



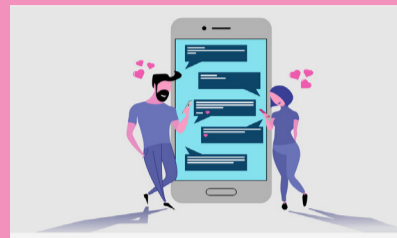
## CAA/NRC redefined

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# Demon Virus spreads fear

Anjana Jayakrishnan

**Shenzhen:** Less than a month after the “mystery illness” was first identified, the novel coronavirus has infected around 5974 people in China alone. Chinese officials confirmed that the death toll had crossed 130, with new infections reported in Singapore and Thailand. Wuhan, the city at the epicenter of the outbreak has been placed under strict quarantine. Life for ordinary Chinese people has become a silent maelstrom of shutdowns and quarantine measures.

“I have a few friends in Wuhan, but none are sick. They cannot leave. About 50 million people are quarantined at the moment,” said Geoffrey.V.Schofield, a personal fitness trainer and writer who lives



Doctors treating patients in Wuhan

in the southern city of Shenzhen. “Wearing a mask is mandatory on the metro and in other public places. More than 90% of people are wearing them, though they are selling out fast and can be hard to find,”

he added.

The virus was traced back to a ‘wet market’ in Wuhan, which sold many exotic animals in cramped and often unsanitary conditions. DNA analyses conducted on the virus -

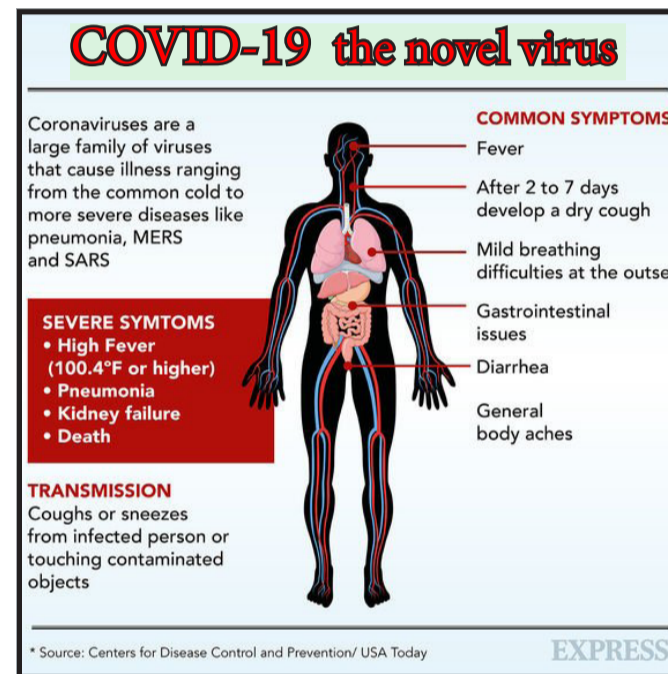
now named COVID-19 - by Wuhan Institute of Virology revealed that it was near-identical to a same species of virus found in bats. Efforts are being made to synthesise a vaccine.

New data published

in the Lancet journal suggests that infections may have started as far back as December 1st, meaning that the virus may have been active earlier.

Geoffrey and other citizens have expressed

greater positivity. “The government is being very transparent about the entire process, and are taking adequate measures. They have a tough situation, but are responding well” said Geoffrey.



## Kerala students a rallying point in CAA protests

Gayathri K S

**Karyavattom:** Students have always been the first bastion of anti-establishment activities. Ever since the police manhandled and arrested students of Jamia Milia and other universities for holding protests against CAA and NRC, a united front has been put up by students across India. The counterparts of the students in Kerala speak on why they oppose this act and why are they into the streets.

“When religion becomes the criteria for determining citizenships, it’s purely unconstitutional and discriminatory,” opined Beena, a second-year



Protest in Karyavattom Campus during Xmas Celebration

MA Economics student at the Karyavattom Campus of Kerala University. The students and teachers organised a joint march to show solidarity with their counterparts in Jamia Milia and JNU. Aishe Ghosh, President of the Student’s Union in JNU also lauded Malayali students for their quick

response to the protests, pointing out that it was students from Kerala who had taken the initiative to raise their voices in such a crucial time.

“It’s now or never for India,” says Ramshad A Khan, Chairman of Kerala University Department Union,

Karyavattom Campus. He adds that the students here clearly understand what CAA and NRC are. They unequivocally oppose laws like the CAA, which they say has no place in a secular democratic Republic like India. The latest move by the Central Government blatantly violates the fundamental rights to Equality guaranteed by Article 14 of Indian Constitution. With CM Pinarayi Vijayan doubling down on the state’s refusal to enact CAA or the NRC bill, the same sentiment sweeps across campuses in Kerala.

## A vox pop of students on CAA and NRC

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## Rivers for our future

Amal M B



Poet V Madhusoodhanan Nair inaugurating the seminar on “Rivers for Future” at Karyavattom

**Karyavattom:** The Department of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries of the Kerala University, Karyavattom Campus organised a three day international seminar on conserving rivers

for future. Prominent speakers from different universities across the globe led sessions on water conservation and issues related with rivers and other water bodies on Earth.



## Transitioning dreams into reality

What can a group of youngsters do with Rs 10,000? Make a film of course!

