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COMMERCIAL DRIVERS TO GET TRAUMA CARE, FIRST-AID TRAINING **PG4**



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RETAIL INFLATION, IIP GROWTH BOTH RISE TO 17-MONTH HIGHS **PG12**



'IT'S SO EASY TO MOCK SOMEONE NOWADAYS' **PG16**

'DEMOCRACY AT STAKE,' SAY FOUR SUPREME COURT JUDGES

For first time in history, SC Judges revolt against Chief Justice of India



Supreme Court Judges Justice J Chelameswar, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Madan Lokur and Justice Kurian Joseph at a PC in New Delhi on Friday **PTI**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: On a day which will have a permanent place in the history of the Indian judiciary and Constitutional affairs, the four senior-most judges of the Supreme Court on Friday mounted a virtual revolt against the country's chief justice, warning that democracy is at stake and raising questions on "selective" case allocation and certain judicial orders. The unprecedented move by the four judges including Justice J Chelameswar, the second senior judge after Chief Justice Dipak Misra, sent shock-

waves across the judiciary and polity, bringing to fore the simmering differences between the country's top judge and some senior judges in the apex court in recent months. The Supreme Court currently has 25 judges.

Justice Chelameswar himself described as an "extraordinary event" in the annals of the Indian judiciary when the judges addressed a joint news conference during which he said "sometimes administration of the Supreme Court is not in order and many things which are less than desirable have happened in the last few

months." The judge accused Justice Misra of not taking any "remedial measures" on some of the issues which affected the functioning of the apex court that they had raised. Justice Misra became the CJI on August 28, 2017 and he is due to retire from on October 2 this year.

Unless this institution is preserved, "democracy will not survive" in this country, Justice Chelameswar said at the unscheduled press conference, in the first of its kind event in independent India, leaving uncertain how this open dissension in the hallowed institution would be resolved. **See P7**

'Centre's extreme interference with judiciary dangerous for democracy'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee voiced "anguish" over the happenings in the Supreme Court on Friday where four top judges virtually revolted against the Chief Justice of India (CJI), saying that the development made people sad as citizens. She also said, "Extreme interference" of the Centre in the functioning of the judiciary is "dangerous" for democracy, but did not elaborate.

"We are deeply anguished with the developments today about the Supreme Court. What we are getting from the statement of the four senior Hon ble Judges of Supreme Court about the affairs of the court makes us really sad as citizens," Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief, said in a tweet on Friday

"Judiciary and the media are the pillars of democracy. Extreme interference of central government with



judiciary is dangerous for democracy," she said.

Reacting to the developments, the Congress said that democracy was in "danger". "We are very concerned to hear 4 judges of the Supreme Court express concerns about the functioning of the Supreme Court. #DemocracyIn-Danger," the Congress' official Twitter handle said.

'Chief justice is only first amongst equals... nothing more or nothing less'

Text of letter from 4 senior-most SC judges to CJI Dipak Misra

Dear Chief Justice,

It is with great anguish and concern that we have thought it proper to address this letter to you so as to highlight certain judicial orders passed by this court which has adversely affected the overall functioning of the justice delivering system and the independence of the high courts, besides impacting the administrative functioning of the office of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India (CJI).



CJI Dipak Misra

From the date of establishment of the three chartered High Courts of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, certain traditions have been well established. The traditions were embraced by this court which came into existence almost a century after the above mentioned courts. These traditions have their roots in Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence and practice.

One of the well settled principles is that the Chief Justice is the master of the roster with a privilege to determine the roster, a necessity in multi numbered courts for an orderly transaction of business and appropriate arrangements with respect to matters with which member/ bench of this court (as the case may be) is required to deal with which case or class of cases is to be made. The convention of recognising the privilege of the Chief Justice to form the roster and assign cases to different members/ benches of the court is a convention devised for a disciplined and efficient transaction of business of the court but not a recognition of any superior authority, legal or factual, of the Chief Justice over his colleagues. It is too well settled in the jurisprudence of this country that the chief justice is only the first amongst the equals — nothing more or nothing less. **Continued on P5**

A-G K K Venugopal meets CJI Dipak Misra

NEW DELHI: Attorney General K K Venugopal on Friday said that the unprecedented move by four senior Supreme Court judges in holding a Press conference "could have been avoided" and the judges would now have to act in "statesmanship" to ensure complete harmony. Venugopal, who had a meeting with Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra after the Press conference, spoke on much persuasion and expressed hope that all judges, including the CJI, would rise to the occasion and "wholly neutralise" the "divisiveness".

"What has happened today could have been avoided. The judges will now have to act in statesmanship and ensure that the divisiveness is wholly neutralised and total harmony and mutual understanding will prevail in future," he said. **PTI**

Mamata Banerjee
Hon'ble Chief Minister
West Bengal

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SVF TO LAUNCH 25 big ticket films

SVF, India's largest movie production house, will be producing 25 big ticket films over a period of three years. The aim is to take Tollywood to next level and serve as a platform to harness fresh talent

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bringing cheer to movie lovers this new year, SVF, Eastern India's largest movie production house raised the curtain on SVF Stories – one of the biggest entertainment events Bengal has witnessed. At a glittering ceremony held in the city of Joy, Shrikant Mohta and Mahendra Soni, co-founders of SVF made an ambitious declaration of producing 25 big ticket films over a period of next three years (until 2020), allocating Rs 100 crores for the same – a figure unheard of in Tollywood so far.

'SVF stories' aim at becoming an annual gathering, bringing notable personalities from the industry under one roof for announcing upcoming film projects of the production house.

As part of the 25 films, Arindam Sil is set to entertain the audience with two of his detective films, *Asche Abar Shabor* and *Byomkesh Gotro*, while Sandip Ray will be back with his *Feluda* and *Professor Shonku O El Dorado*.

The list includes some notable projects from National-award winning directors Srijit Mukherjee and Aparna Sen. While Srijit is coming up with *Uma*, *Kakababur Prottyabarton* and *Ek Je Chhilo Raja*, Aparna Sen will be adapting the classic novel by Rabindranath Tagore - *Ghare o Baire*, in a film titled as *Ghare o Baire*.

A good news for the fans of Raj Chakraborty is that he will be directing two of his most ambitious projects - *Siraj Ud Daulah* and *Tong Ling*. On the other hand, Anjan Dutt will enthrall the audiences with *Finally Bhalobasha* and *Ami Asbo Phire*.

SVF co-founder and director,



of age' story.

Based on Smaranjit Chakraborty's best seller novel, Birsa Dasgupta will return with a bang with *Crisscross* along with another film, *Bibhaho Obhijaan* - an emotional saga.

Debaloy Bhattacharya will be directing his next with a new take on Byomkesh: titled *Bidaay Byomkesh*.

Following the massive success of *Amazon Obhijaan* across India as well as internationally, SVF is all set to bring the third part in the Dev starrer Shankar franchise to be directed

by the doctor turned director, Kamaleswar Mukherjee.

Mahendra Soni, SVF co-founder and Director said, "We are coming up with movies with diverse genre and themes for old and young alike. The next three years will also see many firsts – we will be expanding into Bangladesh with the release of the first film starring the Bangladeshi superstar Shakib Khan; *Siraj-Ud-Daulah* will be the first ever war film of Bengal. We will also have new talents debut in our films. There is plenty in store for the audience to look forward to."

Shrikant Mohta said, "At SVF, we have always tried to do our bit to raise the bar for Bengali cinema. Our commitment of Rs 100 crores for producing 25 films over the next three years will not only aim at taking Tollywood to the next level but also serve as a platform to harness fresh young talent in the industry. In fact, with the super success of *Amazon Obhijaan*, we are excited and motivated to make the third part of the franchise even bigger."

