

**WORLD 6**  
BIDEN: STRIKES IN SYRIA SENT  
WARNING TO IRAN TO 'BE CAREFUL'**MONEY 7**  
FUEL PRICES RESURGE  
AFTER 3-DAY BREAK**SPORT 8**  
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## Cong getting weak, rues G-23

### Senior party leaders pitch for strong Cong leadership at Centre

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Pitching for a strong Congress leadership at the Centre in order to corner the Narendra Modi-led Government, the group of 23 Congress leaders, known in the party circles as "dissident" voices, on Saturday launched a fresh offensive questioning the top brass of the party why it failed to utilise the services of an "experienced" leader like Ghulam Nabi Azad when it needed him the most.

At least seven leaders belonging to this "group of dissenters", assembled in Jammu to attend Shanti Sammelan organised by the Gandhi Global Family.

Interestingly, the "show of strength" was organised by these leaders a day after the announcement of the Assembly polls by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in five States, including Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

In one voice all these leaders sent out a clear message to the Congress leadership to start working towards strengthening the party before it's too late. The tone and tenor of the speeches made by these leaders clearly indicated the Congress party is headed for a major "shakeup" in the days to come. These leaders also made it clear they will not sit idle as the country was facing numerous challenges.



Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Raj Babbar during a Shanti Sammelan event in Jammu on Saturday

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Apart from Ghulam Nabi Azad, former Cabinet Ministers Kapil Sibal, Manish Tewari, Anand Sharma, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, parliamentarians Raj Babbar, and Vivek Tankha attended the event in Jammu.

Wearing saffron headgears, all these leaders also openly came out in support of the demand for restoring "statehood" to Jammu & Kashmir.

None of the office-bearers of the Jammu & Kashmir

Pradesh Congress Committee, including its chief GA Mir, attended the event. Only loyalists of Ghulam Nabi Azad from the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region attended the event in full strength.

Leading the charge from the front, one of the senior most members of the group Anand Sharma said, "The Congress has weakened in the last decade. Our voice is for the betterment of the party. It should be strengthened everywhere once again. New generation should connect (to the party). We've seen good days of the Congress. We don't want to see it weakening as we become older."

In a veiled attack on the party leadership, the former Union Minister went on to add, "All of us have covered a long distance to reach where we're today. Nobody among us has come through the window, all of us have walked through the door. We have come through the students' movement, the youth movement. I've not given

anyone the right to declare if we're people of Congress or not, nobody has that right. We'll build the party and strengthen it. We believe in the strength and unity of the Congress."

His Cabinet colleagues Kapil Sibal and Manish Tewari also battled for a strong Congress leadership at the top. Sibal said, "We had gathered together earlier too and we have to strengthen the party together."

Sibal questioned as to why the Congress was not utilising the rich experience of Ghulam Nabi Azad.

"He is one such leader who knows the ground reality of Congress in every district of every State. We were saddened when we realised that he is being freed from Parliament. We didn't want him to go from Parliament."

Referring to the treatment meted out to Azad by the party high command, Sibal said, "What is the real role of Ghulam Nabi Azad? A person who flies an aircraft is an experienced person. An engineer accompanies him to detect and repair any malfunctioning in the engine. Ghulam Nabi ji is experienced as well as an engineer."

Echoing similar sentiments Anand Sharma also said, "There has never come such an occasion after 1950 when there is no representative of Jammu & Kashmir in the Rajya Sabha. This will be corrected."

## DMK-Cong seat sharing hitch in TN

### DMK offers only 20; Cong unhappy, says it got 40 last time

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

With the Election Commission of India declaring the poll schedule for the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Friday, the DMK and the Congress are finding it difficult to arrive at an amicable seat sharing agreement.

A national leader of the Congress told *The Pioneer* that the DMK is proving to be a tough taskmaster when it is time for seat allocation. "The maximum they had offered as till Saturday 2 pm is just 20 seats. Please remember that the Congress was allocated 40 seats during the 2016 Assembly election and we won eight seats," said the senior leader who did not want to be identified.

Last week the team of Congress leaders deputised by party chief Sonia Gandhi called on the DMK headquarters and held a round of meeting with the second rung leaders of the Dravidian major.

"It was not a pleasant experience," said another leader, a close aide to party scion Rahul Gandhi.

The leader said the grand old party of India would not be happy with anything less than



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during his election campaign for upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly polls in Tuticorin on Saturday

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40. "The DMK is winning election by making use of the goodwill enjoyed by the Congress in Tamil Nadu. There is a strong anti-DMK feeling in the State, but the Congress will survive because it has showed the world that the party does not require power to become strong," said the leader who was accompanying Rahul Gandhi to Thoothukudi on Saturday.

What comes out of the Congress leaders' comments is the fact that there is a trust deficit between the party and the DMK. This was visible in the downfall of the Congress-

led Narayanasamy Government in Puducherry which lost vote of trust because of the resignation of the lone DMK member.

The Congress negotiators were led by former Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandi and Karnataka leader Dinesh Gundu Rao. The absence this time of Ghulam Nabi Azad has surprised TNCC leaders. "Azad was the leader who knows the functioning of the DMK inside out. But he was conspicuous by his absence this time," said the leader.

While the Congress-DMK talks are in a deadlock, the AIADMK scored a major point on Friday by enacting a legislation that granted 10.5 per cent reservation for the 2 crore strong Vanniyar community in the Government service. This has been a long standing demand of Dr Ramadoss, founder of the PMK. This brought in some cheer to the AIADMK as it has pacified three of its major allies, the BJP, the PMK and the Puthiya Tamilakam.

The DMK, which has been on an aggressive mood till early last week, has suddenly mellowed down and maintaining a silence. Meanwhile TTV Dinakaran, general secretary of the AMMK and nephew of VK Sasikala, Jayalalithaa's former aide, declared that he would be the Chief Ministerial candidate of the front to be led by his party. This means that there are four CM candidates in Tamil Nadu as on Saturday, the other three being incumbent Edappadi Palaniswamy, MK Stalin (DMK) and film actor Kamal Haasan (MNM). Tamil Nadu goes to the poll on April 6 to elect 234-member Assembly.

## Centre: Enforce Covid appropriate behaviour

### States, UTs told to deal firmly with violations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday advised States and UTs — Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Telangana and Jammu & Kashmir — to enforce Covid-appropriate behaviour by dealing firmly with violations and ensure effective surveillance in case of potential super spreading events so as not to let the situation go out of hand.

These States and UTs have been reporting a high Covid-19 active caseload or an increasing trend in new cases in the last week, noted Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba while chairing a high-level review meeting with Chief Secretaries of States/UTs.

"They were advised not to lower their guard, enforce Covid appropriate behaviour and deal firmly with violations. It was strongly underlined that they need to follow effective



Beds lined up at Nesco Covid care centre, amid concerns over surge in Covid-19 cases, at Goregaon in Mumbai on Saturday

PTI

surveillance strategies in respect of potential super spreading events," the Union Health Ministry said in a statement.

The need for effective testing, comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation of positive cases, and quick quarantine of close contacts were also strongly emphasised.

During the review meeting, States were advised to undertake vaccination on priority in districts reporting higher cases and monitor strains and clustering of cases for early hotspot identification and control.

They have also been asked to improve the overall testing

in districts reporting a reduction in testing, and increase RT-PCR tests in districts having high antigen testing.

The States and UT were directed to focus on surveillance and stringent containment in selected districts reporting reduced tests/high positivity and increased cases.

They have also been advised to carry clinical management in districts reporting higher deaths and promote Covid-appropriate behaviour to ensure effective citizen communication to not let complacency set in, especially in light of the vaccination drive entering the next phase.

## CAPSULE

### 8 HELD IN TELANGANA OVER COW SLAUGHTER

**Hyderabad:** Eight people were on Saturday arrested for allegedly slaughtering 16 cows in Siddipet district of Telangana, police said.

