

Overdrive on ganja seizure Two bank dacoits lynched by mob in Nayagarh

Bhubaneswar(KCN): With the Department of Excise on overdrive to seize Ganja, there is both quantitative and qualitative improvement in seizure of these narcotic and psychotropic substances in the State.

Bishnupada Sethi, Secretary Excise is continuously harping on curbing the Hemp cultivation and seizing illegal Ganja, being sold in the grey market.

Mr.Sethi is touch with State Police and Directorate of Excise for destruction of hemp Plants in the districts and seizing the illegal Ganja.

Funds support is being extended to State Police in this regard with the active support from the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

So the quantity of Ganja seized during the illegal transfer has increased in the State during the year.

While regularly

Hemp Plants are being destroyed by the Police and Excise officials in several districts, large amount of Ganja is also being



seized.

Around 7,156 kg ganja were seized from Odisha during 2011-12, the quantity has been crossed 8,726 kg by 2015-16 December. Similarly, 6606 kg of Ganja

were seized during 2014-15.

According to an official statistics, the Police and Excise are destroying the Hemp

stroyed was 15.66 lakh in 2014-15. Maoists are allegedly funding the Hemp cultivation and people are lured to cultivate the Psychotropic substances instead of rice and vegetables.

Similarly, the illegal plants are being destroyed in Deogarh, Sambalpur, Boudh, Gajapati, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Kan-dhamal and Nayagarh district.

Total 3.30 lakh Hemp plants were destroyed in Deogarh during 2011-12. It rose to 6 lakh in the district in 2014-15.

While 2.56 lakh Hemp plants were destroyed in Sambalpur district in 2011-12, the quantity increased to 19.75 lakh by December 2015-16. In Malkangiri, 4 lakh plants have been destroyed in 2015-16. The number was 12,47,800 in Kandhamal.

cultivation in nine districts every year. Angul district records the highest in Hemp cultivation, where 7 lakh Hemp plants were destroyed during 2011-12. The quantity of hemp de-

stroyed was 15.66 lakh in 2014-15

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BHUBANESWAR(KCN): Two dacoits were lynched by a mob in Nayagarh district while trying to escape after looting a bank in Kasanda village under Ranapur police limits on Wednesday. A third, who suffered critical injuries, has been hospitalised. The miscreants were captured near a farm before being overpowered by the public, which was already tipped off about the heist. The public, which went after them, turned their ire on the trio and for over half an hour, the dacoits were beaten mercilessly before being rescued by the police.

The police rushed the miscreants to Nayagarh district headquarters hospital (DHH) but two of them succumbed on the way. While the identity of the deceased is yet to be ascertained, police sources said they belonged to Khurda town. Ranapur police registered an FIR in this connection and will soon record statement of the third accused, who is recu-

perating at the DHH. The incident took

dacoity, chased them down near a farm

away. The dacoits, police suspect, are ha-



place at around 3.15 pm when the trio came on a bike and entered the bank, which was manned by just three staffers. They were armed with sharp weapons, bomb and chilly powder packets. Police said two of them attacked the peon and held the other staffers captive and the third collected around `3 lakh from the cash box at the teller counter.

They fled towards an isolated area through a 'kuchha' road but the locals, who got a whiff of the

field. The villagers rained boulders at the miscreants, sources said. Senior police officers, including Additional SP Sridhar Pani, rushed to the spot. Nayagarh SP Kanwar Vishal Singh said the ASP will submit a report on the incident on Thursday.

"We will examine the CCTV feeds and act against those involved in the incidents," the SP said. Kasanda is located about 28 km from Ranapur police station and the nearest police outpost at Sarankul is 11 km

bitual offenders, well-versed with the locality and escape routes. The dacoits removed the CCTV camera installed in the bank and tried to damage its feed. The camera has been recovered and is being examined. "We had to carry the deceased and the injured in police jeep for about half a kilometre before an ambulance could be arranged to proceed towards the hospital," a police official said. The looted money has been recovered and a two-wheeler, weapons and the bombs seized.

Suicides of farmers: HC directs TN to file affidavit

CHENNAI: Madras High Court today directed the Tamil

Trustee, Tamil Nadu Centre for PILs, seeking directions for

from various financial institutions, the petitioner submitted.

past three years, agriculture in Tamil Nadu has been worst affected and those workers in the agriculture sector became jobless.

