



FIRST COLUMN

Coronavirus outbreak India to send medical supplies to Wuhan



New Delhi, Agency. India will send a consignment of medical supplies to Wuhan on a relief flight later this week, and has tentatively scheduled a third round of evacuations of Indian nationals out of Wuhan and Hubei, the Embassy of India (EOI) in Beijing said on Monday. The WeChat group set up by EOI to coordinate evacuation efforts had over 80 Indian nationals as members by Monday evening, Embassy of India in Beijing tweeted, "GOI [Government of India] will send a consignment of medical supplies on a relief flight to Wuhan later this week... On its return, the flight will have limited capacity to take on board Indians..." In a 2-minute video released on Sunday, Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri expressed "solidarity and support" to the Chinese people and the government in Beijing tackling the epidemic. "We feel deeply for the people and the families that are affected by this epidemic," he said. "I would particularly wish to express support for the people of the city of Wuhan and the province of Hubei who have been most affected by the epidemic and who hold a very special place in the hearts of the people of India." "The Government of India is soon providing a consignment of medical supplies... this is a concrete measure which will fully demonstrate the goodwill, solidarity and friendship of the people and the Government of the India, with the Chinese people."

SC starts hearing arguments on reference by Sabarimala bench



New Delhi, Agency. The language of Article 25 of the Constitution is that the state cannot intervene to regulate the religious affairs of a faith but only its secular affairs, a nine-judge Supreme Court Constitution Bench remarked on Monday as it began hearing arguments on a reference made by the bench which heard the Sabarimala review petitions. Chief Justice of India Justice S A Bobde heading the bench said that for instance, it can be said that the money offered into a hundi should not be used for terrorism or invested in casinos etc. He added, "For instance if a law tells how to do namaste or namaz, it will amount to a direct interference in religious affairs... However, there may be rules in the interest of hygiene etc" and referred to the IPC provisions against human sacrifice. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the court had so far not been able to explain where religious affairs end and secular activities begin.

Uttar Pradesh: Five- month-old raped, killed



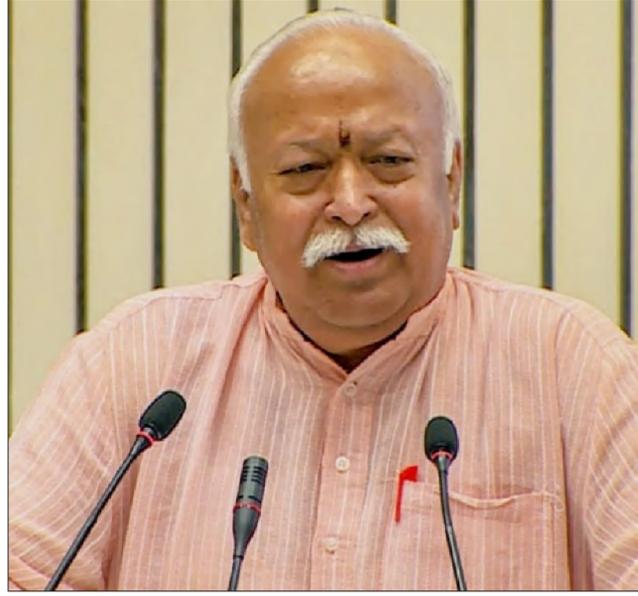
Lucknow, Agency. A five-month-old girl was raped and murdered in Lucknow, allegedly by her relative who abducted her from a wedding party late Sunday night. The 25-year-old accused, who is a cousin of the infant, has been arrested, police said. According to police, the infant's body was recovered by the family it had wounds and bruises all over, with a fracture on head. The postmortem report confirmed rape, the police said. "The family had come to attend a wedding on Sunday night. According to the child's father, around 11 pm his nephew said he is playing with the girl and went out with her. When he did not return for long, the family started looking for her. Around an hour later, the girl was found in an empty plot around 1 km from the venue. They immediately took the girl to KGMU Trauma Centre, where doctors declared her dead on arrival," DCP (North) Sarvshreshth Tripathi said.

Mohan Bhagwat: Unlike Gandhi, no one to atone now if movement goes awry

New Delhi, Agency.

Against the backdrop of protests against CAA and NRC, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Monday said that unlike Mahatma Gandhi, there was no one today who would atone if a movement went wrong. He said Gandhi's ideas and methods were formulated according to the circumstances of his time and taking them literally would not be advisable. He was speaking at the launch of a book on Gandhi by Jagmohan Rajput at Gandhi Smriti. The event, which began with Bhagwat paying tribute at the spot where Gandhi was shot dead by Nathuram Godse, was attended by Minister of State, External Affairs, V K Singh and BJP MP Satyapal Singh, among others. "He (Gandhi) launched many experiments. If some went wrong, he did not conclude that the truth he had in his heart was not the truth. He said may be my way was wrong. If some of his movements went out of hand, he even atoned for his mistakes.

If today a movement goes awry, disturbs law and order, is there anyone who would be ready for atonement?...," he said. On Gandhi's ideas and his books, Bhagwat said whatever great personalities say or do is according to circumstances. "If we try to take it literally, it will not remain relevant. Whatever Gandhiji said or did, even in his time, people had different views on it. Now if you go into that, you will get confused... we cannot carbon copy his deeds and ideas. Even Gandhiji would have stopped us. But the philosophy based on which Gandhiji formulated his ideas needs to be followed," he said. "Gandhi was never ashamed of being a Hindu. He used to say 'main khattar sanatani Hindu hun. Aap shiksha a



■ "He (Gandhi) launched many experiments. If some went wrong, he did not conclude that the truth he had in his heart was not the truth."

par pakke raho aur dusre dharmon ka samman karo (I am a staunch Sanatani. Stay true to your faith and respect other religions)" Bhagwat said. He said that India's fate had to

be changed, one would have to leave the path of popularity and inculcate discipline. Responding to the criticism by a guest of present India not being one of Gandhi's dreams, Bhagwat said it was changing fast and in 20 years, its colour would change completely. "Today when I roam around, I see it is not a situation of hopelessness. It hasn't happened yet that's true. But in Chemistry, there is titration. It changes colour somewhat only to revert to its original state. It feels as if it is not going to happen. But in time and with enough evidence, the colour will completely change tomorrow."

Karnataka sedition case: After protest, J&K students re-arrested

Bengaluru, Agency.

THREE engineering students from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), who were arrested on charges of sedition on Saturday but released a day later due to "deficient evidence", were re-arrested on Monday following protests by members of Hindutva groups like the Bajrang Dal. The three students Basit Aashiq Sofi from Baramulla, Talib Majeed and Amir Mohiuddin Wani from Anantnag, all studying at the KLE Institute of Technology in Hubballi were sent to judicial custody till March 2 by a local court. On Saturday, the youths were arrested over a video circulated on social media, which purportedly showed them singing along with a song playing in the background with the words "Pakistan Zindabad". They were charged with sedition and promoting enmity. But on Sunday, the students were released by the Hubballi police under Section 169 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure (release of accused when evidence deficient). However, after their release triggered protests by Hindutva groups, the Hubballi police arrested the youths again and



produced them in court on Monday. "They have been arrested, produced before the court and remanded to judicial custody," Hubballi Police Commissioner R Dileep said. Police had to protect the youths from protesters, who threw slippers and targeted the police van in which they were brought to court.

The principal of KLE Institute of Technology, Basavaraj Anami, said the students were being rusticated on account of their arrest in the case. The KLE Institute of Technology is part of BJP politician Prabhakar Kore's KLE Group. The video was allegedly recorded by the students in Prerana Hostel of the KLE Institute of Technology. "They gathered in their room and recorded a pro-Pakistan video.

Sheena Bora probe: Senior cop knew Mukerjeas, didn't disclose early on, says Rakesh Maria

Mumbai, Agency.

Former Mumbai Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria has claimed in his autobiography that at the beginning of the investigation into Sheena Bora's murder in 2015, Deven Bharti, the Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) had not disclosed to him that he knew jailed media baron Peter Mukerjea and his wife Indrani Mukerjea, who are prime suspects in the case. In his book, Let Me Say It Now, retired IPS officer Maria, also claimed that Peter had informed Bharti about Sheena's disappearance much before her remains were discovered in a forest in Raigad in August 2015. The revelations about Bharti's friendship with the Mukerjeas came while Maria questioned Peter at Khar police station soon after Indrani's arrest. In the book, Maria narrates the incident saying that he questioned Peter why he didn't do anything when he found out about Sheena's sudden disappearance in 2012.

"Sir, I had told Deven!" is what Peter had replied. "I looked at Deven with a quizzical look on my face, but he was poker-faced," Maria writes, adding that all the officers in that interrogation room were taken aback at Peter's disclosure but tried to look unaffected. When reached for a comment, Bharti, who is now Additional Director General of Police (Anti Terrorism Squad), said, "Mr Maria belongs to a family linked with Bollywood and, it seems, scriptwriters have a



great influence on him. In addition, it appears to be a marketing strategy which attempts to grab more eyeballs rather than placing facts. Moreover, for a policeman, it's advisable to read the charge sheet and case diary rather than a piece of fiction. Won't comment much as the trial is in progress but would definitely tell that the whole investigation team was aware of all developments and were on the same page till investigation was with Mumbai Police." In his book, Maria says he didn't question Bharti at the time since their subordinates were present in the interrogation room. But he adds that Peter's revelation and the indication that he apparently was on first-name basis with Deven Bharti surprised him. Maria says that night was sleepless for him since he wanted to understand what had Peter told him that night.

The chairperson and members of Lokpal were appointed in March last year

Before he quit, Lokpal judge sent 3 letters to chief on lack of work, and gaps in processes

New Delhi, Agency.

Weeks before he resigned from the nine-member Lokpal citing personal reasons, Justice Dilip B Bhosale, former Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court, sent as many as three letters to Lokpal Chairperson Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose, complaining about the lack of "any office/official work" and expressing reservations about pace of work in the watchdog body. The Indian Express has learnt. Sources said that Justice Bhosale sent these letters in November-December last year he resigned on January 6. He was one of the four judicial members of the Lokpal, the other three being Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, former Chief Justice of Orissa High Court; Justice Abhilasha Kumari, former Chief Justice of Manipur High Court and Justice A K Tripathi, former Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court.

When contacted, Justice Bhosale declined to comment. The chairperson and members of Lokpal were appointed in March last year but with its rules still pending, as Justice Bhosale's letters suggest. Sources said in his first letter to Justice Ghose dated November 14, Justice Bhosale said that since there was no work, "let us utilise this time in laying down the 'basic



procedure (in black and white) including in respect of digitisation of the complaints, received and disposed of, along with orders passed therein, as suggested by me from time to time." He also wrote that "intricacies of the procedure will gradually 'evolve' as and when we would actually start dealing with the complaints, maintainable before us, in accordance with the procedure." Section 59 of the Lokpal Act says that the Centre will make rules for the Lokpal. The nodal department, Department of Personnel and Training, has prepared draft rules which were sent to Ministry of Law but are still pending.

Indeed, this issue, too, was red-flagged by Justice Bhosale in the same letter in November: "Let us also place on record in the form of resolution the decisions (major/policy) already taken (and communicated to us) including framing of the Rules which are pending consideration since last few months and sending official communication to the Government for expediting its approval." The letter also added: "We should request the Government by way of a resolution, to provide competent officers on top priority basis for constituting an Inquiry and Prosecution Wings, without which we would not be able to function effectively even if the Rules are notified."

As per latest data on the Lokpal website, 1065 complaints were received until September 30 last year of which "1000 have been heard and disposed of." A senior official of the Lokpal told The Indian Express: "Most of these were minor and were not maintainable under Lokpal Act. Those which were have been kept on file. We will consider them once Rules are notified." Lokpal, as of today, has an office on rent at Hotel Ashok in Delhi and its permanent office has been finalised in Vasant Kunj where it will be moved over the next few days. In the letter, Justice Bhosale wrote that he requested "early action" on his letter and

said he was writing "only with a view to keep the record straight. I would feel obliged if an official meeting of the Lokpal is convened to consider this letter or this may be considered whenever we hold a meeting." Justice Bhosale wrote another letter a week later, on November 21, urging the chairperson to constitute committees regarding administrative, infrastructure, expenditure, vigilance etc with two or more members in order to bring "transparency" in the functioning of Lokpal. He wrote, "This will help us to take appropriate decisions concerning each of these committees. This will further help to bring more transparency in our working and that every member would have a feeling of involvement and also to know what is happening on administrative side." He also requested that both these letters be placed "for consideration in the official meeting of Lokpal at the earliest." Justice Bhosale wrote a third letter on December 11, less than a month before his resignation, which reflects his annoyance with what he said were inaccurate minutes of a meeting held on November 26. In his letter he wrote to Justice Ghose that "it was unanimously decided to constitute a Library committee and it was left to you, Sir, to constitute such a committee."

2004 Amritsar family suicide case: Former DIG, DSP among 6 held guilty, sentencing tomorrow

Amritsar, Agency.

An Amritsar court on Monday convicted retired Punjab Police DIG Kultar Singh, DSP Hardev Singh and four others in a 2004 family suicide case. All the accused were sent to Amritsar jail. The sentence will be pronounced on February 19. In 2004, on intervening night of October 30 and 31, Hardeep Singh along with his mother, wife and two minor male children had committed suicide in Chowk Moni area of Amritsar and next morning Sumit Chawla, relative of deceased had over telephone informed Hardev Singh, the then SHO of Police Station C Division Amritsar and the first IO of the case, who now stands convicted. He is convicted for tempering with suicide notes to save then Amritsar SSP Kultar Singh, whose name was found on the suicide notes left by the deceased. Before taking the extreme step, the entire family had written a suicide note on the walls of a room of their house.