Amal M B

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Malayalam Cinema saw new heights last year when *Lucifer* touched the benchmark of 200 crores and other films like *Odiyan* and *Madhuraraja* pushed the borders of the revenue a film in Bollywood could touch. 2020 is all set to see the emergence of a group of young film makers whose movie *Transition* gave wings to their dreams. *Transition*, was made on a meagre budget of Rs. 10000 and is the debut directorial project of Krishnanunni Mangalath, son of popular director Radhakrishnan Mangalath.

“Though I have made a few short films, a feature film has been a dream of mine since my school days,” says Krishnanunni. “I could have never made this possible without the honest effort from my friends...We never set



Cast and crew of the movie *Transition*

out to make a film with Rs. 10000 it's just that we somehow ended up making one at that cost, due to our methods,” he laughs.

The movie revolves around the journey of a young man, who travels from Madurai to Thiruvananthapuram. Along the way he runs into an eclectic set of people which forms the crux of the plot.

20 year old Krishnanunni Mangalath has also done the cinematography, editing and some of the other

post production works as well. The movie which has a duration of just 75 minutes is shot in monochrome using an old Canon 7D camera which was borrowed.

Much of the budget was spent on travelling. Krishnanunni's friends helped out with music and sound oroduction while editing was done on his own laptop using available viedo editing software. “The box office success is never a matter of concern for anyone of us...we look forward to send the film to a couple



Krishnanunni Mangalath



of film festivals. It is of course an experimental film and for me success is that I have achieved my dream and my film has hit the big screen,” added Krishnanunni.

## Loops the beauty of art in a hoop

Amal M B

**Thiruvananthapuram:** 21 year old Praveena Preme from the city is going places with her colourful hoop art. It has been only a few years since she found her interest in hoop art. Embroidery hoops are now being used widely as to display art. Praveena brings out magic in hoops with her creativity and innovative caricatures.

“It was only an year ago when I decided to explore hoop art after I came across it in Pinterest. Since then I got hooked to it as I already had an interest towards art since my childhood,” says Praveena

A second year microbiology student at Amity University, Noida, Praveena loves experimenting in art and hence christened her venture ‘Crafterina’. She was also successful in putting up a stall at



Praveena Preme

Olam festival held at Tagore theatre where some of her works were displayed. She has now completed more than 25 embroidery hoops.

These hoops are inexpensive and the texture of the stitches can be seen and touched which makes them really appealing and special. There are two kinds of hoops available plastic and metal. Praveena prefers to use the metal one. Once the stitching is done the hoops can be framed and hung on the wall or be propped on a shelf.

## Nishagandhi blooms again for dance lovers

The seven-day cultural fiesta of dance at Nishagandhi

Amrutha C K

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Nishagandhi Dance Festival ended on 26th January after the seven fascinating evenings, marked by different captivating dance forms in several genres.

“It is a welcome sign that artists have come out in protest to express their resentment against anti-democratic and fascist tendencies,”

said chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan in his inauguration address.”Such protests through art will upset many, who are the practitioners of intolerance. Artists should fight against any move that hinders freedom of expression through art,” he added. The Nishagandhi open-air theatre in the palace compound holds the Nishagandhi dance

festival every year in January. Renowned dancers performed a variety of classical dances such as Mohiniyattam, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri, modern ballet and other folk forms. Artist and connoisseurs of dance from all over India came to enjoy this cultural treat. The audience was treated to a veritable feast of art at no cost, where they could see renowned



Kalamandalam Gopi as Nala

artists from across the globe perform. Classical music performances were also featured.



Aishe Gosh, JNU Students Union President inaugurating the Kerala University Department Union in an event held at the Jubilee Hall of Karyavattom Campus on February 6th 2020.

## Kerala University Department Union Representatives

**Karyavattom:** SFI won all 19 seats uncontested in the Kerala University Department Union elections. First year MPhil Islamic History student Ramshad Khan A was elected Chairman, while Gayathri K.S from Communication and Journalism was elected General Secretary. Social Science student rep. Manusha Ahlad became the first transgender candidate to be elected in Kerala University.



Ramshad Khan A  
(Chairman)



Shereena S  
(Vice Chairperson)



Aswin Babu  
(UUC)



Gayathri K S  
(General Secretary)



Gopika  
(Lady Rep)



Bindu V  
(UUC)



Adithya P  
(Lady Rep)



Nibin Baby  
(UUC)



Nithin Benjamin  
(Arts club secretary)



# English, still a dream in Govt. schools

Nishanth P

The educational infrastructure of Kerala has witnessed a steady development in the past six to seven years. Various programmes and initiatives have been introduced by the changing governments in the education sector. These political parties may have ideological or political differences. But history shows us that they are not ready to compromise on the primary and secondary education of the state. The fact that Kerala is the most literate state is proof of this statement. But there is a difference between the educational and practical linguistic capabilities of students. And this difference creates uncertainty in the future learning skills of students.

The exact reason as to why parents choose more costly, demanding and private schools for a child's primary education could be reduced to one little

factor- development of child's linguistic capabilities. It is a common belief that a child would be well versed in English if he or she is admitted to a private school where the administration often insists on using English as the mode of communication. Even though every student might not turn up to be a good orator in English, a fair percentage would acquire the confidence to use English when needed. But what is the case of students in public schools or government funded schools?

Government schools might offer the best teachers in the state to their students. But the students seem to lack the courage to communicate in English. We visited St.Mary's HSS, a government funded school located at the coastal area of Vizhinjam in the capital city of Kerala. Most of the students studying in this school are from the community of fishermen



Students at St Mary's HSS giving a presentation

- people who are in a way least exposed to the language of English. Therefore, these students will not be able to afford the luxury of parental guidance in their quest to learn English as the mode of communication.

