Crawford Market.

The police said they have not found any suicide note. The family members of the deceased will be questioned, said the police. An officer from Azad Maidan police station said that Roopa did not jump from her flat as its balcony had a grille. TNN

CITYLIGHTS

Thus Spake Mumbai

Come elections and Mumbai's rough and ready politics mints smart and razor-sharp words that resonate with the city's vibrant mood. Here are a few terms culled from the latest BMC polls. 'Casham-cash' was synonymous with a rich BJP candidate—and there were many like him in the poll fray. On the other hand, 'cash-less' was the one with meagre resources. The one who helped such underdogs was instantly hailed as 'boss'. A 30-something MNS candidate in a western suburb was nearly moved to tears when his next-door barber gave him Rs 11,000 in cash as token of neighbourly affection—and a free haircut. A candidate who hesitated to shell out money for food and beverages for supporters was promptly condemned as 'sadel' (the decaying variety). Needless to add, such tight-fisted politicians were in a minority across wards. Netas left no stone unturned to keep their workers in a good mood. In Malwani, local residents would cook biryani for party activists as the sun set down on yet another day of hectic electioneering. The community kitchen never served beer, though. Such friendly wards were known as 'hara-bhara' (prosperous).



TWILIGHT PLAY: Spectators enjoy a game of cricket at Azad Maidan even as Gothic structures glow in gold

Juhu wins battle for open spaces, gets another park

Mumbai: On a lazy Sunday afternoon, as the sun slowly moved down towards the horizon, tabla maestro Zakir Husain played to inaugurate the Kishore Kumar Baug and the Vijay Tendulkar Rangmanch at Juhu.

The inauguration with a musical performance by Husain

open space along the Irla nullah. The baug and rangmanch now form a contiguous open space along with Kaifi Azmi Park. The brainchild of activist PK Das to create open spaces along the city's nullah is part of his Juhu Vision plan.

Rajya Sabha member Javed Akhtar, who funded the development of the open space through his MP Local Area Development Fund, said it was necessary to reclaim the city for its citizens. Akhtar who composed a poem 'Hill Station', for the occasion, said it was ironic that people have to go to other places in search of greenery and serenity.

It was 10 years ago that citizens first came out, demanding that they be allowed access to the open space. Ashoke Pandit, who led the agitations to reclaim the open space, said, "Back then, this was a wooded place and it had become a den for drug addicts. Then there was a plan to build a private club by the Ronson Foundation to whom the land had been leased. Around 500 trees were cut."

They were joined in their fight by actor and former parliamentarian, Shabana Azmi.

The work on creating the walk of fame along either side of the nullah will be completed in a few months. The path will have statues of famous personalities from Juhu. **TNN**

PUBLIC VICTORY



> Kishore Kumar Baug (above) and Vijay Tendulkar Rangmanch were inaugurated at Juhu on Sunday afternoon

> A decade ago, citizens first came out, demanding access to the open space

> Back then, it was a wooded spot and had become a den for drug addicts. There were plans to build a private club and about 500 trees were cut

in, accompanied by Shabir Khan on the Sarangi, marked a decade-long relentless effort by local citizen groups, Gulmohar Citizen's Welfare Group and Save Open Spaces, to reclaim the

Lawyer's visit to ailing pal sparked fight to cap stent rates

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Mumbai: There have been attempts by political parties—both reigning and in the opposition—to walk away with credit for capping the prices of cardiac stents in the country. In reality, it's members of the civil society and everyday individuals who have toiled with the help of RTIs and public interest litigations (PIL), to achieve a landmark decision to make heart procedures affordable.

The name of lawyer Birendra Sangwan (37) should top that list. While visiting the ailing brother of a friend in

2014, the New Delhi lawyer was surprised to see that the Metro Hospital in Faridabad refused to offer any clarity on the price of the stent used on his acquaintance. After some investigation, he found out that there was no uniformity in pricing of stents and patients were charged at the whims of hospitals.

This incident, coupled with a few experiences in his own family, motivated Sangwan to file an RTI and find out if the mesh-like devices that open clogged arteries fall under the 'drugs' or 'metals' category. "I was surprised to learn they were drugs, but did not come under any price regulation," he told

Plaint against KEM

After Lilavati Hospital in Bandra, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority has received a complaint against the civic-run KEM Hospital in Parel for overcharging of cardiac stents. It has asked the FDA to look into the allegation. **TNN**

TOI: It prompted him to file the first PIL in Delhi high court in 2015, asking for stents to be brought under the National List of Essential Medicines. "On the same day, the court ordered the government to act on it," he said. But, the latter didn't do so for

more than five months, forcing him to file a contempt petition.

After a series of hearings, the first victory came after a year in July 2016, when the government included stents in the list of essential medicines. The decision triggered a chain of events that ended with the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) capping the prices of bare metal stents to Rs 7,260 and Rs 29,600 for drug eluting stents. "I am glad that the litigation has led to the stent prices coming down by 85%," he said.

Sangwan's battle against the Rs2,500-crore stent industry would have been more ardu-

ous if not for support from civil groups and coalition of doctors such as All India Drug Action Network (AIDAN), Alliance of Doctors for Ethical Healthcare and Jan Swasthya Abhiyan. These groups joined hands to rally behind the government and ensure pressures of the medical device industry did not get the better of them.

"Our representations have been consistent and on the lines of ensuring that life-saving drugs are available and affordable. When NPPA called us for our opinion, we harped on the point that the manufacturers must show non-inferiority, which is different from supe-

riority in order to charge such premium," said Dr Mira Sivan from AIDAN. She however said that stent pricing is just one battle won and not the war.

City NGO, Society for Awareness of Civil Rights, played a key role in taking the initiative to expose profiteering in the stent industry in 2011. President RP Rao said they had tipped the food and drug administration which later led to probe and the first concrete report to establish arbitrary pricing.

Sangwan said it was not his last battle to make healthcare affordable. "Next on agenda is going after prices of 14-15 other medical devices."

ALL FOR A HEALTHY CAUSE



Lawyer Mrunalini Deshmukh (L) at the 'Yoga by the Bay' session organized on Marine Drive

Onion prices in state crash after bumper crop

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Mumbai: Onion prices in the state have touched a five-year low. The average price farmers have fetched for a quintal has been Rs450.

At the Lasalgaon AFMC, the biggest market yard for onions in the country, the average price for a quintal has been Rs740 in February 2016, when the state was reeling under a severe drought. Cost of production for a quintal is Rs950. Prices were the highest in 2013, with farmers fetching Rs1,424 a quintal.

Officials said the dip in price is due to bumper production in the state. Lack of storage and processing infrastructure to increase the shelf life of the produce has left farmers at the mercy of traders, who are consistently quoting low prices. Some farmers have set their onions on fire, as they were not even getting the basic input cost.

Lasalgaon was getting 30,000-35,000 quintals of red onions every day in February, as against the average 12,000. The bumper production resulted in traders demanding more railway wagons to transport onions to other parts of the state and country.

"The shelf life of onions is a month; there is so much

NUMBERS GAME

Year	Prices a quintal of onion received
2013	₹1,424
2014	₹761
2015	₹1,031
2016	₹740
2017	₹450

stock at the market yard, which will take 20 days to clear if we get adequate transport and the stock keeps increasing every day," said a market committee official. They want 40 wagons to transport onions, but they are getting 15-18 wagons.

The railways agreed to give more wagons to transport the onions, but this being the peak of the harvest, the inflow of produce is not slowing down. Officials hope that in March the produce will slow down and prices will stabilise, giving relief to the farmers, who have made an accumulated loss of Rs 200 crore.

Initially, prices were affected due to demonetisation, and they did not pick up till the December-end; since January, heavy inflow and skewed demand and supply ratio led to the dip in price.

Tax dues row: Bldrs to move court over state action

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Thane: Builders in Thane have protested against the Maharashtra revenue department's decision of sealing offices of some developers, who allegedly defaulted on paying government dues like non-agricultural (NA) tax and royalty for excavating sand as per the Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, 1966.

Developer Suresh Haware, whose firm was penalized, said the action is "unjustified". "We will challenge the move in court as a previous Supreme Court order says that if soil is excavated for construction purposes from any site and is used at the same spot, it does not attract any royalty. The soil excavated from our site as per the department's claim was never taken out of the premises and so it is unfair to consider us as defaulters," said Haware.

Meanwhile, the district administration is in the process of intensifying its action against defaulters and has plans to slap notices on another 250 prominent developers and commercial complexes from Thane and Navi Mumbai for defaulting payments of over Rs100 crore to the treasury.

"A list of 250 commercial unit holders has been compiled and we are sending notices to them," said a senior revenue officer from the Thane collectorate.

Unfazed by failures, Rane retains fort

Former chief minister Narayan Rane was the only Congress leader to stand chief minister Devendra Fadnavis' attack during the elections to the municipal corporations and zilla parishads across the state. He was able to retain control over the Sindhudurg Zilla Parishad and in the house of 50, Congress secured a clear majority. In the past, his elder son Nilesh lost the Lok Sabha polls to Sena nominee Vinayak Raut, while Rane himself lost to his arch political rival Vaibhav Naik. Subsequently, Rane made a fresh attempt to enter the lower house but he did not succeed, however, he later managed an entry into the upper house.

One-man show

Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis took the entire state by a storm when the BJP gained control over maximum municipal corporations and zilla parishads. Fadnavis began planning for the municipal council elections immediately after he took over the reins of the state in December 2014. Initially, it was proposed to entrust the task to a high level committee, but Fadnavis took the responsibility on himself. Besides examining the elective merit of all the nominees, he personally toured the state. On the day the results were out, he began planning for the municipal corporation and

Mahesh Benkar



zilla parishad elections. A comprehensive action plan was drafted—daily interactions with media, campaigning in and out of Mumbai. A BJP cabinet member predicts that Fadnavis has drafted an action plan for the 2019 Lok Sabha and assembly polls too.

Mother versus son

In Jalgaon, it was a contest between a mother and her son. Shiv Sena had nominated a local activist P B Sonawane, while BJP had nominated his mother Leelabai Sonawane, a sitting member of the Jalgaon zilla parishad. Ever since the

election process began, there was uncertainty on whether Leelabai Sonawane will contest or not, since she was expecting her son to contest the election. In fact, she had offered her seat to the son on the condition that he will contest on a BJP ticket. Owing to differences between them, he did decide to contest as a Shiv Sena candidate. An upset Leelabai decided to contest against her son. There was extensive campaign against each other, in fact election campaign in Jalgaon district was launched by chief minister Devendra Fadnavis. Since there was a massive response, it was expected that the mother will be elected. However, the son defeated his mother by 7,000 votes.

Pilgrims protest 9% service tax on Haj, likely to move Supreme Court

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Mumbai: Bhandi Bazaar resident Mohammed Hanif Nalkhande spent his life's savings to fund his five-member family's Haj last year. But the private tour operator (PTO), which arranged his travel to Saudi Arabia, recently charged him Rs14,000 per pilgrim. The tour operator said he wanted to recover the service tax the government had levied on Haj operations last year. "I am in a fix. Why should I pay the service tax for Haj which I performed in the past," says Nalkhande.

Nalkhande is joining hands with

several pilgrims to petition the Supreme Court against the government's decision to charge 9% service tax on PTOs who arrange Haj travel. The All-India Haj Umrah Tour Organisers Association (AIHUTOA) is also intervening in an earlier petition by a pilgrim against the tax. Both pilgrims and the association are protesting against the tax on a pilgrimage which is purely a religious ceremony.

They are protesting also as pilgrims who travel through the Haj panel (1.25 lakh) have been exempted from paying the tax while those choosing private operators (45,000) are being charged.

"Whether one goes through the Haj Committee or a tour operator, the purpose is to perform Haj. Both kinds of pilgrims perform the same rituals," said Ansari Mehmood Pervaiz, a retired school principal, and a petitioner. "I am utilizing my pension to fund my Haj, which was to cost around Rs 3 lakh. If I have to pay service tax, the cost will increase by Rs27,000. Where will I get this extra amount from?" asked Pervaiz.

Pune-based Dr Sarfraz Memon plans to go for Haj along with his ailing son and was shocked when his tour operator told him he may have to pay the tax too.

CM inaugurates restored Town Hall

Mumbai: Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the newly restored century-old Town Hall and Asiatic Society Library on Sunday.

At the function Fadnavis said that the Asiatic Society and its premises have been the backdrop of many movies, and they will consider allowing sho-

oting in the Town Hall and the library on days it's shut. The restoration was done by the state public works department with the help of a heritage conservationist from the city.

The library has been handed over to the higher and technical education department for its functioning. **TNN**

Lalbagcha Raja mandal plans UPSC mock exam

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Mumbai: It is commonly observed that few Maharashtrians consider a career in the civil services. In a small step towards promoting their numbers, the Lalbagcha Raja Ganeshotsav mandal will conduct mock interviews for UPSC exam aspirants on March 4-5. They will be examined by a panel of eminent judges. The actual interviews begin at the UPSC headquarters in New Delhi on March 20.

The Lalbagcha Raja library is being revamped for the mock exercise. "It will be very similar to the original interview, right down to the formal setting of the room, furniture and stationery. We have invited serving income-tax commissioners, revenue officials, Customs representatives, journalists and police officers. It will be a mock interview not a false one," said Balasaheb Kamble of the mandal.

Dated: 21/22 February 2017
ED OPERATORS - GOVT. OF M.P.

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ns for the purpose of empanelment are available on

O/O The Commissioner Aviation, Govt. of M.P., Raja
e 31st March 2017.
I: mpaviation@mp.gov.in

Sd/-
COMMISSIONER AVIATION

22 yrs later, acquitted man gets life term for murdering his wife

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Mumbai: Twenty-two years after he was acquitted of killing his wife, the Bombay high court has held Satara resident Ramchandra Lokhande guilty of her murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment. A division bench of Justice Vijaya Tahliramani and Justice Revati Dere directed Lokhande, who is now in his 60s, to surrender before the authorities in 12 weeks' time, failing which the police have been asked to trace him and take him into custody.

"On going through the evidence on record and especially the medical evidence, we are of the opinion that the view of acquittal taken by the sessions judge is a totally perverse view. The evidence on record shows that Nirmala (Lokhande's wife) met a homicidal death and that at the relevant time he and none else had the opportunity to assault and kill her and thereafter to set her on fire," said the judges.

Nirmala's body was found at the couple's house on February 28, 1987. Lokhande was ar-

rested for stabbing her and setting her on fire. He claimed he was falsely implicated in the case and that his wife had committed suicide by stabbing and setting herself on fire. The sessions court in 1995 accepted his contention and acquitted him. Earlier this month, the state's appeal against the conviction came up for hearing. The HC cited the evidence of the doctor and the post mortem report which showed that the cause of Nirmala's death was the stab wound. Based on the post mortem re-

port the HC concluded that Lokhande had first stabbed her to death when she was asleep and hours later set her body on fire to destroy evidence. The HC noted that the police had not recovered the blood stained knife. "If Lokhande's story was true, a blood stained knife would be found in the house," said the judges, adding, "It is not possible that Nirmala would have stabbed herself, would have washed the knife, kept it in place and thereafter set herself on fire. Such a sequence of events is just not possible and it is totally unthinkable."



BEST ordered to pay ₹24L to youth paralysed in hit & run

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Mumbai: The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal has ordered BEST to pay a compensation of around Rs 24 lakh to a youth who was left completely disabled after a bus hit the two-wheeler on which he was riding pillion in 2013. The biker was killed in the hit-and-run incident.

The defence tried to pin part of the blame on the pillion rider— Jitendra Patil, who is 26 now — for not wearing a helmet, but the tribunal held that the BEST driver who fled from the scene was completely negligent as he did not make any attempt to even to help the injured or call the police. "It shows his conduct and guilty conscience," the tribunal said.

The application seeking compensation was filed by Patil's father in November 2013. Patil was working in a construction company at the time of the incident on October 2, 2013.

The incident happened at 3.15 am on Gokhale Road, when Patil and his friend were on their way from Mahim to Siddhivinayak Temp-

DRIVER WAS NEGLIGENT: TRIBUNAL

> The defence tried to pin part of the blame on the youth for not wearing a helmet while riding pillion
> However, the tribunal held that the BEST driver who fled from the scene was completely negligent as he did not make any attempt to even to help the injured or call police



le. The complaint alleged that the bus came from the opposite direction in high speed and was being driven rashly. The bus then rammed the bike causing both victims to fall. While both riders suffered grievous injuries, the bus fled. Cops rushed the injured to the hospital, where Patil survived and his friend died.

Police traced the bus driver after examining footage of CCTV cameras in the area and arrested him. A chargesheet was filed against the driver.

Patil told the tribunal the incident had shortened his life span and he has had to undergo severe mental agony and pain. He also said that his family had incurred heavy expenses in his treatment.

The driver, however, denied the allegations. He claimed that he had slowed

down before taking a right turn. It was then that the motorcyclist came from the opposite direction at an extremely high speed and in a rash and negligent manner and collided head on into the front, right side of the bus. He also claimed that a BEST departmental inquiry exonerated him.

However, in his cross examination by the defence, the driver said he first saw the bike only when he heard the sound of the collision.

The tribunal said that while there was nothing abnormal about the speed of the bike owing to the empty roads, it was the bus driver who was required to take precautions while negotiating the right turn. "Had the bus driven been taken proper care and precaution it was possible for him to avoid the untoward accident," the tribunal observed.

BJP's plan is to split Maha, says Raut

► From P 1

The gravest danger to Maharashtra is from the BJP. They have no positive thought about Mumbai and their gameplan is to divide Maharashtra (into smaller states)," said Raut. Pointing out that a large number of non-Marathi corporators have been elected to the BMC, Raut said most of them harbour a feeling of hatred for Maharashtra. "They flaunt their wealth and think that they can buy out everything... For them, Mumbai is merely an instrument to make money, to usurp wealth. New Delhi too nurses a similar sentiment," Raut said.

Raut reminded Sainiks that the Shiv Sena had left no stone unturned to offer protection to the city's mercantile community during the 1992-93 communal flare-up following the Babri demolition. However, this time around, the same community voted the BJP to power on religious and community considerations. "This vote is not for the development of Mumbai," said the Rajya Sabha MP. Raut had a word of praise for the Congress which, he argued, did not display arbitrariness while governing Mumbai. "The Marathi quotient in the Congress party wanted Mumbai to be with Maharashtra. Senior Congress leaders such as Sharad Pawar were of the view that the Sena should gain strength so that Maharashtra is not vivisected," he said.

Dadar has some of the most congested roads in island city

► From P 1

He said most bike/scooter buyers in Mumbai were aged 18-35. "This is a young population which is dependent on private transport to reach a station or office," he said.

Transport experts said a lack of "good and affordable" public transport system had led to people opting for two-wheelers. When BEST hiked bus fares more than a year ago, coupled with poor frequency, many purchased two-wheelers in the suburbs to travel from home to the railway station during peak hours. Most railway stations in the suburbs also came up with bigger parking lots to cater to the needs.

In the island city, Dadar has some of the most congested roads, including the one near Dadar TT. Deputy RTO Subhash Pedamkar (island city) said, "Dadar has seen a huge growth in car and two-wheeler registrations in the past few years. The area has seen a spurt in redevelopment too. Another area where vehicle population has seen a huge jump is the Worli-Mahalaxmi belt, with scores of highrise apartments having two to three cars registered per family."

Mill areas of Lower Parel have also given way to highrises, and this belt, popularly referred to as Upper Worli, is where car registrations will peak. Colaba-Cuffe Parade has a huge vehicular population, including many commercial vehicles, compared to tony areas of Malabar Hill or Nepean Sea Road-Pedder Road.

In the western suburbs, Andheri and Goregaon have several residential and commercial hubs where the car/bike population has swelled over the years. Traffic there moves bumper-to-bumper during peak hours and congestion is the biggest issue, especially on arterial roads and near railway stations. The other three western suburbs on the RTO radar are Kandivli, Bandra and Borivli, with many households going in for bigger cars that occupy more road space.

Transport department statistics showed that overall vehicular density in Mumbai (island city and suburbs) has increased to approximately 1,500 vehicles per km, from 935 between 2011-12 and 2015-16. The vehicle population surged from two million to nearly

Pic for representation

CARS OCCUPY 85% OF ROADS



EXPERTS ALARMED

> Transport experts are alarmed by the rise in private cars, which occupy 85% of road space and are an "impediment" for the growth of public transport in the city. They also fear that the rise in vehicles could lead to parking woes.

> "There is an urgent need to set up a parking authority to implement the new parking policy, and impose a congestion tax in business hubs," said A V Shenoy of Mumbai

Transport Forum. "Arterial roads should be kept free of parking (on both sides) during peak hours. It will free up road space and allow movement of 50% more vehicles, especially buses," he said.

> Transport expert Ashok Datar said the city needed 1,000 AC buses on dedicated corridors, which can carry several lakh passengers during peak hours and keep cars and two-wheelers at bay.

Since 2011-12

50% increase in vehicles on city roads

45% increase in pvt car population

51% increase in 2-wheeler population

Mumbai's vehicle population

Year	Population	Cars	2-wheelers
2016-17* (*Till date)	30L approx	9L approx	17.1L
2011-12	20.3L	6.2L	11.3L

"This is a young population which is dependent on private transport to reach a station or office — Sanjay Sasane | DEPUTY RTO (EASTERN SUBURBS)

three million during this period. People are purchasing nearly 100 private cars and 250 two-wheelers daily; the vehicular strength in-

cludes 17 lakh two-wheelers and nine lakh private cars and SUVs across the city, RTO sources added.



TIMES Personal

**PRAYER MEETINGS
(ANNOUNCEMENTS)**

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Kamat, Nirupam blame each other for Cong rout

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: After a dismal performance by the Congress in the BMC elections, the battle between party satraps -- former Union minister Gurudas Kamat and city Congress chief Sanjay Nirupam -- seems to be getting uglier.

On Saturday, Nirupam told **TOI** that of the 38 seats for which Kamat had suggested nominees only one managed to win a seat. However, refuting his charges Kamat has said that Nirupam is conveniently trying to take credit for every seat that the party won in the elections, while the blame for the wards lost is being put on him.

"Nirupam is trying to disrupt my constituency from where almost seven candidates names were changed," said Kamat.

Nirupam, on the other hand, said that he had taken full responsibility for the loss of the party in the corporation elections. "However, I feel that at the district level at least those leaders who had sug-

Debate prompts party to seek state review

Rattled by the scale of defeat in the Maharashtra local body elections, the Congress leadership is likely to call a meeting of state leaders to discuss measures to stem the erosion of the party base. Sources said Congress's former chief ministers, former and current state unit chiefs and other senior leaders will be part of the stock-taking exercise, amid fears that the one-time bastion is slipping from the party's hands. They not only suffered a drubbing in the BMC -- where it won 31 of the 227 seats -- but were also swept aside in other city bodies. The defeat coincided with massive gains for arch-rival BJP.

As a desperate measure, Congress and NCP have decided to join hands to helm zilla parishads where they jointly have the majority.

The meeting in the capital is likely to focus on how the party lost its base so rapidly after having ruled Maharashtra virtually unchallenged for five decades. While the state unit blames "infighting", the defeat is seen as evidence of an atrophying local leadership, worsened by a BJP on the upswing. That BJP has single-handedly matched its ally Shiv Sena in Mumbai and decimated it in the rest of state is seen as an ominous sign. The push from a section of the Congress to ally with Shiv Sena in the city is being seen as a diversionary tactic to hide their failures. Sources said there was little likelihood of the Congress embracing Sena as the alliance would have consequences for its ideological positioning. -- **Subodh Ghildiyal**

gested candidates should have gone out and campaigned for them. After recommending many candidates these leaders never worked for them," said Nirupam.

He added that only some candidates in electoral wards of Jogeshwari and Dindoshi were changed as they were not "appropriate".

Oppn plans no-trust motion in state

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Mumbai: Congress and NCP are contemplating a no-confidence motion against the BJP-led state government, during the Budget session from March 6 here.

The Opposition intends to take advantage of the rift between BJP and Shiv Sena, which has widened since the last few days. Sena leaders have openly said that the BJP-led government is on notice, while the Sena party president had recently said the par-

ty will take a stand about withdrawing support only after the civic polls.

NCP chief Sharad Pawar had recently stated that his party will not support the BJP in the state if the government is reduced to a minority and dared the Sena to withdraw support. The NCP chief asserted in Nanded on Sunday that they won't support the BJP even in the mayoral election on March 9.

Congress MLA Naseem Khan told **TOI** the Congress will oppose the BJP government.

Is technology helping us learning to learn?

Santosh Desai

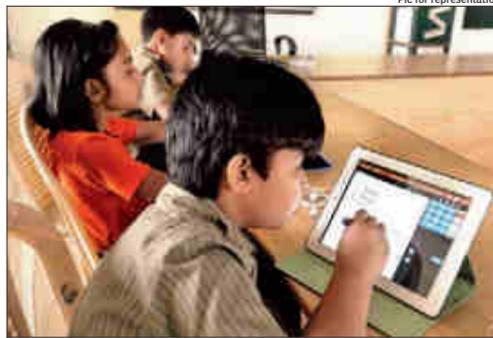
If it needed education to use a pen, an angootha chhaap can operate a computer today", said the animated young man in Kolkata. He was referring to his facility with a mobile phone and the doors that it opened for him by the mere twiddling of his thumbs. As part of a study examining the social impact of technology in the country, we had run into this school drop-out in a small shopping complex where he was selling costume jewellery that he had taught himself to make by watching youtube videos. He had learnt to navigate the world that the phone gave him first by learning English on his own, which allowed him to use the smartphone with lightning speed, and then by teaching himself ways to earn a living. More than anything else, he exuded confidence about being able to learn on his own.

He is not alone. Elsewhere, 10-year-olds are at the forefront of technology, using it as their primary sense organ. A young kid in Nashik attributed his amazing facility

with the digital world to the 'surround'. Some housewives spoke of their new found ability to expand their range of skills, beginning with the culinary thanks to videos and WhatsApp groups. A section of retired people spoke of how learning to use the internet gave them a new lease of life- the world suddenly opened out. Old interests were revived, new ones discovered.

Once a certain minimum threshold of familiarity is crossed, the phone becomes an instrument of exploratory travel and discovery. The wonderful thing about a search engine like Google is that you need to know nothing in order to use it. To avail of it, all one needs is to confess one's ignorance- one needs no qualifications or any prior knowledge or expertise in a subject to begin educating oneself on it.