Crop failure has been reported in the Cauvery delta region due to water shortage, Ramesh submitted. After reports came in the media that 13 farmers committed suicide over the last two months, a Central team went to Thiruvapur and Nagapattinam districts and had discussions with the affected families and the fellow villagers.

He also sought for a direction from the Court to set up an expert committees in each district to find out the reasons for the farmers suicides. The Court posted the case for further hearing to February 14.



Nadu Government to file an affidavit within four weeks regarding steps taken by it to prevent suicides of farmers in the state.

The first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice M Sundar gave the direction on a plea by K K Ramesh, Managing

steps to arrest suicides of farmers and also to set up an expert committee to create awareness among farmers about latest technology in the agriculture sector.

Several farmers have committed suicide in the last few years as they were unable to repay the loan they have taken

"We would like the state government to place on record the steps which have been taken to prevent the suicides of farmers" the Judges said. The petitioner, while referring to various media reports, submitted that due to failure of north east monsoon and south west monsoon for the

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Sofia Vergara's son Manolo Gonzalez makes modelling debut

WASHINGTON(K-CN): Manolo Gonzalez Vergara, the only child of Sofia Vergara, recently made his plunge into modelling industry following in his mother's footsteps.

The 24-year-old son made his modelling debut in a photo spread for Paper magazine's latest issue, inspired by the films of Spanish director Pedro Almodovar, reports E! Online.

In one photo, Gonzalez Vergara wears



a black suit and poses along model Stevie DeFelice who is sporting a red top, skirt and blazer as the duo hold a Bloody Mary each and sit on the floor that has a shattered mirror reflecting them.

The young model also took to his Instagram handle to thank the magazine.

"And for allowing me to sit next to Stevie DeFelice. I hope she wasn't too traumatized," he added.

Man who hacked Kareena's I-T e-filing account arrested

MUMBAI(KCN): An employee of Central paramilitary forces was arrested by the cyber police here for accessing Bollywood actress Kareena Kapoor's Income Tax e-filing account, police said tonight.

The accused wanted to get Kareena's personal mobile number so he hacked her IT account, they said.

Kareena's chartered accountant had last year approached the police with the complaint that somebody had hacked her IT e-filing account and tampered with it.

Cyber-police tracked down the culprit today.

The accused files income tax returns for people as a part-time job while working with paramilitary forces, police said, without disclosing his name. Further probe was on.



Flowers, colours and more at Pasadena's Rose Parade



Dancers with the Escuela Secundaria Technical Industrial NJo. 3, Buhos Marching Band from Xalapa, "Veracruz, Mexico performs at the 128th Rose Parade

After banknote ban, India sees 7 percent growth in first half of 2017/18: Sources

NEW DELHI (KCN): India expects growth of around 7 percent in the first half of the next fiscal year, two officials said, painting a rosier picture for the economy than many economists after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's shock move to abolish large banknotes.

Nearly 90 percent of transactions used to be in cash in India, which was gripped by a severe shortage of currency after Modi's Nov. 8 decision to take 500-rupee and 1,000-rupee notes, worth about \$7.5 and \$15, out of circulation overnight.

Several private economists have said the move could drag down growth in the next fiscal year to 6.5

percent to 7 percent, as small businesses fired workers, consumer demand fell and farmers' winter



sowing efforts were hit.

Related Article Slowdown for six months will spur growth: S Gurumurthy

Demonetisation

to boost growth in long run; pain transitory: Jaitley

Demonetisation, as it is termed, has be-

come a major election issue in states going to the polls this year, such as Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with 200 million people, where the perfor-

counting for 86 per-

cent of the cash in circulation, were withdrawn in an effort to crush India's huge shadow economy, boost tax revenues and promote the use

of bank accounts and digital transactions, but perceptions that the ambitious operation was botched have hurt Modi's standing. The government officials, involved in budget discussions for the 2017/18 fiscal year, acknowledged that growth in Asia's third-largest economy would still be less than the 7.75 percent initially projected for the current fiscal year.

It could even fall as low as 4 percent in this year's January-March quarter, they said.