### 3 COVID-19 DEATHS, 243 CASES IN DELHI ON SAT

**New Delhi:** Delhi recorded 243 new Covid-19 cases on Saturday, while three more fatalities pushed the death toll to 10,909, according to the data shared by the city health department.

### ASI SHOOTS HIMSELF DEAD INSIDE PCR VAN

**New Delhi:** An Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) of Delhi Police allegedly shot himself dead with his service pistol in a PCR van while he was on duty at Zakir Hussain flyover in West Delhi on Saturday morning, officials said.

### FIRE AT FACTORY IN PRATAP NAGAR, ONE DEAD

**New Delhi:** The charred body of a 22-year-old labourer was recovered after a fire broke out at a warehouse in North Delhi's Pratap Nagar area in the early hours of Saturday.

### ASSAM: BPF QUITS NDA TO JOIN CONG ALLIANCE

**Guwahati:** The Bodoland People's Front (BPF), a part of the BJP-led Assam Government, on Saturday said it will join the 'Grand Alliance' helmed by the Congress to contest the upcoming Assembly polls.

## Biden won't sanction MBS over murder of Khashoggi

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) likely approved the killing of US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, according to a newly declassified US intelligence report. But the Biden Administration is not going to sanction MBS.

The intelligence findings were long known to many US officials and, even as they remained classified, had been reported with varying degrees of precision.

But the public rebuke of MBS is still a touchstone in US-Saudi relations.

## All 728 dists to become unique hubs to boost farm exports

### Peda, Bindi, jaggery, spices among items under One Dist One Focus Product scheme

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As part of its effort to boost farm exports, enhance farmers' income and raise rural jobs, the Centre on Saturday finalised a list of products from agriculture and allied sectors under the "One District One Focus Product (ODOFP)" scheme that will be promoted in a cluster approach in 728 districts across the country.

For instance, Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district is to be promoted as Bindi (tikuli) cluster; Deoghar and Dumka in Jharkhand for Peda products; hub; Rajouri for spices; Anantnag for trout fish; Ayodhya for Jaggery; Auraiya for food processing desi ghee; Srinagar for flowers; Budgam

for exotic vegetables; East Delhi for namkeens, and South-west Delhi for milk-based products.

Similarly, Kupwara is to be developed for walnut; Ganderbal for honey; Bandipora for processed poultry/mutton; Durg and Koriba in Chhattisgarh for tomato-based products; Surguja for litchi; Batod in Gujarat for guava; Porbandar for gram-based products; North Goa for jackfruit; Ambala for onion and Kinnaur for fruit wine under the ODOFP scheme.

According to the Ministry, the product chosen in the district for promotion, having export potential which will boost farm exports and enhance farmers' income.



Besides, also help to provide jobs in rural sector.

The list includes 25 districts of Arunachal Pradesh; 38 districts of Bihar; 28 districts of Chhattisgarh; 2 districts in Goa; 22 districts of Haryana; 12

districts of Himachal Pradesh, 24 districts of Jharkhand, 20 districts of Jammu & Kashmir; 31 districts of Karnataka; 14 districts of Kerala; 52 districts of Madhya Pradesh; 36 districts of Maharashtra; 16 districts of

Manipur; 30 districts of Odisha, 23 districts of Punjab, 4 districts of Sikkim, 36 districts of Tamil Nadu; 8 districts of Tripura, 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh, and 18 districts of West Bengal.

As many as 13 districts each of Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh, 11 districts each of Delhi, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland; and 33 districts each of Assam, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana have been included.

That apart, three districts of Andaman & Nicobar Islands; total three districts of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu; two districts each of Ladakh and Puducherry; one district each of Chandigarh and Lakshadweep are part of this exercise.

According to the Ministry, fruits have been identified for 226 districts, the highest in the

list while vegetables for 107 districts and spices for 105 districts are at the second and the third position in the list. Paddy will be promoted in 40 districts, wheat-5 districts, coarse cum nutri cereals in 25 districts, pulses 16 districts, commercial crops 22 districts, oilseeds 41 districts, plantation 28 districts, floriculture 2 districts, honey 9 districts, animal husbandry/dairy 40 districts, aquaculture/marine fisheries 29 districts and processed products 33 districts. The Ministry said that the list of products have been finalised after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

"These products will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the Government of India schemes, to increase the value of the products and with the ultimate

aim of increasing the income of the farmers. These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme (PM Formalisation of Micro food Processing Enterprises Scheme) of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoter and micro-enterprises," the Ministry said.

At the governing council meeting last week, the NITI Aayog also reiterated that food processing and export under One District One focus Product scheme not only aligns perfectly with district-level crop diversification, but will also help raise rural jobs and income of farmers.

"This future development of agriculture with rise in income will augment shift in demand towards processed food and thereby furthering this cycle," it said.



## HOME THEATRE

# Not a patch on the book or original movie



### THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

**Netflix**  
**\*ing: Parineeti Chopra, Aditi Rao Hydari, Kirti Kulhari, Avinash Tiwary**  
**Rated: 5/10**

Let's talk about the positives first. It starts off on a good note. The opening scene tells you that there is more to come and it is bound to be interesting — murder-crime thrillers are definitely a treat to watch. And this latest Parineeti Chopra film is no different. A girl on the train who watches the life of another woman and reminiscing her own and wishing it was her in place of that girl is normal enough. More so when our life is in shambles and nothing is going right. So far so good.

Unfortunately, as the movie progresses it starts to spiral out of control and goes off track. Of course the makers wanted to give a Bollywood feel to the film and hence the song and dance but there

was no need to let it deviate so much.

If the makers had gone with the name and copied most of the scenes, they might have stuck true to the book by British author Paula Hawkins 2015 novel of the same name. One doesn't understand the need to go for a twist that doesn't make much sense because there are so many gaps that are difficult to fill. However, if can manage to watch it like any other B-town movie and not look for answers that need to be addressed, The Girl On The Train manages to hold your attention. But there is a condition — one should have neither seen nor read the book by the same or watched the 2016 movie starring Emily Blunt. The character in the Hindi version is played by Chopra.

If by any chance one gas done either of the above, it will be a lost cause even if there is a deviation at the climax which is definitely a surprise.

— Shalini Sakseena

# Guru-shishya parampara is what it's about

**AAVARTAN**  
**IMDB**  
**\*ing: Miroslaw Baka, Mateusz Banasiuk, Adrianna Chlebicka, Krzysztof Czeczot, Wojciech Kalarus, Tomasz Karolak, Jacek Knap, Anna Smolowik, Sebastian Stankiewicz**  
**Rated: 5/10**

The latest film by writer-director Durba Sahay, who had made her debut as a director with The Pen, is a take on the guru-shishya parampara and how one cycle ends and the next begins. With danseuse Shovana Narayan in the lead, the one-hour-and-56 minutes are spent exploring the beautiful relationship that a gurus have with their shishyas and how sometimes ego and pride come in the way of this beautiful and sacred relationship. But the whole premise behind an art form is to surrender to the art and

there is no place for egos here.

Through the four generations of passing on the tradition of who will lead the next generation of young dancers, Aavartan, which means a cycle, is interesting to watch — that a guru can be jealous of her pupil but manages to over come her insecurities via a story told to her by her guru.

Narayan may not be a great actor but there is no doubt where her skills lie — a brilliant Kathak dancer. Those who love classic dance forms, this movie is a treat to watch. To see Narayan dance so beautifully even though she is 70 years old is magical. It just goes to show that one can never take the art form from the artist whatever be the age. The dual towards the climax where she performs is absolutely riveting. One can see clearly why she is still the queen of her art.

Watch this one for some excellent footwork by Shovana Narayan.