Traditionally, learning in India has been a tedious affair. Learning by rote has been the norm, and the mental model is that of dense knowledge struggling to penetrate our brains. Most of us immediately forget what we have allegedly learnt once the exams are over. The onerous formality of education



Pic for representation

CITY CITY BANG BANG

creates a barrier to those outside its ambit. It is far from clear as to what use would one be able to put the things that one learns in school.

Attempts to promote 'vocational' education have traditionally met with limited success. Things are changing, however. Across the country, traditional ideas about what constitutes good education are beginning to change; computer training institutes, airhostess academies, media and event manage-

ment schools, personality development courses- these are the emerging faces of education in the country.

With technology, it is possible to imagine an even more radical redefinition of the idea of learning. Instead of a linear, step-by-step process which is determined by those who allegedly know better, education comes an exercise in discovery of those bits of knowledge that are of immediate and direct relevance

and interest to the seeker.

Otherwise, today education is something that gets injected into us without our consent and without any sense of need.

And yet, there is nothing intrinsically sacred about the process we think of as education. All of us need teachers, we need texts of one kind or another, and we need some repetition and reinforcement in order to learn, and all of these can potentially be made available outside the formal system of education. We also need to be able to learn all of our lives, and not cram education in a 15-year period at the beginning.

Education is being set free to be stumbled upon. It will flow in unpredictable non-linear ways as those outside its ambit will grab whatever they find useful. In a larger sense, perhaps it is time to rethink our traditional approach to education and harness this new capacity we have developed to learn on our own. What might help is the development of self-learning modules that are designed to aid the process of discovery using principles of storytelling and gamification. We are learning to learn in a new way, and that is good news.

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Top-up mediclaim must cover all costs above base policy

Jehangir B Gai

Due to spiralling medical costs the sum insured under a base mediclaim policy which might be taken years ago may become inadequate today. To overcome this, insurance companies offer a top-up policy, which has a clause about the threshold limit for a claim. Thus, the insurance company pays the only the difference in the amount to the extent the claim exceeds the threshold limit.

In a ruling, the National Commission has held that the insurance company's interpretation about the threshold limit is not justified.

Case Study: Kamalendra and Sushma Kanwar had opted for mediclaim insurance from United India Insurance. They had a base policy of Rs 2 lakh and a top up policy for Rs 3 lakh. The top up policy provided for a threshold limit of Rs 2 lakh per claim, so any claim would be payable only when it exceeds the limit of Rs 2 lakh.

When Kanwar was hospitalized, his claim under the base policy was settled. But the remaining claim of Rs 1,40,345 under the top up policy was not settled as it was below the threshold limit of Rs 2 lakh.

Kanwar filed a complaint before the Mohali District Forum, which was contested by the insurance company. The forum upheld the complaint and ordered the insurer to pay the balance amount of Rs 1,40,345 along with 9% interest. In addition, Rs 25,000 as compensation for harassment and litigation expenses was awarded.

United India challenged this order before the Punjab State Commission, which dismissed the appeal. The insurance company then approached the National Commission in revision. The insurer's stand was that

the insurance contract provided that any claim under the top up policy would be payable only if it exceeded the threshold limit. The company argued that the claim of Rs 1.4 lakh was less than the threshold limit of Rs 2 lakhs, so the repudiation was justified. The National Commission observed that the objective of a top up policy is to get higher insurance coverage. So the clause regarding the threshold limit would have to be interpreted to be the sum insured under the base policy. When the amount under the base policy was exhausted, the claim would have to be paid up to the additional coverage limits under the top up policy. For this purpose, the total cost of the treatment during the entire policy period of one year would have to be considered. As the total claim amount was Rs 3,40,345, during the policy period, Rs 2 lakh was payable under the base policy and the balance Rs 1,40,345 would have to be paid under to top up policy. The National Commission concluded that the repudiation of the claim was incorrect.

Accordingly, by its order of February 17 delivered by the Bench of Justice Ajit Bharihoke and Anup Thakur, the National Commission dismissed the insurance company's revision, and confirmed the orders in Kanwar's favour which held him to be entitled to get the balance amount.

Impact: The Commission ruling said that the base coverage and the top up policy must be aggregated and the sum total would be considered as the annual coverage limits available under both the policies.

(The author is a consumer activist and has won the Govt. of India's National Youth Award for Consumer Protection. His e mail is jehangirgai.columnist@outlook.in)





BJP ROLLS OUT KEY CENTRAL MINISTERS, INCLUDING HOME MIN RAJNATH SINGH, FOR STATE POLLS | 9

AT RALLY WITH SON-IN-LAW, RJD CHIEF LALU PRASAD SAYS EAST UP'S ELDERS LIKE HIS 'SAMDHIS' | 11



Central 'squeeze' on funds for Dalit scheme leaves thousands in lurch

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Manoj Kumar Paswan, a Dalit student from Nawada district in Bihar, has lived a hard life, coming as he does from a poor marginal farmer family. He and his family saw a ray of hope after he got a scholarship in 2016 to get a degree in computer applications from a college in Nagpur. One year on, he is back to square one. The promised money from the central government's Post Matric Scholarship scheme, which was to be routed directly to his college, has not materialized. He is back in the village, repeatedly visiting the welfare office, pleading for a solution.

"My seniors in college got the scholarship. But mine never came. The college said there are some issues, we are trying to sort them out. How can I continue like this? I came back home to pursue the matter

with the welfare officer here," he told TOI from Nawada.

His is not an exceptional case, as revealed by data collected by the Dalit advocacy group, National Campaign for Dalit & Human Rights (NCDHR). In response to a complaint made by them, the social justice ministry told them that they had released nearly Rs 5,000 crore in 2015-16 and 2016-17 but the states had demanded almost double of that, Rs 9,120.56 crore.

"What has happened is that in the beginning, states continued to provide scholarships to Dalit students but the central govt put a squeeze. Finally, the pipeline dried up and the students were left high and dry. Colleges started demanding fees from the students or told them to quit. Thousands have been affected by this tragedy," said Paul Diwakar of NCDHR.

The Post Matric Scholarship is given by the Centre to an estimated 65 lakh Dalit and 20 lakh tribal students in order to

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DALIT STUDENTS

STATES' DEMAND

Up to 2014-15 4,584.2

2015-16 4,536.4

Total (A) 9,120.6

CENTRAL RELEASES

2015-16 2,213.9

2016-17 2,731.5

Total (B) 4,945.4

Total due from Centre (A-B) 4,175.2

All figures in ₹ crore

Source: MISE reply on 13 Feb 2017 to NCDHR complaint



ADIVASI STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

States claim in 2015-16 1607.6

Released by Centre 834.5

Due amount 773.1

assist them to get higher education. It is routed through the state governments, who also chip in with a small amount. Funds are directly transferred to colleges after authentication.

Ayyamperumal, a Dalit student from Perambalur district in Tamil Nadu, told TOI that he faced constant trouble

and harassment in the three years he got the scholarship while doing his bachelors at Trichy. "I had to go up to the District Collector with complaints of non-payment. People used to ridicule me, saying 'a Paraya boy wants to become educated!' but I vowed to get my right," he told TOI.

Although the tribal affairs ministry has not officially given out latest data but they too were facing a similar squeeze last year. In response to an RTI query by NCDHR, the ministry said as opposed to an anticipated expenditure of Rs 1,608 crore by states in 2015-16, the ministry released Rs 834.5 crore, leaving a deficit of Rs 773 crore.

Colleges too are duping students of scholarships, as revealed by the case of Christ Institute of Technology in Puducherry, which lured 120 poor Dalit students from Bihar promising free education and boarding based on scholarships from the government. After a few months, they stopped all facilities and asked students to pay up or quit.

Ayyamperumal confirmed that some colleges ask students to deposit fees first, assuring reimbursement after scholarship comes in. But they refuse to pay up when the amount gets transferred.

Post-SC order, 10k K'taka Dalit staff to be demoted?

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Bengaluru: The fate of nearly 10,000 Dalit government employees hangs in the balance as they face the threat of being demoted, with the Supreme Court recently scrapping reservation in promotions.

The Congress government is gearing up to challenge the apex court order and is taking great pains to work out a please-all formula to prevent political damage ahead of the 2018 assembly polls.

"We are in a sensitive and tricky situation. If we fail to stand by the Dalits, they will brand our party anti-Dalit, which could have a huge impact on our election prospects. And if we decide to fight for them, the other backward and upward communities will view us with contempt," said a worried senior minister.

Law and parliamentary affairs minister TB Jayachandran said the government is in the

TAKING A LEAF OUT OF UP'S BOOK

To cushion the blow of the Supreme Court order, the government has taken a cue from Uttar Pradesh and worked out a formula to protect the salary and perks of the demoted employees. In effect, a senior officer and a demoted junior officer may have different designations but the same salary and perks.

However, the move will be implemented only if the government loses the legal battle. "We have no choice but to challenge the order and delay the process," said a minister.

process of seeking the opinion of the accountant general (AG) on what best can be done. "Based on his inputs, we will take a final call," he added.

On February 9, the apex court had struck down the consequential seniority in promotions awarded by the Karnataka government for SC/ST employees since 1978. It fixed a

three-month period for demoting those promoted under the reserved category. The government can file an appeal within the period.

This can be a cause of worry for the government, given the vast number of SC/ST officials enjoying plum posts because of consequential seniority. On the other hand, those un-

Mulling petition

The Supreme Court decision will definitely have a far-reaching impact on dalit employees. We are considering filing a review petition in the apex court

AS Ponnanna | ADDITIONAL ADVOCATE GENERAL

The review petition will not stand in the Supreme Court. Other states have tried it and failed. The Karnataka government will have no choice but to demote those promoted under the reserved category

—A senior advocate

der the general and other backward categories, who are awaiting promotions for years, may finally get their due.

A senior DPAR official said the government is yet to carry out a group-wise survey before implementing such a harsh decision that will bring Dalit employees down the seniority ladder—from officers to group 'D'

staffers—in one stroke.

Karnataka State Employees Association president B P Manje Gowda said 7,000-10,000 officials and employees may be moved to lower ranks, considering 18% of the posts in each of the 65 departments have been reserved for SCs/STs.

Assuming that 1-2% of the 5.15 lakh government employees have benefitted from the promotion quota, he said thousands of employees would be affected by the apex court order. He said the association will not fight for the cause of Dalits or other communities since it is concerned about the welfare of all government employees.

Pro-reservation groups, however, have decided to oppose the move. "We are closely monitoring the government's next step, and have asked SC/ST employees to prepare for a mass agitation as and when required," said a senior SC/ST employee, who didn't rule out the possibility of bringing crucial official work to a grinding halt.

Let law officers advise depts, ministry delays decisions: AG

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Attorney general Mukul Rohatgi has written to law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, requesting him to amend rules that make it mandatory for central law officers to give their opinion to government departments only when routed through the law ministry.

Rohatgi said the rule, which bars law officers from giving legal advice to ministries without involving the law ministry, delays decisions on important matters and runs contrary to constitutional provisions. The AG, in his letter which has also been marked to finance minister Arun Jaitley and the Prime Minister's Office, said various ministries, departments and even ministers had declined to route their requests for his legal opinion through the law ministry due to urgency of the matter. He said remedial measures get delayed as the law ministry takes its own time in routing the requests from government departments.

Referring to Rule 8(e) of the Law Officers (Condition of Services) Rules, which provides that unless a reference is received from the law ministry no advice will be given to any ministry or department, Rohatgi said the rule was contrary to Article 76 of the Constitution which states that it shall be the duty of the attorney general to give advice to the government of India upon such legal matters, and to perform such other duties of a legal character, as may from time to time be referred or assigned to him by the President. He urged the government to revoke the rule at the earliest.

Foreign secy to visit US to take up H-1B, Indians' safety issues

New Delhi/Hyderabad: Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar will visit the US from Tuesday during which key bilateral issues, including India's concerns over a possible clamp down on H-1B visas and safety of Indians are expected to be discussed.

According to officials here, Jaishankar will also be holding talks on regional and international issues of mutual interest with senior members of the Donald Trump administration during his four-day visit. Maintaining that the government was engaged with the Trump administration as well as members of the US Congress on concerns regarding the H-1B visa issue, they said India's view that Indian IT companies were contributing to the American economy by increasing the competitiveness of their firms will be conveyed by the foreign secretary during his meetings.

During the visit, which will be taking place barely days after killing of an Indian engineer in a crowded bar in Kansas City in an apparent hate crime, the issue of safety



VOICING KEY CONCERNS: Foreign secretary S Jaishankar

of Indian nationals is also expected to figure during the discussions between the two sides.

In Hyderabad, Union minister Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday condemned the killing of the engineer, saying the US government should respond to such incidents and take the "strongest action". "The US should respond to this incident. American President and people of America, they should come out openly to condemn such actions...and then take strongest action. Also send a message that it is not acceptable," Naidu said.

"These kind of incidents involving racial discrimination are shameful. They will

dent the image of USA. So the US President, administration and civil societies should unequivocally respond and condemn such incidents. I as a central minister condemn such incidents," he said. According to reports, the shooter who has been arrested, yelled "get out of my country" before opening fire on 32-year-old Srinivas Kuchibhotla and his Indian colleague Alok Madasani on Wednesday night.

Srinivas was killed while his friend was injured. A third person, an American man identified as Ian Grillot, 24, who tried to intervene also received injuries in the firing in Austins Bar and Grill in Kansas City. Naidu said he spoke regarding the incident to his cabinet colleague and external affairs minister Sushma Swara, who gave appropriate directions to the Indian high commission. "It is shocking that Kuchibhotla was shot dead in an alleged (case of) racial discrimination. It caused mental agony to all Indians. I express my sympathies to the bereaved family," he said. AGENCIES

Report: Mumbai richest Indian city with wealth of \$820 billion

Mumbai: Mumbai is the richest Indian city with a total wealth of \$820 billion, a report has said.

According to the latest New World Wealth report, India's financial capital here is home to 46,000 millionaires and 28 billionaires, and is followed in terms of wealth by Delhi in second place and Bengaluru in third place.

Delhi is home to 23,000 millionaires and 18 billionaires with total wealth of \$450 billion, while Bengaluru has 7,700 millionaires and 8 billionaires and an aggregate wealth of \$320 billion. Home to 9,000 millionaires and 6 billionaires, Hyderabad is next with a total wealth of \$310 billion. Pune, with a total wealth of \$180 billion, has 4,500 millionaires and 5 billionaires.

The total wealth held in India as of December 2016 amounts to \$6.2 trillion, while the country is home to 264,000 millionaires and 95 billionaires, the report added. AGENCIES

Vyapam scam: 96 candidates lied that middlemen had died

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The CBI probe into the Vyapam scam has found at least 96 instances where candidates lied that the middlemen who hired proxies to appear for the entrance test were dead.

It was alleged that a large number of bright students were hired to sit for the medical entrance examination conducted by Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board, the Hindi acronym for which is Vyapam.

The original candidates were approached by middlemen who further engaged other middlemen to identify bright students in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Delhi and Rajasthan who could impersonate those taking the entrance exam. The strategy was such that the actual candidate did not know the second middleman or the impersonator.

The photographs in online forms submitted by the candidates were allegedly morphed to match those of the impersonators who took the entrance exam on the payment of a fee.

When the scam surfaced, candidates were asked to give the names of middlemen. The candidates instead gave

It was alleged that a large number of students were hired to sit for the medical entrance examination conducted by MP Professional Exam Board, Hindi acronym for which is Vyapam

the names of poor people unrelated to the scam so that the police could not reach the actual middlemen and the impersonators who appeared on behalf of them. When the CBI took over the probe, it suspected that in about 96 cases, the candidates and the middlemen were lying, prompting the agency to put them through lie detector tests.

Sources said candidates and middlemen who refused to undergo the test were asked to undertake a psychological assessment test (PAT) for which their consent or court permission is not required.

The CBI has so far carried out such tests in 96 cases, prompting a majority of the candidates and the middlemen to tell the truth and identify the real persons, sources said.

Keralite fighting for IS in Kabul dead in drone attack?

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Kozhikode: On Sunday, family and close relatives of TK Hafeesudheen, the young man who left Padne village in Kasaragod district with 10 others last June to join Islamic State, got a message on Telegram informing them that he had been "martyred" for the cause.

Telegram is an instant messenger service that is open-sourced at the receiver's end but whose server-side code is proprietary and is reportedly favoured by the IS as a communication tool. The Telegram message was sent from the account of Ashfaq Majeed, another Padne youth who had left with Hafeesudheen to join the terror outfit.

"Hafees was killed in a drone strike yesterday. We consider him to be a shuhada (martyr) and Allah knows best," said the message received by B C Abdul Rehman, local leader of IUML and a relative of the slain youth.

"I got the message at 8.30 in the morning, which said the burial of Hafees was over. When I asked about others, Ashfaq said they are all waiting for their turn to become martyrs," Rehman told TOI. Rehman said a similar message was received by Hafeesudheen's mother on Sunday morning. "On hearing the news, Hafeesudheen's father Abdul Hakkeem is rushing from Sharjah to Kasaragod," Rehman said.

GROUP LEFT STATE IN JUNE 2016

The Telegram message was sent from the account of Ashfaq Majeed, another Padne youth who had left with Hafeesudheen to join the dreaded terror outfit

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Police said there was no immediate possibility of confirming the news

Hafeesudheen and ten others left Padne in June 2016 to Tehran from where the group sneaked into IS-controlled Nangarhar in Afghanistan



Hafeesudheen

Police officials said there was no immediate possibility of confirming the news. Hafeesudheen and the others left Padne in June 2016 to Tehran from where the group sneaked into IS-controlled Nangarhar in Afghanistan. Nangarhar is out of bounds even for Afghan government agencies and National Investigation Agency (NIA) has sought Interpol's help to get details of Indians in IS there.

Home ministry identifies 263 enemy properties in Goa

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Panaji: The ministry of home affairs (MHA) has identified 263 enemy properties worth over 100 crore in the state that belong to Goans who have acquired Pakistani nationality. These properties assume significance as the Union government intends to take them over by passing a law in Parliament.

Enemy properties are those whose survey numbers are registered in the names of Goans who migrated to Pakistan decades ago. After these Goans accepted Pakistani citizenship and India declared Pakistan an enemy state around 1965, their properties were declared ene-

my properties. Most such properties are located in the talukas of Bardes and Salcete, while a few lie in Tiswadi, Bicholim and other parts of the state.

The MHA has forwarded a list of enemy properties to both district collectors and has directed them to collect the lease rent from their occupants. Sources said several people have already approached courts, staking claim to these properties.

Advocate Cleofato Coutinho said there should be a mechanism in place for citizens who have changed their nationality to claim their property. "The problem with the current law is that it is very difficult to get such property back," he said.

On September 11, 1965, a central government notification stated that all immovable properties in India belonging to, or held, or managed on behalf of Pakistani nationals were to be treated as enemy properties, and that control over them was to be vested in the custodian of enemy property.

Matters relating to enemy property are dealt with under Enemy Property Act, 1968 and Enemy Property Rules, 2015.

Presently, all cases involving enemy properties are being dealt under the Enemy Property (amendment and validation) Ordinance promulgated by the President of India on January 7, 2016.

TN joyride turns watery grave for nine tourists

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Madurai: Nine tourists including five women and three children who were having a joyride on a fishing boat drowned after it was caught in tidal waves and capsized near Manapad shore in Tuticorin district on Sunday. Fishermen managed to pull out 20 people who were drowning in the sea but nine of them died later. Search is on for two or three more people who were believed to have been on the boat.

Around 5.30 pm, a group of tourists visiting Manapad beach undertook a trip on a fibre fishing boat belonging to local fishermen. They had come to the beach after attending a

temple festival nearby. It was customary of tourists visiting the coast to persuade local fishermen to take them out on a pleasure trip in the sea. Though fishing boats are not allowed to undertake joyrides, the practice has been continuing on the sly resulting in accidents and loss of lives.

Shortly after the group left in a fibre boat, it was caught in a tidal wave and capsized. Though local fishermen rushed in on their boats after hearing screams, many drowned. The fishermen managed to pull out 20 people of which nine succumbed later. Local fishermen along with marine police and fire & rescue department personnel are on a search mission.

Luxury race cars test Chennai cops' patience

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: A fleet of luxury race cars and a road made for a driver to step hard on the gas. But were the drivers of the vehicles involved in a test of speed?

The jury's out on that. But police officers who impounded 10 high-end luxury cars including marques like Porsche, Lamborghini and Ferrari on East Coast Road on Sunday insisted they were. They have charged the drivers with speeding and endangering life.

But the youngsters in the cars, stopped on a stretch near Akkarai, claimed that they were within the speed limit of 60kmph on the section infamous for drag racing. They said they were heading to a break-fast event that a car company

had organised for luxe vehicle owners.

It did not help their contention that the Lamborghini of one of the youngsters, who traffic police investigators identified as Raghav Krishnan, reportedly ran over the foot of a police inspector. Krishnan also failed to stop when police flagged him down. The Neelankarai traffic enforcement police booked him under IPC sections 336 (endangering life) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

An officer said police had proof that the cars were speeding. One of youngsters whose car police impounded, however, said the engines of the race cars sounded loud even if they were moving only at 60kmph. "We were conducting checks on East Coast Road on



VIOLATING RULES: Ten high-end vehicles were seized for speeding

complaints from residents of localities along the highway that youngsters were racing cars and motorcycles." Neelankarai traffic police inspector Soundararajan said, adding that a biker died while racing with a friend near Mahabalipuram on Saturday. "The complainants said the youngsters posed a danger to pedestrians."

A member of the police team said when officers attempted to halt the cars at 6.30am, most of the drivers refused to comply. "The team called in re-

inforcements and senior officers deployed a larger force to stop the cars at Uthandi toll gate," he said.

"We saw 10 cars speeding on the stretch," the officer said. "Once we finally forced them to halt, drivers of the vehicles refused to show us the documentation for the vehicles and also refused to cooperate with us."

After police impounded the high-end cars, they lined them up near Uthandi for nearly four hours. That created an all-round spectacle, with passersby stopping to look at the vehicles and take selfies with the cars. Many of them uploaded videos and photographs on social networking sites. To put an end to the horseplay policemen moved all the cars to a spot near the Kanathur police station.

Collegium sends, recalls and resends names for appointment as HC CJs

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ERROR OF JUDGMENT?

New Delhi: A faux pas led to an unprecedented chain of events in the Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar: It recommended names of judges for appointment as chief justices of nine high courts, suo motu recalled the names and then resent them to the government.

Judges and chief justices of high courts are selected by a smaller collegium — comprising the CJI and two most senior judges of the SC which would be Justices Khehar, Dipak Misra and J Chelameswar. For selection of SC judges and transfer of judges and chief justices of high courts, the collegium comprises the CJI and four most senior judges of the SC.

Justice Chelameswar had not been attending the collegium meetings since September last year, protesting the lack of a uniform and trans-

parent method of selection of persons for appointment as judges of the SC or HCs. He had also argued strongly that members of the collegium should record their reasons in writing to back their decision to recommend one name in preference to another.

When the collegium met to select the nine names for appointment as CJs of HCs, as usual, Justice Chelameswar decided to record his views in writing. But, due to some misunderstanding and miscommunication, CJI

Khehar expanded the collegium and included Justices Ranjan Gogoi and Madan B Lokur in place of Chelameswar. This panel then finalised the nine names and sent them to the government in the first week of February.

Expansion of the collegium would have been in order had a member recused himself from the selection process or been incapacitated to attend the meeting. With neither of the reasons available to justify expansion of the collegium, the CJI possibly realised the faux pas and took prompt steps to retrieve the recommendation sent to the ministry of law and justice.

The file was sent to Justice Chelameswar, who was in agreement with the names, and he duly affixed his signature. The file was then resent to the ministry for completing the appointment process. Law ministry sources said the names had been sent to the respective chief ministers for their comments.

SC-govt consensus on national security clause?

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court collegium is likely to come around to accept the Centre's stance that it can turn down names of judges recommended for appointment to the high courts and Supreme Court on grounds of national security on the condition that the reasons are recorded in writing.

Sources said the collegium would soon convey to the government its new stand, in what can clear the way for the early appointment of judges of high courts and the Supreme Court. The MoP might be finalised by the month-end, sources said.

The national security clause has been one of the

trickiest in the memorandum of procedure (MoP) for appointment of judges which has been hanging fire since December 2015, when a five-judge constitution bench entrusted its redrafting to the Centre in consultation with the CJI. The draft MoP prepared by the Centre had been tossed to the collegium and back without much progress on the 'national security' clause for the past year.

In a recent meeting, members of the SC collegium led by CJI J S Khehar decided that while the Centre can reject a person for appointment as SC or HC judge under the national security clause, it would have to record reasons in writing as to how a particular appointment would run afoul of national security.

Spotlight on bahubalis, royalty and satraps in UP fifth phase

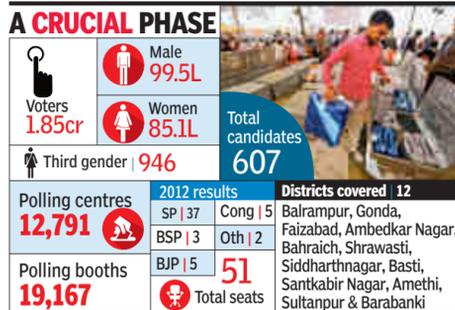
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: The fifth round of the battle for UP's crown will be fought on Monday in 51 assembly constituencies of 11 districts located in Awadh, Terai belt and East UP, where election discourse is dominated by bahubalis, royalty and local satraps.

Besides Muslims, Brahmins and Thakurs, substantial number of non-Yadav backward classes and non-Jatav Dalits will play a crucial role in this highly backward, but agriculturally rich region. Pollsters do not rule out the possibility of communal polarisation following a series of caustic remarks by Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. Some, however, believe, more than 3.07 lakh first time voters (18-19 years) in these 51 constituencies can also tilt the balance at some places by breaking caste and communal barriers.

Besides Amethi, politically important constituencies which will go to poll include Sultanpur, Bahraich, Gonda, Itwa and Akbarpur. In Ayodhya, it will be the first time after Independence that a major political party has fielded a Muslim candidate. The BSP's candidate here is Bazmi Siddiqui.