The budget, expected to be presented on Feb. 1, leaves Modi little room to hand out large, populist sops, despite demands by politicians, business-

men and other lobby groups for relief to the industry and taxpayers.

"There is no scope for big-ticket spending, like debt waivers for farmers, or transferring money into poor people's accounts," said one of the officials, who requested anonymity as they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Still, the officials said the finance ministry's internal projections leave sufficient room to allocate funds for investments and infrastructure spending, without derailing India's fiscal deficit target.

India plans to cut its fiscal deficit to 3 percent of GDP in the fiscal year to March 2018, versus this year's target of 3.5

percent. Modi can fund increases of 10 percent to 15 percent in some ministries' budgets and focus on job creation in areas such as farming, construction and small businesses, the officials said.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley could announce tax incentives for individuals and firms to boost consumer demand, amid lingering uncertainty over the implementation of a nationwide goods and services tax, said one of the officials. A senior farm ministry official said budget spending on the sector for the next fiscal year could rise to about 500 billion rupees (\$7.37 billion), up 40 percent on the current year.

Major subsidies,

including those on food, fertilisers and petroleum products, estimated at about 2.32 trillion rupees (\$34.22 billion) for this fiscal year, are expected to go up only marginally, the officials said.

The officials said good monsoon rains could accelerate growth in the second half of the year.

Modi is staying within budget limits so far, despite a series of incentives to poor people, farmers, women and small businesses announced on New Year's Eve.

The incentives would only cost about 35 billion rupees a year, said Soumya Kanti Gosh, chief economic adviser at state-owned State Bank of India.

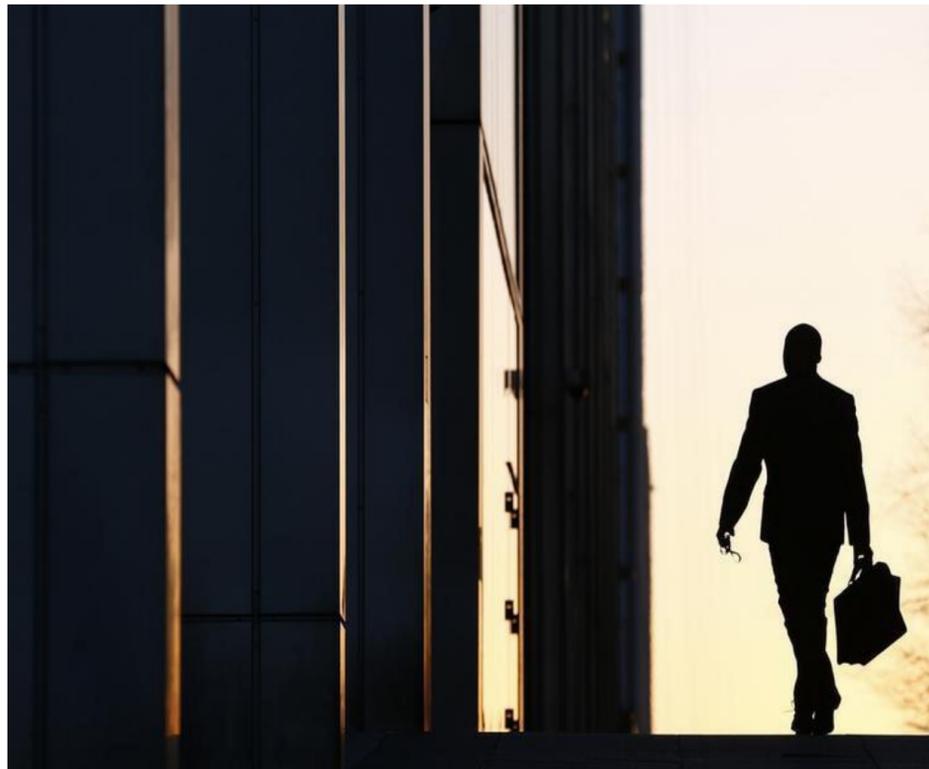
M&A deals in 2016 witness five-year high at USD 61.44 billion

MUMBAI(KCN): Merger and acquisition (M&A) deals in the country hit a record five-year high at USD 61.44 billion

surged over 133 percent this year to USD 18.78 billion, while outbound deals saw a 8 per cent dip to USD 4.9 billion in value

for initial public offers and fund raising through such issues surged to a five-year high at USD 4.12 billion across 93 IPOs.

the year, contributing 57 per cent of the total private equity investments in 2016. "This figure stood at 32 per



(about Rs 4 trillion) in 2016, a report stated.

