

12 FEBRUARY 2019

1. File cases against Avni’s shooter

The State level panel inquiring into Avni or tigress T1’s death has called for ‘immediate’ registration of cases against sharp shooter Asghar Ali Khan, who is not only considered ‘prima facie guilty of unauthorised shooting’ to kill the tigress, but also for ‘clandestinely’ tampering with evidence by removing the weapons and scheduled drugs used in the killing without informing authorities.

<p>December 9, 2017 Ninth body of Chandku Bhonu Futki, is found</p>  <p>December 15 Shooter Nawab Shafath Ali Khan is called in. He had tranquilised a tigress in Tadoba in July</p> <p>January 27, 2018 Villager Ramaji Shendre killed, beheaded body found</p> <p>January 29 Order to capture or shoot T1 by chief wildlife warden</p> <p>January 30 Two PILs against the shooting order are filed. The order is stayed by Bombay High Court's Nagpur bench</p> <p>January 31 Another PIL demands special investigating team to probe killings</p>  <p>February 16 Operation to capture T1 on hold when it is found she has two cubs, barely two months old</p> <p>March 1 Order by the National Tiger Conservation Authority to tranquilise T1 and capture cubs</p>	<p>[The search in numbers]</p> <p>200 forest personnel</p> <p>60+ camera traps</p> <p>5 elephants</p> <p>2 Cane Corso dogs</p> <p>2 drones with thermal imaging</p> <p>1 para-glider</p> 	<p>August 4-28 Three villagers found dead</p> <p>September 4 Principal chief conservator of forests orders to shoot the tigress</p> <p>September 6 Nagpur bench approves order</p> <p>September 10 Shooter Nawab is called back</p>  <p>September 11 Supreme Court orders tranquillising, but "if unsuccessful, it (T1) shall be eliminated by shooting"</p> <p>September 19 Two vets quit hunt, saying officials want to kill T1</p>  <p>September 25-26 2 other vets, 5 elephants join 200 forest personnel</p> <p>September 30 2 drones with thermal imaging capability arrive</p>  <p>October 8 2 Cane Corso dogs on hunt. Golfer Jyoti Randhawa, also a dog trainer, part of team</p> <p>October 9 A 2-seater paraglider deployed</p>
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The committee led by the State’s Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) noted that this “opens up the possibility of such important evidence being tampered with. Therefore, appropriate cases should be immediately registered against Mr. Khan under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act**, by the forest authorities and under the **Arms Act** and the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act** by the police authorities.

The committee has submitted its report and we are establishing its facts. As for the role of the shooter, once he submits a copy of licence we will examine if there were any loopholes in his conduct. There are two facts to be scrutinised: one, whether he had a licence or not and the other if the shooting was without prescribing to guidelines, stressing that the government is looking at both the aspects.

Maharashtra is one of the most progressive States as far as protection of wild animals is concerned. It is not a question of just one tigress but over the past few years we have taken a number of steps such as fencing and lighting the buffer zone and forest areas to protect various species. We have been doing our best irrespective of what the committee has observed, assuring that the guilty will be brought to book if rules were found violated.

The removal of problem tigers, the committee said, is a “necessary evil” and needs management intervention to ensure continued local public support for tiger

conservation efforts. It said, Unless there is a human casualty and a search for victim’s remains is involved, large scale ‘combing’ operations to follow tigers should be avoided. Instead, small teams of skilled spoor trackers should be employed to locate the tigers and if possible use dogs trained specifically for tracking down tigers.

The government should plan and establish one or more specialised-wild animal damage control unit, with sufficient mobility, equipment, resources and authority to move across forest jurisdictions including areas under the forest corporation and to swiftly address conflict and depredations in the State, the committee has mooted.

“It is critical that such a unit should be led by a forest officer supported by a team of personnel with specialized knowledge of carnivore ecology, field tracking skills, veterinary and chemical capture skills, shooting and firearm skills. Only such personnel should be identified and posted to these specialized units,” backing the creation of a specially trained cadre of veterinarians for all tiger reserves and territorial divisions that have sizeable large carnivore populations.

Note



2. CAG report to be tabled today

Amid new revelations that anti-corruption clauses in the Rafale deal were waived, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General is likely to be tabled in Parliament on Tuesday. The CAG, which went into the nitty-gritty of the €7.87 billion agreement with France will not get into the pricing details, which have been withheld by the government citing information security pact between the two countries. Opposition parties have also questioned the impartiality of the current CAG, Rajiv Mehrshi, in the audit.