— Shalini Sakseena



## Plan Your Day



### Pupper Party 4.0

**Venue:** Cafe 27, Kailash Colony, New Delhi  
**When:** February 28, 2021  
**Time:** 1 pm onwards  
**We are pumped and ready for yet another pupper party in our city! Join us for the Delhi Pupper Party 4.0.**

Enjoy a thrilling Sunday with your pups. Let your pets chomp on a yummilicious doggy buffet, play fun games & win super gift hampers worth ₹2,200! All pets at the event get a dazzling Just Dogs voucher worth ₹975 and humans get a complimentary FnB Coupon with ₹100 with each ticket!

### Ultra Run

**Venue:** Delta 105, Village Pada, Manesar, Gurugram, India  
**When:** February 28, 2021  
**Time:** 6 pm onwards  
**A run in the clean and green environs on the outskirts of Gurgaon.**  
 Choose your distances from short and sweet 10K to herculean 24hrs ultra run or an experiential night run inside a safe Military themed campus- Delta 105.  
**Race Categories**  
 Note: Crew supporting participants & accompanying

guests will have to buy Food-Coupons to order meals from the campsite kitchen.  
 Race Categories (check route map)  
 63.3Km Ultra Run (Feb 28 6 am start, cutoff 10hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹2,000  
 Full Marathon (Feb 28 6:15 am start, cutoff 7hrs, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,400  
 Half Marathon (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000  
 10Km Run (Feb 28 7am start, Min age 18yrs): ₹1,000



## TELLY TALE

### 'I FEEL WAJID'S PRESENCE'

Zee TV has been a pioneer and a trend-setter in shaping television content over the past three decades and is all set to



change the face of music reality shows once again with its latest non-fiction property, the *Indian Pro Music League* (IPML). In what will be a clutter-breaking format innovation, Zee TV is all set to present audiences with the world's first-ever music league championship, starting February 26. While the world of sports has seen several league competitions, this unique music league will have six teams representing different regions of India, battling it out against each other in a musical championship.

Each of these six teams supported by leading Bollywood and sports celebrities will have top playback singers as their captains, one reality show star and one fresh voice. The likes of Mika Singh, Kailash Kher, Sajid Khan, Shaan, Ankit Tiwari, Javed Ali, Asees Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, AkritiKakar, Payal Dev, Neha Bhasin, Shilpa Rao have been signed on to captain the 6 zonal teams.

During the shoot of the grand premiere episode, everyone was ecstatic to kickstart the reality show. In fact, all the celebrities put their best foot forward and gave some splendid performances on the grand Indian Pro Music League stage. However, it was popular Bollywood composer, Sajid Khan's words that left everyone teary-eyed during the shoot. Sajid, his family, and the whole of Bollywood was dealt a huge blow last year when his brother Wajid Khan passed away suddenly. Participating in the *Indian Pro Music League* was actually Wajid's dream and not having him around made Sajid very emotional, after all, it was also his first reality show without him. On the stage, Sajid mentioned how he missed his brother but also felt his presence on the stage, and hence, he is looking forward to making this show a huge success.

Sajid Khan who is the captain of Delhi Jammers mentioned on the stage, "Even when Wajid was hospitalized, he was

constantly concerned about the show. Whenever I visited him, he kept telling me that we must work hard for the *Indian Pro Music League* and make it a success. Till date, I have never done a show without Wajid, but this is the first time I am coming without him on such a big show with so many star singers. However, I feel his presence here, I think he is always with me and that makes me extremely comfortable. I feel I am no one without him and I will work really hard and make him proud."

### PACKAGE FULL OF MASTI

Get ready to witness showdowns in the upcoming episodes across & TV shows. In *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai*, Manmohan Tiwari (Rohitashv Gour) finds himself at crossroads with his beautiful Anita Bhabhi (NehhaPendse) who is fighting a court case against him. Either way, Manmohan is destined to lose! Whereas, Rajesh (Kamna Pathak) who tire to create a rift between her husband Happu Singh (Vogesh Tripathi) and Beni (Vishwanath Chatterjee) makes matters go out of hand in *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*.



Bringing *aandhi* and *toofan* are the new visitors at Pappu's (Manmohan Tiwari) guest house in *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* with an announcement that there is a pot full of gold hidden in the haveli, followed by an exhausting treasure hunt. In *Santoshi Maa Sunaye Vrat Katahyein*, a time warp takes place bringing Indresh (Ashish Kadian) back to life and Swati (Tanvi Dogra) to justice. But will Asur Rani Paulomi (Sara Khan) give up without a fight?

Sharing more on the zesty details of the track, NehhaPendse *aka* Anita Bhabhi shares: "If there is one woman who can influence Vibhuti Narayan Mishra (Aasif Sheikh) like Anita does, is Angoori Bhabhi (Shubhangi Atre). When Tiwari ji tortures Tiliu (Syed Salim Zaidi) under pandit ji's orders, Anita gets furious and files a case against him. When Angoori convinces Vibhuti to fight Tiwari ji's case against Anita herself, things get heated."

Kamna Pathak *aka* Rajesh Singh says, "Beni and Happu's *dosti* is *pakk!* But Rajesh has triggered the two of them that will result in an ugly fight. The pair makes efforts to make each other feel jealous and ultimately refuse to talk.

*Iss darar ke beech*, will Rajesh and

Kamlesh (Sanjay Chaudhury) be able to patch the two best buds? "Samta Sagar *aka* Sarla shares: "The Gupta family is used to Gudiya's frequent surprises. This time around she brings the previous owners of the house who got displaced a long time ago. They reveal that back in the day they hid a huge pot of gold in the house. After knowing about the treasure, Sarla is determined on finding the fortune."

Sara Khan *aka* Asur Rani Paulomi shares: "Swati along with the help of Santoshi Maa (Gracy Singh) has always fought her battles. But will Indresh support her after being emotionally blackmailed by his father Singhasan Singh (Sushil Sinha)? Asur Rani Paulomi will not let Santoshi Maa win and to find out how, the audience must stay tuned!"

### WELCOME SARGAM ON SCREEN

Laughter is the best medicine to take stress away, and Sony Entertainment Television is making sure the audience gets a good dose, with the launch of its new show *Sargam Ki Sadhesatii*. The channel is all set to unveil a sitcom that encourages family viewing. Produced by Vipul Shah of Optimystix Entertainment, *Sargam Ki Sadhe Satii* brings forth the Awasthi household with Sargam as the *bahu*, and her unique *sasural* where she is the only woman among men.

The shenanigans of the Awasthis from Ghaziabad will throw viewers into giggle-fits, while also warming the hearts with relatable situations. Altogether, the Awasthi family will be seen elevating the most mundane situation — ones that viewers will easily relate to — into a whole lot of fun. The makers have chosen an eclectic cast, led by *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* actor Anjali Tatrari as Sargam and Kunal Saluja as Aparshakti Awasthi. The rest of the key cast members include names such as Darshan Jariwala, Sanat Vyas, Ojas Rawal, Yash Sehgal, Vishnu Bholwani, Akash Makhija, Yash Sehgal and Krish Chugh.

Sargam Awasthi is empathetic, rational, intelligent, selfless and a leader in essence, but for someone who becomes a homemaker, she faces two key challenges. Firstly, she does not know to cook, a stereotype that is often associated with a good *bahu*. Secondly, in her earnest desire to balance everything and to be a Jack of all trades at home, she keeps faltering here and there. Comical twists in the story happen as Sargam tries her best to be The Sadhesatii men include Sargam's husband Aparshakti Awasthi *aka* Appu, who is a small-time influencer for the world, but a *jugaadu* hero of his house. An aspiring actor, he is unabashedly disorganised and takes pride in being a multi-tasker.

"Dadaji" Anandilal Awasthi, also called 'sympathy seeker' due to his unending love for talking about his 'fake' ailments, is the oldest, but most youthful member of this mad-house. His favourite topic is his bowel movement!