The journey over the next three years will also see SVF's first film with brilliant filmmaker Mainak Bhowmik. Titled *Generation Aami*, this film by Bhowmik will be a 'coming

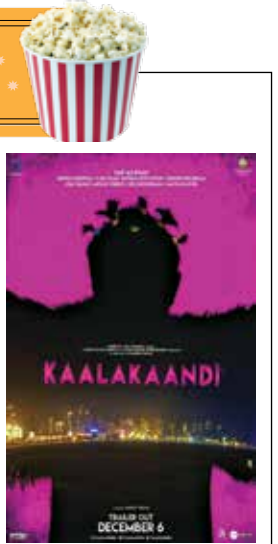
MOVIE OF THE WEEK

Black humour hard sold

'KAALAKAANDI'

Director: Akshat Verma; Cast: Saif Ali Khan, Sobhita Dhulipala, Akshay Oberoi, Isha Talwar, Deepak Dobriyal, Vijay Raaz, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Shenaz Treasurywala, Amyra Dastur, Neil Bhoopalam, Shivam Patil

Rating: ★★



The title is Marathi slang – *Kaala-Kaandi*. It means, something that is not being done in the right manner or is horribly wrong. And as the title suggests, right from the first frame, we are reminded that nothing can go right for its characters.

What makes *Kaala-Kaandi* interesting, though, is its dark comedy, easy to relate situations and characters. It is one of the easiest films to love and one of the hardest to think of as a work of art. It approaches the notion of pure filmmaking as entertainment; it is a nearly flawless example of itself.

It lacks, a lesson or message and is content to show three sets of people facing a series of interlocking challenges they face one night.

Set in Mumbai, with a variety of quirky, pseudo characters awake after midnight, it reflects the unpredictable life in the city. But, they seldom find themselves intertwined in a bizarre series of coincidences.

Boldly told, what happens to the characters apart from the nightmarish and bizarre nature of their experiences can only be described as screwball logic. While the plot unravels like the pages of a thriller, the humour seems laboured. You witness this in the first scene and in the climax.

In the opening scene Saif Ali Khan is in his doctor's clinic where his doctor sugar coats his diagnosis with, "You do not suffer from ulcers, hence you don't have perforating ulcers. Instead you suffer from stomach cancer."

For a person who never experienced the excesses of life, this unpleasant bit of news hits like a ton of bricks. So when he returns home, where the wedding preparation of his younger brother Angad (Akshay Oberoi) is under-way, he sips alcohol and tries a narcotic substance.

This sets the ball rolling for a roller-coaster cinematic experience.

In the second situation, Zubin (Kunal Roy Kapur) is in low spirits because his girlfriend is migrating to America. Just before her flight, as a farewell gesture and to celebrate the birthday of their friend Ann (Shenaz Treasurywala), they land up at a pub which predictably gets raided. How they escape from the clutches of the police and what fate has in store for them, forms the crux of their story.

In the third narrative, Vijay Raaz and Deepak Dobriyal, work as flunkies for the local gangster. After collecting the protection money from a film producer, how greed overcomes them, forms the crux of their fate.

What keeps the quirky characters afloat are the spunky, rustic dialogues that are gags by themselves. For instance, when Angad asks his older brother about his sexual preference, Saif in his typical style blurts out, "Madame Curie, curious," he asks this after Saif's escapades with a transgender. The dialogues between Saif and the transvestite also bear testimony to this.

On the performance front all actors have put their heart and soul into their characters and they shine on screen. Unfortunately the characters are two-dimensional and cardboard thin. Of the supporting cast, Sobhita Dhulipala as Zubin's girlfriend, Amyra Dastur as Neha – Angad's fiancée, Isha Talwar as the wedding photographer and Saif's love interest, Treasurywala as Ann along with Shivam Patil as her boyfriend Jason who calls himself "Jehangir Jehangir" have their moments of on screen glory.

Overall with good production quality, director Akshat Verma's attempt at this noir comedy is engaging but it goes without saying that the script material tries to sell itself a little too hard.

Let that Punjabi suit do the talking this LOHRI

WITH THE LOHRI FESTIVAL approaching, it's time for all you ladies out there to begin your fashion fiesta. Don't let the chilling weather take away the enthusiasm of the festival. Whether it is an *Anarkali* or a straight-fit kurta, go out there and have fun.

As suggested by experts, here are some ideas to jazz up your festive wear.

► **Typical patiala style:** This has been a favourite over the years, especially amongst newly-wed brides. Don a Punjabi-style *patiala salwar kameez* in bold colours with traditional *zardozi* work. A knee-length *patiala* suit is the ideal choice.

► **Anarkali suits:** This look is popular among fashionistas right now. It is an excellent combination of ethnic style and ease. You can pick an *anarkali* piece in bright hues. This voluminous outfit is high on grace and has a warmth attached to it.

► **Long kurta with straight pants:** If classic *patialas* or *anarkalis* are not your



thing, then you can settle for a long *kurta* and straight-fit pants. With this style you are sure to set a new fashion trend for the *Lohri* function. Try a georgette or silk long-shirt with embellishments and team it up with patterned pants.

► **Flared kurtas:** If you love the flares, opt for knee-length flared *kurtas* in bright

colours. This is turning out to be a hot favourite among the fashion brigade. Go for *kurtas* in gold and antique embroidery with a flowing *sharara*-style *salwar*.

► **Jacket-style kurta:** Try a *kurta* option in the jacket style, as it is not only elegant and stylish but will keep you warm on a cold night.

IANS

For some peace and PAMPERING



LAHARI BASU

Mothers and grandmothers might have often suggested us to use some useful home remedies in order to attain a glowing and healthy skin, but we are too busy to try any of them ourselves. As we complain about our busy schedule and take refuge in chemical-based beauty products, our body feels the negligence and falls prey to various maladies.

Although it would be a crime to ignore how lovely we feel to be pampered, it only seems worthwhile and useful, when someone else steps in and takes charge of caring for your hair and skin. That is exactly how spa treatments make you feel: loved, relaxed and revitalised. One of the most valued spa destinations in the Capital, 'Healthy self's' elaborate arrangements at 'Eros Hotel' offers an array of options for you to choose from. Those who are looking for an effortless full-body clean-up may opt for the honey and lemon body scrub followed by a restorative facial or a full body massage.

Hopping in at 'Eros' with high hopes and welcomed by several smiling faces, one would feel that they are in the right place for a pleasurable treatment. As you lay down in the cosy room, and inhale Forest Essentials' aromatic honey and lemon body scrub, you already start feeling calm. Then, with some appropriate music, candle lights and a pair of trained palms tending

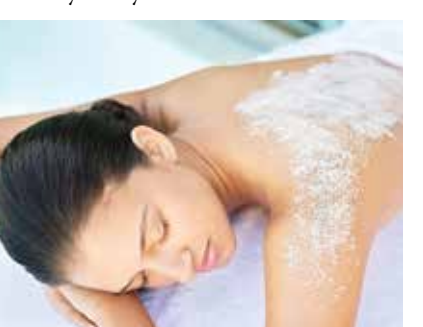
to your limbs you might actually hear your inner self, smile in comfort.

Honey is known to soften and enrich the skin with nutrients, while lemon detoxifies and works as a de-tanning agent. With combined efforts of the two, you are left with a soft and supple skin, after you walk out from the shower. The oils of Neroli flower and lemon zest, work to combat stress and revitalises the body's energy field.



aesthetician's hands feel like a blessing putting you to sleep.

Washing off the scrub, a clay pack rich in *Neem* and citrus leaves is applied on the face to ensure a calm and cool layer. After a calming experience of a 10-minute rest, the clay mask is removed thoroughly leaving your face clean to breathe. An anti-oxidant rich cream with carrot, honey and olive is then applied to nourish and hydrate your skin.



The restorative facial is an intensive balancing treatment, to help relax damaged and irritated skin. Starting off with a cucumber and green tea face wash, the aesthetician uses an alcohol-free cucumber and marigold facial toner to balance the pH level of your skin. Then a deep cleansing exfoliator containing carrot seed and red rice is used to massage and get rid of blackheads. With her unhurried and smooth massage-like movements on your face, the

Furthermore, the time spent on pampering yourself really pays off well in the time to come when you walk out confident, calm, and radiant. A treatment like this not only makes one feel refreshed and calm, but also enhances one's senses with the aromatic essential oils, and other alluring organic products. Feel the luxury, enjoy the peace and bask in the glorifying world of an exquisite pampering session at the Healthy self spa at Eros Hotel, Nehru Place.