The students of Plus One and Plus Two end up giggling when they are asked something in English. If this is the case of a school where English teachers are present, it is not hard to imagine the state of the hundreds of government schools where there are no specialized English teachers, and where English is taught

by teachers whose majors are Biology and Mathematics.

When they were asked to reply in English, many remained hesitant and a few refused outright to answer. When compelled, they replied in broken English. "No importance to studying in English"; "Mother language is Malayalam"; "Other people will mock us"; "Parents do not speak English"; were some of the explanations given.. It shows a sad state of self-awareness in the students as they realise why they are handicapped in English but also lack the means

or the initiative to change the situation.

A single student was able to recall and recite the lines of an English post seen in social media: "Born from a poor family, I am a loser; But one day I will die as a legend." While humorous, it is also testament to the unfulfilled potential of these children. Older teaching methods with blackboards and books cannot keep up with the changing times and children's access to technology. The way he imbibed this line from social media, points out that new

methods of teaching that could be implemented to make them better communicators in English.

There are programs like 'Hello English' and 'ASAP foundation course' in government schools and colleges that provide them with proper training in Communicative English. But they are offered only to selected students. More such programmes should be implemented so that these students are not outperformed by their peers in more affluent schools. State controlled and state funded schools could boast a long list of their students who occupy positions of power in both Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations. Some kind of reform is very much needed in the educational sector, especially in the linguistic departments to prepare the students for their future life where English would become an inevitable part of their life.

## Curtains come down on third edition of MBIFL

Asha P N

**Thiruvananthapuram:** One of the city's most beloved literary fests, the 'Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters' (MBIFL) came to a close on February 2nd. The festival which was held at the Kanakakunnu Palace premises at Palayam from January 30th to February 2nd 2020 featured over 300 speakers leading different sessions which were all fully packed with audience from diverse age groups.

The sessions were arranged at different venues set up in the premises, namely - Mathrubhumi Hall, Festival Hall, Hall of Letters, Bamboo Groove, Poe Tree, as well as the Nisagandhi Auditorium.

Each day began with musical performances in the morning. Sessions were arranged in a way that each venue had its own characteristics and retained a unique



A session from MBIFL

atmosphere for the audience. The subjects varied from solo presentations to talks to conversations. They were held between 10 AM in the morning and 6 PM in the evening and were followed by the entertainment programs arranged at the Nisagandhi Auditorium. Evenings were a treat for music lovers as different artists performed on different days. Another attraction of the festival was the bookstore inside, which hosted books of personal choice from the collection along with sale of articles like bags, diaries, water bottles etc.

The specially-arranged 'Ka Corner' was one of the main highlights. It provided a great opportunity for visitors to get his/her caricature done in manual or digital format free of cost and a large number of people made use of this opportunity.

The Punjabi Dance performers were one of the highlights of the venue, dazzling the audience with their colourful and rhythmic performance.

Handloom products were also promoted through this as it was elected to make the



Sashi Tharoor at the book signing session



Murali Gopi leading a session

dresses of the group of 12 hosts that ran the session.

On the whole these sessions provided the attendees with whole lot of new information and gave them the opportunity to listen to their favourite authors or poets and journalists as well as meet them in person.

## KU elects first transgender representative



Manusha Ahlad

**Anjana Jayakrishnan**

**Karyavattom:** 22-year old Manusha Ahlad officially took up her position as the first transgender student representative of social sciences in the Union Inauguration ceremony held at Karyavattom campus on February 6.

A postgraduate student in the Politics department, Manusha's journey has been inspiring, but filled with obstacles. Manusha is frank about the struggles lying ahead. "Kerala is both highly transphobic and trans-accepting," she

revealed. "I think with greater representation we can solve a lot of existing problems." In December 2019, she requested the University of Kerala for separate quarters as she could no longer live in the men's hostel. With the support of her classmates and teachers, Manusha is now open about her identity and confident enough to stand as a representative of the transgender community on campus.

She also has high aspirations of becoming an IAS officer in the future.



## Academic Climate needs a change

The way our country is approaching the educational sector is a matter that should be subjected to serious discussions. The educational index for different parts of the country shows huge variations with each other. The fact that Kerala has a top index of 76.6% and Uttar Pradesh with the lowest index of 36.4% does not paint a rosy picture for the educational sector and its opportunities.

It has been only two years since news came from Uttar Pradesh which stated that almost 3500 PhD holders applied for a peon job in the state. For the 2019 NTPC exam conducted by Railway Recruitment Board, it is estimated that almost two crore Indians applied to appear in the exam. The minimum eligibility for applying to this exam was the successful completion of higher secondary education but a significant number of people with Master's degrees applied to the same exam. Think about all the hard work and struggles that were put into creating a doctoral search only to find yourself applying for a peon job years later.

What could be the reason for this? Is it because the country fails to provide quality education across various disciplines or is because of the over glorification of government jobs in the country? There is no clear answer as to why job opportunities are so limited for highly-educated candidates. Last year, as much as 5844,5020 students were awarded PhD from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh respectively. The ways these scholars are created in such large numbers make the job market unbalanced and unaffordable to handle these qualified candidates. An enquiry must be sent to the grass root level to check whether the projects carried out by these states are genuine and useful as far as social or academic areas are concerned. Universities should admit students based on their merits and qualifications rather than the weight of their pockets.