# 'I waited for movies, got TV shows instead'

AYUB KHAN, who plays Guddu Mishra on Ranju Ki Betiyaan on Dangal TV speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his role in the series, how he got into acting and why he ventured into TV shows

### ■ What is your role in Ranju Ki Betiyaan?

I play Guddu Mishra; he is from Muzaffarpur, Bihar. He is someone who is respectful of his father and because of his father's wish to get married to a particular person, even though he doesn't agree to this, he gets married to Ranju (played by Reena Kapoor). She is timid and has no voice of her own. Ranju has four daughters. But my character is of a patriarchal mindset, he yearns for a son who can take his family name forward. Even though he respects his father, he wants to break the norm and achieve what he has wanted to do, dreaming of doing. Even though he has a wife and daughters, he gets married to another with whom he has two sons. His situation is unconventional but with a conventional marriage. This is a bit of dichotomy.

### ■ How did you get this project?

I had earlier done a show for Rashmi Sharma Telefilms titled *Shakti-Astitva Ke Ehsaas Ki*. The show was about a eunuch child. The role that was offered to me was challenging. The show was quite progressive and hence had agreed to do this show. I liked that my role was strong and all the twists and turns that happen are because of me.

### ■ What made you play Guddu Mishra?

Of course, the fact that while my character finds himself in a conventional marriage, the situation is unconventional. Second, the more important one is that the show is about a single working mother; something that is becoming prevalent in our society. More and more people are breaking out and craving a life for themselves. It is encouraging people to believe in their dreams and to strike out and make a living.  
**■ Was the fact that the role different from what you had done in the past also the attraction of taking up Ranju...?**

More than the character that I was essaying, it was the concept of the show that had me take up the project. The concept is very interesting. I felt that the show is extremely progressive, that it has something to say. The part that has been offered here, I have something to say, there was a certain amount of identifiability here. I thought that the audience would get something out of it.

### ■ Do you think that people get impacted by what a show wants to say?

Yes, it does. When you pick up a subject like *Ranju*... when one wants to break the mindsets of people, if one tries to approach this aggressively, there is a possibility that one may be rejected. At times, at the cost of looking regressive, you slowly and gently push a thought process



forward and steer him towards a path that is different from the present one. One has to achieve a balance where you don't lose your audience and yet cater them towards progressive ideas.

### ■ You started off with films, what was the attraction of venturing into TV?

After doing films like *Mrittyudand*, whatever that came my way after that was not all that exciting. The roles offered were not doing anything for me. I waited for two years to get work. Then came a time when I needed to work and met a person who was making a show, he appeared to be progressive with his ideas. He made the show *Muskaan* (1999). Once I started doing TV I realised that the commitment to TV is very heavy especially with daily soaps. With weekly, one could still do films. Once daily started, it became difficult to do films and TV. But if your character was not pivotal, one could still manage but the minute your role became central to the show, doing anything else, it was unfair to not be committed to one platform.

### ■ Is that why you haven't done movies in the recent past?

The funny part is; it is ironic but the truth is that every time I waited for a movie to come my way and it didn't and I took up a TV show, the very next day of shooting of the TV, I would get an offer of doing a film. I don't know whether it is luck or fate. Also, once you commit to a TV show, it requires full attention and one cannot plan in advance.

### ■ You have a film background. Was there ever a time when you wanted to be something else besides an actor?

Yes, definitely. There was a time when I wanted to be a fighter pilot — the whole idea of having so much power under you! But then my mother threatened and bullied me, I am the youngest of the siblings and since she could not bully them, she did it with me. I agreed not to pursue flying. But I have no regrets.

### ■ Is it important for an actor to find a connection with the character he is essaying?

Actually, what an actor needs to have in his arsenal is to understand different facets of life and society. To be able to understand different thought processes. Also, to be able to understand characters of people. If one is unable to do this, one is just playing a part that people may or may not be able to identify with. One learns a lot from society and people and an actor needs to learn from them.

### ■ What next?

I am open to any form of medium to work in. It is just that whenever it comes my way, I hope I am in a position to take them up. Let's see what is in store.



# 81 new patients reported in U'khand on Saturday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The number of novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) patients in Uttarakhand increased to 96,949 on Saturday with the State health department reporting 81 new cases of the disease. The department also reported the death of one patient from the disease which increased the death toll to 1,692 in the State. The authorities discharged 29 patients of the pandemic from different hospitals on Saturday following their recovery from the disease. A total of 93,442 patients have so far recovered from the disease in the State. The recovery percentage from the disease now stands at 96.38 and the sample positivity rate is 4.07 percent.

A 29-year-old woman, a



Covid-19 positive patient, was reported dead at CHC Munsyari, Pithoragarh on Saturday. The contagion of Covid-19 completed 50 weeks on Saturday. The first case of the disease was reported on March 15. During this period, the State conducted more than 24 lakh tests for detecting the disease. The health department reported 42 new patients of the disease in

Dehradun district on the day. Here, 1,542 samples were tested in different labs on Saturday. Similarly 29 patients were found in Haridwar, five in Tehri, four in Nainital and one in Udham Singh Nagar district on the day. No new patients were reported from Almora, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Champawat, Pauri, Pithoragarh, Rudrapur and Uttarkashi districts on

## THE ONGOING VACCINATION DRIVE AGAINST COVID-19 REMAINED SUSPENDED ON THE DAY FOR UPDATING THE COWIN PORTAL

Saturday.

The State now has 421 active patients of Covid-19. Haridwar district is at the top of the table of active cases of the disease with 130 patients. Dehradun with 101 active patients is now at second position; Nainital has 60, Pauri 30, Udham Singh Nagar 21, Almora 23, Tehri 18, Champawat 14, Chamoli 10, Uttarkashi nine, Bageshwar four, Rudrapur one active cases of the disease. Pithoragarh district has no active cases of the district.

Meanwhile, the ongoing vaccination drive against Covid-19 remained suspended on the day for updating the CoWin portal. A total of 20,319 beneficiaries have so far been fully vaccinated in the State.



Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat greets a child affectionately after reaching the Ranikhet area on Saturday

Pioneer photo

## Some hopeful, others skeptical about resolution of Jogiwala mess



POOJA NEGI ■ DEHRADUN

One of the busiest intersections in Dehradun, the Jogiwala Chowk has for long been affected by a traffic bottleneck which remains unresolved despite different steps taken by the police and other authorities concerned. Protracted traffic congestion on one of the major entry points to the provisional state capital has become a sore for the authorities too since construction of the Mohkampur flyover has resolved traffic issues only till it reaches the pending problem of Jogiwala Chowk. Recently, the Union Road Transport and Highways minister Nitin Gadkari had asked the state government to submit a proposal for resolving the Jogiwala issue. While this development has been welcomed by some, others remain skeptical about this issue and the government's capability to get it resolved.

Talking to this correspondent about the recent developments, an employee of a gar-

ments shop said, "Because of the traffic mess our business also gets affected as there's a lot of rush and resulting dust due to which customers do not really wish to visit. Road widening is necessary but the government should also think about local shopkeepers like us - more than half of our shop will be gone in the widening process but we don't know where we will go after that. The Government must provide us compensation or reallocate our shops."

Some in the area remain skeptical like Dinesh Negi, the owner of Garhwal Sweet Shop at Jogiwala Chowk who has doubts about the government's intentions. He said, "The government is considering the 1938 map for encroachments and according to that they will take over all the areas where the canal used to be."

However, our shop has not been marked because no canal was present here. If they want to take our shops they will have to pay us otherwise we are not leaving". Another sweet shop

owner, Mahesh Yadav whose shop has been marked at different spots said, "We also want development through road widening as these accidents and traffic congestion bothers us and the locals too but when a large section of our shop is likely to be demolished, we also expect to get something in return from the government. First, the pandemic and then this encroachment issue - both have made our life difficult. It would be better if they provide someplace to ensure our livelihood too just as what the government did while executing the demolition for widening of Chakrata Road. Jogiwala is now under the purview of the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun and now it is the responsibility of the MCD to handle this issue."