Homemade hair masks for coloured hair

HAIR COLOUR is not just used for hiding grey hair anymore as people are changing the colour of their tresses according to their mood and seasons. However, this process needs a lot of care and attention so why not opt for few homemade hair mask recipes that you can use

to keep your locks strong and shiny. **Hair care experts list five simple homemade hair masks for you:**

► **Avocado plus almond oil:** Avocado is densely packed with nutrients and is a super food that you should incorporate into your diet. This creamy fruit can also be applied on your hair to give it extra softness and shine. Since colour treatments can make your hair dry and brittle, a nutrient-rich and creamy fruit like avocado can efficiently salvage your colour-treated hair. Almond oil is also great for hair since it contains Vitamin A and E, in addition to other nutrients. Mixing avocado and

almond oil gives you a super food mix for your hair and brain.

► **Eggs plus honey:** Eggs are extremely good for the health of your hair. You can use the protein-rich eggs to bring the lost shine and lustre back to your hair. If hair colour has made your hair dry and frizzy, egg masks can help you deal with these issues effectively. Honey is a great humectant and has over 22 amino acids, 27 minerals and 5,000-plus enzymes. It is also full of anti-oxidants. Mix eggs and honey to bring life back to your hair, and fight the negative effects of pollution.

► **Banana plus milk:** The combination of banana and milk gives you the goodness of protein, good fats and calcium, among other nutrients. As good as this combination is for your bones, it works wonders for your colour-treated hair too.

► **Olive oil plus honey:** Olive oil is rich in Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids and is extremely beneficial for hair.

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Need to shift focus from Pak to China: Army chief

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: India needs to shift focus from its border with Pakistan to that with China, Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat said on Friday, cautioning that the country cannot allow its neighbours to drift towards China, virtually asking the government to effectively implement its 'neighbourhood first' policy.

Admitting that Chinese troops have been ramping up pressure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), he asserted that China may be a powerful country but India too is not a weak nation.

In a media address on the eve of the Army Day, Rawat said countries like Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan have to be kept on board as part of a broader strategy to deal with China, and India must make



PIIC Naveen Sharma

"wholehearted" efforts to continue extending support to them.

"We cannot allow the neighbourhood to be drifted away from us --whether it is Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka or Afghanistan. These nations have to

be kept on board, and I think we have to put in our wholehearted effort to ensure we continue to support them," he said.

The Army chief's comments assume significance given that in recent past, China has been deepening ties with some South Asian nations and pro-

viding them with huge financial aid, which, some experts feel, may draw India's neighbours including the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal towards Beijing. These countries have been traditionally close to New Delhi.

Underlining the need for shifting attention from the western border with Pakistan to the northern frontier with China, Rawat said, "For too long, we have kept our focus on the western front. I think time has come for us to focus on the northern border. Therefore, our infrastructure development on the northern border has to be speeded up."

Referring to India shoring up ties with other countries, he said, "We are seeking support of other nations, group of nations in the region, to see that we are not isolated completely in a situation in Asia against an assertive China.

That is the next step that is being taken and, therefore, you will find that a quadrilateral is formed." In November last year, India, Japan, Australia and the US had set the ball rolling for forming a quadrilateral coalition in the Indo-Pacific region to pursue their common interests, a move seen as a measure to counter growing Chinese influence.

He said there are other countries that are coming on board to support India in whatever way they can.

"At the military level, we know that if there is a threat from China, we have to be prepared for it," he said, adding India's military engagement with almost all nations of the region are of a high order.

The Army is concentrating more on the neighbourhood than beyond as this will enable India to balance the Chinese assertiveness, he said.

Centre is 'sitting' on over 7 lakh vacancies: Report

DHIRENDRA KUMAR

NEW DELHI: In a major revelation that may prove to be a setback for the government, it has come to the notice that the Centre is 'sitting' on over 7 lakh vacancies in different Central ministries, departments, etc.

According to a latest report of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, there are total 36,33,935 sanctioned posts in different ministries and departments of the government, which excludes sanctioned posts in military services and out of that 4,12,752 posts are lying vacant in different departments while 2,22,159 vacancies are in Indian Railways, which is the largest employer in the country.

Similarly, in all the three forces, there are 59,622 vacant posts, out of which 9,259 vacancies are of officer level and 50,363 vacancies are of junior level. The highest vacancy is in the Army which is short of 27,864 employees, while 16,255 posts are vacant in the Indian Navy and 15,503 posts in the Air Force.

Similarly, in public sector undertakings, it's been estimated that above 20,000 posts are vacant. As per the report, the Central universities of the country are short of 5,928 teachers as similar numbers of posts are vacant.

Recently Human Resource



NUMBERS THAT MATTER

4,12,752 vacancies in central ministries, departments	2,22,159 vacancies in Indian Railways	59,622 posts vacant in all three forces
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Development (HRD) Ministry had faced the ire of a Parliamentary committee over vacant posts of teachers in central universities. Besides, President Ram Nath Kovind had also expressed his concern over the vacancies in universities and asked for immediate recruitment. In May last year, the HRD Ministry in an RTI reply had revealed that 9,749 posts of teaching faculties were vacant in central universities.

According to the data provided by HRD Ministry, there is about 60 lakh approved posts of teachers in primary and secondary schools and out of this, 15 per cent seats are vacant, which translate into 10 lakh posts. The situation is grim

in the primary education sector as there are about 9 lakh vacancies in primary schools and one lakh post of teachers is vacant in secondary schools. It's important to note that Centre is not responsible for filling the vacant posts as it comes under the purview of respective state governments.

Commenting on the issue, Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) general secretary Brijesh Upadhyaya said, "It's a hard fact that employment has never been a priority for the governments. It's the result of lack of concern of previous governments that even after 70 years of Independence; the country has no employment policy."

ISRO hits century; launches Cartosat 2 series Sat, 30 others

S VIJAY KARTHIK

SRIHARIKOTA: India on Friday reaffirmed its space prowess and commercial launch capabilities as it successfully launched its 100th satellite along with 30 other spacecraft including weather observation Cartosat 2 series onboard the Polar rocket from here.

This was PSLV's longest-ever mission. With the successful launch, including 28 satellites from foreign countries, by the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), ISRO put behind a rare failure it encountered four months ago.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had suffered a setback after the failure of the earlier PSLV-C39 mission in August last year.

The previous mission to launch backup navigation satellite IRNSS-1H on board PSLV-C39 had failed after the heat shield did not separate in the final leg of the launch sequence, with the satellite getting stuck in the fourth stage of the rocket.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed ISRO scientists for the successful PSLV C-40 mission.

"The launch of the 100th satellite by @isro signifies both its glorious achievements, and also the bright future of India's space programme," he said a tweet.

A visibly relieved ISRO Chairman A S Kiran Kumar, on his final mission as the chief of the space agency, said he was happy to provide Cartosat 2 Series as a New Year gift for the country.

"ISRO is starting 2018 with the successful launch... all satellites have been released. So far Cartosat performance is satisfactory," he said at the mission control room.



PSLV-C40 carrying Cartosat series along with 30 other satellites lifts off from first launch pad at Sriharikota, on Friday. The lift-off marks 100th launch by ISRO

made by educational institutions in the country, Kumar, who is retiring later this month, said.

"Basically...the 100 satellites covers all student satellites also that have been put (by ISRO)," he told reporters at the post-launch briefing.

Earlier, in a precise launch, PSLV-C40 lifted off at 9.28 am at the end of the 28-hour countdown from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, about 110 km from Chennai, and soared into a cloudy sky.

After a perfect flight sequence, each of which was applauded by ISRO scientists, the four-stage rocket first injected the 710-kg Cartosat-2 Series Satellite for earth observation into 505-km polar sun synchronous orbit about 17 minutes after lift off.

India's nano satellite and 28 payloads from six countries, including the U.S and the U.K, totally weighing 613 kg were then released into orbit one by one in a space of about seven minutes. In a multi-orbit manoeuvre, micro satellite built by ISRO was placed in the orbit finally after the PSLV-C40 was brought down to 359.584 kms in polar Sun synchronous orbit by twice re-starting the fourth stage of the rocket, about 105 minutes after lift-off.

The fourth stage was finally shut off at about 2 hours 21 minutes, thus making the mission the longest ever by ISRO.

A similar kind of process was taken up during the launch of SCATSAT-1 on-board PSLV-C35 in September 2016 in which the fourth stage engine was restarted and later cut off for launching the satellite. This mission had lasted two hours and 15 minutes, ISRO scientists said.

Over 720 people detained under PSA in last 2 yrs, says J&K Govt

JAMMU: Nearly 726 people were detained under Public Safety Act (PSA) in Jammu and Kashmir in the last two years, the government said today.