This phase will decide the fate of eight ministers in the Akhilesh Yadav government, that of outgoing assembly speaker Mata Prasad Pandey (Itwa), BSP state president Ram Achal Rajbhar (Akbarpur)



Mulayam has punctured 'cycle': Rajnath

Balla: Taking a jibe at SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, Union home minister Rajnath Singh said here on Sunday that Mulayam had punctured the 'cycle', while his brother Shivalp Yadav had broken its chain. "I really wonder how Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh will reach Lucknow riding the damaged cycle," he said at an election rally on Sunday. He claimed that there was a wave in favour of the BJP and the atmosphere in UP was conducive to blooming of the 'lotus'. "Parties like SP, BSP and Congress have created muddy pools throughout the state, and in these very pools lotus will bloom," Singh said. **TNN**

and Peace Party president Muhammad Ayub (Khalilabad). Bahubalis and their kin in the fray include Abhay Singh (SP) and Khaboo Tiwari (BJP) from Gonda, Anand Sen Yadav (SP) and Jitendra Singh (BSP) from Bikapur, Suraj Singh (SP) and Prateek Bhushan (BJP) from Gonda Sadar, Anil Kumar Tripathi (BSP) from Meh-dawal, Yashbhadr Singh (NISHAD) from Issauli, Meh-boob Alam (Lok Dal) from Tulsipur, Rupesh Kumar (Inde-



pendent) from Gonda, Anup Sanda (SP) from Sultanpur and Ajay Pratap Singh (NISHAD) from Katerhari. Candidates hailing from erstwhile royal families include Garima Singh (BJP) and Amita Singh (Congress) in Amethi, Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh (BJP) in Tiloi and Aeshwarya Raj Singh (RLD) from Basti Sadar and Alakshendra Kanti Singh (BJP) from Bhinga. There are at least 13 constituencies where contestants include sitting or former MLAs who have represented the seat three or more times in the past.

BJP pips Cong to emerge as 2nd largest party in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: The BJP has emerged as the principal gainer by becoming the second largest party in rural Odisha pushing the Congress to the third position, even as the state's ruling BJD won majority seats.

According to the results declared by the State Election Commission (SEC), of the 846 Zilla Parishad seats for which polls were held in five phases from February 13, the BJD has won 473 seats and the BJP 297. The Congress was left with just 60 seats. In the last Odisha Panchayat elections held in 2012, the BJD had won 654 seats, followed by the Congress with 128, and the BJP 36 seats out of 854 seats. Out of 846 ZP seats, results of Belapada constituency in Bolangir district, Niali seat in Cuttack district and Shergada constituency in Ganjam district were withheld, the SEC release said, adding elections were not held in ZP constituencies number 7 and 8 of Chitragonda in Malkangiri due to Maoist threats.

The SEC release said the CPI has won two ZP seats, while the CPI(M), JMM and the Ama Odisha Party have won one seat each. Independent candidates won 11 seats. Election was countermanded at 20-Gania ZP constituency in Nayagarh district due to the death of a candidate and polling was not conducted at 2-Komma ZP seat in Nuapada district following a high court order.

While the ruling BJD secured majority in 16 districts, the BJP got a clear mandate to form Zilla Parishad Councils in eight districts. The Cong-



LOCAL HEROES: BJP workers celebrate the party's victory in the Maharashtra civic polls and Odisha local bodies elections

BJP alleges poll fraud, plans to move court

Unhappy with the number of seats it got in the panchayat election, the BJP is planning to move the Orissa HC against polling officials for alleged electoral malpractices. The BJP alleged that polling officials, in collusion with leaders of the ruling BJD, helped the party get more seats. Sources said the decision was taken at a core committee meeting on Sunday which was attended by Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan, state BJP president Basanta Panda and legislature party leader KV Singhdeo among others. **TNN**

'Sops to refinery withdrawn due to BJP win'

The politics over withdrawal of tax sops to IOCL's Paradip refinery got shriller as Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said BJP's surge in panchayat elections in Odisha was the reason behind the move. "I can understand the ruling BJD's worries and anger after the impressive show put up by the BJP in panchayat elections. But, you (CM Naveen Patnaik) should not harm the state's interest by withdrawing interest-free credit for 11 years to the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd due to anger against the BJP," Pradhan said. **AGENCIES**

ress could secure majority only in Jharsuguda district. The districts where the BJD got clear majority were Jajpur, Angul, Balasore, Bhadrak, Boudh, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khur-

da, Koraput, Nayagarh, Nuapada and Puri.

The BJP is all set to form ZP Councils in Bargarh, Bolangir, Deogarh, Kalahandi, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Subarnapur districts. **AGENCIES**

Go digital, become a soldier in fight against graft, says PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Appealing to people to opt for digital payments as a tool to fight corruption and black money, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that each and every individual doing so would be part of a "new anti-corruption" cadre in the country.

"Take it (digitalisation) further as it has a very major role in the fight against corruption and black money... In a way, you are a soldier in the cause of cleanliness and purity," Modi said in his monthly radio programme - Mann Ki Baat.

Listing the government's initiatives to promote digital transactions post-demonetisation, the prime minister said the newly-launched BHIM app would take the anti-corruption movement forward.

Urging the youth and all those who have won prizes under 'Lucky Grahak Yojana' or 'Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana' to use the BHIM App in a big way, he said, "We have to go from door to door, associating everybody, to place the BHIM app in 125 crore hands".

The PM also praised the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for creating a world record by sending 104 satellites into space and spoke about the importance of science and technology in improving the lives of people.



PROMOTING TECHNOLOGY

"After the successful mission of sending Mangalyaan to Mars, ISRO achieved another landmark on February 15 where it launched 104 satellites at one go. These satellites belong to several countries, including America, Switzerland, Israel and UAE. By launching 104 satellites, India has become the only country to do so," he said on the 29th edition of Mann Ki Baat.

Pointing out that this was the 38th successful launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle undertaken by ISRO scientists, the PM said the Indian satellite, CATROSAT 2D, would help farmers gauge the availability of water in their area besides providing "accurate mapping of India's resources and infrastructure" and helping "urban development planning".

Modi added that ISRO's cost-effective space programme had amazed the world. "This is one of the significant developments not only for ISRO, but also for India," he said. **Ajit Ninan**

MGR's niece meets Modi, joins BJP

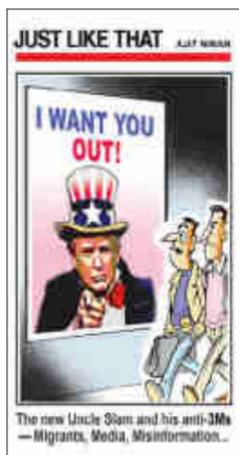
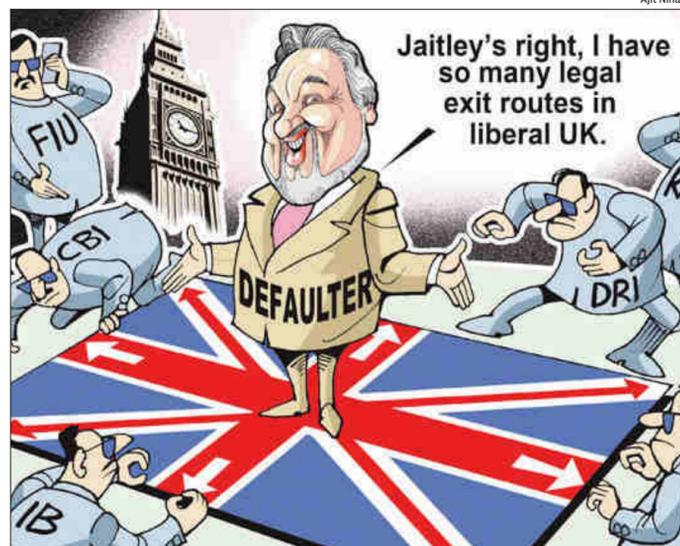
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: M G Ramachandran's niece Leelavathi, who donated her kidney to the AIADMK founder when he was being treated at Brooklyn Hospital in New York in 1984, officially joined the BJP on Sunday along with M C Rajendran (MGR's brother MG Chakrapani's son) and his son M C R Praveen. Speaking to reporters after meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday, Leelavathi said they decided to join the BJP because no other party could do a better job today. "MGR's image is being used for gaining political mileage.

No one follows his ideas and vision. Only a powerful leader like Narendra Modi can work for the welfare of the people the way MGR did," she said.

Asked why they joined the BJP, a party which is struggling to find a base in Tamil Nadu, Praveen said, "I was a member in the AIADMK. But today, the party has lost its strength. It's like a ship without a captain. Many in that party have forgotten MGR. As a political party, BJP gives us a lot of confidence," he said.

"Today, the AIADMK is at a dead end. We lost hope in AIADMK after J Jayalalithaa's death," said Praveen.



Don't forget quota stir atrocities, says Hardik

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Hardik Patel, the 22-year-old convener of Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS), on Sunday addressed the first public meeting in the city after the massive rally of August 25, 2015 at GMDC ground. Sunday's meeting, held in Nikol, was organised to felicitate kin of martyred Indian army jawans who had died fighting insurgents. Tributes were also paid to members of the Patidar community who lost the-

ir lives during the agitation for reservations.

Hardik reminded his community about the police atrocities that had allegedly taken place during the violence after the GMDC rally. It may be recalled that violence had broken out after Hardik was detained from GMDC ground. "If you have forgotten the violence inflicted on our people, the atrocities on our youths and indecent conduct with our sisters, then go and check your DNA. You can be anything but a Patidar," Hardik said.

Back from IS cells, AP doc can't believe he's alive

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vijayawada: Sixty-two-year-old physician Dr Ramamurthy Kossanam breathed freedom as he touched down at Vijayawada airport on Sunday after 17 months of trauma and torture in ISIS captivity in Libya. "Thank God, I am free. I cannot believe, I would meet my family in India. I suffered multiple injuries as abductors shuttled me through dungeons in the line of fire," he said.

Dr Ramamurthy's wife, Anna Bhavani, and children welcomed him at the airport even as a battery of officials,

politicians and journalists lined up for their turn. Heart-rending scenes were witnessed as tears welled up in the eyes of his kin. The physician could barely walk because of bullet injuries to his legs. He cannot move his left wrist as a bullet is embedded in it. Doctors at Andhra Hospital said Dr Ramamurthy would need at least four months to recover from mental shock and physical wounds.

The doctor was one of the nine health professionals abducted by ISIS militants for treatment of injured colleagues. Dr Ramamurthy said he was taken to the battle-



Dr. Ramamurthy (bottom right) with his family in Vijayawada

ties to treat wounded jihadis. "I had to treat my own injuries and also cater to the terrorists," he said.

IS militants laid siege to Sina Hospital at Sirte in Libya on September 8, 2015, and abducted Ramamurthy, another Indian, Samal Pravash Ranjan, and seven nurses

from the Philippines. After being held captive for 17 months, the doctor was freed on February 22 after high-level diplomatic intervention from India. Ramamurthy was flown to Turkey and then brought to Delhi.

He thanked the Indian government and national security adviser Ajit Doval for rescuing him. Ramamurthy was forced to provide medical help to injured IS militants in war-torn Libya.

He said his captors were a group of well-educated youngsters, who are well aware of socio-economic and political conditions in India.

Jats don black, say they will not celebrate Holi

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Rohtak: Buoyed by the large gathering on the Sunday sit-in over the call of "black day", the All India Jat Arakshansangharsh Samiti (Aijass) on Sunday announced their decision not to celebrate Holi to press for their demand. Donning black 'chunnis', turbans, and bands, the Jat protesters—including elders and women—reached the Jassia sit-in in tractor trollies, raising the demand of Jat reservation. The large crowds of protesters—including supporters of controversial godman Rampal—coming from villages from across the district, laid siege to the NH-71A from Rohtak to Gohana.

The operations at Makdoli toll plaza were suspended, making it a free run for vehicles in which Jats were travelling. Attempting to target the business community, Jat leader Yashpal Malik asked the protesters to refrain from shopping from establishments not carrying the message for Jat demands. Attacking the BJP government for not accepting their demand for withdrawal of criminal cases, Malik said if the ruling regime was so serious about upholding the law of the land, then why was action not taken against BJP workers in the past 12 months. "BJP



The protesters lay siege to the NH-71A from Rohtak to Gohana

workers were directly involved in triggering tension and attack on the Jat community, but action against them has been missing, and the government pretends to have no knowledge about it," alleged Malik.

Appealing to protesters to be ready for a Delhi siege, Malik said the date of surrounding parliament would be announced on March 2, in which Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Jats would protest at Jantar Mantar. He said the date probably would be just after Holi festival, and the protesters would lay complete siege to National Highway-1 (Sonapat-Delhi), 10 (Rohtak-Delhi), and 8 (Rewari-Delhi). He said: "About 50,000 protesters will enter Delhi on March 2, and five crore after Holi, leaving no space for others on that day."

Delhi's iconic Centaur Hotel to bite the dust

Aircraft Parking Bays To Come Up In Its Place

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New Delhi: Centaur Hotel, a city landmark built for the 1982 Asiad Games, will soon be consigned to history. The Delhi International Airport Pvt Ltd (DIAL) says the site of the hotel will be needed by December 2019 — by when it would have completed 37 years — to make way for aircraft parking bays as part of the terminal 3 expansion plan.

"The site is not needed for the fourth runway as that will be built slightly ahead of it towards the existing third runway. But we have to make additional parking bays and the Centaur site is needed for that," said a senior airport official. Run by Air India, the 376-room Centaur was a landmark when it opened because of its glitzy interiors. Its glass elevators visible from the central lobby, a novelty back then that only Le Meridien at Janpath could boast of, were a big hit.

Today, it is a pale shadow of its original self due to years of mismanagement and poor upkeep. Despite its prime location, flyers began patronising other five-stars in Delhi and Gurgaon. AI is likely to ask for land elsewhere in the 4,608-acre IGI Airport comp-

lex in lieu of this site.

Meanwhile, the lifespan of another 1982-era structure at IGI Airport — terminal 2 — that was to be demolished in 2020 to make way for a brand new T4, may get extended. T2 served as the international terminal from 1982 to 2010, when T3 opened. In 2010, T2 was mothballed and DIAL has now made it ready to handle domestic flights of some low cost carriers (LCCs) which will be shifted here from T1.

T1 is currently used for all domestic arrivals and departures of IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir. The combined traffic of these three airlines is more than the built capacity of T1 and DIAL is in talks with the three LCCs to shift a couple of them to T2 to decongest T1 as well as get space at T1 to begin expansion work there.

"Some of these LCCs are open to shifting entirely from T1 to T2 but they have only one issue — they move from T1 to

T2 in early 2017, and then return to T1 in 2020, when T2 is scheduled to be demolished. They are not comfortable with the idea of shifting operations twice in three years. The budget airlines open to shifting have asked us to examine if T2 can be retained and T4 built nearby so that they don't need to move again in 2020," said the official.

This is the main reason why shifting of airlines from T1 is stuck despite the fact that the terminal is operating passengers more than its built capacity, leading to severe congestion during peak morning and evening hours.

Aviation secretary R N Choubeey is trying to end this impasse as decongesting T1 is a must to end flyers' misery, as well as to create space to begin expansion work. Since T4 will not be built in one go like T3, DIAL may go in for a phased construction, allowing T2 to survive a little longer.

MEGA PROPERTY SOON TO BE HISTORY



1 Aircraft parking bays to come up at hotel site under Delhi T3 expansion plan

2 376-room property run by Air India now not in best of condition

3 AI to ask for land elsewhere in Delhi Airport complex in lieu of this site

4 T2, to be demolished to make way for new T4, may get extended lease of life

Jaitley: 'Alliance of subversion' on varsity campuses

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Joining the latest intolerance debate after the Ramjas College violence, finance minister Arun Jaitley claimed an "alliance of subversion" on varsity campuses, saying separatists and the ultra-Left were speaking the same language.

Talking to students of London School of Economics, Jaitley said, "Any idea which thinks in terms of disintegration of (the) country, is something I abhor. Within the framework of upholding the sovereignty of (the) country, we can ideologically differ but free speech does not permit you to assault the sovereignty of the country."

Most BJP leaders have made no bones about their reservations over anti-India slogans raised on campuses and have been equally vocal against violence on campuses.

Reiterating that there was no space for violence on campuses, Jaitley said, "I believe that free speech in India and in any society has to be debated. If you believe you have free speech to assault the sovereignty of the country, then be ready to concede free speech to counter that."

"I find this absolutely strange that an argument is being raised that I have free

PC takes a dig at finance minister

Amidst a row in Delhi University, Congress leader P Chidambaram asked finance minister Arun Jaitley on Sunday whether he was heading an "alliance of subversion" when he was heading the varsity's students' union in 1975. "When Mr Jaitley was President of DUSU in 1975, was he heading an 'Alliance of Subversion'?" the former finance and home minister tweeted. AGENCIES

speech to advocate that India should be broken into pieces and those who oppose me are hindering that right to free speech. Well, they too have a right to free speech."

He further said, "Violence is not the method, no group can and should use violence... there is an alliance of subversion which is taking place. The separatists and the ultra-Left are speaking the same language on certain university campuses. They must allow others with a different opinion to put a counter viewpoint."

Jaitley is on a four-day tour to London to represent India at a reception in Buckingham Palace on Monday to mark the UK-India Year of Culture.



CBSE to review prescribed textbooks of pvt publishers

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New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will now periodically review the textbooks of private publishers prescribed by its affiliated schools. The decision was taken after a series of meetings with the ministry of human resource development, CBSE and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to ensure that books are in consonance with the National Curriculum Framework.

Meanwhile, over 1,400 CBSE schools have raised their indent for NCERT textbooks



GOING BY THE BOOK

for the 2017-18 academic session for Classes I to XII. An indent for nearly 32 lakh NCERT books has been raised so far, which the council is supposed to make available before the start of the new session. The board has also extended the deadline to raise the indent from February 22 to February 28, 2017, after schools sought more time.

According to MHRD officials, "The government is trying to ensure that there is an adequate number of NCERT books available, so that students and parents are not forced to buy expensive private textbooks due to artificial scarcity. This is to check the nexus between private book publishers and schools," said the official, adding that because of this intervention by CBSE, now a large number of schoolchildren will be prescribed NCERT books which are "less expensive and of good quality". There used to be complaints earlier because of the scarcity of these books until July-August.

Shootout in Delhi mall, 4 of gang held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Four contract killers of the Haryana-based Ram Karan gang were nabbed after a shootout near a mall in west Delhi early on Sunday.

The four men were on their way to kill a rival gang member. They surrendered after a gun-battle in which a dozen rounds were exchanged between cops and the gang members. The four criminals have committed three triple murders in Haryana in the past two years and were wanted in several cases of extortion.

The men admitted to being involved in the murder of gangster Sandeep Badwasania.

The men, identified as Sushil, Amit, Sunil and Ramesh Meshra, were in a stolen Toyota Fortuner when they were intercepted at a picket near Subhash Nagar, said special commissioner Dependra Pathak.

"They opened fire at the cops and tried to ram through the barricade, but their SUV got stuck. While firing, the gun of one of the criminals got jammed after a bullet got stuck in the barrel. The cops overpowered them while the others were helping him. Three pistols, bullets and 32 mobile phones have been seized from them," said DCP (west) Vijay Kumar.

Boy drowns after abductors throw him into Yamuna

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Unable to find a place to conceal their seven-year-old captive, abductors allegedly pushed him off the ISBT bridge into the Yamuna and later sought a Rs 2.5 lakh ransom from his family. The boy's body was found six days later, on Sunday afternoon, around 1km downstream near Geeta Colony.

The boy, Andaz, was kidnapped from near his house in east Delhi's Karawal Nagar on February 20 by three men who offered to treat him to momos. Police said they have arrested two of the accused, Vikas and Laxman. Vikas lived in the neighbourhood and knew Andaz. The men



told the cops that they had kidnapped the boy to repay debts. Two days after allegedly killing the boy, the accused made a ransom call to his father, Shrawan Kumar, who works as a part-time driver. They asked Kumar to come to an isolated spot in Karawal Nagar the same day with Rs 2.5 lakh, adding he could collect the boy after handing over the money.

The father somehow arranged the money and waited at the designated spot for three hours. He then returned home with the money.

Kumar said, on the day Andaz went missing, the family was scheduled to visit a relative's house. When the boy wanted to go out and play, they had asked him to return

early. "I went out to check when it got late but could not find my son," he said.

The family approached the police and a case was registered. "A search was launched. Two days later, when the men made the ransom call, they were traced to Karawal Nagar," said Ajit Kumar Singla, deputy commissioner of police (north-east).

During interrogation, the duo told the cops that they took the boy to Kashmere Gate, thinking they would send him home by putting him on a bus to Karawal Nagar. But they changed their mind and instead took him on the ISBT bridge, asking him to look for fish in the water. They asked him for his father's mobile number. Then, they threw him into the water and fled.

Brothers may have been in touch with IS 'handlers'

► From P 1

Audio clips recovered from the brothers indicated that they were in touch with IS 'handlers' in Iraq and Syria through social media platforms.

Both Waseem and Naeem have degrees in computer science. While Waseem has an MCA degree, his brother Naeem completed BCA recently. Both were in the scrap business in Rajkot and Bhavnagar.

ATS officials said that the Ramodiya family was in a state of shock. Their father, Arif Ramodiya, is a cricket umpire with the Saurashtra Cricket Association.

ATS SP Himanshu Shuk-

Cops: Waseem's wife backed terror plan

ATS officials also recovered audio call records from Waseem's cellphone where he is heard talking to his wife, Shehjeen, in the Kutchi dialect. "In one audio clip, Waseem is heard explaining some terror attack plans to his wife. Shehjeen is also heard encouraging Waseem not to abandon his task. Hence, Shehjeen is also on our radar," said an ATS official. TNN

la alleged that Waseem and Naeem were in touch with IS suspect Mufti Abdus Sami Qasmi of Rampur in UP. Qasmi was arrested by the Na-

tional Investigation Agency (NIA) from Hardoi in February last year. "We have phone call records showing Mufti Qasmi was in touch with Waseem. Qasmi had been using cellphone with number 9811408736," Shukla said.

Qasmi had visited Gujarat twice to deliver sermons at Ahmedabad and Bharuch. In fact, there exists a YouTube video of Qasmi addressing a meeting at Kalupur tower on May 2, 2012.

ATS officials suspect that the Ramodiya brothers may be behind the crude bombs that were recovered in Rajkot recently. We are questioning them at the moment. Both will be produced in court on Monday.

'Self-styled shankaracharyas can't fulfil stringent eligibility conditions'

► From P 1

These things are very disappointing, and put the sadhu community under a cloud," said Swami Ravindra Puri of Mahanirvani Akhara.

Another seer, Brahma Vidyand said, "None of the self-styled shankaracharyas can hope to fulfil the stringent eligibility conditions for becoming a shankaracharya laid down by Adi Shankaracharya. Only someone with pure conduct and character, possessing deep knowledge of the scriptures including the Vedas, Vedantas, Puranas, and Prasthanatrayee, which includes the Upanishads, Brahmasutra and the Gita,

No data available with govt regarding number of shankaracharyas in country

The exact number of shankaracharyas in the country is a matter of mystery even for the government. Doon-based RTI activist Ajay Kumar has filed a number of RTI queries with various central and state government departments to ascertain the exact number of seers claiming to be shankaracharyas. But he says he has drawn a blank everywhere. Kumar told TOI that in his endeavour to dig up details, he has always come up against a wall. "All the government departments that I have approached claim they have no records in this matter," he said. TNN

can be appointed shankaracharya." The appointment must have the sanction either of the predecessor, or of the Kashi Vidwatparishad, a body of scholars based in Varanasi, headed.

TOI tried to speak with some of the seers who are al-

leged to have taken on the title of shankaracharya. One of them, Swami Rajarajeshwarashram, chief of Jagadguru Ashram at Kankhal, who has anointed himself shankaracharya of Dwarka Sharda Peeth, said he was in Nagpur and would be in a position to

speak in detail only when he returned to Haridwar in a couple of days.

Another sadhu, Trikal Bhawanta Saraswati, a woman seer, who claims to be shankaracharya of Gayatri Triveni Prayag Peeth, said male sadhus were biased and not giving the shankaracharya's post to females. "A lawsuit regarding my anointment as shankaracharya is pending in the Allahabad high court but I am confident it will soon be decided in my favour," she said.

According to Brahma Vidyand, most of the self-styled shankaracharyas had assumed the title secretly. "That is why nobody bothers much about them, nor is their number known," he claimed.

Elections without pomp & show? Blame it on these backroom boys

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Shravasti: From a computer operator at Shravasti district hospital to tracking TV news and advertisement in the graveyard shift – 10 pm to 6 am – Yaduvansh Kumar's life has suddenly acquired dollops of excitement. He is part of a rag-tag crack team – media certification and monitoring committee – that tracks new, advertisement, and of course, paid news in the ongoing elections.

At Shravasti's two-room setup at DM office, if Yaduvansh tracks TV, Malkhan, from local information department and Saurabh Katiyar, from TB prevention department, keep a hawk eye on newspapers. And Kunwar Bahadur, the man who keeps tab on social media, is otherwise a motivator at a local village panchayat. There are several like them in the team, which works round-the-clock to keep a daily record of candidates' expenditure.

Scanning through Friday's local newspapers, Malkhan experiences an 'Eureka' moment. "Mil gaya. Paid news," he shouts. It's a story in a Hindi daily about a Bhinga candidate. The headline mentions that that candidate claims a wave of support in his favour: "It's so one-sided – bound to be paid news," Malkhan is convinced. The clipping is promptly punched to a separate file.

"We will contact the editor of the paper. He will have to explain. In similar instances in the past, a newspaper came out with the



The rate card to calculate candidates' expenses

explanation that candidates from all the parties were given the same opportunity to speak about their chances. If in this case as well, the newspaper publishes stories based on other candidates' interview then we will consider it normal, otherwise the newspaper will be charged for publishing paid news," he says, pointing towards a pile of newspapers he has to scan every day.

There is another team – consisting of staff from the treasury department, good at maths – which collates the data sent by the field squads to calculate each candidate's expenditure on the basis of a 'rate card' which has every possible expenditure likely to be incurred during a poll campaign – from Rs 3000 for a medium-size gate to Rs 500-2800 for loud speakers and amplifiers depending on the size of the rally; and from Rs 5 for tea and samosa to Rs 30 for puri-sabzi, campaign workers are likely to be fed, every single expenditure in under the scanner.

The field teams keep an eye on campaigns and rallies and give inputs like how many vehicles were used, how many gates were put up, the number and size of the banners and hoardings and even what kind of refreshments were given to the people taking part in meetings and rallies. Each input is then converted in terms of expenditure as per the readymade rate card to tally with figures submitted by candidates. If elections nowadays are devoid of colour with posters and hoardings which used to cover a city's skyline missing, credit – or blame – is on these backroom boys, working across UP. Operating from each of 75 district headquarters, they are eyes and ears of the election commission helping it maintain transparency.