After the incident in 2004, police had forced open the door of the house in presence of large number of persons. The body of Hardeep Singh was found lying in the balcony and body of his wife Romy was hanging from the fan. Bodies of his mother,



Jaswant Kaur, and both sons Sanmeet and Ismeet were found in the rooms. There were number of writings on the walls of the rooms. Police party immediately pushed private persons out from the incident spot, allegedly shut the doors and remained inside the rooms for some time and later called senior officers to the spot. After senior officers arrived, again the door was

opened and writings describing reasons for the suicides were noted down on papers. In the suicide note, Hardeep had claimed that he had murdered his father, Sunder Singh, adding that while depositing the body he was seen by his relative, Sabreen, who informed this to her father-in-law, Mohinder Singh. He alleged that Mohinder started extorting money and later informed

the police who also started blackmailing the family. There were also allegations of blackmailing against sister and brother-in-law of the deceased. On October 31, 2004 Mohinder Singh, Sabreen, Parminder Kaur (sister of deceased) and brother-in-law Palwinderpal Singh were booked. They were arrested on November 1 that year. Interestingly, despite the suicide note naming then Amritsar SSP Kultar Singh, he was not named in the FIR. In 2009, Punjab Human Rights Organisation (PHRO) activist Sarabjit Singh Verka took up the matter before a local court and sought justice for the victims while alleging that the local police was not probing the case properly. The charges were framed under Sections 306 (abetment to suicide), 388 (extortion) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC against Kultar Singh and four relatives of the deceased Sabreen, Mohinder, Parminder Kaur and Palwinderpal Singh. Hardev Singh was charged under sections 465 (forgery), 471 (using as genuine as forged document), 120(B) (conspiracy), 210 (fraudulently obtaining decree for sum not due) and 217 (public servant who disobeys direction of law). All six accused were convicted under the charges framed against them.

Day after Dalit man shot dead in MP, forest ranger, 14 others booked 6273118

Bhopal, Agency.

The Madhya Pradesh police have booked 15 forest officials, including a ranger, for allegedly killing a Dalit man in Fatehpur village of Shivpuri district amid confusion over the sequence of events leading to the death on Sunday. While forest officials claimed that the incident took place when a team went to clear



encroachment, the victims' family members alleged that caste abuses were hurled at them when water accidentally splashed onto a ranger who came to fill his water bottle at a pump they were also using. The Karera Police have picked up several suspects based on a complaint from Saroj Balmiki, the wife of deceased Madan Balmiki. In her complaint, Saroj said her daughters were filling water from the hand pump in the village when forest ranger Suresh Sharma hurled abuses at them. She alleged he sent female staffers which lead to a scuffle that brought their 38-year-old father to the spot. She alleged that the ranger shot at her husband. Shivpuri SP Rajesh Chandel said the allegations about caste abuse were not true. He said the victim's father was posted at Madhav National Park and that he stopped reporting for work. The victim was cremated on Monday. Park director Mohan Meena claimed that the forest team had gone to the spot to clear encroachment by the victim. He claimed several of those named in the complaint were not on the spot at the time of the incident. He said when the team reached to clear the encroachment, they were subjected to stone pelting. He added that they would lodge a cross-complaint against Madan's family members and other villagers involved in attacking the forest department team.

Pak, a range country of GIB, absent at UN meet discussing its fate



Gandhinagar, Agency.

Even as the United Nations 13th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP13) in Gandhinagar is poised to discuss an Indian proposal to include the critically endangered species, Great Indian Bustard (GIB), in the Appendix I of the convention, Pakistan, which is also a range country of the bird, has so far remained absent from the global meeting. Pakistan is not only habitat of GIB, but also one of the 130 parties to the convention. Replying to a query from The Indian Express, media coordinator for the convention, Florian Keil, said that so far, Pakistan has not shown up for the convention. "At the moment, no representative from Pakistan... Pakistan has registered, but they are definitely not here."

And as Secretariat, we don't have any information as to why or why not," said Keil. Keil added that there are delegations who sometimes don't show up. And in the current convention also, out of the 130 party countries, 78 were present Monday. Inspector General of Forests, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Soumitra Dasgupta, said that current population of GIB in India is believed to be around 175 individuals inhabiting in five states that include Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Out of the five states, he added, Rajasthan has the biggest population of the bird at around 150. In Gujarat and Maharashtra, Dasgupta added, the situation is not very good with only 7-8 birds left. In Karnataka around 12 individuals have

been identified. Dasgupta said that one of the major reasons for GIB becoming endangered are habitat degradation and hunting in the neighbouring Pakistan. At a press conference after the inaugural session of the convention, replying to queries if the CMS or India will talk to Pakistan on banning hunting of GIB, Executive Secretary Amy Fraenkel said that Pakistan is one of the 130 parties to the CMS while implying that conservation of the GIB will be binding upon Pakistan if it gets listed on the Appendix I of the Convention. Meanwhile, India has already launched a plan for the conservation of four endangered species in the country that include dugong, dolphin, dancing deer and GIB. Dasgupta said that the project has been initiated in partnership with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) with total budget of Rs 100 crore which has been allocated from the fund of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA). "Out of those Rs 100 crore, Rs 30 crore have been earmarked for the conservation of GIB," Dasgupta said. When asked if absence of Pakistan from the convention will affect the conservation efforts for GIB, Dasgupta replied in negative and said, "Once GIB is listed in the Appendix I of the Convention, it will be expected that Pakistan bans hunting of GIB. If they don't, then they will be questionable on international conventions." He also stated that the inclusion of GIB in the Appendix I of CMS will be a multilateral decision with participation of so many party countries. He added that United Nations sends invitation to the partner countries for the convention and if they do not come, nobody can help it.

In J&K, police invoke stringent UAPA in FIR against social media use

Srinagar, Agency.

Police in J&K have invoked the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to register a case against people using social media through proxy servers by getting past Internet firewalls. The FIR was filed a day after a video of the ailing Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Geelani was uploaded on social media by different users. "Taking serious note of misuse of social media, the Cyber Police Station, Kashmir Zone, Srinagar has registered a Case FIR against various social media users who defied the Government orders and misused social media platforms," police said in a statement. "The FIR has been registered while taking cognizance of social media posts by miscreants by use of different VPNs which have been spreading rumours with regard to the current security scenario of the Kashmir valley, propagating secessionist ideology and glorifying terror



acts/terrorists," it said. The J&K government restored Internet service in the Valley after shutting it down for six months, but only whitelisted sites can be accessed. The government has banned the use of social media and peer-to-peer applications. On February 14, a government order reiterated the ban on all social media sites. The FIR, registered under sections 13 of UAPA, 188, 505 of IPC and 66-A (b) of IT Act, is the first against use of social media after the ban. "There have been continuous reports of misuse of social media sites by miscreants to propagate secessionist ideology and to promote unlawful activities. Social media has remained a favourite tool which largely provides anonymity to the user and also gives wide reach," the police statement said. "Lot of incriminating material has also been seized in this regard," it said.

India deployed P-8I naval jets to keep eye on Chinese troops during Doklam face-off



New Delhi, Agency.

Indian Navy's Poseidon 8I anti-submarine warfare aircraft was deployed to carry out surveillance on movement of Chinese troops during the 73-day-long standoff between India and China in mountainous Doklam. Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat confirmed the use of the naval aircraft while talking about the need for bringing in tri-services synergy in dealing with national security challenges.

"The P-8I aircraft of Indian Navy was deployed in Doklam (during the face-off)," Gen Rawat told a group of journalists. Troops of India and China were locked in a standoff at Doklam from June 16, 2017, after the Indian side stopped the building of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army. The face-off triggered fears of a war between the two neighbours. The standoff ended on August 28, 2017 after over 100 rounds of talks between diplomats of the two sides. The P-8Is were also deployed

to keep an eye on movement of Pakistani troops after the Pulwama terror attack last year. "The P-8I aircraft were the most potent platform to carry out surveillance be it sea or mountains. The aircraft were live-streaming data to support decision making during the Doklam face-off," said defence expert Capt D K Sharma (retd). Sharma said deployment of the P-8Is signified synergy among the Army and the Navy in dealing with the major crisis. The P-8I, based on the Boeing next-generation 737 commercial airplane, is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon used by the US Navy. India was Boeing's first international customer for this aircraft. The first P-8I aircraft was inducted into the Indian Navy in 2013 and, at present, it has a fleet of eight P-8Is. In 2016, the defence ministry had placed a follow-on order for four additional P-8I, the delivery of which will begin by April 2020. Last year the government cleared procurement of another batch of six P-8Is.

Hindu migrant doctor held for working without licence, says police

Jaipur, Agency.

The Jodhpur police on Saturday arrested a 44-year-old Pakistani Hindu migrant, who studied medicine in Pakistan and was registered to practice there before he arrived in India in 2004. According to officials, Noorjee Bheel was arrested because he didn't have a valid licence or certificate required to practice medicine in India. He has been booked under several IPC Sections. Family members of Bheel accused the police of assaulting him on Saturday, and activists termed the incident as an instance of harassment of persecuted minorities who have come to India for seeking refuge. "...My elder brother had opened a small clinic and would mostly treat and prescribe



medicines to other migrants," said Khivraj, Bheel's younger brother. Police confirm the arrest but dismiss allegations of Bheel being assaulted. "The FIR has been registered by the chief medical and health officer... He used to run a clinic. There is no truth to the allegations that he was beaten up," said Parmeshwari, SHO, Choupasni Housing Board police station.

Tapas Pal, Bengali actor and former MP, passes away

Kolkata, Agency.

Bengali actor and former MP Tapas Pal passed away early Tuesday morning at the age of 61 in a private hospital in Mumbai, his wife Nandini Pal confirmed to iBangla. He won the 2014 general elections from the Krishnanagar Lok Sabha constituency on a Trinamool Congress (TMC) ticket. Born on September 29, 1958, Pal started his career at the age of 22 and gained popularity with his debut film Dadar Kirti in 1980. Later, several of his films got popular including Saheb (1981), Parabat Priya (1984), Bhalobasa Bhalobasa (1985), Anurager Choyan (1986), Amar Bandhan (1986). He was awarded the Filmfare Award for his role in Saheb. Pal also worked in Bollywood films. He first starred in Abodh opposite Madhuri Dixit. Pal, once a baby-faced lead actor of melodramatic Bengali films, was among the earliest Tollywood stars to add shine to the Trinamool's anti-Left campaign. In 2014,



Pal was caught on camera threatening to kill CPI(M) workers and have their "women raped" if any of his party workers were attacked. Pal is survived by his wife Nandini Pal, who is a participant of Bigg Boss Bangla at present, and a daughter Sohini Pal, who is also an actor.

DMK MP triggers row by comparing media houses to 'Mumbai red light area'

Chennai, Agency.

DMK MP RS Bharathi has waded into a controversy by comparing TV media houses and journalists to those in "Mumbai red light area", alleging money was their primary concern. With the Chennai Press Club and comments on the social media criticising him, Bharathi expressed regret for his statement after being prompted by DMK Chief MK Stalin to do so, though he said he had "made a fair comment" while speaking on the party employing political strategist Prashant Kishor. In a video that went viral on Monday, the DMK Rajya MP is heard questioning why the media had made a matter of debate, his party roping in Kishor and purportedly questions the rationale behind it discussing Stalin and his family's visits to religious places.

The DMK had earlier roped in Kishor's Indian Political Action Committee to help shape its campaign for the Tamil Nadu assembly elections next year. In the video, Bharathi is heard saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi



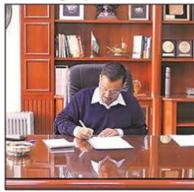
and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had also used Kishor's services, but questioned why that had not been debated in the media. The TV channels were making an issue out of Kishor joining hands with the DMK out of "frustration," he reportedly says in the video. Hitting out at TV media houses, he said "they are running their company like Mumbai red light area," alleging money was their primary concern. "There is (also) a debate whether Thalopathy (Stalin) went to temple or not, whether those from his house did or not. Is that important for the country," he asked. With his remarks not going down well with many, including those in the social media, the veteran leader expressed regret, saying Stalin had asked him to do so.

"A wrong debate was happening in media as if DMK had been pawned to him (Kishor). There are so many issues (to be debated)... he had worked for Modi, Kejriwal... but some media made a big issue when he joined hands with the DMK," Bharathi later told reporters. "I gave a fair comment that this looked like the act of some people working in red light area. But my intention is not to hurt anyone, any media house. Our leader (Stalin) came to know and asked me to express regret and I also realised that it was a mistake. So I express regret," he added. Earlier, responding strongly to Bharathi's comments, Chennai Press Club Joint Secretary Bharathy Tamizhan said instances of targeting journalists and media were on the rise. "The Chennai Press Club strongly condemns the lowly remarks made by senior politician Bharathi, who also holds the DMK Organising Secretary post," he said in a statement and urged DMK chief M K Stalin to reprimand such acts. He welcomed constructive criticism against the media.

Delhi : Promises made, AAP cabinet settles in to keep them

New Delhi Correspondent.

On Day 1 of the AAP government's third term in office, the newly sworn-in Cabinet of six ministers is set to focus on implementing the 'guarantee card' released before the polls. The card listed promises such as deploying 'mohalla marshals' in residential areas, reducing pollution to a third, and making bus rides free for students. The Indian Express looks at the key areas the six ministers will prioritise over the next five years. This time, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who took over the water ministry last term, has not kept any ministry for himself. Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia, who continues to hold key portfolios including Finance and Education, presided over meetings with both departments soon after resuming office at the Delhi Secretariat Monday. During the meeting with the finance department, he stressed on the need to eradicate departmental corruption by income tax officers. "It is important to take steps to wipe out departmental corruption. Setting up effective revenue targets should be our next course of action," he said. At the meeting with officials from the education department, he asked them to expedite work on two new universities and repair the outer walls of all government schools. After re-assigning charge as Transport Minister, Gahlot said the CM's 'guarantee card' will be his priority. He said the government will work on further strengthening Delhi's transport system. The AAP guarantee card had promised to increase the strength of the bus fleet to 11,000, expand the Metro network beyond 500 km and extend the free bus rides scheme for students as well. Gahlot also appealed to the Centre to allow the Delhi government to make Metro rides free for women commuters, which has been stuck after the Delhi Metro indicated that there are hurdles in implementing the scheme.



SC sends mediators to Shaheen Bagh: People have right to protest

Mukesh Kumar Thakur, New Delhi.

Acknowledging that people have a fundamental right to protest, the Supreme Court Monday appointed two advocates as interlocutors with the mandate to persuade anti-CAA protesters at Shaheen Bagh in Delhi to end their blockade of a public road. The court will hear the matter next on February 24. The bench of Justices S K Kaul and K M Joseph said one set of people taking to public roads to air their grievance can inspire others to follow suit and this will ultimately lead to chaos. Democracy, the judges said, is about expression of views but "there are lines and boundaries" for it.