According to the latest report by News CorpVCCEdge, the number of M&A deals remained robust this year with 1,002 such transactions worth USD 61.44 billion.

The deal value in 2016 is not only a record five-year high but is also 159 per cent more than USD 23.71 billion witnessed from 995 deals in 2015, the report said.

As per the report, there were 633 domestic M&A deals amounting to USD 32.77 billion -- a jump of over 278 per cent in value terms -- in 2016. Besides, inbound deals (143) value

terms. "The hike in the M&A deal value can be attributed to the three deals worth USD 27.7 billion which includes Essar Oil Ltd, Max Life Insurance Co Ltd and Reliance Communications. Wireless Telecom Business acquisitions contributed 45 per cent of the overall deal value," it said.

Private equity investors unlocked investments worth USD 6.79 billion across 239 exits in 2016. This is nearly 17 per cent more in value terms compared to 2015 and also is the highest in the past five years, the report said.

The year gone by was also a record year

"While M&A activity perked up in 2016 due to a few multi-billion dollar deals that firms struck either to slash debt or consolidate their market share, what we are seeing is the flow of angel/seed money into enterprises in sectors like fintech, healthcare, education and travel which will continue into 2017," News Corp VCCircle CEO Nita Kapoor said.

"There is a huge funding opportunity for start-ups operating in these sectors that succeed in delivering a good consumer experience," Kapoor added. Angel and seed investors drove the deal activity during

cent in 2012 and has been rising every year. They accounted for 748 deals amounting to USD 324 million," the report said.

The number of PE deals slumped almost 25 per cent to 1,309 deals, while the value of such transactions dropped by 44 per cent to USD 12.38 billion, for the period under review. "Early stage investments in start-ups has shown a significant decline of 39 per cent to USD 1.59 billion in the year gone by, as compared to USD 2.62 billion in 2015," it noted.

SEBI issues guidelines to evaluate company directors and board members

MUMBAI(KCN): India's capital markets regulator on Thursday issued guidance on how companies should evaluate the performance of their directors to ensure objectivity and improve corporate gover-

nance. The note is intended as guidance and does not constitute new rules, the regulator added.

The new guidance comes at a time when a boardroom battle at Tata Sons, the holding company of the \$100 billion

also ousted Nusli Wadia, an independent director who sat on the boards of three of its listed companies, after he publicly backed Mistry's claims.

SEBI did not mention any specific companies in its note.

they are allowing independent directors to perform their roles effectively and check whether directors are allowed to exercise their own judgment and voice their opinions freely, it added.

Evaluations should be performed internally through questionnaires and oral assessments, as well as through external experts to ensure objectivity, the SEBI said, adding that action plans should be based on these evaluations.

A 2016 report by proxy advisory firm InGovern said that, under its five-star rating system, only five of India's top 100 companies merited three stars for providing effective board evaluations.

In Govern founder Shriram Subramanian described the SEBI guidelines as a useful start but said that they still fell below standards on board evaluations in Britain and the United States.

"Even if (Indian) companies adopt this guidance note in its entirety, it would fall short of global best practice," he said.



nance.

Among the guidelines, companies should consider whether discussions among board members are healthy and free-flowing, whether critical and dissenting suggestions are welcome and whether conflicts of interest are monitored and dealt with, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said.

Tata conglomerate, has highlighted the vulnerability of independent company directors in India when they come up against a dominant shareholder.

Tata Sons is waging a bitter battle against former chairman Cyrus Mistry, who has complained of mismanagement and corporate governance failures within the company. It has

"The purpose of the guidance note is to educate the listed entities and their boards of directors about various aspects involved in the board evaluation process and improve their overall performance as well as corporate governance standards to benefit all stakeholders," the regulator said.