In a written reply to a question in the State Assembly, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti said that 525 people were detained under PSA during the year 2016 and all of them were released.

In 2017, 201 people were detained under PSA, out of which 124 people were released and 77 were under preventive detention, Mufti said.

Chandrayaan-2 mission on schedule: ISRO

SRIHARIKOTA: The Indian Space Research Organisation on Friday said the Chandrayaan-2 mission is on schedule and flight models are going through various tests. In Chandrayaan-2, the country's second mission to the Moon, ISRO is planning to rover to explore the lunar surface. "It is on schedule. We have to find out whether it is in March or not," ISRO Chair-

man A S Kiran Kumar told reporters here in a response to a question. Speaking after the successful orbiting of 31 satellites, including weather observation Cartosat-2 Series craft, by the PSLV-C40, he said the Chandrayaan-II satellite was getting ready at the ISRO Satellite Centre. The flight models were going through various levels of tests, he added.

'Chief justice is only first amongst equals... nothing more or nothing less'

Continued from P1

In the matter of the determination of the roster, there are well-settled and time-honoured conventions guiding the chief justice, be it the conventions dealing with the strength of the bench which is required to deal with a particular case or the composition thereof.

A necessary corollary to the above mentioned principle is the members of any multi numbered judicial body including this court would not arrogate to themselves the authority to deal with and pronounce upon matters which ought to be heard by appropriate benches, both composition wise and strength wise with due regard to the roster fixed.

Any departure from the above two rules would not only lead to unpleasant and undesirable consequences of creating doubt in the body politic about the integrity of the institution. Not to talk about the chaos that would result from such departure.

We are sorry to say that of late, the twin rules mentioned above have not been strictly adhered to. There have been instances where cases having far reaching consequences for the nation and the institution have been assigned by the chief justices of this court selectively to the benches "of their preference" without any rational basis for such assignment. This must be guarded against at all costs.

We are not mentioning details only to avoid embarrassing the institution but note that

such departures have already damaged the image of this institution to some extent.

In the above context, we deem it proper to address you presently with regard to the order dated October 27, 2017, in RP Luthra vs Union of India to the effect that there should be no further delay in finalising the memorandum of procedure (MoP) in the larger public interest. When the MoP was the subject matter of a decision of a Constitution Bench of this court, in Supreme Court Advocates-on-record Association and Anr Vs Union of India [(2016) 5 SCC1] it is difficult to understand as to how any other bench could have dealt with the matter.

The above apart, subsequent to the decision of the Constitution Bench, detailed discussions were held by the collegium of five judges (including myself) and the MoP was finalised and sent by the then Hon'ble Chief Justice of India to the Government of India in March 2017.

The Government of India has not responded to the communication and in view of this silence, it must be taken that MoP as finalised by the Collegium has been accepted by the Government on the basis of the order of this court in Supreme Court Advocates-on-record Association (Supra). There was, therefore, no occasion for the bench to make any observation with regard to the finalisation of the MoP or that that issue cannot linger on for an indefinite period.

On July 4, 2017, a bench of seven judges of this court decided in Re, Hon'ble Justice C S Karnan [(2017)1 SCC1]. In that decision (referred to in RP Luthra), two of us observed that there is a need to revisit the process of appointment of judges and to set up a mechanism for corrective measures other than impeachment. No observation was made by any of the seven judges with regard to the MoP.

Any issue with regard to MoP should be discussed in the Chief Justices' conference and by the full court. Such a matter of grave importance, if at all required to be taken on the judicial side, should be dealt with by none other than a constitution bench.

The above development must be viewed with serious concern. The hon'ble Chief Justice of India is duty-bound to rectify the situation and take appropriate remedial measures after a full discussion with the other members of the collegium and at a later stage, if required, with other hon'ble judges of this court.

Once the issue arising from the order dated October 27, 2017, in RP Luthra Vs UOI, mentioned above, is adequately addressed by you and if it becomes so necessary, we will apprise you specifically of the other judicial orders passed by this court which would require to be similarly dealt with.

With kind regards, Justice J Chelameswar, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Madan B Lokur, Justice Kurian Joseph

PM Modi, Rahul pay tributes to Vivekananda on birth anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress President Rahul Gandhi were among the leaders who today paid tributes to Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary, which is also celebrated as National Youth Day.

"I bow to Swami Vivekananda on his Jayanti. Today, on National Youth Day I salute the indomitable energy and enthusiasm of our youngsters, who are the builders of New India," Modi said on Twitter.

Gandhi invoked Vivekananda to say that it was duty of all to encourage everyone in their struggle to live up to their own highest idea and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to truth.

"My tributes to Swami Vivekananda on his birth anniversary. #NationalYouthDay," he said on the micro-blogging site.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said he bowed before the "youth force" of the country as he tweeted a picture of Vivekananda.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also invoked Vivekananda's message of "arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached" as he paid respect to the spiritual leader.

"I bow before India's great saint, symbol of harmony and source of inspiration for the youth on his birth anniversary," Surjewala tweeted.

My heartfelt wishes for all the pilgrims heading to Gangasagar Mela

Mamata Bandyopadhyay
Chief Minister, West Bengal

Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal

ICA -118(9)/2018

Bright prospects for 2018

The signs for investment growth in 2018 are positive as more funds flow in to industry



To fulfil domestic demand, imported goods must be discouraged and local manufacturers encouraged (Representational Image)

The World Bank had predicted higher growth for India in the next year. But that is not an isolated episode of global enthusiasm about the country's prospects. Earlier, credit rating agencies had upgraded India's investment worthiness. But for now, the World Bank study has indicated strong growth potential for India at plus-seven per cent for the next decade when China slows down. One can safely say that for a decade from now on, India should be the fastest-growing major economy, that is, unless the governments of the day totally derail the process.

But, growth presumes continuous investment. India had grown fast—at its highest at over eight per cent—when the investment rate was also very high. We have seen that plunge since. Along with the drop in investment rate, the overall growth rate has also slowed down. So then, the question is how do we sustain our investment levels from year to year.

Primarily, investment should rise when it is profitable for the investors; they see prospects of earning some money on their outlay. No one will invest for the sake of the country growing. It is the old Adam Smith rule that when everyone takes care of their own self-interest overall societal development takes place. What are the conditions for fresh investments in the Indian economy now?

First and foremost, the demand should be buoyant enough for industry to invest. Only when existing capacities are being used reasonably high, fresh investments can be forthcoming. The latest surveys indicate that capacities are not being used up satisfactorily and it is not as if output cannot be significantly increased without creating fresh capacity. The Index of Industrial Production and the sectoral capacity utilisation figures are showing just that.

Add to that, the production trends of the capital goods sector also are indicating that there is some slack in the economy. The capital goods sector can be used as a proxy for the level of investment, unless of course, all machinery and plant are being imported for industrial expansion. While it is true that some of the machinery items, particularly in the power and telecom sectors, are being imported for balancing investment, other areas are not demanding

too much of fresh capital equipment.

In some sectors of the economy, like ordinary consumer articles, a lot of domestic demand is being met by cheap imports from China. The huge trade deficit with that country, continuing for years now, simply indicates that. For domestic demand to be met from domestic production, it is essential that most of the cheap imports—from electric kettles to garden umbrellas and kitchen wares—which are all being imported, be curbed. It could give a boost to domestic production and industries could start thinking of fresh investment to meet the surging demand.

Second, the investment cycle could resume once more when funds are available and at reasonable rates. The bulging portfolio of non-performing assets of the major lenders is acting as a brake for the domestic industry. The bad debts on banks' balance sheets and the strict recognition norms now being implemented by the Reserve Bank of India have made the banks risk averse. First, they lack fresh free funds and second, they are being risk-averse and rather parking their funds in safe government bonds and undertaking treasury operations to remain profitable than offer their funds to borrowers.

Stressed balance sheets and the overburden of bad debts have skewed their

assets to liabilities ratios and they can hardly offer loans. So, the current programme of assets resolution of PSU banks—which have close to 85 per cent share in overall lending—should inject enough vitality to resume their core banking activities. The investment cycle could be expected to resume thereafter.

There are still some other positive developments which could help the process of private investment. The fledgling corporate bonds market could work in disintermediation and channel funds directly into the corporate sector. While the development is too recent, yet it holds promise. There is a background to this. Since the demise of the so-called development finance institutions, namely the three development funding bodies Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) and the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI), long-term debt for project funding had withered away. Two of these turned into regular commercial banks and one had gone virtually defunct.

