

LANDMARK 5
GRAND ALLIANCE WITH CONG
'REPREHENSIBLE': PM**WORLD 7**
SYRIA FORCE TAKES ISIS
BASTION, 'CALIPHATE' WIPED OUT**SPORT 10**
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**USUAL SUSPECTS**
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Modi biopic fuss non-issue for EC

An unintended consequence of the staggering popularity of social media in the world is the mushrooming of completely useless controversies that have a life-span of a few hours. One such erupted last week over the countrywide release of the film *PM Narendra Modi* starring Vivek Oberoi on April 12.

The announcement of its release got some people very hot under the collar. One person who was particularly agitated was the writer Ramachandra Guha. He tweeted: "That such a film will be shown and promoted during the elections demonstrates the joke and farce that the 'model code of conduct' is; how can the Election Commission allow it?"

Guha's objection seems grounded in his fierce dislike of real Prime Minister Modi, although to be fair he also objected to a lesser-known biopic on Rahul Gandhi that will also be launched this election season. As a political concern of those campaigning on the single plank of Modi hatao, Guha's worry is warranted. However, it will not enhance the democratic credentials of India's liberal community if it seeks an outright ban on a film that dares to hero worship Modi or, for that matter, Rahul Gandhi. Consequently, a temporary restriction, at least people have voted, seems a second best but contrived solution.

Of course, there are ominous implications of this demand for the EC to intervene and put the film in cold storage till counting day. If a film can be put on hold on the ground that it seeks to influence public opinion, then it follows that similar restrictions should accompany other creative projects that also seek to mould voter behaviour. This includes books — both fiction and non-fiction — poetry, theatre, works of art and even opinionated columns (such as this one) in print and online, in fact almost anything that can be construed to have a direct or tangential political dimension.

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The whole idea of sanitising India from political influences seem absolutely preposterous, especially when the avowed objective is to ensure the exercise of political choice. That eminent individuals should be lending their names to such a strange initiative is sad. However, sadder still is the belief the distortion of what the Code of Conduct (CC) is all about.

When it was evolved, the CC wasn't aimed at preventing any articulation of politics. It merely sought to first, negate any unfair advantage accruing to the incumbent Government through the improper and partisan use of official machinery; second, to monitor and regulate the use of financial resources by parties and candidates; thirdly, to insulate the ordinary citizen from any significant inconvenience to their lives; and, finally, to ensure free and fair polling. In time, often with the benefit of hindsight, the EC has extended the CC to extend to opinion polls and the use of media. Regulating and monitoring "paid news", however, remains work in progress.

Despite its imperfections and lax implementation by individual officers with a bias towards a party or candidate, the CC has made a big difference to the culture of political campaigning. Some of the changes are visible and felt by the ordinary citizen.

Till the 1991 general election at least, the use of loudspeakers was totally unregulated. One of the noisiest campaigns I witnessed was the 'Ayodhya election' of 1991 in Uttar Pradesh when loudspeakers blaring rival political messages and campaign songs drowned each other at market venues and bus stops, and went on all day and night. It was also customary for political meetings to extend late into the night and the early hours of the morning. In fact in the Hindi heartland, the political worth of a leader was often judged from how many hours late he was running from his original schedule.

This pattern of electioneering is now history. The ban on public meetings and use of the public address system after 10 pm is now an accepted facet of life and often gleefully imposed by the administration. Another area where the CC has made a big difference is in the use of Government facilities and public buildings. One of the first campaigns I covered as a journalist was the 1991 general election when the Congress under Rajiv Gandhi was still at the helm. One of the features of that election, in North India at least, was that the Congress candidates routinely requisitioned the Circuit House for the use of the candidate. This doesn't happen today.

These, however, are the easier facets of the CC. The more daunting challenge before the EC is to ensure an environment free from harassment and intimidation of voters. Today, apart from the Maoist belt in Chhattisgarh, West Bengal poses a challenge. EC has staggered voting in the State to include all seven phases and contingents of paramilitary forces have started patrolling sensitive areas, sometimes with the cooperation of the local police and often independently of them.

Another big step is to ensure that the media is in synch with the larger objectives of democratic functioning. But this is a more problematic area where the media's right to be partisan has to be balanced with some do's and don'ts, without inviting charges of compromising the rights of expression. The more blatant cases of 'paid news' are easy to handle — by adding a notional charge to a candidate's expenses — but how is the touchy area of a campaign freeze in the 48-hours before polling in a seven-phase election to be achieved? And how will the dissemination through WhatsApp groups be effectively monitored? Today's technology makes a mockery of regulation and control.

These are just some of the issues that will test the EC's effectiveness. Diverting its attention to non-issues is hardly helpful. But then, this is also an election where some groups of people are also fighting to ensure their own future relevance in a changing India.

Diggy vs Pragya likely

Cong picks Digvijay from Bhopal; Sadhvi: 'I'm eager to defeat nation's enemy'

PNS ■ BHOPAL/LUCKNOW

With the candidature of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijay Singh being finalised from Bhopal, the fight in the Madhya Pradesh capital is likely to be interesting as Pragya Thakur, aka Sadhvi Pragya Bharti, may be pitted against him. Digvijay is contesting election after 2003 in the State.

Digvijay's candidature was made public by Chief Minister Kamal Nath during his interaction with mediapersons at a programme here on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Congress has changed the seat allotted to its Uttar Pradesh unit chief Raj Babbar from Moradabad to Fatehpur Sikri, in an apparent bid to make the Lok Sabha contest easier for the actor-turned-politician. Imran Pratapgarhiya will now be the party's candidate from Moradabad.

Party sources said that Babbar was not keen on contesting from Moradabad, where the BJP has fielded its sitting MP Kunwar Sarvesh Kumar.

After having served as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for 10 years from 1993 to 2003, Digvijay had left the State saying that he would not contest any election. At present, he is a Rajya Sabha member.

Digvijay took active part in MP in the run up to the last Assembly elections.

The way the MP CM announced the candidature of Digvijay was quite dramatic. Generally, the CEC of AICC declares the list. Nath said, "I

have a list of party candidates in my pocket but I can't disclose. However, I can make an announcement. (Congress) Election Committee yesterday (Friday) finalised the name of Digvijay Singhji from Bhopal."

When asked whether Digvijay was happy with the decision, Nath said, "I do not know, whether he is happy, but I am happy." To a query, whether he has "dealt" with Digvijay with this decision, Nath parried the question on Digvijay's winnability.

Sadhvi Pragya Bharti, who has been acquitted in the Malegaon blast case, is ready to take on Digvijay. Talking to mediapersons in Bhopal, she said, "Digvijay Singh is a 'desh ka dushman' and I openly challenge country's enemies."

Pragya was discharged from an ayurvedic hospital in the city months ago after being treated for critical illnesses.

Though Pragya did not



confirm whether she has been contacted by the BJP to fight poll, she did say the BJP was a party which matched her ideology. However, Pragya hinted she wasn't much eager to contest election, but said she was contacted by someone to fight election. Pragya, who had taken sanyas at 14, said it was an opportune moment to enter politics. She slammed the

Congress for attacking and Hindutva by calling them terror forces. Pragya was given clean chit in the murder of RSS pracharak Sunil Joshi as well. State BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal told *The Pioneer* that the voters are waiting for Digvijay to contest from Bhopal. They want to teach him a lesson.

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Rahul may contest from Wayanad

PTI ■ PATHANAMTHITTA/KOTTAYAM

The Congress in Kerala has proposed AICC president Rahul Gandhi's name for the Wayanad Lok Sabha seat, a party bastion in the State, but he has yet to respond to the request, senior leaders said on Saturday.

Talking to reporters in Pathanamthitta district, AICC general secretary Oommen Chandy said the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) has requested Rahul to contest from Wayanad.

There is a demand from party leaders that Rahul should contest from any of the South Indian Lok Sabha seat. "We

have requested Gandhi to contest from Wayanad seat. He has not commented on the request so far. But we expect that there would be a positive response," Chandy said.

The party, which is contesting 16 out of 20 Lok Sabha seats in Kerala, has announced the names of 14 candidates but has not declared its candidates from Wayanad and Vadakara.

"I once again request Gandhi to contest from Wayanad. Congress president contesting from Lok Sabha seats in South India and North India will strengthen national unity and integration," Chennaihala said.

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Prasad replaces Shotgun in Patna Sahib

BJP releases 102 names, Giriraj Singh shifted to Begusarai from Nawada

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday expectedly denied ticket to yesterday's film star and its sitting MP from Patna Sahib Shatrughan Sinha and instead fielded Information and Technology Minister and Rajya Sabha member Ravi Shankar Prasad from its stronghold.

However, Prasad may face Sinha eventually as the latter could be fielded by the Congress in the Kayastha-dominated seat. For sometime now, Sinha had been critical of both the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on a



number of issues. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Bihar announced names for 39 of the 40 seats with Union Minister Giriraj Singh being shifted from Nawada to Begusarai despite his opposi-



tion. The IJP will contest from Nawada this time round. The alliance, however, reposed faith in all other Central Ministers from the State by fielding them from the same seats that they had won in 2014.

The BJP also announced

names of its candidates for Odisha fielding its spokesperson Sambit Patra from Puri and its State president Basant Panda from Kalahandi. In Bihar though, it did not field its spokesperson Shahnawaz Hussain from Bhagalpur, which he had unsuccessfully contested last time, thus putting his future in the party under cloud.

The BJP on Saturday announced the names of its 102 more candidates for the Lok Sabha polls, thus now totalling 286 candidates till now.

The candidates have been picked for UP, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and Kerala, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

Earlier 17 names for Bihar were announced in Patna. Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Arjun Munda will contest from Khunti, a seat once occupied by BJP veteran Karia Munda.

BJP's three new names from Uttar Pradesh included Pradeep Choudhary, a Gujjar, from Kairana seat (west UP) which was won by the RLD candidate with the backing of the SP and the BSP in a bypoll in 2018. The bypoll had first tested the efficacy of the Opposition alliance against the BJP. The other candidates from two other seats from West UP which would go to poll in the first phase are Dr Yashwant (Nagina) and Bhola Singh (Bulandshahar).

Turn to Page 6

Babbar to now contest from Fatehpur Sikri

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Accepting the request of UP Congress chief Raj Babbar, the Congress brass has changed the seat allotted to him earlier and fielded him from Fatehpur Sikri Lok Sabha constituency.

Babbar had expressed his intention to contest from Fatehpur Sikri Lok Sabha seat but he was shifted to Moradabad constituency in anticipation that Bollywood star-turned-politician Hema Malini could be fielded from Fatehpur Sikri by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

However, soon after Hema Malini's ticket was announced by the BJP from Mathura, Babbar got in touch with his party brass and got himself shifted to Fatehpur Sikri.

Sources in the Congress said that besides Babbar, another senior leader, Jitin Prasad,

about whom there were rumours on Friday that he would join the BJP, would now contest the Lok Sabha poll from Lucknow against Rajnath Singh, instead of Dharaura.

The sources maintained that fearing his defeat, Prasad wanted a change in his seat but a senior Congress leader convinced him to take up the prestigious fight from Lucknow. Prasad was told that even if he lost the election, the party would ensure a berth for him in the Rajya Sabha later on.

However, efforts to confirm the development from Prasad failed as he could not be contacted for comments.

In the seventh list released by the Congress late on Friday night, the party announced nine more candidates from UP while changing candidates on two seats.

Till date, the Congress has announced 44 candidates.

BJP names new candidate for Kairana seat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday announced the names of three more candidates for the Lok Sabha elections from Uttar Pradesh. As expected, the BJP did not give ticket to Mriganka Singh from Kairana Lok Sabha seat in west UP and replaced her with party MLA from Gangoh (Saharanpur) Pradeep Chaudhary.

Chaudhary is a Jat leader and before joining the BJP ahead of the 2017 UP Assembly polls, he was with the Congress and had won the Assembly election on the ticket of the grand old party.

Mriganka Singh is the daughter of former MP from Kairana Hukum Singh. After her father's death last year, she contested the byelection to Kairana seat in May 2018 but lost to Samajwadi Party candidate Tabassum Hasan who was supported by the Bahujan Samaj Party and Rashtriya Lok Dal.

Rain, cloudy sky likely in Delhi next week

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital may witness strong surface winds on March 26. In weekly weather forecast, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said that there are chances of rain on March 25 and sky will remain cloudy in entire next week. From March 26 onwards maximum temperature will increase and fluctuate between 32 degrees Celsius and 35 degrees Celsius and minimum temperature will oscillate between 16 degrees Celsius and 19 degrees Celsius.

It was a pleasant Saturday morning in Delhi with the minimum temperature at 16.6 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's average. "The sky will remain clear with strong surface winds during the day, said an IMD official. The maximum tempera-



ture settled at 30.3 degrees Celsius. Overall humidity was recorded at 34 per cent.

Friday's maximum temperature was 30.2 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's average, and the mini-

mum temperature was 15.5 degrees Celsius, two notches below the normal. The overall Air Quality Index (AQI) was 'moderate' at 113 as per the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting.

CAPSULE

PINAKI CHANDRA GHOSE TAKES OATH AS LOKPAL
New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday administered the oath of office to Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as the country's first Lokpal.

RAHUL GANDHI ATTACKS MAMATA IN RALLY
Chanchal (West Bengal): Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday launched a scathing attack on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, accusing her of running the entire State according to her whims.

ATTACH VIJAY MALLYA'S PROPERTIES: COURT
New Delhi: A Delhi court has ordered attachment of liquor baron Vijay Mallya's properties in Bengaluru in a case relating to FERA violations.



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Election Commission of India
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Akhilesh hits out at Modi's criticism of opposition

'We have worked to keep alive Lohia's legacy'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his charge that the opposition had forgotten the principles of veteran socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia.

The socialist ideologue's birth anniversary was celebrated on Saturday.

The SP chief termed the BJP "schizophrenic" and said the saffron party tries to co-opt icons like Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia but follows people who these leaders disagreed with.

Akhilesh defended his position saying, "We have relentlessly worked for defending Lohia's legacy and the SP is the only party working on his principles."

On the occasion of 109th birth anniversary of Dr Lohia, the Prime Minister, in a blog, took a jibe at the opposition saying that "they believe in 'satta, swarth and shoshan' (power, selfishness and exploitation) and are experts in grabbing power".

Modi also said that the moot question facing 130 crore Indians was, how can those who betrayed Dr Lohia be expected to serve the nation? "Today they are betraying

the principles of Dr Lohia, tomorrow they will also betray the people of India," Modi said.

Reacting to Modi's jibe in Lucknow on Saturday, Akhilesh said, "We don't need lecture on principles of Dr Lohia from Prime Minister Narendra Modi or the BJP. Many people have deflected from the principles of Lohia. Perhaps we are the only party which is constantly working on Lohia's principles."

The SP chief also accused the BJP of trying to hide behind the issue of nationalism merely to deflect questions raised by the people.

"There are no jobs for the youth of the country. The BJP is trying to hide behind 'nationalism' instead of answering people's questions. People are closely watching everything and will give them a befitting reply in the election. Also, posters of BSP chief Mayawati and me were burnt by BJP people in Barabanki on Holika. This only shows their mindset towards Dalits and Backwards of the country," Akhilesh said.

Addressing a meeting of SP leaders to commemorate Lohia's birth anniversary, Akhilesh said, "The BJP cannot dictate what the people want and decide as to who is a nationalist and who is not."



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav addressing party workers on the 109th birth anniversary of socialist ideologue Dr Ram Manohar Lohia at Lohia Park in state capital on Saturday

RLD urges EC to stop ads featuring Hema Malini

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Rashtriya Lok Dal has urged the Election Commission of India to stop all advertisements featuring cine star-turned-politician Hema Malini who will be contesting the Lok Sabha election from her Mathura Constituency on Bharatiya Janata Party ticket.

In a letter sent to Chief Electoral Officer of Uttar Pradesh, L Venkateshwarlu on Saturday, RLD national spokesman Anil Dubey said the advertisements of a water purifier featuring Hema Malini appearing in the media were blatant violation of model code of conduct, as in the advertisement she appeals to the public to use the water purified by the said water purifier.

In his complaint, Dubey said even after announcement of Hema Malini's name as BJP candidate for the Lok Sabha poll, the said advertisements were continuing.

The RLD spokesman also demanded that the cost of the advertisements featuring Hema Malini that appear during polls be added to her poll expenses account.

Yogi to launch BJP campaign from Saharanpur today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who is one of the star campaigners of Bharatiya Janata Party, will launch the party's poll campaign in Uttar Pradesh from Saharanpur after offering puja at Maa Shakumbhari Devi temple on Sunday.

Saharanpur goes to poll with seven other west UP constituencies in the first phase of polling on April 11. The other constituencies going to polls on April 11 are Kairana, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Meerut, Bagpat, Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar.

"Before launching the poll campaign, Yogi Adityanath and some senior leaders of the party will offer prayers at Maa Shakumbhari Devi temple in Saharanpur. Yogi always goes to the famous temple during his visit to Saharanpur," said BJP state general secretary and west UP in-charge Vijay Bahadur Pathak in Lucknow on Saturday.

Pathak, who is camping in Saharanpur, said that all preparations for the grand launch of the poll campaigning had been completed.



After 'darshan' of Maa Shakumbhari Devi, Yogi will address his first poll meeting at the nearby Naglamafi village in Behat Assembly segment of the constituency.

"The Chief Minister will stay in Saharanpur for 90 minutes after reaching there around 12 noon. Some UP ministers from the western region, along with senior party leaders, will be present in the first election meeting of the Chief Minister.

After Saharanpur, Yogi

would leave for Mathura and address an election meeting in Vrindavan, Pathak said.

Yogi will again go to Mathura on Monday where he will join actor-turned-sitting BJP MP Hema Malini who will file her nomination papers from Mathura Lok Sabha seat.

Meanwhile, Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani will address a public meeting at Kali Mathia Chauraha in Shastri Nagar in Kanpur at 3 pm on Sunday. Irani is among the star campaigners of the party.

Saints postpone Ayodhya march

PNS ■ ALLAHABAD

In view of the Lok Sabha elections, the proposed march of saints and seers to Ayodhya for the construction of Ram temple has been postponed.

The Akhara Parishad, at a meeting held here, decided that the fresh strategy and dates for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya would be announced after the Lok Sabha elections.

During the Kumbh Mela, the Akhara Parishad had announced that the saints and seers would proceed to Ayodhya after Holi for the construction of Ram Temple.

They had also decided to create public awareness over temple construction in Ayodhya.

However, with the model code of conduct coming into force in the country from March 10, Akhara Parishad president Mahant Narendra Giri said that fresh strategy for the construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya would be chalked out after the Lok Sabha elections.

At the present moment, the earlier stand of proceeding to Ayodhya for construction of the Ram temple stands postponed, Mahant Narendra Giri added.

Two thieves arrested; valuables recovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kalyanpur police arrested two thieves and recovered stolen cash and valuables from them on Saturday morning. They confessed their involvement in the theft committed in the house of Laxmi Narain of Keshavpuram, Avas Vikas-I, a few days ago.

On a tip-off, the police arrested both the thieves near Dalhan culvert. They were identified as Lulu alias Firoz (23) of Astha Hotel, near Ganesh Ata Chakki, Maswanpur, Rawatpur Gaon, Kalyanpur and Akram (32) of House No. 55, Sarai Bazar, near Masjid, Kalyanpur.

The arrested persons also confessed their involvement in many other thefts in the past. The police recovered nine pairs of anklet, seven pairs of bichhya and ₹62,000 in cash from them.

Both have a long criminal history and over half-a-dozen cases are registered against them, most at Kalyanpur police station, in the past.

The police team was led by sub-inspectors Jabir Hussain and Pankaj Kumar. Meanwhile, the police arrested three suspects involved in a triple murder case, including a couple. They were held in Maharajpur police station area on Friday evening.

Meanwhile, with the arrival of three bodies in the village from the mortuary on Saturday afternoon, panic prevailed among villagers. It may be recalled that over a dispute of playing Holi with neighbours, a couple and their elderly aunt were battered to death in Baijakheda village of Maharajpur.

They were identified as Vijay Kishore, his wife Rina (32) and aunt Usha Devi (54). Vijay Kishore was employed in a thread manufacturing unit in Pokharpur, Chakeri.



near Masjid, Kalyanpur.

Youth shot dead by constable over playing Holi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, a police constable shot a youth dead in Mathura after a dispute over playing colours on Holi on Friday.

The accused constable, who is a kin of a senior Samajwadi Party leader, was arrested and sent to jail.

As per reports, constable Rohit Yadav aka Tilla, posted in Gautam Buddha Nagar, had come to his native town

Vrindavan in Mathura on his SUV to celebrate Holi. On Friday evening, he had a verbal exchange with Rajat over playing colours near Nagal Baba temple. The dispute snowballed and Rohit whipped out a revolver and opened fire at Rajat, injuring him critically.

Later, some eye-witnesses rushed to rescue Rajat and also nabbed Rohit before calling the police. The accused cop was later handed over to the police.

Rajat was rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead upon arrival.

A case was registered in this regard by Mathura police and the constable was sent to jail.

The Noida police was intimated about the arrest and advised to take departmental action against Rohit after placing him under suspension.

Meanwhile in Mathura, a woman died and eight persons were injured when two cars col-

lided on Yamuna Expressway around 9:30 am on Saturday.

As per reports, one of the cars collided with the other while overtaking it, as a result of which the occupants sustained serious injuries.

All the injured were admitted to Nayati hospital on Agra-Mathura highway. While the woman was pronounced dead by doctors, four others were stated to be critical.

A case was registered and the body was sent for autopsy.



Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi being garlanded by BJP workers on his arrival at Rampur, on Saturday

Five die in mysterious circumstances

Allahabad (PNS): Five persons died in mysterious circumstances on Friday in the neighbouring Kaushambi district. The local residents said that they died after consuming illicit liquor.

The police are tight-lipped over the issue, and have sent the

bodies for post-mortem examination.

In the Dalit Basti of Karari in Kaushambi district five persons fell seriously ill on Friday and were rushed to two different hospitals where they breathed their last. The police tried to hush up the incident.



NOTICE

NOTICE

Arun Mediratta has lost the Original Allotment Letter and 8 Original Payment Receipts of my Plot No. D-43, DLF Garden City, Raibareilly Road, Lucknow. Allotment letter No. 0460, dated 28.06.2013 and Payment Receipts No. GDN/CRB/00269/1211, GDN/CRB/00166/0512, GDN/CRB/00114/0712, GDN/CRB/00009/1012, GDN/CRB/00560/1212, GDN/CRB/00184/0313, GDN/CRB/00356/0613, GDN/CRB/00004/1013. Mob.: 9794700006

Cop held for graft

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi unit of Anti-Corruption Organisation on Saturday caught incharge of Sonia police outpost red handed while taking bribe from a person. The police officer was sent to jail.

According to information, the victim, Rajkumar Gupta of Kabirchaura, had taken franchise of a courier company and had employed a youth to deliver letters/parcels. Gupta had alleged that the youth had not delivered many letters/parcels and kept them at his home after making fake signatures of person to whom he had to deliv-

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SHOs directed to maintain law and order during polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The district administration held a meeting with all the SHOs regarding their duties in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The meeting presided over by District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma was attended by all the SHOs at Collectorate on Saturday.

Chief development officer Manish Bansal, while giving details of the meeting, said that the SHOs had been called to review certain activities in connection with the law and order situation during elections.

"Once the nominations begin, the observers for elections will seek details of how many booths are there under the SHOs and how much force has been deployed at the booths. The observers try to find out if the SHOs have all the information about the booths," he said.

Bansal said the DM also reviewed the vulnerability mapping which had already been carried out by the SHOs. "The vulnerability mapping is carried out to see if the thana has any vulnerable areas where the voters can be intimidated by other groups of people. These people have to be bound and action has to be taken against them. The CDO said that instructions were also given regarding arm licences.

"We have a total of 59,000 arm licences in the district. Instructions were given to the SHOs to get the licenses



District Magistrate Kaushal Raj Sharma during a meeting with SHOs at Collectorate in Lucknow on Saturday

deposited and in case there is an exemption, formalities should be completed at the earliest. There are several people who ask for exemption because of serious threats to their lives," the CDO pointed out.

Directions were also issued for physical verification of liquor shops. The SHOs were informed that on March 26, 27 and 28, the zonal magistrates would be visiting all the booths and the SHOs should be present at that time.

Meanwhile, the District Magistrate held another meeting to ensure maximum participation of the differently-abled voters in the elections. The DM

said all endeavours were being made to ensure that the participation of differently-abled people was increased and for that, 40 organisations from the district had been contacted. The DM said one wheelchair would be available at each booth and there would be 3,000-7,500 'matdan mitras' at the booths to bring the differently-abled voters there. Sharma said that a rally of differently-abled people would also be taken out so that voters were inspired to step out of their house to exercise their franchise. He said the differently-abled voters unable to walk would also be provided

ambulances. Meanwhile, for the benefit of voters, the Election Commission of India has started a voter helpline app. The district administration officials said with the help of this app, voters could search their names in the electoral rolls and learn about their respective booths.

"People can also fill form 6 online to register as voters and gain information about EVMs and VVPATs. The app will also help them in making election-related complaints and get answers to the various queries. They can also view the results and poll analysis," an official said.

Man shot at by rival over property row, critical

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

A man was shot at by his rival over a property-related issue in Kakori on Saturday noon giving the Lucknow police a tough task to handle in the election season. The victim suffered injuries on his stomach and his condition is said to be critical. There were reports that the youth was attacked on an issue related to a girl. But police spokesman AK Dwivedi rubbished the reports.

Jitendra Rawat (23) of Gonda lives in Gurudin Kheda locality. Around noon, when he was in a mango grove, Vishal of Newada village of Malihabad reached the scene and opened fire at the victim hitting him in his stomach. He left the scene leaving behind the profusely-bleeding victim. Some villagers present in the mango grove converged on the scene after they heard the gunshot and rushed the victim to Trauma Centre. The police spokesman said the police arrested Vishal after launching several raids. "A case of murderous assault was registered against Vishal. Initial probe revealed that Vishal and Jitendra had an enmity on a property-related issue and because of that Jitendra was attacked," he said.

Meanwhile, a contractual LESA employee Sooraj (26) of sector H colony in Gudamba ended his life at his house on Saturday. He was hanging from the ceiling with a stole tied around his neck.



People wait for trains to their respective destinations after Holi festivities, in Lucknow on Saturday

Pioneer

Woman hacked to death, severed body recovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Unidentified miscreant killed a woman, trisected her body before stuffing it in a hand bag and abandoning it on a bench opposite Ram Manohar Lohia Law University in Krishna Nagar early Saturday morning. The identity of woman was yet to be ascertained. Police recovered some CCTV footages in which the man was seen moving towards the bench and leaving the place. But the cops failed to search the suspect, who was tall and had a sturdy build. The sniffer also failed to give any lead to police.

The incident gave a chilling reminder of Gauri Srivastava murder case in which the police had recovered body parts stuffed in sacks and strewn alongside the road (during the regime of then SSP Yashaswi Yadav) and recovery of body parts of two women in Madaion (when Rajesh Pandey was SSP, Lucknow). Police suspect that the crime was committed by some disgruntled man who was unhappy with his wife on some issues.

As per reports, Vinay Lal of sector D1 of LDA colony spotted the abandoned red-coloured bag lying on a bench fixed on the ground and meant for morning walkers to rest there. The bag also contained a torn letter. He dialled the police control number apprehending some suspected explosive material inside it. However, when the cops opened the bag, they were shocked. It contained two chopped off hands, two legs and a head of a middle-aged woman. The body parts were wrapped in a polythene bag and the torso was missing. Blood was trickling down from the body parts and it seemed that the woman was killed hours before. The horrendous incident sent the entire Lucknow police in a tizzy. Soon a huge team of police, led by ASP, East, reached the scene for carrying out the investigation. The police teams sent the body parts to the mortuary for autopsy and combed the area to search the missing torso but to no avail. The police detained some persons and were interrogating them.

During the initial probe, the police succeeded in obtaining some CCTV footages in

Cases of unidentified bodies a Gordian knot for police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The recovery of unidentified bodies from different parts of the city always had embarrassed the police and tested its brilliance unsuccessfully. Barring the murder of 19-year-old law student Gauri Srivastava, whose chopped body parts were recovered alongside the Shaheed Path in Lucknow, the police failed to get headway in several of them.

In 2017, the Hasanganj police had recovered an unidentified decomposed body of a woman. The body was stuffed inside a jute gunny-bag and was recovered near Daliganj bridge under Hasanganj police station. Police are yet to get any headway. In the same year, the police had recovered chopped body parts of two women from IIM Road. The case was transferred to the crime branch on December 18, 2018, after Madaion police failed to make any breakthrough even after marathon efforts. On January 22, 2019, the Gosainganj police recovered the body of an unidentified woman from thickets near Ekana stadium. The body was stuffed in a suitcase. The woman's dress was in a dishevelled state. Police are still empty-hand in this matter.

On June 22, 2018, a 24-year-old woman was beheaded and her body was dumped in a mango grove under BKT police station. Cops had suspected that she was first sexually assaulted and later her head was chopped off. Her



wounds suggested that she was attacked with a sharp-edged weapon. Police are still empty-handed in this matter.

In Mohanlalganj, the police recovered several bodies but failed to get any headway about the identity of victims and the perpetrators of crime. On November 30, 2010, the police recovered semi-charred body of a woman from inside a field in Kankaha village. The police continued the probe for three months and later shelved the case. On November 26, 2012, the police recovered the body of a woman from a drain in Pursaini village of Mohanlalganj. The probe into the case continued for four months and was later shelved.

On August 22, 2015, the Mohanlalganj police recovered the body of an unidentified woman but could not get any clue about her identity and the miscreants. On September 16, 2017, the police recovered the body of an unidentified man from the forest cover in Dhanuwasad village of Mohanlalganj. The case is yet to be cracked. The same is the fate of a case in which the body of an unidentified woman was recovered in Mohanlalganj area on February 27, 2019.

which a man was seen carrying a red-coloured bag and was wobbling. The police sources said the man was seen coming from a lane behind the boundary wall where he had put the bag on the seat. "It seemed that he was planning to dump it somewhere but did not get time or could not spot a safe place," the sources said. Krishna Nagar CO LP Singh said the police

were yet to ascertain the identity of the woman. "We are looking for missing persons and matching the details. Some persons are being interrogated," he said. He added that the police were also looking for the CCTV footages at Metro rail stations, bus and railway stations to find out the way the suspect moved to hide himself.



A motorcycle rally being flagged at 1090 crossing to mark Shaheed Diwas on Saturday

Pioneer

5-yr-old boy among 2 charred to death as shanty catches fire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Two persons, including a five-year-old boy, were charred to death after the shanty in which they were resting caught fire on Saturday noon in Gosainganj. Some livestock also suffered burns in the mishap. The villagers claimed that the fire broke out after a high tension electric wire snapped and fell over the shanty. Police rubbished the claims and said the fire broke out in a thatched roof and then in the tin shed where the victims were sleeping.

As per reports, the victim, identified as Jitendra Kumar (22), and his nephew Nishant (5), both of Shivar of Gosainganj, were sleeping in the shanty when the fire broke out and they were charred to death. The villagers said an overhead wire snapped and it caught fire in a thatched roof and later the fire engulfed the shanty. The villagers staged a protest at the crime scene and obstructed the investigation work being carried out by the police. They alleged that they had lodged a complaint about the shabby state of the overhead wire to the Electric department but their complaint was never addressed. The police spokesman said the police were cross-checking the allegation

VILLAGERS CLAIMED THAT THE FIRE BROKE OUT AFTER A HIGH TENSION ELECTRIC WIRE SNAPPED AND FELL OVER THE SHANTY. HOWEVER, POLICE TRASHED THE CLAIMS

that the fire broke out after an electric wire snapped.

CASE REGISTERED

A case was registered at Madaion police station against a woman and her son in connection with the mysterious death of insurance agent Bhola of Telibagh locality in Lucknow. Bhola had suffered injuries when he had gone to the house of Rekha (name changed) in connection with an insurance policy-related issue on March 19 and had died later. His family alleged that Rekha had taken a huge sum from Bhola and suspected that Bhola was killed due to a dispute over that. "The doctors had recommended preservation of the viscera as they failed to ascertain the cause of death. This made us grow suspicion. We demand a threadbare probe into the case," deceased's family told police.

15 hurt as two groups clash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Fifteen persons suffered injuries in a bloody battle which erupted between two groups after a youth from one group tried to teach etiquettes to youths of the rival group in Sikandarpur village of Gudamba on Friday night. Among the victims is an elderly woman, who suffered head injuries and fractured her arms. She was admitted to a private hospital where her condition is critical. Reports said a group of raucous youths were standing near the house of Abhishek and

were hurling expletives. Hearing this, Abhishek went to the youths and asked them to go to some other place as their act was indecent. This irked the youths and they attacked Abhishek. To save him, Abhishek's maternal grandmother came in between and she was also attacked by one of the attackers who lobbed a brick on her. This made supporters of Abhishek to march to the scene and soon it was free for all.

"Police had identified some of the youths in this connection and a preventive measure was being taken," the police said.

Police said Abhishek and his sister Arti suffered injuries in the brawl too. A sub-inspector was bowled to the villagers when he demanded the mobile number from a woman after intimidating her in the name of investigation. The villagers alleged that the S-I was in a drunken state and his intention seemed doubtful. "He had reached the scene to oversee the investigation but indulged in act in which he misbehaved with the woman," the villager alleged. The police spokesman said he had no such information when asked.

Irate villagers attack police team in Maal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

An irate group of villagers attacked a police team while protesting against the murder of a local youth who was killed allegedly for demanding his wages in Maal on Saturday afternoon.

Some commuters helped cops in fleeing the scene by giving them a lift on their bikes when they were being chased by the mob. The group literally laid siege to the area and there was no reach of police for hours. An additional police force was sent to the scene to control the situation. Normalcy returned to the area only after senior officials ably struck a dialogue with agitators making them agree to end their protest. Dhruv of Gopramau village of the area was working as a labourer at the house of Genda Singh, also of Goparamau village, and Rs 42,000 was due to Dhruv as wages. On Holi day (March 20), Dhruv went to meet Genda to take the money

but he was thrashed. Genda later drove his car on Dhruv and his friend Onkar and caused Dhruv to suffer serious injuries. Critically-injured Dhruv was first taken to CHC Maal but the doctors referred him to Trauma Centre in view of his condition which was deteriorating fast. His family later took him to a private hospital for better treatment but Dhruv died there.

"The police registered a case of brawl, causing injuries to him by reckless driving and also causing death due to negligence," police spokesman AK Dwivedi said. He said Dhruv's mother Shivrani had lodged a complaint with the police on Friday. Sources said police did not register a case of murder against Genda and this stirred up the villagers. "On Saturday, they put the corpse on the road while protesting against the police apathy. A police team was sent to the scene to clear the road and this ended up in a brawl," the sources said.

Sparrow census: 7,000 and counting

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

There are more than 7,000 sparrows in the city, as per the census carried out by Wildlife Institute of India and Biodiversity Lab of Lucknow University on March 20 (World Sparrow Day).

Coordinator, Wildlife Centre, Amita Kanaujia said they received an overwhelming response in terms of SMSes and e-mails. She said the figures were still pouring in. "The numbers may increase as we are still getting several responses from residents," she said.