Government jobs over the years have offered a lot of perks and benefits including financial stability and job security. This makes it a highly sought out sector. But on the downside, thousands of young minds are made to work in fields which generally will have no connection with their respective academic field. This raises an important issue of concern which puts into question the relevance of college education. The curious case of thousands of engineers who work as bank officers and business developers are testimonial to this. Lack of opportunities in their field is an example cited by these misplaced engineers as the reason for their career shift. But if engineers are doing bank jobs, what will happen of the lakhs of students who study banking or economic or taxation for that matter.

Education is indeed one of the important social aspects that needs to be looked after for the overall development of the country. But the current conventional form of education system should undergo a systematic change so that it could spearhead the changes in the country. If we look in a different perspective, the current educational system is not doing much help at the bottom level to create a change of significance. The education inflicted upon an individual should reflect in his or her behavioral and psychological approach. It must instill in his/her mind, a tendency to move on from the mass notions and must enable him/her to think of his/her own. Therefore, an educational reform is something that we should look up to or support so that we could prosper as a nation.

“

## CAA - Students Speak

”

The students of India do not want this nation to fall into a Stark future reminiscent of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy and for this we will fight till the last person.  
- Nithin A, UoK

On a lighter note



Anjana Jayakrishnan

**Not all superheroes wear capes!**

CAA and NRC is making the future of socialism in trouble. The educated population had clearly stated that they oppose this bill. Students are very much influenced by this population, and they strongly condemn the bill. The media here also have a major role in influencing the students. Constitution gives us the right to hold protest.

- Shyamshanker TM, Kannur University

There is only one answer that can explain the framing of the CAA. Which is an expression of the evident Islamophobia of the BJP government and their RSS paymasters. The CAA combined with the NRC and the NPR is a diabolical plan to flush out the Muslim population to whatever fate the Hindutva ideology wish of them.  
- Midhun P, Calicut University

The students of India always have risen in rage against polarization. CAA and NRC is implemented to do polarization and to dismantle secularism in India - Arjun S Mohan, MG University, Kottayam

## Much Awaited Post of CDS Created

Col. Robby George

**New Delhi:** General Bipin Rawat took over as the first Chief of Defence Staff on 1st January 2020. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) formally established the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) last year, to lead defence forces as well as take charge of the Department of Military Affairs. India was the only large democracy which did not have a single point military advisor. The Prime Minister had announced the decision to establish the long pending post of the CDS in his speech on Independence Day 2019.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement, a committee was set up under the National Security Advisor, consisting of the Cabinet Secretary, the Defence Secretary and the Chairman of the Chief of Staff Committee among others, to make final the powers of the appointment.

The CDS is a four-star general and a tri-service Chief who shall lead the defence forces. Other responsibilities include heading the Department of Military Affairs under the Ministry of Defence.

He is a professional service chief, head of the Indian Armed Forces and the senior-most uniformed

military advisor to the Government of India. The position was first officially suggested in 1999 following the Kargil War through the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee. The Chief of Defence Staff is a critical position in today's era of hybrid warfare, and will help increase jointmanship, tri-service effectiveness and overall combat capabilities of the country.

The CDS is selected from among the serving officers of the Indian Armed Forces. While being "first among equals" among the service chiefs, the CDS would be a single-point military advisor without holding any military command. The



General Bipin Rawat

holder of the post would also be the head of all tri-service command structures, assisted by a deputy, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff to replace the post of Chief of Integrated Defence Staff. The CDS would head a newly-created Department of Military Affairs (DMA), under the Ministry of Defence and will function as its Secretary. Apart from

heading the DMA, the CDS will also be the Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. He will also be the Principal Adviser to the Minister of Defence.

Salary and prerequisites will be same as the Service Chiefs and will come under the Right to Information Act.

### Major functions of the CDS

- Trimming weapons procurement procedures and integrating operations of the Indian armed forces - Army, Air Force and Navy.
- Direct the service chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force and will also have the authority to create 'Theatre Commands' as and when needed.
- Command tri-service agencies/ organisations/ commands including those related to cyber and space.
- Will be member of Defence Acquisition Council chaired by the Minister of Defence and Defence Planning Committee chaired by the National Security Advisor.
- Function as the Military Advisor to the Nuclear Command Authority.
- Bring about jointness and ensure optimal utilisation of infrastructure in the three Services.
- Implement Five-Year Defence Capital Acquisition Plan and Two-Year roll-on Annual Acquisition Plan, as a follow up of Integrated Capability Development Plan.
- Bring about reforms in the functioning of three Services aimed at augmenting combat capabilities of the Armed Forces by reducing wasteful expenditure.
- Assign inter-Services prioritisation to capital acquisition proposals.



## Reforms and Law

Noufal L

**New Delhi:** Recently, the Union Ministry asked all state governments to send their suggestions for a major overhaul and recasting of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), thus paving way for reforming criminal justice system of India. Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) will undertake review of the laws such as IPC, CrPC, Indian Evidence Act and Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act. BPRD under Ministry of Home Affairs was set up in 1970 in furtherance of the objective of the Government for the modernisation of police forces.

Advocate Shajahan A of Kerala High Court believes it has been high time that the legal system be amended to bring down the rate of crimes in the country. "The laws of our country are old and it needs to be modified. Some penal code offences need to be dropped to make

**"The laws of our country are old. The penal code has to be amended to make it consistent with the new ideals of constitutional morality"**

the code consistent with the new ideals of constitutional morality, viz. the narrowest possible definitions of crimes, presumption of innocence etc. "In a criminal justice system, since an accused as an individual is pitted against the might of the state, criminal law must ensure that the state does not take undue advantage of its position as prosecutor" he said. Criminal and penal codes need substantial changes to fit into the liberty model and its obsolete provisions must be stricken off.