POLL SNACKS

'SP will need oxygen support after polls'

BSP chief Mayawati said on Sunday that Samajwadi Party will go on ventilator after her party gains power in UP. "Chunav ke natije aate hi SP oxygen pe chali jayegi, aur isme kuchh kami rahi toh use unke chacha Shivpal pura karenge (After poll results, SP will need oxygen and uncle Shivpal will do the rest if needed)," Mayawati said while addressing an election rally in Ballia on Sunday.

UP minister sacked after he joins BSP: UP minister Vijay Mishra, who had joined BSP after being denied ticket for the Assembly polls, has been sacked from the Akhilesh Yadav government. Governor Ram Naik sacked Mishra on the recommendations of Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav. A letter requesting the Governor to sack Mishra was received by Raj Bhavan on Saturday, officials said.

Damad in tow, Lalu seeks votes for samdhi

Daughter Married To Mulayam's Grand-Nephew, RJD Chief Likens East UP's Elders To His Samdhis

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Salempur (Deoria, UP): In the rural deep of UP's Purvanchal districts, when Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD) supremo Lalu Prasad on Sunday took to microphone, there were inevitable belly laughs in the crowd as he addressed them all as "samdhi."

"Jitne boodhe aur budhiye log hain, sab samdhi hai humare. Yadav ji (Mulayam) ke pautu se hum shaadi kiye hai beti ka. Bihar aur Uttar Pradesh ko ek kar diya hai. Aur aap logon ne mann bana liya hai. Iska istemaal saavere mooh dhoke hoora karke, SP-Congress ke vote daaliye" said Lalu in Bhojpuri-mixed Hindi, the common dialect in eastern districts of UP.

As he flew from Kushinagar to Deoria, the two UP districts that are closest to Bihar, to address four back-to-back rallies, Lalu knew he had struck an emotional chord with the Purvanchalis. His daughter Rajlakshmi is married to Mulayam Singh Yadav's grand-nephew Tej Pratap, Samajwadi Party MP from Mainpuri.

Tej Pratap flew along with his father-in-law to all four rallies. At each rally, he would touch his feet and solicit support to save the Yadav clan.

While SP patriarch Mulayam has taken a back seat, remaining absent from most big rallies for his party candidates across the state, Lalu seems to have run to the parivar's defence.

"BJP is using abusive language against Akhilesh. I won't let anything happen to him. Like Tej, he's my son too" he told TOI at the rally ground.

With just three phases of elections left to be concluded by March 8, Lalu is set to pack a punch with 29 more rallies across Mau, Azamgarh, Var-



IN-LAW SUPPORT: Lalu Prasad with son-in-law Tej Pratap Yadav

nasi, Ballia and so on in the next week.

Most of these districts are a 45-minute to an hour hop from Patna.

Although Akhilesh had not included Lalu at the time of the Congress-SP alliance announcement, it is he who has now pro-

vided him with a chopper, a brand new 5-seater, to campaign.

Lalu packs a punch with his inimitable mimicry of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and can jeer at the PM with a flippancy discourse that is enough to turn the crowd on their feet.

Which is why most of Lalu's

Sunday attack was reserved for Modi and BJP president Amit Shah, both of whom have launched vitriolics on Akhilesh on graveyards for Muslims and deteriorating law and order affairs in the state.

"They are fighting a pseudo battle over Lord Ram and temple. It's us who proudly follow our rich history of Ram. We followed the paramparas of sending our daughters of Janakpur proudly to the state of Ram," said Lalu.

"My father-in-law is the only politician who takes on the PM subtly. He won applause from the people because he spoke their dialect. We will have more rallies by March 1," Tej Pratap told TOI.

Earlier, during his address, Lalu took more potshots at Modi over religious contours, saying the Ganga is visited by those who want to do their sanskars.

In Deoria, he even readily invoked a local saint – Devraha Baba – for his supernatural heal-

ing powers while condemning the 'spiel' by Yogi Adityanath.

"I used to visit the shrine of this renowned saint Devraha Baba. His miracles are well-known. Not like this Yogi from neighbouring Gorakhpur," Lalu told the gathering.

He did not spare the BJP over notebandi. "I have nine children. If PM was first serious about bringing back black money, he would have brought that from Swiss banks. And I would have become a crorepati. We wouldn't have to stand at ATMS to withdraw money at times of demonetization," he said

Fabled for ferrying Lord Ram across Saryu, Kewats now want jobs, education

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Faizabad/Ayodhya: "Jab Ram Bhagwan tatt pe aayi rahe banbaas jaane ko wo Saryu paar kar sakat thhey, parantu Sita mayya kyunki stree thhi agar se paani mein utarri toh napunsak ho jati. Eeh liye wo naav dundhat thhey. Tab hamaar Raja Nishad ooko paar lagai thha (When Lord Ram had come to the river bank to embark on his exile, he could have easily waded through the water. But if a woman crossed the water on foot, she would become infertile so he looked for a boat for mother Sita and it is then that our King Nishad-raj came to their rescue)," says Sonu Nishad (42) with pride, while narrating the legend.

As he continues with the narrative, banks of Saryu at Guptar ghat in Ayodhya, which will go to polls on Monday, are lined with a few boats. Business is dull with low levels of water almost eight months of the year, February being one of them. The ghat is revered for being the place from where Lord Ram took 'Jal Samadhi', leaving his human form behind. "From helping Lord Ram cross the river to bringing karsevaks in December 1992 to Ayodhya through the water



Kewats at Guptar Ghat say business is low

channel, the Kewat community has played an important role.

The young voices in the community clearly want to move on, get jobs, be educated and live a decent life, with river providing not much to survive on. As per Dalit writer RD Anand, "The story has been

used vigorously to keep the feeling of being a Hindu intact both when it was cleverly written by Tulsidas and later when RSS cashed in on it, while no work is actually done for them."

"My father was one of those who ferried karsevaks here.

of BJP-captured Ayodhya seat and five years of SP rule.

"The biggest problem is spurious liquor that has claimed thousands of lives, ruined families and pushed women to fend for themselves. We have protested but police patronise it," said Arvind Nishad.

A young group from the village, with women in the lead, was thus born in September 2016 under the name of Ratiya Sudhar Samiti-Nishad Mukti Morcha that has been pushing the cause. "Women have to be confined to the house with aggressive drunkards in the street. We all face problems in getting married too," said Neelam Nishad who claims to have given slogans for the movement that are also printed on calendars of Raja Nishad.

Another major issue is lack of adequate toilets; three toilet compounds are used by over 10,000 residents of Ratiya. Only 30% population has private toilets. "We have sent several representations to the municipality but after sunset women and men prefer to go in the open," said Veeru.

Unemployment is another big challenge. "Only 25% here have work, that too of selling fish etc; the rest 75% are unemployed," said Kamal Nishad.

Ayodhya mahants call BJP's 'bluff'

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Ayodhya: Giving a thumbs down to several BJP leaders who have raised the Ram mandir issue in the midst of elections in UP, prominent sadhus of Ayodhya's major religious akharas have said the outcome of the state polls will have no bearing on the prospects of the temple being built.

No government in Lucknow can clear the way for the temple at 'Ram janmabhoomi', said mahant Suresh Das, head of the Digambar akhara, whose predecessor Ramchandra Das Paramhans was one of the spearheads of the temple movement.

"Vote ke liye yeh neta jhoolte hain (these politicians lie for the sake of votes)," Das told TOI. "During the 2014 elections, they said the temple will be built after

they have majority in the Lok Sabha. Now, they say they need majority in Rajya Sabha."

Akharas are orders of militant ascetics with large presence in many holy cities. Ayodhya has three; all at some point were directly involved in the Babri Mosque-Ram Temple dispute.

Like his predecessor Paramhans, Suresh Das is aligned with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and reflected the group's militant views on the subject. "The temple movement hasn't ended, it has merely been suspended till 2018 to give time to the PM to clear the path," he added.

Prominent priests from other akharas were even more cynical of the temple issue being raised during elections.

"Before every election, we get a Ram mandir in Ayodhya! Ram has become BJP's polling agent," said mahant Gyan Das, head priest at Ayodhya's famous Hanumanagarhi

'Ayodhya has lost a lot'

Patanjali is opening a new unit in Chitrakoot. Why didn't it come to Ayodhya?" asks mahant Ram Das before answering the question himself. "That's because no one wants to invest here due to uncertainty and fear." The words represent a growing weariness with the temple agitation, nearly three decades after it pitch-forked Ayodhya into the national limelight. Ram Das, the head of the Nirmohi akhara – one of the litigants in the mosque-temple land dispute – makes a strong case for letting the court decide the matter. "Ayodhya has paid a heavy price. No factories have come here and no infrastructure built during these years. The railway track to Ayodhya is still a single line. Even roads haven't been widened," he says.

temple, also home to the town's largest Nirvani akhara.

"Modiji has guts, we respect him. If he wants he can call a joint session of Parliament to pass a law on the temple. But it must happen with harmony and the agreement of all. We want a temple smeared in milk, not blood," he added.

Mahant Ram Das, head of the Nirmohi akhara which is one of the litigants in the title suit over the disputed Babri mosque-Ram janmabhoomi land, agreed that the temple issue had no place in these elections.

"The matter is in Supreme Court and let it decide it. The issue shouldn't be politicised. Anyway, the BJP has been raising it since 1989 and even rode to power on its back. Have they

been able to build a temple?" Ram Das asked.

While some BJP leaders have spoken about the temple during these elections, the PM hasn't even visited Ayodhya, he pointed out. "The VHP too has no support. It can't even gather a decent crowd here," he added.

Ayodhya goes to polls in the fifth phase on Monday. Like in the past, several mahants have taken political positions, some even aligning along caste lines.

For instance, mahant Bhavnath Das from the Nirvani akhara has been canvassing for the Samajwadi Party. Gyan Das too airs his preference for Akhilesh Yadav. The holy town and its holy men, it seems, remain as political as ever.

There's a little bit of Nepal in UP polls

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Nepalgunj (Nepal): Bholenath is a small-time businessman from Bahraich. He has come to Nepalgunj across the Rupaidiha border to bring back his wife Leela, so that she could vote on February 27 in Bahraich Sadar constituency. She is a Nepalese citizen, but also a voter in India after her marriage to Bholenath seven years ago. As the bordering constituencies of Nanpara and Balha of Bahraich district are about to vote, the buzz is quite palpable in Nepalgunj, a big business centre of Nepal's Banke district.

If you think only a citizen of India can vote in UP elections, visit Rupaidiha,

40km from Bahraich, and cross the border. It's an open secret here that a large number of 'citizens of Nepal' will go across to cast their votes on February 27.

"Hundreds of people will go across the border on Friday itself, so that they could vote on Monday. The number includes those who are citizens of Nepal and also the ones who are working here in various business establishments. The social ties between the people of the two sides are centuries old and then there is an open border between the two countries. So, it's very difficult to monitor," says Krishna Adhikari, a senior journalist in Nepalgunj.



Rupaidiha police station is the last before UP-Nepal border

His information comes with a request: "Please don't identify them by asking for their voters' identity card. There are hundreds of people doing it, so why identify one of them. It's nothing like dual citizenship. They just have identity cards of the two countries to take ben-

efits from both the sides."

"The border is between two countries and in your mind. For the people living on the two sides, it doesn't exist. They share the tie of roti and beti (food and matrimony) which is considered unbreakable. In wedding season, every day you will find one or two barats ready to go across," says Rajesh Kandiyani, an Indian businessman settled in Nepalgunj.

So, no matter who wins, Nanpara's main contestants – BJP's Madhuri Verma, Congress's Waris Ali and BSP's Abdul Waheed will have a few hundred Nepalese citizens pitching for them.

(Some names have been changed to protect identity)

BSP's genesis at Kanshi Ram's caste lab

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Faizabad/Ambekarnagar: The sprawling Gulab Bari (Garden of roses) housing the mausoleum of Nawab of Oudh Shuja-ud-Daula, has been one of the main tourist attractions in Faizabad. Centred in the middle of the city, the 18th century structure, however, has another history – it once happened to be one of the many crucibles in the discreet caste laboratory of Dalit leader Kanshi Ram, long before he went on to form the political behemoth called Bahujan Samaj Party.

"It was sometimes in mid-1970s. Saheb (Kanshi Ram), who was still in his formative years as a Dalit leader

used to call us to Gulab Bari to discuss issues concerning people of the lower caste and how they can be grouped socio-politically to overthrow the might of the existing political dispensation," recalled Ram Karan, former banker and associate of Kanshi Ram.

The Dalit amalgamation experiment of Kanshi Ram began on December 6, 1978 and he went on to form a semi-political entity, Backward and Minority Community Employee Federation (BAMCEF). The members of the group, comprising essentially the educated from the lower caste community were turned into a cadre before being sent into Dalit dominated hamlets. "We



Facade of Gulab Bari

would meet people of lower castes and tell them about their constitutional rights," Ram Karan said.

Exactly three years later, on December 6, 1981, BAMCEF transformed into another organisation called Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS-4). The role of its

members remained more or less the same until April 14, 1984 when Kanshi Ram eventually founded the BSP.

The party, however, made its presence felt first time in 1989 assembly elections when it won 13 seats. Though party floundered marginally in 1991, it rose significantly in 1993 when it won 67 seats while contesting in alliance with the Samajwadi Party. It was this year Kanshi Ram's caste lab bore fruit and his party won five out of 10 assembly seats in Faizabad. The five seats were actually in present day Ambekarnagar which was carved out of Faizabad by then CM Mayawati on September 29, 1995.

CAMPAIGN TRAIL | TOI spends a day with Bazmi Siddiqui, the first Muslim candidate from a major party in Ayodhya after Independence

Muslim candidate quotes Prophet to seek vote from all

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AYODHYA: *Ye Islam ki aur uske Nabi ki seekh hai ke tum sachche Musalmaan nahi agar khud aaram se khana kha kar so jao aur tumhara padosi bhooakha reh jae* (This is the teaching of Islam and its Prophet that you're not a Muslim if you go to bed satiated while your neighbour goes hungry), blares the microphone as Bazmi Siddiqui, the only Muslim candidate this year and the first one after Independence to be fielded by a mainstream national party to contest the religiously significant and politically controversial Ayodhya seat, makes his speech.

It is evening and BSP's Siddiqui is addressing a mix crowd of Dalits and Muslims at the Mahobra Bazaar crossroad on one of the many back-to-back jan sabhas. Under a faint white light, Siddiqui seeks votes on brotherhood, peace and unity with references to Islam's teachings.

Amid claps and frequent acknowledgements of 'sahi baat hai', Siddiqui continues his address, first in Awadhi, forming an instant connection, and then moves to Urdu and Hindustani, calling himself the 'beta' and 'bhai' of the mixed gathering.

"SP aur BJP ka vidhayak dekh liya ab ek mauqa BSP ka bhi deibey. Jhamajham sarkar chalegi jaise behenji ki chalti hai. Unka bitwa tumhaar bitwa se jada sundar toh naahi ke eke liye ote diebo (You have given SP and BJP MLAs. Now give BSP a chance. Your son is no less good looking than their sons – Akhilesh and Rahul – if you vote on that criteria), he says, leaving the crowd in splits. "Ladke ki sachai se bahot prabhavit hun main. Agle saal peace party ko ote deen tha, eeh baar haathi," said 85-year old Mohd Siddiqi. "His being a Muslim is another winning factor," added another villager Waseem.

At another jan sabha in Rekabganj area, Siddiqui claims, "You know why behenji chose a Muslim for this seat? So that we establish the milestone of Hindu-Muslim



Bazmi Siddiqui campaigning in his constituency

unity in Ayodhya that has been used by BJP to send out a wrong communal message."

Earlier in the day, Siddiqui's convoy of five white SUVs with fluttering blue flags had crossed the Pura Bazaar crossing, 14 kilometres ahead of Faizabad.

Even before the dust could settle, Siddiqui would, in one swift motion, jump out of the front seat and start greeting people with folded hands while his supporters distributed pamphlets to villagers.

Barauli village, off Pura Bazaar, has a population of around 400 people with a majority of Dalit voters (Kori and Paasi) and OBC (Kurmi) who claim they vote in bulk. "Humey ookey musalmaan

Siddiqui addresses in Awadhi and then moves to Urdu and Hindustani, calling himself the 'beta' and 'bhai' of the mixed gathering

hone se kauno matlab naahi," says Shyamwati, a villager. "Heeya ote haathi pe jaat hai (The vote here goes to the BSP)," adds Golu.

As he moves ahead, crisscrossing the many Dalit majority villages in Faizabad district, Siddiqui makes it a point to lay stress on the 'haathi'. "SC population here is 80,000 and Muslims 60,000. Even if there is 70% voting by these two, capturing 55,000 SC votes and 30,000 Muslim votes I will win," he said.



A thought for today

The question is, can we wake up?

ANNA DEVERE SMITH

Shot In Kansas

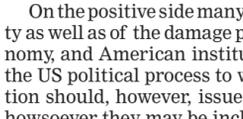
A Hyderabad engineer falls victim to festering socio-economic turmoil in America

The tragedy in Kansas where two Indian technical professionals were shot at, killing one of them, has come as a shock for the Indian community in the US. To set the killing in context, it must be remembered that while it was the handiwork of a white American – a navy veteran and IT specialist – following the hurling of racial slurs, another white American – Ian Grillot – grappled heroically with the gunman, took a bullet in the process and may be responsible for the second Indian professional escaping with an injury. There are diverse forces at play in the American polity today, and it is worth analysing these before jumping to conclusions.

There's no denying that the incident comes at a contentious time in America where there's a raging debate about immigration and job loss. In some quarters the killing has melded with the issue of a new Donald Trump administration getting tough on immigration and blaming migrants for supposed job losses. However, the forces behind what happened in Kansas predate Trump. Indians were blamed for "stealing" jobs from Americans during the Obama administration as well.

Recall that it was former President Barack Obama who had coined the "Say No to Bangalore and Yes to Buffalo" slogan to rescind tax incentives to US companies that had branches overseas. Moreover it was during his administration that an Indian consul was arrested on trumped up charges, having to do with the trope of Indians being willing to work for less than Americans. Similarly, racism is a long-term problem in America. As is a prolific gun culture that results in horrific shootings across the US, including in schools and colleges. Here, it's noteworthy that neither Republican nor Democratic administrations have had the courage to repeal America's absurd gun laws.

On the positive side many Americans are aware of their absurdity as well as of the damage protectionism will inflict on the US economy, and American institutions are strong. These are issues for the US political process to work through. The Trump administration should, however, issue sharp condemnations of hate crimes howsoever they may be inclined on other issues. Else they will be hard to control and tomorrow Jews as well as blacks, important constituencies that President Donald Trump would want to court, will be affected. Trump should make it clear that such hate is not acceptable in his America.



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Sack Pahlaj Nihalani

In its latest act of tyranny, CBFC refuses to certify a film for being 'lady oriented'

The film *Lipstick Under My Burkha* is written and directed by women, and stars eminent actors Ratna Pathak Shah and Konkana Sen Sharma. Like its title its trailer makes no bones about the film being provocative and bold, inviting the audience into a hidden world of women's fantasies and desire. As the opinion essay on this page elaborates, our quest to become a modern and equal society demands liberating female fantasies from puritanical shackles. But the Pahlaj Nihalani led Central Board of Film Certification has refused to let India watch this film. He must be fired and the board must be reformed.

Director Alankrita Shrivastava understandably suspects that CBFC members don't understand cinema. After all it must be surreal for her that while *Lipstick Under My Burkha* is being celebrated at festivals abroad, at home it is being denied certification because it is "lady oriented". This is as baffling as why 89 cuts were demanded of *Udta Punjab* or why "double meaning" was declared objectionable or indeed countless other acts of scissoring by CBFC. While films live in fear of being cut and mutilated, the censors never face any repercussions for their arbitrariness, incompetence or brutality.

The tyrannical writ of this "sanskari" CBFC has run too long. There must be no further delay in reforming it as recommended by the Shyam Benegal led committee. In essence this means the board should stop scissoring or obstructing films and remain restricted to classifying them – like suitable for over 12 years of age or over 18. As Benegal points out in a free democracy where all adult citizens have the power to choose their government, why should anyone usurp their power to decide what film to see and what not?



Pradesh ka Uttar?

When it comes to elections in UP
1+1 doesn't always equal 2

Sagarika.Ghose@timesgroup.com



Elections in UP pose formidable mathematical challenges. If EBCs and non-Jatavs are equal to Brahmins and Rajputs then where does it leave the Yadavs? And if you add the Muslims to the Dalits but subtract the Banias from the Bhumihars then do the Lodhs become the unknown quantity X? And in an equation with the Mauryas and the Khushwahs are the 'Other OBCs' a key variable? What happens when you add the Kurmis and the Koeris but divide them by the Rajbhars and then multiply them with Jats? Don't forget the Nishads who could be the highest common denominator in some areas. It's time to bring out political calculators.

In UP even the PM says he's an OBC even though in Delhi it's sabka saath sabka vikaas. Akhilesh is a Yadav first even if his laptop is made in China. As for Rahul, when you're a Gandhi first then family is the only caste. Mayawati's mayajaal has meant she has always caste her jaali wide: remember that famous slogan, tilak tarazu aur talwar, inko maaro jooto char (Throw shoes at upper castes).

What Uttar will the most important Pradesh give in these elections? Social justice is cycling around and the lotus is blooming in unlikely places. The elephant's tread is silent and often goes unnoticed and as for the hidden hand, sometimes in the election poker game, life may just deal you a bad hand. To quote Gabbar Singh's famous Sholay line, these days few are demanding, yeh haath hamko de de, Thakur. But Akhilesh has stepped up to say if not haath then UP ko yeh saath pasand hai.

Many young voters in UP are voting with their feet and boarding the train to Mumbai. Between Banarasi Babus, Rampur ka Laxmans and Dabanggs, UP's important in Bollywood. Even though some prefer to sing 'main ayi hoon UP Bihar lootne' netagiri is UP's lifeblood. Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh may have opted to remain surrounded by shatranj ke khiladi while the British gobbled up his kingdom, but today's ruling Shah is a Gujarati vegetarian who wants to have his political rivals for breakfast with the same zest that he eats his dhoklas. Gujaratis love their stock markets, but in UP, the only blue chip that matters is political power. After poll results, we'll know where the best parties are in town but whoever wins or loses, the die has been caste in UP.

Fear Of Female Fantasy

Let's tell tales celebrating women's desires, such as where Shakti demands Shiva satisfy her and he does

Devdutt Pattanaik



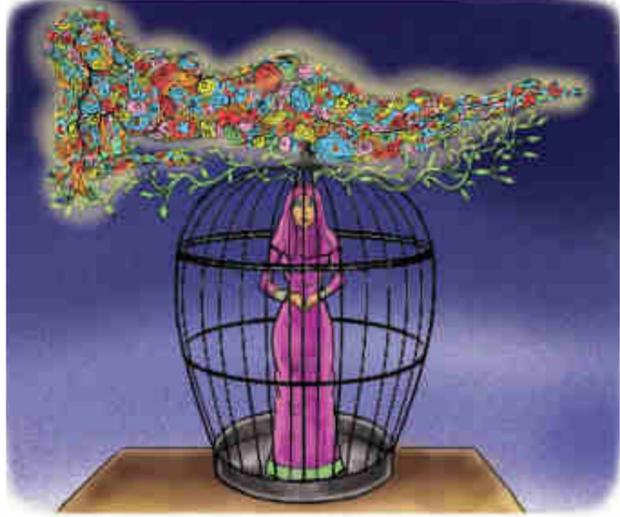
Fantasy frightens us, especially female fantasy. How do we regulate it? We can control a woman's body, lock her in the house, cover her face with a veil, but how do we control her mind. For in her mind, she can imagine a better man, a perfect man, which renders the real men in her life inadequate. Her body can be invaded and violated, but can her mind ever be truly domesticated?

These questions emerge as we hear of censor boards denying certificates to films celebrating female fantasy, and of policemen and politicians physically attacking women, against all norms of civilised conduct, arguing that surely if women want to 'fantasise' about being equal to men, surely they can handle a punch or two.

One way of regulating fantasy has been by propagating stories where women who pursue their desires are viewed as dangerous, hence need to be restrained for social good. For example, in Japanese mythology, the first man and woman are called Izanagi and Izanami. When the woman invites the man to bed, the children born of the union turn out to be the demons, but when the man invites the woman to bed, the children born are the gods.

In Abrahamic mythology, we learn how before Eve there was another woman in Eden called Lilith. She refuses to be subservient to Adam, and rejects the missionary position prescribed by the patriarchs. So she is cast out, and she becomes the mother of demons, of the succubi and incubi, who seduce men and women into sexual activity, and thereby pollute the soul. When even Eve defies God, and eats the Forbidden Fruit, submitting to the possibilities offered by the Devil, she is punished and made answerable to Adam for all eternity.

All of womankind is redeemed by Mary, who quietly accepts the news that even though she is not married, and has



Charu Gowar

never been with a man, she is pregnant with Jesus Christ. She will be the Virgin Mother of the son sent by God to save all sinners.

In Hindu mythology, we hear the story of Renuka, who is beheaded on her husband Rishi Jamadagni's orders because of harbouring an adulterous thought for but a moment on seeing a beautiful man bathing in the river as she was fetching water. How does he gain knowledge of her fantasy? Because he notices she has lost her 'sati' powers.

Sati is a mythic term referring to women who are so chaste that they obtain magical powers such as the ability to withstand the heat of fire. In the case of Renuka, she had the ability to collect water from unbaked pots made from clay from the riverbank. She loses this ability as soon as she desires the handsome man, and so is punished brutally by her husband.

In modern retellings, despite all talk of feminism, we shy away from describing erotic fantasies of Draupadi: does she compare and contrast the lovemaking styles of her five husbands?

That being said, Hinduism is rather ambiguous in its view of female sexuality; seeking control over it while acknowledging simultaneously that it cannot be controlled. And so the head of Renuka, separated from her body, is an object of worship in many parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka. It is taken around in processions, attached to the rim of a pot or a wicker basket, a reminder of female fantasy, and sexuality. Renuka is viewed not as the fallen wo-

man but as the mother-goddess, beyond the control of patriarchal society. She is simultaneously the chaste domesticated farm as well as the wild unchaste forest, unrestrained by the rules of the farmer, the patriarch. Of course, when her tale is retold today, Renuka's desires are whitewashed, and focus is given to the restoration of her status as sati, pure and chaste.