Companies should check that

MS Dhoni, former India ODI, T20I captain

Bombay(KCN): It's easy to place nearly all our cricket captains in varying shades of Indianness. Except MS Dhoni. Always in the moment, an astounding ability to erase traces of emotions, an eerie calm that never ceased to amaze, and the sexy icy-cool nerves. This Dhoni-esque traits form the mythological essence of Indianness — found in the wisdom of epics and in the words of the sages, but rarely found in the streets. Meditation in marketplace sells briskly from the shelves, and thousands throng satsangs to hear similar rhetoric but it's seldom seen in Indians, so much so that it is considered almost unIndian. Dhoni has somehow emerged from this context as a throwback to an mythical era. That would be his greatest achievement and his legacy.

W A T C H VIDEO | Mahendra Singh Dhoni steps down as India ODI, T20I captain

Mahendra Singh Dhoni Steps Down As India ODI, T20I Captain

He has left cap-

taincy like the way he came in — poof and he is gone. Unlike many, he has a great sense of timing about when to walk away. Indian cricket is in the Kohli era, and it made no sense for Dhoni to continue as the ODI captain. Especially when the Test captaincy — regarded as the tougher job as Dhoni himself found out — was already with Kohli.

The next World Cup is in 2019 and there is no certifiable reason apart from self-indulgent farewell to stay on. There is the Champions Trophy in a few months and though no one would have minded if Dhoni had carried on till then, it would have been classified as indulgence. **READ: OK, that's it: MS Dhoni, quits as ODI, T20 captain**

It wouldn't have sat well with the man who knows how to read the writing on the wall quicker than most.

Now to the cricket. The game is hurtling towards a tense climax. Pressure ratcheting up, nerves choking, palms sweaty, batsmen edgy, bowlers

edgier — you couldn't think of a better fielding captain in that scenario than Dhoni. The shorter the duration, the better his captaincy as he could

was in control out there. His fielders felt it, his bowlers felt it, the opposition batsmen felt it and the fans too cottoned on to it. And the spooky

ther downcast or angry when misfields happened. If the yorker ended up as a full toss and was swatted for a six, Dhoni wouldn't

the bowler. With all the emotional energy saved up and not frittered, it was no surprise that the team started to benefit and prosper under Indian

Lesser captains than him have patted themselves. He didn't succumb to such vanity for most of his time as the top dog of Indian cricket. World cup won, he let Tendulkar and Kohli take centre stage. T20 World Cup won, after a shrike and a fist-pump, he let his younger team-mates revel in the spotlight.

It's his shortcomings as a captain in the longer format that captured his effectiveness in the shorter formats. He could work out how to prevent a team from scoring 75 from 50 balls but he found it a bit of a problem when he had to strategise to take 10 wickets in four sessions.

He could let things drift. The coolness turned into undecipherable stubbornness. Recently, R Ashwin captured the difference in the captaincy style between Dhoni and Kohli. It's tempting to read between the lines but it's wiser not to do so.

"The difference between MS and Dhoni is the generation. Virat is one who wants to be at the front. He leads from the front. He says

things to you face. You are not going back into the room thinking what he is thinking or what the team is thinking about oneself. He lets you know upfront and there is a lot of clarity. MS is someone who is not very vocal, not very expressive, very subdued. He keeps things to himself. The biggest positive was he would keep emotions in check," Ashwin had said.

Dhoni's legacy and aura is sometimes better captured by the imprint he left on the opponents. From the Haydens and Husseys who strayed into his IPL world and were captivated by his leadership style to those who have only been on the other side, like Michael Clarke. Last year, in Sydney, just as he was leaving the press conference after the semi-final game, Clarke stopped Dhoni who was entering the room.

"Mate, don't tell me you are quitting. You can play and lead in the 2019 world cup." Dhoni just smiled and walked in. Now he has just smiled, and walked away.



control these fleeting shifts in the game with his persona. Unsurprisingly, he found it difficult to control these essentially uncontrollable urges for a longer period of time in Tests. No wonder he shone in T20 for Chennai Super Kings and in ODIs for India. All his strengths could be squeezed out to their maximum effect in that time period.

READ: Replace MS Dhoni at your peril, Gary Kirsten had said couple of months ago

With him, it was clear that someone

calmness behind the stumps would surely have had a detrimental effect on the batsmen. It definitely had a beneficial effect on his team-mates, and also changed the way we, the viewers, watched the Indians play.