She pointed out that the increase in the number of sparrows could be attributed to the fact that there had been a lot of efforts made for conservation of sparrows lately. "We are making a database of all the people who have responded to us and we will invite them at a common platform and give them sparrow houses and 'Gauraiyya Mitra' certificates for the



THE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SPARROWS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FACT THAT THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF EFFORTS MADE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIRDS LATELY

efforts made for sparrow conservation. These people have made a proactive endeavour," she added.

Kanaujia said since 2009, an appeal was being made to the general public every year to count sparrows in and

around gardens in their areas, and houses on March 20 morning.

"A counting form was distributed with awareness material. This activity forced the public to think about sparrow conservation. People were forced to make efforts to bring the sparrows back," she said. The count was 2,503 in 2013, 3,362 in 2014, 5,637 in 2015, in 2016, 6,036 in 2017, and 7,066 in 2018.

She said that a study which they had conducted recently in Lucknow showed many areas as dense, highly developed and surrounded by irregular rings of diminishing development.

Abdul Wahid, who made a 'Gauraiyya Conservation Centre' with the help of his wife Rafiyya Anjum in 2016, said a lot of birds visited his centre on World Sparrow Day. "A lot of sparrows and bird experts have visited the centre. However, we have not got any help from the state or Central governments," he added.

LMRC to increase spaces for parking at stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Managing director of Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) Kumar Keshav inspected the parking spaces at all the stations in the elevated corridor — from KD Singh 'Babu' Stadium to Munshipulia — on Saturday.

The idea was to identify and mark appropriate spaces for parking as the passenger count is expected to increase. Several passengers are boarding the Metro and therefore, there is a need to increase the parking spaces in about 15 days. "We visited all the stations and inspected the spaces in front. We will soon come out with a proposal. We need to create parking spaces for two-wheelers," Keshav said.

He said there were some stations, such as the one in Indiranagar, on the main road and they would try and affix some kind of a ramp to help the bikers park their vehicles in the pavements. The LMRC MD said they had a contractor who was



managing the parking areas at all the stations. "We have talked to him about the extra parking spaces that can be worked out. At Munshipulia station where we have a large parking lot, the entire space is always full," he pointed out. Keshav said they were happy to be receiving encouraging number of footfalls. "Even after Holi, the number of passengers was 69,000," he said. Regarding music in trains, he said they had made no arrangements for music in trains because it was supposed to be a quiet and serene mode of transport. "However, we have arrangements for music at the stations and we also have bands to perform at many of the stations in the North-South corridor," he added.

LESA collecting arrears from govt departments



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Electricity Supply Administration is in the process of collecting arrears from government departments for over the past six months to one year. LESA is currently carrying out revenue drive and has collected Rs 73 crore.

Chief engineer Pradeep Kakkar said that the target for March was Rs 140 crore. He pointed out that major revenues comes from all the top government departments, including police, defence and railways. The chief engineer said that the police department owed LESA Rs 11 crore. "We have submitted the bills at the SSP office after getting the same verified from police station incharges. Now, grants will be sought

from the state government and the amount will be deposited, process for which is on," he pointed out. He said that a number of primary schools in Itaunja and Chinhhat had arrears to the tune of Rs 2.11 crore. "The primary health centre in Bakshi-Ka-Talab has arrears of Rs 2.39 crore and there are 200 such centres in total," he added.

"Social Welfare department on Parag Narain Road owes LESA Rs 40 lakh while Lucknow Development Authority has arrears of Rs 2.2 crore which will be paid shortly. The Forest department owes LESA Rs 25-30 lakh while Lucknow Municipal Corporation Rs 14-15 lakh from its zonal office in Gomti Nagar and the workshop behind a mall in trans-Gomti area. The

Telecom department has arrears of Rs 7-8 lakh," the chief engineer pointed out.

He said LESA had over three lakh domestic consumers, 40,000 commercial consumers and 6,000 industrial consumers. "The maximum revenue (over 65 per cent) comes from domestic consumers, 20 per cent from commercial consumers and 15 per cent from the industries," Kakkar said. He said that smart meters were being installed in three trans-Gomti divisions, including Chinhhat, Bakshi-Ka-Talab and Rahimnagar. "After the installation of smart meters, people will receive SMSes on their mobiles and every consumer will receive the bills on the first day of every month," he said.

Manifesto for clean air to be out tomorrow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

Climate Agenda will be launching on Monday the public manifesto for political parties on the issue of air pollution in view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Senior campaigner of Climate Agenda Ekta Shekhar said the manifesto had been made with the help of organisations in 40 districts of the state. She said they had been taking this manifesto to various political parties so that they adopted its points in their respective manifestos.

"We are already meeting political parties that have linked us to their manifesto teams. However, we are not too sure how much of this they will adopt and hence we will be putting this in the public domain so that people can ask these political parties in future regarding how they are dealing with air pollution," She said.

The same organisation had kept an artificial white pair of HEPA filter lungs in the city in January earlier this year. The lungs had turned black within 24 hours, highlighting serious health hazards.

"This 7-day event had raised awareness about air pollution and gathered support from political parties, executives, public and civil societies. All mainstream political parties had promised to pay utmost attention to the issue in their political manifestos for the Lok Sabha elections," Ekta pointed out. She said that solar energy, electric vehicles and eco-friendly waste disposal mechanisms, along with individual behavioural change, have the potential to bring back clean air to Uttar Pradesh and entire country.

"Reports have stated in the past, more than 2.6 lakh deaths occurred due to air pollution-borne diseases in India during 2017. A UNICEF report says that four infants die in Uttar Pradesh every hour due to toxicity in ambient air. Almost all the hospitals in the state are now full of patients with respiratory problems. Patients from all parts of the state reach hospitals like KGMU and it shows that air pollution is not limited to a specific part or region of the state. It happens every year and the number of patients is continuously

increasing. Only an alliance of government and general public can tide over the crisis," she said.

Ekta said clean air should be announced as the fundamental right for all under NCAP. "People must engage in efforts by governments and NGOs to clean the air, as the issue of air pollution cannot be addressed by anyone alone. Each one of us can contribute in this fight to bring back clean air to our cities by utmost utilisation of solar energy and public transport based on clean energy," she added.

Light & sound show to be staged at Residency

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The light and sound show will commence at Residency after three months. Regional tourism officer RP Yadav said the delay was caused by delayed layout of the technical system to support the show.

"The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has brought about certain changes which need to be incorporated. A sum of Rs 3.5



The show will be showcased near the museum at the Residency. It is the place where the show was originally held earlier

crore has already been given to Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam. They will also be making a script for staging of the show," he said.

Yadav said the show would be showcased near the museum at the Residency. "It is the place where the show was originally held earlier," he said. Meanwhile, he said that the Tourism department was also carrying out beautification of Buddheshwar temple on Sitapur and a sum of Rs 75 lakh had been given to the department for the purpose.



Former UP minister Ahmad Hasan and others paying floral tributes to the statue of Ram Manohar Lohia on his birth anniversary at RML Hospital in Lucknow on Saturday

Pioneer

Smart signalling system will ensure better traffic regulation, says ASP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ LUCKNOW

The smart signalling system under the Integrated Management Traffic System (IMTS) will be implemented in the form of 6-7 corridors in the city shortly. According to ASP (Traffic) Abhishek Verma, it will be implemented at all the 105 crossings of the city in the next 2-3 months.

He said that the issue of implementation in the form of corridors was taken up after the company faced some problems in the pilot study which was taken up near Indira Gandhi Prasththan and at Hazratganj crossing.

"The company was not satisfied with the manner in which it was being conducted at these



two crossings. Now, the company is implementing it as a junction or as a corridor. Six to seven crossings will form a perfect corridor because the standalone thing is not working," he said.

"In case of a standalone, the traffic comes from all sides which makes it very difficult to regulate and hence it can be tested in a better fashion in a corridor where the traffic comes in a regulated

manner from the preceding crossing," he explained.

Verma said the implementation of smart signalling to be done shortly would no longer be a pilot study but proper implementation. "There will be a total of 19 corridors (105 crossings) in the city where the smart signalling will be implemented," the ASP (Traffic) said.

Giving the example of one corridor under smart sig-

nalling, he said it would start from Polytechnic crossing and go up to Bandariya Bagh, thus covering all the crossings on this route. "The company which has taken up the job of implementation is lagging behind by 3-4 months in its schedule, and we have directed it to implement the project at the earliest," he said.

"The company will be starting with a few corridors because it has limited resources. The company has given us a timeline of 2-3 months in which the project will start working in the entire city," Verma said.

Smart signalling is a system in which the manual workforce will be reduced on roads and traffic will be regulated in an intelligent way by using sensors and analytics. The violators will be fined through automatic number plate deduction cameras. There will also be surveillance cameras to check the movement of any suspicious vehicle through various crossings.

U.P. Rajya Vidut Utpadan Nigam Ltd, Obra Thermal Power Station, Obra-Sonebhadra E-TENDER

NOTICE Name of Work : Annual Breakdown Maintenance of Coal Pipe work for unit no. 9, 10 & 11, 3x200 MW, BTPS, Obra. Tender No.: T-09/SE-I/BTPS/BMD-II/2018-19. **Estimated Cost of Work :** Rs. 7.00 Lakh (Rs. Seven Lakh Only). **Approx. Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>** 15.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs. **Last Date and Time for Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender Fee, Earnest Money and Tender Document in the Undersign Office** 16.04.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids** 18.04.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Place of Opening of e-Bids :** Office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra Sonebhadra. **Address for Communication :** Superintending Engineer, O&MM C-I, BTPS, Obra Sonebhadra, U.P.-231219. **E-mail Address :** se.ommc.l.btps.obra@uprvnl.org. **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 590.00 (Rs. Five Hundred Only). **Earnest Money :** Rs. 14,000.00 (Rs. Fourteen Thousand Only). **Note :** The tender documents shall not be sold. Tender specification is available on <http://etender.up.nic.in> Tender will be accepted online only.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MM-C-I, BTPS, OBRA.

E-TENDER NOTICE Name of Work : Annual running breakdown maintenance and removal of Accumulated Soot/ Routine Checking work of Wall Blower for unit no. 9th, 10th & 11th of (3x200MW) units, BTPS, Obra. **Tender No.:** T-10/SE-I/BTPS/BMD-I / 2018-19. **Estimated Cost of Work :** Rs. 7.80 (Rs. Seven Lakhs Eighty Thousand) Approx. **Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>** 18.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs. **Last Date and Time for Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender Fee, Earnest Money and Tender Document in the Undersign Office** 19.04.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids** 22.04.2019 up to 16:00 Hrs. **Place of Opening of e-Bids :** Office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra Sonebhadra. **Address for Communication :** Superintending Engineer, O&MM C-I, BTPS, Obra Sonebhadra, U.P.-231219. **E-Mail Address :** se.ommc.l.btps.obra@uprvnl.org. **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 590.00+90.00 (GST)=Rs. 590.00 (Rs. Five Hundred Only). **Earnest Money :** Rs. 15,600.00 (Rs. Fifteen Thousand Six Hundred Only). **Note :** The tender documents shall not be sold. Tender specification is available on <http://etender.up.nic.in>

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MM-C-I, BTPS, OBRA.

E-TENDER NOTICE Name of Work : Replacement of old & damaged Acid storage tanks (02 Nos.) and one alkali storage tank (01 no) of W.T.P.-B with Old & useable Acid storage tank of W.T.P.-A and evacuation of filter media of PSF no-7, 8 & 9 in Chemistry Division, OTPS Obra. **Tender No.:** T-13/SE-I/BTPS/CHE.DIV/2018-19. **Estimated cost of Work :** Rs. 4.82 Lakh Approx. **Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>** 08.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs. **Last Date and Time for Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender Fee, Earnest Money and Tender Document in the Undersign Office** 10.04.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Date and Time of opening of e-Bids:** 11.04.2019 at and after 16:00 Hrs., **Place of Opening of E-bids :** Office of Superintending Engineer, Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra - Sonebhadra. **E-mail Address :** se.ommc.l.btps.obra@uprvnl.org. **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 500.00 + 90.00 (G.S.T. Extra) = 590.00, **Earnest Money :** Rs. 10,000.00 (Rs. Ten Thousand Only). **NOTE :** The tender documents shall not be sold. Tender specification is available on <http://etender.up.nic.in> Tender will be accepted online only. Information related to extension in due dated and corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves updated.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER O&MM-C-I, BTPS, OBRA.

Short Term E-Tender Notice Name of Work : Routine maintenance work related to Dual belt gravimetric feeder, Bowl Mill & related system of units 9th, 10th, 11th of 3x200MW, BTPS, Obra. **Tender No.:** T-07/SE-I/BMD-II/BTPS/2018-19. **Estimated cost of Work :** Rs. 9.86 Lakh, **Last Date and Time for Submission of e-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website <http://etender.up.nic.in>** 11.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs. **Last Date and Time for Submission of hard copy along with scanned copy of UTR slip Tender Fee and Earnest Money** 12.04.2019 up to 17:00 Hrs. **Undersigned Date and Time of opening of e-Bids:** 15.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs., **Place of Opening of e-Bids :** Office of Superintending Engineer Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra - Sonebhadra. **Address for Communication :** Superintending Engineer, O&MM-C-I, BTPS, Obra-Sonebhadra, U.P.-231219. **E-mail Address :** se.ommc.l.btps.obra@uprvnl.org. **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 1000.00+90.00 (18% G.S.T.), **Earnest Money :** Rs. 15,000.00 (Rs. Fifteen Thousand Only). **NOTE :** The tender documents will not be sold. Tender specification is available on <https://etender.up.nic.in>. The Bidders are advised to visit the regular basis in order to keep themselves updated.

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LIMITED, OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA - SONEBHADRA. Extension

NOTICE E-TENDER No. 06/SE-I/BTPS/BMD-I/2018-19 Name of Work : The work of annual running break down Maintenance of coal & oil burners, air nozzle and boiler drum internals (Main Boiler) of unit No. 9, 10 & 11, 3x200 MW, BTPS, Obra. **TENDER No.:** T-06 / SE-I / BTPS / BMD-I / 2018-19. **ESTIMATED COST OF WORK :** Rs. 5.00 Lakhs Approx. **Last Date and Time For Submission of E-Bids (Technical and Financial) at e-procurement website, <http://etender.up.nic.in>** 03.04.2019 up to 18:00 Hrs., **Last Date and Time for Submission of uploaded requisite Hardcopy of Tender Fee, Earnest Money and Tender Document in the Undersign Office** 04.04.2019 up to 17:00 hrs., **Date and Time of Opening of e-Bids** 06.04.2019 up to 16:00 hrs. **Place of Opening of E-Bids :** Office of Superintending Engineer Operation & Mechanical Maintenance Circle-I, 'B' Thermal Power Station, Obra, Sonebhadra. **Address for Communication :** SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, O&MM-C-I BTPS, Obra-Sonebhadra, U.P. 231219. **Email Address :** se.ommc.l.btps.obra@uprvnl.org. **Bid Document Cost :** Rs. 500.00 + 90.00 = Rs. 590.00 **Earnest Money :** Rs. 10,000.00 (Rs. Ten Thousand Only) **Note :** The tender documents shall not be sold. Tender specification is available on <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Tender will be accepted online only. **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, O&MM-C-I, BTPS, OBRA.** No. - 55, Date - 18.03.2019. "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"

U. P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. Very

Notice No. 313 / ETCB / 2018-19 e-Tender in two separate parts on prescribed tender forms are hereby invited from the experienced contractors on U.P. Govt. e-tendering website <http://etender.up.nic.in> for providing Computer Operators on Contract basis for a period of 12 months in circle and divisional offices under jurisdiction of Electricity Transmission Circle Sultanpur up to 02:00 PM on 30.03.2019 which will be opened at 04:00 PM on the same day publicly. Technical Bids in respect of above tender notice shall be uploaded up to 02:00 PM on 30.03.2019 after making payment of "Tender Fee Rs. 1,180/- (inclusive of 18% GST) through RTGS / NEFT. The Tender Bid Part-I (Technical Bid) will contain EMD of Rs. 10,000/-. The Tender Fee and EMD shall be deposited through RTGS / NEFT (PNB, Sultanpur A/c No. 3126002100003334, IFSC Code PUNB0312600) duly pledged to the undersigned in official capacity and photocopies of GST Registration, PAN, Latest Income Tax Clearance Certificate, symmetrical experience along with work completion certificate under UPPTCL / PGCIL and 2nd part rates only. For the proof of electronically deposits, U.T.R. No., A/c No. scanned copy of duly countersigned Pay-in-Slip and in case of EMD deposited in form of Bank Guarantee, scanned copies of Bank Guarantee and email copy of confirmation issued by the concerned bank should be got uploaded by the contractor along with tender documents on the above e-tendering portal. The original Bank Guarantee shall be submitted within a week after the opening date of Part-I / Technical Bid or before the Scheduled date of opening of Part-II i.e. Price Bid, whichever be earlier. Tenders without having proper earnest money will not be accepted. In case the office remains closed or undersigned remains out of headquarters on the notified tender opening date, tenders will be opened on the next working day at scheduled time only. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. Intimation regarding opening of Tender Bid Part-II i.e. Price Bid will be given on above website in due course of time. Please visit U.P. Govt. e-tendering website www.etender.up.nic.in for details/download and for any connection / amendment / modification / extension till the date of submission of tender. **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER Electricity Transmission Circle, Sultanpur, No. 429, Date 27.10.2019, "SAVE ENERGY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"**

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD. OBRA THERMAL POWER STATION, OBRA, SONEBHADRA CORRIGENDUM

Tender No. T-12/SE-HQ/OTPS / FF&SD / 2018-19 TENDER ID : 2019_RVUNL_308103_1 The opening date of Part-I (Technical Bid) of Online e-bid Tender No. T-12/ SE-HQ/OTPS/FF&SD/2018-19 for the work of "annual refilling of Co2 fire extinguishers & Gas cartridges of OTPS, Obra" is hereby extended due to unavailability sufficient no. of bidders on due date and shall be opened on website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> as stated below : **1. Online submission End date & time of e-Bid : 25.03.2019 at 18:00 Hrs.** **2. Last Submission date & time of Hardcopy, EMD, Tender Cost & Annex : 26.03.2019 at 17:00 Hrs.,** **3. Online opening date & time of Part-I (Technical Bid) : 28.03.2019 at 16:00 Hrs.,** All other terms & conditions will remain same. Information or corrigendum if any shall be uploaded only on the above website. Bidders are advised to visit the website on regular basis in order to keep themselves updated. **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER-HQ No. 50, Date - 16.03.2019, "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION"**

Two lady doctors among 11 diagnosed with swine flu

Lucknow (PNS): Two lady doctors from SGPGI and KGMU were among 11 swine flu cases reported from different parts of city on Saturday. Till now, 473 patients have been identified in the city while four deaths reported, according to CMO officials. However, according to sources, seven persons have succumbed to the

H1N1 infection so far. The doctors down with swine flu have been identified as Kalika Dubey (SGPGI) and Saumya (KGMU). Other patients included Mamta Srivastava, Padmeshwari Devi, Mithilesh Kumari, Swapnil Agarwal, Sandhya Sharma, Dev Ashish Malik, Mukesh Rastogi, Md Raheem, and Jai Ram.

SCHOOLSCAN CMS student offered admission by six foreign universities

Shreyash Sharma, a student of City Montessori School, Kanpur Road, has been offered admission by six universities of USA and Hong Kong with scholarship. Shreyash has been awarded 100% scholarship by the University of Hong Kong. He has also been awarded scholarship of US\$ 1,60,000 by Florida Institute of Technology, US\$ 1,40,000 by Bellarmine University and US\$ 40,000 by University of Cincinnati of USA. Besides, he has also been offered admission by



Trinity University and Columbia College of USA. CMS founder Jagdish Shreyash congratulated Shreyash and expressed gratitude to the teachers.

Shah accuses Cong of insulting Pulwama martyrdom

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing his attack on Congress president Rahul Gandhi's close aide Sam Pitroda for allegedly taking a dim view of Pulwama terror attack and surgical strike against Pakistan, BJP president Amit Shah on Saturday accused the Congress of "insulting" the martyrdom of soldiers killed in the Pulwama terror attack and claimed that only BJP can ensure the country's security.

In the continuing poll-campaign slugfest with the Congress, Shah asked Rahul to apologise to people and armed forces for the comments of his aide.

Speaking to media, Shah said Pitroda's statement conveyed that the Pulwama terror attack was a "routine" incident carried out by a few people for which Pakistan cannot be blamed, as the BJP chief asked Rahul to make his party's stand clear on the issue.

Pitroda, he said, also questioned surgical strikes and air strikes by the Indian armed forces.

"Does the Congress believe that terror incidents in the country have nothing to do with the Pakistan government or Pakistan Army?" Shah asked, seeking Congress President's response.

Pitroda is Indian Overseas Congress chief and is seen to be one of the key advisers to



BJP president Amit Shah addresses the media in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

Gandhi.

His comments, including that one cannot "jump on entire nation" (Pakistan) just because some people from there "came here and attacked" in reference to Pulwama terror attack, were Friday seized on by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lead the BJP's all-out attack against the Congress on the issues of terrorism.

Keeping the heat on the opposition party on the issues of terrorism and nationalism in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls, Shah said the Congress is known for "vote bank" and "appeasement" politics during election and asked if such politics can be above national interest and the "blood of martyrs".

The BJP president then drew a comparison between the Congress-led UPA dispensation's "no strong action" against terrorism and the Modi

Government's "zero tolerance" against it to assert that only the saffron party is capable of securing India.

"I want to reassure people of this country that only the BJP can provide security to the country, can give a befitting response to terrorism and can foil Pakistan's conspiracy," he said. The Modi Government has succeeded in isolating Pakistan internationally and the morale of security forces is sky high, he said.

Shah said the Congress president on March 7 had said that questions raised on air strikes should be answered.

"But whose questions he wants to be answered and who raising questions on Indian Air Force. Who do you support? It is not proper for the national president of a party to raise such questions and doubt the IAF," he said.

"When anti-national slogans were raised in JNU you called it freedom of expression and you also went there in their support. This is an example of your abhorrent vote bank politics".

The BJP president also rejected the Congress distancing itself from Pitroda's comments by terming them as his personal views, as he wondered "what is personal view in politics".

The Congress president should tender an apology without any delay, he demanded.

Shah to launch poll campaign with rally in Agra

New Delhi: BJP president Amit Shah will launch the party's poll campaign after the Lok Sabha election schedule was announced with a rally in Agra in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday, and its top leaders will hold rallies in every constituency across the country till Tuesday. Asserting that national security plank will figure high on the party's 'Vijay Sankalp' (Pledge for Victory) rallies planned for Sunday and Tuesday, senior party leader Muliktar Abbas Naqvi said the BJP will launch "ground strike" against "abusers of security forces".

PNS

PM Modi should stop sending love letters to Islamabad, Cong retaliates

New Delhi: Returning fire on BJP's tirade against Sam Pitroda for allegedly going soft on Pakistan, the Congress on Saturday took potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for sending best wishes to his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan on the eve of the neighbouring country's national day saying he should stop sending "love letters" to Islamabad.

Modi had sent a letter to Khan, greeting the people of Pakistan on the eve of its National Day and highlighting the importance of a terror-free South Asia. It was Khan who made Modi's gesture public.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala reminded Modi of his own words asking him to stop writing "love letters" to Pakistan and alleged that his "muscular politics" is aimed at only the people and the media.

The attack came after Modi sent his best wishes to Khan on the Pakistan National Day, which is celebrated to mark the Lahore Resolution on March 23 each year.

"Mr 56" of the Sari-Shawl-Imprromptu Pak visit for Birthday-ISI invite fame

diplomacy was feeling very shy yesterday.

"Guess? Chowkidar hid the fact that he had wished Pak PM on Pak National Day without a word on Pak terrorism."

"Muscular politics soap opera for people and media only," Surjewala said on Twitter.

The Congress leader also tweeted, "Modi ji, Stop writing this Love Letter to Pakistan".

He posted a video of Modi's interview to a channel where Modi during the UPA time is saying Pakistan needs to be talked to in the language it understands and that writing love letters to it should be stopped. He was referring to then prime minister Manmohan Singh's letter to then Pakistan President.

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal too pitched in saying: "Remember Modiji... You embraced (then Pakistani premier) Nawaz Sharif, called him to your inauguration and showed what a change it would be. It was you who shared a birthday bash, gave him gifts. While our PM never visited Pakistan, you gave him gifts and then you are teaching us lessons on Pakistan?"

Ravi Shankar Prasad questions RaGa over rise in income



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

jump in income.

Claiming that Congress President Rahul Gandhi has no ostensible source of income, the BJP on Saturday questioned the substantial rise in his income between 2004 and 2014.

BJP leader and Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the media that Congress leader's income had risen from over ₹55 lakh in 2004 to ₹9 crore in 2014 as per his election affidavits, and asked how can a mere MP witness such a

"In his election affidavit in 2004, his income was ₹55,38,123 while in 2009, it rose to ₹2 crore and in 2014 it rose to ₹9 crore. We know how much an MP earns. We want to ask what is this Rahul Gandhi model of development without an ostensible source of income," he said.

He also questioned Rahul whether he had bought two properties from Unitech which was linked to the 2G spectrum allocation scam, PTI quoted BJP leader as saying.

BJP seems to be schizophrenic: Akhilesh on PM Modi's blog

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday termed the BJP "schizophrenic" and alleged that the party tries to co-opt icons like Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia but follows people who these leaders disagreed with.

The remarks by the SP chief came in response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's blog in which he dubbed the efforts of regional parties to form a grand alliance with the Congress as "reprehensible", saying socialist ideologue Ram Manohar Lohia would be "horrificed" as most of these parties claim to be his followers.

Accusing the BJP of practising double standards, Yadav wrote on Twitter, "I wonder which principles are being spoken of. The BJP seems to be

schizophrenic." "On the one hand they try to co-opt Gandhi Ji, Bhagat Singh, Sardar Patel, Dr Ambedkar and Dr Lohia and on the other hand they follow

"reprehensible" their efforts to form a grand alliance with the Congress. He said Lohia would be "horrificed" as most of these parties claim to be his followers.

In a blog to mark the 109th birth anniversary of Lohia, Modi alleged, "Today those parties that falsely claim to be Dr Lohia's followers are desperate to form an opportunistic 'maha-milawat' or adulteration alliances with the same Congress (which Lohia opposed). It is both ironical and reprehensible."

Grand alliance with Cong 'reprehensible': PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday utilised the 109th birth anniversary of socialist ideologue Ram Manohar Lohia to hit out at socialist parties by dubbing as "reprehensible" their efforts to form a grand alliance with the Congress. He said Lohia would be "horrificed" as most of these parties claim to be his followers.

In a blog to mark the 109th birth anniversary of Lohia, Modi alleged, "Today those parties that falsely claim to be Dr Lohia's followers are desperate to form an opportunistic 'maha-milawat' or adulteration alliances with the same Congress (which Lohia opposed). It is both ironical and reprehensible."

The Samajwadi Party, Janata

Dal-Secular, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Sharad Yadav's Loktantrik Janata Dal, which will merge with the RJD after the Lok Sabha polls, were some of the parties formed on socialist ideology.

Modi claimed Lohia would be "proud" of the NDA Government led by the BJP for following his ideas.

"Dr Lohia's thoughts inspire us. He wrote about modernising agriculture and empowering farmers, which the NDA Government is effectively doing through efforts such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Krishi Sinchai Yojana, e-Nam, Soil Health Cards and more," he said in the blog shared on Twitter.

Referring to gender inequality, the Prime Minister said nothing pained Lohia more than the caste hierarchy and inequality between women and men.

"But neck deep in vote bank politics, it was parties that dis-

honestly claim to be Dr Lohia's followers that opposed the NDA Government's move to abolish the inhuman practice of triple talaq," he alleged.

Hitting out at the Congress, Modi said whenever Lohia spoke, the Congress "trembled with fear". He said Lohia had once claimed that during the Congress regime neither agriculture and industry nor the Army improved.

"These words can accurately describe even subsequent Congress regimes, where farmers were harassed, industry was discouraged (except if they belonged to friends and relatives of Congress leaders) and national security was ignored," the PM wrote. Noting that anti-Congressism was Lohia's "heart and soul", Modi said, "Unfortunately, today Lohia would be horrified at the political developments taking place."

"Those parties that claim

inspiration from Lohia have completely abandoned his principles. They are leaving no opportunity to insult him... Lohia always believed that dynastic politics was inimical to democracy. He would have been flabbergasted to see his followers' think about their own families first instead of the nation," he wrote.

Modi alleged that these parties are "experts at grabbing power, looting as much as possible and exploiting others. Poor people, tribals, Dalits, OBCs and women are not safe in their rule because these parties give a free run to criminals and anti-social elements." He said people should realise as to how can those who betrayed Lohia be expected to serve the nation.

"Today they are betraying the principles of Dr Lohia, tomorrow they will also betray the people of India," Modi alleged.

Congress, NCP announce seat-sharing pact in Maha

Congress gets 24, NCP 20

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After weeks of close-door confabulations, the Congress and NCP on Saturday formalised the seat-sharing arrangement for the "Mahaghatbandhan" constituents in Maharashtra, with the two main parties, deciding to contest 24 and 20 seats respectively and leave the remaining four seats to smaller parties.

Under the seat-sharing arrangement hammered among the constituents of "Mahaghatbandhan", the Congress will contest 24 seats out of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in the State, while the NCP will field candidates in 20 constituencies. Of the remaining four seats, the smaller parties — Raju Shetti-led

Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) will contest two seats, while Hitendra Thakur-led Bahujan Vikas Aghadi (BVA) and Yuva Swabhimani Paksha (YSP) will fight one seat each.

Addressing a joint news conference with NCP's State president Jayant Patil and former Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) president Ashok Chavan said: "There are in all 56 political parties in Maharashtra's Mahaghatbandhan. Leaders of all political parties are present here."

Apart from the Congress, NCP and three other constituents, the other major constituents in the Opposition's umbrella coalition include: the People's Republican Party (Kavade), RPI (Democratic), Swabhimani Republican Paksha, Bhim Sena, United Republican Paksha, Maharashtra Muslim Sangh, All India Vimukta Bhatkya

Jaati Jamati Party, Ganrajya Sangh, Maharashtra Parivratana Sena, Swabhimani RPI and RPI (Kharat).

Launching a blistering attack against the ruling BJP, Chavan said: "We have formed Mahaghatbandhan by involving political parties representing all sections of the society including farmers, labourers, women, Dalits, minorities, youth and oppressed sections. The NDA Government is indulging in 'Jumle baji'. There is a lot of unhappiness among common people in the state. The BJP-Sena Government has wreaked havoc in the State. It has failed to deliver on all fronts. Our intention to throw out Governments at the Centre and in the State.

Chavan charged that the Amit Shah-led party was practising "Saam, dham, Dhand, Bhed" politics and said that many smaller parties were suffering because of the questionable politics indulged in by the principal ruling party.

Chavan junks speculation about his resignation

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

An embarrassed former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan on Saturday dismissed speculation about his impending resignation as the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee president, after an audio tape in which he is heard telling a party worker that "No one is listening to me. I am planning to resign" went viral in the State.

An audio tape of a conversation between Chavan and a party activist from Chandrapur, who identified himself as one Rajurkar, in which the former expressed desire from his post as the State Congress chief went viral on Saturday.

In the mobile conversation, the caller voiced resentment over the nomination of Vinayak Bangade as a Congress candidate for the Chandrapur Lok Sabha seat and said that the party cadres

were opposed to Bangade's candidature.

Chavan also suggested to the caller that he should speak to Mukul Wasik, who was "calling the shots" in the selection of candidates for the state. "But Mukul Wasik is no one in front of you," the caller said.

At one stage, Chavan is heard saying: "I have also informed the party. Nobody is listening to me. I am planning to resign".

A former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Chavan was questioned about the audio tape in circulation at a news conference called to announce the formalisation of the seat-sharing arrangement among the "Mahaghatbandhan" constituents in the State.

Though he indirectly admitted that the tape was genuine one, Chavan said that a private conversation had no relevance in politics. He clarified that he had no plans to quit as the MPCC chief.

PM Modi a liar, Mamata an autocrat, says Rahul

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In a bid to occupy the anti-BJP, anti-Trinamool Congress space in Bengal, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday attacked both Narendra Modi and Mamata Banerjee with matching ferocity, calling the former 'a vendor of lies' and the latter 'an autocrat of sorts' who does "whatever she likes."

Incidentally, Gandhi's attack comes weeks after Congress leader in Lok Sabha and his senior party colleague Mallikarjun Kharge joined Banerjee along with 21 other national leaders in a Mahaghatbandhan (grand alliance) rally in Kolkata. The rally was held on February 19 from where all the leaders vouched for a united India and united Opposition to fight down a "communal BJP".

Mendacity is the hallmark of the Prime Minister, Gandhi said in North Malda from where he commenced his electoral campaign in Bengal.

Launching a vitriolic attack on Modi for "peddling lies wherever he goes," he said adding the coming election will see a battle of ideologies. "On two sides of the political spectrum are: Congress which is fighting for the unity of the country and the BJP-RSS which want to drive a wedge between castes and communities."

Piercing the Prime Minister with the Chowkidar spike Gandhi said Modi is a person who not only "tells lies throughout the day," but also "functions as a chowkidar (watchman) of the rich people."

The common people like the unemployed, farmer workers do not need chowkidars, he said insisting only "the rich people like Anil Ambani" need them. Attacking Modi for "defending the corrupt and fugitives" like Mehul Chowkshi, Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya who have defrauded the banks of thousands of crores of rupees Gandhi said the Prime Minister had "taken the common man's ₹30,000 crore to fill the pock-

ets of Anil Ambani" in Rafale (fighter craft) case.

Gandhi was campaigning in favour of Congress candidate Isha Khan Chowdhury who is contesting in place of his cousin sister and sitting MP Mausam Benazir Noor who is contesting on a Trinamool Congress ticket.

Attacking Noor for betraying the people as "you elected her on Congress ticket but she switched over to the TMC under pressure from that party," Gandhi said the people will take account of their betrayers. Noor however said she had turned coat inspired by the good works done by Mamata Banerjee.

Taking on Banerjee for giving Bengal an autocratic Government Gandhi said, "it is a one-man show going on in Bengal. The person who runs this Government never takes anyone's suggestions. She does whatever she likes," adding the present Government was "not better than the one run by the previous Left Front."



Major Surendra Poonia joins BJP in the presence of senior BJP leaders JP Nadda and Ramlal in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

Mehbooba to contest from Anantnag

Faesar's party not to contest polls

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti has thrown her hat in the poll arena by deciding to contest Lok Sabha polls from Anantnag parliamentary seat.

She had earlier vacated the seat in June 2016 to become Chief Minister of the State after the demise of her father



Mufti Mohd Sayeed.

She had defeated National Conference candidate Mehboob Beg by a margin of over 65,000 votes in 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar on Saturday, Mehbooba also announced her party's decision of not fielding any candidate from two Lok

Sabha seats of Jammu-Poonch and Udhampur-Doda. With this announcement she has come on the same page with the National Conference and the Congress party.

The former Chief Minister said the decision was taken to prevent division of 'secular' votes in the Jammu region.

She also announced that Agha Mohsin would be the party's candidate for Srinagar parliamentary seat.

The party had given mandate to Qayoom Wani from Baramulla constituency.

With the entry of Mehbooba Mufti in the fray the Anantnag Parliamentary seat is set to witness quadangular contest. National Conference has fielded Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi, while BJP has given mandate to Sofi Yousaf while Congress is yet to announce name of its candidate.

Due to security concerns, LS bypolls weren't conducted in Anantnag since April 2017.

In view of the prevailing security situation the Election Commission of India has decided to conduct polls in three

phases to ensure fool proof security arrangements.