While both the central and state governments are executing various major projects, it now remains to be seen whether the authorities manage to swiftly tackle this long pending issue which successive governments have failed to effectively resolve.

## Appointment of position holders: AAP attacks Govt

**CM distributing positions at the cost of State's exchequer : Ravindra Anand**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Strongly condemning the decision of the Uttarakhand Government to appoint more position holders, the Aam Adami Party (AAP) has alleged that in order to provide favour to people close to him the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat is burdening the exchequer of the State.

The spokesperson of the state unit of the party, Ravindra Singh Anand today said that on one hand the State Government is finding it hard to pay the salaries of the employees and on other the

public money is being spent on the position holders. Claiming that Crores of rupees per month are being spent on position holders, he said that there are more than 100 such persons in the state now.

He said that it is an irony that the employees are forced to go on strike for non-payment of salaries but the CM has appointed 100 persons on different positions.

Anand said that it is clear that these appointments are being done to keep the supporters of CM in good humour as the assembly elections are scheduled next year.

## Pradhan's statement on petrol price irresponsible : Joshi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Terming the statement of Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in which he had held the Covid-19 pandemic and winters responsible for increase in the prices of petroleum products and cooking gas as highly irresponsible, the spokesperson of Rajya Andolankari Samman Parishad

Mahesh Joshi has said that the minister is misleading the people of the country. He said that the price of every consumer item is at peak at the moment and the general public is reeling under it. Joshi added that the government has no control over the prices and both central and state governments are continuously ignoring the interests of the people.

## Kedarnath MLA Manoj Rawat bereaved

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Fakir Singh Rawat, the father of Congress MLA from Kedarnath Manoj Rawat died on Saturday in Gopeshwar, Chamoli district. He was 89 years old and was ailing from some time. The Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has expressed deep sorrow on the demise of father of the Kedarnath MLA. In his condolence message the CM has prayed for peace of the department soul. The Pradesh



Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh and other Congress leaders have also expressed their condolences at the death of Rawat.

## Training programme to enhance value of Bamboo products begins



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A week long training programme meant to enhance value to the Bamboo and Ringal products made by various entrepreneurs started at Doiwala block of Dehradun on Saturday.

Organised by Uttarakhand Science Education and Research Centre (USERC) in association with Saraswati

Jankalyan Evam Swarojgar Sanstha, the training programme is part of GBPIHED sponsored project. Inaugurating the training programme, Chief Guest Senior FRI scientist Dr Santan Barthwal informed the gathering about preparing nurseries of Bamboo and Ringal saplings. Dr Manju Sundriyal referred to efforts that can be undertaken towards ensuring

value to the ringal products which she said can be done by introducing new designs to the products. USARC Director Prof MPS Bisht stressed on usage of local resources for enhancing the project value.

Local Gram Pradhan Neha assured all support to such training programmes. As many as 30 women entrepreneurs are taking part in the training programme.

## Nainital resident avails more than five lakhs in the Ayushman Bharat scheme

**First in the State to do so**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Nainital resident Mohammad Hasim became the first person in the state to get treatment costing more than five lakhs in the Ayushman Bharat scheme. There is a limit of ₹5 lakh in a year for the golden card holders under the scheme but the limit can be increased in exceptional cases. Hasim, 62-year-old, was suffering from a type of heart failure.

He was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh recently.

The associate professor at department of cardiology, Dr Barun Kumar said that to save the life of this patient of heart failure, it was very important to install a CRT-D device in his body. "This device functions like a pacemaker."

After all tests found that the patient has breathing problems and his heart function is not functioning properly and the heart size has also become larger. It was decided

to install CRT-D devices to save the life of the patient. This process of installing the device has been done without making the patient unconscious," he said.

The Director AIIMS Rishikesh, Dr Ravikant commended the team of doctors who carried out the complex procedure of device transplantation.

The State Coordinator of Ayushman Bharat Yojana Uttarakhand, Atul Joshi said this is the first case in the state of treatment of a person with a Golden Card costing more than ₹5 lakh.

## GUEST COLUMN

# The first step towards regulation of social media



**A Surya Prakash**

Balancing the need for regulation to keep out obnoxious online content that promotes violence and vulgarity with the need to preserve our core constitutional values and freedom of expression is at the core of the new rules which have been formulated by the union government to address concerns regarding the new media.

The policy has tried to create the much-needed level-playing field between online

news platforms and print media on the one hand and online and television news media on the other and to bring the online news portals within the ambit of the Code of Ethics that govern the print media like the norms of journalistic conduct drawn up by the Press Council Act, the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Rules, 1994. This was long overdue because of the recklessness and irresponsibility that is on display in some of these platforms.

Similarly, while the cinema industry has a film certification agency with oversight responsibilities, OTT platforms have none. However, in order to ensure artistic freedom, the government has proposed self-regulation and said the OTT entities should get together, evolve a code and come up with content classification, so that a mechanism is evolved to pre-

clude non-adults from viewing adult content. They must get down to do it. The grievance redressal mechanism thought of is three-tier, with the publishers and self-regulating bodies being the first two. The third tier is the Central Government oversight committee. The policy proposed requires publishers to appoint grievance redressal officers and ensure time-bound acknowledgement and disposal of grievances. Then, there can be a self-regulating body headed by a retired judge.

Online platforms are wary of rules that seek verification of accounts, access control etc, but these issues need to be resolved within the framework of India's laws. For example, while mainstream media is conscious of provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) dealing with promotion of violence, enmity among communities, defamation etc, content on online

platforms seem to be totally oblivious of all this.

The vulgar comments posted on social media about women professionals in media or in other fields and the inability of the Indian State to deal with such behaviour makes one wonder whether the IPC is inapplicable in cyber space.

The Indian digital and OTT players can draw lessons from the concerted action taken by the digital companies in Australia which have come together and drawn up a code to deal with fake news and disinformation. It is called the Australian Code of Practice on Disinformation and Misinformation and it was released only recently by the Digital Industry Group.

Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) has welcomed the initiative and said

more than two-thirds of Australians were concerned about "what is real or fake on the internet". In response, ACMA says the digital platforms agreed to self-regulatory code "to provide safeguards against serious harms arising from the spread of dis- and misinformation". Some of the actions promised by the digital platforms include disabling of accounts and removal of content.

In the UK, the Government is all set to bring in a law to make online companies responsible for harmful content and also to punish companies which fail to remove such content. The aim of the proposed "Online Safety Bill" is to protect internet users and deal firmly with platforms that promote violence, terrorist material, child-abuse, cyber bullying etc. The Digital Secretary, Mr. Oliver Dowden

was quoted as saying "I'm unabashedly pro-tech but that can't mean a tech free for all". This in a sense sums up the current mood in this issue across democracies.

In the U.K, self-regulation governs the print media and private television and radio are regulated by the Independent Television Commission and the Radio Authority as provided by a statute.

As regards the two ministers who announced the government's guidelines - Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad and Mr. Prakash Javadekar - it should not be forgotten that both of them are the heroes of what is called the "Second Freedom Struggle" when they fought against the dreaded Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the mid-1970s and suffered incarceration for about a year and a

half, so that the people got back their constitution and democracy.

Obviously, their commitment to basic democratic values has and will continue to influence their policy formulations vis-à-vis media regulation.

Finally, a word about the framework within which companies should operate in India. As the union minister for Information Technology Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad said, they must function with the laws of the land. This is non-negotiable.