READ: Replace MS Dhoni at your peril, Gary Kirsten had said couple of months ago

The bowlers didn't throw up their arms and looked ei-

throw a tantrum. Suddenly, everyone in the team would appear less nervy and more detached. As if they were all caught in his hypnotic spell, and did his bidding. That would go down as his great achievement as the leader. His silence, the darting eyes, the occasional wave of the hand, the turn of the head here and there to see if the fielders are in the right spots, and the quiet word or two to

cricket's greatest Pied Piper.

For majority of his time as the captain, the lack of narcissism also came as a pleasant surprise. Again, almost unIndian in its construct. World Cups won — he raised the hopes with T20 and quenched the desires with the 50-over. Champions Trophy won, World No. 1 ranking achieved but above all he didn't strut and preen.

Virat Kohli to be named limited overs captain to usher in new era

Mumbai (KCN): India's limited overs cricket will usher in a new era with the national selectors expected to name Virat Kohli as the captain when they pick the squad for three ODIs and three T20 Internationals against England.

Test skipper Kohli is expected to be anointed captain of the limited overs teams also, after Mahendra Singh Dhoni decided to step down from the job in a surprise decision last night.

While there should not be any doubt regarding Kohli taking over as skipper of the limited overs team, the selectors have the onerous task of choosing the two squads having a right balance as there has been a spate of injuries to top players recently.

Two key Mumbai batsmen — Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane — have been ruled out with injuries, which may give a chance to out-of-form Shikhar Dhawan, if he's de-

clared fit, to open the innings with K L Rahul, unless the selectors spring a total surprise and bring in a newcomer.

Karnataka's Rahul missed the ODI series against New Zealand due to an injury while Delhi batsman Dhawan too got injured in the preceding Test rubber against the Kiwis.

The left-handed Dhawan last played in an ODI in Australia in January last. After flopping in the first two matches, he struck a purple patch in the remaining three games of that series to make a century and two half centuries.

Karun Nair, who scored a brilliant triple hundred in the fifth and final Test against England in Chennai, is expected to be chosen in place of Rahane whom he also replaced in the Test team.

A question mark, however, remains regarding key spinner Ravichandran Ashwin who cited an injury after the conclusion of the 4-0 Test drubbing of England

and has not played in Ranji Trophy for his state team Tamil Nadu. He also missed

would be interesting to see whether the two slow bowling all-rounders will be cho-

veyed to the selectors who, thus, will choose him over other claimants.

squad along with Yadav.

Manish Pandey and Kedar Jadhav

Sharma to team up with in-form Jasprit Bumrah and Umesh Yadav to man the

the selectors repose faith in Suresh Raina for the ODIs, but they are expected to include him in the squad for the three T20 International matches, which also will to be chosen on Friday, provided he is declared fit again.

The selectors will also choose the India A squads for the two practice games against the tourists set to be played at the Brabourne Stadium here on May 10 and 12.

The official announcement of the meeting has been given through a media release by BCCI's Chief Executive Officer Rahul Johri, who thus is expected to perform the duty of the secretary of the Board in place of the sacked Ajay Shirke.

England are set to return to India on Sunday. They start the ODI series on January 15 in Pune and conclude the second part of their visit to India with the third and final T20I at Bengaluru on February 1.



the ODI series against New Zealand as he was rested to keep fresh for the subsequent Test rubber against England.

Second off-spinner Jayant Yadav was out ruled out of the last Test of the series against England due to an injury and it

sen by the selectors without proving match fitness.

Although Dhoni has stepped down as captain of the limited overs team, he has made himself available to play under a new captain, which should be Kohli, and this has been con-

Axar Patel was chosen to be the left-arm spin option against the Kiwis while resting Ravindra Jadeja. But, with the big break in between the Test and ODI rubber, Jadeja should get the nod. Amit Mishra was the third spinner in that

should retain their spots in the ODI squad along with Mandeep Singh. With Mohammed Shami, who did not play in the ODI series against New Zealand, and Dhawal Kulkarni out with injuries, the selectors have the option to recall Ishant

pace department.

Hardik Pandya too got injured during the Test series against England but has started to play in the D Y Patil T20 tournament now in progress here and is likely to get the nod.

It will be interesting to see whether