The Finance Ministry issued a statement that such an accusation was “totally a figment of imagination and stretch of facts”.

It is pertinent to point out here that it is the Department of Expenditure of the Finance Ministry which deals with financial sanctions relating to all the Ministries of the Government of India and, in that capacity, any files relating to defence procurement would be dealt with by the Secretary, Department of Expenditure, and not by Shri Rajiv Mehrshi as Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs,” the Finance Ministry statement said. “To claim that Secretary (Economic Affairs) would have dealt with the expenditure proposals from the Ministry of Defence is totally a figment of imagination and stretch of facts.

About CAG

- The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India is an authority, established by the Constitution of India under article 148.
- CAG audits all receipts and expenditure of the Government of India and the state governments, including those of bodies and authorities substantially financed by the government.
- The CAG is also the external auditor of Government-owned corporations and conducts supplementary audit of government companies, i.e., any non-banking/ non-insurance company in which the state and Union governments have an equity share of at least 51% or subsidiary companies of existing government companies.
- The reports of the CAG are taken into consideration by the Public Accounts Committees (PACs) and Committees on Public Undertakings (COPUs), which are special committees in the Parliament of India and the state legislatures.
- The CAG enjoys the same status as a judge of Supreme Court of India in Indian order of precedence.
- Appointment: CAG is appointed by the President of India following a recommendation by the Prime Minister. On appointment, he/she has to make an oath or affirmation before the President of India.
- Removal: The CAG can be removed only on an address from both house of parliament on the ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. The CAG vacates the office on attaining the age of 65 years age even without completing the 6 years term.

3. 60% children adopted in India between 2015 and 2018 are girls

India may have a skewed gender ratio, but the female child happens to be the first choice when it comes to adoption. The number of female children placed for in-country adoptions and inter-country adoptions between 2015 and 2018 are relatively higher than male children.

During this period, about 11,649 children were put up for in-country adoptions; of them 6,962 were girls and 4,687 were boys. Of the 3,011 children that were placed for in-country adoption in 2015-16, as many as 1,855 were female children. In the year 2016-17, as many as 3,210 children were placed under in-country adoptions and of them 1,915 were

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females. The figures for 2017-18 and 2018-19 (till December 2018) were 3,276 and 2,152, of which the numbers of girl children were 1943 and 1249 respectively.

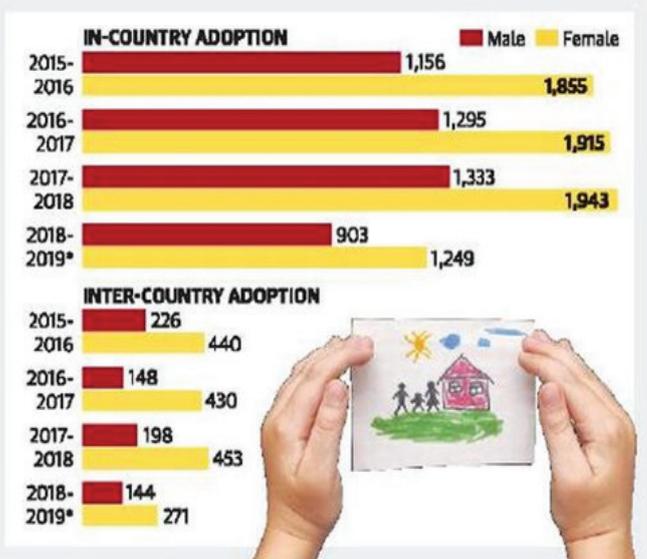
All the figures put together, female children comprise almost 60% of all in-country adoptions. When it came to inter-country adoptions, the number of female children was even higher: 69%. Of the 2,310 children placed under adoption between the same period, 1,594 were females.

There was little doubt that more girls were being adopted and it reflected that gender bias and the attitude of people against the girl child are changing across the country.

Daughters in demand

Between 2015 and 2018, about 60% of children adopted in the country were girls. The figure jumps to 69% when it comes to inter-country adoptions

*Figures till December 2018
Source: CARINGS (Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System), Ministry of Women and Child Development



More girls for adoption?

Adoption Scrutiny Committee, State Council of Child Welfare (Karnataka), said that one has to also look whether more girls were coming for adoption. The urban middle class people were preferring female children because they are concerned and aware of the situation of the girl child. The situation may not be the same for villages and small towns

4. SEBI to look into sale of pledged shares

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is looking into allegations and counter-allegations related to the sale of pledged shares.