In the absence of these DFIs, the industry was finding it difficult to get long-term project finance at reasonable rates. The commercial banks were giving mainly working capital loans and long-term loans could be raised from abroad.

But only large companies could do that. Equity capital could then be the only resource for funding long-term projects and it is not always possible to raise equity capital. Equity could be a costly form and it is also rather long-term in that you cannot raise equity for investment and wipe it out after a while. Debt funds are what is needed.

Corporate bond markets, once fully operational and liquid, could serve this function very well. The emphasis on developing India's domestic corporate bonds markets is a welcome move and could eventually meet industry's need for long-term debt funds effectively.

These are of course the financial aspects of investment. There are some physical areas as well. You cannot really invest unless the investment is really sought after. What is happening, however, in this country is that investment is deterred. Without getting land for setting up new factories or other facilities, no investment can happen however much money is available.

What is needed is a stable policy environment and commitment to basic economic goals. Without that, growth or development cannot happen even when that is the only way to raise the country to convert its potential.

(The views expressed are strictly personal)

EDITORIAL

Paradise troubled

G ar firdaus bar-rue zamin ast, hami asto, hamin asto, hamin ast (If there is a heaven on earth, it's here, it's here). Mughal Emperor Jehangir is said to have said this when he visited Kashmir in the 17th century. Cut to the 21st century and we have a very different kind of Kashmir to deal with. While its virginal beauty—the alpine forest and the pristine streams—still remain by and large intact, the socio-political milieu is polluted and vitiated beyond repair. The decades of terror and militancy in the state has instilled a deep sense of fear and alienation among the local people. It has also brought negative publicity for the state and dented its image as a peace-loving Himalayan paradise blessed with vast lakes and stunning mountains. The Dal lake boulevard looks desolate, the multi-cuisine restaurants that dotted Srinagar's marketplace are all without business and the decorated autorickshaws with passenger area completely separated to offer more privacy to the honeymooning couples are missing from the streets. There are fewer celebrations and festivals are subdued. The paradise is in a state of shock. At the core of the problem is neighbour Pakistan, which has been fomenting unrest in the state by misguiding gullible youth, giving them training and logistical support to carry out anti-India operations. To keep Pakistan's interference in Kashmir under check, India has to deploy a large number of security forces along the Line of Control and elsewhere in Kashmir. The security forces have done a commendable job both in restricting Pakistan's nefarious designs and maintaining order and normalcy at the grassroots level. The many Shikaras with fascinating names in the Dal Lake and the enchanting large gardens spread across Kashmir, more notably in Srinagar, beckon the footloose and the tourists alike. But people can't visit the Indian Shangri La like ordinary tourists, for it has not seen normalcy in a long time. The peaceful, idyllic world of the ordinary Kashmiris is destroyed by the crossfire between the militants and the security forces. The Shikara, cable car and horse rides are unimaginable when the border areas witness cross-border firing as a routine, when security forces and the students face off every now and then, and when families receive dead and injured on a daily basis. The fun, the frolic, the scent of deodar, all have lost the magic. Just to illustrate how ironical the life can be for the ordinary Kashmiris, let's take the example of Ghalib Afzal Guru and Muhammad Naveed Aalam. Both these young boys have passed their Class XII examination with distinction, Ghalib scoring 88 per cent and Naveed 77 per cent. Ghalib is the son of Afzal Guru, who was executed in 2013 following his conviction in 2001 Parliament attack case. Naveed's elder brother Burhan Wani was a Hizbul Mujahideen militant and a poster boy of Kashmir militancy. He was killed in an encounter with Indian security forces in July 2016. These two young boys have made the country proud by their stellar success despite the odds that they had deal with. The families behind these two meritorious students deserve unqualified recognition and appreciation. More recently, hours before the New Year eve, three heavily armed Jaish terrorists attacked the CRPF training camp in Awantipora. One of the three militants was identified as the 16-year-old Fardeen Ahmad Khanday, son of J&K Police constable Ghulam Mohammad Khandey. And another noteworthy youth joining the ranks of the militants is Aligarh Muslim University scholar Manan Bashir Wani, who is said to have joined Hizbul Mujahideen. Call it a quirk of fate or a fault of policymakers, the life of ordinary citizens, especially women and children, is marked with fear, anguish, and helplessness. Decades of militancy has left little for livelihood for the local people. The paradise has long forgotten the mellifluous music of the mountain; the people have lost touch with their routine of growing maize and grazing sheep. Bringing it back to normalcy requires mediation and the Centre has appointed a former Intelligence Bureau director, Dineshwar Sharma, as the official interlocutor in Jammu and Kashmir. And, in an important development, the state government has decided to allow full amnesty to local militants who have not indulged in any terror act as yet and are willing to come back home to their families. The government is also trying to engage the youth in gainful employments, sports and tourism so as to bring them back to the mainstream. Home to a wide range of holy places including the Amarnath cave and the Vaishno Devi temple, Kashmir is a shining example of India's pluralism and tenets of coexistence. From skiing to mountaineering, it offers immense possibility of adventure sports, a key revenue-generating tourism product. Ghalib and Naveed give us the hope that the future generations of the Kashmiris will regain and restore the paradise.



ANJAN ROY

For domestic demand to be met from domestic production, it is essential that most of the cheap imports—from electric kettles to garden umbrellas and kitchen wares—be curbed. It could give a boost to domestic production and industries could start thinking of fresh investment to meet the surging demand

Quote martial

The art of communication is the language of leadership

JAMES HUMES

A VERSATILE CM

As the first woman CM of West Bengal, Hon'ble Mamata Banerjee deserves praise for the D-Litt conferred upon her by the prestigious Kolkata University. Artistic affinity with which Mamata Banerjee developed herself amid her busy schedule, with regard to literature and painting, have already proven her excellence. Always encouraging art and people through lyceum, Mamata Banerjee has proven herself to be worthy of this award. Her perspicuous writings, musical pitch, and sense of painting have been admired by many. For a long time, she has been orienting herself with the intelligentsia in the country from whom she has learnt a lot.

SAMIR CHAKRABORTY Via email

dear EDITOR

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Nature's fury

If Nature, by its mighty standards, decides to show that it is not in the least amused by man's irresponsibility and nonchalance, there can be unimaginable devastations. In recent times, environmentalists are getting more dismayed and anxious by natural catastrophes—they are even more exasperated that their warnings have been going in vain. 2017 will certainly be remembered for nature's anger that manifested itself in terrifying storms, hurricanes, wildfires, land and mudslides, high river levels, dormant volcanoes turning active, earthquakes and tornadoes yielding the most unpleasant of surprises. The trend has continued even in the first week and a half of 2018. California and its southern region is a case in point. The Governor of this West American State attributed the long-ranging wildfire, then the incessant rains followed by the raging mudslides, death and destruction, to the sea getting warmer and other manifestations of Climate Change. Someone like Al Gore who is famous for "An Inconvenient Truth" and its sequel can always turn around, shrug and say, "I told you so." For the last few decades, there have been enough warnings on the consequences of large-scale carbon emissions. These emissions have been the inevitable practice since Industrial Revolution. Now, they have assumed alarming proportions with greater industrial development. Add to this, the ever-growing and unmanageable human population. In 1800, the total world population was close to one billion. It grew to 7.6 billion in 2017 and, at this rate, it is likely to be close to more than eight billion in another three years. The more the people, the greater the demand for industrialisation, the lesser the green and forest cover, more depletion of natural resources and the worse. The celebrated Philosopher, Bertrand Russel, in his "Impact of Science on Society" tried to justify wars and natural catastrophes by arguing that these were the only way to check population. A modern day war with nuclear explosions would take a very heavy toll on both man and nature—that is why, before matters could get totally out of control, the Paris Climate Control Treaty came into being. Plenty of right-thinking countries were signatories. President Barack Obama played the leading role to show others the way. But matters changed as soon as his tenure ended. His successor, who was determined to remove the Obama legacy in every conceivable way, decided to look the other way. On Thursday, at the White House official media conference following the official meeting with the visiting Norwegian Prime Minister, President Trump declared that he would have nothing to do with the Paris accord on Climate Change because he was more committed to conventional fuel businesses like oil, gas and fossil fuel. When the Norwegian leader told him that their country depended on hydroelectric power for energy, he replied rather dismissively, "Good idea and good for you." The French President, Emmanuel Macron, who is emerging as a very active leader of the Western world, is confident that he would be able to persuade his American counterpart to join others on the Paris Treaty. Here's hoping, even against hope, that he would succeed if only for man's survival against all odds.