IPC was intended to be regularly revised by legislative amendment which did not happen. As a result the courts had to undertake this task upon themselves, which did not turn up satisfactory as most amendments have been ad hoc and merely reactive.

Noufal L

**New Delhi:** The central government initiative to implement nationwide NRC and CAA has created a stir across the length and breadth of the country. The National Register of Citizens is a list of all the citizens in the country, with necessary documents to prove their citizenship. Earlier, following the Supreme Court's order, the Government conducted the NRC updating exercise in Assam and as a result over 19 lakh applicants failed to make it to the NRC list.

NRC will provide a much-needed perspective on the extent of illegal migration. The fear that illegal immigrants will change the demography of the country and influence the politics of different states will also be done away with. Demands were made by some NGOs like the Assam Public Works (APW), which had petitioned the Supreme Court for upgrading the previous NRC. Statutory obligation of the state as the Section 14A in

# NRC/CAA redefined

### Issues with nationwide NRC

- Existence of deportation provisions- as immigrants are subject to laws like the Foreigners Act, 1946 and Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and tribunals are already empowered to detect, detain and deport them.
- No clarity over previous results- on what the end results mean for the 19 lakh plus people who find them outside the NRC, potentially stateless and at risk of "deportation" to Bangladesh, which refuses to acknowledge the same.
- Concerns of minorities: There are fears that such an exercise could end up targeting minorities in the country.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 which makes Hindu illegal migrants and those from certain other minority communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship further creates apprehensions about alienation of minorities in the process.
- Under the Foreigners Act of 1946, the burden of proving whether an individual is a citizen or not, lies upon the individual applicant and not on the state. Also, the details of how such an exercise will be carried out are not yet known. Further, there is poor documentary culture in India and here around 125 crore Indians will have to produce documentary proof of their ancestors up to a certain date to create a legacy tree.
- No specific policy in ascertaining the fate of people - The government has not prepared a post NRC implementation plan, as the possibility of deportation of illegal migrants is bleak.
- Issue of Statelessness - There are apprehensions that India will end up creating the newest cohort of stateless people, on the lines of Rohingyas who fled Myanmar for Bangladesh.

the Citizenship Act of 1955 provides in sub-section (1) that "The Central Government may compulsorily register every citizen of India and issue national identity card to him". The procedure to prepare and maintain National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) is specified

in the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003. Move towards solving the immigration issue- as it is expected to deter future migrants from entering the country. It can also aid the agencies in effective border management, especially with Nepal

and Bangladesh.

However the NRC is a double edged sword that can hurt both ends, and that's why there is unrest and conflicts happening across the country on this issue. Various social commentators regularly pinpoints the negative sides of NRC which makes it such a controversial topic.

## Operation Olympia 2020 -2024

Ancy K Jose



File Picture

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Kerala government is all set to carry out, 'Operation Olympia'- an ambitious project aimed at the development of promising sportspersons. It is an elite training programme intended to prepare the state's athletes for the 2020 - 2024 Olympic games.

The Sports

Department and Sports Council are preparing a team of 123 athletes for the Olympics games. The main objective of the operation is to provide international-level training to indigenous players by providing them with skilled trainers. Such trainers will be availed from foreign nations.

The programme focuses on eleven Olympic disciplines.

A study on fitness conducted during 2009 - 2011 has found 80 percent of children to be lacking physical fitness. To solve this, it is necessary to include sports in the school curriculum.

## Nirbhaya still haunts

It was on December 16, 2012 when Nirbhaya turned a tragic story to instill pain in us. A victim of brutal gang-rape, Nirbhaya's struggle ended but the police went on to file a watertight case against the accused. 7 years after the crime and after the massive protests sparked by the culprits haven't been hanged to death yet. This is often promoting such crimes as they are not the rarest of the rarest anymore and only if it is so one would be rewarded a death penalty. The law systems here aren't able to create a sense of fear in the culprits to withstand themselves from committing such crimes. Unfortunately changes are only to the names of victims and nothing else than the same old story.

## ICC Women's T20 commenced

Ancy K Jose



File Picture

**Australia:** The 7th edition of ICC women's T20 world cup commenced on 21st February in 6 stadiums across 4 cities in Australia. 10 teams divided into 2 groups play the first round of the tournament.

The Indian team will be lead by all rounder Harmanpreet Kaur. Richa Ghosh and Sefali Verma are the new faces in the team who have been selected for the first time in a major ICC tournament. The Indian team belongs to group A along with the host and the defending champions Australia. New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are the remaining teams in Group A. Group B consists of England, South Africa, West Indies, Pakistan and Thailand.

The knockout stages will start from 5th March and the final will be held on 8th March at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne on International Women's Day.



# No longer just a woman

Nguyen Ngoc Trinh

*Have you ever believed in super heroes? These three Vietnamese women will inspire you and all the women out there to hold their head high and walk ahead.*



## Political ballots with The First Chairwoman of Vietnam National Assembly

Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan is a Vietnamese female politician. She is currently the 8th National Assembly Chairwoman of Socialist Republic of Vietnam. She is the first female politician in history to hold this position. In early 2016, Forbes Magazine voted her the most influential woman in Vietnam. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan's election as National Assembly Chairwoman was highly appreciated by the public. This proves a change, the beginning of the policy of promoting the role of women in leadership and management, the policy of increasing the number of female delegates to 30% to integrate into the world and gender equality in Vietnam.