"Certain section of society is aggrieved by a legislation which is being tested in this court. We are not saying that despite pendency of matter, people will not have the right to air their grievance or protest. Question arising is where to protest... Whether traffic can be managed better here or there is not the question. It cannot be a place like this. If today some people, tomorrow some other people may do it. Different portions of city can be blocked by people who may have their grievance.... If everyone starts coming on road, you know Delhi...It will lead to chaos," Justice Kaul said. Hearing two PILs one by Advocate Amit Sahni and another by Delhi BJP leader Nand Kishore



Garg which highlighted difficulties on account of protesters occupying a road in Shaheen Bagh, the bench said the way out could be for someone to try and convince the agitators to move out, may be to an identified location. It asked Delhi Police to suggest alternatives. The court deputed senior advocate Sanjay Hedge and advocate Sadhana Ramachandran to talk to the Shaheen Bagh protesters and convince them to shift. Appearing for Delhi Police, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the message should not go out that all institutions are on their knees and are requesting the protesters to move. The bench said if nothing works out, "we will leave it to authorities. We are hopeful that some reason will prevail".

A lawyer appearing for Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad and former Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah who wanted to intervene in the matter said there is more to the matter than meets the eye. She said the traffic congestion is because police had closed a parallel road. At this, Justice Kaul said "my concern is not a better traffic route. If everybody starts blocking roads and entering public spaces, may be for genuine causes, where does it end?... You have made your point of view. We are not saying you stop making your point of view. But this kind of protest happening on a public street?" "Democracy works on expressing views but there are lines and boundaries for it," Justice Kaul said, adding there must

be a balancing factor or it can get chaotic. "Someone may get ideas. Somebody who is not on the same page today," Justice Kaul said. One of the petitioners then said there were plans to replicate Shaheen Bagh in 5,000 areas across the country. "We are not concerned whether 1,000 sites are created as long as long as public roads are not blocked," Justice Kaul said. The petitioners alleged that the Delhi Police had not done anything to remove the blockade. The bench then put the query to Mehta on why no action was taken in the last two months. "You don't need our certificate," said Justice Kaul said. "It is needed," replied Mehta, adding that all kinds of allegations were being made against police. The court then asked what, according to police, was the solution. Mehta said the "solution is only remove". He said "children and women are being used as shield". The petitioners then sought interim directions. Justice Joseph said, "We have decided to examine. Let us give them some time." He said people had a fundamental right to protest and it was necessary to allow people to protest. Intervening, Mehta urged Justice Joseph not to say that protests were better than judicial review. Justice Kaul said there was no absolute licence in the name of protests. "We have a duty to perform. We will do it. Some may like it, some not. But we will not play to any agenda this side or that side," Justice Kaul said.

After Wuhan, 406 are out of quarantine camp in Delhi : Homely, touched hearts



New Delhi Correspondent.

"We didn't feel like we were alone. It was homely, and that touched our heart," Peerzadh Ahmed, a 22-year-old medical student from Kashmir's Budgam, said about the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) facility in West Delhi where he and 405 others were quarantined after being evacuated from Wuhan in China on February 1-2. On Monday, the 406 people were given certificates saying they had tested negative for coronavirus, and were allowed to leave the facility in Chhawla. The all-clear was given after two round of tests by a team of around 45 doctors from ITBP, BSF, AIIMS, Safdarjung hospital, NCDC and others. The group 186 women, 209 men and 11 children included a large number of medical students from Hubei University of Medicine in Shiyan, around 450 km from the epicentre of the epidemic. While two persons left the ITBP facility Monday, others are set to leave in the coming days. The ITBP has offered to provide transportation till the airport, bus terminal or railway station.

Speaking to The Indian Express, those who stepped out Monday said the situation in China seemed to be under control until January 24, when the death toll began to spike and panic spread. Fearing for their safety and survival, about 140 Indian students from the Hubei university got together and contacted the Indian Embassy. "They told us to prepare a list of all people. We gave passport numbers, emails and other details they asked for. They made a WeChat group in which they sent specific directions, it was well planned. And then, they told us that buses will come from Wuhan to pick us up," said Ahmed. Food was a constant worry, though. "From January 22-26, it was quite scary because we were running out of food, and the prices were rising. The whole city was under lockdown. No one came out," said Atul Dwivedi, a professor at Hubei university. The situation was similar across the province, including in Yichang, where Joseph Philipose, 24, was pursuing an internship at Three Gorges University. "Medical shops were open but there were no masks. I used the same disposable mask with tissue paper. It was a risk to shop for food. I had to go to this 24x7 shop, which was open,

while the rest were closed. If anybody sneezed or coughed next to us, we used to run away," he said. V. Hanuhat, 21, studying at Hubei province said, "Even outside we weren't getting food, it was a terrible scene over the 26, we were slipping into depression." hatak said there was also water shortage, and though the university supervisors sent food, it was in limited supply. No one was allowed to get out of the dorms, which were locked from the outside at all times. In Delhi, the ITBP camp turned to be a pleasant surprise for many. "The facility was of the highest standard... Everything was awesome, we were all very well taken care of," said Siddharth Pandey, 22, a medical student from Hubei who left for his hometown in Lucknow. With round-the-clock medical supervision and clinical tests daily, the group had to maintain a minimum of 3-feet distance from each other, and wear masks and gloves at all times. All staff and medical professionals were required to wear body-suits. Pushkar Mishra, 21, from Hubei university, said they were checked thrice a day before the first test results came. "Till then, the atmosphere was very tense, no one was interacting with each other freely. But after the results, people loosened up," he said. The routine inside was set. After breakfast at 8 am, and clinical examination, many would play carrom, TT or chess at the recreation room, or watch movies on TV. "Lunch was at 12.30-1 pm, after which we would either sleep or play games or chat. Tea was from 3-3.30 pm, and the same routine continued till dinner," said Ahmed from Budgam. Philipose said it was "too tense to study, none of us did that". ITBP officials said the group was housed in a newly constructed building meant to house young jawans and the challenge was preparing the facility in two days. "The lifts, geysers, etc., were not ready. To fully prepare the place was challenging," said an ITBP staffer on duty. Dr A P Joshi, the lead medical professional in-charge, said, "We did two tests. On Day 2-3 after they arrived, we sampled their nasopharyngeal swabs, sending them to ICMR-AIIMS-National Institute of Virology. They gave us the reports after 24-48 hours. We did the same exercise on February 13-14 at the end of the quarantine, and the results were negative."

British MP who slammed Govt on Article 370 sent back from Delhi airport

New Delhi Correspondent.

A BRITISH Opposition lawmaker, who had criticised India's decision to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 last year, said Monday that she was denied entry to the country and deported after she landed at Delhi airport despite holding a visa. The government, however, denied the claim and said Labour Party MP Debbie Abrahams had landed in Delhi despite being informed that her visa "had been cancelled much earlier".

"She had been duly informed about the cancellation. Yet, she arrived," a Home Ministry official said. Abrahams, who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group for Kashmir, said she was travelling on a valid e-visa to India to visit family and friends but the visa was revoked without explanation. Abrahams' e-visa was reportedly issued last October, and was valid until October 2020. Government sources said Abrahams did not hold a "valid visa" to visit India, and the e-visa is for the limited purpose of tourism, and not for any other activity, business, politics or official. A British



High Commission spokesperson said, "We are in contact with the Indian authorities to understand why Deborah Abrahams MP was denied entry to India. We provided consular assistance to her whilst she was in New Delhi Airport." Recounting her experience at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Abrahams said in a statement on Twitter that she arrived Monday morning and was informed that her e-visa had been cancelled. She said she had presented herself at the Immigration desk along with her documents and e-visa. "...the official looked at his screen and started shaking his head. Then he told me my visa was rejected took my passport

and disappeared for about 10 minutes. When he came back he was very rude and aggressive shouting at me to 'come with me'. I told him not to speak to me like that and was then taken to a cordoned-off area marked as a Deportee Cell. He then ordered me to sit down and I refused. I didn't know what they might do or where else they may take me, so I wanted people to see me," the British MP claimed.

The Immigration officer disappeared again, she said, adding that she then phoned her sister-in-law's cousin with whom she was planning to stay. "(He) got in touch with the British High Commission and he tried to find out what was going on," she wrote on Twitter. She claimed that later several Immigration officials came to her but none of them knew why her e-visa was cancelled. "Even the person who seemed to be in charge said he didn't know and was really sorry about what had happened," Abrahams claimed. "Just to be clear, I have Indian relatives who I was meant to be visiting with & have Indian members of staff accompanying me."

Delhi Police gets new song, composed by officer

Vijay Kumar, New Delhi

At the 73rd Raising Day ceremony on Sunday, Delhi Police chief Amulya Patnaik released the official song of the force 'Abhimaan Mera' while rewarding 75 personnel for their exemplary service. This will replace the old police song, which was composed in 1990. The old song was a minute long and had few lyrics, said police, while the new song is four minutes long and has a video. Police said the song was written two years ago by Assistant Commissioner of Police at EOW Anil Samota. "I have always been fond of writing poems. Three years ago, when I was posted at Samaypur Badli, I wrote a poem on the police force and that song is still displayed at the police station. When the seniors were looking for a new police song, I pitched 'Abhimaan Mera' and it was selected. The motivation behind it was to establish a connect between the public and the police," he told The Indian Express. For the next year and a half, Samota and other officers improved the lyrics and the video was created. Additional PRO Anil Mittal said, "The video shows the various duties performed by Delhi Police personnel. Focusing on public cooperation and hard work the lyrics of the song imbue vigour



and encouragement with a sense of pride amongst the force." Police said the music was composed by artists Sumit Choudhary and Sonu Thukral and the video edited by media company BKT International. Punjabi singer Kunal Aggrawal is the voice behind the song. While some portions of the video feature actors playing the role of criminals or citizens in need of help, others capture security arrangements on streets and at events as well as the police parade on Republic Day.

Congress implosion continues, now Ajay Maken and Milind Deora spar

Chanchal Singh, New Delhi

Cracks within the Congress party widened after senior Congress leader Milind Deora praised the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government for doubling its revenue and maintaining a surplus over the last five years. Delhi Congress leaders were quick to counter Deora, with former Delhi Congress chief Ajay Maken asking him to "leave the party" rather than putting out "half-baked facts". On Monday morning, Deora, the former Mumbai Congress chief, tweeted, "Sharing a lesser known and welcome fact the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government doubled its revenues to Rs 60,000 crore and maintained a revenue surplus over the last 5 years. Food for thought: Delhi is now one of India's most fiscally prudent governments."

The statement came days after the party failed to win a single seat in Delhi elections held on February 8. The party's overall vote share came down to 4.26% from 9.65% in 2015 polls, and only three candidates managed to not lose their deposit. Maken, who led the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee in 2018 and contested the Lok Sabha polls in 2019, responded: Brother, you want to leave @INcIndia, please do, then propagate half baked facts." He said



the "CAGR (compound annual growth rate) during Congress government grew at 14.87%, more than the 9.90% under AAP." Deora was quick to hit back: "Brother, I would never undermine Sheila Dikshit's stellar performance as Delhi CM. That's your speciality. Instead of advocating an alliance with AAP, if only you had highlighted Sheila ji's achievements, @INcIndia would've been in power today." Alka Lamba, who lost from Chandni Chowk on a Congress ticket, also responded to Deora's comment, saying that the Congress-ruled Karnataka had doubled its budget revenues from 2013 to 2018. Radhika Khera, who contested from Janakpuri

and lost, tweeted: "As a young first-time contestant, I find this extremely disappointing from our senior leaders, who instead of encouraging our own party to do better are busy patting AAP's back." The central Congress leadership also stepped in and asked leaders not to speak out of turn, questioning the AAP government's governance claims. "The contest in Delhi was between Kejriwal's dangal-wali Delhi and Modi's dangonwala Delhi. It was the Congress led by Sheila Dikshit which had transformed Delhi. Since Delhi is the national capital, it is but natural that the tax collection will be some Rs 18,000-19,000 crore," Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala told reporters. "So don't say how much the revenue has increased. Reveal what has been done for people's welfare." On the spat between leaders, he said: "We had (already) unequivocally told all the Delhi state leaders to introspect about their role and responsibilities. Let me go a step further today. Congress leaders in rest of India also commenting on issues outside their states need to look at their own performances, their own responsibilities and their own commitment to the party."

At Shaheen Bagh, protesters say open to mediation but won't vacate site of sit-in

New Delhi Correspondent.

After the Supreme Court deputed senior advocate Sanjay Hedge and advocate Sadhana Ramachandran to talk to the Shaheen Bagh protesters and convince them to shift, those on the ground said that while they were open to speak with the authorities, they have no plans of giving up. The protesters, mostly women, have been holding a sit-in on road 13 A of Shaheen Bagh for over 65 days now.

Petitions have been filed against blocking of the road as a result, which has thrown traffic out of gear in parts of Delhi and Noida. Shahna Alam (60), one of the protesters, said, "This movement against the citizenship law and the government is very important to us. We can't leave and settle at other places. We heard what happened at the court. They might not support us, but we'll continue sitting here. The only issue is road closure, which can be solved. People want us to move, but that will break the momentum of this protest. We can talk to Hedge as he has come here before. He will understand us." Petitioners



have said the protest shouldn't be allowed on public roads. Some of the protesters said they were demoralised by the court's observations and demanded that the government help them. Sitting on a cot, Mehruisa (60) said, "Why don't people understand our issues? If the Centre agrees to remove CAA, we will stop protesting. Rather than solving the issue, they are busy removing us from here." Speaking from the stage, she told protesters they will continue the fight, but urged everyone to maintain law and order. "Maintaining peace has always been our strength. We don't clash with police or anyone. All we want is to stay here and protest."