Meanwhile, in another significant development former IAS officer Shah Faesar on Saturday said that his party won't contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a press conference at Press Club in Srinagar, Faesar said that they will strengthen the party first before taking the poll plunge.

Faesar launched his 'Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Movement' party during a function in Srinagar on last Sunday.

Court orders attachment of Mallya's assets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi court has ordered attachment of liquor baron Vijay Mallya's properties in Bengaluru in a case relating to FERA violations.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Deepak Sherawat issued fresh directions after the Bengaluru Police, through Enforcement Directorate's special public prosecutor N K Matta and advocate Samvedna Verma, sought more time to execute its earlier order in this regard.

The court directed the state police to attach the properties by July 10, the next date of hearing.

The Bengaluru Police had earlier informed the court that it had identified 159 properties belonging to Mallya, but had not been able to attach any of them.

Mallya was declared a proclaimed offender by the court on January 4 last year for evading its summons in the case.

The court had on May 8 last year directed the attachment of Mallya's properties in the case through the Bengaluru Police commissioner and sought a report on it.

It had declared Mallya a proclaimed offender for evading summons in a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FERA) violation case after noting that he had failed to appear despite repeated summonses.

It had on April 12, 2017 issued an open-ended non-bailable warrant (NBW) against the liquor baron.

Unlike a non-bailable warrant, an 'open-ended NBW' does not carry a time limit for execution.

Cong-NCP leaders have lost people's trust: Tawde

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BJP leader and Maharashtra school education minister Vinod Tawde said on Saturday that Congress and NCP leaders in the state have lost people's trust.

They do not have faith in themselves too, he said.

"Maharashtra Congress chief Ashok Chavan says nobody listens to him and (NCP supremo) Sharad Pawar never does what he says," Tawde said.

The leaders of the BJP and its ally Shiv Sena, on the other hand, practise what they preach, he said.

"Sharad Pawar said that (NCP leader and his nephew Ajit Pawar's son) Parth will not contest Lok Sabha election, but now Parth is contesting," Tawde pointed out, saying this has left people confused.

Chavan was unable to handle his own constituency and his supporters were leaving the party, Tawde claimed.

Bihar Left parties slam Mahagathbandhan for keeping them out

PTI ■ PATNA

Left parties of Bihar on Saturday slammed the Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) for excluding them in the seat-sharing formula saying the decision was not in sync with the ground realities in the state.

The CPI(ML) Liberation, the major Left party in Bihar, said it would now contest in five seats and extend support to the CPI and the CPI(M) which have declared their nominees for two Lok Sabha constituencies.

"Had the Left been taken aboard, it would have added to the credibility of the challenge that the anti-BJP parties seek to pose to the NDA. It seems the Grand Alliance has not learnt its lessons from the betrayal of mandate," CPI(ML) Liberation state secretary Kunal said in a statement.

He was referring to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U), walking out of the Mahagathbandhan in 2017 and returning to the NDA.

BJP to support independent candidate Sumalatha in Mandya

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Independent candidate and multi lingual actress Sumalatha received a big boost Saturday with the BJP deciding to support her in Mandya to take on Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy son Nikhil in the Lok Sabha polls.

Sumalatha, widow of actor-turned-politician M H Ambareesh, decided to contest as an independent after being denied a ticket by the Congress, which is now facing trouble in the district over conceding the seat to its ruling coalition partner JD(S).

BJP's Central Election Committee Secretary Jagat Prakash Nadda announced the party's decision to support Sumalatha, as he read out the list of candidates for various Lok Sabha seats across the country in Delhi.

With Congress ruling out fielding Sumalatha for Mandya, saying it would go to JD(S), clamour had grown within BJP to induct her and field her as the candidate, as a section believed it would help the saffron party, which doesn't have

much presence in the Vokkaliga bastion.

However, BJP's state leadership was one in supporting her as an independent so she could continue to bank on the support of disgruntled Congress leaders in Mandya, who are upset about their party's decision to cede the seat to JD(S).

Congress and JD(S) have been arch rivals in old Mysuru region, especially Mandya.

Both parties forged an alliance to form the government after the 2018 assembly poll results and are fighting the Lok Sabha polls together, according to the coalition arrangement.

Sumalatha's late husband Ambareesh had contested and won from Mandya in the past and enjoys popularity among the masses there.

She had filed her nomination as an independent on Wednesday and enjoys the support of many within the Kannada film industry, with film stars Darshan and Yash among others by her side during campaigning.

Sumalatha had also sought

the support of senior BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna, a prominent Vokkaliga leader from Mandya.

Despite losing Mandya Lok Sabha seat in the bypolls in November 2018, BJP had made significant inroads, with party candidate Siddaramaiah, a political greenhorn and former civil servant securing 2,44,404 votes, its best performance there.

BJP on Saturday also announced that Muniswamy S, a Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike corporator from Kadugudi, would be its candidate for the Kolar Lok Sabha seat.

With the announcement for two seats on Saturday, BJP has so far announced candidates for 23 (including Mandya) out of total of 28 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

The first list of 21 candidates was announced on Thursday.

The five seats for which the party is yet announce its candidates are Koppal, Raichur, Bangalore South, Bangalore Rural and Chikkodi.

₹800-crore foreign assets detected; prosecution started in 3 cases: IT dept

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Karnataka-Goa Income Tax region has detected and unearthed about Rs 800 crore worth foreign assets and started prosecution in three cases, a top department official said here Saturday.

"Till date the directorate has detected and unearthed foreign assets worth close to approximately ₹800 crore. Prosecution has been launched in three cases under the Black Money Act. Prosecution notices have already been issued in 10 other cases," principal chief Income Tax Commissioner (Karnataka-Goa), B R Balakrishnan told a news conference here.

He said the searches exposed a complex web of overseas entities floated by the assessee for laundering money abroad and investments made in foreign assets, having ramifications under the Black Money Act.

While probing many

'Till date the directorate has detected and unearthed foreign assets worth close to approximately 800 crore. Prosecution has been launched in three cases under the Black Money Act. Prosecution notices have already been issued in 10 other cases'

assessees in the mining business, evidence of laundering the money abroad to clear undisclosed overseas assets were found, he said.

"A few assessee have surrendered their Indian citizenships and obtained citizenship of other countries.

They were found to have opened various undisclosed bank accounts, made substantial investments in trust structures and acquired real estate properties overseas in countries like Hong Kong, the U.K., Samoa, Singapore, Bulgaria

and Panama.

Searches have been conducted in 26 cases involving foreign assets," Balakrishnan added.

On Benami prohibition, he said the I-T department detected a unique modus operandi in Goa, where foreigners used to acquire properties which were not registered in their names.

"Enquiries have revealed that many foreigners had paid consideration for villas and were occupying the same for more than a decade without getting it registered or transferred in their names in order to circumvent the law of the land," said Balakrishnan.

He said 12 such properties have been provisionally attached under the Prohibition of Benami Properties Transaction Act.

The I-T department was likely to provisionally attach approximately 100 acres of land worth more than Rs 100 crore by the end of March, he added.

52 booked in Rajouri for failing to deposit licensed weapons

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu & Kashmir police Saturday booked 52 persons in Rajouri district for ignoring administrative orders to deposit their licensed weapons in police stations in run-up to the upcoming parliamentary polls.

Rajouri, which falls in Jammu parliamentary segment, is going to polls in the first phase on April 11.

The district magistrates across the state have directed people to deposit their licensed weapons in local police stations as part of the efforts to ensure free and fair polls.

"An order in this regard was issued by Rajouri district magistrate on March 1 and all the licensed weapon holders were asked to deposit their weapons in local police stations in view of the forthcoming parliamentary polls.

"Although majority of licensed weapon holders deposited their weapons in police stations but some people paid no attention to the order even after police served them reminder through notices," a police spokesman said.

Taking note of it, he said various cases under relevant sections of law have been registered against the violators in police stations across Rajouri district.

Rajouri's Senior Superintendent of Police Yougal Manhas said the persons against whom cases have been registered would face cancellation of their licenses and the matter would be taken up with the district magistrate in due course of time.

"More legal actions against more such violations are being worked out by Rajouri Police in days to come," he said.

Rahul may...

From Page 1

Gandhi's candidature from Wayanad will energise the Congress party in South India and thus the party can win majority of seats from the region, the leaders said. The Congress had earlier proposed T Siddique,

the Kozhikode DCC president, for the Wayanad seat but he has backed out. Siddique said he also wants Gandhi to contest from the Wayanad seat. The election convention of the party-led UDF for Wayanad constituency will unanimously urge Gandhi to contest from the seat, he added. The Congress state units

in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have also demanded that the party president contest the Lok Sabha elections from the respective states. The Congress earlier this month had announced that Rahul Gandhi will contest from his bastion Amethi and Sonia Gandhi from Rae Bareilly.

कार्यालय आबकारी आयुक्त, मध्यप्रदेश, मोतीमहल, ग्वालियर

विज्ञापित

वर्ष 2019-20 के लिए राज्य में देशी/विदेशी मदिरा की फुटकर दुकानों के समूहों का ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन के द्वितीय अथवा उसके आगे के चरण) के माध्यम से निष्पादन की व्यवस्था।

कैम्य भोपाल, दिनांक 24.03.2019

सर्व साधारण की जानकारी एवं आबकारी के फुटकर ठेकेदारों की विशेष जानकारी के लिये राज्य शासन के आदेशानुसार यह सूचना प्रकाशित की जाती है कि वर्ष 2019-20 के लिये मध्यप्रदेश में देशी/विदेशी मदिरा की फुटकर विक्री की दुकानों के समूहों के लिये ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) किया जाना है।

ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) द्वारा मदिरा दुकानों के एकल समूहों के निष्पादन की व्यवस्था एवं शर्तें।

ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) द्वारा बिडिंग की प्रक्रिया को भागों में संपादित की जाएगी- प्रथम भाग में ई-टेंडरिंग (क्लोज बिड) तथा इसके उपरान्त ई-टेंडरिंग (ऑक्शन)। यह प्रक्रिया एन.आई.सी. के पोर्टल <https://mptenders.gov.in> के माध्यम से की जाएगी।

ई-टेंडर द्वारा निष्पादित किए जाने वाले समूहों, उनके अधीन दुकानों की सूची, उनका स्थान, उनका आरक्षित मूल्य, जमा की जाने वाली धरोहर राशि, देशी एवं विदेशी मदिरा की खपत (सेलरपर) से सम्बंधित जानकारी विभागीय वेबसा. ईट <http://mpexcise.org> एवं एन.आई.सी. के पोर्टल <https://mptenders.gov.in> के होमपेज पर लाईव टेंडर के आषान के अंतर्गत आबकारी विभाग का चयन कर एडवॉसर्स सर्व के माध्यम से वांछित जिले को सिलक्ट कर प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

ई-टेंडर की प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने हेतु इच्छुक व्यक्ति/टेंडरदाता (बिडर) को एन.आई.सी. के पोर्टल <https://mptenders.gov.in> के होम पेज पर "Online Bidder Enrollment" में जाकर ऑनलाईन रजिस्ट्रेशन की प्रक्रिया पूर्ण करना होगी। इस हेतु बिडर का क्लास-3 डिजिटल सिग्नेचर होना आवश्यक है। रजिस्ट्रेशन उपरान्त इच्छुक बिडर अपनी लॉगिन आई.डी., पासवर्ड एवं डिजिटल सिग्नेचर के माध्यम से पोर्टल पर लॉगिन कर सकता है।

एक व्यक्ति/फर्म/कम्पनी एक से अधिक अथवा सभी समूहों के लिए अलग-अलग ई-टेंडर की प्रक्रिया में भाग ले सकते हैं। बिडर को प्रक्रिया में भाग लेने हेतु टेक्नीकल पात्रता परीक्षण में सफल होना अनिवार्य है। ई-टेंडर की प्रक्रिया, टेक्नीकल पात्रता एवं अन्य शर्तें मध्यप्रदेश राजपत्र (असाधारण) क्रमांक 125 दिनांक 16 मार्च, 2019 के अनुसार होगी।

निष्पादन की राशि 10 करोड़ तक आरक्षित मूल्य के समूहों के लिये 2 प्रतिशत तथा 10 करोड़ से अधिक आरक्षित मूल्य वाले समूहों के लिये 10 करोड़ तक 2 प्रतिशत + 10 करोड़ से अधिक शेष राशि का 1 प्रतिशत निर्धारित की गई है। किसी एक चरण के ई-टेंडर की प्रक्रिया पूर्ण होने के उपरान्त अधिकतम प्राप्त बोली/ऑफर निर्धारित आरक्षित मूल्य से कम राशि का प्राप्त होने पर, उक्त बोली को स्वीकार करने अथवा संबधित समूह को ई-टेंडर के अगले चरण में ले जाने के संबंध में राज्य शासन द्वारा आवश्यक निर्णय लिया जायेगा।

जिन समूहों में पूर्ववर्ती ई-टेंडर में बिड प्राप्त हुई है, उनमें पूर्ववर्ती ई-टेंडरिंग में प्राप्त अधिकतम मूल्य की राशि ही न्यूनतम बिड होगी, इससे कम मूल्य की फाइनेंशियल बिड पोर्टल द्वारा स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी।

जिन समूहों में पूर्ववर्ती ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) में कोई बिड प्राप्त नहीं हुई है, उन समूहों में बिडर्स की भागीदारी बढ़ाने के लिये संबधित समूह के वर्ष 2017-18 के वार्षिक मूल्य, अथवा वर्ष 2018-19 के वार्षिक मूल्य की राशि से 15 प्रतिशत कम करने पर प्राप्त राशि में से जो कम हो, वह राशि न्यूनतम बिड होगी। इससे कम मूल्य की फाइनेंशियल बिड पोर्टल द्वारा स्वीकार नहीं की जायेगी।

ई-टेंडर हेतु देशी/विदेशी मदिरा की फुटकर दुकानों के समूहों की जिलेवार संख्या, उनके आरक्षित मूल्य का योग जानकारी निम्नानुसार है :-

मिण्ड(27, R1190378752), नीमच(17, R962220807), निवाड़ी(12, R361769094), ग्वालियर(14, R1023893684), खरगोन(07, R558000224), रत्नाम(07, R480098076), सिंगरौली(04, R278442395), डिण्डौर(01, R50771666), दतिया(06, R153594207), बैतूल(04, R405340026), सिवनी(04, R361548951), उज्जैन(11, R903263073), मंडसौर(08, R326323289), खण्डवा(05, R331385529), अनुपपुर्(02, R92118455), बड़वानी(06, R313299011), छिन्वाड़ा(09, R559884335), धार(07, R615394156), मुरैना(05, R242321812), खरोपुर(04, R81521000), भोपाल(05, R1226794333), शिवपुरी(07, R286949071), होशंगाबाद(02, R292237226), सतना(04, R295335469), बुरहानपुर(01, R81828001), आगरमालवा(01, R44422201), सागर(02, R625307845), टीकमगढ़(02, R38703062), जबलपुर(03, R401865137), कटनी(01, R142412027), देवास(03, R111150169), छतरपुर(01, R70982400), रायसेन(01, R49428000), शाजापुर(01, R25293243), राजगढ़(01, R16284004), निष्पादन का कार्यक्रम :-

द्वितीय राउण्ड (दिनांक 23/24 मार्च प्रातः 11 बजे से प्राारंभ है)।

1	ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड) हेतु ऑन-लाईन टेंडर प्रप्र डाउनलोड एवं ई-टेंडर ऑफर सबमिट करने की तिथि एवं समय	26 मार्च 2019 अपराह्न 0300 बजे तक।
2	ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड) हेतु ऑन-लाईन टेंडर प्रप्र खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक 26 मार्च 2019 अपराह्न 0300 बजे से।
3	ई-टेंडर (ऑक्शन) प्रारंभ एवं बंद होने की तिथि एवं समय	प्रातः 10:00 बजे से अपराह्न 02:00 बजे तक (तत्पश्चात 15 मिनट के अंतराल में बोली दिये जाने पर आगामी 15 मिनट के लिये समयावधि में वृद्धि)
(i)	प्रथम चक्र	दिनांक 27 मार्च 2019
(ii)	द्वितीय चक्र	दिनांक 28 मार्च 2019
4	जिला समिति द्वारा ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) के माध्यम से निराकरण किये जाने की तिथि एवं समय	कार्यवाही पूर्ण होने पर।

(तृतीय राउण्ड) द्वितीय राउण्ड में निष्पादन से शेष रहे समूहों के लिये।

1	ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड) हेतु ऑन-लाईन टेंडर प्रप्र डाउनलोड एवं ई-टेंडर ऑफर सबमिट करने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक 29 मार्च 2019 को प्रातः 10:00 बजे से 30 मार्च 2019 अपराह्न 04:00 बजे तक।
2	ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड) हेतु ऑन-लाईन टेंडर प्रप्र खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक 30 मार्च 2019 अपराह्न 04:00 बजे से।
3	ई-टेंडर (ऑक्शन) प्रारंभ एवं बंद होने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक 31 मार्च 2019 को प्रातः 09:00 बजे से दोपहर 01:00 बजे तक (तत्पश्चात 15 मिनट के अंतराल में बोली दिये जाने पर आगामी 15 मिनट के लिये समयावधि में वृद्धि)
4	जिला समिति द्वारा ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) के माध्यम से निराकरण किये जाने की तिथि एवं समय	कार्यवाही पूर्ण होने पर।

टीप :- ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) तिथियों में एवं प्रक्रिया में परिवर्तन का अधिकार आबकारी आयुक्त, मध्यप्रदेश को रहेगा।

ई-टेंडर (क्लोज बिड एवं ऑक्शन) प्रक्रिया के संबंध में यह कार्यवाही प्रचलित याचिकाओं क्रमांक: रिट याचिका क्रमांक 5677/2019 एवं 5684/2019 में माननीय उच्च न्यायालय द्वारा पारित अन्तिम निर्णय के अधीन रहेंगी।

संलग्न :- उपरोक्तानुसार

अपर आबकारी आयुक्त मध्यप्रदेश

G-2504/19

Prasad replaces Shotgun...

From Page 1

The BJP has already released of 28 names for UP in its first list when it announced 184 nominees earlier for 20 states. Mafuja Khatun will contest from Jangipur in West Bengal. The BJP also announced 51 names for Andhra Pradesh Assembly seats, 22 names for Odisha Assembly seats and one Assembly by-election seat in Meghalaya. The NDA in Bihar, comprising the BJP, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) and Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP, announced the candidates excepting for Khagaria, currently held by the LJP. But it is not clear whether sitting MP Mehboob Ali Kaiser will be fielded again.

Giriraj Singh's colleagues in the council of Ministers Radha Mohan Singh, RK

Singh, Ashwini Kumar Choubey and Ram Kripal Yadav will be fielded from their respective sitting seats of Motihari, Ara, Buxar and Pataliputra respectively.

Begusari, won by the BJP in 2014, fell vacant upon the death of MP Bhola Singh a few months ago. The Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) has fielded Chandan Kumar from Nawada where he will be taking on Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) Vibha Devi - wife of Raj Vallabh Yadav, who lost his membership of the Assembly recently upon conviction in a rape case. State BJP president Nityanand Rai will be seeking re-election from his Ujijayarpur seat while BJP's national spokesperson Rajiv Pratap Rudy will be seeking re-election from Saran, where he had defeated former Chief Minister Rabri Devi five years ago.

Speculations were rife that he might be dropped this time. Another BJP national spokesperson Syed Shah Nawaz Husain was hopeful of a ticket from Bhagalpur, which he had represented in the past but lost the seat to RJD in 2014.

The seat has gone to the ruling Janata Dal (United) this time, which fielded Ajay Kumar Mandal as its candidate.

Another surprise inclusion in the BJP's list was Chhedi Paswan, who will be seeking re-election from Sasaram, which he had won defeating Congress veteran and former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar. Earlier, there were reports that Paswan, who had often been critical of the NDA Government in Bihar, might not be reconsidered for the 2019 polls. The BJP has also reposed its faith in Pradeep Kumar Singh for Araria, which he had won in 2009 but failed to wrest it back five years later and also during the by-poll last year, necessitated by the death of sitting RJD MP Mohd Taslimuddin. LJP State president Pashupati Kumar Paras will be replacing his brother and party chief Ram Vilas Paswan in Hajipur as the Union Minister is likely to get a Rajya Sabha ticket with BJP's backing.

Chirag Paswan, the son of the LJP chief, will be seeking

re-election from Jamui. Interestingly, three of six LJP candidates - Chirag, Paras and Ramchandra Paswan (Samastipur) are members of the same family.

The BJP, which had won 22 constituencies in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, conceded five of the seats to the JD(U), which returned to the NDA in 2017 after a brief dalliance with the Lalu Prasad's RJD..

Other notable changes in the saffron party's list, with respect to the previous parliamentary elections, include former MLA Gopalji Thakur, who has been fielded from Darbhanga-- a seat the party had won five years ago with Kirti Azad as its candidate. Azad had recently joined the Congress. In Madhubani, Ashok Yadav replaces his father and sitting MP Hukum Dev Narayan Yadav-- a Padma awardee who has retired from active politics. The LJP has given its ticket from Vaishali to Veena Devi-- a former BJP MLA and wife of JD(U) MLC Dinesh Prasad Singh, who joined Paswan's party after the announcement.

Diggy vs Pragma...

From Page 1

Bhopal Lok Sabha constituency, which was represented by Shankar Dayal Sharma in 1971-77 and 1980-1984, has been held by BJP since 1989.

Bhopal constituency is represented by BJP's Alok Sanjar, who had won the seat in 2014 by a margin of 3.70 lakh votes. BJP stalwarts like Sushil Chandra Verma, Uma Bharati and Kailash Joshi had represented the seat in the past. Former cricketer late Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi, scion of the erstwhile Bhopal State, had unsuccessfully contested from Bhopal on a Congress ticket in 1991. The constituency is spread over eight Assembly segments, namely Berasia, Bhopal Uttar, Narela, Bhopal Dakshin-Paschim, Bhopal Madhya, Govindpura, Huzur and Sehore.

2nd senior most...

From Page 1

Besides Verma, the other contenders for the Navy Chief's post included Vice Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar, Western Naval Command chief Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar and Southern Naval Command chief Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla, sources said. Verma retires in November this year while Karambir Singh will retire after three-year tenure or attaining 62 years of age, whichever is earlier.

Born on November 3, 1959, Singh was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1980 as a helicopter pilot and has flown extensively on Chetak and Kamov helicopters. He is the son of a former IAF officer. A graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and College of Naval Warfare,

Mumbai, hails from Jalandhar. He is also a recipient of Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM) and the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM). In his career spanning over 37 years, Singh has commanded four ships — Indian Coast Guard ship Chandbibi, missile corvette INS Vijaydurg, guided missile destroyers INS Rana and INS Delhi. He also served as the Fleet Operations Officer of the Western Fleet. His other important assignments include Chief of Staff of the Tri-Services Unified Command at Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra and Gujarat Naval Area (FOMAG).

In the rank of Vice Admiral, he was also the Director General of Project Seabird, looking after infrastructure development of the Navy's modern base at Karwar.

I-T dept dismisses 'BSY diary' as 'forgery document'

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Income Tax Department Saturday dismissed as a "forgery document" and a "set of loose papers", the "Yeddyurappa diary" about alleged bribe payment to top BJP brass that has created a political furore.

The Congress, citing a media report, had Friday demanded a Lokpal probe into the charge that the state BJP chief had paid Rs 1,800 crore as bribe to the party top brass, which Yeddyurappa had dismissed as "atrocious and malicious." "Our conclusion after studying it was that it is a forgery document. It is a set of loose papers," principal chief Income Tax Commissioner of Karnataka-Goa Region BR Balakrishnan told reporters.

He said "There was an attempt to just make use of the diary to influence some other investigation, which we have not succumbed to. We have done our job in this

case as well." The documents, which were photocopies, were seized from Karnataka water resource minister D K Shivakumar's residence during a raid carried out by the Income Tax department on August 2, 2017, he said. The papers were sent to the forensic science laboratory in Hyderabad, which returned it saying that they need the original papers, Balakrishnan added.

He said that whatever came out in the magazine (Caravan) which broke the story was not part of the Income Tax department's seized material. Balakrishnan stated that in view of various Supreme Court decisions on admissible evidence, "this particular diary has no evidentiary value."

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala had said at a press conference in New Delhi that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should come forward and clarify on the matter.

Desire for peace not a sign of weakness: Pak President

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

It would be a "mistake" for India to view Pakistan with the eye of pre-partition and its desire for peace should not be misconstrued as a sign of weakness, President Arif Alvi said on Saturday as Islamabad displayed its military might on the National Day.

Alvi was addressing the annual Pakistan Day Parade here to commemorate the resolution passed by the All-India Muslim League on the day in 1940 in Lahore demanding a separate country for Muslims.

The National Day featured a joint parade by the army, air force and navy, display of military hardware, along with open and veiled anti-India rhetoric.

"It was the duty and responsibility of Pakistan to respond to the Indian aggression... We responded with better strategy," Alvi said, apparently referring to the downing of an Indian Air Force jet.

Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after a suicide bomber of Pakistan-based terror group JeM killed 40 CRPF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district in February 14.

India launched a counter-terror operation against a JeM



Pakistani-made tanks roll down during a military parade to mark Pakistan National Day, in Islamabad on Saturday

training camp in Balakot. The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured its pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1.

Alvi said India's actions jeopardised peace in the region.

"It would be a mistake on part of India to view Pakistan with the eye of pre-partition. Doing so would be very dangerous for the region's stability."

"India will have to accept Pakistan as a reality, and it must come to the conclusion that

dialogue is the only way to resolve issues," Alvi said at the ceremony where Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was the guest of honour.

He said Pakistan wants peaceful co-existence but its "desire for peace should not be misconstrued as weakness".

"We are a peaceful nation, but are not oblivious to our defence, and the same has been proved in the recent demonstration of Pakistan's defence capability," he said,

adding that Pakistan is a

responsible nuclear state and respects integrity and sovereignty of other states.

Alvi said the country is safe and moving on the path of progress and development after effectively combating the menace of terrorism.

The President also inspected the parade before his address. Prime Minister Imran Khan, Defence Minister Pervez Khattak, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Zubair Mehmood Hayat, army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, naval chief Admiral

Zafar Mehmood Abbasi and Chief of Air Staff Mujahid Anwar Khan attended the ceremony.

According to official sources in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a letter to Khan, greeting people of Pakistan on the eve of its National Day and highlighting the importance of a terror-free South Asia.

Modi, in his message, said it was time for the people of the sub-continent to work together for a democratic, peaceful, progressive and prosperous region, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence, they said.

Contingents, paratroopers and fighter jets from Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China, Bahrain and Sri Lanka also took part in the parade. Shahper and Buraq drones were also displayed in the parade along with different missile systems including Nasr, Babur, Shaheen 1, Ghuri, Shaheen 111 among others, and defence systems as well as tanks. The day dawned with 31-gun salute in the federal capital and 21-gun salute in provincial capitals. Special prayers were also offered in mosques after morning prayers for the country's progress and prosperity.

Imran welcomes Modi's greetings on Pakistan National Day

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has welcomed his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi's greetings on the eve of its National Day, saying it has come to begin a "comprehensive dialogue" between the two countries to address and resolve all issues, including the "central issue" of Kashmir.

According to official sources in New Delhi, Prime Minister Modi sent a letter to Khan, greeting people of Pakistan on the eve of its National Day and highlighting the importance of a terror-free South Asia.

Modi, in his message, said it was time for the people of the sub-continent to work together for a democratic, peaceful, progressive and prosperous region, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence, they said. Khan, in a tweet, welcomed Modi's message and said the time has come to begin a comprehensive dialogue between

the two countries to address and resolve all issues, including Kashmir.

"I welcome PM Modi's message to our people. As we celebrate Pakistan Day I believe it is time to begin a comprehensive dialogue with India to address & resolve all issues, esp the central issue of Kashmir, & forge a new relationship based on peace & prosperity for all our people," Khan tweeted on Friday. India has made it clear to Pakistan that cross-border terror attacks and talks cannot go hand in hand.

India last year called off a planned meeting of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi on the sidelines of the annual session of the UN General Assembly in New York after blaming Pakistan-based entities for killing of three special police officers in Kashmir.

Earlier, Khan also tweeted Modi's message. "Received msg from PM Modi: 'I extend my greetings & best wishes to the

people of Pakistan on the National Day of Pakistan. It is time that ppl of Sub-continent work together for a democratic, peaceful, progressive & prosperous region, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence," Khan said.

Modi's message to Khan came in the midst of severe strain in ties between the two nuclear-armed neighbours following the Pulwama attack and the subsequent air strikes by India on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Pakistan's Balakot.

Significantly, India Friday boycotted a reception at the Pakistan High Commission here to mark Pakistan's National Day, objecting to invites extended to several separatist leaders from Jammu and Kashmir for the event. The official sources in New Delhi said the prime minister sends a customary message on National Days to other heads of state and government and added that his message to Khan highlighted the importance of a terror-free South Asia.

Syria force takes IS bastion, 'caliphate' wiped out

AFP ■ BAGHOUZ

Kurdish-led forces pronounced the death of the Islamic State group's nearly five-year-old "caliphate" Saturday after flushing out diehard jihadists from their very last bastion in eastern Syria.

Fighters of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces raised their remote riverside village where diehard jihadists of a variety of nationalities made a desperate, dramatic last stand.

The SDF's victory capped a deadly six-month operation against the final remnants of the caliphate which once stretched across a vast swathe of Iraq and Syria, and held seven million people in its sway.

Saturday's announcement will go down as a symbolic date in a war that changed the face of the region and spurred a spate of global terror attacks.

"Syrian Democratic Forces declare total elimination of so-called caliphate and 100 per-



An Islamic State militant flag, foreground, lies in a tent encampment after U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) fighters took control of Baghouz, Syria on Saturday

cent territorial defeat of ISIS," spokesman Mustafa Bali said in a statement, using another acronym for IS.

In Al-Omar, an oil field used as the main SDF staging base for the final phase of the assault, fighters in their best fatigues laid down their weapons and broke into song and dance. A military band played anthems, including

the Star Spangled Banner, as a ceremony attended by Kurdish top brass and officials got under way. The state proclaimed in mid-2014 by fugitive IS supremo Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi started collapsing in 2017 when parallel offensives in Iraq and Syria wrested back its main hubs Mosul and Raqqa. The nearly five years of fighting against the most bru-

tal jihadist group in modern history has left thousand-year-old cities in ruins and populations homeless. Early US estimates put the numbers of IS fighters at around 40,000, many of them foreigners. But the territory administered by the remnants of IS continued to shrink month after month and in September 2018 the SDF launched a

final offensive on the last dregs of the "caliphate" in its Euphrates Valley strongholds. US President Donald Trump, whose country has led an international military coalition against IS since September 2014, jumped the gun on announcing the end of jihadist territorial rule on multiple occasions.

SDF fighters last week expelled the last IS fighters who refused to surrender from an encampment on the edge of Baghouz and have since been hunting down a few survivors hiding on the reedy banks of the Euphrates.

MORE THAN 630 CIVILIANS KILLED

Beirut, Mar 23 (AFP) More than 630 civilians were killed in the six-month operation against the Islamic State group that culminated in its defeat by US-backed Syrian forces on Saturday, a monitor said.

The embattled leader, who faces a major protest march in central London on Saturday, wrote to lawmakers Friday night saying she would bring the European Union withdrawal back to Parliament if there seems to be enough backing for it to pass.

"If it appears that there is not sufficient support to bring the deal back next week, or the House rejects it again, we can ask for another extension before 12 April, but that will involve holding European Parliament elections," she said.

May's changing stance reflects the plan's dismal chances in the House of Commons after two prior defeats. She also says she would need the approval of House Speaker John Bercow to bring the plan back for a third time despite his objections. Bercow

May not to seek Brexit vote this week

AP ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Theresa May has told lawmakers she may not seek passage of her troubled Brexit withdrawal plan in Parliament next week.

She said she would bring the European Union withdrawal back to Parliament if there seems to be enough backing for it to pass.

She said she would need the approval of House Speaker John Bercow to bring the plan back for a third time despite his objections. Bercow

has said a third vote would violate parliamentary rules unless the plan is altered. May said in her letter to lawmakers that if the deal is approved, Britain will leave the EU on May 22, a date agreed with EU officials.

Lawmakers have twice rejected the deal and haven't shown any clear swing toward endorsing it in recent days. Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union on April 12 if no deal is approved.

Pro-Brexit forces are also

girding for the possible political impact of a planned march in central London in support of holding a second referendum that would give British voters the option of remaining in the EU despite the 2016 vote in favor of leaving.

The organisers of the "People's Vote March" predict that one of Britain's largest-ever protest marches will grip central London. More than 4 million people endorsed an electronic petition this week in favor of revoking Article 50, the act that formally triggered the Brexit process.

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Somalia attack kills five, including deputy minister

AFP ■ MOGADISHU

Five people were killed including a deputy minister on Saturday after Al-Shabaab militants stormed government buildings in Somalia's capital, a witness and a senator told AFP. "I saw the dead bodies of four people, one of them in police uniform," said witness Abdulahi Mohamed.

Senator Ilyas Ali Hassan named the deceased minister as Saqar Ibrahim Abdalla, who was killed separately.

The attack began with twin bombings of the complex housing Somalia's ministries of works and labour, which were then stormed by the Shabaab.

Police official Ibrahim Mohamed said the attack ended after police killed four gunmen.



A Somali woman walks past a destroyed building after a suicide car bomb attack on the government building in the capital Mogadishu, Somalia, on Saturday

"There were some other casualties including members of the police," he said, without elaborating. The attack also left at least 11 people wounded, according to Abdulkadir Abdirahman Adan, director of the Aamin ambulance service in the capital Mogadishu.

Shortly after the assault began, Al-Shabaab issued a statement claiming credit.

Attacks that combine bombings with gunmen have become a speciality of the Al-Qaeda linked group, which is fighting an armed insurrection in Somalia against what it sees as heretic and foreign influence.

Earlier this month, at least 20 people died in an attack in Mogadishu which saw Al-Shabaab jihadists battling security forces for nearly 24 hours.

Trump orders withdrawal of curbs against N Korea

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump has abruptly ordered the withdrawal of additional "large-scale" sanctions on North Korea, immediately after the Treasury Department has announced Thursday on Chinese shipping companies doing business with North Korea. Those sanctions prompted swift push-back from the Chinese and North Korean governments. The sanctions were the first new sign of pressure since talks between Trump and Kim broke down in Hanoi.

"The US and like-minded partners remain committed to achieving the final, fully verified denuclearisation of North Korea and believe that the full implementation of North Korea-related UN Security Council resolutions is crucial to a successful outcome," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

today ordered the withdrawal of those additional sanctions! Trump tweeted on Friday. This was an apparent reference to sanctions the Treasury Department has announced Thursday on Chinese shipping companies doing business with North Korea. Those sanctions prompted swift push-back from the Chinese and North Korean governments. The sanctions were the first new sign of pressure since talks between Trump and Kim broke down in Hanoi.

Francis accepted Ezzati's resignation and named a temporary replacement to govern Chile's most important archdiocese: the Spanish-born Capuchin friar and current bishop of Copiapo, Chile, Monsignor Celestino Aos Braco.

The 77-year-old Ezzati had submitted his resignation to Francis two years ago when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 75. But Francis kept him on, and Ezzati became the flashpoint of abuse survivors' ire for mishandling several cases of abuse.

Francis himself became embroiled in the scandal after initially discrediting victims during his 2018 trip to Chile, sparking a crisis in confidence in the Chilean hierarchy and his own leadership.