## Fighting it out on the football ground

Vietnam's national women's football team has always been able to bag gold most often when they set themselves to the ground. They have won the AFF Women's Championship thrice and also won gold six times in the SEA Games. Unlike the men, the women have to sacrifice a lot to pursue their career on ground. Only those who are brave enough to look over the family are able to stay in the game. Some of them push carts to sell bread, repair cars or sell vegetables on the road to work for a living - but they have never given up their passion and dedication to football. The Vietnam women's team has already won the SEA Games five times while the male team had to work for over five decades to get a single title.

## Bravest Mother in the world



The story of a mother with terminal cancer determined to give birth to her child, will give you goosebumps but will also bring tears to many eyes. At a stage when most women are celebrating the life ahead of them, Nguyen Thi Lien discovered that she had Stage IV breast cancer - when she was four-months pregnant. When the entire medical system opposed her, she was determined enough to fight the serious disease without any kind of chemical treatment. Somehow she went on to carry the baby for five more long months and finally reached the labor room where she had to face the biggest test ever. The surgeon had no other option than a cesarean, however could she could not undergo anesthesia as there was a risk that she would not regain consciousness - or end up paralysed for the rest of her life. She was never ready to give up and drawing on every ounce of strength she possessed, finally gave birth to a sweet baby daughter. She risked her own life for her baby and all she wanted was her baby to be safe. She named her daughter Do Binh An with a wish for a peaceful life ahead.

## Tet, the time of homecomings

Do Thuy Trinh

**Hanoi:** In Vietnam, when you see peach blossom trees, kumquat trees and apricot flower flooding the streets, the Tet is coming. For Vietnamese people, Tet is not only the most important holiday of the year, but also the best time to return home to reunite with family. Tet or Lunar New Year in the three regions in Vietnam can be divided into three periods, they are Tết Niên (before New Year's Eve), the preparation before Tet; Giao Thừa (New Year's Eve), and Tân Niên (the New Year) - the days following Tet.

### Preparing for Tet holiday

This period begins one or two weeks before the actual celebration. People rush out to purchase gifts, groceries for upcoming family reunions and new clothing. All preparations are meant to set the stage for attracting as much luck and good fortune as possible in the upcoming year.



*Shops during Tet*

### New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve, the most sacred time of the year for many, is called "Giao Thừa". Midnight between the last day of the old year and the first day of the new one is full of profound meaning. The last day of the year, every member of different generations gathers around a grand banquet to enjoy the last meal of year.

### The New Year (During Tet)

On the first day of Tet holiday, the whole family will dress up and gather together to offer New Year's greetings

and wishes to each other. Children receive a red envelope containing money from their elders. This tradition is called Giving Li xì (lucky money).

Tet is a time for relaxation, joy and hope. Tet is the time to settle past mistakes and start a good year ahead. And above all, Tet is the time for everyone to come back to their home gathering with family, visiting relatives and be with the most loved ones and welcome a new page together. It is when you wait for a call from your loved ones, no matter where you are.

## The plight of Vietnamese 'scarecrows'

In November 2019, 39 Vietnamese found dead in a frozen container in England.

Nguyen Ngoc Trinh

"The Scarecrow" is a word that contains blood, tears and countless hardships and humiliations that are not easy to put into words, for the Vietnamese community in England. It refers to illegal immigrants. Those who choose the path of illegal immigration must accept that their lives will be like straw, worthless things. Vietnamese passports are discarded or burned as soon as they take step to a certain European country via the tourist route, in order to deny citizenship. The European Union laws of asylum stipulate that illegal immigrants can be denied refugee status, and will be deported to the country they came from.

Most common routes for the desperate migrants will lead them to the car parks and tents in the port city of Calais (France) - this side of the tunnel through the English Channel,



*File picture of Vietnamese immigrants*

connecting England with mainland Europe. From here, the toughest part of the journey begins. French humanitarian organizations strive to support the refugee community with everything they have: pillow covers, old clothes, food but suffering is still suffering. Looting each other, forcing, even silent murders occur in this chaotic and unprotected community.

And when night falls, groups of people sneak into the parking lot to find the cars that will go to England. They slit and

lie between the goods or cut the lead coverings to get into containers. For the lucky ones passing the border checkpoint, to the UK, the VIP driver will stop at a gas station or a resting station for guests to hitchhike.

Reefer containers are the preferred option as they are better to evade the thermal scanners of border security. It was in one such container that 39 people perished as they were left unattended in a parking lot for too long. Those who survive the journey end up in low-end jobs, uncared and unlooked for.



## Sexting In India - Nature vs Culture

Nishanth P

Sexting - a term that was non-existent twenty years back but is now regularly appearing on the news. A survey conducted by Marketing Science Institute (MSI) of 1008 women (aged 18-54) shows that more than 70% of the people have shared text messages, e-mails or photos that are private in nature to their friends. It also shows that 17% of these people had partners who shared explicit photos online as part of the new phenomenon of "revenge porn".

The study highlights how sharing personal content such as suggestive texts, nude photos, and suggestive video can potentially lead to cyber stalking and the exposure of private content online.

In a country like India, the term is often associated with news items depicting an individual or groups of individuals are blackmailing others with sensitive material. The greatest frequency of sexually-explicit messages have been reported in people of age group 14-25.

"In case of sexting the person's age matters. If the child is below

18, then sexting is a punishable offense but if the person is above 18, then no punishment can be given since it done with consent," says psychologist and noted actress Mala Parvathy.