The regulator had asked the exchanges to look into the trade details and seek clarifications from the entities concerned regarding open market sale of shares to ascertain whether any norms were breached in the process.

The regulator would subsequently examine whether there was any violation of regulations relating to insider trading and disclosure norms.

THE PLEDGING ROUTE



- Total value of pledged shares is Rs 1.57 lakh crore, as per BSE
- Promoters of 39 companies have pledged 100% of their holdings
- 121 companies have seen promoters pledge in excess of 90%
- Cumulative value of pledged shares has fallen due to fall in market
- Number of companies with high pledging has gone up in the past 2-3 months
- Value of pledged shares touched 7-year high in December 2015

WHAT IS PLEDGING:

Promoters of listed companies often pledge their shares to raise short-term capital to fund the working capital requirements of the company. The shares are typically pledged with non-banking financial companies or even banks, which lend up to a certain percentage of the value of shares that are offered to be pledged

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About SEBI:

- SEBI is the statutory regulator for the securities market in India.
- It was established in 1988 and given statutory powers through the SEBI Act, 1992.
- HQ: **Mumbai**.
- **Purpose:** Protect the interests of investors in securities, promote the development of securities market and to regulate the securities market.
- SEBI is responsive to needs of three groups, which constitute the market
 - * Issuers of securities,
 - * Investors and
 - * Market intermediaries.
- It has three functions:
 - * Quasi-legislative (drafts regulations in its legislative capacity),
 - * Quasi-judicial (passes rulings and orders in its judicial capacity) and
 - * Quasi-executive (conducts investigation and enforcement action in its executive function).

5. Mammoth crowds mark 40th anniversary of Iran revolution

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani insisted that "enemy" plots against the country would fail as vast crowds marked 40 years since the Islamic revolution at a time of heightened tensions with the U.S.

The presence of people today on the streets all over Islamic Iran means that the enemy will never reach its evil objectives, Mr. Rouhani told those thronging Tehran's Azadi (Freedom) square, decrying a "conspiracy involving Washington.

Missile programme

Mr. Rouhani lambasted calls from Washington and Europe for a fresh agreement to curb Iran's missile programme. Iran have not, and will not request permission from anyone for increasing our defensive power and for building all kinds of... missiles.



The events on Monday were the culmination of official celebrations, called the "10 Day Dawn" that mark the period between February 1, 1979 and February 11 when Shia cleric Ayatollah Khomeini returned from exile and ousted the Shah's last government.

The state has played up this year's anniversary, as 40 is symbolic of maturity in the Islamic tradition and the age at which Prophet Mohammed received revelations from God.

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1979 Revolution

The democratically elected prime minister in Iran was thrown out and the Shah was restored to the throne with the help of American CIA.

In the times of cold war, the US wanted to keep the Shah in power as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.

Iran was reaping enormous benefits from oil production and the gap was widening between the wealthy and the poor.

The recession in 1975 led to tension between the classes.

In October 1977, the son of the Shia cleric Ayatollah Khomeini died of heart attack and the rumours spread that he had been murdered by the SAVAK secret police.

Shah was battling for life due to cancer at the time. Shah had his Information Minister published an article in the leading newspaper that slandered Ayatollah Khomeini was a tool of British neo-colonial interests and a man without faith.

This angered people and the theology students in the city of Qom exploded in angry protests.

To suppress the protests the shah came down heavily on the protestors and what followed as a massacre at Qom.

Further, there were series of protests across Iran against the misadventures of Shah and his administration which culminated in the revolution of 1979 where the monarch of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was overthrown and his government was replaced with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a leader of one of the factions in the revolt.

6. H-1B holders from India rally for reform

A group of mostly Indians on H-1B visas held a rally outside the White House on Sunday afternoon, demanding immigration law reforms to benefit those in the country legally. The rally, organised by the Republican Hindu Coalition (RHC), involved some 200-300 people.

Among the demands of the group was that the green card backlog be cleared with a waiting period of 1-5 years. The wait time, at present, can run into decades for employment-based green cards for Indians.