Cultural tales, repeated over generations, fix themselves in our soul and become real. We start assuming they reveal an objective truth of the universe, rather than the subjective truth of a culture. Through stories we try to defy nature, and deny imagination. We are told repeatedly that women should be desirable, but they cannot be desired. Women who desire are punished, like Surpanakha, whose nose is cut, and Ahalya who is turned into stone. We are told that Ahalya was 'innocent', duped by Indra who took the form of her husband. We are not allowed to consider alternate narratives that maybe, just maybe, she recognised and wanted the virile sky-god, bored of her stiff intellectual old husband.

In modern retellings, despite all talk of feminism, we shy away from describing erotic fantasies of Draupadi: does she compare and contrast the lovemaking styles of her five husbands? We avoid giving too much importance to apsaras who are great seductresses but lack all maternal instincts, like Menaka who leaves Shakuntala on the forest floor, after vanquishing Vishwamitra's celibate will. We want goddesses to be virginal and chaste. We fear the yoginis who encircle and entrap young nath-yogis with their charms; we declare them insatiable witches.

Hindu mythology is unique in that it exists in a paradigm where nothing is perfect or permanent. All things change. And there is always a story suitable for every age. Time to reject our colonial puritanical past and dig out ancient tales where Shakti approaches Shiva and demands he satisfy her, and he – ironically known as Kamatya, the killer of desire – dutifully complies.

'Despite winning World Cup most of our players are struggling ... BCCI should adopt blind cricket'

Ajay Reddy is the captain of the Indian cricket team that won the Blind T-20 World Cup by beating Pakistan. India won the inaugural edition of the Cup in 2012 as well. Reddy spoke to Pratigyan Das on the challenges of playing blind cricket, how it can gain popular support and why he thinks BCCI should come to the rescue of the Cricket Association for Blind in India:

■ How does it feel to be world champions beating arch rivals Pakistan?

The emotions are yet to sink in. It was a great feeling to hold the tricolour and become world champs yet again. I feel proud to win the World Cup for the country. The team had toiled hard, we were waiting for this day and it paid off. It was more special as we defeated Pakistan in the final match. Besides, India's winning streak against Pakistan in the World Cup remained intact.

■ But has your team got its due? In fact you had also expressed your disappointment over Virender Sehwag's tweet that called your team 'other Men in Blue'?

Well, there was some confusion and I was

quoted out of context. In fact, #TheOtherMenInBlue was a hashtag which was the theme of the Indian team. But yes, I feel sad that despite winning the World Cup and that too second time in a row, most of our players are struggling due to poor financial conditions. Despite performing consistently at international level, our players are struggling to earn a living and are forced to leave cricket to make ends meet. What should we do more to get recognition? My state is yet to acknowledge my achievement.

■ Do you think BCCI should grant affiliation to the Cricket Association for Blind in India?

Yes, I do feel BCCI should come to the rescue of CABI which is facing many financial constraints. Presently, due to financial constraints, our board is unable to pay its players regular salary, provide better infrastructure, training facilities among other issues. If BCCI, the richest board

in the world adopts CABI, our financial problems will be solved. It will encourage other countries and players to come to India. We will get more sponsors. Pakistani players have been recognised by their cricket board, they get regular salary; even smaller nations have already recognised their blind cricket but unfortunately it's not the case in India despite winning consistently.

■ Do you think lack of popular support is one of the reasons why blind cricket or for that matter women's cricket is not getting recognition?

No I don't think so. There was a time when people hardly knew anything about blind cricket. But in this World Cup which was played in various cities across the country, surprisingly, the enthusiasm among the crowd was huge. They cheered for us, appreciated our team spirit, dedication and hard work. Moreover, while travelling, people would come and ask us about the matches, scores, etc. I feel there is a growing awareness among the cricket lovers for this form of cricket. The game will become more popular if we play regularly. This is precisely why BCCI needs to chip in. If sponsors come forward, our players and the game will change for the better. Besides, celebrities should also come forward in promoting this game.

■ What are your expectations from the government?

Government should take a positive interest in

promoting blind cricket. Till BCCI recognises us, Union government should at least provide an annual grant to CABI to manage and plan its future tournaments. Government should also provide jobs to our players. It will motivate budding talents to come forward and take interest in this game. Besides, it should also issue guidelines to state governments on providing jobs to the local players. We have been consistently bringing laurels for the country. Our achievement is not less than Olympic players. If they can be showered with rewards and jobs, why are we being left out?

■ Please tell us about your journey, so far?

I was passionate about cricket since childhood. I studied in a normal school till class VI and played normal cricket with my classmates. Since I am visually impaired, my mother would resist my playing the game. She was scared that I would injure myself. But I was in love with this game. My passion got wings when I joined Lutheran High School for the Blind in Narsaraopet, in class VII. The school was known for promoting cricketers. But serious cricket came in after I watched Sekhar Naik's game. He became my role model and I practised hard till I got selected for the national team. I am happy that I have performed consistently for my country.

■ Any tips?
Everyone is special. Always set a goal, focus on it and work hard for it. Success will follow you.

dilbert



How Gut Chemicals Contribute To Our Well-being

Anil K Rajvanshi

Scientific evidence suggests that a big part of our emotions is probably influenced by chemicals and nerves in the gut. For example, 95% of the body's Serotonin is found in the gut. It is an important neurotransmitter that is a well-known contributor towards feelings of well-being. Sometimes it is also called a "happiness hormone".

Similarly research published in the 'Journal of Microbiology Health' has found that a bacteria-free gut in early childhood leads to adults with less anxiety and general cheerfulness. Interestingly the effect of early childhood gut bacteria has maximum impact on the developing brain and peters off by the age of two-three years just when brain expansion also starts slowing down.

The brain-gut information channel is primarily the vagus nerve – one of the longest nerves inside the body – whose

central purpose is to communicate with internal organs like gut and heart and to relay their information and status to the brain. It starts from the head and after going through all the organs ends near the anus. The other brain-gut communication channel is blood flow.

Similarly, another study recently published in the journal 'Cell' has shown that Parkinson's disease (PD) starts in the gut and not in the brain! Alpha-Synuclein molecules normally found in the gut, heart and brain, play an important part in neuron communication.

The inflammation of the gut somehow triggers them to form a fibrous mesh-like structure there and this information is transferred to the brain both by the vagus nerve and through the blood stream. This information then triggers the

creation of Alpha-Synuclein fibrous mesh in the brain, causing the death of neurons and hence PD.

Apparently, the ancients knew something about the gut-brain connection. Hence the colon cleaning process of Ayurveda, including enema, or the "gut wrenching" exercises of Nauli in Hatha Yoga help in cleaning the gut thereby increasing the feeling of wellness. Similarly the yogic exercise of Mayur Asana, where the body is balanced on the navel and this pressure on it stimulates the vagus nerve, helps improve the brain-gut connection.

In Patanjali Yoga, the gut occupies the centre of the body-universe. It says that by Sanyam on the navel (nabhi, gut, etc), a yogi gains knowledge of the constituents of the body.



the speaking tree

Sacredspace

Feedback Loop

You need to embrace change ...
I think it's very important to have a feedback loop, where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better.

Elon Musk

Genes may be behind your math anxiety

Women More Nervous Than Men: Study

London: Do maps and maths make you nervous? Blame it on your genes as they play a significant role in how anxious we feel when faced with tasks such as reading a map or solving a geometry problem, a new study has found. Spatial skills are important in everyday life, from navigation to assembling flat-pack furniture, and have also been linked to success in the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) professions.

However, people differ considerably in these skills and researchers think it could be partly down to anxiety. Similarly, anxiety about maths is thought to impair achievement in the subject at school and deter people from using these skills in daily life. Looking at the genetic and environmental factors underlying anxiety is a necessary first step in identifying specific genes which make some people more anxious than others. If genes and environments contributing to one form of anxiety, such as spatial anxiety, are different from those contributing to another form of anxiety, such as mathematics anxiety, this suggests they should be managed differently in order for interven-



Photo for representation only

SUM OF ALL FEARS: Pinpointing specific genes for anxiety could help in identifying children at risk very early in their lives

tions to be successful. Researchers from King's College London measured anxiety in a sample of more

than 1,400 twin pairs aged 19 to 21. The researchers identified several different forms of anxiety: general, mathemat-

ics, and for spatial anxiety: navigation and rotation/visualisation. All forms of anxiety showed a substantial genetic component, with DNA explaining over a third of the differences between people. Non-shared environments were found to explain the rest of the differences between people in spatial anxiety, which are environments that twins raised in the same family do not share, such as different extra-curricular activities, teachers and friends. For instance, non-shared environments such as driving, cycling or playing computer games may be particularly relevant to spatial anxiety. The study also showed that people who are anxious about navigation are not nec-

essarily anxious about rotation or visualisation tasks, such as completing a complex jigsaw puzzle. The same was found for mathematics and general anxiety, showing that those who experience spatial anxiety do not necessarily tend to be generally anxious or experience anxiety towards other STEM-related activities such as mathematics. The researchers also found a small but significant gender difference in their sample, with women showing higher levels of anxiety than men across all areas. The researchers said that this may be due to women being more willing to disclose their feelings of anxiety, or anxiety caused by the stereotype that STEM subjects are 'for men.' AGENCIES

Bariatric surgery last best hope for obese teenagers?

Gina Kolata

If all goes well, Aliyha Carasco-Garcia will have an operation next month that will change her life. She will shed many of the 240 pounds that now burden her 5-foot-2-inch frame. Like many who have bariatric surgery, she has tried diets and exercise to no avail. Surgery is her last best hope. But there is a differ-

ment proved to produce lasting weight loss in severely obese people? The very idea fills many parents and doctors with trepidation, and with good reason, said Aaron Kelly, a physiologist and specialist in pediatric obesity at the University of Minnesota. "We're at a point in this field where surgery is the only thing that works for these kids but we don't know the long term outcomes."

The question for teens and their parents is: Which is worse — accepting uncertainty about the long term health risks from surgery or the likelihood of serious health risks from remaining obese? An estimated three to four million adolescents are heavy enough to meet the criteria for bariatric surgery, Dr Kelly said. But only about 1,000 teenagers a year have the operation. Many medical centers will not perform it on teenagers and many pediatricians never mention it to their heavy patients. NYT NEWS SERVICE



RISKING LIFE: Aliyha

SHORT CUTS



HISTORICAL SITE NOW A PARKING LOT: A file photo of the Roman-period fortress city of Hatra that dates back more than 2,000 years and located in a desert area, about 60 miles southwest of Mosul in Iraq's Nineveh province. According to experts, many archaeological sites have now become parking plots. It will be a long-term battle for Iraq and international experts to repair the ravage caused by IS terrorists

Vitamin in milk can reduce pain

A vitamin found in milk may be useful for preventing nerve pain caused by chemotherapy drugs. The researchers tested the effect of nicotinamide riboside — a form of vitamin B3 — in female rats that were treated with paclitaxel, a chemotherapy commonly used to treat breast and ovarian cancer.

Lowering systolic BP may prevent early death: Intensive treatment to lower systolic blood pressure to below 120 mm Hg can prevent 107,500 early deaths every year, a new study recently published says. Systolic blood pressure refers to the pressure in the arteries when the heart beats. The bottom number, diastolic, refers to the pressure between beats.

Brain scans may prevent drug abuse

San Francisco: Scientists have found a better way to predict what personality traits might indicate that a kid is at risk for drug or alcohol abuse. The finding of Brian Knutson, professor of psychology at Stanford University, and Christian Buchel, professor of medicine at Universitätsklinikum Hamburg Eppendorf, was based on a brain scan data set of 144 European adolescents who scored high on a novelty seeking test. Psychologists know that kids who score high on tests of novelty seeking are on average a bit more likely to abuse drugs, experts said.

The researchers were out to work on the question: could there be a better test, one both more precise and more individualised, that could tell whether novelty seeking might turn into something more destructive? They suspected that a brain-scanning test called the Monetary Incentive Delay (MID) Task could be the answer: Knutson had developed MID as a way of targeting a part of the brain now known to play a role in mentally processing rewards like money or the high of a drug. AGENCIES

Wikipedia bots fight online over content for years

London: "Benevolent bots" that are designed to improve articles on Wikipedia — just like humans — have online "fights" over content that can continue for years, researchers have found. Commonly known as software robots, editing bots on Wikipedia undo vandalism, enforce bans, check spelling, create links and import content automatically. Other bots can mine data, identify data or identify copyright infringements. The team observed how they interacted on 13 different language editions over 10 years (from 2001) and found that bots interacted with one another, whether or not this was by design. It led to unpredictable consequences.

The research paper, published in Plos One, said bots appear to behave differently in culturally distinct online environments but "are more like humans than you might expect". It is a warning to those who use artificial intelligence for building autonomous vehicles, cyber security systems or for managing social media. "We find that bots behave dif-

Although bots are automations that do not have the capacity for emotions, bot-to-bot interactions are unpredictable and act in distinctive ways, experts say

ferently in different cultural environments and their conflicts are also very different to the ones between human editors," said lead author Milena Tsvetkova from the Oxford Internet Institute. Said her colleague Taha Yasser: "Bots are designed by humans from different countries. So when they encounter one another, this can lead to online clashes."

"We see differences in the technology used in the different Wikipedia language editions that create complicated interactions. This complexity is a fundamental feature that needs to be considered in any conversation related to automation and artificial intelligence," Taha added. AGENCIES

Neanderthal genes behind schizophrenia

New York: Although the last Neanderthal died thousands years ago, their DNA sequences still influence how genes are turned on or off in modern humans, and their effects can contribute to traits such as height and susceptibility to schizophrenia or lupus, says a study. Experts know that after leaving Africa, our ancestors — the homo sapiens — mated with Neanderthals thousands of years ago. Today, Neanderthal DNA makes up 1-4% of the genomes of modern non-African people. "Even 50,000 years after the last human-Neanderthal mating, we can still see measurable impacts on gene expression," said study co-author Joshua Akey from the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle.

"And those variations in gene expression contribute to human phenotypic variation and disease susceptibility." Previous studies have found correlations between Neanderthal genes and traits such as fat metabolism, and lupus risk. "Hybridisation between modern humans and Neanderthals increased genomic complexity," Akey explained. AGENCIES

Watch birds at noon and beat back stress

London: If you are living in a neighbourhood surrounded by trees and shrubs, with birds chirping all the time, there are fewer chances you suffer from anxiety or stress, says a new study. According to researchers at the University of Exeter, the British Trust for Ornithology and the University of Queensland, lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress were associated with the number of birds people could see in the afternoon.

"This study starts to unpick the role that some key components of nature play for our mental wellbeing. Birds



FOR A STRESS-FREE LIFE

around the home, and nature in general, show great promise in preventive healthcare, making cities healthier, happier places to live in," said Daniel Cox from University of Exeter. A recent research by Cox also found that watching birds makes people feel relaxed and connected to nature. AGENCIES



SINGER ROBBIE WILLIAMS SAYS MODERN POP STARS LACK THE AURA AND ANTICS OF '90s STARS

MERYL STREEP ACCUSES DESIGNER KARL LAGERFELD OF SPOILING HER OSCARS



Seven stand on Pakistan flight to Saudi, probe on

Islamabad: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) allowed seven passengers to travel standing in the aisles all the way to Saudi Arabia last month, prompting a probe into the serious breach of security regulations by Pakistan's loss-making national carrier, according to media reports.

The airline official told BBC that an internal investigation had begun 'and appropriate action will be taken once responsibility is fixed'



were hand-written and not computer-generated, sources said. The computer-generated list, provided to the aircraft crew by the ground traffic staff, did not mention the excess passengers, the report said. Sources said that the senior purser (air hostess), Hina Turab, maintains that she informed the captain that there was chaos in the cabin because the passengers were over and above the configuration, but the captain told her to 'adjust' as the aircraft was on the taxi way.

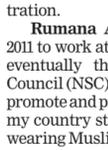
Captain Anwer Adil, who operated that flight, maintains that the computer-generated sheet did not show excess passengers. He said: "After take-off when I came out of cockpit, Ms Turab informed me that there were some extra people who (had been) boarded by the traffic staff. I also noticed some people were those who were categorically refused jump seats by me at the check in counter before the flight. I had already taken off and the senior purser did not inform me about extra passengers before closing the aircraft door. Therefore after take-off, an immediate landing back at Karachi was not possible," he said.

As many as seven passengers aboard the Boeing 777 Pakistan International Airlines flight PK-743 (Karachi-Madina) on January 20 were forced to stand throughout the over three-hour flight after the airline boarded excess passengers, Dawn newspaper reported. The PIA management appears to have taken this lightly as no action has been taken against those responsible for the bizarre incident, the paper said. PIA spokesman Danyal Gilani said the matter was being investigated.

Gilani told the BBC that an internal investigation had begun 'and appropriate action will be taken once responsibility is fixed'. If someone was found responsible for any wrongdoing, the PIA would take stern action against them under the company rules, he said. The Boeing 777 aircraft has a seating capacity of 409, including jump seats for staff, while flight PK-743 carried 416 passengers from Karachi to Madina. The report said allowing seven passengers to travel by standing all the way to the destination constituted a serious air safety breach as in the case of an emergency, passengers without seats would not have access to oxygen and could also cause congestion in case of an emergency evacuation. The boarding passes issued to the extra passengers

Hijab-wearing White House staffer quits in 8 days

Washington: A bold hijab-wearing Muslim ex-White House staffer of Bangladeshi-origin has said she quit her job after US President Donald Trump announced his controversial travel ban, lasting just eight days in the new administration.



Rumana Ahmed was hired in 2011 to work at the White House and eventually the National Security Council (NSC). "My job there was to promote and protect the best of what my country stands for: I am a hijab-wearing Muslim woman — I was the

Iran's Ahmadinejad gets pally with Donald

Tehran, Iran's ex-president Mahmud Ahmadinejad published on Sunday an open letter to Donald Trump, welcoming his criticism of the US political system but taking issue with his visa ban and attitude to women.

Many Iranians see the new US president as cut from the same cloth as Ahmadinejad, who shocked the establishment with his sudden rise to power in 2005, combining hardline rhetoric and populist economic policies to win a powerful following among Iran's lower classes. At times in the long and rambling letter, published in English and Farsi on his website, he appears to find a kindred spirit in Trump. "Your Excellency (Trump) has truthfully described the US political system and electoral structure as corrupt and anti-public," he writes. Ahmadinejad also takes issue with Trump's visa ban on seven Muslim-majority countries, including Iran.

only hijabi in the West Wing — and the Obama administration always made me feel welcome and included," she wrote in an article published in The Atlantic. Ahmed said that like most of her fellow American-Muslims, she spent much of 2016 watching with 'consternation' as Trump "vilified our community."

lims, she spent much of 2016 watching with 'consternation' as Trump "vilified our community." "Despite this — or because of it — I thought I should try to stay on the NSC staff during the Trump administration, in order to give the new president and his aides a more nuanced view of Islam, and of America's Muslim citizens," Ahmed said.

"I lasted eight days. When Trump issued a ban on travellers from seven Muslim-majority countries and all Syrian refugees, I knew I could no longer stay and work for an administration that saw me and people like me not as fellow citizens, but as a threat," she said. Ahmed said the

evening before she left her job at the White House, she notified Trump's senior National Security Council (NSC) communications adviser, Michael Anton, of her decision.

"His initial surprise, asking whether I was leaving government entirely, was followed by silence — almost in caution, not asking why. I told him anyway," she wrote.

"I told him I had to leave because it was an insult walking into this country's most historic building every day under an administration that is working against and vilifying everything I stand for as an American and as a Muslim," Ahmed said.

Wary of US power, China ups naval skills

'Move Pushed By President Donald Trump's Fickle Nature'

Beijing: The PLA navy is likely to secure significant new funding in China's upcoming defence budget as Beijing seeks to check US dominance of the high seas and step up its own projection of power around the globe.

China's navy has been taking an increasingly prominent role in recent months, with a rising star admiral taking command, its first aircraft carrier sailing around self-ruled Taiwan and new Chinese warships popping up in far-flung places.

Now, with President Donald Trump promising a US shipbuilding spree and unnerving Beijing with his unpredictable approach on hot button issues including Taiwan and the South and East China Seas, China is pushing to narrow the gap with the US navy.

"It's opportunity in crisis," said a Beijing-based Asian diplomat, of China's recent naval moves. "China fears Trump will turn on



BONE OF CONTENTION: China's Liaoning aircraft carrier conducts a drill in an area of South China Sea in this undated photo taken December, 2016. China's navy has been taking an increasingly prominent role in recent months

them eventually as he's so unpredictable and it's getting ready."

Beijing does not give a breakdown for how much it spends on the navy, and the overall official defence spending figures it gives — ¥954.35 billion (\$139 billion) for 2016 — likely understates its investment, according to diplomats.

China unveils the defence budget for this year at next month's annual meeting of parliament, a closely watched figure around the region and in Washington, for clues to China's intentions. China surprised last

year with its lowest increase in six years, 7.6%, the first single-digit rise since 2010, following a nearly unbroken two-decade run of double-digit jumps.

"Certainly, the PLA navy has really been the beneficiary of a lot of this new spending in the past 15 years," said Richard Bitzinger, senior fellow and coordinator of the military transformations programme at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "We don't know how much they spend on the navy, but simply extrapolating from the quantity and the quality of

things that are coming out of their shipyards, it's pretty amazing."

The Chinese navy, once generally limited to coastal operations, has developed rapidly under President Xi Jinping's ambitious military modernisation.

It commissioned 18 ships in 2016, including missile destroyers, corvettes and guided missile frigates, according to state media. Barely a week goes by without an announcement of some new piece of equipment, including an electronic reconnaissance ship put into service in January.

Trump to miss media dinner date

Washington: Donald Trump on Sunday announced that he would skip the glitzy White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) annual dinner, to become the first US President to miss the gala in decades amidst his raging tiff with the media.

"I will not be attending the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner this year. Please wish everyone well and have a great evening!," Trump tweeted.

The black-tie dinner, which raises money for journalism scholarships, takes place every spring and is usually attended by the president, journalists, celebrities and Washington insiders. The last president to miss the dinner was Ronald Reagan, who sat out because he was recovering from an assassination attempt in 1981, although he still delivered remarks by phone, CNN reported. According to National Public Radio (NPR), Richard Nixon was the last president to simply skip the event, doing so in 1972.

Trump's announcement came a day after the White House broadcast several major newscasters and newspapers like

London open-air screening backs Oscar boycott by director Farhadi

London: Thousands of film buffs were expected to gather in London's Trafalgar Square Sunday for a screening of 'The Salesman' by Iranian director Asghar Farhadi, who is boycotting the Oscars over US President Donald Trump's policies. "It will be a great opportunity to showcase how London is an international hub of creativity and a global beacon for openness," said London mayor Sadiq Khan. The Iranian filmmaker will not attend the Oscars in protest against Trump's executive order banning visitors from seven Muslim-majority countries. Farhadi thanked Khan and the cinema community "for this generous initiative", adding he appreciated "this show of solidarity."

The NYT, CNN and BBC from an off-camera press briefing. NYT

WORLD DIGEST

Twin attacks on Syrian city kill at least 32

In synchronised attacks, insurgents stormed into heavily guarded security offices in Syria's central Homs city, clashed with troops and then blew themselves up, killing a senior officer and at least 31 others, state media and officials reported. The swift, high-profile attacks against the Military Intelligence and State Security offices, among Syria's most powerful, were claimed by an al-Qaida-linked insurgent coalition known as the Levant Liberation Committee. The attacks came as Syrian government and opposition delegates meet in Geneva in UN-mediated talks aimed at building momentum toward peace despite low expectations of a breakthrough.

Russians march to remember slain opposition leader Nemtsov: Thousands of Russians are marching in the streets of Moscow to mark two years since opposition leader Boris Nemtsov was gunned

down outside the Kremlin. Nemtsov was a fierce critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin. His February 27 death, in what appeared to be a contract killing, sparked an outpouring of anger and fear from Russia's beleaguered opposition movement. The protest on Sunday in Moscow is expected to be the largest opposition gathering since a similar memorial march last year.

Iran prez Rouhani to run for second term: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has decided to run for re-election in May, the vice-president for parliamentary affairs said on Sunday. "In recent weeks, Mr Rouhani has reached a conclusion to take part in the presidential elections," Hosseini Amiri told reporters. Rouhani, a 68-year-old moderate who has pushed for greater social freedoms and improved ties with the West, has been widely expected to run for a second term but has yet to formally announce his candidature for the May 19 election. He remains popular for stabilising the economy and ending sanctions through a nuclear deal with world powers.

'Kim suffered painful death within 20 minutes of attack'

Kuala Lumpur: Kim Jong-Nam was dead within 20 minutes of being attacked and would have suffered a 'very painful death' as his major organs shut down, Malaysia's health minister said on Sunday.

The estranged half-brother of the North Korean leader was killed with lethal nerve agent VX, police have revealed, after he was ambushed at Kuala Lumpur airport on February 13. Two women can be seen shoving something into his face in leaked CCTV footage of the brazen assassination before he seeks help. "He died in the ambu-

lance. He fainted in the clinic," health minister S Subramaniam said.

"From the time of the onset (of the attack) he died within 15 to 20 minutes."

Autopsy results suggested the 45-year-old died from 'very serious paralysis' due to a lethal nerve agent, Subramaniam said

PARALYTIC DEATH

earlier Sunday. Police are holding two women suspected of staging the attack as well as a North Korean man.

They want to speak to seven other North Koreans including a senior embassy official, but four of the suspects fled Malaysia on the day of the murder. VX is so deadly it is listed

by the UN as a weapon of mass destruction.

The scene of the killing in the budget terminal of Kuala Lumpur International Airport was swept by civil defence personnel in hazmat suits before being declared safe.

"VX only requires 10mg to be absorbed into the system to be lethal," Subramaniam said.

"The absorption level was so rapid that within a few minutes the man had symptoms." Nerve agents prevent the proper operation of an enzyme that acts as the body's 'off switch' for glands and muscles. Without that switch, glands and muscles are constantly being stimulated, eventually tire and become unable to sustain breathing.

Plant trees, says Taliban leader

Kabul: The Taliban's leader called on Afghans to plant trees as spring approaches in a rare public statement on Sunday that comes amid fears of another bloody fighting season.