Open Search
EDITORIAL

After The Prize

Bong Joon Ho's Parasite won big at the 92nd Academy Awards. It bagged four top honours including the Best Picture Oscar. Parasite also merits special acclaim for being the first Non-English film to win in the Best Picture category. Expectedly, Bong Joon Ho is over the moon and considers his victory as a big moment for South Korean cinema. The Oscar has its own set of problems and I am not suggesting that an Oscar recognition is always an indicator of excellence in cinema produced in Hollywood. However, it was heartwarming when several of those who came on stage either to present or accept awards made repeated references to race, gender, equality and justice through film reminding their colleagues about cinema's social role. Like all other awards, the Academy Awards also fall prey to formula and that criticism is valid. Before the big day, film critics and audiences spend many anxious moments making predictions for possible winners. However, I see Parasite's victory in a slightly different way. Bong Joon Ho is a well-regarded film maker from South Korea. His films have regularly travelled the film festival route enabling many of us located in smaller cities like Pune to watch his films. He recently said that once you overcome the barrier of subtitles, you will be introduced to so many amazing films. I couldn't agree more with his statement though I have always believed that cinema is primarily a visual medium. The visuals or images constructed in film become its language. Often the images speak louder than dialogues and I felt the same while watching Parasite. Set in contemporary South Korea, it is the story of class apathy and social disparity. While wealth is controlled and concentrated in the hands of a few, large masses live literally like parasites in their underground homes because they couldn't afford to live anywhere else. There's a scene in the film when the parasite-like residence, because of its low-lying location, is submerged in water owing to incessant rains. The people look helpless and indifferent because they don't know what else to do. I don't think any language or subtitle would aid or prohibit my understanding of this agony though the reach and visibility of such cinema remains a point of concern. Parasite's win is expected to awaken many film viewers (not only Americans) to cinema beyond Hollywood. Owing to its cultural and political clout, Hollywood is often the only foreign cinema that is available in our theatres. Film festivals, film society and archive screenings and some online film viewing platforms are the only other forums to watch non-Hollywood foreign films. For whatever reasons, the Oscars are popular and have a wide reach, and if this popularity can help bring attention to the many cinemas of the world, perhaps that's not such a bad thing. Am I being too ambitious while saying this?

-Vijay Kumar

The new faultline

Pratap Bhanu Mehta

Democracy and capitalism have, for good or for ill, often been closely aligned. But this moment in global politics is characterised by the intensification of the tension between the two. This tension provides the new ideological faultline in many contexts. Democracy, as Karl Polanyi argued, had as one of its functions, the "self-protection" of society against what he called the "satanic mills" of capitalism. This protection had to take place on a number of dimensions. First, there had to be a modicum of social justice, as evidenced in the share between labour and capital, for the system to have any legitimacy. In practice, this social justice was achieved through the welfare state, which by ensuring basic goods at least maintained the fig leaf of equality of opportunity. The second was to ensure that the political process was not entirely beholden to monied interests to the point that it could not claim independent legitimacy. Politics could serve as an independent source of legitimacy, only if it was not entirely subservient to the logic of market interests. Governments may rise or fall with economic performance. But the resilience of democratic authority requires that its fate not be entirely tied to economic outcomes. Third, the self-protection had to ensure that the commodification of social life did not acquire the dimensions where it would lead to a loss of meaning.



that capitalism has seriously eroded the self-protection functions of democracy. In some ways, a potential contest between Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump will turn out to be a more interesting contest because it is the one contest that makes these stakes totally clear: Personality and competence issues apart, the Bloomberg-Trump contest, would be ideologically not a contest at all. Whether the heirs to "Clinton-Obama" centrism are more electorally attractive can be debated. But they are seen to fudge the democracy question. It is true that there is a good deal of the condescension of posterity in how we assess Clinton-Obama-Blair centrism. The condescension underestimates the complexity of electoral politics and the contextual virtue of institutional moderation. But analytically, the critique of that centrism is that it saved capitalism (and some of its plutocracies and associated imperialism) more than it saved democratic enfranchisement; and by not pushing harder on the social protection functions of democracy, it paved the way for disenchantment with it. What may attract the young to Sanders is not equality per se, but restoring the romance of agency; the idea that democracy does not give itself over to a fatality where its protective functions are undermined.

but as a group that has to display unity often against an enemy. In this sense, the ideological function of nationalism is to immobilise any pushback by democracy and civil society.

It is a form of democratic legitimacy that is turned against exactly the self-protection that democracy is supposed to provide: Questions of social justice have to be immobilised; there is high degree of comfort with the autonomy of the political process being subverted by the very thing it must be protected against, namely monied interests; there is a deep impatience with the idea that goods like the environment need protection; there is also a contempt for the institutional forms in which power is exercised. But this is not just a pathology of individual leaders. It has now become an ideological faultline. This is why the question of the internal diversity within parties like the Republican Party has become relatively irrelevant. Moderation made sense when the contest was largely on one dimension a little more or a little less distribution. But once you have grasped the thought that the pushback against a self-undermining capitalism will come from democracy itself, then there is relatively little resistance to standing behind any form of executive power that will contain that democracy. Right-wing parties hang together not just because they have that ultimate form of identity politics nationalism to bind them together. They hang together because their *raison d'être* is now to ensure that society does not pushback against capital. They can have a great deal of success in this endeavour, but only at the risk of making society off balance in ways Polanyi had suggested. With an environmental crisis looming the costs of capital democracy relations being off balance are even higher. So the contest in the US, but elsewhere as well, is less over socialism versus capitalism. It is whether there is too much democracy or too much capitalism, and where the balance between the two lies.

It could be argued that at this point in many countries across the world, the "Left-Right" dimension does not quite capture what is at stake in contemporary politics. What is at stake is not just equality of distribution, but the relationship between democracy and capitalism. If you look at the emerging ideological landscape, the issue is not so much between socialists and capitalists.

open search

View From The Neighbourhood: Praising Erdogan

Islamabad is, understandably, pleased with Turkish Recep Erdogan's visit to Pakistan, which concluded on Friday. Erdogan, who addressed a joint session of Pakistan's parliament, chided India for the clampdown in Kashmir and the alleged human rights violations in the now union territory. Dawn, in its editorial on February 16, seems to echo the government and states pleasure. Noting that Erdogan has "raised his voice for the oppressed people" of Kashmir and that the ruling AKP in Ankara "consistently supported "strong ties" with Pakistan. In addition, the editorial welcomes Erdogan's praise for Pakistan's role in "bringing peace to Afghanistan". All three points mentioned in the editorial Kashmir, Afghanistan and Pakistan's overall role as a responsible nation-state are arenas where New Delhi has consistently sought to undermine Islamabad in the international arena. That a regional power like Turkey has reiterated its support for Pakistan's view is certainly noteworthy. Yet, the editorial raises a deeper question: Is the role of a critical media merely to celebrate when the powers-that-be do? Two caveats: One, Dawn does note, however fleetingly, the authoritarian tendencies displayed by Erdogan. Two, it also cautions against coming down too strongly on Turkey's side in its dispute with Syria as PM Imran Khan has done. The editorial does, however, seem to endorse the role of religion in international relations: "Both Pakistan and Turkey should work to enrich their relationship bilaterally as well as at multilateral forums. Mr Erdogan raised valid concerns about the plight of Palestinians during his speech, and Pakistan's other Muslim friends should not feel threatened by the efforts of Ankara, Islamabad and others to strengthen the ummah." This celebratory note may well be an over-compensation for the fact that countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar have deepened ties with India and the changed status in Kashmir has not irked these countries as many imagined it would. Chaitanya Mishra, writing in The Kathmandu Post, puts forward an interesting idea on how to read the dynamic between India, China and Nepal. The Yam (Nepal), appears to be in a dire situation, caught as it is between the Elephant (India) and the Dragon (China). Mishra then takes a long view of history and argues that the two other periods in the last millennium when the region was in such close engagement could offer lessons for the present. First, during the Maurya and Gupta empires in India and the Han and Ching dynasties in China, both powers saw growth, high agricultural production and trade. This was the period when the Silk Route was established, and a win-win situation developed. "The second dense meeting of the trio took place during CE 1100-1600, just prior to the dominance of Britain and Europe across the globe. The gross domestic products of China and India have been shown to account for as much as 55 percent of the world gross domestic product (GDP) at the close of this period. The Malla period in the Kathmandu Valley, adjacent areas and along the border trade points were well developed. The three cities of the Kathmandu Valley had developed excellent infrastructure and excelled in Buddhist, Hindu and other learning as well as artisanship, crafts and engineering," writes Mishra. For landlocked Nepal, as well as for both India and China, the growth of all will benefit all. For Nepal, of course, conflict and economic deceleration within and between the Elephant and the Dragon can have dire consequences.

Economic Graffiti : The \$5 trillion arithmetic

Kaushik Basu

The Indian government has set itself a big target, namely, that the Indian economy will have an aggregate income or gross domestic product (GDP) of \$5 trillion by 2024-25. One sees this target number everywhere touted in various government documents, including the Economic Survey, referred to in the Budget speech and, in newspaper editorials. What is unfortunate is that there is little effort to take it beyond a slogan. It is not unusual to have politicians trying to galvanise people around slogans and banners. However, when it comes to targets and aims pertaining to the economy, it is important to have the officials and advisers go beyond the headline, to lay out the details and the road-map for the target. For international observers and particularly investors, not to see these creates doubts about professionalism. Minimally, one needs to flesh out what the \$5-trillion target means in terms of more granular indicators, such as annual growth, inflation and so on, so that we can then begin to craft policy. The translation to more basic indicators is easy to do. All one needs is pen, paper, calculator and a little patience.



It is the kind of exercise which school children can do faster than adults. Let us begin. In 2018-19, India's GDP was \$2.75 trillion. India's latest official growth rate happens to be 4.5 per cent. We all hope that this disappointing performance will be short-lived but for the sake of basic arithmetic, let us ask how long it will take to get to the \$5-trillion mark if India continues to grow at this rate. Clearly, in 2019-20, the GDP will rise to \$2.87 trillion, which is \$2.75 trillion plus 4.5 per cent of 2.75. Continue in the same fashion to compute the size of the GDP and it becomes clear that the target of \$5 trillion will be reached not in 2024-25, but in 2032-33. As pointed out above, this is no surprise.

A target is not something that happens by business-as-usual. It is aspirational. We have to get the nation growing faster than the abysmal performance seen in recent times. So what we need to do is the reverse arithmetic. Set the target as \$5 trillion dollars for 2024-25 and compute the implicit growth rate that will get us there. This turns out to be 10.48 per cent or, approximately, 10.5 per cent. This is a hugely ambitious target. As far as I know, the only example of any nation growing for six consecutive years at an average annual rate of over 10.5 per cent was China from 2003 to 2009. China had another comparable sprint from 1991 to 1997 but there were some fluctuations then. Can India get this rate? Right now, with India's economy spiraling downwards, it seems not possible but let us look back at our own history. From 1947 till now, India's economy grew at over 10 per cent only twice in 1988-89 and 2007-8. Of these, the first may be dismissed because the previous year the economy had grown very slowly, by 3.5 per cent. So a large part of the growth in 1988-89 was a catch-up. Further, the late 1980s were a period of fiscal profligacy for which India paid a big price in 1991.

Thus, from our own history, the only example from which we can learn is the remarkable growth in 2007-8, made all the more remarkable by the fact that India had been growing well for several years, starting from 2003. And from 2005, India was actually growing over 9 per cent. This was a period of professional fiscal policy and steady effort at building infrastructure. India's economy was making big news in the international media and investment poured in. India's investment-to-GDP rate climbed to an all-time record of 39 per cent. There are lessons to be learned from this history, but even with that, to grow at 10.5 per cent for six consecutive years at this time is nearly impossible. For one, our investment-to-GDP ratio has crashed to 30 per cent and this takes time to re-build. If we can get back to a growth rate of 7 per cent we will be lucky. There is one aspect of the aggregate economy that I have not talked about as yet inflation. Virtually all serious commentators agree with me that in purely real terms, the \$5-trillion target is unreachable, but maybe we can make it by a combination of real growth and inflation. A popular argument goes like this. One way India can get to the target

is if, alongside say 7 per cent growth, India has an inflation of say 3.5 per cent. Then India's nominal GDP growth rate will be 10.5 per cent. That was the target growth. These commentators would admit that by this combination of real growth and inflation, a part of it would be the chimera of prices, but we would still get to the target figure. I have heard this argument repeatedly and by serious commentators, both among defenders and critics of government policy. But the argument is wrong.

The five trillion target is in dollar terms. Typically, if India has higher inflation than the US, the rupee would depreciate vis-à-vis the dollar to account for that. For the sake of pure arithmetic, assume US inflation is zero, India's inflation is 10 per cent, and India's real growth rate is 0. In that case, in rupee terms, India's economy will grow by 10 per cent. But how much will India's economy grow in dollar terms? The answer is zero. This is because the rupee will typically depreciate by 10 per cent to match the inflation differential, and so the larger GDP of India in rupee terms, when converted to dollars will show no growth. It follows that we cannot get to the \$5-trillion mark by supplementing the growth that falls short of 10.5 per cent with inflation, as many have argued. But this should immediately make it clear that there is another way of getting to the target. This can happen if the US dollar loses value. We can then get to the target of \$5 trillion because that will mean less in real terms. In other words, let us say we get real GDP growth up to 7 per cent per annum. Let us also assume India maintains its target inflation of 4 per cent. The only route then is to persuade Trump to get US inflation up to 7.5 per cent. This will weaken the dollar vis-à-vis the rupee by 3.5 per cent each year. In short, there are two routes: A huge policy initiative to boost real growth or the luck of a dollar depreciation.

FIRST COLUMN

Unloved by Donald Trump, National Public Radio carries on



Afghan, Agency. First, President Donald Trump questioned the existence of National Public Radio in a tweet. Then, as part of the annual budget request released last Monday, he recommended slashing federal funding to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the body that distributes taxpayer dollars to NPR and other public media outlets, to \$0 by 2023. Past budget proposals from Trump have apparently had little influence over the amounts that public media has received from the government. For the 2020 fiscal year, the White House recommended \$30 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Congress, which has traditionally shown support for public media, ultimately decided on \$465 million. Although Congress controls how much federal money goes to public broadcasters, NPR is not taking the potential threat lightly. About 1% of its budget comes from federal money, but Mike Riksen, an NPR vice president, said the funding was "essential" to public radio. "Elimination of federal funding would result in fewer programs, less journalism especially local journalism and, eventually, the loss of public radio stations, particularly in rural and economically distressed communities," Riksen said. "We are fully engaged with policymakers to ensure a complete understanding of federal funding and its importance to our stations and the public media system." The White House budgeted \$30 million for public broadcasting in 2021. For 2022 the last year of federal funding for public media, if the president got his way Trump proposed \$28 million. Despite the lack of support from the administration, Paul G. Haaga Jr, a longtime Republican donor who is the chairman of NPR's board of directors, said he believed public media was not in danger. He recalled conversations that he'd had with Republican lawmakers soon after he joined the board. "They'd leaned over and say, 'Don't tell anybody in the caucus, but I love NPR and couldn't live without it,'" Haaga said. "And I'd lean over and say, 'Don't tell anybody, but everybody in the caucus tells me that, too.'" Nevertheless, NPR has been under scrutiny lately after tensions arose between Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and journalist Mary Louise Kelly. Kelly, an anchor of the NPR news show "All Things Considered," said Pompeo had used foul language during a tense exchange on Jan. 24 after she pressed him on the administration's Ukraine policy as part of a taped interview.