‘Dreamer’ benefits

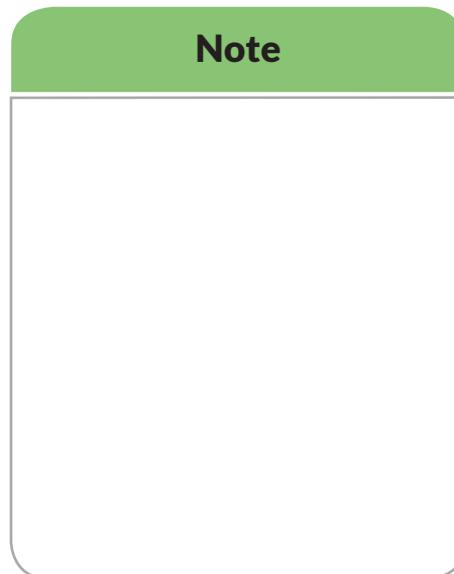
The group is also pushing for **legal childhood arrivals (‘LCAs’)** to receive any benefits that individuals brought illegally to the U.S. as minors (a group often referred to as ‘Dreamers’) might receive. Nearly 7,00,000 such individuals have been protected by a Barack Obama-era programme called for **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)**.

Age 21 is a fear factor for H-1B parents whose kids are on an H4.

H-1B visa holders, whose children and spouses get H4-dependent visas, are asking that H4 children be given green cards straight away, so that they can remain in the U.S. after they turn 21 without having to switch to another visa category or having to self-deport.

Placards at Sunday’s rally included ones that read, DALCA [DACA for LCAs] kids deserve better, Stop Abusing Legal Immigrants and We are

Note



Not Displacing American Jobs. One placard even said \$25 billion could be raised from green card fees to build U.S. President Donald Trump's controversial border wall. What we are suggesting to them [lawmakers and the Trump administration] is to include DALCA in DACA. We have nothing against DACA, that's fine, but just because you came here legally you should not be prohibited from DACA benefits.

The third demand of those rallying was to remove the country caps for green card allotments. Currently, no country may be allocated more than 7% (around 9,800) of the total number of green cards granted each year. India, which sends a relatively large number of skilled workers to the U.S. each year — over 70% of all H-1B visas in fiscal year 2018 went to Indians — inevitably uses up all the green cards allocated to it. China, Vietnam and the Philippines are other examples, though the excess demand for immigrant visas is far less in these countries.

Green card cap

Just under 3,07,000 Indians were waiting for green cards in May 2018, according to U.S. Citizenship and Information Services (USCIS) data. These numbers do not include dependent spouses and children whose green cards, when granted, also count against the overall cap.

In 2017, H.R. 392, a Bill introduced in the 115th Congress sought to end the per-country cap. Several groups, including the American Hospital Association, National Iranian American Council and Canadian Bar Association, had raised objections to this, concerned that it would crowd out applications from other countries.

Nevertheless, similar Bills have been introduced in the 116th Congress this year. Democratic Senator Kamala Harris and Republican Senator Mike Lee introduced the Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019 which will eliminate country caps for employment-based green cards and increase the caps from 7% to 15% for family-based green cards.

The struggle for H-1B workers and families may go on for a while yet. Hours before Sunday's rally, news had broken that the discussions between lawmakers and the President to avert another shutdown had broken down over disagreements over border security funding.

About H1B Visa:

An L1 Visa (Intra-Company Transferee Visa), grants entry into the United States to a foreign worker who has demonstrated competency as a manager, executive and/or possesses specialized knowledge of procedures integral to the operation of a U.S based enterprise. This visa is most commonly obtained by individuals who are employed by multinational companies.

Like the L1, an H1B visa is also a nonimmigrant visa which permits foreign workers to enter into to U.S. to carry out the functions of a company, however, the individual must possess knowledge either theoretical or technical in a specialty occupation field. Examples of such include, but are not limited to:

- 1.Engineering
- 2.Medicine
- 3.Science
- 4.Mathematics
- 5.Architecture

Note



H1-B	L1
Not limited to MNCs – any U.S. employer may seek the skills of a foreign worker	Limited to MNCs
Requires Specific Degree	Does not require Specific Degree
The H1B regular cap is 65,000 with an extra 20,000 reserved for those who have completed their Master’s from a US university.	No limits to the number of L1s approved every year
Have to be paid the prevailing wage or actual wage	No such requirement
6 yrs plus extension	7 yrs and no extension
Need to demonstrate lack of availability of domestic workers	No Need to do so
Can also do but is authorized by executive action and therefore not permanent	Spouse (L2 visa) can apply for Jobs

Note