Haibatullah Akhundzada, who became head of the Taliban after his predecessor was killed in a US drone strike in Pakistan last May, urged for more tree planting in a message

on the group's website. Spring traditionally marks the start of the

fighting season for the insurgents, so called their annual 'spring offensive', in which the Taliban launches a major campaign of attacks across the country. Akhundzada said trees played "an important role in environmental protection, economic development and beautification of earth".

AROUND THE WORLD



IN SYNC: Members of a carnival dance group parade through the streets of Braunschweig in northern Germany on Sunday

IS attacks loom large, says new UK anti-terror chief

The Islamic State terror group is plotting "indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians" in UK cities on a scale similar to the one executed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1970s, Britain's new anti-terrorism chief Max Hill has warned. The recently appointed independent reviewer of terrorism legislation said hundreds of British jihadists who are returning from war zones pose a level of threat to the UK not seen since the IRA bombings in the 1970s. Hill said the Islamic State was planning "indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians on a scale similar to those perpetrated by the IRA 40 years ago".

forbidden." Woman scribe says being targeted by Sudan Islamic hardliners: A Sudanese female journalist and critic of government policies said on Sunday that she is under fire from hardliners who have accused her of 'insulting Islam' in one of her columns. Shamael al-Nur said she has become a target of a radical Islamist and a section of Sudan's hardline media for criticising government public health policies in a column published on February 2 in Al-Tayar newspaper.

Democrats elect Perez national chairman

Democrats elected former Labor Secretary Tom Perez as their new national chairman over a liberal Minnesota congressman, capping a divisive campaign that reflected the depths of the party's electoral failures as well as the energy from resistance to President Donald Trump. Perez, the first Latino to hold the post, edged Rep Keith Ellison in the second round of voting by Democratic National Committee members gathered in Atlanta. The new chairman must rebuild a party that in the last decade has lost about 1,000 elected posts from the White House to Congress to the 50 state-houses, a power deficit Democrats have not seen nationally in 90 years.

'Titanic' actor Bill Paxton dead

American actor Bill Paxton, who rose to stardom with roles in Hollywood blockbusters such as "Aliens" and "Titanic," died at age 61 after complications from surgery, his family said in a statement on Sunday. Paxton, who appeared in dozens of films over some four decades, had recently starred in the HBO television series "Big Love," about a polygamous Mormon family, and acted alongside Tom Cruise in the film, "Edge of Tomorrow".

Kuchipudi exponent to enthrone Queen

London: Little did Arunima Kumar know that she would be dancing on the stairs of the historical Buckingham Palace on Monday in front of Queen Elizabeth II when she had started learning dance at the age of seven.

"I was thrilled when I was conveyed by the Buckingham Palace through an email that I will be performing before the Queen along with my troupe," says Arunima, a celebrated dancer and choreographer.

The Queen is hosting a reception for some prominent Indians to mark the 70th year of India's independence.

Kumar would be putting up a Kuchipudi performance on Monday besides choreographing an event along with her troupe members Shivani Bandari, Sethia Jesal Patel, Helene Lesage, Elena Catalano and others.

'Moonlight' shines bright at the 2017 Film Independent Spirit Awards

London: Barry Jenkins' powerful coming-of-age tale 'Moonlight' has swept the 32nd annual Film Independent Spirit Awards, winning six major trophies, including best picture.

Jenkins' incisive gay drama which tied Andrea Arnold's 'American Honey' with six nominations at the ceremony also won best director, editing, cinematography and screenplay for the 37-year-old filmmaker and Tarell Alvin McCraney, whose play 'In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue' was the inspiration for the project, reported The Guardian.

"There are a lot of people who pushed that script away from their desks," a tearful McCraney said.

He went on to thank those who made the decision to sign onto the film without worrying about the potentially damaging effect a gay film would have on their careers. In addition, the 'Moonlight' cast was hon-

OVER THE MOON

Table listing award winners for 'Moonlight' and other films, including Best Feature, Best Male Lead, Best Female Lead, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting Actress, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Documentary, Best International Film, Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Production Design, Best Sound, Best Music, Best Costume Design, Best Hair and Makeup, Best Visual Effects, Best Production Office, Best Production Office, Best Production Office.

the legal guardian of his nephew in 'Manchester by the Sea'.

While receiving the prize on stage, Affleck made reference to President Donald Trump's government as he said, "The policies of this administration are abhorrent and they will not last. They're really un-American." Isabelle Huppert won best female lead for her role in darkly comic thriller 'Elle', winning out over Natalie Portman and Annette Bening.

"I think good cinema is always independent. I want to thank (Elle director) Paul Verhoeven for being so independent," she said. Other winners included Molly Shannon (best supporting actress for 'Other People') and Ben Foster (best supporting actor for 'Hell or High Water'). The Spirit Awards ceremony, hosted by Nick Kroll and John Mulaney, took place in a beachfront tent next to the world famous Santa Monica Pier in Los Angeles.

CHINA WILL ALLOW MORE IPOs TO LURE CAPITAL AND BOOST ECONOMY, SAYS TOP SECURITIES REGULATOR

RELIANCE GROUP CHAIRMAN ANIL AMBANI TO SPELL OUT DEFENCE SECTOR PLANS TODAY



Oyo eyes unicorn club with \$500m

SoftBank Likely To Get Controlling Stake With Latest Fund Infusion

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Mumbai: Budget hotel aggregator Oyo Rooms is in talks with Japan's SoftBank — an existing investor — for a \$500-million round of financing, which is expected to catapult it into the so-called unicorn club, comprising tech startups that are valued at \$1 billion or more, according to three people privy to the development. Oyo is likely to rack up a valuation of \$1.2 billion after the investment, said sources who did not want to be named as the talks are private.

The Gurgaon-based company is currently valued at \$460 million. The raise, when completed, will emerge as one of the largest mid- to late-stage investment deals in the fledgling consumer internet economy, which was flush with investor capital till about a year ago but has seen a perceptible slowdown since then.

SoftBank's maverick founder Masayoshi Son, who recently launched a \$100-billion technology fund with partners like the Saudi Arabian govern-

RIISING STAKES

- Oyo Rooms' main business is aggregating budget hotels, where it claims to have 7,000 properties on its platform across 200 cities
- It recently launched Townhouse, earlier called Flagship, which caters to the premium mid-market segment
- SoftBank holds 26.5% currently in Oyo. After the latest financing round, this will go up to about 50%
- Other early investors like



Lightspeed have around 20% stake, while Sequoia Cap's shareholding is 15-17% at present

➤ The startup has raised \$180m till date

ment and Apple, has said he's committed to India even after the abrupt exit of president Nitesh Arora, his anointed successor: The Japanese internet and telecom major's investment in Oyo will be routed through the \$100-billion Vision Fund, sources said.

"SoftBank has put in a term sheet, a non-binding agreement between the company and the investor, but the terms are yet to be finalised. The amount they (SoftBank) want to put in will tantamount

to heavy dilution for all shareholders and therefore it's taking time," a source cited earlier in the report said. SoftBank holds around 26% stake in Oyo and its shareholding would top 50% if the deal goes through.

Oyo Rooms founder and CEO Ritesh Agarwal said, "SoftBank has been a valued partner as we continue on our path to transform the hospitality space in India. We will also continue to explore other salient markets for further expansion. Our efforts are complemented by our investors' conviction in our mission and our team. We do not wish to comment on funding and future investments at this stage."

A SoftBank spokesperson said, "We do not comment on speculation. SoftBank is deeply committed to its portfolio companies in India and elsewhere and actively helps them to grow their business."

The fresh capital from SoftBank is largely going to be ploughed into Oyo's new offering, Townhouse (earlier called Flagship), which currently has 70 operational properties in the mid-market space. Townhouse leases properties and services them for better quality experience in a move to fix quality issues, which emerged as a big concern for the hotel aggregator after it scaled up its inventory indiscriminately over the past two years while fighting competitors. Going forward, Oyo plans to put the pedal to the metal on Townhouse.

For now, Oyo's main business is aggregating budget hotels, where it claims to have 7,000 properties on its platform across 200 cities. Almost 90% of its revenues come from this platform where hotel owners pay a commission to it. SoftBank's bet on Oyo could be on the larger travel and hospitality industry, which saw the mega merger of MakeMyTrip and Golbibo last year with the backing of South Africa's Naspers. Globally too, this segment has seen heightened action with China's online travel firm Ctrip buying out travel search website UK's Skyscanner for \$1.7 billion. Oyo's previous fund-raise of \$60 million, which was completed in August 2016, saw its valuation remain flat at around \$400 million, pre-money.

Besides SoftBank, its other investors include Sequoia Capital and Lightspeed Venture Partners. Having begun life as Oravel Stays — an Airbnb clone — in 2012, Oyo in all has snagged \$180 million in risk capital. Budget hotel aggregating startups piqued the interest of investors in 2015 with players like Zo Rooms raising capital from heavyweights such as Tiger Global.

Few supporters in govt for 'bad bank' proposal

Most Don't Want To Be Seen As Bailing Out India Inc

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New Delhi: The proposal for a bad bank has found little traction with the government, which wants to leave it to market forces and banks to clean up their books instead of the Centre stepping in for what many believe will amount to a bailout.

LIMITED RESOURCES

- Govt officials are in favour of letting market forces rule and banks cleaning up their own books
- Using limited resources would also expose govt politically, like US' TARP which was seen by voters as being pro-corporate
- Even otherwise, global funds like KKR, JC Flowers & Canadian pension fund are lining up \$8bn to buy NPAs

Chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian as well as Viral Acharya, the new RBI deputy governor, have suggested variants of a bad bank in the form of Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA) and National Asset Management Company.

Sources in the finance ministry, however, said that the issue is best left to banks as the government did not have the required resources to meet the capitalisation needs. In addition, politically, it does not want to be seen as bailing out companies and banks when the same resources can be deployed elsewhere. This argument stems from the fact that the US TARP was seen to be pro-corporate sector and did not go down well with the

voters, something that Donald Trump pushed to his advantage during the elections.

Apart from that, sources said, there are already several asset reconstruction companies that have been strengthened through amendments to the law. Besides, several overseas funds such as KKR, JC Flowers and the Canadian Pension Fund are queuing up with \$6-8 billion to take over NPAs. "There is no dearth of interest in bad debt and the question is how to make good use of the funds that the government has. It is best that banks and the private sector take care when there is already interest," said an officer.

Close to half-a-dozen proposals are awaiting RBI clearance, said an official.

In addition, banks have themselves got moving. For instance, they have referred eight cases to the two-member committee comprising former Central Vigilance Commissioner Pradeep Kumar and former SBI chairman Janaki Balabh on resolving NPAs. Of these, six have been cleared, while in two cases the panel has asked for reworking the process.

"The activity will pick up in the coming months. The question is of pricing, something that the RBI has already suggested can be dealt with through a rating-based pricing mechanism," said a government officer, who did not wish to be identified.

Sources said that CEA Subramanian's proposal of having PARA or an asset reconstruction company only for the public sector was not feasible as several private players were also part of loan consortiums.

Lone Star, IL&FS to put \$550m in stressed biz

Mumbai: Private equity firm Lone Star Funds and infrastructure financing company IL&FS have announced a collaboration to jointly invest in stressed infrastructure projects in India, with a capital pool of \$550 million.

The collaboration could result in asset purchases of up to \$2.5 billion, a joint statement said. The objective of the move aligns with the objectives of the government of India and the Reserve Bank of India in resolving stressed infrastructure assets, it said.

The collaboration seeks to assist banks, sponsors and asset reconstruction companies to recycle capital, thus permitting reinvestment of capital in fresh projects.

"Lone Star looks forward to collaborating with IL&FS in re-vibrating Indian infrastructure assets and benefiting from IL&FS' long-track record as a successful

INFRA FOCUS

developer and manager of infrastructure projects in India," Lone Star's president, Asia Pacific, Mark Newman said.

The company invests globally in operating companies, real estate, equity, credit, and other financial assets. "The India infrastructure sector is poised for revival as the evolving framework is becoming more conducive for resolving stressed assets. The collaboration with Lone Star, a firm with global asset turnaround experience that has invested capital in a range of industries, is strategic and presents the potential to attract sizeable foreign direct investment into India which supports the initiatives of the government and RBI," IL&FS chairman Ravi Parthasarathy said.

IL&FS has built a strong portfolio of infrastructure projects aggregating to \$25 billion. AGENCIES

It is end of the road for Maruti's Ritz

New Delhi: India's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) has stopped selling one of its popular hatchbacks, Ritz, in both domestic and international markets. Launched in 2009 in both petrol and diesel versions, the Ritz sold a total of around 4 lakh units.

MSI spokesperson said, "As part of refreshing our portfolio, we continuously review our portfolio and introduce new models." Stating that Ritz has been one of MSI's successful models in its portfolio, the spokesperson said the car played an important role in strengthening the company's presence in the modern compact vehicle segment. "Maruti Suzuki is committed to ensure availability of spare parts and service for next 10 years," the spokesperson added.

The company now sells the Ignis, Swift, Celerio, Dzire and Baleno in the compact segment, which witnessed 25.2% growth in sales (55,817 units last month as against 44,575 in the year-ago month). AGENCIES

Sehgal, Nilekani bag EY awards

Vivek Chand Sehgal, chairman of Motherhood Sumi Systems (MSSL), the flagship company of Samvardhana Motherhood Group (SMG), has been named the EY Entrepreneur Of The Year 2016.

Sehgal will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEYO) in Monte Carlo to be held from June 7 to 11 this year.

Nandan Nilekani bagged the lifetime achievement award for his invaluable contribution to the Unique Identification Authority of India — the Aadhaar initiative. TNN

Being probed for helping Indians evade tax: HSBC

London/New Delhi: Global banking giant HSBC has disclosed being probed by tax authorities in India and several other countries for allegedly helping four Indians and their families evade tax.

The bank said the investigation includes its Swiss and Dubai units. It has also been approached by the regulatory and law enforcement agencies of various countries for information on persons and entities named in the leaked 'Panama Papers' — which includes hundreds of Indians who have allegedly had indulged in tax violations through offshore tax havens with help of a Panamanian law firm, Mossack Fonseca.

Disclosing the "tax-related investigations" in its latest annual report published last week, HSBC said it has set aside \$773 million (over Rs

The bank has set aside \$773 m (over Rs 5,000 crore) as a provision for tax- and money laundering-related matters

5,000 crore) as a provision for various tax- and money laundering-related matters.

"There are many factors that may affect the range of outcomes, and the resulting financial impact of these investigations and reviews. Due to uncertainties and limitations of these estimates, the penalties could differ significantly from the amount provided," HSBC said, while adding that it is cooperating with the relevant authorities.

"Various tax administrations, regulatory and law enforcement authorities around

the world, including in the US, France, Belgium, Argentina and India, are conducting investigations and reviews of HSBC Swiss Private Bank and other HSBC companies in connection with allegations of tax evasion or tax fraud, money-laundering and unlawful cross-border banking solicitation," it said.

The bank said the Indian tax authorities in 2015 had issued a summons to an HSBC company in India. "In August 2015 and November 2015, HSBC companies received notices issued by two offices of the Indian tax authority alleging that they had sufficient evidence to initiate prosecution against HSBC Swiss Private Bank and an HSBC company in Dubai for allegedly abetting tax evasion of four Indian individuals and/or families. AGENCIES

IDFC to turn ration shops into outlets for banking

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Mumbai: IDFC Bank is converting ration shops into banking outlets by recruiting Public Distribution System (PDS) agents as business correspondents. With various states pushing the ePDS agenda, where payments are transferred electronically to distributors, the private bank is seeing an opportunity to convert distributors into partners, rather than customers.

Although state governments have provided the mandate to different banks, IDFC Bank is treating this as an opportunity to scale up its net-

ePDS AGENDA

work. The private bank, which has received the mandate from Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra governments for cashless payment at PDS outlets, is now in talks with the Haryana government.

The bank had recently rolled out IDFC Aadhaar Pay in association with the Unique Identification Authority of India. The service involves use of a point of sale device that has a fingerprint scanner, which facilitates account-to-account transfers using Aadhaar. The customer does not need to swipe a debit card, remember passwords or own a cellphone. Also, there are no transaction fees.

"In rural and semi-urban areas, where customers need 'assisted digital' banking formats, IDFC Bank's Aadhaar merchant solution is a perfect fit. The merchant benefits from the medium — as this is a new AEPs payment railroad, it has no merchant discount rate attached to it and can provide the service to customers without having to pay the bank a transaction fee," said Rajiv Lal, MD & CEO, IDFC Bank.

\$100bn wasted trying to beat market, says Buffett

Billionaire investor Warren Buffett in a letter on Saturday decried his critique of investment fees, saying the rich are going to continue to get fleeced by Wall Street fees and that the system has wasted \$100 billion over the last decade.

Over five pages, he updated Berkshire Hathaway shareholders on a bet made almost a decade ago that a low-cost fund that passively tracked the S&P 500 Index would outperform a basket of hedge funds. He also laid anew into the rich for being suckered by Wall Street investment advice, which he estimated has wasted over \$100 billion over the last 10 years.



When trillions of dollars are managed by Wall Streeters charging high fees, it will usually be the managers who reap outsized profits, not the clients

ful that the wealthy would take his advice, his argument has gained steam.

After years of underperformance, hedge funds are facing a revolt by endowments, pension funds and other institutional investors that have decided they aren't getting their money's worth. Meanwhile, index funds have been on a tear. In 2016, passive strategies attracted \$505 billion in new money, while active managers saw \$340 billion in redemptions, according to data from Morningstar.

Buffett (86) has been making his point for more than a decade, most visibly through his \$1-million bet with Protege Partners. BLOOMBERG

80% of desi NGOs work with govt: Study

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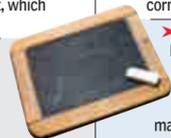
Mumbai: India's social sector programmes are usually believed to be poorly planned and shoddily implemented. But a new study that analysed Indian non-profits says that India — faced with a plethora of challenges — is actually offering lessons across the world, and particularly to the US.

The other surprising finding is that instead of disrupting the government, about 80% of these organisations that were studied seek to collaborate with it to reach out to the socially and economically challenged population.

The study done by philanthropy advisory Bridgespan Group, published in Stanford Social Innovation Review, says there may not be a better lab than India for studying the challenges non-profits face in trying to scale up, while stretched for resources.

5 RECURRING MINDSETS: GLOBAL LESSONS

- **Denominator** | This represents the total size of the need (with numerator being quantity of need)
- **Dignity** | This refers to elevation of the humanity of each participant, which is critical
- **Radical frugality** | When scarcity abounds, most Indian NGOs not only focus on reducing costs, but use frugality to scale up
- **Innovative hiring** | Some NGOs have responded by searching for people in overlooked but promising corners of the talent pool
- **Collaborative** | Many of India's larger NGOs have sought to innovate within the system, and make govt a vital ally



the collaborative mindset with government institutions — the most prevalent," said Soumitra Pandey, co-author of the study and partner, Bridgespan. "They seek either to fill gaps in existing programmes, like Akshaya Patra's assistance with providing midday meals to school children, or to spur innovation by example (Agastya's hands-on learning programmes in science, technology, engineering and math deli-

vered to government schools by van or motorcycle)."

Bridgespan studied 20 Indian non-profit organisations, including Aravind Eye Care, Educate Girls, Karuna Trust, Maita Health Institute, Pratham, SEWA, Gram Vikas and Goonj, that have deftly managed the tension between scale and scarcity. It identified five recurring mindsets that India's non-profit leaders use to maximise outreach and assist mil-

lions of people in need.

The first was the denominator mindset: When thinking about a non-profit's impact as a fraction, the denominator represents the total size of the need, and numerator the quantity of need that the non-profit is currently meeting. Many Indian non-profits use denominator thinking to stay focused on addressing the total size of the need, rather than perfecting a solution that serves relatively few.

The second was the dignity mindset: Elevating the humanity of each participant is critical when confronted with addressing the needs of millions. Many of India's non-profits focus on preserving an individual's dignity in an effort to avoid reducing and compartmentalising the human experience into numbers on a spreadsheet.

The third was the radical frugality mindset: When scarcity abounds, most Indian non-profits not only focus on reducing costs, but find ways of using frugality to scale up. They optimise operational ex-

penses and rein in expenditures, while ensuring that no cuts are made in areas that might stave innovation.

The fourth was the innovative hiring mindset: One of the biggest impediments to a non-profit's growth in India is the scarcity of people who have the right skills to fill certain types of jobs. Some non-profits have responded by searching for people in overlooked but promising corners of the talent pool.

The fifth and final was the collaborative mindset: While would-be innovators in Western countries tend to focus more on "disrupting the system" or "thinking outside the box", many of India's larger non-profits have sought to innovate within the system, and make government a vital ally.

More often than not, the leaders of non-profits ensure their organizations' roles map closely to the government's. Their logic: The more they mirror the government's structure, the easier it will be to build productive partnerships.

'Shoutcasters' heard loud & clear in online gaming

Earn Big With Commentary During Live Streaming

Ranjani Ayyar & Aparna Desikan | TNN

Cricket and soccer matches have drawn crowds for many years now, not just for the action on the ground but the commentary as well. This has now extended to e-sports and online gaming. Platforms like Facebook Live, YouTube Gaming and Twitch are used to stream games, which can be viewed by spectators in real time. And if one has a flair for commentary, they become a 'shoutcaster' who provides commentary while playing.

Vaibhav Chavan from Underdogs Gaming Studio explains, "Basically, as you play, the game is streamed to draw spectators. In games that have multiple players and are designed like a battle, people like to watch you play the game." Zerah Gonsalves was a professional gamer for eight years before she decided to become a shoutcaster. Speaking at length about a game while they are being live-streamed adds spice to the e-sport tournaments. "Shoutcasting is more like commentary in cricket. It makes the tournament interesting. One needs to know about developments at each level and possess the ability to speak at length," she said.

Charging on a per-hour basis, shoutcasters are usually seasoned gamers with a flair for speaking. "With the e-sports industry seeing double the number of tournaments with at least eight big tournaments a year, from more than two a year ago, quality shoutcasters are on demand. Gamers are generally shy and not articulate enough, so the well-spoken among them have a good chance to have a flourishing career as a shoutcaster," said Kiran Noojibail, head (e-sports), LXG India, a gaming company, and a full-time shoutcaster with the firm.

Niharika Patil, or Niha Novacaine — as she is known in the gaming world, indulges in multi-player battle arena games and is one of the 10

partners that work with Twitch, a live-streaming video platform. "I live-stream my play twice a day — once for my Indian audience and once for my European audience. I am also a cosplayer i.e. I design and wear costumes and accessories to represent a specific character," said Patil.

the government paying attention to e-sports. The recently conducted Indian gaming forum with backing from the government and Ronnie Screwvala's initiative to spend Rs 80-100 crore on a tournament will only add to the fun," said Gonsalves, who goes with an online name Angela.



DRAWING U INTO THE GAME

- Live streaming** | Watching an online tournament/game live
- Platforms that facilitate live streaming** | YouTube Gaming, Facebook Live, Twitch
- Shoutcaster** | Giving commentary while playing a game that is being live streamed
- Who can be one** | A gaming expert with a flair for talking non stop
- Traits of a good shoutcaster** | Ability to keep audience engaged, Quirky personality, Know and explain nuances of gaming

Shoutcasters start off with ₹500 per hour and can charge up to ₹2000 per hour

While Patil acts as an influencer for the platform, drawing a global audience to watch her play, she engages with her audience in multiple ways. "My audience can watch me play and listen to my commentary. I also do real-life streams where we discuss music, talk about other games and gaming techniques. It is like hosting a live gaming talk show," she said. To start with, shoutcasters participate in smaller tournaments and charge up to Rs 500 per hour, participating in 8-hour sessions. As they graduate to bigger tournaments, they can charge up to Rs 2,000 per hour. "There is going to be an increase in the demand for shoutcasters with

Motilal Oswal arm invests ₹100cr in facility services co

Ranjani.Ayyar@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Facilities management services company Updater Services (UDS) has received Rs 100 crore from MOPE Investment Advisors (MOPE), for a minority stake. This is the third round of private equity investment for the company after New Vernon and ICICI Ventures invested in 2004 and 2008.

UDS is an integrated business services company with offerings in facilities management, people and staffing, production support services, industrial asset management. With operations across the country, the company caters to over 700 clients across industries.

Raghuandana T, MD, UDS said "I strongly believe that as one of the premier private equity fund managers in the country, MOPE will help us deepen client relationships and offer all in-

CASH BOOST

> Established in 1985, UDS is an integrated business services company with offerings in facilities management, people and staffing, production support services, industrial asset management

> MOPE is currently managing two growth capital funds, India Business Excellence Fund (IBEF) and IBEF II focused on providing growth capital to mid-market companies, typically in the range of US\$ 10-20 million, across sectors

> The current ₹100 crore funding from MOPE bagged by UDS is the third round of private equity investment for the company

> MOPE is a subsidiary of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, a diversified financial services group with businesses in securities, asset management, private equity and investment banking



tegrated business services to our clients. Their experience of managing companies across varied sectors will bring a lot of value to us as we endeavour to build a world class organization."

"As India grows from a \$2 trillion to a \$5 trillion economy and as we get more structured, opportunities to scale up in this space will grow.

There is huge demand for commercial office space and large residential complexes. Traditionally, managed by mom and pop establishments, companies like UDS stand to benefit with systems and processes in place and being compliant from a governance stand point. The company has been built by first generation entrepreneurs

and has a reputation for excellence," said Vishal Tulsyan, MD and CEO, MOPE.

MOPE is part of Motilal Oswal group and manages two growth capital funds, India Business Excellence Fund (IBEF) and IBEF II.

IBEF, is a Rs 550 crore (\$125 million) fund and is fully invested in thirteen portfolio companies across food processing, bulk packaging, power transformers and power infra enablers. It has already made ten exits.

IBEF II, a Rs 950 crore (\$160 million) has seen investments into companies across consumer and life science businesses. Investment into UDS marks the 11th from this fund.

"We believe these sectors exhibit long term secular growth story. With disposable incomes increasing, these sectors will shift from unorganized to organised and there is tremendous scope for sustainable growth here," added Tulsyan.

'5 major telcos optimum for Indian market'

Barcelona: The fresh round of consolidation unfolding in the Indian telecom market is likely to yield five major players, ensuring "enough competition but not fragmentation of spectrum", telecom secretary JS Deepak said.