Hospital director dies in China's Wuhan, epicentre of coronavirus outbreak



Beijing, Agency. The head of a leading hospital in China's central city of Wuhan, the epicentre of a coronavirus outbreak, died of the disease on Tuesday, state television said, becoming the second prominent Chinese doctor to have succumbed to the pathogen. Liu Zhiming, the director of Wuhan Wuchang Hospital, died at 10:30 a.m., it said. Earlier this month, millions in China mourned the death of Li Wenliang, a doctor who was previously reprimanded for issuing an early warning about the coronavirus. Tens of thousands of medical workers have been fighting to contain the spread of the coronavirus, believed to have first surfaced in a seafood market in Wuhan, the capital of the central province of Hubei.

They escaped an infected ship, but the flight home was no haven

Tokyo, Agency.

The ground rules were clear. A day before 328 Americans were to be whisked away from a contaminated cruise ship in Japan, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo told passengers that no one infected with the coronavirus would be allowed to board charter flights to the United States. But as the evacuees began filing onto two reconfigured cargo planes early Monday for departures to military bases in California or Texas, some noticed tented areas separated from the rest of the cabin.

Then reality hit: After 12 days stuck on the cruise ship where more and more people were testing positive for the virus, they were now sharing planes with people carrying the same pathogen they were desperate to escape. "I didn't know until we were in the air," said Carol Montgomery, 67, a retired administrative assistant from San Clemente, California. "I saw an area of plastic sheeting and tape." While the planes were aloft, the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services said in a joint statement that the results for 14 passengers who had been tested two or three days earlier had come back positive just as they were heading to the airport in buses. U.S. officials, it turned out, had started bringing the passengers home without actually knowing their test results. But because the evacuation had already begun by the time Japanese officials relayed those results, officials decided to let the infected evacuees, who were not yet exhibiting



symptoms, board the planes and sit in the back, separated from other passengers by plastic sheets about 10-feet-tall. The reversal was the latest chaotic turn in a two-week quarantine of the ship that has become an epidemiological nightmare. Even as the Americans were flying home and countries like Australia, Canada and South Korea were preparing to evacuate their own citizens, the Japanese Health Ministry announced on Monday that 99 more cases had been confirmed on the cruise ship, bringing the total to 454. Among them was the third Japanese public health official to contract the virus while tending to passengers and crew members aboard the ship, the Diamond

Princess. The unstinting rise in infections and the scramble to bring American passengers home, even after some were discovered to be infected has led to tough questions, and some withering criticism, about the handling of the outbreak aboard the ship, home to the largest number of coronavirus cases outside China. "The quarantine on the ship ended up being an unprecedented failure," said Eiji Kusumi, a doctor specializing in infectious diseases at Navitas Clinic in Tokyo. "We should learn from this lesson that a quarantine on a ship is impossible, and we should not repeat this in the future." Countries around the world are now struggling to figure out what to do

with cruise ships during the coronavirus outbreak. Another ship, the Westerdam, was turned away from port after port in Asia until it was welcomed in Cambodia. The cruise line insisted that no one was ill and passengers started heading home, yet one of them, an American woman, later tested positive for the virus, worrying experts that the epidemic will get only worse. After the long quarantine in Japan, U.S. authorities had strongly encouraged American passengers on the Diamond Princess to accept the offer of a flight out. Getting them off the ship took days of planning and hours of screening, checking passports and loading passengers onto buses for the 40-minute bus ride from the port of Yokohama to Haneda Airport in Tokyo. The goal was to ensure that passengers who were symptomatic remain in Japan, U.S. officials said. Medical experts examined American passengers on the ship and determined that at least 328 of them could be evacuated. Meanwhile, Japanese medical experts had done testing of the passengers, but did not have all the results ready. In the end, 61 Americans remain on board, officials said. Asked why U.S. officials began evacuating passengers without knowing their test results, Dr. William Walters, managing director of operational medicine at the State Department, told reporters on Monday that it was "unpredictable" when the results would come back. The Americans were put on about 15 buses to the airport.

High turnout in Iran election will display unity against 'enemies': Iran's Khamenei

Dubai, Agency.

A high turnout in a parliamentary election will display unity in Iran against "enemies", the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei tweeted on Tuesday, days before the vote seen as a referendum on the clerical establishment's popularity. "America will fail to create divisions between the authorities and Iranians ... a high turnout will display our unity against the enemies," Khamenei tweeted.

The Guardian Council, a hardline vetting body, has rejected around 6,850 moderate or conservative hopefuls in favour of hardliners from among the 14,000 applicants seeking to contest the Feb. 21 vote. About a third of lawmakers have also been barred from standing again. Khamenei, the final authority in Iran's complex system of clerical rule and limited democracy, backed the Guardian Council, saying the next parliament was no place for those scared of speaking out against their enemies. "The election will neutralise American's ill intentions ... the vote is



the Islamic Republic's prestige," state TV reported Khamenei as saying. Tensions have been high between Iran and the United States since 2018, when President Donald Trump exited a 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers and imposed sanctions that have hit the country's economy hard.

In retaliation, Iran has gradually rolled back its commitments under the deal. Tehran says its steps are reversible if European parties to the agreement fulfil their promises of shielding Iran's economy from U.S. penalties. "We need a group parliament to neutralise plots of our enemies," said Khamenei.

Sex abuse claims drive Boy Scouts of America to bankruptcy

Kabul, Agency.

The Boy Scouts of America sought bankruptcy protection to cope with a rising tide of claims tied to sexual abuse of children in its ranks. The group filed in Delaware early Tuesday under Chapter 11 of the U.S. bankruptcy code, which allows the organization to keep operating while it works out a plan to pay its debts and design a recovery plan. Court papers listed liabilities of up to \$1 billion and assets as much as \$10 billion. The Irving, Texas-based group said it's setting up a trust fund to compensate victims. "The BSA cares deeply about all victims of abuse and sincerely apologizes to anyone who was harmed during their time in Scouting," Roger Mosby, chief executive officer, said in a statement. "While we know nothing can undo the tragic abuse that victims suffered, we believe the Chapter 11 process - with the proposed Trust structure - will provide equitable compensation to all victims while maintaining the BSA's important mission." The Boy Scouts are the largest non-profit group to go bankrupt after allegations that they turned a blind eye to widespread sexual abuse of children in their care. USA Gymnastics and more than 20 dioceses of the Catholic Church sought court protection after facing similar claims. The national Scout organization could seek to adopt tactics used by corporations and the church to shield its 261 local councils from claims that, according to court documents, could reach about 1,700 based on what's known so far. The group said in its statement that the local councils haven't filed for bankruptcy. The Wall Street Journal previously estimated that local councils hold about \$3.3 billion in assets, citing tax filings for almost 400 nonprofits registered under the Boy Scouts' umbrella with the Internal Revenue



Coronavirus could be knockout blow for Hong Kong's once-thriving tourism, retail sectors



Hong Kong, Agency. Tom Bennell's olive oil distribution business took a heavy beating during months of pro-democracy protests that emptied Hong Kong hotels and restaurants, his major customers. Now he fears a knockout blow as the city fights the coronavirus. The two-decade-old Olives and Oils supplies more than 20 five-star hotels, as well as clubs, delis and restaurants in Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, where retail and tourism act like balance wheels for an economy running on trade and finance. The coronavirus, which has killed more than 1,700 people across the border in mainland China and one of 60 patients in Hong Kong, has reduced tourist arrivals to a trickle and kept residents away from shops at a time when the city is mired in its first recession in a decade. Business is so bad that Bennell has pulled his two teenage sons out of international school to cut costs. If things don't turn around, he might be forced to leave the city that has been home since 1993. "This is the straw that's going to break the camel's back. It's horrific," said the 46-year-old. "This is the worst I've ever seen it. It's unbelievable."

Turkey ramps up Gulen crackdown with nearly 700 arrests

Istanbul, Agency.

Turkish prosecutors on Tuesday ordered the arrest of nearly 700 people, including military and justice ministry personnel, state media said, intensifying moves against a network accused of orchestrating a 2016 coup attempt. Authorities have carried out a sustained crackdown on alleged followers of US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen since the failed bid in July 2016, in which about 250 people were killed. Police still routinely carry out raids targeting suspects.

The latest operations marked an escalation by police against alleged supporters of Gulen, a one-time ally of President Tayyip Erdogan who subsequently became his arch foe. Gulen, who has lived in self-imposed exile in Pennsylvania since 1999, has denied any involvement in the attempted coup. In the latest moves, prosecutors ordered the arrest of



157 people, including 101 serving officers, in an investigation of the Turkish Armed Forces, state-owned Anadolu news agency said. About 100 people have so far been detained in this operation, the private Demirören news agency reported. In the capital Ankara, 71 people were

to be detained in an investigation targeting alleged Gulen supporters in the justice ministry, Anadolu said. It subsequently reported that prosecutors had issued arrest warrants for another 467 suspects across the country over links to Gulen as part of an investigation into corruption in police examinations held in 2009. Erdogan has for years accused Gulen's supporters of establishing a "parallel state" by infiltrating the police, judiciary and other state institutions. Since the coup attempt, about 80,000 people have been jailed pending trial and some 150,000 civil servants, military personnel and others sacked or suspended from their jobs. Turkey's Western allies including the European Union as well as rights groups have criticised the scale of the crackdown, while Ankara has defended the measures as a necessary response to the security threat.

China virus outbreak threatens global drug supplies: European business group

Beijing, Agency.

The world's pharmacies may face a shortage of antibiotics and other drugs if supply problems from China's coronavirus outbreak cannot soon be resolved, the head of a European business group in China warned on Tuesday. EU Chamber of Commerce President Joerg Wuttke added that Beijing was making supply chain problems worse with a mandatory quarantine of arrivals from abroad as it battles the virus, which has killed more than 1,800 Chinese mainly in the central province of Hubei.

Chinese media reported on Friday that the capital is requiring a 14-day quarantine for all arrivals, which Wuttke said would make it difficult to fly in technical experts to help if facilities are down. Calling the measure unreasonable and against WHO guidelines, he told a roundtable in Beijing it would "cause more harm to



business than many of the other things". Wuttke also highlighted the difficulties faced by the auto industry due to disruption of deliveries of supplies in China, and surging inventories. Companies are also running out of packaging material and face challenges with regulatory uncertainties, he said. "The magnitude of the challenges is just really huge," he said. He added that the disruption from the coronavirus epidemic had driven home the need to diversify away from China. "People have now woken up to the fact that you must have a backup plan."

Cheteshwar Pujara keen to set record straight in New Zealand

Hamilton, Agency.

A month or so before the New Zealand tour, Cheteshwar Pujara randomly revisited the scorecards of his previous trip to the country. Not because he was nerdy or nostalgic, or as part of an elaborate pre-tour preparation, but just to get a hang of the impending challenge. "Just to trigger my memory, just to get into the mood. Not particularly how I was dismissed, but for a general recollection of the match," Pujara told The Indian Express, before leaving for New Zealand. Browsing the scorecards, the two Tests flickered through his mind.

Sitting at his home in Rajkot, he could see right in front of his eyes how he got out in the each of the four innings. First Test, first innings in Auckland: "Loose shot, I just pushed at a wide ball," he says. Second innings: "I was batting well, faced 70-80 balls and then got a good ball. Could have played it better." Second Test, first innings in Wellington: "Got a start, then was lbw to an in-swing." Second innings: "I was caught down the leg-side off a bouncer." Just 60 runs off four innings, it's where for the first time in his Test career criticism began to swirl around him. It was his first supposed failure at this level too. On his previous overseas trip, to South Africa, he had crunched a magnificent second-innings hundred in Johannesburg and was living up to the early hype and reputation. At that juncture of his career, he averaged around 60. "I have always felt that I could



have done better in that series," Pujara says. But the next year, after disappointing tours to Australia and England, his career was at a crossroads. From his technique to scoring rate, every aspect of his batting was over-criticised. He didn't brood over his failures he had the support system too but an uneasy angst clutched him. From it stemmed realisation. "Until that point, I thought Test runs were Test runs. Wherever you score those runs, it's the same. I was not obsessed with things like scoring a lot of runs overseas. I wanted to score everywhere, be it in India or overseas. The satisfaction always came not from the amount

of runs I scored, but how it would benefit the team. But now I realised how difficult it is to score runs abroad, from an individual and team perspective. So I needed to work on my game, see what's going on and correct the mistakes," he says. He was equally baffled by the phrase 'tough conditions'. "It's another misconception that only conditions in Australia, New Zealand, England and South Africa are difficult. True, we are more accustomed to subcontinental conditions, but some of my innings at home like the 90 in Bangalore against Australia, or the hundred I got in Sri Lanka were as satisfying as some of my hundreds in Australia," he

observes. The latter innings of 145 not out to which he keeps coming back came on an SSC green-top with Dhammika Prasad producing insane movement. Moreover, Pujara was making a comeback and opening the innings. The 92 in Bangalore against Australia was on a tacky surface, India were a Test in deficit and Australia's spin pair of Nathan Lyon and Steve O'Keefe was looking to scythe through the hosts' batting line-up. Those were probably series-winning efforts too. In that time, he also realised that preconceived notions could turn counter-productive. "If you are touring a country for the first time, you are bound to have certain preconceptions, that the pitches would behave this way or that way, that I will have to play in a particular manner. Sometimes, you watch videos of old games or talk to players who have played there. And this gets into your mind. These are all useful, but in the end, you have to assess your own game and find the best method that suits you. To go with an open but aware mind," he says. An open but aware mind it's an incredibly difficult space to be in. To keep changing your game on the move, but not overtly compromising with your technical game. Batting is a lot about instincts and second-guessing, taking hints from bowlers and out-thinking them, but it's also about removing presuppositions. It's a gamble but at the same time a study. So Pujara, like most Indian batsmen, reached New Zealand prepared for devilishly swinging surfaces. That's what old

cricketers and older scorecards might have told him. But he realised that bounce could be another antagonist. "As some of the pitches swing a lot, you discount the bounce. But most pitches have good bounce and they have bowlers who can make use of the bounce. So batsmen should be prepared for seam, swing and bounce. But after a point, it becomes nice to bat on. I remember Virat (Kohli) and Shikhar (Dhawan) scored hundreds (in 2014). A good ball can come at any time, but that's true everywhere, even in the subcontinent. Maybe, it comes often. As a batsman, you have to be prepared for it whenever or wherever you're playing," he says. More than any amount of homework or practice sessions, Pujara comprehended the significance of warm-up games. "They might field average bowlers, they might give surfaces dissimilar to the ones you get in the Test match, but the more time you spent in a country, the more acclimatised to the conditions you get. After all, the nature of the pitches can't be too different, and at this level you know the quality of bowlers. Most of them you have played before, you've watched videos and there's no unfamiliarity," he observes. But the wind makes horizontal bat shots difficult.