SHRUTAPA PAUL

We are unpatriotic when we forget the social and secular fabric of India, when we enforce our views on people even though our Constitution awards various freedoms to individuals. We are unpatriotic when we spit out that despicable red 'paan/gutkha' masala on the walls of public offices

How do we tell if someone is in love? Does he or she make public declarations of his undying affection? Nowadays, much of the declarations happen on social media anyway. How do we tell if someone is religious? Do they carry on their person various symbols of their faith? Not really, right? Love and religion are both personal. Some choose to flaunt it, others have a more silent expression of it. Neither can be seen through the singular spectrum of mass expression. If love and religion are expressed according to an individual's beliefs, how can expressions of patriotism be governmentally enforced?

A few days ago, I was at the vet's with probably over a dozen pet-parents and their fidgety pets. A movie playing on the telly had the National Anthem coming on. I stood up for it, some people looked at me curiously, but most continued with what they were doing. I consider myself a patriot; I believe in nationalism but not at the cost of forcing it down someone else's throat. I stand up for the National Anthem even in the privacy of my house; even when there is no one to watch me. It is my choice to do so. But does it make the rest any less patriotic?

On November 30, 2016, a bench of Justices Dipak Misra and Amitava Roy, had made it mandatory for the National Anthem to be played in cinema halls before the start of a movie and moviegoers would have to duly show respect by standing up. Did we really have to prove our patriotism before watching a movie? This week, the Supreme Court overturned the draconian order leaving it to the prerogative of the cinema halls. But the rider was that if the National Anthem is played then all, except people with disability, would have to stand up for it. Though the verdict was hailed as a victory for Kerala's Kodungallur Film Society (KFS) that had challenged the 2016 interim order, it still smacked of



Polluting roads and displaying civic sensibilities must be markers for judging patriotism (Representational Image)

judicially imparting patriotism among Indians.

Patriotism is best described as an attachment to one's homeland, its culture, its history, its diversity. It is not limited to showing respect to the National Anthem alone. I believe we are unpatriotic when we vandalise public property if our demands are not met. We are unpatriotic when we forget the social and secular fabric of India. When we enforce our views on people even though our Constitution awards various freedoms to individuals. We are unpatriotic when we spit out that despi-

table red 'paan/gutkha' masala on the walls of public offices; or when we urinate on the road even when there are public conveniences available. Or even when we desecrate monuments and old structures with graffiti. We are definitely not patriotic when we litter our roads and tourist attractions with all kinds of garbage. If that is not being unpatriotic, I do not know what else is.

Why not make civic sense mandatory as an expression of patriotism? Why not penalise all who disrespect the nation and its ethos by damaging its secular image, its heritage sites, its

public infrastructure? I would readily exhort people to follow these diktats rather than those ill-thought, myopic decisions such as making people stand up for the national song. Let us not be touchy about things that have little bearing on the ground. To improve the nation and our surroundings, and to show true patriotism, there are a dozen things that should be made mandatory; standing up for the National Anthem is not one of them.

(The writer is a journalist and media entrepreneur. The views expressed are strictly personal)

Transforming the face of a Kingdom

Under the firm leadership of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salam, Saudi Arabia is denouncing its radical outlook to diversify its economy



NILOVA ROY CHAUDHURY

The women of Saudi Arabia will be allowed to enter some of the country's sports stadiums, earlier an all-male preserve. A royal decree issued last September will allow women the right to drive in the country, beginning June. In further social transformations, the municipality of the holy city of Madinah will be run by women

There is a huge buzz throughout Saudi Arabia as the hitherto conservative Kingdom – seen as the religious font of Islam and home to its holiest shrines – gets ready to welcome women into its sports stadiums beginning this holy Friday. The women of Saudi Arabia have entered 2018 with hope unlike ever before, for now, they will be allowed greater freedom and perhaps play select sports – and welcomingly, drive. These efforts to bring gender parity are among a series of sweeping social and economic changes being orchestrated by the young Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, to propel Saudi Arabia's position into a global leadership role in the 21st century.

The year 2017 was transformational for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a series of initiatives designed to improve gender equality, promote economic diversification, root out corruption and make it more open and attractive to visitors. Behind a vast majority of these path-breaking initiatives was the motivation of Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the world's youngest defence minister, who, at 32, was elevated to the position of Crown Prince last June. The initiatives he has taken form a part of the "National Transformation Programme 2020" and the Kingdom's "Vision 2030", guidelines of which he had outlined last year.

The most momentous of these have been on gender equality. For the first time, girls in public schools will be allowed to play sports and receive physical education. The women of Saudi Arabia will be allowed to enter some of the country's sports stadiums, earlier an all-male preserve, while a royal decree issued last September will allow women the right to drive in the country, beginning June. In further social transformations, the municipality of the holy city of Madinah will be run by women. The women-only branch of the municipality will provide all the regular services offered by municipalities, including the issuance of licences for commercial activities and construction permits, inspection campaigns and investment opportunities, among others. These measures gained international recognition and Saudi Arabia was elected in 2017 to the UN Women's Rights Commission for a four-year term.



Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman is radically transforming deep-rooted Saudi ethos

Other than the major social impact, shrewd economic thoughts are behind these measures, as increasing women's participation in the workplace will boost the economy and combat corruption. The "National Transformation Programme 2020" aims to capitalise on the Kingdom's youth dividend by opening up the country to more employment opportunities through sports and entertainment and to empower women.

Opening the country to more entertainment, allowing musical concerts and even a Comic-Con event (a three-day festival of anime, pop art, video gaming and film-related events last year) was part of a wide-ranging boost to reform the

economy and society and restore what Prince Mohammed bin Salman called the "moderate" face of Islam. The plan involves changing the education curriculum, increasing women's participation in the workforce and investing in the entertainment and tourism sectors to create jobs for young people.

Equally far-reaching are the efforts to open up the Kingdom to outsiders, by offering tourist visas for foreigners, from this year, and creating facilities to promote the country as a tourist destination. The Red Sea project, which aims to offer an unparalleled tourist destination, will be developed along with leading global hospitality firms that will not be subject to the Kingdom's con-

servative rules. Over 18 million foreigners visited Saudi Arabia last year, almost all on pilgrimage to Mecca. As tourism is the country's second-most important sector, the Red Sea project will spearhead the diversification of the Saudi leisure industry.

Meanwhile, an ongoing nationwide anti-corruption drive culminated last November with the detention of four ministers, high-profile entrepreneurs and 11 princes, including a son of former King Abdullah and multi-billionaire Alwaleed bin Talal. This not only consolidated the Crown Prince's authority but clearly sent out a message that the royal family was not immune from facing the brunt of law, hitherto unthinkable in the King-

dom where the descendants of Ibn Saud were seen as a law unto themselves. That members of the royal family could no longer take their privileges for granted became more apparent when princes, protesting a cut in their water and electricity consumption payments, were taken into custody in the first week of 2018.

"Vision 2030" outlines the Crown Prince's intent to make the country the centre of the Islamic and Arab world, a hub connecting three continents and an economic and investment powerhouse. That Prince Mohammed bin Salman is King Salman's chosen successor and heads the Council for Economic Affairs and Development, which oversees the Kingdom's economic affairs and

also shapes its political and security policies, indicates that the manifold measures which he has initiated will be ultimately carried through. After taking over as Crown Prince in June 2017, Mohammed signalled his intent to fight radicalisation and combat terrorism, spearheading a boycott of Qatar over its alleged support to terrorism. In October, the prince said the return of "moderate Islam" was central to his plans to modernise the Kingdom.

After a horrific terrorist attack that killed over 300 people in Egypt, Mohammed declared a "war against terrorism" at the inaugural meeting of the 41-member Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) in Riyadh in November saying, "We will not allow such elements to tarnish the image of Islam."