In recent times, Twitter has tried to define freedom of expression and even claimed that it seeks to protect the freedom of expression of Indians. "Freedom of Expression" is embedded in our chapter on fundamental rights in our constitution and it is circumscribed by what are called

"reasonable restrictions". These are in place because India is a vibrant democracy and the most diverse society in the world with many social, political and economic complexities. That is why India's founding fathers have, with great intuition and foresight introduced a caveat vis-à-vis freedom of expression, so that constitutional rights promote internal peace and harmony. What these freedoms are and what these restrictions are have been defined by our Supreme Court in innumerable cases and the law as laid down by India's apex court is the law of the land. We do not want some private international companies to assume the role of some supra courts and put their own spin on our Constitution.

(The writer is an independent journalist)



## Guru Ravidas Anniversary

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Saturday launched four welfare schemes at a state-level programme organised here to mark the 644th birth anniversary of Guru Ravidas.

The district-level virtual programmes were also organised in all 22 districts.

Khattar launched Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Parivar Uththan Yojana under which selection of one lakh poor families residing in the state who are having lowest family income would be done through Parivar Pehchan Patra portal. So far 65 lakh families have been identified, he said.

"Every possible effort will be made to increase the family income of such families' to at least Rs 8,000 to Rs 9,000 per month. For this, the government will emphasise on skill development, besides providing employment opportunities and

# Haryana CM launches 4 schemes to mark



financial assistance," he said.

On the occasion the Chief Minister announced an increase in financial assistance under the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Awas Navinikarn Yojna to Rs 80,000 from Rs 50,000 for the repair of houses belonging to the Scheduled Caste families living below poverty line (BPL). He also announced that the BPL families belonging to any category will be able to avail the benefits of Dr B.R. Ambedkar

Awas Navinikarn Yojna.

Earlier, this scheme was limited to the BPL families belonging to the Scheduled Caste. He said from April 1 the annual income slab of the BPL families would be increased from Rs 1.20 lakh to Rs 1.80 lakh. Also the legal aid given to the Scheduled Caste has been increased to Rs 21,000 from Rs 11,000. Khattar said in a bid to spread the message of social harmony, brotherhood, and

removing the evils of casteism, a sum of Rs 11 crore has been allocated under the Sant Mahapurush Vichar Samman and Prasaar Yojana.

Under this scheme, financial assistance from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh will be provided to the social and religious organisations for holding programmes on the birth anniversary of the saint at the block and gram levels.

Khattar said Guru Ravidas is still relevant today and everyone while rising above caste, creed, class and community should take inspiration from the life and teachings of such great personalities for ensuring brotherhood and social harmony in society. "On this auspicious day, I bow to the great Saint Guru Ravidas Ji. I urge everyone to come forward and strengthen the bonds of society by following the path of reverence, devotion, equality and compassion shown by him," he said.

## PSPCL has recruited 10378 employees in the past 4 years, says CMD Venu Prasad



PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) has recruited 10378 employees in the past 4 years as its contribution in the implementation of the Ghar Ghar Naukari (Job to every household) initiative of Punjab Government. "The PSPCL has given jobs to 7866 technical employees of 17 different categories and 2512 non technical employees of 10 different categories", PSPCL CMD A.Venu Prasad said on Saturday.

The CMD said that recently PSPCL has advertised 2632 posts of 5 different categories including 1700 assistant line-men. He further said that the recruitment process for the appointment of these posts will start in near future. He added that PSPCL has already given employment to 1406 dependents of deceased employees of the corporation since January 2017. Divulging the details, he added that 1112 dependants have been given jobs under group 'D' and 294 under group 'C'.

## Ambala Jail in Haryana now has 'Jail-Radio'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Rajeev Arora on Saturday inaugurated the third 'Jail-Radio' of Haryana in the Central Jail, Ambala.

In his address, Arora, said that the main objective of starting Jail-Radio is to promote art, creativity and harmony among the inmates. On this occasion, DGP (Jails) K.K. Selvaraj was also present. Earlier, jail-radios have also been started in Panipat and Faridabad in collaboration with 'Tinka-Tinka Foundation'.

Arora said that the Central Jail at Ambala is considered as a historic jail in India and is among the three Central Jails of the state.

He said that though a Jail has a restricted environment but with the introduction of radio, its inmates will be interacting with the outside world. He said that there are a total of

19 jails in Haryana and the state government plans to start jail-radio in almost all the jails in order to initiate the process of Jail reforms for inmates. He also shared that the authorities concerned have been in dialogue with the founders and office-bearers of various NGOs regarding introducing more Jail reforms.

Selvaraj said that the first phase of installation of Jail-Radio in Jails has been completed with the introduction of radio in Ambala Jail and now Jail-Radio will be started in four other jails of the state under the second phase. He said that he was satisfied with the improvement in behaviour of inmates in state jails. Jail Superintendent, Lakhbir Singh said that the introduction of Jail Radio has helped in transforming frustration in inmates towards positive thinking and is like a ray of hope for the inmates and will further enhance creativity in them."

## Himachal CM lays foundation stone of Shiv Dham at Mandi

PNS ■ MANDI

Shiv Dham will be constructed at Mandi by spending an amount of over Rs. 150 and would be an added attraction for the tourists visiting Mandi district, Himachal Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said on Saturday.

Speaking after laying the foundation stone of Shiv Dham Phase-I at Mandi, Thakur said that the credit of this goes to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who helped the State in getting clearance of Shiv Dham project and 604 other projects hanging in fire for need of forest clearances.

The first Phase of this project would be completed at a cost of Rs. 40 crore. Thakur He also laid the foundation stone of multi-storey parking near U-Block to be constructed at an estimated cost of about Rs. 100 crore on Public Private Partnership mode.

Thakur said that a Rs. 27 crore Anaj Mandi (Grain Market) would be constructed in Mandi town as soon as the State gets forest clearances. He said that the Finance Commission has also recommended ₹1,000 crore for Greenfield Airport Mandi and ₹400 crore for



expansion of Kangra Airport.

The Chief Minister said that the Shiv Dham would be developed in an area of 9.5 hectare at Kangnidhar and would be a major attraction for the tourists visiting Chhoti Kashi Mandi. He said that the Shiv Dham would have replicas of twelve Jyotirlingam, statues of Lord Shiva and Ganesh, Museum, Food Court, Herbal Garden, Nakshatra Vatika, Amphi-theatre, Orientation Centre, Car Parking etc.

He said that developmental projects worth Rs. 300 crore were being executed during the last three years in Mandi town. The Chief Minister said that the present State Government has completed three years in office and this was possible due to the active support and cooperation of the people of the State. He said that the new responsibility also brought in new challenges, but with peoples' cooperation every challenge was converted into opportunity. He said that in the first round of the test, the BJP

won all the four seats in Parliament with a record margin.

### CONDEMNNS BEHAVIOUR OF CONG MLAS

Jai Ram Thakur said that the act and conduct of the Leader of Opposition and other MLAs of Congress in Vidhan Sabha was indeed highly condemnable and against the rich tradition of the culture of the State. He said that this shows that the Congress today was a leaderless, directionless and issueless party. He said that there was a competition between the leaders of Congress to exhibit their supremacy to catch the attention of their Central leaders.

State In-charge BJP Avinash Rai Khanna said that the incident that took place yesterday in Vidhan Sabha was uncalled for and unwarranted. He said that the Congress leaders stooped so low by indulging in hooliganism and manhandling even the Governor.

## After Guv heckling by Cong MLAs, Dy Speaker calls on Dattatraya



PNS ■ SHIMLA

A day after Congress MLAs heckled Himachal Governor Bandaru Dattatraya in the Assembly complex, Deputy Speaker of Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha Hans Raj called on the Governor at Raj Bhavan, here. It was described as a courtesy call.

Later, Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu, along with other senior officers of the Police Department called on the Governor. In view of development occurring in the premises of the Legislative Assembly, the Governor reviewed the security arrangements with DGP.

The DGP expressed grief over the inconvenience caused to the Governor and said that it was unexpected and unfortunate. He said that as a first citizen of the State, the police administration has decided to take extra precaution and provide a high security system to the Governor in their future activities. He said that he would

be provided 'Professional Advice' and a Road Clearing System to be developed.