So whenever there's an opportunity, he tunes up for a series with as many warm-up games as possible, or county games like he did before the trip to England two years ago. He had a terrible time in the build-up to the series, but ended up enjoying a revival with a terrific

FIRST COLUMN

West Indies fast bowler Oshane Thomas admitted to hospital after car accident



New Delhi, Agency. West Indies fast bowler Oshane Thomas was involved in a car crash on Highway 2000, Jamaica on Sunday night. Thomas' car was overturned during the car collision. As per reports, the 23-year-old was "conscious and responsive" on the way to the hospital. After the unfortunate accident, the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA) expressed best wishes to the player in a press release on its website. "WIPA's executive and staff would like to extend our sympathies to Oshane. We wish for him a speedy and full recovery." Former West Indies fast bowler Tino Best hoped for Thomas' speedy recovery in a tweet: "The Caribbean youngster's last international appearance was against Ireland in an ODI on January 12, 2020. The Jamaican speedster was picked by Rajasthan Royals (RR) in Indian Premier League (IPL) 13 auctions for his base price of Rs 50 lakh. He took five wickets in four games in the previous season.

'Faf's record speaks for itself': A glance at Faf du Plessis' captaincy report card

New Delhi, Agency. "Faf du Plessis' record as player and captain speaks for itself," said Cricket South Africa's acting CEO, Dr Jacques Faul, while announcing the former's retirement on Monday. "He has maintained the high standards he set for himself," Faul remarked. du Plessis stepped down as South Africa's Test and T20I captain but the cricketer maintained that he wants to continue his services for the Proteas both as a batsman and a senior member. du Plessis leaves behind a lasting impact as a skipper leading the Proteas to greater heights in the cricketing world. Here are few of his interesting stats as a captain of the rainbow nation. Du Plessis was appointed as South Africa's full-time T20I captain in February 2013 and it was under his leadership the Proteas went to book the last-four spot in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2014. Three years later in 2016, he took the helm in the longer format of the game and in the following year he was also named as the ODI captain.

Sachin Tendulkar's inspiring speech after winning Laureus Sporting Moment award

New Delhi, Agency.

India's legendary cricketer Sachin Tendulkar received the award for Laureus best sporting moment in last 20 years. Former Australian skipper Steve Waugh handed the trophy to Tendulkar after Tennis legend Boris Becker announced the winner on Monday in Berlin. After winning the World Cup 2011, Tendulkar was lifted on shoulders by teammates Virat Kohli, Yusuf Pathan, Suresh Raina, Harbhajan Singh and others as the team took a lap of honour at Wankhede Stadium after beating Sri Lanka by six wickets. "It's incredible. The feeling of winning the world cup was beyond what words can express. How many times you get an event happening where there are no mixed opinions. Very rarely the entire country celebrates," Tendulkar said after receiving the trophy. "And this is a reminder of how powerful a sport is and what magic it does to our lives. Even now when I watch that it has stayed with me." The German tennis legend asked Tendulkar to share his emotions after winning the coveted World Cup Trophy. "My journey started in 1983 when I was 10 years old. India had won the World Cup. I did not understand the significance of it because eventually we were celebrating, I also joined the party



Kyle Jamieson credits shift to Auckland for making him better cricketer

Wellington, Agency.

Towering New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson has revealed that moving from Canterbury to Auckland helped him get rid of a detrimental aggressive streak and become a cricketer worthy of national duty. The 6'8" tall pacer, who made his ODI debut against India in the recent series, was handed a place in the Test squad for the upcoming two-match rubber beginning at Basin Reserves here on February 21. "I'm a pretty fiery character on the field. On the field I'm pretty aggressive.

I think it came out in ways I necessarily didn't like. I would sort of do it and then post-game be like, 'What did I do that for?' he was quoted as saying by 'stuff.co.nz'. Jamieson shifted to Auckland, where he was born, prior to this season after making his T20 debut for Canterbury in 2016 in the Super Smash. He said there was a lot of negativity around him in Canterbury, where he grew up, and it affected his behaviour. "There was a bit of negativity surrounding myself and the environment and that was coming out in my behaviour on the



field," he said. The 25-year-old, who was called as an injury cover for the Australia series late last year, said returning to Auckland made a massive difference to his game. "I'm really enjoying my cricket, which is probably something I couldn't say a couple of years ago," said Jamieson, who scored 55 and took 2 for 42 on debut during the second ODI against India at Eden Park. "I was going through a bit of stuff

off the field. Just the chance to come in with this group and turn up and learn everyday try and better myself as a cricketer was something that was too hard to turn down, so look, it's been massive for my game. "...it was just a shift that I needed to make. Most importantly, I needed to be happy and I needed to enjoy my cricket. Wherever that may take me, then it will," he added.

Trent Boult challenges Virat Kohli ahead of Wellington Test

New Delhi, Agency.

New Zealand's left-arm fast bowler Trent Boult is raring to get on the field after recovering from a fractured hand. Boult aims to take on Virat Kohli head-on in the first Test in Wellington starting February 21. Boult's last international appearance was against Australia in the Boxing Day Test last year. The injury forced the 30-year-old to miss the limited-overs series against Kohli's side. "That's personally why I play the game, to get guys like that (Kohli) out and test myself against them, so I can't wait to get stuck in. But he's an exceptional player. Everyone knows how great he is," Boult said ahead of the red-ball fixture.

Boult is looking to use the pacer-friendly conditions at Basin Reserve, Wellington in his first international game of the year. "I'm preparing for a solid wicket. It generally is very good here and goes the full distance (five days). I do enjoy playing here, the history that's involved, and it's going to be an exciting week building up. I can't wait to get out there," the southpaw said. Kohli scored 612 runs from 11 innings last year at an average of 68 including two centuries and two half-centuries. The 31-year-old has had success batting on New Zealand wickets in the longest format of the game. The current No.1 Test batsman has scored 735 runs from 13 innings including two centuries and three half-centuries at an average of 66.81. The Rotorua-born cricketer geared up for the Test series with a



club game where he bowled eight overs. "I think it is what it is. I have just got to put the last six or so weeks behind me and just back myself to get out there and do my thing. I was pushing in off the long run. I think a couple of the clubbies from Taupo really enjoyed that. It was a good afternoon," Boult also talked about how he utilised the time off from cricket and spent time with his new-born child. "Having some time away from the game and having my second son a couple of weeks ago came at quite a good time," he said.

Poonam Yadav's three wickets help India edge out West Indies in World Cup warm-up

Brisbane, Agency.

Spinner Poonam Yadav claimed three wickets as India geared up for the ICC women's T20 World Cup with a thrilling two-run win over the West Indies in a low-scoring warm-up match here on Tuesday. Electing to bat, India posted a lowly 107 for eight in their stipulated 20 overs before returning to restrict West Indies to 105 for seven. Chasing 108 to win, West Indies were comfortably placed at 57 for one in 13 overs when Deepti Sharma struck, cleaning up opener Lee-Ann Kirby (42) to trigger a collapse. Soon skipper Stafanie Taylor (16), Chedean Nation (0) and Deandra Dottin (11) were back in the hut as West Indies slipped to 67 for five in the 17th over. Hayley Matthews (25) and Chinelle Henry (17) blasted three fours and a six in the 19th over to leave them with 11 to get off the last six balls. Henry blasted Poonam for a four but the Indian dismissed Matthews in the fourth ball. West Indies needed three runs off the last ball but Henry was caught by Veda Krishnamurthy. Earlier, India's top-three failed to fire as they were reduced to 17 for three in 3.1 overs. Opener Smriti Mandhana (4) lasted just six balls, while Jemimah Rodrigues (0) failed to open her account. Young Shafali Verma blasted a couple of fours before being caught by Britney Cooper off Shamilla Connell (2/20). Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (11), too, didn't stay long, while Krishnamurthy was cleaned up by Afy Fletcher (1/26), as India slumped to 52 for five in 11.2 overs. Deepti Sharma made a 32-ball 21 before becoming a victim of Anisa Mohammed (2/16), while Pooja Vastrakar (13) was removed by Aaliyah Alleyne (1/9). Stafanie Taylor then got rid of Taniya Bhatia for 10. Shikha Pandey finally smashed a 16-ball 24 to give some respectability to the total.



Won't rule out playing 2023 World Cup: Ross Taylor

Wellington, Agency.

Veteran New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor doesn't rule out playing the 2023 ODI World Cup but says his form, fitness and motivation level at the end of next year will decide whether he actually manages a place in the squad. The 35-year-old will become the first cricketer in the world to complete 100 games across three international formats when he steps out for the first Test against India at Basin Reserve on February 21. "I haven't ruled it (2023 World Cup) out but I still think it's a long way away.

First and foremost I want to get to next year the Twenty20 World Cup and then the home summer and then I'll have a good idea on how I'm placed at the end of next summer," Taylor was quoted as saying by 'stuff.co.nz'. "Whether there is still a drive, whether I'm good enough, whether I'm fit



enough, and whether I deserve my spot in the side. If I can tick all those, then definitely 2023 is an option." The big-hitting batsman said despite his desire to continue, he won't out himself under too much pressure. "You

always want to do well and first and foremost the game is more important. At the same time you can put extra pressure on yourself. You've just got to go out and enjoy it and take it as another game. Hopefully, I can contribute in any way I can," he said. Taylor will be joining Stephen Fleming, Daniel Vettori, and Brendon McCullum in the New Zealand Test 100-club and he credited his mentor the late Martin Crowe for motivating him. "He (Crowe) saw something in me that I never did. I was pretty happy to play one Test; to play 100 Tests is pretty special," he said. "There's still a game to play and contribute to, but at the same time you've got to acknowledge the achievement and the fact a lot of people helped you out along the way."

Kings XI Punjab set to acquire St Lucia franchise of CPL

New Delhi, Agency.

Kings XI Punjab is set to acquire the St Lucia franchise of the Caribbean Premier League, becoming the second IPL team to own a CPL outfit after Kolkata Knight Riders. "We are about to sign an agreement to be part of CPL. We are getting the St Lucia franchise.

The structure and name of the company will only be communicated after we get BCCI's approval," KXIP co-owner Ness Wadia told PTI on Monday. "Mohit Burman (co-owner) is in the Caribbean at the moment to sign the agreement. We want to especially thank the Prime Minister of St Lucia Allan Chastanet and Tourism Minister Dominic Fedde for making this possible. We have been pursuing this for almost nine months," added Wadia. St Lucia Zouks is one of the six teams competing in the CPL. The team is led by former West Indies captain Darren Sammy. Another Indian Premier League franchise



Kolkata Knight Riders had acquired Trinbago Knight Riders in 2015. It is the most successful CPL franchise till date, having won three titles. St Lucia's best performance till date came in 2016 when it finished fourth. The Caribbean Premier League, which began in 2013, is among the established T20 leagues in the world. Pete Russell, Chief Operating Officer of the Hero CPL, said: "We are hugely excited to welcome this ownership team to the CPL family and we are looking forward to seeing where they take the Zouks during the upcoming season and beyond.

FIRST COLUMN

APPLE WILL LAUNCH IPHONE SE 2 ON 31 MARCH, WILL GO ON SALE ON 3 APRIL



New Delhi, Agency. Apple is reportedly hosting an event on 31 March, where the company is expected to launch the much-awaited iPhone SE 2, which is rumoured to be dubbed as iPhone 9 at the time of launch. According to a report by German site iPhone-ticker.de, Apple is planning to hold a media event by March-end and 31 March is the most likely date. While there is no confirmation about the event or the launch from Apple, the March launch does sound plausible, considering that's when the original iPhone SE was launched. Further, the report also claims that after launch on 31 March, the iPhone SE 2 aka iPhone 9 will hit the markets by 3 April. If that's true, we still don't know if that sale date is applicable only for the US market or for the global market. From what we know so far, the affordable iPhone is likely to come with a price tag of \$399, which is roughly around Rs 29,000. The iPhone SE-successor is also expected to feature a 4.7-inch LCD display and its design might resemble the iPhone 8's. Some reports also suggest that it might be powered by A13 Bionic chipset and will offer 3 GB RAM. It is also possible that it might sport a Touch ID home button. Besides the affordable iPhone, in the next few months, Apple is also expected to launch the new iPad Pro, which will reportedly feature a triple-lens rear camera setup that supports 3D sensing for AR. A new MacBook Pro or MacBook Air or both are also speculated to launch soon.