Cyber illiterates are the ones who generally fall into the trap of sexting. Teenagers, when introduced to mobile phones or web cams, experiment with things that might not be suitable for their age. Indulging in a relationship during this period is common amongst teenagers. But things get complicated when mobile phones are introduced to these children. What would start as plain flirting would soon turn into the transfer of messages and images that are sexual in content which are often considered as tokens of love and trust.

"The children usually start messaging for fun but it can lead to psychological problems, trauma or depression later," Parvathy explains "Relations which start as small friendships end up as traps where these messages become weapons against the child once they end the relationship."



"Revenge porn" colloquially termed "sextortion" is another worrying trend. Entire websites on the internet devote space to sexually-explicit videos - often of minors-which were leaked by vengeful partners after the relationship soured. For teenagers, online grooming by sexual predators and blackmail using their own sensitive pictures can create severe psychological distress.

In August 2014, Apple's high security 'iCloud' servers were hacked and nude photographs of prominent actresses flooded the media. Repeated cyber-attacks and hacking events have also raised security concerns on other social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. Simply put the privacy offered by the internet is an illusion and pictures, and videos once

uploaded, are permanent.

The West in general is better prepared to handle sexting fallouts thanks to their various academic programs and progressive thinking. But as this phenomenon moved to other parts of the world, the practice contradicted with the cultures and traditions of other countries.

In a highly sex-negative country like India, engaging in sexting/any form of sexual activity is a social taboo. A healthy teenager becomes sexually active at 12 or 13 year old. But as per our culture, it takes another 15-18 years before he/she could engage in any sexual activity. And it is during this period they resort to online flirting or sexting to attain sexual liberation. This is the reason why sexting as a phenomenon is seeing a steady growth

in conservative countries like India.

Sexting is not necessarily a bad practice. In a country like India where rape culture still exists, sexting would blow some steam off the pressure that contributes to this culture. But a lack of comprehensive sex education is also a factor in sexting crimes as most students are unaware of how to set boundaries or engage in healthy, age-appropriate sexual behaviour.

On one side the cultural aspects of the country looks down upon this practice. But on the other hand, a lot of people, especially millennials engage in this practice without adopting proper safeguards. Most often girls and ladies are the ones who become the victims. These pictures would then be used to demand more sexual favors, monetary gains or any other purposes. In the case of men, blackmailing is done using the threat of false rape cases. That is why these students should be made aware of all the aspects of sexting as a practice right from a young age to prevent unfortunate events from happening. Parents play a great role in transparency.

Sexting is a real thing and its high time we acknowledge it. This phenomenon is only going to get more popular in the coming years especially with the ease of access to internet and connectivity. However certain measures could be adapted to sext safely. Never sending photos with identifiable features is one of them because even if the pictures are leaked, they would in no way connect back to the sender. Turning off the device's location services especially in social media applications would help not to disclose the location of the sender. Using applications like 'Telegram' and 'Snapchat' which would automatically and securely delete the photos of sender is another way to sext safely.

Sexting is a form of modern courtship which everyone in a relationship will experience at least once. But as a receiver you have the power to control what you send. And adopting these measures would certainly help people to foster a consensual relationship without private moments leaked on social media for the world to see.

## Chinese Paddlefish declared extinct

Ajmal N

**Wuhan:** The Chinese Paddlefish one of the largest freshwater fish in the world, is the first species in the world to be declared extinct in 2020. The declaration came from the Chinese Academy of Fishery Science in the 'Science of the Total Environment' journal.

Scientist Hui Zhang and his colleagues from the Chinese Academy of Fisheries stated that the species had supposedly gone extinct between 2005 and 2010. The study team analysed fish catch records and tried to locate the fish using sonars and nets at different locations of the river but could not find any trace of the fish. No specimen and no tissue of this fish were stored which means the fish cannot be revived



Chinese Paddlefish

through cloning. The researchers suggested that this extinction should serve as a lesson in the conservation of remaining fishes.

"The extinction of the anadromous Chinese Paddle fish is a crucial loss to the ecosystem as they are efficient predators and also indicators of environmental health," said Professor Bijukumar, faculty head of the Aquatic Biology department at the University of Kerala.

"2020 is the year to

achieve the so-called Aichi target to reduce biodiversity loss, and despite efforts by many countries the pressure on biodiversity remains," he added. "India is also taking efficient steps to prevent extinction by declaring more protected areas, and by enacting laws and policies, and moreover, with specific conservation programmes for a few species."

The paddlefish evolved more than 200 million years ago and

is native to the Yangtze river. In this fresh water basin, they could grow up to an average of 10 feet. The species went into gradual decline in the 1970's due to overfishing, where 25 tons of paddle fish were captured per year on average. However the main reason for its extinction is said to be the construction of the Ghezhouba dam on the river in 1981 which was built without a fish ladder for the fish to go upstream and spawn.

Initiatives from UN like declaring 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity to make the nations and people aware of the massive extinction of species that is happening in the Anthropocene are aimed at raising conservation awareness and action against mass extinction.

## OCLU Action Camera for travelers



OCLU Action Camerae

The sleek, aerodynamic design along with its innovative software, state-of-the-art processors, and a myriad of accessories to choose from make OCLU the perfect travel companion for the adventure inclined.

Aside from delivering high-quality photos and videos in any situation (films in 4k at 30fps or 1080p at 120fps), the award-winning 4K action camera is IPX7 water-resistant and comes with GPS functionality, electronic image stabilization, and a standard tripod screw, which makes it universally compatible. Another cool feature is LiveCut, a unique editing function that lets you delete unwanted content on-the-fly.