After realising his error and apologising to the victims, Francis summoned all of Chile's 30-plus active bishops to the Vatican last May and strong-armed them into offering their resignations. To date, he has accepted fewer than 10 of them. The Vatican announcement came a day after an appeals court in Chile allowed prosecutors to continue investigating Ezzati for an alleged cover-up, rejecting his motion to dismiss the case and remove himself from the probe, Chilean media reported.

Chilean abuse survivors have long accused Ezzati and his predecessor in Santiago, Cardinal Javier Errazuriz, of protecting predator priests and discrediting victims.

Indian-origin homes targeted for gold robberies in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian-origin homes are at the centre of over 140 million pounds worth of gold jewellery stolen in the UK over the past five years, a freedom of information request revealed on Saturday.

So-called "Asian gold", bought as wedding gifts and known to be stored in homes of South Asian origin families as it is passed down generations, led to nearly 28,000 thefts since 2013, the BBC investigation found.

Out of 23 of 45 police forces from across Britain that provided figures on these thefts, Greater London had the highest value stolen - 115.6 million pounds, followed by 9.6 million

pounds in Greater Manchester. Sanjay Kumar, who specialises in selling Asian gold in the dominantly Indian-origin suburb of Southall in west London said he recognised the cultural significance behind gold jewellery and always advised his customers to think carefully about how they store their gold and to insure it.

"People are told by their parents and grandparents 'you must buy gold - it's an investment, it's lucky. It's something that we as Asians do, so people are following the tradition and the culture', he said.

Police forces investigating cases of theft said that in some of the burglaries victims owned large amounts of jewellery, but that was not always the case. In

Cheshire, police set up a dedicated team to work with members of the community after a series of Asian gold related burglaries. Aaron Duggan, head of crime at Cheshire Police, said that one of the challenges his officers face is that gold can be disposed of easily.

"At second-hand outlets, certainly around Asian jewellery, questions should be asked - 'who is this person in front of me selling this gold?' The irony is it's often harder in this country to sell scrap metal than it is second-hand jewellery," he said.

Scotland Yard regularly issues special advice around Diwali, Navratri and other major Indian festivals for the British Asian community to be

extra vigilant. "The festival period tends to see a spike in this type of crime largely due to more jewellery being worn as communities travel across London to different venues - whether temples or to other people's homes," the Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

During the course of 2017-18, the Met Police recorded 3,300 such high-value thefts, worth around 21.2 million pounds. Kent Police with 89 thefts worth 1.6 million pounds and Greater Manchester Police with 238 thefts worth 1.5 million pounds were among the other key hotspots.

"Gold will continue to be highly desired by criminals due to the speed and anonymity with which it can be exchanged for large sums of cash," Metropolitan Police Detective Constable Lisa Keeley said during last year's Diwali appeal.

"These pieces of gold and jewellery are not just valuable possessions, they are also of great sentimental value, and if stolen, would have a huge impact on owners. Our proactive measures to tackle these crimes has seen reductions in offences, however there is more to be done," she said.

Operation Nugget is the Met Police's dedicated operation to tackle gold thieves, which seeks to drive down the number of such offences through a series of initiatives.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice
On behalf of the President of India, acting through Chief Administrative Officer/Con, North Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur invites the following E-works Tenders:-

S No.	E-Tender No.	Name of Work	Approximate value	Earnest Money
1	DY CE-CON-EAST-GKP-39-2018 Dated-20-03-19	Balance work of Supplying and laying of blanketing material in formation between Dhandahid (excluding) Ballia-Ghapuzi City section in connection with doubling of Ballia-Ghapuzi City of Varanasi Division.	₹ 29,02,48,736.20	₹ 16,01,300/-

● Bidding Start date: 08-04-2019 ● Last date of submission of above E-Tender up to 15:00 hrs. on 22-04-2019. ● Date of opening of above E-Tender 15:00 hrs. on 22-04-2019. ● Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria, terms & conditions is available on website <https://ireps.gov.in> ● In case any disparity arises between Hindi and English version of tender notice, English version will hold good and will be followed.
Shri Shiv Saran Ram, XEN/Con/Ballia, Mob. No.: 9794844286
CPRO/W-332 Dy Chief Engineer/Con/E, Gorakhpur
About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955
" Pass Level crossing safely "

CENTRAL ORGANISATION FOR RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION
1, NAWAB YUSUF ROAD, CIVIL LINES, ALLAHABAD-211001
FAX No. 0532-2407197 Dated: 22/03/2019

No. RE/Tender/Civil/500

E-TENDER NOTICE
Name of work: General repair and maintenance, white washing, disempering, execution of miscellaneous and Horticulture works in GM's new Camp Office at ITO and Officers Rest House at Tlak bridge, New Delhi.

1. Completion Period: 12 Months
2. Approximate Cost of the work: ₹ 28,23,561.75
3. Tender Cost: ₹ 3000.00 (₹ Three Thousand Only).
4. Earnest money to be deposited: ₹ 56,500.00
5. Submission/Opening of tender: 15.04.2019 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of tender through www.ireps.gov.in and the Tender shall be opened online using IREPS portal any time after closing of tender.
6. Website particulars: www.ireps.gov.in (where details have been uploaded).
7. Office address: Office of PCE/CORE, 1, Nawab Yusuf Road, Civil Lines Allahabad.

NOTE: Only E-Bid shall be accepted against above Tender.
Dy. Chief Engineer/CORE/ALLAHABAD
For & On behalf of President of India
No. PR/354/19 (Kaka)
Serving Customers with a Smile

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, ALLAHABAD
Tender Notice
E-Tender Notice No.: NCRPU-ALD-DFC-2019-01 Dt: 15.03.2019
Dy. CSTE/Proj-1/North Central Railway/ Allahabad for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-Tender from the established reliable and experienced manufacturers or their authorized agents with sufficient proven experience in similar works through E-tendering portal on www.ireps.gov.in as per the following details:-

Name of the	Estimated cost work (₹)	Earnest money (₹)	Cost to Tender document (Non Refundable)
New work of S&T Utility shifting, infringing DFCCIL's alignment at Station KYT, CAR, BDL, GAE, JIA & LC No. 10 & 11 etc. in ALD-MGS section as per DFCCIL's final alignment plan.	22.26 Lacs approx (Twenty two lakh twenty six thousand only)	445000 (Forty four thousand five hundred only)	3000/- (Three thousand) only, Tender document not transferable, Cost not refundable.

Downloading/Online availability of Tender Documents: From 15.03.2019 onwards. Completion period of work: 04 Months from the date of issuing of LOA. Tender Closing date and time: 29.04.2019 before 15:00 hours. Tender opening date and time: 29.04.2019 at 15:30 hrs. Place of Opening: Through online e-Portal www.ireps.gov.in in the office of Dy. CSTE/Project-1, North Central Railway, Subedarganj Allahabad. Validity: 90 Days from date of opening. Further details can be obtained from Indian Railway website www.ireps.gov.in. Tenderers who wish to participate in tenders invited on www.ireps.gov.in have to register on the website mandatorily. Please refer to website for more details. Tenderers have to submit cost of tender document and EMD only through online mode details. Online payment of earnest money and cost of tender document can be made through net banking/ credit / debit card etc. Fixed deposit receipts (FDR) will not be accepted as EMD for tenders invited on IREPS (E-tender portal). 389/19 FA

North central railways @CPRONCR

SHOW TIME

Period drama arrives with extreme action



KESARI
*ing: Akshay Kumar, Parineeti Chopra
Rated: 7.5/10

Every film ever made on patriotism evokes pride in every Indian — that we get to walk on the land that has produced India's finest. Soldiers who have laid down their lives to protect Mother India — defend her boundaries from the enemy — at the cost of putting not just their lives but their families as well.

We all always talk about the sacrifice a soldier makes when he is at our borders, we forget that the only reason he is able to do so fearlessly is due to a strong family backing. A family that has taught him to take a bullet on the chest.

Therefore, everything is *Kesari* makes you proud — that 21 Sikhs of the 36 Sikh Regiment preferred to fight for their honour and not because they were being paid for it. That they preferred to face the enemy and defend the border when they had the order to run. That they preferred to face death rather than be slaves to the British.

The film directed by Anurag Singh is a taut war drama that has been executed brilliantly and the

reason why it weaves its magic is because it has been so well scripted. The wit, sarcasm, action, humour and tragedy has been beautifully woven into the narrative. Being given a sneak peek into history that one gets to see between the Sikhs and Islam adds value. Or the significance of *kesari rang* — *Kesari rang ka matlab samjhte ho... shaheedi ka rang hai... bahaduri ka.*

Akshay Kumar as Havaldar Ishar Singh is brilliant. Off late, the actor has chosen to be part of films that make the audience sit and think and may be just may be a better human being. One can say that as Singh, this is best performance till day. His acting gives you goosebumps because of the way he has executed his character and carried the role on his shoulders.

Not that the other characters are there for show. Each has played their role to a T. The dialogues, the action and the climax will leave you teary-eyed as will the sheer violence and barbarism that unfolds make you shudder.

This is a must see epic — how 21 Sikhs fought 10,000 Afghans, were martyred and made the enemy run for their lives. — Shalini Saksena

Dragons come of age delightfully

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD
*ing (voicing): Jay Baruchel, America Ferrera, Cate Blanchett, Craig Ferguson, F Murray Abraham
Rated: 7/10

We have already established that Hollywood makes the best animation films. The latest from DreamWorks reiterates the point. Those who have not been following the franchise since the time it began back in 2010 — *How to Train Your Dragon*, the film was loosely based on a 2003 book by British author Cressida Cowell. It would be somewhat sad to see the series come to an end. Some of the dragons are really cute and not to forget Toothless — and also a dragon with only half a tail.

While the last part may not have the fire that the prequels had, it will thaw even people with a cold heart — it is after all a story about how a species (read dragons) despite being brutally hunted by man still befriends a human knowing that this particular boy means well.

Though the original was the best of the lot, part 3 is all about some brilliant visuals in the hidden world which take away your breath. The burst of colours is amazing. What is more amazing is that it tells a story — that with love comes a great responsibility — that of sacrifice.

The first movie was released on March 26, 2010 and it comes to an end on March 24, 2019 (technically not end but release). It has been a full circle — for Toothless to grow up and be the alpha that he is and for Hiccup who finally grows up to be a man who leads his people and making the ultimate sacrifice that love demands.

A movie that will take the kiddies into a wonder land and melt the hearts of the adults. — Shalini Saksena



TELLYTALE



LIL' CHAMP GETS A MUSICAL BREAK

Zee TV's *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li'l Champs* has been entertaining the audience's week-on-week with magical performances and unique musical prowess of the contestants. In the upcoming episode, the viewers will witness ace singer and music sensation Himesh Reshamiya gracing the show as the guest judge this weekend.

After listening to a bunch of sweet and talented voices, Himesh was completely blown away by Anushka Patra's performance on *Parda Parda* from *Once Upon A Time in Mumbai*. The judges applauded and lauded Anushka for exceptional singing but what Himesh said changed her life forever. He decided to offer Anushka her first musical break for his next film *Xpose Returns!* Completely smitten by her performance, Himesh had something sweet to say, "Anushka, you are ready for playback singing. You have the perfect confidence, the perfect voice for a Bollywood playback, the right attitude and you are completely prepared. I would like you to do the playback singing for my next film *Xpose Returns*."

The 12-year-old singing dynamite couldn't contain her happiness and was left speechless after she was offered this golden opportunity. Well, kudos to Anushka for giving such a magical performance and our handsome guest judge Himesh Reshamiya for honouring her talent.

ANUSHKA TO BE SEEN AS MAHAKAALI

Committed to championing and propagating content highlighting tenacious women, Colors' *Khoob Ladi Mardani*... *Jhansi Ki Rani* traces the journey of Manikarnika, whose heroic saga continues to be an inspiration to many. In the recent episodes, the show depicts a sequence of Manikarnika's metamorphosis into Mahakali, a fierce shakti who is known to banish all evil.

Currently, in the show, viewers witnessed how Manikarnika is disheartened as her defense for her brothers Bheema & Shiva in the trial goes in vain. Gangadhar

(Vikas Manaktala's) takes a strong decision and announces the death penalty for both. His decision saddens her, and she goes to the Kali temple, where she meets Gangadas (Ankur Nayyar), who is her spiritual guide. He advised her to channel her emotions for her advantage and gives the example of Mahakali. He tells her to "awaken the *devi* within her" and with his guidance she envisages herself as the powerful Mahakali. With Ganga Das' guidance she visualises herself as Goddess Mahakali destroying atrocious Ross (Jason Shah), as he is leaving no stone unturned to create destruction in Jhansi. Manikarnika feels further strengthened, when she reckons on the battle of Mahakali and Raktabej. She sees herself winning over the odds and being victorious over Ross. This occurrence instills the faith in herself, and she believes that good will win over all evil. This episode will also re-emphasise Manikarnika's character as she will come



across as an ideal, inspiring and strong human being which personifies the true strength of a woman.

SONU NIGAM ON KAPIL SHOW

This week Sonu Nigam along with his wife Madhurima will be part of the *The Kapil Sharma Show*. They will share some really interesting incidents and secrets of each other.

In a chit-chat with Nigam, Kapil asks will ask questions about his calm and soft-spoken nature. He will hilariously tell the audience that how Sonu's even while scolding might scold so softly that nobody would understand if his scoldings or his love.

The reason that Sonu has: "People manage to get an attitude when they become famous or settle down but I have always remembered a few things that I do not have to do. I know that I never have to speak bad about anybody in front or behind the back of people. I have also learned that no matter what, one has to find happiness



in whatever they do, be it big or small." Also being in a comedy show, how could he forget to add a punch line to his serious answer. At the end, he merrily adds, "Who can speak loudly after he is married. I have a wife who has taught me how to speak softly."

GUDDAN BATTLES AQUAPHOBIA

Zee TV's *Guddan... Tumse Na Ho Paega* lead protagonist Guddan is always up for challenges and believes in pushing boundaries and trying out new things. She suffers from aquaphobia and fears every time she is near a water body, but she mustered all the courage to dive inside for one of the sequences. Recently, the entire cast of the show visited Goa to shoot for a special Holi special episode wherein Guddan gets caught in the water current and starts drowning when Akshat comes in nick of time and saves her.

Shooting for the water sequence was nothing short of a nightmare for Kanika. She recalls that she had to step inside deep water to make the sequence look more authentic. She said: "When I was told that I have to shoot a water sequence, I got jittery and I was extremely sceptical about



it. But the crew members spoke to me and convinced me to give it a shot. I chanted prayers and jumped into the water. My biggest motivation was my own character-Guddan and I told myself, tumse bhi ho paega. I am glad that I opted to do it as it helped me overcome my fear and of course the appreciation I received from everyone was worth it."

'I don't want to repeat myself'

MUSBA HASHMI chats up actor PARESH GANATRA, famous for his roles in Baa, Bahu and Baby and Chidiya Ghar, about his new show

■ Tell us about your character.

I play Mahendra Thakkar, a successful businessman (has a shop selling Bhakarwadi). He is a man of values and principles and can't compromise with them. But believes in changing with time. He is not rudiment in his thoughts and is ready to accept changes both in his business and life. He respects his customers a lot and keeps in mind their choices.

■ Do you share any similarities with your character?

Yes. Just like my character I am also a man of values and can't compromise on them. I can't do anything just for the sake of impressing people and creating a good image for myself. I am very real and a very straight-forward person. The difference in me and my character is that I am not businessman. I can't sit at one place. I want to be in the field and be creative.

■ How difficult was it for you to explore the genre of comedy?

It is difficult to get into the skin of the character — be it comic or intense or serious. You can't say *ki yeh toh maine aaram se kar liya. Jis din actor yeh bolney lag jayega ki arey ye toh mere liye kafee asaani tha* that shows arrogance and overconfidence. It means you don't want to grow as an actor.

Whenever I am given a character to play I try to understand his situation — mental and emotional. Then I try to get hold on his background, family, body-language, accent, education and understand his struggle story if any. I feel if someone has faced struggles in his life and then rose to name and fame, he will always be grounded and *jinke paas baap-dada ka paisa hota hai unme thoda arrogance dikhta hai*. After observing the smallest events of a character's life then I proceed towards the story. I believe in doing my homework and keep experimenting. If you will not research and experiment with your characters then all your performances will become monotonous and I feel that is the end of an actor. I don't want to repeat myself and that is what makes all the difference in one's performance.

■ Was it difficult for you to make a place for yourself in the industry?

No, it wasn't that difficult. Whatever work and projects I took up worked out well. The struggle of an actor comes in when he does a project which doesn't work or when he doesn't get work. I had my own struggles. I did a film



Mann which didn't work. But then I did *Aankhein* and it worked and then there was *No Entry, Welcome, Delhi Belly, Rowdy Rathore, Bol Bachchan* and all of them worked out well. I started getting work and people started recognising me. Fortunately, on TV also whatever work I did turned out to be a success so now I don't feel worried about getting work. I get work. I have faced a lot of struggle in my theatre days and so I understand how to value my work.

■ Who is the ustaad of comedy?

Kishore Kumar, Mehmood and Johnny Lever. They did and do comedy effortlessly. Nowadays, if you mock someone people will laugh on it but I think this not the true essence of comedy. I believe in doing situational comedy and these people were masters at it. They never made jokes on people that is why still people enjoy watching their work. They are very expressive. And also the evergreen Charlie Chaplin. If someone can make you cry or laugh without uttering a word then no one can match him ever.

■ There is a lot of competition in the industry. Does that affect senior artists like you?

The scenario has changed in the comedy genre. There are a lot of formats that have come up. It is a never ending process. An actor or a comedian will never be out of place. Everyone has a USP and they know what they are good at or what they lack in themselves. As far as I am concerned, I know that I am not good at doing mimicry so I will never do it. Not am I comfortable in with under the belt kind of comedy so I won't get into it. I always love doing situational comedy rather and that is my forte.

■ Was there a moment when you thought of quitting?

Yes, definitely. There were two projects where I thought of leaving them because for me the work environment matters a lot. If I am not comfortable working in the environment I do feel like quitting but I have learnt *ki aap jo bhi kaam lo ussey pura karo, beech mein mat choro kyunki show aap se nahi apney naseeb se chal raha hai*. I always put aside those feelings and remember how much efforts I have put into it and walking away is not the solution.

■ What are your upcoming projects?

I have offers for a few films but for that I have to leave TV and I am not willing to do it. So, right now I am only focusing on *Bhakarwadi* and once it will be done, I will do other projects for sure.

Food nostalgia



Popular TV actors tell you the traditional food they used to eat on Holi.

Jasmin Bhasin: For me, Holi celebration is incomplete without *gujiya*. I remember my mom used to make *gujiya* at home for me on Holi. That is the traditional food that we have on the festival and I love and miss those *gujiyas*. Nothing can match the taste of my mother's cooked *gujiyas*.

Tinaa Dattaa: My mom makes *ras malai* for us every year on Holi and I love it. Without eating her *ras malai*, my holi is incomplete. I myself have tried to make it many times but the taste of *ras malai* made by my mom is unbeatable. I can never match up.

Adaa Khan: My neighbour was a Bengali and she used to make these yummy *ras malais* every year on Holi. I remember on every Holi, she used to get *ras malai* for us and it used to taste delicious. I do eat *Ras malai* at times but the *ras malai* which she used to make had a different taste. I used to love it, I miss eating it.

Arjun Bijlani: As a kid, I remember playing Holi with all my neighbours and on the occasion of Holi, my dad used to make this yummy *chana masala* for all of us. So, while playing I used to come in between, munch it and go back to play.



Ssharad Malhotra: As I am a Punjabi and for me, Holi without *lassi* is incomplete. Every year, we have *lassi* made at my place. From childhood, till now, I have never missed having *lassi* on Holi. So, I am sure I will have *lassi* this year as well.

Shashank Vyas: *Kachori* is something which my mom makes on Holi. I love eating *kachori* with *achaar*. My mom makes yummy *kachori*'s every year on Holi. So if I am not shooting and I am in my hometown on the occasion of Holi, I definitely have *kachori* and *achaar* made by my mom.

Shahi awarded

Producer Rajan Shahi's *Ye Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* is one of the longest running show on Indian television and for the same it won the award for maximum number of episodes 2875 and best continuity show 2019 at the Indian Telly Awards at Sahara Star on Wednesday evening. Rajan Shahi who attends events rarely was seen receiving the award for *Ye Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai* as a team. He says, "Look styling doesn't matter once your unit says we are a team in true sense of the word." *Ye Rishta* has got 102 awards till now and has a loyal audience and now spni off of *Ye Risthe Hai Pyar Ke* is also a talking point and generating good word of mouth." We wish Rajan Shahi and Director's Kut all the very best for producing heart touching shows.



Super dancers impress Shakti Kapoor

Mumbai's nine-year-old Tejas Varma along with super guru Tushar Shetty have been mesmerising the viewers week on week with their powerful performances. Though, this is the first time for Tushar as a guru, he has been highly appreciated by the super judges for his choreography. This time around he has managed to impress Shakti Kapoor and Govinda who will be seen as special judges for the upcoming Holi special episode. The contestants performed on their most celebrated songs as an attribute to their onscreen *jodi*.

Contestant Tejas Varma and Super Guru Tushar Shetty performed on Shakti and Govinda's popular song *Pak Chik Pak* from their superhit movie *Raja Babu*. Both actors were more than amazed and actually went speechless on seeing them dressed up like *Nandu* and *Raja Babu*.

Expressing his views Tushar's choreography and performance Shakti Kapoor said: "You've done a brilliant job, I swear! My daughter Shradha is doing a movie — *Street Dancer* and one more related to dance, I will tell her that at least one song should be definitely choreographed by you."

On hearing this Tushar instantly bowed down to him for his kind gesture. Tushar was elated by the compliment. His happiness indeed knew no bounds and was seen beaming with joy.

The rest of the judges also appreciated Tushar and Tejas for their hard work and thanked Shakti Ji for giving him such an opportunity as he truly deserved every bit of it.



PLAY LIFE THEIR WAY

They have brought accolades to the country by breaking barriers in life and overcoming obstacles as they push themselves beyond human capacity. SHALINI SAKSENA catches up with these high performers to bring you their inspiring stories of mental, physical and emotional endurance to defeat defeat in its rawest form

Nothing is going to stop him

Born in a small village in Jalandhar district of Punjab, Rajinder Singh Rahelu is a polio victim since when he was just 8 months old. A boy who would use his hands to crawl from place to place, went on to win a Bronze medal in the 2004 Summer Paralympics in the 56 kg category of power weight lifting. He represented India in the 2008 and 2012 Summer Paralympic Championships. He has a Commonwealth Silver medal in the Men's Heavyweight category. In all, he has 12-14 international medals and 20 Gold medals at the national level. Not only this, he has five records to his credit.

To begin with, he got a job with the Punjab Sports Department as an Arjun Awardee. He coached power lifters. A new Sports Authority of India initiative brought in Grade A coaching jobs for Paralympic winners for which he applied in 2015.

Today, Rajinder Singh Rahelu is a weightlifting coach at the National Sports Academy, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Talking about his journey where his mother would carry him every where till he was 10, to winning medals for India, the 45-year-old coach tells you that it all began for him with power lifting options in the disabled category.

"After completing my Class XII, I couldn't study further due to distance issues. This was in 1992-93. I was wheelchair bound and couldn't go to college. But I decided to go for distance education. After that I tried to look for means to earn a living. I tried my hand at several jobs. I tried to train with a local doctor after I learnt typing. I thought I would open a clinic. But nothing worked. I come from an economically weak family. My father was a bandmaster and my grandfather a weight lifter," Rahelu recounts.

"He was a champion from Punjab. I knew he was into power weightlifting but didn't know that one needed to train on a regular basis. I was intrigued. He was leaving for training but he sat down and explained all about power weightlifting. He said there were three events — bench press, deadlift and squat.

"The way he explained each event, I realised I could do bench press. But he told me that this was not possible as before one could lift weight on the chest, one had to put the feet firmly on the ground. This would lead to an imbalance. As he was leaving, he looked at me and asked me to



THE POWERMAN: Rajinder Singh Rahelu has defeated polio with a host of big ticket medals

come for training. I was 22 back then. I reached before he did. On day one, I lifted 70kg. "My grandfather told me if I could lift this weight with no training, I could do much better with it. He said if I worked hard, I could go places. That changed my life," says Rahelu. He continues to work hard and is eligible for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

While he managed to lift 70kg that day, training was tough. As he operated a hand-operated tricycle, his upper body and hands were powerful.

"The problem was that my village was small. The nearest gym was four-five km away. I would go there everyday. Sometimes, it would be closed. We had a youth welfare centre. When the local youth saw me training for bench press, they got the required equipment for me. I won my first two medals while training at that gym. The third time, I was already associated with Punjab Sport," Rahelu recalls.

Though his parents didn't have the means, they always encouraged him to study as much as he wanted. His mother took him to all the doctors — be it Ayurveda or allopathy.

"It's my parents efforts that have brought me where I am today. They were

illiterate but they pushed me to study. When I won my first Paralympic medal they were thrilled.

"I was greeted with *band-baja* when I reached my village. My father was with me when I was conferred with the Arjun Award. My mother passed away just a few months back. Initially, I was posted in Jalandhar. But after I associated with the Sports Authority of India, I decided to move to Gandhinagar," Rahelu tells you. He is married and has two daughters. His 10-year-old has already won the State-level swimming championship.

Since the time Rahelu started in 1992 to the time he won his first medal at the Paralympic Greece Games in 2004, a lot changed. "Since then, it has become organised. Athletes now go as a team. There is prize money, certificates and great training facilities.

In 2004, there were only two medals. Back then, we would spend our own money to participate. Today, there are hundreds of athletes who have the ability to win so many more medals for India. The recognition has given confidence to the differently-abled. They know they are no less. People don't give us that *bechara nazar* anymore," Rahelu says.

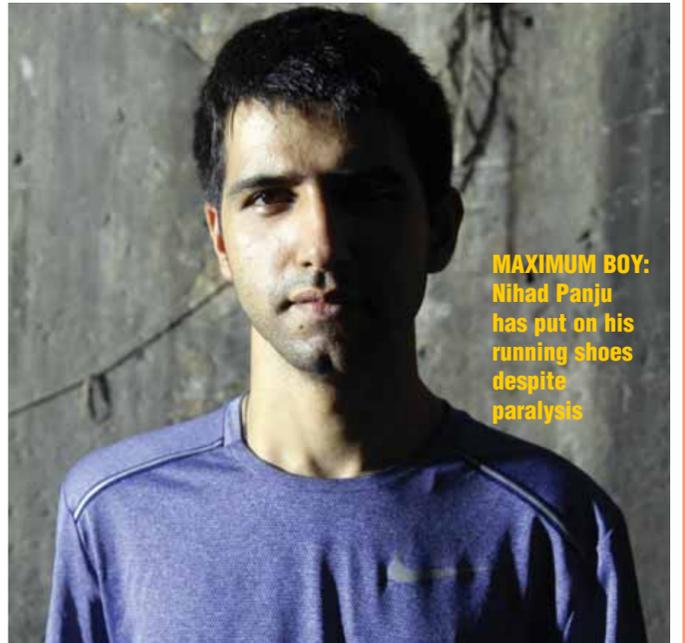
Not fragile despite the most impossible odds

This 28-year-old, with his left side paralysed, is a marathon runner and pushed himself to the edge and back with the support of his trainer Rustom and his family. Nihad Panju, from Mumbai, spent a major part of his life doing physiotherapy. But he managed to live a normal life, complete his schooling and went to college and graduated in Interactive Multimedia Design.

He was also a part of a programme — Holistic Neurological Reorganisation And Simulation — for four years. This is when the real changes started taking place. "The four years on the programme taught me the importance of being physically fit. I was so tired doing normal therapy. My trainer was encouraging a group of people to run the marathon back in 2012. I told him I, too, wanted to run. Since then, I have run seven half marathons," says Panju, who had a brain injury due to TB meningitis when he was five months old, leading to his disability.

However, he hates to be treated differently and likes to be pushed when it comes to his training. He tells you that may be there is five to 10 minutes of awkwardness when he meets people but it soon disappears.

"I have always lived a normal life. My entire family and friends have played an integral role in pushing and motivating me. I would not be here if it wasn't for them," Panju says. He has a younger sister, a businessman father



MAXIMUM BOY: Nihad Panju has put on his running shoes despite paralysis

I have always lived a normal life. My entire family and friends have played an integral role in pushing and motivating me

and a mother who is a homemaker. His association with The Titan Games on Zee Cafe happened due to a film by Sachin Pillai — *Not Fragile* (a Homegrown original film).

He says he pushed himself so relentlessly because people said he couldn't run a marathon and that motivated him to prove to himself that he could. He had also gotten tired of the physiotherapy. His trainer has now become more of a friend rather than an instructor.

But this doesn't mean that when they are training, Rustom treats him any differently.

"There are a lot of positive vibes around me and that spill over when I am training. I suppose my trainer takes my positive disposition to encourage me further," Panju says.

This special performer is now trying his hand at different things since he is still young and can experiment with an active life.

Giles D'Souza is a name familiar with those who know anything and everything that is related to Parkour. He is as most people call him, the ninja turtle from Mumbai. His mission is to teach how one can overcome any obstacles that come in the way. He believes that one needs to push one's body and that the philosophy to life by climbing the city walls thorough mind and body coordination. Giles is not only a certified Parkour trainer but also a cross-trainer who gives coaching classes.

He tells you that he was a chubby kid and used to play video games. But then one day he saw a documentary on TV — *Jump London*. "I was 16 when I saw this documentary. I was amazed at what these people were doing. It literally changed my life. It was based on the *yamakazi*, the first people who started doing parkour in France. These people were doing what my characters in the games or on TV were doing. I decided then and there that I wanted to do this. I took my fat body and started training. But there was not a single thing that I could do — no push-ups and no pull-ups," Giles recalls.

This took him to training with a few people. But after two years of training the group broke up. So he started training on his own. He tells you that he is self-taught. But he decided to do a certification in Parkour. That took him to Singapore. "I was 24 where I started trying myself in different aspects like cross-functional training, animal movements and Parkour training. Fitness is just one aspect of training. Our body is capable of so much more. People go to the gym to do just one thing. But to push ourselves we need go back to crawling once again. To convince adults to crawl again is tough. So I tell them that they need to go back to the basics before they can learn to walk when it comes to training," Giles says.

He tells you that people do have unrealistic expectations when it comes to their bodies. More so in the tinsel town where everyone wants to loom like a model. This is due to how body building has impacted the fitness industry.

"If you go to a gym or faintness expo, they will have body builders who will be at the helm. People have to understand that body building and fitness are two different things. Fitness is what everybody needs. Earlier, we were fit, because we used to do a lot physical activities. Body building is about a

Mumbai's ninja turtle Strongman woman



MOTION BOY: Giles D'Souza is a committed endurance buff

certain kind of look. If you are a model body building works. But if you want to be fit, one has to first learn how to move," Giles explains.

When people come to him to train, he asks a few basic questions — check their health history and any injuries. But he tells you that he pushes his clients. "I put them through very gruelling first session. My friends have a joke for me — that people who want to end up in their own sweat and puke they need to come to me for training. However, their is not true. I push them the first time because I want to show them what their body is capable of. I train with them. I tell them that if I, a fat person, can go from there to where I am today, they too can do so," Giles tells you.

He says that most people are unaware of what they want. "Just the other day a person had come to me who wanted to learn how to do a back flip and be fit. I asked him what a back flip had to do with fitness. I told him that

he wanted to learn how to do a back flip, he needed to get in touch with a gymnast. People need to be educated how fitness," Giles says and insists that people don't need a personal trainer but education.

His own personal journey involves a lot of conditioning which involves climbing walls, jumping from one tree to another. In general being a ninja. "I have done all that. I have basic Parkour foundation. Climbing, crawling and jumping comes naturally. One can learn the techniques. What is needed is to continue to keep moving the body while doing the techniques safely. A lot of people can climb a 10 feet wall and jump off it but can the body take that

I was 24 when I started training myself in different aspects like cross-functional training, animal movements and Parkour. Fitness is just one aspect of training. Our body is capable of so much more

impact? What is required is to condition the body and make it strong. I do more conditioning," the 29-year-old tells you and says that mental training is just as important.

In order to ensure that the body keeps moving, he pushes his trainers and reminds them why they began training to being with. He tells you that one needs to keep at it. "The minute you leave training, you go back to where you began. One needs to make training a habit," Giles

says whose association with The Titan Games, inspired and produced by Dwayne Johnson happened when he learnt that there were people who were looking for persons with extraordinary endurance and make a programme for Zee Cafe.

She is the first woman to represent India at the World Powerlifting Competition, in the under the 90-plus category, in Russia. In May 2018, she was declared the 'Strongest Woman in India' as part of the Strongman India League competition, held in Goa. Meet 32-year-old Suhani Gandhi from Bengaluru.

She started weightlifting four-five years back at the State level and went on to win for Karnataka. After winning a few medals, she had the opportunity to go for a competition for power lifting. "Her strength was appreciated. But she decided to approach this event through a different federation — Russian — World Powerlifting Congress.

"I didn't approach the Indian federation. I was 27 when I started weightlifting. Power lifting came only last year," Gandhi tells you and says that she was very young when she started going to the gym. "I was always a heavy baby. When I was 16 I decided to keep fit and loose weight as well. I did weights and cardio training. I played tennis and played at the national level but never won any matches. I had lost weight but was still heavy. I gave up this game because I didn't want to push myself to the extent where I would injure myself. I pondered and decided to use my weight to my advantage. I was at home for six months and started to push myself and see how much I could push myself. Then the next two years were tough, I was under stress, my weight weighed heavily on my mind. I started weightlifting. This was a turning point for me the minute I started winning medals" Gandhi recalls who has studied Bachelor of Business Management.

Last May, when she got the chance to be part of Strongman India League in Goa. "There



MISS MUSCLE: Suhani Gandhi is proud to be heavy with wins on her CV

were all kinds of open categories and so many women. I won and got my world ranking in top 100. I know stand at 56 and am a world qualifier. Since then I have been part of all competitions, whether in Delhi, Bengaluru or even Ghaziabad. I work hard everyday," Gandhi tells you and says that there is no stopping her.

Though she has won so many competitions, it doesn't stop people from taking a dig at her weight. The sad part, she tells you is that these come from people within the industry. "Comments like you are not fit since I weigh over 100 kg. It is not as if I am lazying at home. I work and train hard. But now that I have won, people's perception has changed. They better not make any comments about my weight since I have wins behind me," Gandhi tells you. She says that she had to train long hours to switch from weightlifting to powerlifting.

"Powerlifting has different technique. I am proud to say that I am not on steroids.

Hence I have to train hard. I will be competing for Strongman Woman outside of India too," Gandhi says. She is concentrating on positivity.

She tells you that Strongman India League is a sport where men and women compete. "Last year, women were not allowed to represent India and go to Finland. Hence I decided to approach another federation. The fact that I have been chosen has given me confidence. If I win, it will be great. My goal is to bring me closer to getting an Arnold Pro Card — a professional card for being in top 10 — as a strong woman," Gandhi says and tells you that the league has different games.

"These are all about endurance. You have deadlift and stone throwing where one has to throw 40 kg, 50 kg and 100 kg. There are other events as well," Gandhi tells you, adding that to improve her world ranking she has to push to lift over 250 kg.

Suhani proves that women can be stronger than men.