At present there was only one Personnel Security Officer (PSO) deputed during the functional activity or in the movement of the Governor but now, the system would be changed and 'Close Protection Team' would be deployed in which more professional police Commandos would be engaged and the current PSO system would be changed.

He said that Advance Security would be provided in important and big programs and efforts would be made in such programs that both the Add-de-Camp (ADC) of the Governor would move together. He said that in the event of any adverse situation, the officer posted under the protection of the Governor could make the call for backup and the police administration was determined to provide strict security to the Governor and would not allow any lapse in this regard.

DGP said that the police administration will try to provide DSP security facility in Raj Bhavan also.

A day before, in the budget session of Himachal Pradesh Assembly on Friday, five Congress legislators including Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri were suspended for allegedly jostling the Governor when he was leaving the Assembly complex after his address. The Congress MLAs - Mukesh Agnihotri, Harsh Varhan Chauhan, Sunder Singh Thakur, Satpal Raizada and Vinay Kumar, were suspended for the entire session till March 20. No Congress MLA was present in the House at the time of suspension of the five MLAs.

The Congress MLAs had allegedly tried to stop the Governor in front of the Speaker's chamber when he was going towards his cavalcade, accompanied by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur after addressing the Assembly on the opening day of the budget session.

### THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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In my Indian Navy Service records My Son's name is SARTHAK whereas his correct name is SARTHAK KUMAR and it should be updated. Service No-122304-R Rank: Ex POELP Alok Kumar S/o Yogendra Mandal, R/o B-13/8 ONGC Colony, North, Distt Dehradun.

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client Shri Sunil Chamoli S/o Shri Maniram Chamoli R/o 160/9C, Neelkanth Vihar, Neshvillia Road, Distt. Dehradun, Uttarakhand is recorded land holder of a piece of land entered at Khata No. 887 comprising in Kharsa No. 2214 measuring 2025 Sq Ft. or 188.19 Sq Mtrs., situated at Mauza Raipur Pargana Parvaddun, Tehsil Sadar, Distt. Dehradun. In the series of chain of documents, Regd. sale deed Dtd. 11.06.2014, duly Regd. in the Office of Sub-Registrar IV Dehradun in Book No. 1 Vol. 1246 at pages 161 to 190 at Sr. No. 3064 on 11.06.2014, executed by Smt. Chandra Devi W/o Late Shri Shyam Lal R/o Nehru Gram, Raipur, Dehradun in favour of Smt. Jyoti Patwal W/o Shri Shailendra Singh Patwal D/o Shri Ranjeet Singh Rana R/o Vill. Dang P.O. Kaljikhah, Distt. Pauri Garhwal has been lost. If anyone has any right, claim, title or interest over the above piece of land on the basis of above referred lost document, he may lodge his objections by contacting me at my following address within a period of 15 days from the date of its publication. After the expiry of the said period, if anyone, having any claim over the said piece of land shall be deemed to have been abandoned completely and my client would be fully entitled to avail financial assistance against the security of the said property by way of Equitable mortgage.

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## Punjab records 11 more Covid-19 deaths, 595 fresh cases

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With 595 fresh Covid-19 cases in Punjab, the infection tally in the State rose to 1,81,597 on Saturday, while 11 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 5,825, a medical bulletin said.

SBS Nagar saw a maximum 75 fresh Covid-19 cases, Jalandhar 70, Patiala 69, Ludhiana 62, among others. A total of 368 coronavirus patients were discharged after recovering from infection, taking the number of cured persons to 1,71,0336, the bulletin said.

There are 14 critical patients who are on ventilator support, while 79 are on oxygen support, it said. Over 29,023 samples were collected for Covid-19 testing on Saturday. So far, 49,82,773 samples have been tested for coronavirus in the state, the bulletin added.

### 60 NEW CASES IN CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh on Saturday reported 60 more coronavirus cases, taking the Union Territory's infection count to 21,719, according to a medical bulletin. No Covid-19 related death was reported on Saturday and the toll stood at 351, as per the bulletin.

## AAP to raise issues of MSP, post-matric scholarship, farm loan waiver and electricity in Budget Session

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has decided to question Capt Amarinder Singh government and raise four main issues of MSP, post-matric scholarship, farm loan waiver and electricity in the upcoming budget session. The decision was taken during an all-MLA meeting presided over by senior leader of the party and Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Punjab Assembly, Harpal Singh Cheema at the party headquarters on Saturday.

Addressing the media after the party meeting, Cheema said that Capt Amarinder Singh had failed to fulfil all the promises that he made back in 2017. "It has been 4 years since then and we have reached the final budget session and none of those promises have yet been fulfilled," he added.

Cheema said that as the principal opposition party in the assembly, AAP will take up all these issues in the budget session to show the people of Punjab, the failures of the Captain government. Taking a dig, Cheema further said that Capt Amarinder along with SAD helped Prime Minister Narendra Modi pass the black farm laws. "Once, it was passed Captain occupied himself in theatrics and tried to fool the

people of Punjab into believing that he was pro-farmer when in reality all he tried to do was to derail the farmer protests," added Cheema. He further said that instead of fighting the black farm laws seriously, Captain passed a weak resolution in the assembly against the farm laws which he did not send to the parliament in time.

He said that later, Captain passed amendment acts in the Assembly which had no legal standing to counter the laws. "Nor did Captain meet the PM and oppose these laws, but he also failed to give the farmers MSP, which was their initial right. Instead of fighting for their rights, Captain is going around telling farmers to accept the proposals given by the central govt," said Cheema. Hence, in the upcoming budget session, the AAP would raise the issue of MSP, he added. Further slamming Captain Amarinder and his minister for looting the Dalit students of Punjab, Cheema said that minister Sadhu Singh Dharamsot gobbled up the money meant for the education of poor Dalit students and Captain Amarinder had still not taken any action against him. "Captain released a new post-matric scholarship scheme in the state and provided no benefits to the students. He also formed a com-

mittee chaired by Manpreet Badal to look into how the colleges can be paid their dues so that the degrees of the students are released, but even that committee has done nothing," said Cheema. He said that Captain Amarinder had failed to provide education to the Dalit students and now the colleges and the students were suffering. Cheema said that more than 1,600 colleges were on the verge of being shut and more than 50,000 students had not got their degrees. He said the AAP will also raise the issue of post-matric scholarship in the upcoming budget session.

Talking about the recent suicides of farmers in Dasuya and Tarn Taran because of indebtedness, Cheema said that more than 65 farmers had killed themselves because of the heavy loans which they were unable to pay. "Captain Amarinder had promised that he would waive off all the loans of the farmers, however, the farmers kept on waiting. When nothing changed, they took the desperate path of suicide," he said. Cheema said that the party MLAs met these families and shared their pain. He said that the families were devastated with the loss and they were even more devastated with the betrayal they got from Captain Amarinder Singh.

## Army officer's wife crowned Mrs India 2nd runner up



PNS ■ MHOW

A courageous and proud Army officer's wife, Timsi Bector was adjudged as 'Mrs India - 2021-2nd runners up (VPR)' and crowned as 'Mrs Perfectionist' at a four-day Mrs India Event organized at Ahemadabad from February 17 to 20.

Her birth moment was indicative that she will emerge as a fighter and has a mission to accomplish in life. Declared dead, before she was born and miraculously survived after entering this world, she was born and brought up in a middle class family.

Father, now a retired PCS officer, mother a social activist and cancer survivor, a younger brother who survived a massive accident after 3 major brain surgeries, she has witnessed rains and droughts.