# Anjaam Pathira: 2020's first engaging crime-thriller

Anjana Jayakrishnan



## Movie Review

Serial killers fascinate us. They are the epitome of some of the darkest parts of society's consciousness. In the wake of the Koodathai murders, serial killers are now a topic of discussion in Malayali households. What drives a human being to systematically murder others? *Anjaam Pathira* tackles the "true story" of a serial killer and the psychologist who stands in his way.

Anwar Hussain is the soft-spoken protagonist of the movie. An unassuming clinical psychologist, he is drawn into a series of brutal killings as a consultant. The murdered are all policemen - all have had their hearts and eyes

carved out. A statue of Lady Justice is found at all the crime scenes. Hussain tests his skills to the limit whilst the Kochi police tirelessly work to uncover a sinister and rather brutal killer before time runs out.

The execution of the plot is fast-paced, relying on a good BGM and camera movements to keep the suspense alive. There is little to no lag as befits a thriller. Kunchacko Boban as Anwar Hussain delivers a solid performance. Through him, the film makes a subtle impact in the discussion surrounding mental health, challenging notions that all murderers are mentally unbalanced as well as demystifying counselling and therapy.

Another point which makes the film stand out is director Midhun Manuel Thomas' understated use of

female characters. Catherine (Unni Maya) who leads the investigation is neither sexualised nor is she used a token symbol of women-empowerment. She is efficient, cool and calculated with a deep empathy for her fellow officers. Women are shown in prominent positions in forensics and IT as well. They are an important and efficient part of the workforce.

Some of the plot twists can be guessed easily by suspense-film aficionados - those who were paying attention could probably guess the ulterior motives of the serial killer from the symbolism of the "Neethi Devatha" statues. Sharafudheen is a surprise casting in the film but he manages to make quite an impression in the short time that he appears for.

The highlight



of the film is the cinematography by Shyju Khalid. Khalid is normally known for working with placid, light-filled frames but here, the light becomes a herald of fear. The red windows of the truck that arrives to take policemen away, the powercuts and the shifting lights of the villain's lair all create a tense and atmospheric film. Drone footage of Kochi's skyline is also heavily used, a recent trend in Malayalam cinema.

*Anjaam Pathira* also pays homage to several other reel-life and real-life incidents - the Koodathai murders, the Carell Jeanson case, and even what seems to be a slight reference to the infamous pig-torture scene from Ridley Scott's *Hannibal*.

At times, the film tries too hard to be "modern" in the way Hollywood films are. Sreenath Bhasi's character as a hacker is interesting but too reminiscent of similar characters in

Hollywood movies, like Matt Farrel in *Die Hard 4.0*. The scenes of computer hacking and cyber infiltration lack credibility as it makes the villain too overpowered. The graphics of the hacking process are also outdated and cliché.

Nevertheless, it has been a while since Malayalam cinema has managed to deliver a well-packed and entertaining suspense-thriller movie.

## 'Lady M' the female superstar of Mollywood

Asha P N

The decade that went by saw several comebacks, especially in the movie industry. Favourite heroines including Shobhana and Nadiya Moidu made a comeback into the industry. But the most awaited and most talked-about return was that of Manju Warrier, the 'Lady Superstar' of the industry, whose return to films has been turning heads then and now.

She began her career as an actress in 1995 at the age of 17 through the movie *Sakshyam* and made a dream run of successful movies in a span of 3 years, which came to an end in 1998 with her marriage. She made a comeback through a kuchipudi performance and various advertisements.

Manju's early career featured a host of successful movies which won a variety of awards during the 1995-1998 period. Her comeback movie *How Old Are You* was an industrial hit and struck the chord of nostalgia with Malayalis who mourned her



Manju attending an event

absence from films.

Usually, a 'comeback' in the industry fails to generate steam after the initial interest but Manju Warrier is an exception who has continued to draw crowds to her films. Many of her movies

focus on a female-oriented narrative and remain relatable but powerful in the minds of those who watch them.

"Manju played a beautiful character in *Udahanam Sujatha* after her comeback.

I liked the film *Udahanam Sujatha* more than *How Old are You?* She [Manju] looks even more charming and youthful than before and her energy level at this age has to be appreciated,"

says Reshma K Jayan, a post-graduate student and diehard fan of the actress.

In fact, it can be said that Manju is one of the few actresses in Mollywood who can sell a movie on her name alone, a feat usually reserved for male superstars. She is marketable and also relatable to many women.

She is also joining hands with government in various programs including 'She Taxi' that was launched and is a brand ambassador for projects that promote terrace agriculture. Manju is also a well-known face in the "Kerala Can" cancer awareness campaign run by Manorama.

Perhaps this is Manju's greatest achievement - she refused to remain a star, instead coming down to earth as part of many activities including dance and social activism. For the new generation of youngsters, she remains a relevant and appreciable figure in the arts.

## 'Moothon' wins big in Paris



Geethu Mohandas

**Paris:** In another proud moment for the Malayalam film industry, Geethu Mohandas' film *Moothon* won the coveted Best Film and Jury Prize awards at the South Asian Film Festival in Paris.

*Moothon* was co-produced by Anurag Kashyap and stars Nivin Pauly, Roshan Mathews, Shobhana Dhulipala, Sanjana Dipu, Dileesh Pothan and Shashank Arora in lead roles was the inaugural film at the Paris film festival. It had its world premiere at the Toronto Film Festival last year and was met with critical acclaim, mostly centred around the sensitive and emotional depiction of LGBT themes.