Sterling sweeps Czechs aside

Raheem scores hat-trick in England's five goal triumph; France beat Moldova 4-1; Ukraine hold Portugal for goalless draw

AFP ■ PARIS

Raheem Sterling showed that he is coming of age on the international stage as his hat-trick saw England start their Euro 2020 qualifying campaign by hammering the Czech Republic 5-0, while Antoine Griezmann inspired France to a battering of Moldova.

Manchester City attacker Sterling had scored just two goals in his first 45 caps, but he now has five in his last three international appearances following Friday's treble, which helped England storm to the top of Group A ahead of Monday's trip to Montenegro, who drew 1-1 at Bulgaria.

Sterling opened the scoring in the 24th minute when he tapped home Jadon Sancho's cross, and struck twice more in the second half to put the result beyond doubt after Harry Kane fired home his 21st England goal from the penalty spot.

"It was a beautiful team performance and I was happy to help the team get the win," Sterling said.

Sterling has 24 goals for club and country this term and his impressive form is a fry cry from the dark days when he was vilified as England crashed out of Euro 2016.

"I'm just being confident in myself, I'm trying to get in areas and take shots, not to worry about anything," he added.

England carried the momentum from a run to the World Cup semi-finals and qualification for the last four of the Nations League into the Euro qualifiers and blooded young hopeful Sancho, who impressed on his full England



Antoine Griezmann celebrates after scoring; Cristiano Ronaldo returns after goalless draw



Raheem Sterling celebrates after completing his hat-trick against Czech Republic during England's first Euro 2020 qualifier match at Wembley Stadium in London on Friday

has looked like that all week in training. I'm pleased for him, it is a special night for him," coach Gareth Southgate said. "I think he's really matured as a person and a footballer. He's hungry for goals and hitting things instinctively without thinking too much."

GRIEZMANN SHINES

France also got off to a perfect start after an older head in Antoine Griezmann spurred the world champions on to a comfortable 4-1 victory at Moldova.

Griezmann opened the scoring with his 27th France goal in the 24th minute of their Group H encounter before crossing for Raphael Varane to double the scores three minutes later.

Oliver Giroud equalled David Trezeguet as Les Bleus' third highest scorer of all time with his 34th international goal nine minutes before the

break and Kylian Mbappe completed the rout with three minutes left, before Vladimir Ambros claimed a late consolation for Moldova.

Griezmann would have had two more assists had Giroud and Paul Pogba been more clinical in front of goal, but France's display was easily enough for the three points and top spot in the group ahead of Iceland and Turkey, 2-0 winners against Albania and Andorra respectively.

"We played a very consummate first half in terms of control and attacking organisation. The second half was less fulfilling due to substitutions," said coach Didier Deschamps.

"We've opened our campaign well and the second game comes around quickly. In three days we have to do again."

Cristiano Ronaldo drew a blank on his return to international football after nine months away, as Ukraine battled to

a goalless draw in Lisbon.

The draw was the first time Santos' side have failed to score at home in 19 matches and leaves them second in the group behind Luxembourg, who beat Lithuania 2-1.

William Carvalho had a fine header ruled out for offside in the 16th minute and Ronaldo, Pepe and Andre Silva all went close to opening the scoring, but Ukraine stopper Andriy Pyatov was on fine form to deny them.

In the end the away side could have snatched the three points through Junior Moraes, only for the debutant to fluff a golden chance to grab a shock win.

"We didn't play as we wanted to. We started slowly, not pressing the way we wanted," said Manchester City midfielder Bernardo Silva.

"The second half we tried to create chances to go after the game but unfortunately we didn't score."

Venezuela spoil Messi's return

AP ■ MADRID

Lionel Messi's international return didn't do much to help Argentina regain top form.

Messi was back on Friday for the first time since the 2018 World Cup but couldn't stop his team losing 3-1 to Venezuela in a friendly.

Salomon Rondon, John Murillo and Josef Martinez scored for Venezuela at the Wanda Metropolitano Stadium, while Lautaro Martinez replied for Argentina.

Messi hadn't played an international since the 4-3 loss to France in the round of 16 at the World Cup in Russia.

"He played a good game" Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni said. "The chances we created were thanks to him."

Messi showed his usual deft skills and his long-range shot in the 38th minute was headed for the top corner until Venezuela goalkeeper Wuilker Farinez Aray tipped the ball over the crossbar.

Messi helped set up Argentina's 58th-minute goal with a pass to Giovanni Lo Celso, who eventually fed Martinez inside the area.

Venezuela had opened the scoring in the fifth minute when Rondon ran on to a long pass into the penalty area and sent a right-footed shot beyond goalkeeper Franco Armani.

Murillo made it 2-0 just before halftime by curling the ball away from Armani just inside the far post.

Venezuela's fast counterattacks were a nightmare for Argentina throughout and Martinez sealed victory by converting a 75th-minute penalty.

It's satisfying to earn a victory against a team like Argentina," Venezuela coach Rafael Dudamel said.

Dudamel surprisingly offered his resignation after the match. He told a news conference he was not happy about the political use of a visit by a government official before Friday's game in Madrid, and said his future would be decided in talks with federation officials in the coming days.

The last time Argentina played at the Metropolitano it lost 6-1 to Spain in a World Cup warmup in 2018.

Argentina will play another friendly on Tuesday against Morocco in Tangier. Scaloni said he hadn't decided whether Messi would play in that game.

Argentina has not won a trophy since the 1993 Copa America. It lost the last two finals of the tournament to Chile, in 2015 and 2016. It also lost the 2014 World Cup final to Germany.

The Copa America will be held in Brazil in June.

Venezuela on Monday plays a Catalunya team that is expected to include former Spain players Gerard Pique and Xavi Hernandez.

Messi to miss Morocco friendly

AFP ■ MADRID

Lionel Messi will miss Argentina's friendly against Morocco next week after picking up a groin injury in the shock 3-1 defeat to Venezuela.

Barcelona star Messi started the fixture following a self-imposed eight-month exile in which he missed six friendlies since the tournament in Russia, which they exited in the last 16 at the hands of eventual champions France.

The Argentine Football Federation tweeted the injury update following the loss at Atletico Madrid's Wanda Metropolitano stadium.

Gonzalo Martinez has also been ruled out of the fixture in Tangier with a thigh problem.

Proteas seal series despite Udana heroics



AFP ■ CENTURION

I suru Udana's astonishing 84 for Sri Lanka wasn't enough to stop South Africa from clinching their Twenty20 international series with a 16-run win in the second match at SuperSport Park on Friday.

Udana thrashed his net out score off 48 balls to take Sri Lanka from a seemingly hopeless position to one where they had an outside

chance of winning.

It initially looked easy for South Africa, who scored 180 for three after being sent in, with Reeza Hendricks hitting a fluent 65 and Rassie van der Dussen a powerfully-struck 64.

Sri Lanka lost their first four wickets in the first four overs and were floundering at 62 for six when Udana walked in to bat in the 10th over.

But, as he did in the fourth one-day international, Udana overshadowed the recognised batsmen with a superb display of clean hitting, although he had a let-off when he was caught on the long-on boundary off JP Duminy when on 31, only for Duminy to be no-balled for overstepping. Udana hit eight fours and six sixes.

"He's the kind of player we need. He showed his character," said Sri Lankan captain Lasith Malinga, who was disappointed with yet another top-order batting failure.

Duminy praised a "really good team performance" and the way Dale Steyn and Chris Morris had struck twice each with the new ball. "There are a few things we can improve in the middle and end overs. Udana played a fantastic innings but we gave him a few lifelines," he said.

Hendricks and Van der Dussen put on 116 off 78 balls for South Africa's second wicket.

While man of the match Van der

MALINGA TO RETIRE AFTER T20 WC

CENTURION: Sri Lankan limited overs captain Lasith Malinga will retire from international cricket after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, he has revealed.

Malinga said that he would quit one-day internationals after the World Cup in England and Wales this summer before calling time on his career following the Twenty20 tournament, being played in Australia over October-November 2020.

"After the World Cup, my cricketing career is ending," the 35-year-old said on Friday after his side were beaten by 16 runs by South Africa in the second Twenty20 international at SuperSport Park.

"I want to play in the T20 World Cup and then end my career." Malinga dismissed South African top-scorer Reeza Hendricks for 65 on Friday, his 97th T20 international wicket. He is one short of the world record of 98 held by Pakistan's Shahid Afridi. **AFP**

Dussen's innings was marked by power hitting, which brought him four fours and three sixes, Hendricks oozed class as he struck nine fours in a 46-ball innings marked by fluent off-side drives.

Finch fires Aus to 8-wicket win

AFP ■ SHARJAH

Aaron Finch's fine century drove Australia to a convincing eight-wicket win over a new-look Pakistan in the first one-day international on Friday.

The Australian skipper scored 116 off 135 balls for his 12th one-day international century that helped his team overhaul the 281-run target in 49 overs on a flat Sharjah stadium pitch.

The win gives Australia the lead in the five-match series and comes on the back of their 3-2 series win in India earlier this month.

"To be able to chase down the target for the loss of two wickets is nice. It's nice to keep the momentum with a fourth win in a row," Finch said.

Finch's match-winning knock overshadowed Haris Sohail's maiden one-day hundred (101 not out) which helped Pakistan to 280-5 in their 50 overs.

"We needed wickets at the top which did not come our way because Finch and Marsh handled the chase very well," stand-in captain Shoaib Malik said.

"Congrats to Haris for getting a hundred but we did not push Australia hard," he added.

The 32-year-old Australia smashed Malik for a huge six towards deep mid-wicket to complete his century — his first since June last year against England at Chester-Le-Street — off 120 balls.

Finch, who knocked four sixes and eight boundaries, added an innings-building 172 runs for the second wicket with Shaun Marsh who scored an unbeaten 91 off 102 balls with four boundaries and two sixes.



With 46 needed Finch became Mohammad Abbas's maiden wicket but Peter Handscomb hit 30 not out to help Marsh cross the line.

Finch and Marsh came together after opener Usman Khawaja fell for 24.

Earlier, the young and inexperienced Pakistan led by Malik proved no match for Australia, who are on a roll after their win in India earlier this month.

Left-hander Sohail, who reached 1,000 runs in his 27th one-day international when on 40, anchored Pakistan's innings, adding 98 for the third wicket with Umar Akmal who made a 50-ball 48 in his first international match for two years.

Sohail took a single to complete his hundred in the last over, finishing with six boundaries and a six.

DJOKOVIC, OSAKA WIN MIAMI OPENERS AS THIEM TUMBLES



AFP ■ MIAMI

Novak Djokovic put his Indian Wells disappointment behind him on Friday at the ATP and WTA Miami Open with a ruthless 7-6 (7/2) 6-2 destruction of Australian Bernard Tomic to move into the third round.

The Serbian world number one endured a meek exit at the hands of German Philipp Kohlschreiber in the

California desert but arrived desperate to land what would be a record seventh title in South Florida.

Tomic, the current world No 81, gave the 31-year-old a few problems yet the Australian struggles to consistently challenge the best players and this was evident once again as Djokovic eased through the gears at Hard Rock Stadium with just one hour and 13 minutes on the



clock. On a day that saw Djokovic, top-ranked woman Naomi Osaka and 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams advance, the shock of the day was the departure of Indian Wells Masters winner Dominic Thiem, who was beaten 6-4, 6-4 by highly rated Polish 22-year-old Hubert Hurkacz. Elsewhere, there was disappointment for Kei Nishikori. The fifth seed lost to Serbian Dusan Lajovic 2-6, 6-2, 6-3 but reigning champ-

on John Isner outlasted Italian qualifier Lorenzo Sonego 7-6 (7/2), 7-6, (9/7).

Japanese star Osaka had to keep her emotions in check as she opened her campaign by outlasting Yanina Wickmayer 6-0, 6-7 (3/7), 6-1.

Since winning her second consecutive Grand Slam title in January at the Australian Open, Osaka has failed to go deep in Dubai or Indian Wells.

Next up in the third round is Taiwan's Hsieh Su-Wei, who defeated American Alison Riske 6-2, 7-5.

The pair had a rollercoaster

clash in the Australian Open at the start of 2019 with Hsieh a set and 4-1 up in Melbourne only to lose a dramatic third-round encounter.

Serena Williams survived a second-set lull to beat Sweden's Rebecca Peterson 6-3, 1-6, 6-1, and elder sister Venus also advanced with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 win over Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro.

There will be a repeat of last week's WTA final in Indian Wells between Bianca Andreescu and Angelique Kerber.

Canadian 18-year-old Andreescu, who brilliantly won her maiden WTA title in California, beat American Sofia Kenin 6-3, 6-3 to book a third-round meeting with three-time Grand Slam winner Kerber, who saw off Russia's Karolina Muchova 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.

India off to winning start

PTI ■ IPOH

India defeated Asian Games champion Japan 2-0 to start its campaign at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament on a positive note on Saturday.

Varun Kumar converted a penalty corner in the 24th minute to hand India the lead before Simranjeet Singh (55th) scored a diving field goal from skipper Manpreet Singh's brilliant pass to secure full three points for the five-time champions.

After a goalless first quarter, India slowly took control of the proceedings. Eight minutes into the second quarter, India won a penalty corner and Varun made no mistake in finding the back of the Japanese goal with a powerful dragkick.

The Indian midfield manned by skipper Manpreet and Kothajit Singh stole the limelight by creating numerous scoring chances but the forwardline was guilty of wasting opportunities.

With four minutes remaining for the second hooter, Mandeep Singh missed the target by a



whisker after being set up by a good pass from Sumit Kumar (Junior).

In the third quarter, Japan secured their first penalty corner in the 33rd minute but India custodian PR Sreejesh did well to thwart the danger.

The following minutes saw both India and Japan create scoring opportunities but in vain.

With two minutes remaining for the third hooter, Japanese strik-

er Kenji Kitazato took a brave shot on goal but missed the post by a big margin.

Playing in overcast conditions with temperature hovering around 28 degrees, India continued its hunt for a second goal and earned a penalty corner within minutes of the fourth quarter.

But this time Varun missed the mark, allowing Japan to launch a quick counter attack, which was kept at bay by Birendra Lakra's alertness.

Japan tried different ways to dislodge India, used full-press to gain ball-possession but did not succeed.

Japan removed their goalkeeper to add an extra man in the 55th minute but the tactic backfired with India making use of the opportunity to double their lead. It was a diving effort by Simranjeet that put India ahead.

With just two minutes remaining, Japan secured another penalty corner but the attempt was well-defended by Surrender Kumar, backed by goalkeeper Krishan Pathak, who replaced Sreejesh after half-time.

RCB caught in Bhajji, Tahir spin web

...as defending champion CSK begin campaign with win

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Harbhajan Singh rolled back years to show the relevance of a finger spinner in shorter format as defending champions Chennai Super Kings beat Royal Challengers Bangalore by 7 wickets in the opening encounter of Indian Premier League on Saturday.

On a tricky pitch that assisted slow bowlers, RCB were shot out for 70 in 17.1 overs, a target that CSK achieved in 17.4 overs.

RCB in defeat maintained

their inglorious record against CSK and also had the ignominy of ending with the sixth lowest total in the league.

Skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's move to open with Harbhajan (3/20 in 4 overs) paid rich dividends as he removed rival skipper Virat Kohli (6) in the fourth over and RCB never recovered from that early blow.

Dhoni's reading of pitch was immaculate as a top score of 29 from Parthiv Patel was a testimony to that and the time that CSK needed to score the



Chennai Super Kings' spinners Harbhajan Singh, Imran Tahir and Ravindra Jadeja interact at end of the first innings of the first match of 12th edition of the Indian Premier League 2019 T20 cricket tournament at MAC Stadium in Chennai on Saturday



runs.

Once Harbhajan's finger spinners had inflicted a telling damage on the psyche of the RCB line-up, Tahir tormented the visitors even more with his googlies that killed the contest in the first half.

With so much assistance for spinners, Ravindra Jadeja wasn't going to be left behind, finishing with 2/15 in 4 overs.

Having gauged the pace of the pitch, Harbhajan altered the length of his deliveries effectively and also reduced the pace at times to trouble the batsmen. There are times Harbhajan dropped his length but the slowness of the track made batsmen indecisive.

While he was lucky as his off-break dropped short but Kohli's mistimed pull-shot was taken by Jadeja at mid-wicket boundary.

Moeen Ali slog swept Harbhajan for a six but that was all that he could manage with a length delivery stopping on him as he tried to check his drive and loopy return catch was gleefully accepted.

AB de Villiers (9) wanted to hit out of trouble and was first dropped by Imran Tahir and off the very next ball was caught by Jadeja at mid-wicket boundary. With Shimron Hetmyer (0) getting run-out needlessly, RCB were in the dumps even before halfway

stage.

It was the perfect platform for Tahir and Jadeja, who were unplayable with the pitch offering reasonable turn and it only helped that the lower-order's confidence was shot to pieces.

The way each batsmen reacted to Tahir's googlies was different. Left-hander Shivam Dube (2) didn't read the googly and edged to slips. Navdeep Saini padded one in his intent to defend while Yuzvendra Chahal was holed out at deep square leg trying to hit out of trouble.

Parthiv Patel (29) was the top-scorer and the last man dismissed but hardly looked convincing.

The pitch wasn't an easy one to bat on but 70 was too small a total to defend for RCB even though they stretched CSK for nearly 18 overs.

Suresh Raina (19) didn't score much but he did complete 5000 runs in IPL when he reached an individual score of 14. An IPL legend, Raina is the first player in tournament's history to achieve the feat.

Warner always an entertainer: Yusuf

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Putting behind the embarrassing ball tampering crisis, David Warner would once again look to show his class before the fans, his Sunrisers Hyderabad teammate Yusuf Pathan said on Saturday.

The Aussie opener is back with the Orange Army after he was not allowed to play last year by the BCCI because of his involvement in ball tampering at the Capetown Test in March 2018.

"He is returning after a long time so many people will come to watch him play again. You may be a fan of SRH or not but everyone enjoys his style of batting. He is a very much entertainer on the field," Pathan told reporters at their team hotel.

Warner has always been in the thick of things with SRH. He led by example with a staggering 848 runs and helped them win their maiden title in 2016 IPL.

In 2017, he topped the run charts (641) and smashed a scintillating 59-ball 126 against Kolkata Knight Riders, against whom they open their campaign this season Sunday.

"He has always been an entertainer. He always likes to play his shots early. So obviously everyone will look forward to (watch) him and how he plays this time."

Yusuf further said Warner did not feature in the team in 2018 but he was always with them in spirit. In Warner's absence, Kane Williamson led from the front as Sunrisers Hyderabad stormed to the final.

"Wins or losses he always kept himself in touch and kept motivated us. He would always praise if somebody did well and backed up the players. He may be coming back after one year but it does not feel that he was

not there with us last season. He was with us in spirit."

Warner will miss his opening partner Shikhar Dhawan who has been traded with the trio of Vijay Shankar, Shahbaz Nadeem and Abhishek Sharma.

"In Dhawan's absence we will have to push someone up the order. With more matches, the picture will come clear. We will have to assess the players. The start is always tricky," he said refusing to reveal their plan on who would open alongside Warner.

A winner of three IPL titles and one World Twenty20, the 36-year-old is a veteran in the format as he revealed to play a role with his off-spin.

Yusuf, who switched sides from KKR to SRH last season, said he's been working with spin wizard Muttiah Muralitharan.

"He guided me in where the landing feet should be. During the time of delivery, where my right leg should be. Where my hand in front should be and where I should be looking. The speed of my bowling arm and how it will come down?"

"When you are in the game, you don't always realise what are the areas you need to work on. But when someone like Murali guides you, you get an idea. As an off-spinner, there's a lot to learn from him. He has always gone step by step for me. Last year also he had told me a few things. It's great to work with him."

The veteran had won the inaugural IPL with Rajasthan Royals in 2008 and replicated the success twice at KKR in 2012 and 2014.

"It's a big tournament and I've always been done well here. I played the full season with Ranji Trophy, Vijay Hazare and Syed Mushtaq Ali preparing for the IPL. It's been a good season for us. I kept my focus on fitness as well."

MUMBAI TAKE ON DELHI Sunrisers eye winning start against KKR



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Workload management of pacer Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Hardik Pandya will be the main focus when Mumbai Indians take on a rechristened Delhi Capitals in their first match of the 12th Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Pandya has had two breakdowns in the last six months. A recurring back-injury first ruled him out of the Asia Cup in last September before missing the home series against Australia.

Even former India pacer Zaheer Khan, who is Mumbai Indians' Director of Cricket, felt Pandya's workload should be monitored since he has had recurring lower back injuries.

"He (Hardik) has to be monitored. He's in consultation with the team of support staff. Everything is under control," Zaheer had said earlier this week.

Bumrah is another player who will be closely monitored by the Indian team management in the IPL.

Also it would be interesting to see how Mumbai Indians' manage Bumrah's workload, especially after veteran Sri



Lankan speedster Lasith Malinga will miss the first six games for the franchise.

Elsewhere, Rohit's performance will also be keenly observed as he is expected to open in the World Cup.

Besides, the three-time IPL winners have added legendary Yuvraj Singh to their squad, which already has a few big-hitters in Kieron Pollard, Ben Cutting, Suryakumar Yadav to name a few.

On the pace front, Barinder Sran, Mitchell McClenaghan can be considered, while Krunal Pandya, Jayant Yadav, Anukul Roy, Rahul Chahar and rising star Mayank Markande provide Mumbai ample spin options.

Delhi Capitals, who have changed their name from Delhi

Daredevils, have Shikhar Dhawan in their armoury and the lefty-hander would be keen to get runs in the before the World Cup.

Also a good outing for young players like Shreyas Iyer and stumper Rishabh Pant will bolster their World Cup chances.

Delhi also boasts of Prithvi Shaw, Manjot Karla and experienced campaigners like Colin Munro and Chris Morris, who can give stability to the team.

With the likes of Trent Boult, Ishant Sharma, Kasigo Rabada and Nathu Singh on board, Delhi's bowling attack looks a potent force.

TEAMS (FROM):

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma, Jason Behrendorff, Jasprit Bumrah, Rahul Chahar, Ben Cutting, Pankaj Jaiswal, Ishan Kishan (wicket-keeper), Siddhesh Lad, Evin Lewis, Lasith Malinga, Mayank Markande, Mitchell McClenaghan, Adam Milne, Hardik Pandya, Krunal Pandya, Kieron Pollard, Anukul Roy, Rasikh Salam, Yuvraj Singh, Anmolpreet Singh, Barinder Sran, Aditya Tare, Suryakumar Yadav, Jayant Yadav and Quinton de Kock (wicket-keeper).

Delhi Capitals: Colin Ingram, Manjot Karla, Prithvi Shaw, Sherfane Rutherford, Shikhar Dhawan, Shreyas Iyer, Amit Mishra, Avesh Khan, Bandaru Ayyappa, Harshal Patel, Ishant Sharma, Kasigo Rabada, Nathu Singh, Sandeep Lamichhane, Trent Boult, Axar Patel, Chris Morris, Colin Munro, Hanuma Vihari, Lalaj Saxena, Keemo Paul, Rahul Tewatia, Ankush Bains and Rishabh Pant.

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Comeback man David Warner would be the cynosure of all eyes when last year's finalist Sunrisers Hyderabad open their campaign against two-time champions Kolkata Knight Riders in the 12th Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Under Warner's captaincy Sunrisers won their maiden IPL title in 2016 and in 2017 he was the leading rungetter for his team.

But the Australian opener missed the last IPL because of last year's infamous ball tampering episode in Capetown, and is set make his IPL comeback along side Steve Smith.

Warner will be the most scrutinised player for Sunrisers this season after he was banned for a year over his role in the ball-tampering scandal.

While Warner and Smith were banned for a year, young Cameron Bancroft was left out for nine months for his role.

And come this year, both Warner and Smith would be hoping to make an impact for their respective IPL sides.

Even as his international ban will end on March 28, the left-handed opener is eligible to play in the franchise league and would be hoping to get into his zone to stake a claim in Australia's World Cup squad.

Warner went under the knife for an elbow injury in January during the Bangladesh Premier League but made a successful comeback for his Sydney club Randy Petes with a 77-ball century in a one-day game earlier this month.

Kane Williamson, who led them to runners-up finish in the Aussie's absence last season, will continue to captain Sunrisers, a team that is known for its depth and variation in bowling.

While Bhuvneshwar Kumar will lead Sunrisers pace department, Afghanistan's Rashid Khan will be in charge of the spin attack.

Sunrisers have traded in Vijay Shankar, Shahbaz Nadeem and Abhishek Sharma for Shikhar Dhawan, but the it remains to be seen how they overcome the Indian opener's departure.

In KKR's camp, skipper Dinesh Karthik will look to make most of the IPL opportunity to get the selectors' attention.

Taking charge of the team after Gautam Gambhir's exit, Karthik led KKR to third place



finish following their loss to SRH in the second eliminator last year. KKR have roped in Carlos Brathwaite to go along side Andre Russell, Sunil Narine as they would look to reinforce their batting firepower with Chris Lynn.

TEAM (FROM):

Kolkata Knight Riders: Dinesh Karthik (c), Robin Uthappa, Chris Lynn,

Shubman Gill, Andre Russell, Carlos Brathwaite, Sunil Narine, Piyush Chawla, Kuldeep Yadav, Nikhil Naik, Joe Denly, Shrikant Mundhe, Nitish Rana, Sandeep Warrier, Prasidh Krishna, Lockie Ferguson, Harry Gurney, KC Cariappa and Yarra Prithviraj.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Kane Williamson (c), Manish Pandey, Martin Gupthill, Ricky

Bhui, David Warner, Deepak Hooda, Mohammad Nabi, Yusuf Pathan, Shakib Al Hasan, Abhishek Sharma, Vijay Shankar, Sreevats Gowami, Jonny Bairstow, Wriddhiman Saha, Siddarth Kaul, Khaleel Ahmed, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Rashid Khan, Basil Thampi, Billy Stanlake, T Natarajan, Sandeep Sharma, Shahbaz Nadeem.

Moody: Kane Williamson a doubtful starter

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Nursing a shoulder injury, skipper Kane Williamson will be a doubtful starter for Sunrisers Hyderabad's opening IPL game against Kolkata Knight Riders, coach Tom Moody said on Saturday.

Williamson had suffered the injury during New Zealand's second Test against Bangladesh but he joined the Hyderabad side along with Martin Gupthill on Friday night.

"It's not a long term injury, whether he plays, we will take a call tomorrow," Moody said on the even of the match.

"We have got quite a few days before our next home game. If he's not available I don't see any issues. Bhuvni (Bhuvneshwar Kumar) will lead our side since he's our vice-captain."

SRH play their second match at home against Rajasthan Royals on March 29.

Williamson had guided Sunrisers Hyderabad to a runners-up finish after being appointed skipper last season following David Warner's withdrawal due to the ball-tampering scandal.

Warner has returned to the franchise this season but SRH have retained Williamson as the skipper.

"Kane is obviously the standing International captain who is admired globally on that platform and what he did with us last year, we felt that it seemed to make sense to continue that continuity," Moody said.

"Leadership comes in many different fashions and Davey (Warner) still has a leadership role within the group. In the middle with bat in hand and around training and out in the middle when it comes to strategy from over to over. We just felt there was no need to make any change from last year."



'Unfair to compete with young generation'

■ We don't see you singing playback numbers. What is keeping you busy these days?

My playback singing has declined when it comes to bigger films. But I have my studio at home and I am busy creating and composing music for my YouTube videos. I am also doing corporate and social songs and now I am focusing more on composing and singing rather than just singing.

Talktime

SHAAN

Known for songs like Chand Sifarish and Jab Se Tere Naina, the singer talks to Musba Hashmi about his musical journey and the story behind him becoming Shaan from Shantanu Mukherjee

■ There is a lot of competition for singers. Does that affect senior artists like you?

The competition has increased and everyone is desperate to add at least one big song to his name. I feel lucky that I was in the phase where I got to sing a lot of popular songs.

Now, when I am doing two-hour shows, I don't need to sing anyone else's songs and peo-

ple still remember my songs. I don't see that the competition has affected the senior singers because I am already very thankful that I have had such a good run and I can't try to compete with the young generation singers that will be very unfair to them.

■ You are the leading voice of Bollywood, what all did it take to reach here?

It took lots of dedication and destiny also because sometime you put your best in your work, but things just don't go your way. Also to be able to reinvent yourself and to adapt to the styles and changes that music industry is going through and also to have that fire in your belly to keep going and never let the thought of giving up hinder your ability. The other thing is to always compete with the best and keep improving.

■ Some best moments from your journey.

The years 2006 and 2007 when I won two back to back awards for *Chand Sifarish* and *Sawariya*. That's the time I will cherish for the rest of my life. It was a wonderful phase for me in terms of success and popularity. Ashaji has been very complimentary and kind with her

words for me, especially when I sang *Jab Se Tere Naina* from *Sawariya*. I count that as one of the best moments of my life.

■ How have you evolved as an artist?

I try to continuously evolve and stay updated with the present style of singing. Everytime I sing, I try to be different. You can hear my songs from 2002 to 2017 and you will not be able to make out that it has been sung by the same artist.

■ How did you become Shaan from Shantanu Mukherjee?

We were doing an album where people's names were Shantanu, Sagarika and Naujawan. Composer Biddu got irritated with such long names and decided to cut my name short to Shaan. It was done even without my consent. It was not that I disapproved of it but they did not even ask me *ki naam change kar dein kya*. They just did it on their own saying it's nice. (laughs)

■ How can newcomers benefit from the digital platform?

In today's time, YouTube has become the biggest platform and is like an independent music company where you can put up your

music and if you are able to connect with the audience, you become popular. It is serving as a good platform for newcomers to explore and make the best of.

■ You are judging Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Lil Champs for the second time. What are you looking forward to?

Judging a music reality show, especially a children's show, comes with a responsibility and a lot of focus. You have to be sure of what you are looking for. It has not changed much down the years, but when you know you are judging children you can't judge them for expressions and emotional quotient because they are too young to understand these things, but when it comes to *sur, taal*, voice quality and whether their singing is reaching out to you, you judge them on these. I was judging this show five years ago too, but most of the children are still singing yesteryear songs. They are singing classics. In that sense, there is no evolution. But they are singing these in their own style without copying original artists. Bringing in originality to old numbers has changed as compared to a decade back.

Now, water ATMs

SHALINI SAKSENA tells you how a social initiative is providing access to over 6 lakh households in the Capital access to safe and clean drinking water via vending machines

We all know how ATMs works. You put the debit card into the machine, follow the instructions and lo and behold cash. But did you know that now you have access to clean and safe drinking water through ATMs? A water services company — JanaJal — is revolutionising the way clean and safe water is being delivered through ATMs.

It has till date benefitted more than 90 million people in India with an approximate consumption of eight-10 litres per capita per day as has been prescribed by the Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation in India. It adopts different technology tools to solve different problems. In other words, it adopts new water treatment technologies to solve different water-related issues. Given that water changes every 5-10 km in India, every water ATM is custom built to suit the environment in which it is intended to operate in. Besides accepting coins, all water ATMs are enabled with cashless transacting capability.

Parag Agarwal, Founder-CMD, JanaJal tells you that their mission is to make safe drinking water available to every person at very a nominal cost. "Safe drinking water is a basic human requirement, which is essential for good health and subsequent education of the people and can boost the GDP by up to 6 per cent as stated in a recent article issued by Niti Aayog. Clean drinking water is a medium to deliver health and wellness to communities besides providing gainful employment to individuals, self-help groups, widows and the unemployed. We work closely with NGOs and charitable foundations to provide vocational training and upskill individuals by expanding their capabilities. With the Government's emphasis on CSR spending, corporates have developed a renewed focus on safe drinking water as its significance in terms of meeting basic needs of people is clearly understood along with the fact that the social impact being delivered is unparalleled," Agarwal says.

There is a wide gap in the demand and supply of safe drinking water in the country. Nearly 680 million people have no access to safe water. Women and children walk several miles to fetch water, which prevents them from going to schools or having a job. This has a severe negative impact on the economic growth of the country.

According to a new study titled The Water Gap-State of the World's Water 2018 by WaterAid, states that the global population without access to clean



water has gone up to 844 million, which is almost 200 million more than previously counted. The Economic Survey of Delhi 2017-18 states that around 6,25,000 households do not have access to piped water supply.

The service follows a triple A philosophy of making safe water — Available, Accessible and Affordable — to all while keeping technological advancement and implementation at its core. The ATMs also maximise efficiency by utilising solar energy and regular electricity minimising downtime due to power outages. This serves as an asset for the smooth expansion to other rural and semi-urban areas.

Water ATM is a kiosk that is an independent water treatment plant with a chiller that has the option to dispense water in bulk. This means water in an unpackaged format to people in a quantity that they desire — 250 ml, 500 ml, 1 litre, 2 litres, 5 litres and 20

A GLASS OF 250 ML ON A REFILL BASIS COSTS ₹1. IF THE PERSON WANTS THE SAME QUANTITY IN A PAPER CUP THE COST IS ₹2. A LITRE OF CHILLED WATER IS ₹5 BUT FOR 20 LITRES IT IS ₹20. THE AIM IS TO TAKE WATER RIGHT UP THE HOUSEHOLDS

litres. It is a decentralised water distribution plant that enables people to have greater access to safe and clean drinking water at an affordable cost, taking away the fixed cost involved with packaged water.

"A glass of 250 ml on a refill basis costs ₹1. If however, a person wants the same quantity in a paper cup the cost is ₹2. A litre of chilled water is ₹5 but for 20 litres it is ₹20. The aim is to take water right up the households. While a litre of water is chilled, the bulk water is at room temperature," Agarwal says and tells you that the cost of the ATM depends on the capacity of the plant — anywhere between ₹3 lakh to ₹10 lakh.

At present over 100 such ATMs have already operations in Mumbai for a year-and-a-half. In Delhi, these ATMs are operational in NDMC area and some are operational in Ghaziabad and Gujarat as well. There are plans to move to Karnataka for 1,000 ATMs.

"Since water is still a Government managed utility, we need an authorised legitimate connection to access raw water. This water is then processed before it is made available to the people. We have to approach the Government for connection and the electricity department. Sometimes, we have to approach the local administrative body to get access to a place. For each ATM we have to deal with multiple stakeholders," Agarwal explains and tells you that the biggest challenge to safe drinking water has become the product for a select few since packaged water is expensive.

Despite, the penetration of packaged water, it caters to only 5 per cent, leaving 95 per cent behind. The motivation was to bring safe drinking water through an operational model that took care of the unnecessary cost.

He tells you that sometimes the potable water that we drink is worse than bad water since it has micro particles of plastic. "There are people who get rashes or food poisoning, it could be due to bad water. Bad water is the reason for the deteriorating quality of potable water," Agarwal tells you and says that the reason why water in these ATMs is safe is that nothing additional is being added to it.

"All we doing is to bring the total dissolved solids (TDS) below 500. According to the WHO, this level should not be more than 500 for it to be labelled as potable water. But due to packaged water, this level has come down to 30-40. People have got used to this taste. The only difference in the water in the ATMs is the taste. We bring the TDS down and remove all microbe contamination that causes water-borne diseases and epidemic," Agarwal says and tells you that in the next one year they are looking at 2000 ATMs across India.

Depending on the condition of the raw water is a particular area, the water treatment plant may have an RO system or ultra-filtration system or even a combination of various systems.

In order to clean the ATMs, three manual routine procedures are followed. One is a daily back flush system to get rid of impurities. "Every ATM has an operator who does this. There is a fortnightly wash. Depending on the membrane and the quality of raw water, there are quarterly checks. Each ATM is also connected to the Internet and it is possible to control and study the quality and the quantity of water in real time through cloud to monitor the system," Agarwal says.