His comments assume significance as India — the world's second largest mobile services market after China — is in the midst of massive consolidation with incumbent operators joining forces to take on aggressive newcomer Reliance Jio. The consolidation in the otherwise crowded Indian telecom industry has been hastened by Jio's free voice call and data plans, forcing incumbents to slash tariffs at the cost of profits.

Deepak, who is attending the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, is slated to meet senior officials of global companies like Vodafone, Huawei, AT&T, Nokia, Ericsson, Intel, and Facebook over three days. AGENCIES

Now, air purifiers that can repel bugs, remove odour

Cos Look To Innovate With Added Features

Ranjani Ayyar & Aparna Desikan | TNN

Chennai: As air pollution rises in the cities, the scope for innovation is only growing for white goods manufacturers. From smart purifiers that can be controlled from the mobile device to those that repel bugs, companies like Eureka Forbes, Blue Air and Symphony are moving on from offering the plain vanilla machine to a device packed with features.

"Most of the air purifiers available in the market are either imported, or are ionisers being sold as purifiers. These do not factor in the climatic and environmental conditions," said Shashank Sinha, AVP, marketing, Eureka Forbes. The company has tied up with Breezometer — an analytics company, to provide insights about the quality of ambient air. Using the breezometer, through an app, users will know the air quality upto a distance of 500 metres from the installed purifier. Sinha added that the puri-

fier takes into consideration the lifestyle and the inhabitants in the household. With growth doubling, the company has purifiers priced from Rs 8,990 and is focussing on the residential segment.

According to a report by 6Wresearch, India's air purifiers market is at a nascent stage. The air purifier market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 30% during 2017-23, as per

which 16-17 models offer I-Pure technology. The company also launched its 'Touch Range', which comes with I-Pure technology and other features like digital touch screen, voice assist, mosquito repellent etc.

For Unilever-acquired Blue Air, which entered the Indian market in 2016, IOT-enabled smart air purifiers are among the top selling pro-

BREATHE FRESH

> Key players in the industry include Atlanta Healthcare, Blueair, Crusaders, Daikin, Eureka Forbes, Honeywell Automation, OSIM, Panasonic, Philips, Kent and Sharp

India penetration stands at 1.2% in 2016

> Delhi contributes to more than half of total purifier market

> The market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 30% during 2017-23

Delhi-based 6Wresearch. The market is currently driven by the hype of density of outdoor pollution through media. This has spurred the overall market especially in tier-1 cities across India, wherein Delhi contributes more than half of total market, the report says.

Ahmedabad-based Symphony Ltd is riding on this rising awareness. Symphony Ltd has over 35 air coolers of

ducts which can be controlled from a remote location through an app. One of the indoor purifiers, the Sense+ is engineered to purify the air using the company's patented HepaSilent filtration technology in rooms up to 200 sq feet every 12 minutes. "Such products find takers in the slightly affluent or upper middle class category," said Girish Bapat, director, sales, West & South Asia, Blue Air.

'New India plans IPO by August'

Rachel.Chitra@timesgroup.com

Chennai: New India Assurance is likely to go for an IPO in the next 6-8 months, given indications from its talks with the government. We will be identifying our underwriters for the public offering shortly, said the company's CMD G Srinivasan in an exclusive interaction with TOI. Excerpts:

Can you tell us about the company's planned public offering?

We cannot discuss the size of the offering or the proposed dilution of stake. But we are expecting considerable interest. Since its inception, we have been the market leader in insurance. And despite stiffening competition from private players, we have are still at the number one spot. Our marketshare has increased to 16.7% from 15.1%.

Can you tell us about about New India's progress in integration with iTrex, Central KYC Registry?

We are highly focused on going



ONE-ON-ONE

G Srinivasan
CMD, NEW INDIA ASSURANCE

"Going digital." We are in talks with data repositories like NDSL, CDSL for facilitating opening of e-insurance accounts for our customers. With regard to the iTrex initiative, we have been facing technological problems. But we are in the process of resolving them and you can expect action in the next 2-3 months. The union government's Central KYC Registry will, however, take much longer to implement. The plan to bring in one KYC for the banking, insurance and mutual fund industry is good. The mutual fund industry is the first one on board. For

insurers, this is still very early and nascent stage.

What is your outlook for 2017-18 and where do you see growth coming from?

We are expecting Rs 25,000 crore in premium income for 2017-18. Our major drivers of growth will be health, motor and crop insurance. We are targeting 22% growth of Rs 6,000 crore in 2016-17 in health insurance and 20% growth with Rs 7,000 crore business in motor for the same period. With regard to crop insurance, government initiatives have really helped boost the sector. We saw Rs 1,200 crore premium just from crop insurance and for the next 2 years this will be a key driver. For the industry as a whole also the sector has proved beneficial with premium income jumping to Rs 18,000 crore from Rs 6,000 crore in just one year.

With the recent volatility in the stock markets, have you seen any dip in your investment income?

Not really. As volatility, market routes have been short-term.

Overall the Indian equity market has been on an uptick and for 2016-17 alone we are expecting Rs 4,300 crore in investment income. Our premium has grown 21.1% to Rs 15,543 crore. With a profit after tax of Rs 455 crore, our networth has increased to Rs 30,845 crore on an asset base of Rs 64,392 crore.

What new initiatives will New India be focusing on for 2017-18?

We are going to be adding 10,000 agents in the coming year. We are also launching this new concept of micro-offices. More than 1,000 such offices will be opened in strategic locations. These will be one-man offices, manned by a full-time New India employee, where premiums can be collected and claims filed. We are also looking at increasing our digital push. Currently 13% of our policies are being issued online and we are seeing good traction from our insurance agents sales portal. Our claims settlement ratio is at 96%, which is an industry best, but we are still looking at improving the figure.

Central bank to frame rules for FDI nods

New Delhi: The RBI will formulate a standard operating procedure (SOP) for approval of foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals by ministries following the government's decision to phase out the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

The proposal for laying down norms for foreign investment approvals in sensitive sectors was discussed at a recent inter-ministerial meeting.

The inter-ministerial committee discussed the possibility of approving the FDI proposals along with grant of licences, sources said. In the sensitive sectors like defence and telecom, companies having licences can only seek foreign investments.

To further improve ease of doing business, the government has decided to abolish the FIPB and form a new mechanism for expeditious clearance of FDI proposals. Once the FIPB is abolished, the onus of approving FDI proposals would be on the ministries and regulatory authorities concerned. AGENCIES

Paytm redeploys top execs ahead of e-commerce entry

Digbijay.Mishra @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: As Alibaba prepares to kickstart its India e-commerce play with Paytm Mall on Monday, the Noida-based company has reassigned top management roles to up the ante in the highly competitive online retail market.

Paytm recently spun off its commerce business where Alibaba would own more than 40% stake, paving the way for the Chinese internet conglomerate's direct entry into the local online retail market. Paytm Mall will challenge players like Flipkart, Amazon and Snapdeal, setting the stage for an intense battle.

Paytm has moved two of its vice-presidents, Amit Bagaria and Saurabh Vashishtha, to the new commerce business, while another vice-president, Sudhanshu Gupta, who was looking at the company's erstwhile commerce business, has joined the payments part of the venture.

3VPS MOVED

The spun-off entity of Paytm is looking to raise fresh cash at a valuation of about \$1 billion where Alibaba will pick up more than 40% stake, as reported by TOI in its February 3 edition. The Vijay Shekhar Sharma-founded Paytm is looking to raise \$200 million.

"Paytm Mall will focus on

structured categories and brand authorized stores. It will also focus on electronics, top fashion brands and FMCG products. We will also focus on fashion, home furnishing and SMEs with key focus on small sellers looking to leverage mobile commerce to enhance their business," said Saurabh Vashishtha, VP at Paytm.

The company is starting with 17 fulfillment centres that have been set up by its partners and sellers. "The platform will offer sellers network of over 40 courier partners. Paytm Mall will not have the cash on delivery (COD) option. Most leading e-commerce companies witness 60-70% of their orders being placed via COD.



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'Star will not bid for Team India jersey rights'

It Will Be A Disaster If India Lose Their Voice In ICC: Uday Shankar

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Mumbai: The ongoing standoff between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and BCCI over policy changes has only added to the latter's overflowing cup of woes, especially in the backdrop of a never-ending tussle in the Supreme Court. In the middle of this mess is the game's global and Indian broadcaster — Star TV — looking for some kind of clarity and focus going forward. Uday Shankar, the Star India chairman and CEO, can see none. In an exclusive interview with TOI, he spells out why Star may not bid for certain India rights, predicts doom for the global cricket fraternity if India's position is devalued and more...

EXCERPTS
It's still only a potential threat that India's final option — in this ICC vs BCC standoff — may be to pull out of the ICC Champions Trophy. From a broadcaster's point of view, what's your take on this?

If India doesn't participate in Champions Trophy it would be bad for the tournament. But if India lose their voice or even

if they are not playing a leading role, it would be disastrous for global cricket. The country that delivers the largest share of fans and also the largest share of money in global cricket should have a say in the critical affairs of the game. It is in best interest of cricket as a whole. The game can't get stronger without it becoming stronger in India. We must ensure that we aren't throwing the baby with the bathwater. **There's a flurry of cricket contracts waiting to be tendered, starting with jersey rights**

BUSINESS OF CRICKET

happening in a few days. Are you'll looking to continue your association with BCCI?

Given all the volatility, we are indeed concerned about the health of cricket in the days ahead. No one seems to be talking about making cricket bigger and more popular. We have been very proud that our name is carried on the jersey of Team India. But given all the uncertainties, we have decided not to bid for it again. The commitments being asked for are too onerous without any clarity.

There's lack of clarity in how the ICC is going about with the new set of policies and in the BCCI as well, given their ongoing legal case. You have invested heavily in both. Right now, which is a bigger concern?

For us, the problem is, right now we do not see a consensual leadership in cricket. The power of cricket came from the fact that everybody was aligned. The global cricket leadership was generally aligned to drive it forward. The alignment seems to have broken down. Lack of clarity — both, in ICC as well as BCCI — is our biggest concern right now. We have nothing to do with the politics of cricket. Currently we have invested in cricket more than any other media company has ever done. Our investments in the game are to the tune of a few billion dollars. And hence the business risk for us is very very high.

Will Star seek to renegotiate its deals going forward if the prevailing lack of clarity in ICC and BCCI leads to a weak India at the ICC? Can you explain the dynamics here?

It is not for us to comment on what the revenue sharing or the membership structure of the ICC should be because we have nothing to do with the politics of cricket. However, the centrality of India — a country that generates so much revenue for global cricket — is crucial. The percentage share of revenue that India generates is very high but the percentage share of viewership that India generates is even higher. And our take here is that nothing should be done to weaken or demotivate that enthusiasm. The consequences of that will be devastating.

We have a contractual obligation with the ICC and the BCCI as well as some other boards that runs into several years. We are totally committed to those contracts and we will continue to honour them. However, given all the volatility in the cricket world, we will have to be very careful before making any further commitments.

BCCI's ongoing problems could be temporary but is there a bigger issue being overlooked, in terms of India's bilateral commitments and vis-à-vis the broadcaster's contractual obligations?

Just to give you an example: Right now, a series of BCCI contracts are coming — from team branding to everything else. However, we don't have clarity on things like the Future Tours Programme. Every now and then we keep hearing that India will participate in some tournaments, India will not participate in some tournaments. We don't have clarity on the windows, we don't have clarity on a host of things and these are all factors that have deep commercial implications. Hence our ability to commit more money to cricket right now is a real challenge.

Earlier, when Lodha panel said 'there should be no ads between overs', the broadcasters weren't even consulted. Has there been any communication at any level, given the television industry's massive stakeholding?

It's not for me to suggest how the committees should go about their work but I don't think we have ever been consulted or our views have been sought. This is a bit intriguing for us. I would like to think that as people who take the game to millions of viewers and as people committed to such high sums of contractual value, we have a point of view. If spoken to, we can only help enrich the understanding of everybody.

For instance?

For instance, which are the formats that need to be promoted and which are the formats that do not need to be promoted. If there are millions of people — who rush to stadiums or to their television sets to watch the game — and are not so attached to Test cricket but are very excited about the T20, then there's a certain message that needs to be taken seriously. A game doesn't get built inside a room but it gets built amongst fans. Only if there's connect with fans, the game can get stronger. If you continue to deliver what the fans are not excited about then slowly the fans will begin to lose heart and the game will begin to get weaker. And nobody monitors the pulse and mindset of the fans more than us. Therefore while it may be easy to reject our point of view in this matter, the fact is we are actually a good barometer of the game.



Nobody has been more bullish on cricket than us. But what's happening in the last several months, first within India and now globally, is a matter of concern

—Uday Shankar (Star India)

Apart from the lack of clarity in BCCI, is there any other issue that you say you're not going to bid for the jersey rights?

We have no clarity on the Future Tours Programme. The contract (with BCCI) says schedules can be changed at the will of BCCI and all that — how does that work? The minimum price has already been fixed for each match that the bidder has to pay. Now, can the value for an India-Australia series be the same as that for an India-Zimbabwe game? Is it the same for a Test with Bangladesh as it would be for an ODI or T20 with England or Australia? We have no clarity on any of this. So, on what basis does a potential bidder walk into this?

An India-Pak series, for instance. Where's a replacement to such a money spinner?

In the current contract, there's an India-Pak series scheduled. It is clear that the series may not go through because of the situation between the two countries. Now, if you replace an India-Pak series with an India-Zimbabwe or Sri Lanka series, what happens? Only two sets of people get impacted: the fans and those people who are committed to a set of commercial value.

GALLERY

Ousted BCCI officials vow to keep fighting

At least 20 ousted officials of the board, led by former BCCI president N Srinivasan, met in the Capital on Sunday to renew their fight in the ongoing tussle over the Lodha panel's administrative reforms. Another source, however, said that only 12 of them attended the meeting that lasted for one-half hours. Sources told TOI that ousted officials discussed the International Cricket Council's revenue pattern and contemplated to strengthen their fight through legal means. The officials are not even discouraged by the fact that the apex court's isn't entertaining a lot of their pleas. "The board will take up the ICC matter again in the Supreme Court in March and would continue to fight and appeal for a special bench to revisit some of the reforms," an official, who attended the meeting said.

Shami keen to test himself in Hazare

India pacer Mohammad Shami is recovering well and hopes to return to national duty soon. The Bengal pacer came down to Eden Gardens with his wife and daughter on Sunday to meet former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. "I am doing fine now and have started bowling in the nets," Shami, who was sidelined with a knee injury during third Test match against England in November, said. The pacer is likely to visit National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru again to complete his rehabilitation. He is keen to play a match or two in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy meet, but that will be only possible if the BCCI physio gives him a green light.

Jayant, Ishant should be replaced: Azhar

Former India captain Mohammed Azharuddin feels that Indian team will be forced to make a couple of changes in their playing XI for the second Test against Australia after the hammering it took in the opening match. "Any batting debacle leaves a team on the backfoot. I am not saying series is lost but one needs to look at the kind of track that you want to play. I reckon Chinnaswamy won't have this kind of turn. So my gut feeling is that Jayant Yadav and Ishant Sharma may be dropped from the playing XI," Azharuddin said.

'Oz men tamed India in their own game'

Hailing the Australian side for winning its first Test in India in 13 years, the media Down Under said Steven Smith's team is capable of conquering the series itself for the first time in over a decade. Left-arm spinner Steve O'Keefe was praised for his "superhero" performance in Australia's stunning 333-run win inside three days. "History has been made. Australia has won its first game in India in almost 13 years. Steve O'Keefe has put his name on an honour board among the very best of the game as ever seen and India is in shock," a write-up in 'The Australian' newspaper said.

Guptill, Patel back in Kiwi shake-up

A shell-shocked New Zealand have welcomed the return of a fit again Martin Guptill and dropped pace for spin for the fourth ODI against South Africa. Along with Guptill, off-spinner Jeetan Patel was recalled to the side on Sunday in place of pace bowler Matt Henry who has been in the squad but not used since the Bangladesh series in December.

Kohli, Ashwin unmoved in latest rankings

Captain Virat Kohli remained the highest-placed Indian batsman at second, while off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin held on to his top position in both the bowlers' and all-rounders' list of the latest ICC Test rankings issued on Sunday. The Indian team lost the opening Test in Pune to Australia on Saturday.

ACTION TODAY

INTERNATIONAL
BASKETBALL: NBA, Oklahoma vs New Orleans, 5.30 am; LA Clippers vs Charlotte, 8 am (Live on Sony Six)
FOOTBALL: EPL, Leicester City vs Liverpool, 1.15 am Tuesday (Live on SS Select HD 1); Serie A: Fiorentina vs Torino, 1.30 am Tuesday (Live on Neo Sports)
TENNIS: ATP World Tour Dubai Open, 3.30 pm (Live on Neo Sports)
NATIONAL
BASKETBALL UBA Pro League: Delhi vs Haryana, 4.30 pm; Mumbai vs Punjab, 7 pm (Live Ten 1 HD)

WILL INDIA OPT FOR A CHANGE OF FORMULA?

Post Pune Batting Debacle, Kohli Has The Option Of Dropping A Bowler And Including Triple Ton Man Nair

Bagawati.Prasad@timesgroup.com

Chennai: For the first time at home, Virat Kohli & Co are up against it. A batting debacle — not once but twice in the first Test at Pune — has put India behind right at the start of four-Test series against Australia.

Ever since Kohli took charge in Tests, India have adopted the five-bowler strategy successfully with wicket-keeper Wriddhiman Saha, R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja taking on the additional responsibility of scoring crucial runs in the lower middle-order.

In fact, runs from the bat of spin trio — Ashwin, Jadeja and Jayant Yadav — has had a direct impact in Kohli's dream run as skipper thus far. However, the Indian middle-order, which had rescued the team on many occasions in recent times, came a cropper on a rank turner against the Australian spinners as they were blown away in a matter of minutes in both the innings. In the first innings, India lost their last seven wickets for 11 runs, while India's last seven batsmen contributed 30 runs in the second.

But it's not that India don't have options. Kohli's current strategy has meant that middle-order batsman Karun Nair, who made a triple-hundred against

England in the fifth Test at Chennai, had to warm the bench since.

There are quite a few who feel that Nair could be included in place of off-spinner Jayant, who was under bowled (13 overs in each innings) and looked ineffective in the match. But that would mean India going back to the tried-and-tested seven batsmen four bowler theory which won them many Tests over the years.

Former India skipper Ajit Wadekar and coach feels the combination conundrum is "tricky" ahead of the second Test in Bengaluru starting March 4. "To strengthen the batting line-up, perhaps you can bring in Nair, who has been in fine form. You can have seven batsmen, but one must not forget that we have to take 20 wickets to win a Test. That's more important. It's a tricky call. Combination depends

a lot on the nature of the wicket. If we pick four bowlers, then there could be too much of pressure on the two spinners (Ashwin and Jadeja)," Wadekar told TOI.

Former India keeper and selector Saba Karim believes India "will not" change the combination just because of losing one Test. "I don't think India will change the combination (5-bowler theory) because of the fact that they had lost the Test match. If India are to change the combination, then it should depend on the surface, which India have done in the past. If the conditions are similar to that of in Pune, then I don't think they will change. India lost because of poor batting and not because of combination. The 6-5 strategy has been their winning mantra," said Karim.

Karun Nair, who was made to sit out of the Test eleven despite a triple against England, could find his way back into the team



Despite the failure of the Indian allrounders in the first Test, both Karim and Wadekar backed them to deliver the goods stating that such a batting collapse "won't happen" again. "These things (batting collapses) do happen, but it doesn't mean India will falter again. I think the batting in Pune was just an aberration and India will bounce back in Bengaluru. The allrounders will step up and deliver," said Wadekar.

It has been difficult for Nair to sit out despite getting a triple ton. But Karim feels it isn't an "unfair" decision. "It's hard on him, but I wouldn't say it's unfair. That's how you grow as a cricketer and that's what international cricket is all about. You wait for the right time," he added.

Smith warns his players: India will 'come back hard'

Kumaraswamy.K @timesgroup.com

Pune: Having turned the tables on India in spectacular fashion in the first Test, Australian captain Steven Smith believes his team can get better and has set his eyes on winning a series in the sub-continent after a gap of more than 12 years.

"I wouldn't say it was perfect. We did a lot of things right in this Test, that's for sure. But there are still areas that we can improve on," Smith said after the win on Saturday.

The last time the Aussies



We know India are going to come back incredibly hard. They're an amazing team particularly in their own backyard

— Steven Smith (Aus skipper)

'I wouldn't say Oz spinners bowled better than ours'

Indian captain Virat Kohli wasn't really magnanimous in assessing the performance of Australia's slow bowlers Nathan Lyon and Steve O'Keefe. "I think our spinners bowled really well as well. I wouldn't say they did better. If you don't apply yourself, any bowling attack can look dangerous," he said.

But Australian skipper Steven Smith explained what worked in his bowlers' favour. "I think both and Nathan and Steve bowled a really good length, and just hit that length consistently," he said. **TNN**

won a series in India was in 2004-05. Smith, a cricketer with a keen sense of history, didn't need a reminder.

"Coming to India, we haven't won a game here in 4,502 days," the visiting skipper said, referring to their victory in Nagpur on a green-tinged track at the VCA ground.

Smith has his eyes firmly set on replicating the success of the side led by Ricky Ponting. "But it's going to be a tough road, we know India are going to come back incredibly hard. They're an amazing team particularly in their own backyard. And we've got to be ready for it."

It's a remarkable turnaround for Australia and Smith personally after he flew back home midway through the ODI series in Sri Lanka in August last year.

Smith produced a manual to play spin



ALL-ROUND VIEW
RAVI SHASTRI

The dust will not settle easily on Pune. Losses can be managed. But humiliations singe the very soul. Kohli and his men must shed this nightmare, like a snake does its skin, for a life anew.

Steve O'Keefe was controlled and accurate while his preys looked for spin which wasn't always there. They invariably ended up playing wrong lines. They didn't use their feet much either. Playing from crease without a fluid front foot against spin is disaster defined. It's an issue which can't be left pending even on fair tracks as even they would scruff up in second innings. Indians must find a way to break O'Keefe's rhythm.

Kohli is right that his bowlers were hamstrung by the first innings deficit. The playstation by then was completely in visitors' hands. Indians, blinded by hurt, couldn't put

catches or DRS in right perspective. The free fall continued well into the second innings.

And then there was Steve Smith. He produced a manual to play spin on the driest and roughest of surfaces. He didn't look to counter spin. Rather he preferred to offer a straight bat to deliveries. If it took the outside edge of his bat, so be it. He didn't come forward to defend unless left with no choice, and rather looked for runs. He chose his options and stuck with them. The outcome was a monumental innings against two of the world's best spinners on a customized track. It would be a holy book for visiting batsmen for years to come.

O'Keefe is one thing but Indians can't take their eyes off Starc or Hazlewood either, not to mention Nathan Lyon. It's a very fine pair of fast men at Australia's command. Indeed all of Australia's four bowlers are match-winners on a given day. On the other hand, I would be surprised if India doesn't bolster its batting at the cost of a spinner. **TNN**

ONE LOSS DOESN'T MEAN SERIES IS LOST, SAYS TENDULKAR

New Delhi: Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar on Sunday threw his weight behind the beleaguered Indian team and said that the Virat Kohli-led side will bounce back from the embarrassing defeat against Australia in the first Test in Pune.

India lost to Australia by a huge 333-run margin in the first Test failing to score even 110 runs in both innings.

Tendulkar, who flagged off the New Delhi Marathon on Sunday morning, said that four-match Test series is still wide open.

"Coming to India-Australia Test series, it was a tough Test match for us. But it is a part and parcel of the game. The loss (in the first Test) does not mean that the series is lost, the series is still wide open," Tendulkar told reporters after flagging off the marathon race.

"Knowing the spirit of the Indian team I know that they will fight back hard. Australian team also knows about it because when we beat them, we also knew that they are going to come back to us really hard. I have no doubt that the Indian team is going to come back and compete hard," he added.

Tendulkar said tough moments come in every team and sportsperson's career and that makes sports interesting. "There are good moments and there are tough moments but it is all about how you stand back on your feet again and start competing. That is what makes the sport interesting. That is what sportspersons play for," said Tendulkar who retired from international cricket in 2013 on pile of records. **PTI**

Yadav looks in good rhythm



OUT OF THE BOX
HARSHA BHOGLE

Frequently, as all of us have experienced in life, it is not defeat as much as the reaction to it within oneself that determines the damage it leaves behind. The best of us are able to introspect, improve and shake off defeat before marching ahead. And so as India head to Bengaluru, it is not their skill, which is unquestioned, but their ability to bounce back that will make interesting viewing.

Confidence is a huge part

of an athlete's success; whether he is thinking "I can" or "can't I?" And this is where the captain and the coach, an amazingly confident player in his time, will have a big role to play. There was a reason India started this series as favourites, in the eyes of observers on both sides, and while a weakness has been exposed, and maybe confidence dented, it is prudent to remember that good players don't become bad overnight.

India's big plus was Umesh Yadav though it is worth pondering over whether he has to, in Indian conditions, be an almost exclusively reverse swing bowler. He is in good

rhythm and hopefully is asking Kohli for the ball more often. Now India need to get Shami fit. **PMG / ESP**

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Amazed at the pitch in Pune



TO THE POINT
MOHINDER AMARNATH

The Pune Test defeat was a bitter pill for Indian fans but full marks to the Australians for a commanding performance. While fans are amazed by the poor performance of the Indians I remain amazed at the pitch that was on offer.

The Test did not last three days, and spinners opened the bowling for both sides. It beggars belief that a home team that was doing so well on sporting wickets was sudden-

ly made to play on a rank turner. What could the reasoning have possibly been? Was it the fear of David Warner at the top of the innings or was it simply a case of the Indians underestimating the abilities of the Australians on a turning wicket?

A few things turned the match and possibly the most important one was the last

wicket partnership for the Australians where Mitchell Starc took Australia from 200 to 250-plus. For the Indians the game was always lost once they plummeted to 105 in the first innings. It's easy to say that they should have given a better account of themselves in the second innings but on a badly deteriorating pitch that's really tough. **GAMEPLAN**

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Heartbreak for Mumbai

Lose 4-1 In HIL Final to Lancers; UP Claim Bronze

Jaspreet Singh.Sahni@timesgroup.com

Chandigarh: In a final that didn't live up to its reputation of two best teams fighting for the 2017 Hockey India League (HIL) trophy, Kalinga Lancers held their nerves in the dying minutes – with help from a successful video referral – to beat fellow favourites Dabang Mumbai 4-1.