Red Bull sold one can for almost every person on earth last year



New Delhi, Agency. Red Bull sales rose so much last year that the Austrian energy drink maker could have supplied almost every person on earth with a can of its namesake beverage. Sales soared to a record 7.5 billion cans worldwide last year, propelled by growth in emerging markets like Brazil, India and Africa, said the company, which has crafted its brand around extreme sports sponsorships. The world's population reached 7.7 billion people. Revenue increased 9.5% to 6.1 billion euros (\$6.6 billion). Profit levels weren't disclosed but the website said they too rose to a record, meaning Red Bull's billionaire owners could be set for another windfall later this year. The company distributed more than half a billion euros of profit to shareholders in 2019. Thai entrepreneur and occasional duck farmer Chaleo Yoovidhya teamed up with Austrian marketing whiz Dietrich Mateschitz in 1987 after Mateschitz discovered the energy drink sold by Chaleo's firm while looking to counteract jet lag on a business trip. Closely-held Red Bull is owned by Mateschitz and Yoovidhya's family, and both became billionaires thanks to the tonic they invented. Mateschitz is Austria's richest person with \$12.4 billion of wealth, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Its latest results mean the Fuschl, Austria-based company sold on average more than 20 million cans of the namesake soda every day of 2019. That's about 850,000 cans every hour. Growth was fastest in India, with sales up 37%, Brazil (up 30%) and Africa (up 25%).

If Vodafone Idea disconnects, India picks up the bill

New Delhi, Agency.

India faces a multi-billion-dollar hit to its economy and a tarnished reputation as a place for multinationals to invest unless it can keep Vodafone Idea in business. Vodafone Idea, a joint venture between Britain's Vodafone Group Plc and India's Idea Cellular, is the most vulnerable of the mobile carriers ordered on Friday to immediately pay billions in unpaid government dues and interest following a Supreme Court ruling. It has said it cannot immediately pay the \$3.9 billion it owes and its ability to survive was contingent on the government agreeing a flexible payment schedule. With 13,000 direct employees and loans from banks of about \$3.8 billion, Vodafone Idea's potential exit would send shockwaves through India's economy, which is already growing at its slowest pace in 11 years.

"A default of such a large scale could increase India's fiscal deficit by about 40 basis points," Aliasgar Shakir, a research analyst at Motilal Oswal, said. A 40 basis point increase in fiscal deficit roughly translates to a revenue loss of about Rs 1 lakh crore (\$14.01 billion) for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, when it is facing the country's first fall in direct taxes in decades. Another issue is that Vodafone Idea's departure would essentially leave a duopoly between Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, which is backed by Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani. That



could dampen interest in an auction of 5G airwaves expected before the end of March. A former executive at Vodafone Idea, who asked not to be identified, said the risk of deterring investment was high. "They have been beaten down by the environment here," the executive said. "(We're sending investors) a very negative signal - it says the trust factor between the government and

the industry doesn't exist." No easy answers. The risks are not lost on Delhi, but finding a solution is fraught. Two official sources said the government was seeking to come up with a plan that did not violate the court's order. "(The government) is concerned with what is happening in the sector and its impact on the investment climate," a top Finance Ministry official said, asking to remain anonymous.

A separate source said the government was seeking to structure a relief plan before the next court hearing on March 17, but declined to provide details. The telecoms ministry has been speaking with the prime minister's office to resolve the issue, the official added. Lawyers in the telecoms sector said the government could urge the court to allow companies to pay over a longer time frame. India's telecoms ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Modi has faced criticism for failing to create jobs in a country where about one million job seekers enter the market every month. Even some in the business sector, which broadly cheered him to power, have turned on him. State-run banks are already burdened with some \$140 billion in stressed debt. However necessary, some analysts are sceptical the government can pull together a relief plan in time. The telcos still have some options, including filing a curative petition to the Supreme Court, although analysts see little chance of success.

"The acceptance of a curative petition itself is an onerous task - and with the Supreme Court's tough stance now, the merits of opting for this route may have diminished," Morgan Stanley said in a note to clients. In the meantime, Vodafone Idea has said it will pay Rs 3,500 crore (\$490 million) in dues to the government by February 21. Rival Bharti Airtel paid \$1.40 billion (Rs 10,000 crore) on Monday, less than a third of the total it owes.

BS6 Hero Glamour FI Launched From Rs 64,990

New Delhi, Agency.

Hero MotoCorp has launched the BS6-compliant version of its most popular 125 cc commuter bike, the Glamour. Just like the outgoing model, the BS6 Glamour is also being offered in two

variants. The base drum brake variant is priced at Rs 68,900, while the disc brake variant now costs Rs 72,400 (both prices, ex-showroom). The Glamour continues to draw power from a 124.7 cc air-cooled, 4-stroke single cylinder, OHC motor. However, the engine now comes with XSens programmed fuel-injection technology, and generates 10.73 hp of maximum power at 7,500 rpm, and 10.6 Nm peak torque at 6,000 rpm. The engine continues to be mated to a 5-speed gearbox. The motorcycle comes with an 180 mm ground clearance, which is 20% more than its BS4-compliant predecessor. The updated Glamour also gets 14% better front and 10% rear suspension travel respectively, which helps the ride deal with road obstacles with ease, and promise performance an improvement.



Mukesh Ambani's Big Revamp Of TV Business Before Potential Stake Sale

New Delhi, Agency.

Reliance Industries Ltd., controlled by Indian billionaire Mukesh Ambani, is merging its media and distribution businesses spread across multiple entities into Network18 Media & Investments Ltd. to help simplify the structure of the assets. The broadcasting business, TV18 Broadcast Ltd., will be housed in Network18, while the cable and internet services will be folded under two separate wholly owned units of Network18, Reliance Industries said in a statement late Monday. Under the recast, the share exchange ratio would be: 92 shares of Network18 for every 100 shares of TV18. 78 shares of Network18 for every 100 shares of Hathway Cable & Datacom Ltd. 191 shares of Network18 for every 100 shares of Den Networks Ltd. Reliance Industries' holding in Network18 will be cut to about 64 per cent from 75 per cent as a result of the recast, the Mumbai-based company said in the statement.

The recast may be the first step by Asia's richest man toward bringing on board strategic investors in a business that is being reshaped by streaming giants worldwide. Bloomberg News reported in November that Sony Corp. is conducting due diligence of Network18 as part of talks to acquire a stake, though the discussions are preliminary. An investor such as Sony can bring in international content and bolster the offerings of



Network18 in a market where competition is heating up for paying viewers. Streaming titans like Netflix Inc. and Amazon.com Inc. have been making inroads in India, where more than half a billion smartphone users are consuming content using data bandwidth made cheaper by Mr Ambani's wireless carrier, Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. The recast will "simplify the corporate structure of the group by reducing the number of listed entities," according to the statement from Reliance Industries. "An integrated media play shall further increase the breadth as well as the depth of the group's consumer touchpoints, and allow for retaining a larger share of the consumer's spend on content."

Gold price today: Yellow metal rises on virus overhang, may retest 41,000

New Delhi, Agency.

India's gold prices for April delivery rallied on February 18, tracking gains in the international spot prices that hit a two-week high as global equities retreated after Apple Inc flagged a revenue miss amid the coronavirus outbreak, sobering investor optimism. Spot gold rose around \$1,586.19 per ounce. Earlier in the session, bullion prices touched their highest since February 3 at \$1,586.90, said a Reuters report. The death toll from the coronavirus outbreak in mainland China rose to 1,868, as of February 17, up by 98 from the previous day, it said. The April gold contracts rose 0.54 percent, or Rs 220, to Rs 40,976 per 10 gram on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) at 0920 hours. Experts are of the view that investors could use the dips to buy into gold as the momentum could take the precious metal to retest Rs 41,000. International gold held on to the support of \$1,574 and for silver, it stayed above \$17.70 per troy ounce. At MCX, gold slipped below Rs 40,800 but silver held 46,000 levels. "We expect both the precious metals to remain volatile and lower level



buying is expected around \$1,574 and \$17.55 per troy ounce levels," Manoj Jain, Director, India Nivesh Commodities, told Moneycontrol. "At MCX, buying is expected in gold around 40,500 and again it could test 40,850-41,000 levels, 40330 act as a major support for gold.

Even in silver, buying expected around 45,850 levels, it could test 46,200-46,500 levels, 45,500 act as major support for silver," he said. Expert: Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst, Reliance Commodities MCX Gold April contract has taken a resistance of Upper

Band of Triangle formation which suggests some downside momentum. This has made bearish candlestick on the daily chart, which suggests sideways to negative action can continue. LBMA gold spot has been intact in the range of \$1,570 and \$1,593 and a fresh breakout is awaited.

Hareesh V, Head of Commodity at Geojit Financial Services. Gold may edge higher further on hints that the coronavirus outbreak in China has negatively impacted global businesses and the economy. Risk averse investors continue to invest in gold due to its safe haven appeal. Meanwhile, gains may be limited owing to a strong US dollar and moderate physical market activities. Technical outlook: As long as prices stay above \$1560 expect upticks to continue towards \$1592 initially followed by \$1610. Weakness is expected only on a close below \$1545. Disclaimer: The views and investment tips expressed by investment experts on Moneycontrol.com are their own and not those of the website or its management. Moneycontrol.com advises users to check with certified experts before taking any investment decisions.

Sensex ends off day's low but Nifty still below 12,000; 5

New Delhi, Agency.

The market continued to correct for the fourth day in a row on February 18 as the focus shifts from domestic events such as the Budget and December earnings season to global cues along with the economic slowdown. The benchmark indices recouped more than half of losses in last couple of hours of trade and ended off day's low. The BSE Sensex was down 161.31 points, at 40,894.38, while the Nifty slipped below the key psychological 12,000-mark, down 53.30 points at 11,992.50.



which has left around 1,900 people dead in the world's second largest economy. The Chinese government on February 17 said there were 72,436 people infected by the virus that is now known as Covid-19. It is almost a month since China officially announced the outbreak that the infections have been rising. The outbreak has had a widespread impact on the global economy as China is the biggest consumer and supplier of several commodities, including chemicals, metals, hardware etc. Air travel and tourism have also been hit with several airlines and countries suspending flights to and from China. Investors are worried about the health of the Chinese as well as the world economy, as a lot of companies and manufacturing units continue to be shut in China since last month. As China is the world's

manufacturing hub, businesses across the world are feeling the pinch of the virus that causes respiratory distress. Some global brokerage houses have started lowering their growth forecast for China and other Asian economies. HSBC, which does the maximum business in Asia, said it expects to feel the impact of the coronavirus outbreak in the first quarter and has lowered growth expectations in China for 2020, CNBC reported. Asian markets traded lower with Japan's Nikkei, Hong Kong's Hang Seng and South Korea's KOSPI falling 1.4-1.5 percent, while China's Shanghai Composite closed flat. The earnings also caused selling pressure as Apple issued revenue warning, saying it was unlikely to meet its quarterly revenue forecast amid lower demand in China and lower iPhone supply globally. HSBC's 2019 earnings also missed expectations. Moody's lowers growth forecast. The market continued to feel the pressure of the cut in growth forecast by Moody's. Moody's Investors Service on February 17 cut India's 2020 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast to 5.4 percent from 6.6 percent. It reduced the 2021 GDP growth forecast to 5.8 percent from 6.7 percent. Weakness across global economy due to the impact of the novel coronavirus outbreak could hurt India's recovery, Moody's said.

PPF account new rules: 5 key things about Public Provident Fund scheme you need to know

New Delhi, Agency.

PPF Account New Rules 2020: The Department of Posts of Ministry of Communication has recently communicated regarding the amendments to procedural rules related to all the small savings schemes, including the Public Provident Fund (PPF) scheme. The changes will largely reflect in the post office savings bank manual governing the rules of PPF and other National Savings Schemes. The gazette notification for the new rules was issued on December 12, 2019. It may be noted that the government had earlier in December 2019 brought about changes in the way small savings schemes are to be managed. The Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 stands repealed and along with the Government Savings Certificates Act, 1959 both now come under the Government Savings Promotion Act 1873. Along with this change, there were some other procedural changes made in the Provident Funds Scheme Rules 2019. While the minimum and the maximum amount that can be deposited in PPF remains the same, the minimum amount required to open PPF account has changed along with the number of times one can deposit contributions on the PPF account. Any individual can subscribe to the Public Provident Fund on his own behalf or on behalf of a minor of whom he is a guardian any amount in multiples of Rs. 50 not less than Rs. 500 and not more than Rs. 1.5 lakh in a financial year. Further, the PPF subscriptions can be deposited in a lump sum or in instalments of even more than one instalment in a month. Earlier, the PPF subscription had to be in multiples of Rs.5 and could be paid into the account in one lump sum or instalments not exceeding twelve in a year. For opening a PPF account, one needs to fill and submit Form 1 instead of Form A used earlier.



FIRST COLUMN

Love Aaj Kal earns Rs 31.26 crore, Malang set to cross Rs 50 crore mark today



New Delhi, Agency. Box Office Collection Report: Releases old and new are vying for audience's attention. While Ajay Devgn's costume drama Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior is still making noise, the same cannot be said about the latest Imtiaz Ali directorial Love Aaj Kal, which has been panned by critics. Film trade analyst Taran Adarsh shared the latest box office figures of Kartik Aaryan and Sara Ali Khan's Love Aaj Kal. He tweeted, "#LoveAajKal collapses on Day 4... The drastic fall in numbers doesn't come as a surprise, since the trending was evident during its *opening weekend* itself... Fri 12.40 cr, Sat 8.01 cr, Sun 8.10 cr, Mon 2.75 cr. Total: ₹ 31.26 cr. #India biz." On the other hand, Disha Patani and Aditya Roy Kapur's thriller Malang is performing decently. Its total collection presently stands at Rs 49.20 crore. Adarsh wrote on Twitter, "Malang will hit Rs 50 cr today [Tue; Day 12]... [Week 2] Fri 2.25 cr, Sat 2.52 cr, Sun 3.25 cr, Mon 1.53 cr. Total: Rs 49.20 cr. #India biz" Meanwhile, Saif Ali Khan and Alaya F's comedy flick Jawaani Jaaneman is slowly moving forward. A tweet from Taran Adarsh read, "#JawaaniJaaneman slows down in Weekend 3... Likely to fold up at ₹ 30 cr [+/-], despite appreciation by target audience... [Week 3] Fri 2.8 lakhs, Sat 3.3 lakhs, Sun 4.3 lakhs. Total: ₹ 27.91 cr. #India biz." And finally, Varun Dhawan and Shraddha Kapoor's dance drama Street Dancer 3D will soon exit theaters if one looks at its latest collection. "StreetDancer3D [Week 4] Fri 9 lakhs, Sat 12 lakhs, Sun 21 lakhs. Total: ₹ 74.64 cr. #India biz," tweeted Adarsh.