'I am an artist & love being creative'

Singer, composer, entrepreneur and actor ARJUN KANUNGO loves to don many hats. He tells SHALINI SAKSENA why he loves pop and how he became a musician

■ How did your musical journey begin?

It was not as if I wanted to pursue music. But I was 18, in the US and discovered music. Back then it was a bit turbulent. I had started my course. But when I came back to India, I told my mother that I wanted to do music. But I didn't know what to do. But I knew that if I put my mind to it I would be able to make music. I started a recording studio. I learnt a lot from the artists who came and understand the business. I learnt to play the guitar. I did a lot of work for the ad world. I also had a rehearsal room. Then one day Asha Bhonsle's band came to rehearse. They wanted a guitarist. I tried out and auditioned and started singing. She loved my voice. I toured with her. That is how Bollywood wanted. But I was not happy with the kind of work I was getting so took a break. Then pop music happened. It took off.

■ Would you say you are an entrepreneur then?

Yes. But since I do a lot of live performances, I love that. I am most comfortable there. I love being there. I think my personality is suited for it. I am not an extrovert but while on stage I become a different person. It amazes me how I can be these two different persons.

■ You studied acting. Was it a dream to be an actor?

I am not distracted but am a creative person. All my life I have been doing different things. I am still exploring things as I go along. I like making music, I love to perform, I love making videos. Basically, I love the effort that goes into learning. When you learn something and are able to apply in real-time, it gives a high. When I learnt acting, it was so that I could perform better on stage.

■ What is the latest track about?

It is pop song titled *Tu Na Mila*. It is a love ballad in modern times. We wanted to show love in a different way. We wanted to give it a different setting. We researched a lot and couldn't find a reference point. We have shown action, bullets flying and fire everywhere. It was a challenge to come up with something like this. But we didn't want to go overboard also.

■ How does one manage to get so many hits?

It is a combination of many things. The audience has grown. The popularity of pop helps. Then there is content. If the content is good, people will watch it. The Internet is a strange place. It is based on choice. There are many influencing factors. If you get a lot of hits in the first few hours on YouTube, it goes to the trending page from where it takes off. Music labels help too. There are so many music platforms where the song can be pushed. A lot of things happen.

■ You are into sustainable development. How did that happen?

I am a practical person. People think that environment doesn't effect them and is far out and not going to impact them. I do what I am doing for personal survival. People are unaware that the problem is real and unfolding as we live it. I understand that life is going to get complicated. I am young and have a long way to go. My home is solar powered. If one calculates, they would realise how much carbon foot printing I am saving. It is like planting a 100 trees.

■ Do you have a favourite genre that you love to work with?

It has to be pop. I am most comfortable here. It offers a lot of freedom. It has a bit of rock, a bit of jazz, a bit of classical and bit of R&B. One can do anything with pop. There are no rules. One can do a lot here.

■ What next?

After the immediate release of the song for *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha...* I am part of MTV Unplugged. I am part of web series which is action based and look forward to the series.

WEEKLY NATTER

KANGANA TO PLAY JAYALALITHA IN A BIOPIC

Kangana Ranaut, last seen in *Manikarnika*, will be playing late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalitha in the upcoming multilingual biopic *Thalaivi*, its makers have announced through an official statement that she has been roped in to play Jayalalitha. The film, announced on the occasion of 71st birthday anniversary of Jayalalitha in February, will be directed by Vijay. To be produced by Vishnu Induri, *Thalaivi* will start rolling from April.

"When producer Vishnu Induri approached me with an offer to direct this biopic, I felt a sense of responsibility more than excitement. This was a story of an achiever; a story of one woman who fought for her place in a male-dominated world. It was meant to be told with honesty. The stature of this tall leader and her courage inspired me to say yes as soon as I was offered this opportunity," Vijay said.

The film has music by GV Prakash Kumar while Nirav Shah will crank the camera. *Bahubali* and *Bajrangli Bhajjan* writer has been brought on board to supervise the writing process. "It took us around nine months of research and over 20 drafts to finally lock the script. We are delighted to have Vijayendra Prasad sir helping us through the process of writing. His contribution will be of great value. This will be a very honest biopic of our beloved leader," he said.

Interestingly, another Jayalalitha biopic titled *The Iron Lady* is currently in the offing. This project is gearing up for a 2020 release.



'NOT WRITTEN SONGS FOR PM NARENDRA MODI'

Lyricist Javed Akhtar has denied writing songs for Omung Kumar B directorial film *PM Narendra Modi*. Akhtar took to Twitter and expressed shock to see his name in the credits of the film's trailer.

"I am shocked to find my name on the poster of this film. Have not written any songs for it," Akhtar tweeted along with the snapshot of the trailer's video in which his name was mentioned among several other artists in the lyrics category.

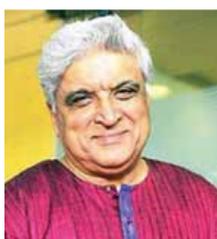
The trailer of *PM Narendra Modi* — was launched last week.

The film will showcase the journey of Modi from his humble beginnings to his years as the Gujarat Chief Minister, to the landmark win in the 2014 general elections, and finally becoming the PM.

Actor Vivek Anand Oberoi is essaying the role of Modi in the biopic, which is scheduled to release on April 5, 2019.

Produced by Suresh Oberoi, Anand Pandit and Sandip Ssingh, *PM Narendra Modi* also features Darshan Kumar, Boman Irani, Zarina Wahab and Barkha Bisht Sengupta in pivotal roles.

— IANS



PUT ON 17 KG FOR KESARI: SANDEEP NAHAR

Actor Sandeep Nahar who plays the character of Buta Singh in *Kesari*, one of the 21 fearless Sardars, who fought in the battle of Saragathi is a happy man. The actor had to gain a lot of weight for this role. He

says: "When I was selected for this role I was 84 kg. I was asked to gain more weight to look like a mighty Sardar. So I ended up gaining 17 kg. The weight gaining process was tough as I had stopped going to the gym completely and used to eat a lot of fatty food. The problem started when I was having trouble breathing. After that, I also developed problems in walking as my knees started paining. I used to face problem while climbing up the steps. As an actor I was insecure because I could not go for any other auditions because of my extra weight."

His experience in *Kesari* was an unforgettable one. "Working with a superstar like Akshay Kumar was a dream come true. His dedication and hard work are amazing. One can learn so many things from him. We used to have a lot of game sessions post our shooting in Wai. He used to call me Motu off-screen," Nahar said. At present, he is on a weight loss process. He adds: "As an actor, my struggle is still on for good roles and first I need to shed off my extra weight."



the pioneer agenda

Ah...romance to me is spontaneity. It's not diamond earrings; it is a bunch of daffodils that's freshly picked from the field
— Kate Winslet



3 **The idea of a nation**
Harsh Mander's *Partitions of the Heart* is a worthy intervention at a time when most public protests are being deemed anti-national



6 **Visibility of disability**
Only a few designers, such as the late Alexander McQueen, recognised fashion's immense potential to challenge perception of disability



7 **Data, data everywhere**
Bombarded with data, all kinds of data on all types of subjects, the human mind is gradually slipping into an oblivion of its own making



WINTER VICISSITUDES

REMINISCENCES

ON THE WANING OF A SEASON

The lure of white extends far beyond hills, and subconsciously, we hope that the picturesqueness of snow-clad highlands somehow permeates the surfaces of flatlands as well — as witnessed in Delhi after a recent hailstorm

Iss baar sardi lambi pad gayi... *Mausam ka kuchh pata hi nahi chal raha hai...* ("Winter this time has lengthened... The weather has been behaving so indecisively"). For someone who has just shifted from the hills of Shimla to the plains of Delhi, the inherent perplexity of this and similar statements being uttered by the Capital's residents comes with a charm of its own, for winteriness remains in the blood and the mind. In fact, if there is something that has quietly yet most efficaciously helped me and my family during the settling-in process over the last few months, it is the continuation of winter in the plains, for what has allegedly been "a long time, this time". While the mountains have now been replaced by high-rises and the fresh, silvery mists have made way for (sadly) the haze of smoke and the coughs of smog, the chill of winter has nonetheless retained, injecting a cool that is otherwise desperately sought in the harsh of Indian summers.

In the middle and upper highlands of the country, it isn't uncommon to witness a spell of snow well into March, a period that otherwise coincides with the youthful 'warmth' of spring and Holi. Just as seasons behave differently in different places, directions and directionality also assume distinctive currencies in dissimilar settings. There was a time when weather reports at the end of television news invariably began with a nod towards the four metropolises — Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta — with Delhi automatically becoming a synonym for the 'North'. And yet for me, with a childhood spent entirely in the foothills, valleys and ridges of the Himalayas, 'North' was uncontestedly something much higher and distant from the country's Capital. And if the curious relationship between directions and seasons is anything to go by, then season-wise, Himachal directly relates to winters first and summers

second, and Delhi, vice-versa. Of course, Delhi winters, too, get celebrated just as the Himalayan spring and summer, but essentialism about a particular ambience of a place continues to hold its sway in the popular consciousness: "Delhi heat" (*Dilli ki garmi*), "Shimla chill" (*Shimla ki thand*). Consequently, temporality itself assumes a different tenor for people habituated to varying vistas and weathers, the lengthiness of summer holidays in plains finding an equivalent counterpart in the protracted winter breaks of hills and mountains for school children.

One key reason for the 'automatic' link that people draw between Shimla (and many other hill stations) and winters is the shape that the season takes as a result of natural topography and architecture. Some months ago, I had reflected in this space on how a typical hill house exerts a strong claim to intimacy and coziness because of its picturesque shapeliness: Gabled and pitched roofs, symmetrical and stylised facades. Add to this and the surroundings a cover of snow, and the already romanticised setting gets further intensified in charm and appeal. It is remarkable that a number of features that we tend to associate with a typically generalised understanding of a scenery — rivers, clouds, mists, sunsets, and snow — depend on the penchant of water for various forms, because water by itself is transparent and shapeless. Snow bears testimony to countless visual profiles as evinced by the intricate lure of geometrical snowflakes (for the keen eyed), and more pervasively, by the layering it congeals into over buildings and natural terrains (for the common eyed). Shape further evinces prolonged tactility, and it never ceases to amuse me how visitors from plains regularly exult in the discovery of the thinnest layer of white on hill-sides during their travels, instantly stopping their cars to touch and hold a bit in animated, expansive gestures, to be further immortalised by photography. If in the plains, it is the moon atop the Taj Mahal that must be customarily palmed or fingerpicked for a photograph, then in the hills, it is the pristine snow that has to be handled to experience and

demonstrate the feeling of being alive in a *thandi jagah* (cold place). Snow embodies the quality of being faraway just like the distant moon, and once you touch it, you bring yourself closer to a fantasy world. No wonder then, that across the country, temporary amusement parks under the rubric of "Winter Wonderlands" routinely spring during the season, and snow — even if artificially created — gets excitedly sought after by one and all.

Snow is the silent cousin of sonorous rain. Extravagantly celebrated in culture, from rituals to poetry and cinema, rains in India dictate a season of their own (the monsoon), the land after all bearing an overwhelmingly hot, tropical topography. Unlike many European nations whose de rigueur damp atmospheres generate around persistent but diffident precipitation, Indian rains are ever confident in their might and music. But whereas rains occasion song and dance, snow primarily harbinger meditation and contemplation, because its entry indexes a wholesome silence, a quintessential quietness. In the hills, it is often the case that only after a prolonged, resounding spell of rain will snow gather the dignity and gravity to chart a way for itself. Once the drama begins, all differences begin to recede, the unity of a colourless colour resiliently seeping surfaces and sensibilities. It is not always easy to make sense of this inherently contradictory hue, and I still remember my childhood classes where drawing snow invariably posed a difficulty, so that we usually left patches of white sheet uncoloured whenever we had to depict frozen mountain peaks.

But the lure of white extends far beyond the hills, and subconsciously, we fervently hope that the picturesqueness of snow-clad highlands somehow permeates the surfaces of flatlands as well. When some weeks ago, a strong hailstorm took over Delhi and left it soaked in a sheet of white, the question that immediately propped up alongside the images was: "Is this Delhi or Shimla?" Another such speculative query also mentioned "Switzerland", the dream of inhabiting a distinguished destination in a distant land once again infiltrating human desire via the bait of white.

If snow naturally embodies an ambience of otherness through the magic of movement, texture, and transformation, then one of the ways of relating to that otherness (in addition to posing and photographing) is by wearing something warm and woolen. There is a joke amongst Himalayan folks that people from the plains, even while visiting the hills in the thick of summer, automatically don layers of woollens, because for them, it is enough that they are in the hills. But there is another joke to do with the woollens amongst the Himalayan folk regarding themselves. Once, when someone from the upper reaches of the Kullu valley (other versions say Lahaul-Spiti) was visiting Delhi during a hot summer, a perplexed local enquired: "Don't you feel hot in this dress?", referring to the layers of woven cloth traditionally worn by Himachalis of the higher areas. To which the visitor promptly replied: "*Jab garmi andar jaayegi hi nahi toh lagegi kaise?*" ("When the heat won't pass through the thick layers of my clothing, how would it affect me?"). In the first joke, wool becomes the way of relating to the hills by staying off the cold (existing or not) when you don't originally belong to the landscape; in the second, wool strangely transforms into a ruse for staving off heat by making one feel entirely at home. On similar lines, I too have occasionally wondered why do we drape a snowman in a woolen cap and a woolen scarf when he himself is made of snow? Shouldn't their warmth be considered a threat to his snowy, frozen identity?

Recently, the ever-versatile social commentator Santosh Desai observed that "the idea of warmth as a defining human condition gets re-affirmed only when it is cold. It is then that the idea of being alive becomes synonymous with the idea of being warm". This remarkable insight is perhaps most potently illustrated by the persistent cultural image of a working fireplace, with people huddled around together and snow falling outside.



AS THE DELHI WINTER SLIPS INTO SPRING ONLY TO QUICKLY FADE INTO SUMMER, I KNOW THAT MY EYES AND EARS WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE LOOKING FORWARD TO ALL ADVERTISEMENTS PROMOTING *THANDAI*, FROM DERM COOL TALCUM POWDER TO ASSORTED SQUASHES AND DRINKS, THAT HABITUALLY WORK WITH CLOSE-UPS OF ICE AND SNOW



OF THE KIDS ENTERING PRIMARY SCHOOL TODAY, 65 PER CENT WILL END UP WORKING IN JOB CATEGORIES THAT DO NOT YET EXIST, SAYS RESEARCH

PREPARING DIGITAL WORKFORCES

Educational institutions need to combine frontier technologies with skill-based teaching and learning in the new-age classrooms, writes ATUL TEMURNIKAR



The concepts of 'digital skills' and 'digital competencies' have broken through the confines of the information technology (IT) industry in recent years. They have become highly relevant yardsticks against which organisations across industries measure the most-valued resource: Their human capital. All eyes are on the upcoming generation of workers — known as the most digitally adept generation yet — to see how they can apply critical thinking skills and technology knowledge to achieve new levels of human progress in the highly technologically advanced workplace of tomorrow.

The new workplace expectations poses an important challenge to India's education sector to prioritise skills building as the nation (ranked 80th) continues to trail behind other economies in the latest Global Talent Competitive Index. As a result, being prepared for the future workforce weighs heavily on the minds of parents and students. There is then no choice but for educational institutes to combine frontier technologies with skill-based teaching and learning in the classrooms, to equip upcoming generations of workers with the necessary proficiencies for tomorrow's digital economy.

DIGITAL SKILLS SHORTAGE AFFECTS ORGANISATIONS WORLDWIDE

Business leaders are turning to the education sector for digital talents who have innovative thinking as they find themselves caught in an increasingly technology-driven and disruptive economic. Unfortunately, traditionally the education system was designed to produce academic excellence rather than to answer the question "how can we equip students with

the necessary skills to accelerate innovation and drive economic growth?" This creates a gap between what is needed and what is available. The sharp rise in demand for data-driven capabilities, such as analytics and digital marketing, is creating a severe skill gap in the labour market. It is estimated that over half of the businesses worldwide are being affected by digital talent shortage, according to a report by Capgemini and LinkedIn. The threat of labour shortage is becoming very real for local Indian organisations.

Whilst the Government is placing an urgent focus on implementing training programmes and skills-building initiatives — notably with the launch of Skills India — these measures only alleviate but do not address the root of the problem: The lack of continuous exposure to technology and digital through the education journey.

Digital literacy should instead be developed from an early age, through the introduction of innovative ways of thinking and digital learning tools in classrooms, with the aim to foster young digital-first mindsets and develop the critical skills needed for the process of lifelong learning and constant reinvention. In this aspect, the education system holds the key to nurturing competent future workforces.

DIGITAL EDUCATION HOLDS THE KEY TO FUTURE DIGITAL WORKFORCES

Digital is quickly becoming the foundation to everything we do in today's information age. This includes educating young minds, who will in a few short years determine India's economic growth and place on the global stage. It is then crucial to enrich every level of education with 21st century knowledge and its applications — through skill-based learning —

OUR CHILDREN ARE OFF TO A PROMISING START AS THEY CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM AN INCREASINGLY DIGITAL UPBRINGING THAT HELPS SHAPE THEIR TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS

to ensure that students today who will be tomorrow's workforce can navigate and thrive in a fast-moving economic climate.

Our children are off to a promising start as they continue to benefit from an increasingly digital upbringing that helps shape their technology experiences and expectations from an early age. Schools and educators need to rise to the technology-driven characteristics of students to provide them with the right digital tools and channels to develop the necessary skills for the 21st century workplace.

We recognise the necessity of such skills and all our teachers as well as campuses are equipped with training, facilities and systems to inculcate these skills to our students. These skills include:

Collaboration: Mimicking the rising trend of workforce mobility, schools can explore the use of virtual technology and high-speed connectivity to promote

knowledge-exchange and collaboration amongst students in different locations.

Digital competency: With automation and artificial intelligence poised to replace resource-heavy and repetitive tasks within organisations, schools can help their students improve future employability by preparing them for the human-machine partnership from today. The provision of student access to digital learning tools and robotics/AI labs can have far-reaching impacts in terms of shaping the next generation of digital workforce.

Innovation: It is important to help young curious minds understand that technology is not only a means to better productivity — it also holds the key to creating new values and breaking down boundaries of what is possible. Entrepreneur bootcamps and innovation competitions are an excellent way to encourage out-of-the-box thinking and applications of technology amongst students. Amidst calls for urgent actions to develop a future-ready workforce capable of powering new levels of innovation, the words of the renowned developmental psychologist Jean Piaget are more relevant than ever: "The principal goal of education is to create individuals who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done". By having a clear grasp of new workplace requirements and applying a digital-first approach to its skills-based education, India can take strong steps in the right direction to equipping our children with the necessary skills to thrive in tomorrow.

The writer is Co-Founder and Chairman at Global Schools Foundation



Lifestyle disorders find a solution in stem cell therapy

Urban lifestyle can be a bane as much as a boon. The diseases and health disorders that one becomes prone to in cities appear to become more widespread due to the rapid industrialisation of the country. Human health is a result of the contact of genetic, nutritional, socio-cultural, economic factors and physical infrastructure. All these factors are influenced by the environment they are embedded in and by changes in this environment.

Around the country, lifestyle disorders like diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases are already affecting the health and well-being of thousands of people everyday. Stem cell therapies carry an immense potential in treating the incurable and irreversible lifestyle diseases like diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, bringing this therapy at the centre stage of medical evolution. However, there are certain other lifestyle disorders that are taking a toll on the human health like hair fall, ageing, blindness and infertility (vitiligo is also quite prominent these days). Here again, Stem Cell Therapy acts as a regenerative medicine to promote the reparative reaction of dysfunctional or injured tissue. Let's scan through the battle between stem cells and the following lifestyle disorders and problems:

HAIR LOSS

Hair loss is a frustrating and embarrassing experience for every man and woman with increasing age. Voluminous hair is associated with vitality and youth. No wonder, people are always on the lookout for some solution that truly works and doesn't simply belt out false promises that numerous advertisements offer. Finally, there is good news for them! The key to bringing back those lost strands lies in stem cells wherein they are turned into hair follicle cells and transplanted onto denuded parts of the scalp or body. Compared to the invasive method of hair replacement surgery, researchers have genetically modified adult human skin cells to form an epithelial stem cell. This cell is one of the building blocks for functioning hair follicles and produces structurally recognisable hair shafts.

FERTILITY TREATMENT

Infertility problems have been a major source of concern for Indian couples lately due to changes in lifestyle, stress and the recent trend of late marriages contributing to this occurrence. While poor sperm count plays a major role in male infertility, female infertility is an outcome of health disorders like polycystic ovarian disorder or PCOD. Stem cells are being considered as potential new therapeutic agents

for the treatment of infertility by the doctors wherein the cells could be stimulated in vitro to develop various numbers of specialised cells including male and female gametes, given their potential use in reproductive medicine. Primordial germ cells (PGCs) are some of the first cells to be developed when an egg cell is fertilised by a sperm. While some cells remain inside eventually developing into the fetus, other cells on the outside become the placenta. Most of the inner cells become stem cells, capable of turning into any kind of specialised cell, and a small number of them become PGCs, carrying the genetic information that will one day be passed down as sperm or egg. Researchers have been able to create these PGCs. However, they are yet to determine whether a PGC can be turned into a sperm or egg cell.

ANTI-AGING TREATMENT

As people grow old, a large number of cells in their bodies get replaced and with age, their body's ability to reproduce new cells decreases immensely. Body fat is the richest source of adult stem cells in the human body. They carry the incredible capacity to not only divide to form more stem cells, but also to differentiate into specialised cells to regenerate dying or damaged tissues. Stem cell treatments help in reloading the supply of stem cells, allowing the body to repair and rejuvenate with younger looking skin. By inserting these stem cells combined with some fat tissue into the areas of the face with wrinkles, the face is softly altered without letting it lose its distinctiveness.

BLINDNESS

For people who are blind, the thought of retaining their eyesight seems like an impossible dream. The tables have finally turned, made possible by a few scientists. Macular degeneration is a leading cause of vision loss in older adults and when it strikes, it affects the area of the eye that is important to see fine details. Through stem cell therapy, stem cells are injected into the rear of the eye in order to replace the damaged photoreceptors, which are small but crucial cells found in the retina. These photoreceptors are sensitive to light and are vital to a person's ability to see things.

Lifestyle disorders are witnessing a steady increase day by day and they can have debilitating effects on the human body, its functions and appearance. However, the advent of clinical researches on stem cell therapies with one's own stem cells has raised a ray of hope in the constant effort to reverse the effects of these disorders. This is good news as it can open the gateway to treating life-threatening disorders in the long run.

FROM PAGE 1

Winter vicissitudes: Reminiscences on the waning of a season

For, to follow Desai, fire makes special sense when it is cold outside. Warmth is a crucial human emotion and affect that takes root in our desire to connect and continue the art of living. AR Rahman and Gulzar's gorgeously composed title song for Shaad Ali's 2002 romance-drama *Saathiyaa* evocatively brings out this desire by sewing the presence of snow with the intimacy of wool: "Baraf giri ho waadi mein/ aur hansee teri goonjey/oon mein lipi simti hui/baat karey dhuaan nikley" ("The valley be clad in snow/and your laughter echoes/cuddled within the weave of wool/your voice condenses into fog"). While the film is set in Mumbai, the song itself is shot in Kullu and Manali. But there are a number of films based in the plains that do not have to rely on hill stations to conjure the idea of winteriness. One can think of *Aankhon Dekhi* (2013) and *Delhi 6* (2009) among others, both set in Delhi, that seek to construct the visual aesthetic of warmth by choosing the season of winter, as visualised by the accoutrements of shawls and sweaters.

And yet for all their charm, wool, winter and their various wonders need to be contextualised, not generalised, because cold places themselves differ in patterns and persistence. My younger brother, a social anthropologist who working in the Trans-Himalayas for the past few years, tells me of the extraordinarily tough life that the people of Lahaul-Spiti (which form the cold deserts of Himachal Pradesh) lead when winter arrives. The old saying that holds spring nearer when winter comes needs tweaking here, because spring is certainly far behind in such areas. Here, societies wage a back-breaking battle of arduous labour to remove the massively thick layers of snow from their houses and establishments, day in and day out (for months in and months out), in addition to finding means to survive within temperatures of minus 10 to minus 35 degrees. Snow isn't benign here, and even its pervasive whiteness becomes a source of blindness under the sun, such that people must necessarily wear goggles to protect their vision. In



the months that have gone by, such extremes have also been reported from Western cities and metropolises, but their technologically advanced materiality of daily life still makes it easier to

alleviate the inhuman conditions as compared to the traditional and rudimentary methods involved in the Trans-Himalayas. Simultaneously, however, the evil of snow and ice incessantly

springs up in Western fantasy literature, whether it is the reign of the White Witch in the CS Lewis' *Narnia* books, or the regime of icy 'darkness' in Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* series, or, most

popularly, the White Walkers of George RR Martin's *A Game of Thrones* books, whose fear lends an incomparable negative chill to the words "Winter is coming".

Perhaps, it is futile to reconcile the two sides of the season. Nature destroys, but as George Eliot put it at the end of her masterpiece, *The Mill on the Floss*, it also "repairs its ravages". I am biased in using the phrase since the full quotation actually stands as: "Nature repairs her ravages, but not all." As climate change swells in its reach and impact, the truth of Eliot's prescient words becomes even more loud, more threatening than ever before. And again, the most recognisable symbol of its destruction is to do with snow and ice, their melting and disappearance. It appears that to keep the earth stable, ice in the upper regions of the planet must retain its iciness. As a human quality, however, 'iciness' rings with an undesirable undertone, as does the word 'coldness' ("He gave me a cold shoulder"). And yet in Hindi, we routinely use the phrase "thand rakho" ("Keep your cool") to assuage someone

seething with anger that is aligned with *garmaahat* (aggressiveness that is invariably 'heated'). Nature continuously provides us a palette of objects and occurrences that can be used to entirely different effects in different situations. With a major part of my life spent in the Himalayas, I remain more attuned towards cold places (not cold dispositions!) that constantly sing with a warmth and intimacy of their own, notwithstanding the hardships involved.

As the Delhi winter slips into spring only to quickly fade into summer, I know that my eyes and ears will automatically be looking forward to all the advertisements promoting *thandai*, from Dermi Cool talcum powder (with its alliterative "thanda thanda cool cool" jingle) to assorted squashes and drinks, that habitually work with close-ups of ice and snow. For winteriness firmly remains in the blood and the mind.

The writer recently completed his PhD in English and Materiality Studies at the University of Cambridge, and will soon join the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich, Germany, as a Research Fellow in Global History

THE IDEA OF INDIA

Harsh Mander's *Partitions of the Heart* is a worthy intervention at a time when most public protests are being deemed anti-national, writes HIMANSHI SHARMA



of all faiths co-existed in peace. The truth is more complex than that. While the role of certain political forces cannot be ignored in stoking communal tensions over the past few years, it is historically inaccurate to claim that the subliminal anti-Muslim rhetoric isn't deeply coded in the very fabric of the social and cultural idea of India. The battle for a secular Constitution was hard fought and hard won; to ignore that is to ignore the tremendous courage that Nehru and Ambedkar displayed when they persisted in countering the Hindutva forces that wanted India to be a Hindu nation in opposition to our newly divided Islamic neighbour. One dangerous consequence of this is that it completely frees 'us', who are tolerant, from all responsibility for the actions of 'them' who engage in bigotry. This inability to make ourselves accountable for perpetuating the very structures we claim to be fighting against cannot but be a band-aid solution. The book shies away from engaging in a nuanced understanding of the legacy of Partition on the citizenship of India despite mentioning it in its title. I also felt that Mander could have spent a little more time in exploring the economic conditions that may have led to the radicalisation of so many people in Hindutva ideology. Finally, the book takes for granted the reader's knowledge of the workings of the RSS, and its ideological influence in BJP. This limits its readership to people who already agree with Mander in their perception of the organisation. Perhaps that was intended by the author, but I do believe that this book could have made a case for newer converts to Hindutva ideology to reconsider their affiliations in light of the information presented here.

The above critique notwithstanding, this book serves as a poignant archive of the times we live in. In the tradition of faithful truth-keeping of writers before him, Mander bears witness to the systemic erosion of inter-community ties through this book. It should be recommended to everyone who wishes to understand contemporary India.

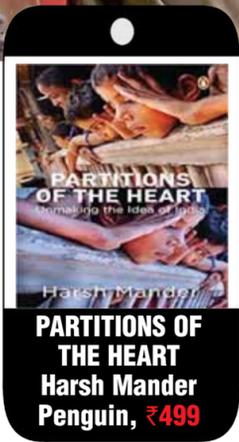
Primo Levi, in *The Reawakening*, sequel to his classic memoir *Survival in Auschwitz*, writes: "Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions." It is an important lesson. It is a reminder that genocides aren't a result of one bad straw-man's evil actions; they are a result of public acquiescence to crumbling institutions, apathy towards discrimination and dehumanisation of large segments of people, and indifference to politics as long as it doesn't personally affect us. Harsh Mander's *Partitions of the Heart* is a worthy and timely intervention at a time when most public protests are being deemed anti-national, and when independent administrative institutions are slowly being stripped of their autonomy.

Mander's book is a scathing indictment of the ruling party in power, who he sees as culprits as well as catalysts behind the contemporary climate of communal hate, and minority discrimination within the country. He dubs this phenomenon 'command bigotry' which has emboldened ordinary and less powerful everyday hate-mongers to exercise their worst instincts in public without fear of Governmental censure. The narrative begins in the Gulberg Society during 2002 Gujarat riots where the callousness of the Gujarat Model towards the rights of its Muslim minority, even in the face of their persecution and death, was first put on display. Mander carefully details the apathy of police forces even as Lok Sabha MP Ehsan Jafri made repeated phone calls to local police stations as well as people in the uppermost echelons of the State Government, allegedly including the then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, to no avail. The next Chapter, "The Ethics of Collective Vengeance" takes a closer look at the fall-out of this Government sanctioned bigotry. The segregation of Muslim communities in villages of Gujarat post 2002, as well as their unofficial economic boycott is juxtaposed with the uninterested Government machinery which

failed to do the absolute minimum to maintain refugee camps, or ensure communal reconciliation or social integration.

Divided into 12 chapters, the book takes care to focus on various interrelated issues like increased public lynching of minorities, cow vigilantism, love-jihad politics, religious conversions, and profiling of young Muslim men as terrorists. He also dedicates an entire chapter to the 'betrayal' of 'secular' political parties which led to the rise of such a tendency. The culpability of the Left parties, Congress, Samajwadi Party et al

in deepening religious divide for their own short-term political gains is discussed and thoroughly criticised in the text. He proposes that these circumstances have reduced minority groups to second class citizenship within their own country. He terms this perpetual feeling insecurity and their manufactured outsider-status as a "bloodless phase of genocide". "They make a desolation and call it peace", Agha Shahid Ali had written in *A Country Without a Post Office*, a slight rephrasing of Tacitus' "solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellat". In *Partitions of the*



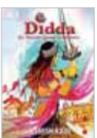
Heart we are made to confront a jarring reality where this desolation of Kashmir has come to haunt the minorities of the rest of the country too. It lifts the curtain on the ugly side of aggressive, masculinist Hindutva fascism that has taken large parts of the country in its grip. Mander's book is part journalistic, part academic and meticulously researched in keeping with the requirements of both these fields. The author tries to include as many examples of news-reports, eye witness accounts, and documentary evidences as part of his argument

in true journalistic style. His academic rigour ensures that these individual events and issues don't sit in vacuum but are linked to larger social patterns of social and political complacency.

One of the primary weaknesses of the book, in my opinion, is Mander's 'all was well' syndrome. Time and again, he describes each post-riot affected area as an erstwhile model of communal harmony. India of pre-2002 years might have had problems, but in Mander's worldview it was a tolerant, harmonious country where people

NEW ARRIVALS

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Ashish Kaul
Rupa, ₹295



A girl abandoned by her parents. A disabled princess who fights all odds to become the most feared warrior queen. A woman almost forced into Sati by her trusted prime Minister. A mother whose son brands her as a witch. This is the story of Rani Didda, the forgotten Hindu queen of undivided Kashmir. History is often unkind and cruel to women, especially women who wield power. Trampled by Wars and religious crusades, lies hidden the story of a glorious woman.

THE SECRETS TO RAISING A SMARTER CHILD
Inderbir Sandhu
Rupa, ₹350

Do you have a small child? Or are you planning to have the full potential of the child? Do you think you have an Einstein, Mozart, Ramanujan, Hawking or Marilyn vos Savant in the making? Do you want to understand your child better to make him or her smarter and happier? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this book is definitely for you! It will give you with the tools to make the best of your child's natural abilities.

EMPTY PLANET
Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, ₹599

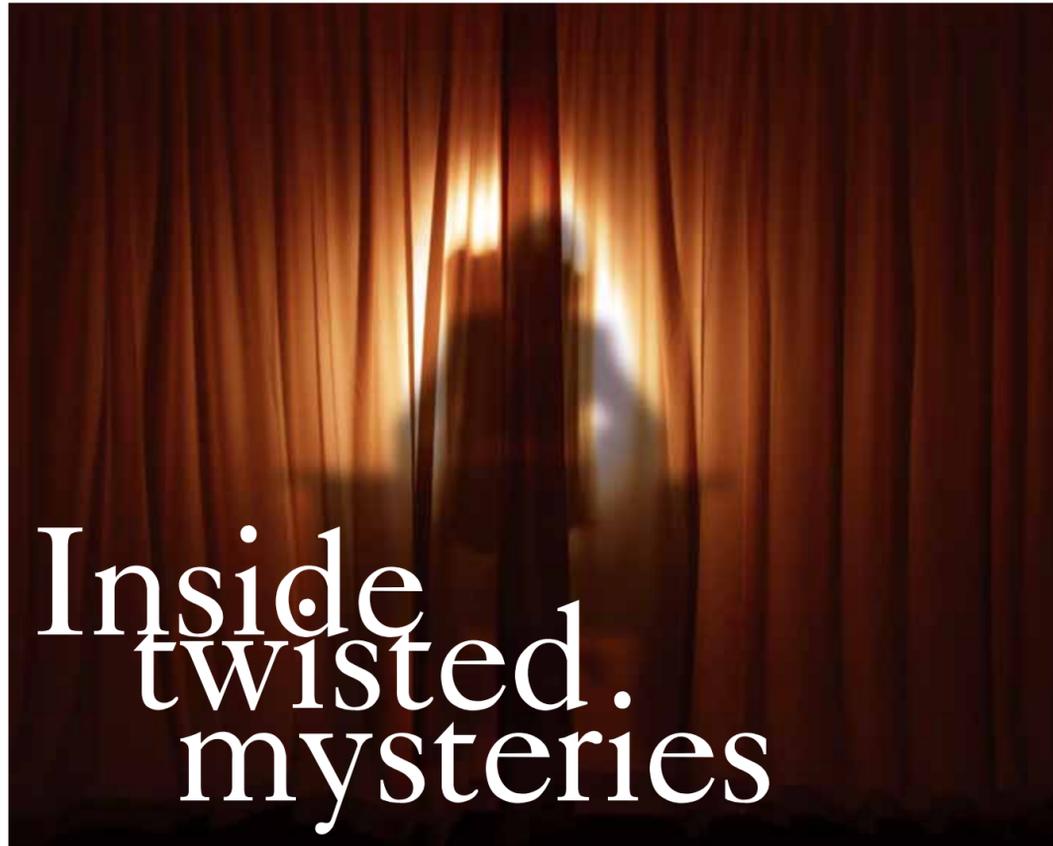


For half a century, statisticians, pundits and politicians have warned that a burgeoning planetary population will soon overwhelm the earth's resources. But a growing number of experts are sounding a different kind of alarm. Rather than growing exponentially, they argue, the global population is headed for a steep decline. Throughout history, depopulation was the product of catastrophe: Ice ages, plagues, the collapse of civilisations. This time, however, we're thinning ourselves deliberately, by choosing to have fewer babies than we need to replace ourselves.