With global Climate Change measures intensifying moves towards less dependence on fossil fuels, the Crown Prince's Vision 2030 aims to drastically reduce the Kingdom's reliance on oil while reforming, diversifying and privatising the economy. The Crown Prince plans, this year, to sell about five per cent government stake in Aramco, the national oil company. He intends to create the world's largest sovereign wealth fund, worth up to \$3 trillion, with money generated by partially privatising Saudi Aramco. He also plans to create a \$500 billion business and industrial zone extending to Jordan and Egypt. The 26,500 sq km city, known as NEOM, will focus on industries including advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, energy, entertainment, food and water. It will be powered entirely by wind power and solar energy.

The country has also announced plans to build a massive entertainment city in Riyadh. The 334 sq km city, almost the size of Las Vegas, when ready, will offer cultural, entertainment and sporting activities. The Al-Qiddiya project will be a part of Saudi Arabia's diversification drive and subsequently boost economic development by creating major job opportunities for local men and women. The project perhaps best captures Prince Mohammed bin Salman's intent to radically transform the face of the Kingdom. IMS

(Nilova Roy Chaudhury is a senior journalist. The views expressed are strictly personal)

Catch-22 of Casteism

Caste remains a complex tool for marginalisation and subjugation, aimed primarily at the consolidation of the positions of the powers that be



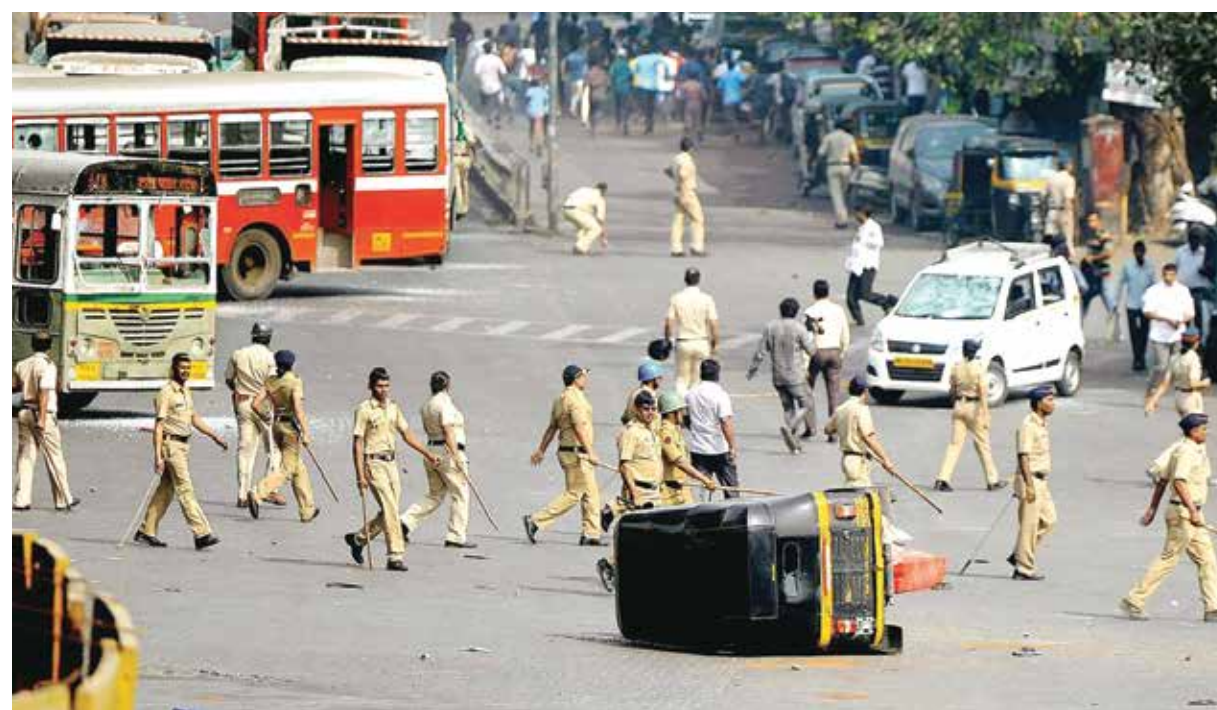
KAVYA DUBE

There is an implicit political need to perpetuate caste-based segregation. In several instances, caste leaders have indeed carved themselves a niche and have come much at par with the affluent. But their ascendance does not necessarily elevate the status of their community per se. The result is a fragmented vote bank

Caste conflict that broke out recently at Bhima-Koregaon brings to the fore the one vexing concern that more than characterising the largely Hindu society of India, has been the flash point of Indian politics – at any level, at any given time. The symbolism of this celebrated historical event holds greater relevance today. The details of this episode point to the adherence to caste and communal identity, irrespective of the caste. When the fragile Maratha supremacy of the Peshwas was thwarted, it was this decisive (and very significant in modern times) Battle of Koregaon that led to the dissolution of the Maratha confederacy.

The victory memorial of this battle conspicuously acknowledges the Mahars in this crucial event. Historically an Untouchable community, the Mahars, given their traditional roles, attained a higher status among their class primarily owing to the security services they provided, among others. Mahars were degraded and resigned to the status of Untouchable during the reign of the Peshwas. It was under the British that the Mahar community woke up to its potential to rise and advance. They had a low-status but an important role to play in the traditional village system. Eventually, when many from this community migrated to the city, they turned to new occupation and worked in mills, docks, and railways. Inevitably, they aspired for higher status and equality.

This community also lent its service to various armies over centuries. Adding to the evolution of this community, the British also recruited them heavily (until the Revolt of 1857). After 1857, the nar-



Scene of protest in Mumbai following riots in Bhima-Koregaon when two caste groups clashed over claims about a two-century-old historical event

rative changed. The British floated the 'Martial Race' theory which classified (discriminated) castes into martial and non-martial categories. To gain better control over India, this play for social appeal was much akin to the traditional *varna* (caste/class-based division) system of the Hindu society which acknowledges *Kshatriya* as the natural warrior in the social order. This reinstated some value to the defeated Peshwas. Besides, the conflicts within various parallel communities were ideal for the British to capitalise on the 'Martial Race' pretext and bring them under their fold.

This entire story serves a lesson. The connotation of such power play and clash goes beyond the narrow lines of communal conflict and stretches of time in history. As much as Caste is a com-

munal identity, it is also a tool to sustain discrimination on any basis whatsoever. It is thus deployed as an organised method of marginalisation, subjugation, and oppression aimed primarily at the consolidation of the positions of the powers that be. It is hence, very much an instrument of power play which continues to be necessary in the present times. The spill-over of caste politics in recent times has added a novel texture to politics palpable on the national front.

There is an implicit political need to perpetuate caste-based segregation. In the fervour to break free from caste inequality and bring it at par with the 'forward' caste groups, new leaders have emerged to take the centre-stage but only to be supported by their respective caste groups largely. In several instances, these caste leaders

have indeed carved themselves a niche and brought themselves much at par with the affluent in most economic aspects. But the ascendance of the leaders does not necessarily elevate the status of their community per se. The result is a fragmented vote bank. The Bhima-Koregaon episode asserted to be an orchestrated event is sufficiently explanatory of electoral motives for 2019.

Oppression, from historic times, as a method associated with caste, is a result of the malpractice to consolidate social power and position. Given the absence of any real compensation to the communities for ages of oppression they had been subjected to, the Band-Aid method of Reservation remains a matter that is literally politically untouchable. Caste groups are here to stay and caste is a ready

identity up for exploitation by anyone depending on the purpose. A possible antidote to this is social inclusiveness and enabling individuals to come at a platform of equal opportunities; by way of celebrating the diversity of the Indian society despite the terror of Hindutva.

Interestingly, Mahar Regiment of the Indian Army is the only regiment that is composed of troops from all regions and communities of India, unlike other regiments which have some specifications with regard to recruitment. This is when the Military does not recognise the Indian government's Reservation system for recruitment! So, when casteism becomes a method of politics, does that not amount to anti-national?

(The author is Senior Copy Editor with Millennium Post. The views expressed are strictly personal)



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Truly unprecedented! Kudos to 4 seniormost judges of SC who addressed a Press Conf today to apprise the people about the extraordinary abuse of 'master of roster' powers by CJI in selectively assigning politically sensitive cases to hand picked junior judges for desired outcome



KARUNA NUNDY
@karunanundy

Proud of a court where four of the top five have the constitutional spine to speak of transparency and predictability in allocating cases. Had Justice HR Khanna not stood up during the Emergency, our constitutional identity would have been very different.