Uttar Pradesh Wizards, meanwhile, claimed bronze beating Delhi Waveriders 5-4 in the third-place playoff.

The two Kalinga stalwarts – Glenn Turner and captain Moritz Fuerste – stepped up to score the winning goals, while Mumbai's lone goal came off the stick of Afzan Yousuf.

Mumbai launched a late surge and even scored a field goal, only to see their celebrations being cut short after Kalinga asked for a video referral that ruled a dangerous ball in favour of the eventual champions.

After a goal-less first quarter, Turner found himself perfectly placed at the goal mouth to just tap the ball between David Harte's legs to make it 2-0.

Fuerste, who scored twice off penalty corners (PC), made it 3-0 in the last



Kalinga Lancers pose with the trophy after winning the final against Dabang Mumbai

minute before half-time, continuing his goal-scoring spree in the tournament.

But Mumbai came back in the 33rd minute to keep themselves in the game when Yousuf converted an indirect PC, turning the scorecard 3-1.

The crowd almost got what it wanted in the 58th minute, when Kieran Govers' field goal seemed to have taken the game to a shootout. But Moritz went for a review, which went Kalinga's way, ruling out the goal.

Fuerste then sealed his team's maiden HIL title win with his 12th goal of the season, another groundier off a PC in the 59th minute.

Award winners

Fair Play: Kalinga Lancers
Top Scorer of The Tournament: Moritz Fuerste and Glenn Turner of Kalinga Lancers (Rs. 20 lakh)
Upcoming Player of the Tournament: Harmanpreet Singh of Dabang Mumbai (Rs 20 lakh)
Player of the Tournament: Florian Fuchs of Dabang Mumbai (Rs 50 lakh)
Achiever of the Tournament: Florian Fuchs of Dabang Mumbai (Rs 10 lakh)

Rajput draws a blank on a windy & luckless day

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New Delhi: Sanjeev Rajput had come fully prepared. He had worked hard on all the aspects of the game and was confident of grabbing a medal in the home World Cup. But what he lacked was the preparation to counter the strong winds sweeping the Karni Singh shooting ranges for the last few days.

SHOOTING

The outcome was yet another medalless day for India at the mega event where the home shooters including the experienced Rajput drew a blank on Sunday. The hosts have so far won just one medal – Pooja Ghatkar's bronze in women's 10m air rifle.

Rajput was in the reckoning for a medal for the better part of his men's rifle 3 positions event. He finished 5th after the kneeling round of 15 shots in the final. Improved his position to 3rd after the prone event of 15 shots. But failed to lift his game while shooting at the standing position to



Sanjeev Rajput missed out in men's rifle 3 positions

finish fifth.

"Match was tough due to windy conditions. I had prepared hard for the event, but not prepared enough to tackle in these windy conditions. There was strong wind. I tried my level best, but somehow I could not read the wind in the final hall," the 36-year-old said.

Rajput's downfall started when the competition entered the final stage. He was locked in an engrossing battle with Thailand's Napis Tortungpan-

ich for the third place. But an 8.4 on the fourth shot in standing position virtually dashed his hopes. He could never recover from that position. When he was eliminated he was just 0.1 point behind the Thai.

"I could not settle down properly in the standing position. This has been an issue in that position. I hit a lot of low 9s and low 10s. That was not enough. I wanted to return with a medal. That regret will be there," said Rajput, who had earlier won a World Cup gold in the event in 2011 in Changwon."

Rajput had made it to the 8-men final at the 8th position. China's Zicheng Hui and Sun Jian took the gold and silver respectively while Switzerland's Jan Lochbihler took the bronze. The Thai finished fourth.

Earlier, World Cup Final 2013 winner Heena Sidhu disappointed by failing to qualify for the summit clash, while Harven Srao made the cut but could not finish on the podium in the women's 10m air pistol event.

Svitolina wears crown

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Dubai: Elina Svitolina uses a court like an interior decorator, accessorizing it artfully, picking angles and lines, littering the space with winners.

Consistency may not be her thing yet, but her craft is punishing. Caroline Wozniacki was at the receiving end of the firepower in the final of the Dubai Duty Free tennis championships on Saturday night, where the 22-year-old from Ukraine claimed her biggest prize yet, a 6-4, 6-2 win in a rain-delayed affair.

Svitolina, who came into the final having won five titles, including one earlier this month, all of which being international series events, took home \$487,245 and 900 ranking points for her first Premier 5 win.

The 5'9" tall Odessa-born Svitolina, who closed the exchange with a winner that clipped the line, will debut in the top ten of the world rankings at No. 10 when the new list comes out on Monday.

Ruffina claims PBMM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Hot favourite Ruffina, trained by Dallas Toddywalla and ridden by David Allan, easily won the juvenile derby, the Poonawalla Breeders' Multi-Million (Grade 1), feature of Sunday's Mumbai races.

Results with dividends

1. HELLO! Classic (1400m): Celtic Prince 1, Paramour 2, Rule Downunder 3, The Champ 4. 3-1/4, 1-3/4, 2-3/4. T:1:22.03. Tote: Rs 37 for win; 14, 12 for places; Shp: 29; Fc: 58; Q: 20; Tanala: 117 & 94.
2. Dr. Goolam E Vahanvati Gold Trophy (1200m): Benefactor 1, Forest Fairy 2, Gazi-no 3, Optium 4. 3-1/4, 1-3/4, 5-1/4. T:1:10.45. Tote: Rs 15 for win; 12, 13, 12 for places; Shp: 33; Fc: 23; Q: 15; Tanala: 50 & 16.

3. Intervale Poonawalla Ltd Trophy (2400m): Geranium 1, Othello 2, Kitty Hawk 3, Jager Bomb 4. 1/2, 1, 2-3/4. T:2:34.00. Tote: Rs 18 for win; 11, 14, 15 for places; Shp: 49; Fc: 82; Q: 31; Tanala: 202 & 61.

4. Poonawalla Breeders' Multi-Million (Grade 1) 1400m: Ruffina 1, Tutankhamun 2, Timeless 3, Perfect Star 4. 2-4-1/4, 1-1/4. T:1:22.02. Tote: Rs 21 for win; 13, 13, 48 for places; Shp: 40; Fc: 62; Q: 25; Tanala: 581 & 373.



British jockey David Allan guiding favourite filly Ruffina to a comfortable victory in the Poonawalla Breeders' Multi-Million on Sunday

581 & 373.

5. Rusi Patel Trophy (1200m): Adeline 1, Airlift 2, Grey Flannel 3, Jarama 4. Shd, 1-1/4, 2-1/2. T:1:11.37. Tote: Rs 31 for win; 14, 17, 10 for places; Shp: 76; Fc: 192; Q: 134; Tanala: 345 & 110.

6. Sir Victor Sassoon Gold Trophy (1400m): Chizzler 1, Miss Saigon 2, Pink Panther and Dancing Lord 4. 1, 3, Dht. T:1:23.15. Tote: Rs 21 for win; 16, 15 for

places; Shp: 33; Fc: 36; Q: 14; Tanala: 55 & 30.

7. Serum Institute of India Trophy (1000m): Abbey 1, Allora 2, Undisputed 3, Incentio 4. 1-1/4, Nk, 3/4. T:0:57.84. Tote: Rs 69 for win; 21, 12, 16 for places; Shp: 36; Fc: 156; Q: 61; Tanala: 411 & 251.

Jackpot: 70% Rs 4002 (41) & 30% 162 (435); Super Jackpot: 70% 5141 (138) & 30% 185 (1642); Treble: 670 (29).

Dhoni's ton helps Jharkhand win

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Kolkata: Very few teams can post a 200-plus total in a one-dayer after tottering at 43 for four in 13.5 overs. But if you have a player like Mahendra Singh Dhoni in your side, the opposition's game plan can go for a toss. That's exactly what happened at the Eden Gardens here on Sunday as the former India captain's maiden List A hundred helped Jharkhand record a comprehensive 78-run victory against Chhattisgarh in a Group D Vijay Hazare Trophy match.

Dhoni made a shaky start and was lucky to survive a loud caught-behind appeal off AK Singh to the very first delivery he faced. He did not time the ball well initially and relied on singles and twos to keep the scoreboard



M S Dhoni during his innings of 129 against Chhattisgarh

moving along with Shahbaz Nadeem.

Mumbai beat Rajasthan

An allround performance powered Mumbai to a convincing five-wicket win against Team Rajasthan in the second round of the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the SSN College grounds on Sunday.

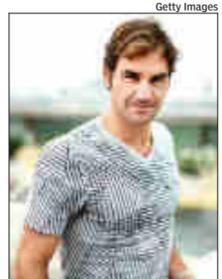
Brief scores: Rajasthan 181/9 in 38 overs (Salman Khan 37, Mahipal Lomror 49, Shardul Thakur 3/47). Mumbai 184/5 in 29.1 overs (Akshil Herwadkar 50, Shreyas Iyer 41, Tajinder Singh 3/45).

I am still riding the wave of Melbourne win: Federer

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Dubai: On Sunday afternoon Roger Federer in a grey RF tee, trendy sweatpants and matching shoes cut the perfect pose for normcore dressing. Easy, relaxed, yet sharp. Making his first appearance at a tournament site since his stirring run in Melbourne, where he added to his record Grand Slam collection – tennis' most-decorated man, affable and articulate, play and persona, is as much superstar athlete as the sport's fashion statement.

Federer 35, father of four; who went almost five seasons without winning a major; not that they were poor years, coming up short in the final hurdle a couple of times, besides closing in on the top-ranking, said, he was 'still riding the wave' of his Mel-



Roger Federer

bourne Park triumph.

"It's taken time to understand everything that happened. It was nice not having a tournament to play right away," Federer, seeded third in the Dubai Duty Free tennis championship, where he opens against Frenchman Benoit Paire, said. "So my last shot is still the forehand cross

court, it is still match point, it's still the Rafa (Rafael Nadal) match... That's what I still have in mind. I'm still riding the wave. Those were incredible moments, some of the strongest I've ever felt as a tennis player."

It was more so because of the mountain he had to climb last year. "It was a tough year (2016) on many levels, playing basically one healthy tournament in Australia. I was sick in Brisbane or injured or not well or hurt throughout the rest of the season. So for me to then to come back this way, couldn't have been any better."

Federer, looking leaner and physically sharper, said he hadn't watched a replay of the Melbourne final. "I've had friends and everybody say, 'Let's watch the match and make a movie night', and I'm like, 'No, not three-and-a-half-hours please,'" Federer said.

Education TIMES

MONDAY | FEBRUARY 27, 2017

SUBJECT WISE

RESEARCH EMPHASIS

In today's technology-centric world, the focus is on reducing human effort and employing machines to perform tasks that have traditionally been the forte of humans alone. Self-driving vehicles, robots conversing with human-like intelligence, and wearable gadgets that enhance our day-to-day lives have already become a reality. With the emergence of the everything-as-a-service era, we are bombarded with continuous data and have access to numerous apps and services that leverage the data for wide-ranging applications and user experiences.

The technology roadmap for the next five years is set for the adoption of many futuristic emerging technologies such as machine vision, smart-city services and applications, computational bioinformatics, autonomous and multi-agent technology, Immersive virtual reality, intelligent user interfaces and more.

Given the diverse domains and emerging trends in IT, there are plenty of rewarding research opportunities. Due to the Indian government's focus on product-based research and technology for social initiatives, many research grants and funding schemes are available to



researchers in academia. Collaborative projects with other universities and industry partners also nurture an environment conducive to research that is mutually advantageous. Engineering institutions in India are allying with

other organisations including Indian and foreign universities, government agencies or ministries, as well as with companies. Innovative research has motivated several students and faculty members to take

start-up initiatives to market their research.

Students reap huge benefits from such research collaborations between their research mentors and faculty from other countries. Research internships are consistently offered to undergraduate, postgrad-

researcher's perspective.

Institutes need to provide IT students with an unshakable core of fundamental knowledge in areas such as computer science and maths. Graduates will be successful if they have a strong hold over the core concepts of computer science and programming

Strong core, diverse skills

EXPERTS SHARE INSIGHTS INTO WORK-RELATED TRENDS IN THE FIELD OF IT

uate and doctoral students by Indian and foreign universities of repute and by research labs. This provides exposure to the research practices and teaching-learning methodologies followed at other institutions, thus broadening a

and an affinity for self-learning. Without the skill, students' capabilities are limited to the technologies that were popular when they were at college, thus producing IT professionals who might be nothing more than one-trick ponies.

— G RAM MOHANA REDDY, professor and head, department of information technology, National Institute of Technology Karnataka, Surathkal

SKILL ELEVATION

Companies spend billions on making technology and devices even more closely aligned with our everyday life. The recent demonetisation drive has hastened the path to digitisation. With such rapid strides and changes in technology, constant skill upgradation has become the norm, and students can no longer rely on theoretical knowledge to get by in the real world of business.

Embracing technology has refashioned the nature of work, including tools, practices and processes and therefore, impacted the skills required to adapt to this shift.

In the telecom sector especially, it is no longer enough to just possess strategic skills. Product designers and developers

need to be keenly aware of consumer trends and tastes, to make products that will be relevant to customers. With device syncing becoming prevalent, students need to have the knowledge of working with and integrating a cross-section of hardware and software platforms.

Students in the field must pursue research and opt for courses that complement their core skills. On the work front, investments are being made in setting up virtual work portals, robotic workforces and app-assisted management to enable employees to work more productively than ever. The domain of social platforms, mobile applications, information and cloud computing determine the way the world does business.

— DEEPIKA SINGH, director, marketing communications, Gineea India

> For the complete story, visit www.educationtimes.com

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A fourth year double degree in architecture and construction management student at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia, I first came to India in November 2015. The people I met and the travel I undertook during my short-term study programme at CEPT University in Ahmedabad then inspired me to continue learning about the Indian culture and developing the relationships I had found along the way. I have been eager to return to India ever since leaving in 2015 and the New Colombo Plan (NCP) Scholarship offered me the opportunity to do so in a manner I could not possibly achieve by myself.

The scholarship, which is awarded to three talented Australian youth to live, study and intern in India in 2017 by the Australian Government, is viewed upon highly by universities, businesses and notable persons within Australia. The programme had an intense application and evaluation process lasting over six months. To be eligible to apply, undergraduate students needed to first apply and be nominated by their home university. Once nominated, students' applications needed to be developed into four main criteria outlined by the NCP — academic excellence at the tertiary level; leadership in the community; adaptability and resilience; and ability to



SCHOLARTALK
India Calling

Callan Green, an architecture student from Australia who has been awarded the New Colombo Plan scholarship by the Australian Government to live, study and intern in India in 2017, on how he plans to use this opportunity

contribute to the NCP goals. These criteria defined the students' proposed plan, motivation and potential to deliver positive outcomes. All students participated in a formal interview with a panel of experts, and a final weighting based upon the students' academic merit, application and interview performance formed the panel's decision. In total 105 scholars were chosen to represent the Australian Government and their respective universities.

I wanted to show as much of my character and enthusiasm for this programme in my application. I have a lot of experience travelling in various countries and also a few respectable academic achievements. However, this programme is about engaging with local communities on a people-to-people level and building fruitful relationships that can benefit Australia and India's bilateral relationship. I thus tried to focus my application towards acknowledging and dis-

playing my willingness to do this. At the awards dinner, I realised that that all the scholars were highly enthusiastic and passionate about engaging with the programme and their chosen country.

Now that I have been awarded the scholarship, I will again be studying at CEPT University. The classes I have chosen are intended to build my awareness of Indian culture and professional work ethic within the architectural profession in India. My studies will prepare me to fully engage within the internship programme; my classes will range from a city planning to professional practice. I will be taking four full-time classes as well as full-time language training.

For my internship, I have been in contact with two local architectural practices in Ahmedabad: Architectonica and Modo Designs.

> For the complete story, click **'International'** under **'Scholarships'** at www.educationtimes.com



EXPERTEYE

UNDERSTAND INTERIORS

Architect and interior designer **Mithil Panwalkar** on what it takes to make a career in his field

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Interior designers (not to be mistaken with interior decorators) plan and design the

interior spaces of a wide range of buildings — from private homes to corporate offices and from retail spaces to healthcare. An architect, on the other

hand, is responsible for designing the exterior form/shell and core ensuring that it complies with building codes set out by the local

authority.

An interior designer's primary duty is to not only make effective and efficient use of interior spaces by ensuring clients' functional needs catered to, but also making designs reflect clients' image and identity. The other

duties include producing presentation drawings that reflect the client's ideas and aspirations, producing technical drawings for execution covering carpentry details, lighting schemes, plumbing, electrical, automation and mechanical venti-

lation layouts, managing execution teams and selecting material, finishes, furniture, fabrics, artefacts, etc.

> For the complete story, click on **'Expert Eye'** at www.educationtimes.com

SNAPSHOTS



HOT STREAK: Jo-Wilfried Tsonga won a second title in as many weeks after beating fellow Frenchman Lucas Pouille 6-4, 6-4 in the final of the ATP Marseille Open on Sunday

Hussamuddin enters final

Mohamed Hussamuddin (56kg) was the lone Indian boxer to enter the final even as two of his compatriots settled for bronze medals after losing in the semifinals of the 68th Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria. Hussamuddin defeated local favourite Stefan Ivanov to make the summit clash, where he will face Ukraine's Mykola Butsenko. However, Amit Panghal (49kg) claimed bronze after going down to Tinko Banabakov in his semifinal bout. In the women's draw, Meena Kumari Mainsam lost to Bulgarian Stanimira Petrova to sign off with a bronze medal.

Ali, Budhia storm into lead after first leg

India's TSD (Time, Speed and Distance) Kings Asgar Ali and his navigator Muhammad Mustafa stormed into the lead after the first leg of the Biswa Bangla JK Tyre Himalayan Drive 5 in Paro (Bhutan) on Sunday, even as the 46 competitors successfully tackled 337 kilometres through dirt tracks and forest roads to reach Paro in Bhutan. Ashish Budhia, head of Ranchi Motorsports Club, is virtually on the tail of the leaders along with Arindam Ghosh.

Saina to represent Olympic Committee in BWF

Star shuttler Saina Nehwal, who

was appointed a member of the International Olympic Committee's Athletes' Commission (AC) last year, would be representing the panel in the Badminton World Federation (BWF). She would join the BWF Athletes' Commission as a representative of the IOC AC, IOC said in a communication to Nehwal.

Wade scores 20 over Cavaliers missing LeBron

Dwyane Wade scored 20 points and Jimmy Butler recorded a triple-double, leading the Chicago Bulls to a 117-99 victory on Saturday night over the Cleveland Cavaliers, who played without LeBron James. **Results:** NBA: Golden State 112 Brooklyn 95; Houston 142 Minnesota 130; Dallas 96 New Orleans 83; Cleveland 99 Chicago 117; Miami 113 Indiana 95; NY Knicks 110 Philadelphia 109; Orlando 105 Atlanta 86; Sacramento 85 Charlotte 99.

'Linking me with 'drug misuse' claims upsetting'

Quadruple Olympic champion Mo Farah maintained on Sunday that he has always competed cleanly and never broken anti-doping rules, countering any association with "allegations of drug misuse." The British middle-distance runner's statement followed fresh accusations published in the London-based *Sunday Times* about his American coach Alberto Salazar's use of medicines, based on information obtained by the hacking group Fancy Bears.

A Messi end for Atletico

Barca Star's Late Winner Eases Pressure On Boss Enrique

Madrid: Lionel Messi struck the winner four minutes from time as Barcelona moved top of La Liga on Sunday with a crucial 2-1 win at Atletico Madrid. All the goals came in the final half hour as Rafinha put Barcelona in front before Diego Godin's header quickly restored parity.

LA LIGA

However, so often the thorn in Atletico's side, Messi registered his 27th career goal against Los Rojiblancos to ease the pressure on under fire Barca coach Luis Enrique.

Barcelona now lead Real Madrid and Sevilla by two points. Real, though, have two games in hand on their title rivals, the first of which was played later on Sunday at Villarreal. Defeat leaves fourth-placed Atletico just one point clear of Real Sociedad in the battle for the final Champions League slot.



RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME: Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (C) struck four minutes from time to help his team beat rivals Atletico Madrid 2-1 at the Vicente Calderon stadium on Sunday

Following their Champions League thrashing at the hands of Paris Saint-Germain and struggles at home to Leganes last weekend, Luis Enrique switched from the Catalans habitual 4-3-3 to a 3-4-3 with Messi forced into an ad-

vanced midfield role.

However, the change in tactics did little to stem Barca's slump in form early on as Atletico dominated the opening half hour. Atletico's best effort of the opening half came from long range, though, as Antoine

Griezmann's driven effort on his weaker right foot forced a brilliant flying save from Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

The deadlock was eventually broken in scrappy fashion on 63 minutes as Rafinha profited from a loose ball inside the area to fire low into the far corner. However, the lead lasted only seven minutes as Godin rose higher than a host of Barca defenders to flick home Koke's free-kick for the equaliser.

Yet, when Barca needed a potential season defining goal, Messi again came up trumps with his 35th in as many games this season. The five-time World Player of the Year's first effort from Suarez's cut-back was blocked, but he followed up to prod past the helpless Oblak and move Barca top of the table. **AFP Results:** Espanyol 3 (Caicedo 17, Jurado 46, Moreno 90+1) Osasuna 0; Atletico Madrid 1 (Godin 70) Barcelona 2 (Rafinha 63, Messi 86)

Spurs go second as Kane nets 100th goal

London: England striker **Harry Kane** scored a clinical first-half hat-trick in 23 minutes as Tottenham Hotspur rebounded from their midweek European disappointment to overwhelm Stoke City 4-0 on Sunday.

Tottenham's victory put them above Manchester City into second



PREMIER LEAGUE

place in the Premier League, 10 points behind leaders Chelsea.

Kane put the home team ahead in the 14th minute with his 100th goal in club football, with 84 of them coming for Spurs. He added another 18 minutes later, volleying in from a corner and completed his third treble in six weeks with a deflected shot.

Dele Alli made it 4-0 before halftime from Kane's cross.

It was a stunning individual performance by the 23-year-old Londoner, who had previously scored hat-tricks against West Bromwich Albion on Jan. 14 and then at Fulham in the FA Cup last Sunday. The team's display also justified manager Mauricio Pochettino's decision to field an unchanged side despite Spurs having less than 72 hours' rest after going out of the Europa League against Gent at Wembley on Thursday.

Mid-table Stoke, in contrast, derived no benefit from having had 15 days without a game and were outplayed throughout.

"We wanted to come out and get back to winning ways," Kane told *Sky Sports*. "It was exactly what we need. I just tried to get my shots off and if you don't shoot, you don't score." **REUTERS**

Mumbai FC fire blanks yet again

Anil.Dias@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Mumbai coach Santosh Kashyap's job is on the line after his team played out a drab, goalless draw against a very young Minerva Punjab FC at the Cooperage Stadium here on Sunday.

This is Mumbai's third straight draw after losing six straight matches and sources have said that the management is running out of patience with Kashyap.

TOI had reported on Sunday on how Kashyap had reportedly asked the Mumbai trio of Steven Dias, Allan Dias and Pratik Chowdhary to leave the team, a decision that didn't go down well with majority of the team members and fans. Their demotivation showed on the field as the team lacked the fighting spirit and didn't really look threatening though they were in command for most of the match.

They did pose a threat in dead ball situations, but Minerva goalkeeper Arnab Das was up to the task, pulling off at least three brilliant saves. The only entertaining part about the match was both sets of fans. The away team supporters may have outnumbered the home team fans, but they couldn't silence the chants of the latter.

The 'Yellow Brigade', Mumbai FC's official fan club, had planned chants against Kashyap, and they didn't disappoint. From the word go, they called for Kashyap to be ousted but only in words that are un-



In Sunday's early kick off, Churchill Brothers (Red) climbed out of the bottom of the table after beating DSK Shivajians 3-0 in Vasco

printable. In a strong show of support to Steven, Allan and Pratik, the Mumbai fans kept chanting the names of the trio throughout the match.

Kashyap, though, remained defiant, saying that his team played well. When asked if he was frustrated with the result, he answered in the negative.

"There's no frustration. We dominated the match but we couldn't get the goal. All we have to do is try harder next match," he said, also choosing to see the funny side of the chants against him. "These people choose to come here and watch the match rather than go out partying. So I have to respect that because they are an important part of the club. I have nothing against

them as I know when we win, they will start supporting me again," he said.

Mumbai controlled the ball well in midfield, but struggled to combine with the strikers. Their first chance of the match came in the 11th minute when Anderson Da Silva's header from a Thoi Singh cross went past the goalkeeper, only for the offside flag to be raised.

Churchill Brothers start upward climb

Vasco: Derrick Pereira showed his former employers what they were missing as Churchill Brothers SC put it across DSK Shivajians 3-0 to climb up from the bottom of the I-League table at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco on Sunday, reports **Marcus Mergulhao**.

Proof that his players are now beginning to warm up to Pereira's style and formation was there for all to see as Churchill not just kept it tight at the back but also converted the chances that came their way.

Anthony Wolfe (64th minute), Ghanevo Kromah (67th) and Surabuddin Mollick (90th) got the goals that Churchill were desperate for after a barren first half. DSK Shivajians - who were coached by Derrick last season - had control of the proceedings in the early part of the match but lacked sharpness upfront.

Uncertainty of track adds to the dare

Frank Silva

MY relationship with water started way back in 1991 when I started racing Jet Skis professionally. 16 years later and with all my familiarity and experiences with the oceans, I can still never predict how the waters will behave during those 15 laps of the race.

Having raced, both on water and land, I have realised that racing on the latter is more challenging, given how the track keeps surprising you at every lap. While racing on land, you don't have that element of a moving track, but on the ocean, the track changes its nature with every single lap. The first lap, we could be racing on a big swell, while our next lap could be completed on flat waters. The continuous shifts in track also have a huge impact on your boat, making every lap a new experience and a stronger challenge.

Also, when racing on dry land, you race along the same

line which allows you to pick up speed as you keep familiarising yourself with the track - an advantage the changing course of water completely lacks.

My biggest tip for CS Santosh and Gaurav Gill, who have mastered their machines on land, would be to watch out for the wake (track of waves left by a race boat moving) of another boat. They will realise that on a bike or a rally car, a competitor can never throw you off-course, however, on the sea, a wake of another boat certainly can.

(THE WRITER IS A PILOT WITH TEAM HVR RACING AT THE NEXA P1 POWERBOAT, INDIAN GRAND PRIX OF THESEAS)