Murder in the Monastery is a traditional, gripping whodunit, which makes for a breezy read that is perfect for a long journey, says KALYANEE RAJAN

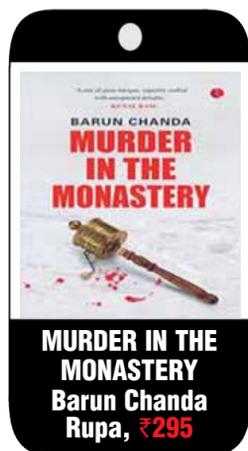
A sleepy hill station, a quiet, faraway monastery surrounded by mountains and nestled in breath-taking scenic beauty, a decent-looking couple trying to reawaken their passion away from the bustle of a hectic city, surrounded by several people with intriguing lives and obscure motives, and a sensitive document with an acute incendiary potential — if knit together seamlessly, these would make a perfect recipe for a Bollywood pot-boiler. An urbane, new-age reader is denied precisely that feeling of fulfilment or a fitting denouement in this extremely good looking novel that aspires in vain to be a pacy adult thriller. The second book by actor Barun Chanda who dons the hats of an advertising guru, acting and writing by turns, *Murder in the Monastery* offers a well-executed narrative.

Placing Kolkata old hound Avinash Roy at the centre of story, Chanda seems to have drawn upon one inspiration too many: A detective who wants some moments of peace and solitude à la a Sherlock Holmes, who is surrounded by a motley group of tourists with hidden past put together by circumstances like Agatha Christie's ten little soldiers, a document pertaining to the mysteries of Jesus Christ's life which is dished out in a man-



Inside twisted mysteries

ner not entirely unlike Dan Brown, to name a few. Roy holidays with his beautiful but oft-neglected wife Sharmila, romping in the wilderness and recovering his lost libido, puts up at the out-of-the-way Dengziang Monastery and is rudely interrupted when he is about to make out with his wife once more, summoned by the head Lama, Lama Phunsok to help recover the missing Issah document. What follows is the sulking wife, neglected once more as duty beckons, packed off to home through her angry outbursts in chaste Bangla: "Let it ruin him...Taetetomarki?", "Dhurrrhah! You are impossible" to never reappear in the plot, having spiced up the story in the beginning with



some legitimate lovemaking sequences to justify the adult tag. The ace detective Roy of course stays back in the Sikkim monastery to clean up the matter. In a poor imitation of James Bond-esque manner, Roy proceeds to make friends with the "rather attractive" Coorgi girl staying at the monastery, Miriam de Gonzales, who seems to know everything that Roy thought to be a private conversation between him and the head Lama. Miriam's disturbing know-it-all chatter and obviously flirtatious attentions put Roy on alert, and together they narrowly escape being crushed to death by a stray boulder rolling down the hill. The episode reminds one of

Sherlock missing a similar attempt on his life after Moriarty's death, retold in the first story of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes". The reader is given samples of Roy's clinical observation skills throughout, as he goes about making deductions about random happenings and individuals. What plunges Roy finally into action in proper, however, are the twin murders of Miriam and Tenzing, her secret lover, within the monastery. Aided by his colleague and Assistant Pradyot, Roy and Inspector Thapa launch on a wild goose chase for the mysterious nun who slept with Miriam on her last night.

That our hero is an ageing detective, at times utterly unimaginative and clumsy,

becomes difficult to get to grips with, especially in the light of Pradyot's swashbuckling, more hands-on approach towards his work. He is not only adept at physically impressing himself upon the people he seeks to question, reminding one of CID's theatrical and burly officer Daya, but also displays a keener sense of observation as compared to his boss. Roy's rounding up and sizing up of the suspects is also Poirot-like: He analyses the characters and motives of all the significant characters, yoked together by fluke or by design, talking in first person, "Let us take William 'Billy' Ford first..." The character of the French documentary film maker Pierre Duval is somewhat lazily sketched, with lingering loose ends. Thrown into this jumble carelessly are Billy's nymphomaniac wife who pursues him literally across the seven seas; the mousy, secretive but ultimately harmless couple; a Lama seeking revenge having been a victim of sexual abuse as a child, a Christian organisation which operates in dubious ways, and the tale of Miriam's failed suicide attempt. The sparsely injected humour feels deliberate and lame by turns, failing to lighten up the tenor of the narrative. The character of Inspector Thapa however, offers some respite by his sheer ingenuity and typical police hound doggedness. The last quarter of the novel is the weakest link, with rough jumps and farfetched solutions cooked up rather like instant noodles, sadly, sans the magic masala. The logical what's and wherefore's are made frustratingly redundant as the reader is pushed into a hastily put together chase for unravelling mistaken identities, hazy motives, and the mystery of the missing document tests all the 'incredible' powers of deduction of the ace detective Avinash Roy. *Murder in the Monastery* should be read on a long journey, putting a traditional, gripping whodunit aside, befitting only a straight, breezy read.



In this file photo released on April 25, 2015, by a militant website, which has been verified and is consistent with other AP reporting, young boys known as the "caliphate cubs" hold their rifles as they parade after graduating from a religious school, in Tal Afar, near Mosul city, north Iraq

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Endgame in Syria

Syria resonates in the regional and global fulcrum as another conflict centre and a twilight zone. The fact has been that terrorism is the spectacular attention gathering device of a resource and fund challenged non-state actor.

In West Asia regionally and in the Syrian quagmire particularly, the issue of insurgency and the spectacularity of the ministrations of the Kurdish forces aligned with United States against the ISIS are present, which are somewhere pitted against the Bashar-Al-Assad regime of Damascus.

Once upon a time Syria used to be a progressive and modernist population centre, but, with the internecine entry of Iran into Lebanon through Syria and Hezbollah, the regional scenario has become tricky going beyond the pale of the quintessential BOP (balance of power) system in the larger international system and the West Asian region. Now, the Syrian nation has turned into a region, facing one of the worst humanitarian disasters whose sinews now reach out to Europe as part of a larger migration across the European mountains and icy lands.

The US, too, gets embroiled in this regional fracas. The December 2018 decision of President Trump to withdraw the last contingent of 2,000 soldiers has been a part of his larger "sequestration and isolationist streak" in the context of the US foreign policy. The US we perceive today is much different from the times of President Bush where-in the superpower nowadays intends to withdraw from global responsibilities, including that of conflict resolution and related reconstruction efforts in destroyed principalities.

The power vacuum left by the American withdrawal from a post-Saddam Iraq led to the spawning of a Phoenix like Islamic State (ISIS). In a way, if the Bashar-Al-Assad regime does not survive, which appears highly unlikely then a strong and capacities-laden nation-state actor such as the US will be required to set the unstable stables in order in Syria.

The American interventionist streak has been on view in places which have faced humanitarian catastrophes. Syria is one such instance, wherein, the NATO ally, Turkey too has reservations about the Washington's policy of taking the help of the Syrian Kurd groups and the attendant militia, in order to counter the ISIS, as the flock of

YPG and others are categorically Turkey's insurgents and law breakers. Still, akin to other places and in the context of American homeland security, the White House has to adequately pre-empt the incurable and destabilising insurgents in the Syrian context and the larger West Asian region. This leads us on to the American R2P as the Americans need to stay much longer in Syria to oversee the establishment of peace and stability in the conflict ravaged nation. According to the 2012 Global Leadership Report, 29 per cent of the Syrians approve of the American leadership, with 41 per cent disapproving and 31 per cent people expressing indecision about the American leadership in Syria.

The scenario of diplomatic exchanges was never so bad between the doughty Damascus and Washington as in the first Persian Gulf War of 1990-91, President Bush Sr was part of the American-led coalition to counteract the dictatorial act of Saddam Hussein, and later in the decade of the nineties, the Americans successes in bringing Hafiz Al Assad of Syria to mediate with the state of Israel with the larger objective of peace in West Asia. By the time in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, Syria participated in the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT) in order to support the American striving in West Asia.

In fact, the Syrians were the first state to intimate the Americans about a terror attack on the US Fifth fleet in line with the USS Cole bombing in 1998. Despite, the Syrian-American cooperation in the context of the GWOT, Syria has always remained on the American list of terror sponsoring safe havens, since the US enumeration of the same in 1979. The US is of the opinion that the Damascus regime supports State Terror and separatist actors in Israel and the Palestinian territories, which place the West Asian peace and stodgy stolidity at a grave risk.

As an adjunct, the US Embassy was attacked in 2006 for which the Syrian Government placed the blame on the American policy in Iraq. These little flies in the ointment tended to sour the relations between the twin nations which were partially at different footings, since the last 30-40 odd years. So no supine surprises here over the growing of thaws between Damascus and Washington!

The Americans clearly parted

ways when President Obama sponsored the UNSC resolution laying the blame for all violence on Bashar-Al-Assad and demanded that he steps down from the perilous pedestal of power. The American Ambassador, Robert Stephen Ford, was too withdrawn from Syria under duress at threats to his personal safety and well-being paving the way for the branding of state of Syria as a recalcitrant nation state. Still, in the Trump Administration, the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, opined that the longer term pedestal of Bashar-Al-Assad would be decided by the local Syrian populace and on several occasions the US President has supported idea of "safe zones" in Syria which Syria finds unacceptable and beyond the pallor of realism.

Also, in the aftermath of the Douma chemical attacks, the Trump regime with Paris initiated missile attacks on the Syrian denomination, thus, paving the way for a confrontation between the US and its allies on side of the fencing ring and Iran and Russia being on the antagonist side of the fighting ring.

Very accurate Tom Hawk missiles have been deftly utilised from USS Philippine Sea and USS Ariegh Burke at the ISIS targets in Raqqa. Thus, Syria is akin to a rogue nation state tumbling on with Iraq and others, in the contemporary US understanding of the conflict, thus, ushering in a twilight zone scenario. As a result in 2014, the nations of the order of Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates along with the American F-22 Raptor Stealth Fighters were unleashed on the Syrian air space.

Harking back to American history, the American intervention in Cuban war and the incidents in Philippines have served as initiator elements in the rise of American power according to Howard K Beale in 1956 work titled as, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Rise of America to World Power."

President Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century had gone on to contend that the United States ought to have warships equal in number to the aspirations and the popular will of the great American people. The niceties of riding a horse, dining with the elites and deliberating on world politics and literature happen to be the enumerated characteristics of a true blue American gentleman, paving the way for the larger over-

ISIS challenge is not over. US President Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the century had gone on to contend that the United States ought to have warships equal in number to the aspirations and the popular will of the great American people



MANAN DWIVEDI

arch of the American nation.

Thus, America has always been on a kind of Oregon trail which includes incursions of the military genre inside states hobbled with humanitarian disasters as a consequence of political violence, terrorism and attendant mayhem. Regulating the international system has somehow been a lynchpin of the US foreign policy to rescue the challenged and turmoiled nations their populations.

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Can ISIS' caliphate resurrect?

The announcement of victory over the Islamic State (ISIS) group in Syria marks the end of the extremists' self-styled caliphate, a proto-state in which they held millions hostage to their dark and brutal vision. But ISIS, which traces its roots back to the bloody emergence of al-Qaida in Iraq after the 2003 US-led invasion, has survived past defeats and is already waging a low-level insurgency in areas it was driven from months or even years ago.

The grueling four-and-a-half-year campaign to drive ISIS from the territories it once held has left entire towns and neighborhoods in ruins, in both war-torn Syria and Iraq. If the long-standing grievances of Sunni Muslims in both countries continue to fester, the extremists could rise again.

What has ended exactly?

What is over is the ISIS' physical "caliphate," after the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led group supported by the United States, declared on March 23 the capture of the last tiny patch of territory controlled by the militants, in the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz.

That domain once stretched over large parts of Syria and Iraq, which the group conquered in a blitz in the summer of 2014, capturing towns and cities, including Mosul, Iraq's second-largest.

The fighters bulldozed berms along the border and proclaimed a contiguous caliphate stretching across a third of both countries. At its height, the territory was the size of Britain, stretching from near the northern Syrian town of Aleppo to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and home to 8 million people.

The extremists governed under a harsh and violent interpretation of Islam. They massacred those who resisted their rule and beheaded hostages, including Western journalists and foreign aid workers, in gruesome videos circulated online. Alleged adulterers were stoned to death, those believed to be gay were thrown from the tops of buildings, and children were made to watch the atrocities as part of their brainwashing. The group captured thousands of women from Iraq's Yazidi minority, forcing them into sexual slavery.

ISIS also carried out the more mundane actions of a state — collecting taxes, printing school textbooks, minting its own currency and restoring public infrastructure. It was an experiment in statehood that not even al-Qaida ever tried on a significant scale.

From its de facto capital of Raqqa, in northern Syria, its leaders plotted spectacular attacks abroad, including the 2015 Paris attacks that killed 130 people. As ISIS began to hemorrhage

territory, it began opportunistically claiming attacks without any evidence of its involvement.

The self-proclaimed caliphate attracted tens of thousands of people from around the world, lured by the group's online activism and slickly produced propaganda videos. Young, troubled men were eager to wage war against those branded enemies of Islam, while others were drawn to the promise of life in an Islamic state governed by God's law.

That physical "caliphate" was declared dead, for now.

What is the cost of liberation?

The grueling four-year air and ground campaign against ISIS has killed or wounded tens of thousands of people, driven hundreds of thousands from their homes and left a swath of destruction stretching from the suburbs of Damascus to central Iraq.

The major cities ISIS once held — Mosul, Raqqa, Fallujah and Ramadi — have all seen major devastation.

The group put up fierce resistance nearly everywhere, using civilians as human shields and launching waves of car bomb and suicide attacks. As it slowly retreated, it left behind booby traps and explosives that in many areas have yet to be cleared.

The US-led coalition dropped tens of thousands of bombs over Syria and Iraq to help its allies on the ground advance, sometimes pulverizing entire city blocks. Syrian Government forces backed by Russian air power battled ISIS in some areas, as did Iraq's state-sanctioned militias, with help from Iran.

The death toll from the campaign remains uncounted. In a report released last year, the coalition confirmed the deaths of 1,139 civilians in airstrikes conducted between August 2014 and November 2018. Rights groups say the number is much higher.

An Associated Press investigation found at least 9,000 civilians died in the assault to retake Mosul alone. In Raqqa, the US-backed campaign killed hundreds of civilians and caused destruction on a massive scale. Syria is still mired in civil war, and Iraq estimates it will need \$100 billion to rebuild. Local leaders in Mosul say they need that much for their city alone. No one has offered to foot the bill, and hard-hit areas remain empty, even years later.

What's next

The official declaration of victory is of mostly symbolic value. Thousands of ISIS militants have dispersed and gone to ground, and US defense officials have warned that IS could stage a comeback in Syria within a year if military and counterterrorism pressure is eased.

"They've cut the trunk of this

malignant tree, but they haven't pulled up its roots, which are still capable of growing and spreading," Hisham al-Hashemi, a researcher in extremism and expert on ISIS, wrote in a Twitter post.

Activists who closely follow the conflict in Syria already point to signs of a growing insurgency and sleeper cells carrying out assassinations, setting up flying checkpoints and claiming roadside bombs in liberated areas across Syria and Iraq.

That insurgency could gain strength as President Donald Trump presses ahead with his planned US withdrawal from Syria. The American commander overseeing the fight against ISIS, General Joseph Votel, has warned that the group is far from being defeated, saying its leaders have dispersed and gone underground.

"What we are seeing now is not the surrender of ISIS as an organisation but a calculated decision to preserve the safety of their families and preservation of their capabilities," he said earlier this month, adding that the insurgents are "waiting for the right time to resurge."

The withdrawal of American forces from eastern Syria would open the door for major turmoil as various actors — including the Syrian government, allied with Russia and Iran — race to fill the vacuum.

ISIS was all but defeated once before, when US forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011; experts warn it could stage another devastating comeback.

And ISIS has established affiliates across Asia and Africa, and continues to be active in places like Afghanistan, Libya, Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Yemen and the Philippines.

Future of detained fighters and their families

Another major concern is jihadis finding their way back to Europe. Around 1,000 foreign fighters are currently being held in Kurdish-run prisons in northern Syria. Their wives — many of them from Western countries — and their children are in camps in northern Syria.

Syrian Kurdish authorities are calling on countries to take back their nationals, saying they cannot afford to keep shouldering the burden. Trump has weighed in, calling on Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to repatriate their nationals and put them on trial.

"The US does not want to watch as these ISIS fighters permeate Europe, which is where they are expected to go," he tweeted in February.

But few countries are willing to bring back people they view as a security threat, posing a dilemma for the Kurdish-led forces as the US prepares to withdraw.

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SOCIAL MEDIA IS REDUCING SOCIAL BARRIERS. IT CONNECTS PEOPLE ON THE STRENGTH OF HUMAN VALUES, NOT IDENTITIES — NARENDRA MODI

Analysing elections in India

Jaishri Jethwaney and Dr Samir Kapur's book looks at the theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between democracy, mass media, and election campaigning in India. An excerpt:

I understand democracy as something that gives the weak the same chance as the strong," said Mahatma Gandhi. "Vox populi vox dei," an oft-quoted axiom in democracies, was coined by the Greeks and conveyed that the voice of the people was indeed the voice of God. Democracy is the manifestation of people's will to be governed by those they elect. It is a different matter that the very same people as voters may not necessarily be happy with the elected representatives they choose to govern them. Democracy, also, is not necessarily the voice of the majority. Many people do not vote, and those who do may not see their candidates win.

Society has a history spanning millions of years, and the media, especially the mass media, is a little over a century old. Yet it is ironic that the media, over the years, has accumulated immense power to influence society in more ways than one. The media's power comes from its capacity to influence public opinion. Media critics believe that it is not a knowledge-based profession, but depends on events and happenings interpreted from both the supply side of information — through press releases, backgrounders, press conferences, events, etc — and the demand side of information, from the perspective of reporters who interpret events and information according to their understanding and mental capability. The media, therefore, can be seen as a social institution, which is not and cannot be very different from the nature of the society it exists in.

The relationship between the media and society is symbiotic. In fact, any debate on the mass media and society oscillates between two extremes, depending on who is saying it. Some swear by the media's unbridled power, while others feel that the media does not affect lives at all. Whatever may be the cliché in these views, there is no gainsaying the fact that the media has become part of the everyday life of an average person, who makes sense of the world around him/her through media stimuli.

In this chapter, an effort has been made to provide a theoretical construct to the interrelation of democracy, the media and its impact on elections. The last century or so has seen the development of many theories and models around the subject, which have also been tested in many elections in the West, especially in the United States (US). Over the years, elections in other democracies, especially in the developing world, have copied campaign styles and media usage from their Western counterparts, again the US in particu-



lar. Critics have often called this the 'Americanisation' of elections. There may not have been many scholarly research studies on the Indian elections with a theoretical construct in the past, but the current crop of scholars — from not only India but also the West — has evinced great interest in the Indian elections, and one does find references in contemporary literature on the subject. The later chapters have cited a number of such studies. British communication theorist Denis McQuail ascribes four important attributes to the mass media that lend it significance.

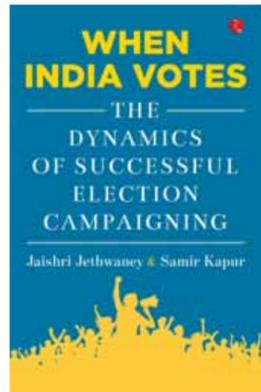
A power source: The media is the primary means of transmission and source of information in society. The media is in the area of public affairs: Government organisations and the corporate sector, because of various regulations, are often in the media glare.

A definition of social reality: The media is a forum where the changing

culture and values of society and groups are 'constructed, stored and visibly expressed'.

A primary key to fame and celebrity status: First, it was people from the entertainment industry, then sportspersons, and now even corporate honchos, who have acquired celebrity status in the media. The power of the media, however, is not intrinsic but acquired. This power comes from the people, as consumers and audiences of news and various other programmes. The political institutions that are accountable to the people in a democracy through periodic elections obviously face the worst of a vocal and negative media, and that is what lends power to the media.

Harwood L Childs, author of *An Introduction to Public Opinion*, in his thesis on the subject, strongly advocates the preserving of public opinion, because many forces in his view seem



to be at work, curtailing and undermining its role. These, according to Childs, include the tremendous growth in executive power, the growing complexity and speed of social change, the emergence of pressure groups and higher stakes among political parties, the mass media and other channels.

Representative bodies are becoming less representative, and elections, though they indicate the preferred candidates, often give only a slight indication of public attitude. A section of analysts feels that the decision of the voters is more often shaped by the mass media stimuli around election time. Excessive visibility of certain candidates in comparison to others, cunning campaigns by parties and the 'public face' as presented have the capability to swing public opinion in favour of or against a candidate, which may have nothing to do with the 'real' choice of the electorate, as it should have been. To what

extent an average person depends on media messages or to what extent the media shapes our minds, attitudes and opinions is, however, a moot point.

MEDIA AND POLITICS

There have been numerous debates leading to concern and anxiety about the increasing role and influence of the media, which, it is alleged, has changed the very fabric of politics. A fascinating, and at times intriguing, interplay of the mass media and politics has been the subject matter of much empirical research.

Politics as an institution has a long history. Many things have influenced politics over the years. Similarly, the media has undergone changes and entered various phases. Political institutions have taken centuries to be what they are today. The media as an institution has progressed in a much shorter period, as said earlier. Thanks to the ingenuity of the human mind, coupled with science and technology, the media has acquired such a formidable position and influence from being a watchdog that it questions institutions and practices that are as old as the human civilisation itself. While the news media has historically been viewed as aggressive and overenthusiastic for the latest and hottest information, its watchdog function in a democratic society posits that people know what their Governments and public-funded institutions are doing. The media has the power to hold the Government and public-funded institutions accountable, forcing them to explain actions and decisions, all of which affect the people they represent.

The assumption is that the press speaks for the people, thus the freedom of speech and freedom of the press Acts are widely prevalent in some democracies. The need for freedom of the media is to ensure that it articulates the voice of the people and their concerns by bringing them in the public domain. The argument supports that the news media must question the Government, thereby contributing in making democracy function. Therefore, it is important to understand that the freedom of speech and expression is in the interest of the public, and such legislation does not only protect the functions of the press, but also lets it function without fear or favour. Today, in the era of globalisation, this role has undergone a sea change. It is often alleged that the media today has become a commodity. There is also growing criticism against the media for projecting unabashed violence.

Excerpted with permission from *When India Votes: The Dynamics of Successful Election Campaigning*, Jaishri Jethwaney and Samir Kapur, Rupa, ₹295

'Hate to see Brexit being ripped apart'

While discussing Brexit in the Oval Office recently, US President Donald Trump said he was 'very sad' about the state of trade negotiations with the UK, writes NICK ALLEN

Donald Trump said he "hates" seeing Brexit being "ripped apart," indicated he believes there should be no second referendum, and said that Theresa May "didn't listen" to his advice. Trump's intervention came as he also promised that a "large scale" trade deal with "unlimited potential" was waiting to be done between the UK and US after Brexit.

Speaking in the Oval Office, while meeting Leo Varadkar, the Irish Taoiseach, the US president said he had been watching the "very sad" developments in the UK, and his approach to negotiations would have worked better. He said: "I will tell you, I'm surprised at how badly it's all gone from the standpoint of a negotiation. But I gave the prime minister my ideas on how to negotiate it, and I think you would have been successful. She didn't listen to that, and that's fine."

"I mean, she's gotta do what she's gotta do, but I think it could have been negotiated in a different manner, frankly. I hate to see it, everything being ripped apart right now." Trump has previously said his advice on how to secure Brexit may have been "too brutal" for May.

Addressing the question of a second referendum the president indicated it should not happen because it was "very unfair". He said: "I don't think another vote would be possible because it would be very unfair to the people that won, that say 'What do

you mean you're going to take another vote?'. So that'd be tough."

"I thought it [the 2016 referendum result] would happen, it did happen, but both sides are very, very, you know, they're cemented in. It's a tough situation. It's a shame. Frankly, it's a shame. There was no reason for that to happen. They could have had the vote and it should have gone smoothly. Unfortunately, it didn't. It's a very complicated issue, and actually the issue on the border of Ireland is one of the most complex points."

Trump said an extension seemed inevitable but he would like to see Brexit "work out". He said: "I think they're going to have to do something because right now they're in the midst of a short period of time, and they're not going to be able to do that. "I would like to see that whole situation with Brexit work out. You know, we're talking to them about trade, and we can do a very big trade deal with the UK. But it's very sad to see what's happening there, and there was no reason."

Trump recalled how he had predicted the 2016 referendum result. He said: "It wasn't that I was a supporter. I predicted that it was going to happen. I was right and people laughed when I predicted it. "I can tell you it's a

"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT WHOLE SITUATION WITH BREXIT WORK OUT. YOU KNOW, WE'RE TALKING TO THEM ABOUT TRADE, AND WE CAN DO A VERY BIG TRADE DEAL WITH THE UK. BUT IT'S VERY SAD TO SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE, AND THERE WAS NO REASON"
— DONALD TRUMP



very complex thing that's going on right now. It's tearing a lot of countries apart. And it's a shame it has to be that way." He added: "We're also renegotiating our trade deal with the European groups. We're talking to the EU about trade, they're willing to talk to us. "And if they don't talk to us we're going to do something that's going to be pretty severe economically, tariff a lot of their products coming in, because the EU treats us very, very unfairly. It'll probably work out. Otherwise, we're going to do something that's good for the United States."

Varadkar told Trump: "I think it'll be a few years until the UK sorts itself out, but in the meantime the EU is available to talk trade with the US..." The president said he would be going to Ireland this year. He said: "I'll be coming at some point during the year. It's just a great place." He tweeted, "My Administration looks forward to negotiating a large scale Trade Deal with the UK. The potential is unlimited!"

Earlier, Trump had warned that Britain "may not be able to trade with the US" because of Theresa May's Brexit deal in comments that could torpedo her hopes of winning Parliament's backing. He said the agreement

May reached with Brussels "sounds like a great deal for the EU" as he urged the Prime Minister to think again. The President's intervention seemed to fly in the face of May's claims that Britain would be able to strike free trade deals around the world after Brexit despite her concessions to the EU.

Also, Trump and Nigel Farage discussed the merits of a no deal Brexit during a face-to-face meeting earlier this month. The US president was urged to support walking away from the table if a bad agreement is on offer — just like he had done during North Korea talks in Vietnam. The conversation took place at the Conservative Political Action Conference [Cpac] in Washington DC, a gathering of right-leaning politicians where both men gave speeches. Moreover, the US President's former chief strategist had said that Margaret Thatcher is the inspiration for Donald Trump's policies in the White House. Steve Bannon also said now is the "the moment" for Boris Johnson, who quit as Foreign secretary over Theresa May's proposed Brexit deal, to challenge the Prime Minister to lead the country. Bannon, who ran Trump's successful campaign to become President in 2016, said that "Trump's policies were based on 'pure Thatcherism'". Bannon had also said: "What we are trying to do is get a piece of action for the little guy."



A FOOTBALL-MAD COUPLE IN FRANCE HAS BEEN BARRED FROM NAMING THEIR SON 'GRIEZMANN MBAPPE' AFTER TWO SOCCER STARS

WHY ISN'T DISABILITY MORE VISIBLE IN FASHION?



Only a handful of designers, such as late Alexander McQueen, recognised fashion's huge potential to challenge our perception of disability, writes LOTTIE JACKSON

My earliest recollection of my personal style was far from complimentary; instead, it started with retorts of "Well, you're going to look very silly!" And indeed I did: Utterly silly. But still I threw aside the pristine twin-set neatly laid out for my sister's party in favour of a garish pyjama top, Dalmatian-print leggings, stuck-on earrings and a conservative flourish of patent Mary Janes, an outfit I thought was the height of sophistication. The whole ensemble was set off by a pink beaded purse puckered with jelly tots, an ill-tempered Tamagotchi and other five-year-old-child essentials. Let's just say it was hard to distinguish me from the clown booked for post-lunch entertainment.

In this moment, fashion became about more than clothes for me. It was an act of defiance, self-assertion and a declaration of who I was — which certainly wasn't going to be imposed by anyone but myself. In the years following, this sense that style is intimately connected to our identity has strengthened. Although I've had a muscle weakness disability since birth, in recent years, additional illness, such as severe pneumonia, has significantly impacted my mobility, stamina and the physical strength of my voice. As a fashion journalist with a disability, I recognise how style can empower people to express themselves regardless of ability, race, age, gender or size.

In recent years, the concept of "diversity" has come into focus in the fashion industry, catapulted from the abyss to assume centrestage in fashion campaigns, glossy magazine covers and post-catwalk commentary. In fact, we've just witnessed a record year in terms of inclusion in fashion. Diversity has become not only a buzzword but also a measure of a brand's relevance in an intensely competitive digital marketplace. The fashion we

see today is an optimistic celebration of a spectrum of identities.

This may be true with regard to the models we're seeing in front of the camera. Take for instance Halima Aden, Charli Howard, or Adut Akech, who are all redefining traditional supermodel stereotypes. But these faces are the harbingers of change that conceal the endemic lack of representation in the wider fashion industry. Diversity doesn't begin and end with who we see in front of the camera, we need more minority voices leading from behind the lens. Recent accusations of racism facing establishment brands — such as Prada, Gucci, and Burberry, which were recently called out for their racially offensive imagery — are a testament to this fact. The solution is simple, and urgent: We must address this disconnect between the diversity of the models on the catwalk and those packed into the front row — the editors, buyers, and ultimately, the voices of power.

However, one minority group is severely under-represented. Although 20 per cent of people have disabilities, this demographic is largely non-existent in the fashion sphere, with only a handful of designers, such as Teatum Jones and the late Alexander McQueen, recognising fashion's potential to challenge our perception of disability. McQueen's legacy is defined by his ability to subvert prescriptive ideas of beauty; his spring/summer 1999 show featuring the Paralympian Aimee Mullins in a pair of handcrafted prosthetic legs is a defining example of how McQueen's work deconstructed social taboos regarding disabled bodies. Historical prejudices have made disability synonymous with victimhood or failure, and consequently it is often hidden from public view.

Actress Selma Blair's first appearance on the red carpet following her multiple sclerosis diagnosis last year saw her pose defiantly with a mono-

MCQUEEN'S LEGACY IS DEFINED BY HIS ABILITY TO SUBVERT PRESCRIPTIVE IDEAS OF BEAUTY; HIS SPRING/SUMMER 1999 SHOW FEATURING THE PARALYMPIAN AIMEE MULLINS IN A PAIR OF HANDCRAFTED PROSTHETIC LEGS IS A DEFINING EXAMPLE OF HOW MCQUEEN'S WORK DECONSTRUCTED SOCIAL TABOOS REGARDING DISABLED BODIES

grammed walking cane. As a former muse for luxury brands like Stella McCartney and Chanel, this image was a powerful symbol of how fashion enables disability to transcend the stigma that surrounds it. Her presence was also a glaring reminder that people with disabilities are often unseen on platforms like the red carpet, the epitome of spectacle and visibility. So although it represented a victory for disability representation, primarily it was an intimation of how far there is to go before it's accepted as the norm. In a later interview with *Vanity Fair*, Blair laments the lack of stylish clothing available to disabled individuals. She wants designers to focus on improving adaptive fashion, which is designed to meet the needs of those with disabilities and chronic conditions: "It can still be chic. You shouldn't have to sacrifice style."

At last designers are beginning to acknowledge the disabled consumer

market, which represents £249 billion of untapped spending power.

Recently, the Cornish-lifestyle brand Seasalt (as worn by the Duchess of Sussex) launched its first adaptive clothing line, Easy On. The collection, only available online, includes discreet additions to existing signature styles such as magnetic fastenings on their popular Beachcombing Coat, loops on sleeve cuffs to make pulling them on and off hassle-free, and soft elasticated waistbands which are pinch-free when seated. "We wanted to help women who can find dressing difficult," explains Seasalt's design director Sue Simpson. The collection was inspired by customer focus groups, so it's designed to "fit into their lives and make [them] feel confident".

However, when I point out their designs are exclusively shown on able-bodied models, they state the photography is "a blank canvas" but would take in my feedback. But this exposes the long-standing myth that disability isn't marketable. More than ever, consumers want to align themselves with brands that have a positive, inclusive ethos.

Seasalt follows in the footsteps of other forward-thinking brands, such as Marks & Spencer and Tommy Hilfinger, which have already released adaptive clothing lines. Their designs featured everything from adjustable hem-lengths to accommodate prosthetic limbs and soft Velcro fastenings, to sleep-suits specifically tailored for babies with hip dysplasia. With a new report revealing the adaptive clothing market could reach \$288.7 billion globally this year, they are right to be expanding their offerings.

The fashion industry's fascination with diversity not only fulfils an ethical responsibility, but it's incredibly lucrative. While I've always believed fashion can foster an inclusive spirit, finally the industry is poised to reflect this.

The Daily Telegraph

CULTURE LANE

James Bond to drive an electric car

Long-haul flights, tons of guns and a bagpipe flamethrower: Such are the special demands of his career that James Bond has never been considered a poster boy for an eco-friendly lifestyle. But next year's 25th Bond film looks set to have Ian Fleming's hero make his first concession to climate change, by driving an electric Aston Martin — albeit one which retails at £250,000. According to reports, the film — whose working title of *Shatterhand* was recently debunked — will see Daniel Craig's 007 behind the wheel of an Aston Martin Rapide E, one of only 155 electric cars being built by the British manufacturer.

The *Sun* reports that director Cary Joji Fukunaga has spearheaded the change, with their source describing him as "a total tree-hugger". "This is something Cary pushed for and Daniel and the producers are going along with. Everybody is afraid of Bond getting labelled 'too PC' but they all felt the time was right to put him in a zero-emission vehicle."

Aston Martin's relationship with



the spy franchise began in 1964, when Sean Connery drove a DB5 sports car in *Goldfinger*. Shooting on the new film is expected to start in April, after a series of delays involving the replacement of Danny Boyle as director following reported "creative differences" between him and producers Barbara Broccoli and Michael G Wilson.

Many suggested Boyle and his co-writer John Hodge were eager to bring Bond up to date with a plot including nods to the #MeToo movement — and, potentially, 007's own death.

MJ fan groups to sue his accusers

Three Michael Jackson fan groups are suing his alleged victims in France for "sully[ing] his memory" by taking part in the *Leaving Neverland* documentary, the fans' lawyer told Agence France-Presse. The Michael Jackson Community — which claims to be the "official fan club forum" — and the MJ Street and On The Line groups accuse Wade Robson and James Safechuck of "lynching" Jackson. The case, which will be heard by a court in Orleans in northern France in July, follows reports that Jackson's children were also considering taking legal action against the men, who say that Jackson sexually abused them when they were children.

Lawyer Emmanuel Ludot, who has previously successfully sued Jackson's doctor for causing distress to his fans by giving him the drugs that killed him, said the groups "want to discredit the accusations of paedophilia" against Jackson.

Ludot said the "indignity of the extremely grave accusations" made by



Robson and Safechuck in *Leaving Neverland* had sullied the memory of the singer, who died in 2009.