Taapsee Pannu to star in Hindi remake of Run Lola Run



New Delhi, Agency. Taapsee Pannu is on a roll at the moment. After announcing projects like Shabaash Mithu, Haseen Dilruba and Rashmi Rocket, the actor has announced her new film titled Loop Lapeta. Loop Lapeta is the Hindi remake of 1998 German film Run Lola Run. The film is being directed by Aakash Bhatia and stars Tahir Raj Bhasin alongside Pannu. Taapsee Pannu shared on Instagram, "Right, so here's yet another announcement from my stable. I'm on a roll. Or shall I say in a loop? Stoked to announce Sony Picture India and Ellipsis Entertainment's crazy thriller-comedy, "LOOP LAPETA", an adaptation of the cult classic "Run Lola Run." Looking forward to the roller-coaster with my director Aakash Bhatia, my co-star, Tahir Raj Bhasin and the amazing folks at Ellipsis Entertainment (Tanuj, Atul) and Sony! Mark your calendar for 29th Jan, 2021!" Run Lola Run was considered a milestone in German cinema and has since received worldwide appreciation. The original film is a thriller that unfolds in parallel timelines. Run Lola Run was screened at Sundance, Venice and various other film festivals and won big in Germany at various award shows. Loop Lapeta is being described as a 'new-age thriller-comedy'. It is produced by Sony Pictures Films India, Tanuj Garg, Atul Kasbekar and Aayush Maheshwari. Loop Lapeta is scheduled to release on January 29, 2021.

Amitabh's Agneepath is more than mere Scarface, maloom?

New Delhi, Agency.

There will be blood. And trial by fire. Never slow down and never stop the march to the righteous path. So proclaims Hariwansh Rai Bachchan's stirring poem that gives Agneepath its title. It is more than fitting that the great Hindi poet's son would step in to honour that oath but instead of walking on the right road, he takes the blood-addled one that diverges and leads him straight to his "maut ke saath appointment." The first thing that hits you on rewatching Agneepath (1990) on its 30th anniversary today is Amitabh Bachchan's stylish swagger and how director Mukul S Anand one of the unsung potboiler laureates who, in many ways, was the only true successor to 1970s' masters like Manmohan Desai, Prakash Mehra and Ramesh Sippy fills the film with homage to the Bachchan mythology and all the tropes that have gone into the making of Big B's superstar persona riding on the success of his 1970s cinematic touchstones.

The story takes place against a backdrop of 'revenge', the most formulaic hangover from 1970s Bollywood but once again, Agneepath proves that if done right, cliché can be more than just guilty pleasure. The film plays like an AB retrospective. Pushing 50 then, Agneepath is the fading star's last hurrah and an apt culmination of the key motifs from the scintillating Seventies and its ubiquitous angry young man. This time, he's the angriest — popped loose and prowling for prey. You can spot creases on the Agneepath star's face



suggesting age and presaging the bearded old dandy the audiences would come to know only a decade later, but the bloodshot eyes are still powerful enough to express anguish and anger. The first tribute lies in the lucky name, only it has been extended to include his lineage and home address. Bachchan made his name in the 1970s playing the angry young man Vijay, but Agneepath's Vijay Dinanath Chavan is by far the most wounded of tigers. (Hum, anyone?) Start counting the real and reel life references. The hospital scene when Vijay recovers and walks out triumphantly recalls the megastar's infamous Coolie (1983) accident while there's a hint of Namak Halaal's (1982) 'I can talk English, walk English' in 'Maut ke saath appointment' moment. Then, there's the mother figure, stretching back to Deewaar (1975). Rohini

Hattangadi is no Nirupa Roy, but she's a worthy heir to Deewaar's morally upright mother. Early on, a young Vijay is shown working in the city as a boot polish boy, another timely token from Deewaar and much like that previous classic, Vijay's rise within the ranks from modest roots to mafia kingpin is vintage Bachchan. So is him dying in his mother's lap in the bloody climax. There's a backstory to why this happens. Vijay's father Masterji (Alok Nath, in his most Sanskari Bauji avatar yet, offering gems that can ensure social media trolls a lifetime's supply of jokes and memes) lives a respectable life with his family in Mandwa, an island off Bombay. But when he runs afoul of the dreaded Kancha Cheena (Danny Denzongpa), interfering with the don's plan of running illegal activities from the relatively safe Mandwa ("it doesn't exist

on the map," as Kancha says, explaining why its prized strategic geography makes it a safe haven for his crime syndicate) Kancha swears to punish the upstanding teacher. Kancha orchestrates Masterji's fall from grace followed by his violent death, turning Vijay's family into pariah overnight. In one of the most harrowing scenes from the film, a young Vijay has to bear his father's corpse as the villagers watch in fear. After being forced to migrate to Bombay, Vijay Dinanath Chavan turns to crime. Hindi film fans know well that crime doesn't pay on screen. Narrating the ill-fated story of a bandit, his mother (Hattangadi) somewhat raises the alarm. Will her son have the same ominous ending as the bandit? "Wash your hands," she warns him. At first, the symbolism is lost on Vijay who is a don with a social conscience and even thinks of himself as Robin Hood, but eventually it hits him. On the way, Vijay and the audience meets some fascinating characters.

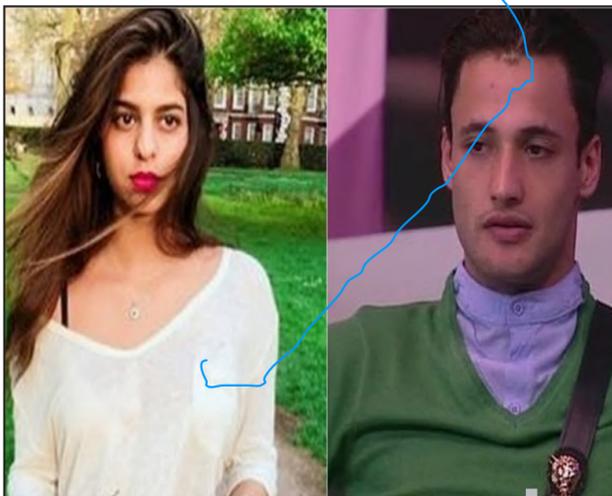
Chief among them is Krishnan Iyer MA, the coconut seller who saves Vijay's life twice and is rewarded with protecting Vijay's younger sister (Neelam). The lungi-clad Mithun Chakraborty provides the laughs, proving that he could be a great comic sidekick when called upon to do so. In creating the evil incarnate that is Kancha Cheena, director Mukul S Anand and writers Kader Khan and Santosh Saroj give a worthy opponent to Bachchan. Both dapper and seasoned, Danny Denzongpa was the right fit, who tosses out Kaderisms with wicked delight.

Asim Riaz and Suhana Khan in SOTY 3? Here's what Karan Johar has to say

New Delhi, Agency.

With his stint on Bigg Boss 13, model Asim Riaz has accumulated a huge fan base, which includes WWE wrestler and actor John Cena. Soon after the reality show ended, rumours started doing the rounds that Asim will be launched by Karan Johar in Student of the Year 3 alongside Shah Rukh Khan's daughter Suhana Khan. Karan on Tuesday quashed the rumours and called the story 'baseless'.

He wrote on Twitter, "Absolutely baseless stories making the rounds of SOTY3!!!! My request to everyone publishing this fabrication is to kindly Stop! Please!" It was even speculated that Asim Riaz might have secured a cameo in Fast and Furious 9, as the film's Twitter handle shared a post about the model. On the other hand, Suhana Khan's debut has been eagerly awaited by Shah Rukh Khan's fans. It has been speculated that she might make her debut under Dharma Productions, but no official announcement has been made yet. The Student of the Year franchise



has launched a lot of new faces in Bollywood. The first film introduced Aanya Bhatt, Varun Dhawan and Fand

Amitabh, Madhuri, Juhi and others mourn the demise of makeup artist Pandhari Juker

New Delhi, Agency.

Famous make-up artist Pandhari Juker, who devised the looks of many Bollywood actors including Dilip Kumar, Nargis, Madhubala, Madhuri Dixit, Sunil Dutt and Amitabh Bachchan among others, passed away on Monday. Amitabh Bachchan shared the news of Juker's demise and remembered him as 'a most endearing personality'. He tweeted, "Pandhari Juker, passes away, prayers, condolences ... pioneer, iconic make up Artist, of Film Industry .. trained all the prominent makeup artists of today .. brilliant, professional and a most endearing personality ... my very first make up was done by him." Madhuri Dixit also expressed her grief on knowing about the demise of the makeup artist. "Saddened to hear of the passing of Pandhari Dada, who has worked with everyone from Meena kumari to Madhubala to today. I have very fond memories of him working together in Tezaab, Ram Lakhan & many more. He made everyone look beautiful & elegant on screen. May soul rest in peace," she wrote on Twitter. "My first makeup was done by dada, who is adored and respected by all. There will be no one like him...we will miss you dada..was a blessing that you did my makeup amongst such great actresses #RIP #PandhariJuker #makeupartist #madhubala #MadhuriDixit #meenakumari #juhichawla," Manisha Koirala wrote on Twitter. Juhi Chawla also took to Instagram recently to share her memories of the late artiste. Sharing a photo of herself with Pandhari Juker, she wrote, "Our dear Pandhari dada passed away... I feel so sad. He was very affectionate, would often share



anecdotes of shootings with yesteryear's superstars & always put us at ease! We worked together in Chandni ,Darr , Saat Rang Ke Sapne, many films & countless songs and dances. He would use his thumb and fingers, rarely used a brush to apply our make-up. He would be done in 15 minutes! Perfectly blended, soft, lovely make up. Miss you Dada!" In an interview with The Indian Express in 2012, Pandhari Juker had shared how he became an accidental make-up artist. He said, "My getting into the film line was an accident. It was my father's illness that pushed me to take up work as a make-up assistant at Rajkamal Studios. I had no idea what I was getting into, but I was a commercial artist, so I knew how to use colours. I learnt under the guidance of make-up gurus like Baba Vardhan and Dada Paranjipe." Pandhari Juker worked with legendary filmmakers like B.R. Chopra, Kamal Amrohi, Tarun Majumdar, Raj Kapoor, Yash Chopra and Subhash Ghai among others.

Kaamyab trailer: Sanjay Mishra's melancholic ode to character actors

New Delhi, Agency.



The trailer of Sanjay Mishra starrer Kaamyab is out. The film narrates the story of a character actor who has worked in 499 movies and is looking for the perfect 500th film. He has played so many characters that his real-self has gotten lost in the film world. Alongside Mishra, Kaamyab also stars Deepak Dobriyal in a significant role. Shah Rukh Khan shared the trailer on Twitter and wrote, "Koi role extra nahi hota. Artist extraordinary hona chahiye. Fir banti hai picture Kaamyab! #KaamyabTrailer starring @imsanjaimishra & #DeepakDobriyal. In cinemas 6th March." The film has been produced by Red Chillies Entertainment and Drishyam Films. Written and directed by Hardik Mehta, Kaamyab looks like a poignant story that talks about the fantastical world of movies, but also talks about the brutal reality of that glamorous world. The film premiered at Busan International Film Festival in 2018. Hardik Mehta received a National Film Award for his documentary film Amdavad Ma Famous in 2015. He also co-wrote Rajkumar Rao starrer Trapped. Presently, Mehta is directing Janhvi Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao starrer Roohi Afzana. Kaamyab releases on March 6.

It looks like some people want to break the nation: Ratna Pathak Shah



Mumbai, Agency. Veteran actor Ratna Pathak Shah says she feels hopeful, seeing young and educated people trying to making a difference. At the India My Valentine event in Mumbai on Sunday evening, Ratna took the stage to talk about the "chaos" in the country, in reference to the protests against the National Register of Citizen (NRC) and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The renowned actor-playwright began by drawing parallels between today and the time she grew up in. "I grew up in the '60s and the '70s. It was a fascinating era, and so is this. During that time, everyone was thinking about the progress of India. How to make the nation ours and what kind of nation it should be. Because my family has always been associated with performing arts, we used to have discussions on these topics. What kind of a play should be written for new India? How can we represent this new world? On what issues should we write plays? "The chaos and the brainstorming of that time can be seen even today. Of course, things have changed. The situation is extremely serious.

Vijay Deverakonda: Going pan-India with Puri Jagannadh's next

Chennai, Agency.

Arjun Reddy star Vijay Deverakonda, who will be making his Bollywood debut with director Puri Jagannadh's bilingual film, says he is looking forward to playing a fighter with a stutter in his maiden pan-India project. Tentatively titled Fighter, the film is being simultaneously shot in Telugu and Hindi. "I've started shooting for my first pan-Indian film with Puri Jagannadh... It's a project that required me to undergo drastic physical transformation and I've been working non-stop to pull off the character.

I play a fighter and the role required me to learn mixed martial arts," Vijay told PTI. The 30-year-old actor also confirmed that he will dub his own lines for the Hindi version which will be presented by Karan Johar and Apoorva Mehta. The film will also be dubbed in other south Indian languages. The project marks the first collaboration of Deverakonda and Jagannadh, who is best known for films such as Mahesh Babu-starrer Pokkiri and Amitabh Bachchan-fronted Bbudadh... Hoga



Terra Baap. Vijay said Fighter, with which he will be chasing his dream of country-wide stardom, would be the beginning of a new phase in his career. "I feel I've slowly started changing and this is the beginning of

a new phase in my career. With each of my upcoming releases, I want to surprise my fans. I really want to rule Indian cinema," he said. Talking about his latest release World Famous Lover, Vijay confirmed that it'll be his last love story as he's shifting his focus on other genres. "This is one of the hardest films of my career. I'm aware of the comparisons with Arjun Reddy and I didn't mind because this will be the last love story of my career. I've played three different avatars in the film, which was emotionally and physically more exhausting than I'd imagined," he added. World Famous Lover, directed by Kranthi Madhav, opened in theatres last week to mixed response. The film also stars Raashi Khanna, Aishwarya Rajesh, Catherine Tresa and Isabelle Leite. Having charted his own path in a cut-throat industry without any backing, Vijay said he's finally living his dream. "Be it about doing my kind of films and chasing the pan-India dream, or producing a film, or launching a clothing line or buying a home, I am living my dream. I am slowly trying to influence and change a generation, and if you notice, the youngsters love me for what I do, he said.