YASHWANT SINHA
@YashwantSinha

What the judges are hinting at is loud and clear. Hope we get at the truth of Judge Loya's death.



SANJAY JHA
@JhaSanjay

Dear Indian media; now is your time to stand up and fight to preserve Indian democracy. Let the men and the boys stand segregated.

It's so easy to mock someone nowadays: Taapsee Pannu

The *Judwa 2* actor, who has been trolled a lot on social media, will be addressing the issue of trolling through a TV show



MUMBAI: Actor Taapsee Pannu feels social media has given people the power to mock someone easily, and says that it can "genuinely crush someone's confidence".

"I think with the power social media has given us, it is so easy to mock someone nowadays. What people don't understand is that it can genuinely crush someone's confidence. Just because a female does not walk by the conventional rules, people like to call her by different names which is highly upsetting," Taapsee said in a statement.

The actor, who has been trolled for flaunting a bikini and wearing short dress on social media, will be addressing the issue through TV show "Troll Police", which brings celebrities and their trolls face-to-face.

Talking about it, she said: "I too have been trolled, and through 'MTV Troll Police', I really want to convey the message to youngsters out there that do not use internet anonymity to shed the veneer of decency."

Taapsee, who now has 5 million-plus followers on *Instagram*, is a part of the show for the first episode. She will come face-to-face with Ashish, a student from Lucknow and a self-proclaimed social media blogger who trolls her on social media platforms.

"It's humiliating! After achieving so much for yourself as an independent woman, this is how you get appreciated by the men of our society. After reading all these comments, sometimes I feel that I have opted for a wrong profession. Going forward if you see any of your friend or relative trolling someone then please share this experience with them." The show will go on air on MTV on Saturday. **IMS**



Working with Shah Rukh comes naturally to me: Kajol

"I've come from a time when we used to work from 7 in the morning till 9 in the night on a daily basis without the comforts of sitting in an AC room. Somewhere down the line, you realise that work is God. You have to take it seriously everyday, it's the most important thing," she says. Much of the discipline, Kajol says, comes from her mother who taught her early in childhood that no work is lesser or bigger. "As a kid my mother made me sweep the house and clean the bathroom. She said if at any point you don't have servants in your house, you should be able to look after the house. Somewhere it gives you amazing work ethics. I've even made my kids broom the house so that they learn not to litter," she says.

The actor launched Hindustan Unilever Limited's new campaign 'A Playing Billion' to promote healthy hygiene habits among children. **PTI**

MUMBAI: Having featured in over half a dozen films and being considered one of the most sought-on-screen pair, Kajol says working alongside Shah Rukh Khan is always a pleasure as the superstar makes the experience easier. Kajol and Shah Rukh shot for a special sequence for Aanand L Rai's next, *Zero*.

With Shah Rukh on *Dilwale*, praised the actor for his dedication to cinema.

"We actually shot for half-an-hour but it was great. It's always fabulous to work with him. He is a really amazing man to work with because he is 300 per cent involved in whatever he is doing. It's great fun because he is such a fine actor that it comes very naturally to work with him and alongside him," says Kajol in an interview.

The actor may have been around for close to three decades in the industry but says her dedication to give it all for work hasn't reduced.



Lily James's 'inner battles' with social media



LONDON: Actor Lily James said she feels like a "hypocrite" when she thinks about quitting the social media while continuing to be present on it. The 28-year-old actor spoke about her own activity on social media in light of Daisy Ridley's decision to delete her accounts after being trolled on *Twitter*, reported *Femalefirst*.

"I completely and utterly relate to that. I believe it to be true, and therefore I am a hypocrite. I am on (social media), and I have a constant inner battle about it," James said. "I'm not on *Twitter*, I don't want to always have something to say, I want to save that for my life. Also I think, especially as a young person, you change your opinions every second, so (you shouldn't) put something down in concrete that's going to come back and haunt you," she added. The *Baby Driver* actor, however, sounded positive about *Instagram*.

"*Instagram* you can use for all sorts of different reasons and that can be powerful. But I do worry about obsession and about perfection and about always presenting your life in a certain way, which is very untrue to how you go about your day," James said. "We go through all sorts of different emotions and *Instagram* makes it look like everything is perfect, and that's rubbish," she added. **PTI**

James Franco's novel describes how he approaches women



four former students of Franco, who once ran an acting school, said he pressured them to engage in sexually charged situations, including expectations of nudity and simulated sex acts.

The novel is a collection of confessional tales by anonymous actors, including Franco himself, blurring the lines between fiction and memoir. But in some chapters, Franco describes in graphic detail how he approaches women. In one chapter, Franco described how he kept a steady stream of sexual partners: "I had something going with most of my female co-stars and worked up a routine so that I could see someone every night."

He said that because of his frequent travel, he managed to meet young women all over the world. "One of my favourite approaches was to ask the young girls that requested to take a photo with me to email me a copy of the photo; that way I can give them my info very quickly in front of a crowd of fans and later work out a way to see them." **IMS**

LOS ANGELES: Actor James Franco's novel 'Actors Anonymous', which he penned in 2013, has resurfaced in news amid allegations of sexual misbehaviour against him. Passages from Franco's novel, describing how the actor-director allegedly seduced "young girls", began circulating on social media, reports *variety.com*. The Golden Globe winner has faced allegations of sexual misbehaviour from his former acting students.

The *Los Angeles Times* recently reported that five women, including



Zareen Khan not interested in being a prop in big films



MUMBAI: Actor Zareen Khan says she prefers to do meatier roles in small movies rather than being a prop in a big budget multi-starrer. The actor made her Bollywood debut with *Veer* and then went on to work in films like *Housefull 2* but of late she has done smaller projects such as *Hate Story 3*, *Aksar 2* and her upcoming release *1921*.

"Rather than being a prop in a film with big actors, I would love to do a

meatier and more meaningful role in a film that does not feature a big actor. Though I do not judge an actor or a film on these levels," she told. The actor said the big projects that she did in the beginning of her career did not benefit her much.

"*Housefull 2* was a big film but it was a multi-starrer and I was one of the four girls, so I couldn't cash in on it completely. In *Ready!* it was just a song. *Veer* was a dream debut, unfortunately the film did not do well."

"I received flak for looking like somebody else (she was called a Katrina Kaif look-alike) and the weight and all. Somehow, it did not work for me." Her next release is Vikram Bhatt's horror flick *1921* and she says, horror films have to be made intelligently. "When Vikram makes a horror film, he has logic and reasoning to it. He doesn't do things for the heck of it." **PTI**

MARY BLIGE GETS STAR ON Hollywood Walk of Fame



LOS ANGELES: American singer-songwriter Mary J Blige has been honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in the recording category.

The ceremony will take place next week at 6201 Hollywood Boulevard in front of Eastown. Sean "Diddy" Combs will join Hollywood Chamber President and CEO Leron Gubler to unveil the star.

"Mary J. Blige is one of the most popular singers of our generation. Fans will be thrilled to see her star on the Boulevard

as her career milestones are celebrated on this very famous sidewalk," said Ana Martinez, producer of the Walk of Fame ceremonies.

The Grammy Award-winning artiste has been recognised for her acting work. Blige received the Golden Globe Award, Screen Actors Guild Award and Critics' Choice Award nominations for her role in Dee Rees' period drama 'Mudbound' as well as a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Song for 'Mighty

River'.

Born in the Bronx, New York, Blige got her start in music by signing with Uptown Records in 1989. At 18, she was the label's youngest and first female artist.

Her debut album 'What's the 411?' was executive produced by Combs and spun off hits including 'You Remind Me' and 'Real Love'. Since then, she has released 12 additional albums that have garnered nine Grammy Award wins from her 31 nominations.

Her film debut was in 2001's 'Prison Song', followed by Tyler Perry's 'I Can Do Bad All by Myself'. She also starred alongside Tom Cruise, Alec Baldwin, and Russell Brand in 2012's 'Rock of Ages' and appeared in 2013's musical drama 'Black Nativity'.

On the TV front, Blige has guest starred on 'How to Get Away With Murder', 'Empire' and '30 Rock'. She also played Evillene, the Wicked Witch of the West, on NBC's musical 'The Wiz Live!'. **IMS**