Jackson's image had been affected by the allegations as well as "the whole community of his fans", the lawyer said. *Leaving Neverland* was first broadcast in the US on HBO earlier this month and has since broken streaming records in Britain.

The film has outraged some of Jackson's fans, who have waged an often vicious social media campaign against his accusers.

Real disaster scene out of Bird Box



Four months after it first appeared on Netflix, footage of a real-life rail disaster will be removed from the movie *Bird Box*, the post-apocalyptic thriller starring Sandra Bullock. The stock footage used concerns a 2013 tragedy in the Québec town of Lac-Mégantic when an unattended train carrying crude oil rolled down an incline, came off the tracks and exploded, killing 47 people.

Earlier this year, the streaming giant said it would not remove the clip, which in *Bird Box* is used to illustrate mass deaths in the wake of an

invasion of spectral beasts who cause a person's worst fears to materialise, leading them to kill themselves.

But in a statement to *The Wrap* recently, Netflix confirmed that both it and the makers of *Bird Box* have decided to replace the clip. They also apologised, saying: "We're sorry for any pain caused to the Lac-Mégantic community." In response, Quebec's Minister of Culture and Communications, Nathalie Roy, praised the decision, saying it shows that "by uniting and pooling our efforts, everything is possible".

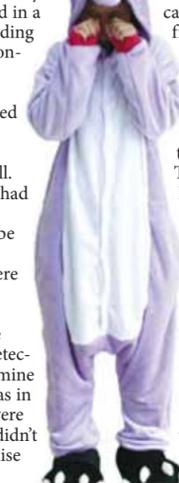
ODDLY ENOUGH

PERSON IN UNICORN COSTUME TRIES TO ROB A STORE

Apparently not all unicorns are the embodiment of purity and grace. Baltimore County Police say a person dressed in a unicorn costume and wielding a crowbar tried to rob a convenience store Saturday morning in the Baldwin community. Officers arrived just after the High's store opening time of 5 am to respond to the robbery call.

Police say the suspect had fled in a silver car. They located what appeared to be the same car after it had wrecked. No other cars were involved in the wreck.

Police say two people involved in the crash were taken to a hospital, and detectives are working to determine what their involvement was in the robbery. No charges were immediately filed. Police didn't say if money or merchandise was taken in the robbery.



(AP)

DRUNK PASSENGER DEMANDS HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SLOW DOWN

German police say a drunken man with a fire extinguisher smashed his way into the driver's cab of a high-speed train running from Frankfurt to Paris and demanded that the driver slow down. Federal police said the ICE train operated by Germany's Deutsche Bahn stopped near Frankfurt after the incident Sunday morning. The 30-year-old man from Heideberg, who wasn't identified, was arrested and faces an investigation into dangerous interference in rail traffic, among other things.

Police say passengers said the man took a fire extinguisher off the wall, smashed a glass door separating the cab from the passenger compartment, and told the shocked driver the train was going much too fast and he had to save the passengers. No passengers were hurt but the train was taken out of service.

(AP)

MAN FINDS IGUANA IN TOILET, CALLS 911

A Florida man called 911 after going to the bathroom and finding a bright green iguana swimming in his toilet. Fort Lauderdale Battalion Chief Stephan Gollan tells the Miami Herald the man "freaked out and didn't know what to do." He says firefighter Jeff Kurus put on a sterile glove, reached in and grabbed the iguana. He took it outside and released it into the wild. Gollan says the department "is the end-all-be-all" when it comes to unique calls. The department tweeted pictures of the iguana, adding "can you imagine lifting the toilet lid and finding this?"



(AP)

HIP HOP BEST BET FOR A CHEESE THAT WILL PLEASE: SWISS STUDY

Exposing cheese to round-the-clock music could give it more flavor and hip hop might be better than Mozart, Swiss researchers said on Thursday. Nine wheels of Emmentaler cheese weighing 10 kilos each were placed in separate wooden crates last September to test the impact of music on flavor and aroma. The cheese was exposed 24

hours a day to A Tribe Called Quest's hip hop track "We Got It From Here", Mozart's 'Magic Flute' opera or Led Zeppelin's rock classic "Stairway to Heaven". One wheel was played the throbbing techno of Vril's "UV" and another Yello's dark ambient piece "Monolith".

Soundwaves at low, medium and high frequencies were played for three others while one wheel was left in peace. "The most obvious differences were observed in strength of flavor, smell and taste," Bern University of Arts researchers said in reporting the findings of a culinary jury which did blind tasting. "The hip hop sample topped the list of all cheese exposed to music in terms of fruitiness... (it) was the strongest of these in terms of smell and taste."

Benjamin Luzuy, a Swiss TV chef and jury member, told Reuters TV: "The differences were very clear, in terms of texture, taste, the appearance, there was really something very different." The experiment, instead of using loudspeakers, used mini transmitters to conduct the energy of the music into the cheese. "All the energy is directly

resonating inside of the cheese," Michael Harenberg of Bern University of Arts told Reuters. Beat Wampfler, the cheesemaker behind the project, said the cheeses were tested twice by the jury and both times the results were more or less the same. He said the experiment would now focus on hip hop. "The idea is now to take 5 or 10 cheeses and put hip hop on them and then compare."

(Reuters)

NOW, 'ZOMBIE LIGHTS' FOR MOBILE-OBSESSED WALKERS

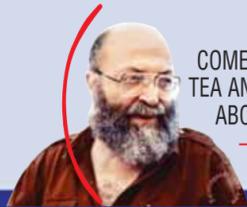
Tel Aviv has taken a small step toward protecting the lives of "smartphone zombies." The municipality has installed special LED sidewalk lights at a busy crosswalk to alert distracted pedestrians staring at their phones when they can walk and when they should stop. Tomer Dror, head of the traffic management division at the Tel Aviv-Yafo Municipality, said the "zombie traffic lights" aim to minimize accidents between vehicles and inattentive pedestrians at crosswalks. "We can-

not force them to take their eyes out of the smartphone and into the road. We need to find ways to put the road into their eyes," he said. The striped lights turn green when it is safe to walk, and red when pedestrians should halt. For now, the pilot program is limited to a single intersection in central Tel Aviv, but the municipality says it will expand the zombie lights if they prove effective.

Similar systems have already been used in Australia, Singapore and the Netherlands. So far, smartphone-addicted residents seem to be welcoming the lights. "It's something amazing," said Tel Aviv resident Shai Levi. "As someone who is addicted to his phone and is all day long with his head glued on the screen, I think that it can without any hesitation, reduce the number of accidents."

(AP)





COME, LET US HAVE SOME
TEA AND CONTINUE TO TALK
ABOUT HAPPY THINGS
— CHAIM POTOK

BRIEFLY
speaking



**EGG INTAKE
AND HEART DISEASE RISK**

Here's a sombre news for all the egg lovers out there. A recent study found that egg yolk contains higher level of cholesterol, which ultimately increases the chances of heart disease and early death. Egg yolks are one of the richest source of dietary cholesterol among all commonly consumed foods. One large egg has 186 milligrams of dietary cholesterol in the yolk. The researchers pooled data of 29,615 US racially and ethnically diverse people to understand if eating dietary cholesterol or eggs were linked to cardiovascular disease and death, which has been a point of debate for decades. The study was published in the journal *JAMA*. The message is about cholesterol, which happens to be high in eggs and especially yolks, and as a part of healthy diet, people need to reduce their daily intake of cholesterol. The reduced intake of cholesterol will result in decreased risk of heart diseases.

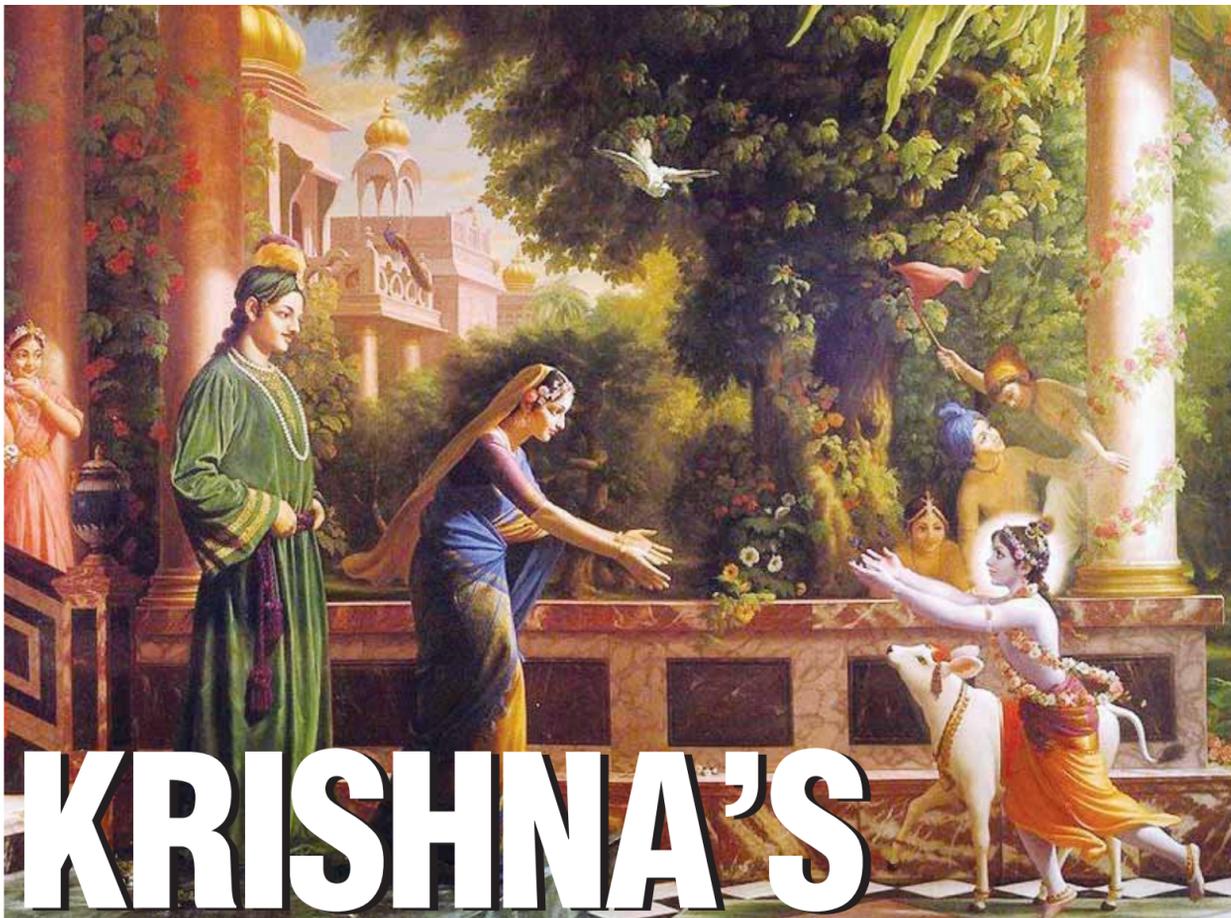
**HEALTHY LIVER
WITH STRENGTH TRAINING**

Besides being beneficial for heart, strength training can also reduce accumulation of fat in liver and improve blood glucose regulation, says a study on mice. The study, led by a team from the University of Campinas in Brazil, showed strength training can reduce fat stored in liver and improve blood glucose control in obese mice, even without overall loss of body weight. The findings suggest strength training may be a fast and effective strategy for reducing the risk of fatty liver disease and diabetes in obese people. "That these improvements in metabolism occurred over a short time even though the overall amount of body fat was unchanged, it suggests strength training can directly affect liver's function and metabolism," said Pereira de Moura from the varsity.

**IMPROVE GUT
HEALTH WITH GREEN TEA**



Green tea has once again been found as the Hall Mary for not just obesity, but various other inflammatory biomarkers linked with poor health, finds a recent study. The study was done on mice to find out what other benefits can green tea provide. Researchers found that the mice who were fed a diet of 2 per cent green tea extract fared far better than those that ate a diet without it, a finding that has prompted an upcoming study of green tea's potential benefits in people at high risk of diabetes and heart disease. The benefits appear to stem from improved gut health, including more beneficial microbes in the intestines of the mice and less permeability in the intestinal wall which is commonly called as the leaky gut. "The results of studies looking at obesity management so far had been a real mixed bag. Our goal was to figure out how it prevents weight gain," said Richard Bruno, the study's lead author.



KRISHNA'S PASTORAL ASSOCIATES

Krishna's foster parents, Nanda and Yashoda, symbolically represent eternal bliss and the ultimate knowledge respectively, explains Dr ASHA GOSWAMI

With the set of mystical and spiritual concepts having synthesised with Krishna during the later phase of the saga, the same built an aura of dreamland with spiritual overtones around Krishna's personae by providing him with pastoral associates and scenario in the form of his foster parents Nanda-Yashoda; elder brother and sister Balarama-Ekanamsha or Subhadra Gopas and Gopis, including Radha, and Vrindavana. Mostly, the narratives of the *Puranas*, which refer to Shri Krishna's activities with these pastoral associates, are held to have been framed and construed and specifically designed to teach symbolic and spiritual ideals through those *lilas* which Krishna enacted in the company with his pastoral associates on earth. Besides, Krishna's all Vrindavana *lilas*, which he enacts in their company wherein he mostly plays the role of love and friendship, are similarly held to be happenings on the non-physical plane and in non-physical bodies, as Vrindavana is also looked upon as representing the inner consciousness of every individual.

Hence, the whole Vrindavana *lila* of Krishna is held symbolic along with his partners, who are also assigned with spiritual overtones. Since, his Vrindavana *lila* on the whole represents Krishna's playful activities during which he behaves the way he likes. For, at Vrindavana, his encounters with Putana, cart, Trina varta, Aghasura, Bakasura, Dhenuk, Keshi and Kaliya, fighting with whom, Krishna had not to exert his strength but in place he just toys with them for achieving his victory. This very well

explains why Krishna's such easygoing encounters at Vrindavana or Gokula are termed *lilas* signifying that these were mere sports and diversions on the part of Krishna at Vrindavana. In the same context, Hariyamsha seems to add "that all the associates of Krishna during his Vrindavana *lilas* were the parts of the Gods themselves, and hence spiritual". Similarly, Krishna's enemies at Vrindavana are held by some representing all types of vices such as lust, pride, hatred, egotism, pride, envy, greed etc. According to others, Vrindavana metaphorically stands for the garden like holy and pure heart of every devotee of Krishna where he teaches the love of devotion to all alike who lend their hearts to him. Krishna's activities at Vrindavana also are held to delineate him as a symbol of a spiritual *saadhak* with ultimate realisation of his true individual state. In the same strain, Krishna's foster parents Nanda and Yashoda are held symbolically representing the super most eternal bliss and the ultimate knowledge respectively.

While their resort Vrindavana itself represents the region of highest spiritual delight and the field of spiritual growth and devotional love as its lord Nanda himself is spiritual bliss incarnate. The *Puranas*, in the same regard, also dictate us that we must not treat Krishna's Vrindavana *lilas* with his pastoral associates as having occurred at one place or time but rather treat them as recurrent modality with the purpose of conveying inspiration and guidance to devotees of every type having either of these feelings towards Krishna such as affection of parents; of friends; or of loved and beloved etc. Krishna at

Vrindavana denotes the universal self and his foster father Nanda implying bliss guides all these in their relations to the universe and themselves. Nanda as supreme joy is located in Vrindavana like the brain of every enlightened person. Krishna in Vrindavana as Nanda's son represents a devotee who is set on his devotional path with various distractions like personal desires which are termed as demons like Putana, cart and others. Next, among pastoral associates of Krishna, his elder brother Balarama is dealt with. He was also known as Baldeva and Samkarshana. According to *Mahabharata*, he was an incarnation of God Vishnu's white hair as Krishna was incarnation of God Vishnu's black hair. That is why they are stated to have fair and dark complexion respectively. It is also stated that God Vishnu divided Himself into two parts who are later known as Krishna and Balarama. He is also stated to be the incarnation of primeval serpent Ananta-Naga.

According to Kautilya, Balarama had his special devotees with shaven head independent of Krishna. According to Kautilya, Krishna's brother Balarama was later identified with such a deity whose worship was in vogue during Kautilya's times on the analogy of Krishna's later identification with God Vishnu. Similarly, as an incarnation of Sheeshnaga, Krishna's elder brother Balarama might have been identified with some tribal god of the Nagas and because of which the Kaliya-Naga's episode was introduced in the Krishna saga to propagate the ideal that Shri Krishna had also won over the prevailing tribal cult of the Nagas who are held to rule over the

Mathura region for a long time. Likewise, in the later stage of Krishna cult, if Krishna's elder brother is treated as symbol of the individual soul and is named Nara, he is forever proclaimed the eternal accomplice of Krishna, Narayana, performing the role of his elder brother. The other pastoral associates of Krishna include his sister called Subhadra or Ekanamsha who is stated to be Yashoda's daughter who was exchanged with Krishna, but did not die at the hands of Kamsa, and was saved and secretly reared by a Gopa at Vrindavana and later worshipped by the cowherds as mother Goddess Katyayani, since she was the one who had saved Krishna's life. The *Puranas* also state that it was on her advice that Krishna succeeded in killing Kamsa. It is also known that those days, the worship of Katyayani was prevalent among the Gopis, for they along with Radha are stated to worship Goddess Katyayani to beget Shri Krishna as their husband. Thus, it be ascertained that she was introduced as Krishna's pastoral associate and sister to meet the requirement of the devotional aspirations of the people who looked forward to the impress of Shakti in the Krishna Cult. Next, the chief of pastoral associates associated with Krishna seems to be the cowherdess Radha. These two types of Gopis, associated with Krishna in later stage of his saga, represent two variant distinct traditions of Krishnabhakti with main focus on the *Rasa*-dance. Radha and other Gopis are also considered to be the outcome of the prevalent poetic tradition of love sentiment during the 16th century.

The writer is a noted Indologist and authority on Krishnaitic Studies



HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK

Data, data everywhere



These are the times of information revolution, more fashionably called information age. When was information nor crucial is still not clear. But let us not debate that. So the new jargon is 'big data', 'cloud computing' and many more fancy coinages. So there are companies into the manufacture of so-called intelligent machines, claiming that these provide insights without limits. Well, for a student of Abnormal Psychology, that is more of a problem than a solution. Yes, insights without limits are reasons for fantasising and causing delusions, of both persecution as well as grandeur. And, of course, they also convert bounded rationality into unfounded assumptions. Anyway, we are in an era where people use stylish phrases like 'data is the next oil' for this world. Whatever that means may not be easily inferred but the fact remains that mankind can survive without data or oil but not without water, which is the real impending threat lurking round the corner. As city after city go waterless, clues are hardly discernable. Nevertheless, as this craze for data grows to maddening levels, there is a need to exercise some caution. While we are slowly but surely getting submerged in the ocean of information, may data, an old poetry comes to mind. It was Samuel Taylor Coleridge who wrote this sometime around the end of the 18th Century in his *Lyrical Ballads*. It was the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner', a sailor's plight on board a ship surrounded by water all over in a vast ocean, forcing him to recite the famous rhyme: "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink." The modern-day human's plight can be summed up with just a little modification: "Data, data everywhere, not a byte to think." Yes, that is what is happening, and rather fast. Bombarded with data, all kinds of data on all types of subjects, the human mind is gradually slipping into an oblivion of its own making. It is losing its ability to think and analyse, thus increasingly developing a dependence on gadgets to aid the mind to think. What is worse is that these gadgets are systematically being made a substitute for the mind. Look what is happening: Machine is learning and human mind is losing the ability to learn. That it may lead to disastrous consequences is still a subject matter of huge global debate, but the fact is that our thinking is being outsourced to the so-called intelligent machines. Resultantly, human beings are likely to become what O'Henry, had he been around, would have termed as the Banana Public drawing an analogy from his famous expression "Banana Republic". Overdependence on these thinking devices is subjecting the brain muscles to a kind of disuse atrophy, which may lead to the same fate that strikes the other bodily muscles making them flaccid. This in all likelihood is going to affect the human mind and its thinking ability in the long run. Some glimpses can already be found with amnesia and ability to retain and recall information declining. There are people who do not even remember their mobile numbers. Even simple calculations need to be carried out with the help of mechanical devices. Such a data-induced dependence syndrome is not far off that will render the mind dysfunctional and blunt the thinking process. But it seems that in the cacophony of differing noises, no one is ready to believe that minds, if not used, can well become a vestige like the appendix.

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Why am I making such a statement? Because as souls this is our number one duty. Souls are *sat, chit, and ananda*. These are intrinsic to them. Souls are eternal. This is common knowledge. Souls are also conscious. This is also well known, because all souls are naturally so. However, there is a problem with the *ananda* part. Once in material bodies, we, souls, are no longer in the state of *ananda*. Rather most of us, except some very advanced devotees of God, are in more or less opposite state, ie disturbed, fearful, anxious, etc. Yes, people try to enjoy life but they do so in whimsical ways. This fact requires further explanation.

We, embodied souls, are governed by the three modes of the material nature. These are goodness, passion, and darkness. Unfortunately, the majority are under the influence of the lower two modes of passion and darkness. Their pleasures are mostly under the influence of these two modes. For example, a person under the influence of the mode of passion will eat rich food in excessive quantities. Such eating, though appealing to the palate and the stomach, will hurt his or her health in the long run. A person under the influence of the mode of darkness will be obstinate, crooked, badly behaved, lazy, etc. (The *Gita*

WE MUST ENJOY

There are different types of enjoyments, but if we stick to the ones in the mode of goodness, we will reap all kinds of benefits, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

18.28) and his enjoyment will be governed by these emotions. People in goodness are wise in their choice of pleasures. These are stepping stones to the goal of getting to the *ananda* state, which requires a few lives to fully attain.

As everyone is different and have different circumstances, there will be many different types of enjoyments, but if one sticks to enjoyments mostly in the mode of goodness and, most importantly, which are according to *dharma*, not *dharma-aviruddhah*, he will gain all kinds of benefits and will not be harmed. As I am familiar with my own self, I will detail how I am going about enjoying my life. I have drawn a detailed list of all the activities which are enjoyable to me and are available to me. Eating is the first and the most regular enjoyment for me. I eat what is good for me healthwise. I take sufficient time to eat and eat in



small morsels. I eat mostly alone with no other activity like watching TV. In short, I enjoy my eating and hope to continue to do so for the rest of my life.

My other premier enjoyment is writ-

ing. In this, I must thank my Lord for helping me. He gives me realisations, which I jot down. I meditate a lot on spiritual truths revealed to me. I make notes and then sit down to give them shape of

an article. The same is true of all the books I have written. This is my very important enjoyment, which I hope to continue to get, God willing. Of course I watch my favourite programmes on television, which are mostly musical programmes. I am very particular about watching news on television. This must be balanced, fact-based. The last and the foremost enjoyment for me is spending time with my Lord in His photo forms. I feel sheltered and this is when I get most of my realisations. I do not think that I will ever be deprived of this enjoyment.

One of the reasons most people are mortally scared of diseases and major setbacks is that they have this impression that their enjoyments will dry up. This is not true. God has not made a creation where one is condemned to miseries only. Remember, we have many faculties which can and do give us enjoyment. We have senses — the most common means, then, we have minds. Intelligence is not far behind and, ultimately, we have ourselves, ie our own selves, souls. In conclusion, I must reiterate that enjoyments should never be given up. If not, we will be cheating ourselves; we must enjoy to make our lives meaningful. Life will go on but we must find ways to enjoy.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com



I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY SHY IN REAL LIFE. BUT I GUESS IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA, I FOCUS —RANBIR KAPOOR



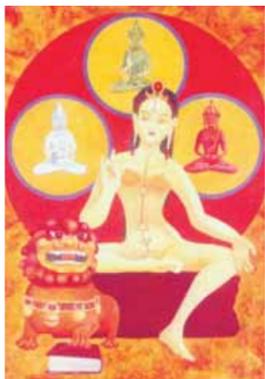
YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week you need to be attentive on the health front. Think on how to continue with good health. It will be a time of peace and prosperity for you. You are likely to deepen your spiritual growth. Celebrate these good feelings and share them with your near and dear ones in whatever way you can. You may find peace in charity. On the career front, you will have a new job/business opportunity and this will help your career to grow. Those looking for a job need to stay optimistic. Things are about to get even better at work for you than you would have hoped. There are promotion and recognition in whichever field you are working on. You might face opposition in your love life. Secret affairs or extramarital relations might put you in trouble.
Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

This week you will enjoy an increase in physical energy, vitality and general positivity. You will be full of enthusiasm, feeling revitalised and enjoy a wonderful sense of good health. In case you have been facing some health challenges, then take a deep breath as things will get a lot better. On the professional front, new opportunities will come knocking your door. At your current job, things are going extremely well. You are moving into a positive state of mind about what you are capable of achieving. Those seeking employment will find a job. In love, you need to become more reliable persons and take up responsibilities that come with any relationship. You need to convey your emotions to your partner. With your patience and maturity, you can strengthen those relations.
Lucky number 14
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You should listen to your body with care and compassion. Those who are having health issues, it is advisable not to stress about them. You need to focus on a healthy outlet to your emotions. Avoid work overload. Indulge in some kind of youth sports activities that will help you to stay active as well as connect you with your inner child. On the career front, some of you have achieved goals and attained materialistic gain. Even though you are financially sound, do not give too much of importance to wealth. Some of you may have a hard time at workplace due to your inflexible approach towards change. Those who are in a committed relationship may witness a positive change in your relationship. Single females may get attracted to the older male. Don't rule him out, he may help you.
Lucky number 12
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

You need to be very cautious about being overworked, overtired, and over-stressed. Bad addictions and obsession might harm you. So, stay away from all these. This week you are likely to lose your self-control. Avoid bad company as this is not favourable for you. Balance is the key to keeping good health. At the workplace, some negative forces are at play. Give your best and be organised and productive. Your honesty and integrity will pay you well. Those who want to invest, put your money in conservative stocks/bonds. In love life, a trip outside country is on the cards. Some quick happenings in your relationship will astonish you. You should distract yourself and your beloved may be back to you.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you will have good health, but you have to be careful while exercising as you might be prone to some injuries. If you are in a process of healing from an injury, then take care and do not stress yourself. Have a focused mind and follow your health regime religiously. At your workplace, you will be feeling content and will cultivate smooth interpersonal dynamics and harmonious communication patterns. Your words will carry more weight with others now; use that wisely to further your prospects. Those seeking jobs are likely to get one. On the relationship front, this is not a good week. You will find yourself indifferent and disengaged with your partner. You need to re-evaluate the situation and seek your inner voice for peace and tranquillity. Singles, have patience as you will take time to find your partner.
Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Orange
Lucky day Tuesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you if you feel something wrong with your body. You need to pay attention to your concerns. Do not panic and don't feel that you can't do anything about it. Trust your intuition and look for other ways to sort out the issues. Be patient while awaiting results. Ensure proper diet, rest and exercise. Career-wise, things will be as per your expectation. It is recommended that you take some time off from work and don't take any important decisions this week. You need to maintain your calm amidst the chaos around you. If you can't stay calm, then seek another position. Those who are committed need to focus on their relationship towards the future. Change your old perspective towards an ongoing issue. Try to talk to your partner openly about your dreams.
Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week your health will enjoy an upswing. You will feel relieved by finding a healer who works with something besides traditional medication. The new method is not to replace medical therapy but to work in concert with it. Listen to your inner voice to decide what is best for your health. Taking advice from experts in meditation and yoga will work in favor of you. On the career front, you may face heady boss/superior and feel irritated this week. Avoid workplace gossip and certainly don't get involved in it. This is not a time to rely on your intuition and your inner knowledge, rather stick to your conscious mind or intellect. Pay attention to your dreams and pleasant surprise will come your way soon. You are likely to face a tough time in your relationship.
Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky blue
Lucky day Friday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week your health looks good, still, you need to be careful. If you are suffering from health issues, then it is likely that you will find a way to your recovery. Keep a positive attitude and things will surely turn in your favour. You might be prone to accident, so, don't take any chance and be safe. Taking tension for your job will keep you busy this week. But this is not going to help matters, rather focus on what you can control and leave behind your anxiety. If you are looking for new opportunities, then confidently make a move and do not hesitate to ask others for help. A positive approach will make all the difference. Those in a relationship should now consider the future. Open up to your partner and talk about your future goals.
Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

It is time to get up and take action to improve your health condition. Your laid back attitude will have a bad impact on your health. Evaluate your health scenario and decide what steps and efforts are required, it could be a physical exercise or a nutritional diet. You need to revive your positive energy. You have to tighten up your belt and get ready to do some hard work at the workplace. Some of you may experience a new beginning. Those seeking employment will be hired into a position that will test your skills. For those of you who are already working will be burdened with responsibilities. This is a great time for love. Committed couples will experience a deep sense of bonding. Some of you may enter the next stage of your relationship.
Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday



CANCER June 21-July 22

Your personal charm and aura will be impressive this week. You will be stronger to give up bad habits in the interest of your health. You are already well on your way with regard to health. You are energetic, full of stamina and vitality. But avoid aggression in your behaviour. Share happy moments with loved ones by looking after their needs. On the career front, you will find a new job opportunity coming your way. Your intelligence and hard-working nature will pay you rich dividends. You are likely to get busy in planning your life ahead and all your emotions and sentiments will take back seat. Those related to arts, music, fashion and media, will be benefitted. In personal relationships, you may feel contented. You may make a plan for an exotic dinner. Married couples will have good bonding.
Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Green
Lucky day Thursday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week your health will suffer. You are likely to become a victim of a health condition may be due to genetic or environmental reasons. During this phase, you will be full of anxiety and negative thinking, but you need to connect your mind and body and meditate for positive vibes. Seek help from others as you have the power to rise above such negative emotions. Work wise, things will flow smoothly. You are planning and progressing to get your idea implemented. All your efforts will prove promising and will assert a place at work. You will find yourself in conflict and disengaging with others which will lead to tension and hostility. Take time out to think of what you can do to stabilize your relations with others. Be careful as someone you trust might betray you.
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Camel shade
Lucky day Sunday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

News related to your health will be positive and your efforts are likely to bear fruit. You have full control of the situations around you, thus, you must take advantage of this and look for alternative ways to deal with health challenge issues. How you speak your mind and conduct yourself will matter the most at your workplace. Conflict and disagreement with peers are indicated. This will create tension. Unfairness at play in your workplace are likely to happen. But ensure that you are not the creator of problems. You need to choose your battles wisely rather than picking upon disagreement. This week, you will feel that your relationship has come full circle. As a result, it may culminate into a marriage and for some, there will be a sense of closure. Singles, have bright chances to meet someone special.
Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Turquoise
Lucky day Friday

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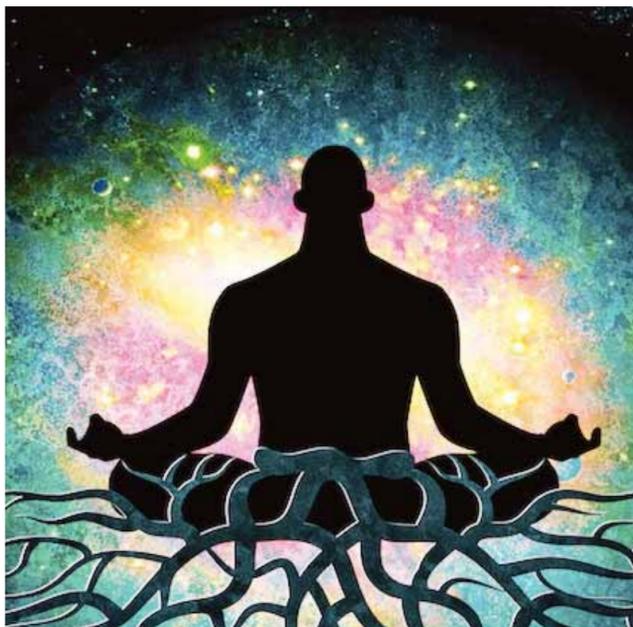


ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Meditation and mind genesis

"Having understood, what you explained in the last issue, I have been trying to self-reflect upon myself, but in vain. I am not able to remain focused. My mind gets bombarded with uncontrolled volume of random thoughts, something like a monkey continuously hopping from one branch of the tree to the other. I keep flirting with those thoughts. There doesn't appear to be any scope to figure out my true nature, not to say anything about correcting the thought process. Tell me, how do I go about?" Asked a reader. "How do you expect to contain a fragile mind so fast, which is habituated to move unrestrained. Have patience, sustained practice may bear fruit." I responded. Better look for a Guru and pursue the process regularly under his guidance. As you proceed, many such questions may keep arising. Guru will lead you through. Meanwhile, for the convenience of our valued readers, I am suggesting a tried and tested simple process. Just lie down on your back on a flat surface. Close your eyes and let loose your mind. Let thoughts naturally flow in and flow out. You will be flooded with thoughts. Don't worry, it is all happening as a part of the process. But don't pay any atten-

tion to them. Pursue the process for at least 20 minutes every day. Having regularly pursued the process for a while, mind will settle down as all such thoughts as would be unnerving you from within will go out of reckoning. You may feel relaxed. Following which, unlike earlier, you may now be able to see a pattern in the thoughts flowing through the mind. Watch them closely, they will reveal your true nature. Following which you could take corrective initiatives through fresh educative inputs. The paradox, however, is that often practitioner's ego plays spoil sport in the process. It doesn't let you dispassionately identify and acknowledge your fault-lines. In that case, you may seek the guidance of a Guru. He may be able to intuitively figure out your true nature and show you its mirror image. Alternately, you could seek astrological guidance for your personality reading. Astrology looks at energy map of the heaven at the time of one's birth, which reflects upon personality frame up of a being with a fair amount of precision, as energy knows no bias. A case in point is that of a highly religious person, who has been offering



his prayers at least for an hour every morning and evening. Yet, his habit tendencies won't spare him. And his family life is in a mess. Let us look at his astrological pointers. Personality indicator, the Sun is locked in adverse formation with Mars, Uranus, and Saturn. That, in the first place, makes out an impulsive, argumentative and quarrelsome person. Second, he is eccentric and erratic. Third, he carries seeds of fear and insecurity because of which he has a negative mindset. He is self-pitying and pessimist. He is a cynic who is in the habit of finding fault with others. He is jealous and over critical of others. Put to an adverse situation, instead of facing it head on, he may try to somehow find an escape route. A sense of inertia deeply ingrained in his psyche, his initiatives will be delayed. Habitually, he shuns taking challenges. So, he may miss opportunities. And when left behind in the run of time, he may fall into depression. What further compounds his problems is that even the mind-signifying Moon is clouded by Saturn's negative aspect. Fiery Mars is ill-disposed off its dire enemy Saturn as well as Uranus. That makes him temperamental, intolerant, impatient, habitually suspicious of

everybody and anybody, and even revengeful by nature. Uranus and mischievous Neptune play spoil sport with intelligence signifying Mercury. That makes him unconventional, eccentric and opinionated. He remains stuck to his self-delusory perceptions, distanced from ground realities. He won't acknowledge truth on its first appearance. Driven by sense of hope against hope, he will continue blindly pursuing his perception till pushed to the wall. It also accounts for his impaired reasoning and judgment. For the above stated reasons, his inter-personal relationship stands compromised and so he is not able to relate to those around with ease and comfort. And the result is there to see. Just academic awareness of his fault lines would not help him get over his habit tendencies. For, they are deeply embedded in the inner realms of his mind in seed form. To get over, continued reflection over fresh educative inputs is required. The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Write to him at G-102, Bharat Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi - 110 025. Tel: 91-11-49848475/9818037273. Email: pioneerqueries@bharatastro.com. Website: www.bharatastro.com