She completed her studies through all odds as a schol-

Class apart, Army officers are meant to be the most disciplined and cultured clan

arship holder, topper throughout her life. She has done M.Sc in Human Genetics, M.Phil Zoology, M.Ed. She served as a Lecturer and a Principal. Being from an entirely different professional stream, she always dreamt of becoming a model. Belonging to a small town Bassi Pathana, a normal stereotype family in Punjab, she could never dare to pursue her dreams. Her destiny changed when she got married to an Army Officer, then Major and now Lt Col Amit Bector.

Class apart, Army officers are meant to be the most disciplined and cultured clan. So immediately after marriage, her husband saw dreams in her eyes and talents in her personality. That was the first time she walked on the ramp and got crowned too.

Being an intellectual, God fearing and rooted to the culture lady, she was always more inclined towards her family. Performing the duties of a wife, a daughter-in-law, a mother of 2 daughters- 12 years and 5 years old, she never gave up on her dreams. Her husband supported her.

The pageant took place in Ahemadabad, where 41 contestants participated as finalists out of 250 shortlisted from all over India. Due to her breathtaking beauty, intellect and talent, she was crowned as one of the three winners of Finale.

### NORTHERN RAILWAY

#### Restriction on parcel booking during Kumbh Mela-2021

In view of Kumbh Mela, Haridwar-2021, restriction is imposed on handling of parcel traffic booking and Luggage in brake vans/VPs/PCEts (including leased traffic) at Yog Nagari Rishikesh, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Roorkee, Lakshar Jn. & Najibabad Jn. Following modification in existing restriction w.r.t. Haridwar & Najibabad Jn. station are made.

#### (I) Najibabad Jn. (Under total restriction upto 30.04.2021)

Stations	Restriction dates	Modification in restriction dates	
		From	To
Najibabad Jn.	11.03.21 (Mahashiv Ratri)	09.03.21	13.03.21
	12.04.21 (Somvati Amavasya)	10.04.21	16.04.21
	27.04.21 (Chaitra Pooranmashi)	25.04.21	29.04.21

#### (ii) HARIDWAR (Reduction in days of the first phase restriction)

Existing restriction	Days	Modification restriction
Up to 02.03.21	07	Up to 28.02.21

Restriction for 2nd phase (till March) of Kumbh Mela (with modification) for Haridwar & Najibabad Jn. is as below:-

Stations	Restriction
Haridwar	27.02.21 (Magh Purnima) Up to 28.02.21
	11.03.21 (Mahashivratri) 09.03.21 to 13.03.21
Yognagri Rishikesh	27.02.21 (Magh Purnima) Up to 02.03.21
	11.03.21 (Mahashivratri) 09.03.21 to 13.03.21
Najibabad Jn.	11.03.21 (Mahashivratri) 09.03.21 to 13.03.21

Rest of the restrictions on Roorkee, Lakshar Jn. & Rishikesh will remain the same as communicated vide this office circular no. 20 of 2020 dated 04.01.2021.

455/2021

Dy. Chief Commercial Manager/FM-II

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

# National action plan to boost toy industry: PM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the Government has prepared a 'National Toy Action Plan' that includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive and provide it with a global platform.

The Prime Minister said the ancient toy culture of the country reflects the practice of reuse and recycling, which is part of the Indian lifestyle.

He said India has the potential to take the world back to eco-friendly toys.

The fair that will continue from February 27 to March 2 aims to bring together all stakeholders including buyers, sellers, students, teachers, designers, etc on a virtual platform to create sustainable linkages and encourage dialogue for the overall development of the industry, according to a Government statement.

Speaking at the India Toy Fair 2021 here that he also inaugurated, the Prime Minister said the Government has prepared a National Toy Action Plan. It includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive, 'Aatmanirbhar', and to provide it with a global platform.

"This first Toy Fair is not just a business or economic event. This programme is a link to strengthen the country's age-old culture of sports and gaiety. India toy culture is as old as the Indus Valley



Civilisation. The world has studied the toys of the Mohenjo-Daro and Harappan era," he said.

Prime Minister had in his 'Ma'am ki baat' radio programme also stressed the role played by the toys in shaping mind and reflected on the rich and varied Indian tradition of toy making.

Addressing the Toy Fair that he inaugurated, the Prime Minister said that India has given the world some of the most popular games like Chess and ludo.

"Chess, which is so popular in the world today, was earlier played in India as 'Chaturanga or Chaduranga'. Modern Ludo was played as 'Pachisi'. In our scriptures too, there are descriptions of young Lord Ram, and Lord Krishna's toys," he said.

Modi said that even today Indian toys are simpler and cheaper than western toys and appealed to the manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology and psychology.

"Try to use less plastic in toys. Use such things that can be recycled," he said.

Indian toys, he said, contain elements of science, enter-

tainment and psychology.

"Take Lattu (top) as an example. When children learn to play with Lattu, they learn about gravity and balance. In the same way, a child playing with a slingshot inadvertently starts learning basics about kinetic energy and potential energy. Puzzle toys develop strategic thinking and problem-solving thinking," Prime Minister said to explain.

Modi said that the new National Education Policy also incorporates play-based and activity-based education.

"This is an education system in which logical and creative thinking can be increased in children through riddles and games. Special attention has been given to this," he said.

The Prime Minister asserted that in the field of toys, India has tradition and technology coupled with concepts and competence.

"We can take the world back towards eco-friendly toys. The National Toy Action Plan has been prepared which includes 15 ministries and departments to make the industry competitive, Aatmanirbhar and take India's toys to the world," he said.

## India, B'desh agree to finish early completion of border fencing, tackle terrorism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India and Bangladesh on Saturday decided to finish the early completion of border fencing and tackle the menace of cross-border terrorism. At the virtual Home Secretary level talks, headed by Union Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Bangladesh Mostafa Kamal Uddin, Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh led the Bangladesh delegation.

"India and Bangladesh attach highest importance to their bilateral relations. Both Secretaries reiterated their commitment to further expand and strengthen mutual cooperation in the security and border related issues. Both sides reaffirmed not to allow the territory of either country to be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests."

"The 19th Home Secretary Level Talks (HSLT) between India and Bangladesh were held virtually today in the backdrop of 'MujibBarsho' and 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation War and establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The Indian delega-

tion was led by Shri Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Union Home Secretary. Sh. Mostafa Kamal Uddin, Senior Secretary, Public Security Division, Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh led the Bangladesh delegation.

"India and Bangladesh attach highest importance to their bilateral relations. Both Secretaries reiterated their commitment to further expand and strengthen mutual cooperation in the security and border related issues. Both sides reaffirmed not to allow the territory of either country to be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests. Both sides discussed early completion of pending fencing along the Indo Bangladesh Border (IBB) as agreed by the Prime Ministers of the two countries," said Union Home Ministry in a statement.

## ED attaches ₹84.40 cr assets of Kanva group of companies

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached immovable assets (agricultural and non-agricultural land, buildings, residential flat and factories) worth ₹84.40 crore held by Kanva Group of companies and related entities besides those of Founder Director and President of Bengaluru-based Sree Kanva Souharda Co-Operative Credit Limited (SKSCCL), Harish S.

The accused individuals and the entities had collected ₹ 650 crore from the public and total attachments in the case is about ₹340 crore.

The attached assets are situated at Nelamangala, Koratagere, Chikkaballapura, Srirangapatana and Bengaluru in Karnataka and at Madakasira in Andhra Pradesh.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of a complaint received from the Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Bengaluru and various registered FIRs wherein it was alleged that the entity has collected ₹650 crore deposits from the members of public, assuring high rate of interest through commission agents, without maintaining required liquidity.

## EC freezes Assam Govt order on transfer, posting of police officers

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to keep in abeyance Assam Government's decision of transferring and posting over a dozen police officers after the announcement of poll schedule.

The poll body has written to chief secretaries and chief electoral officers of five States—West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry—going for the polls, drawing the particular provisions of model code of conduct to the party in power and immediate enforcement of the MCC.

According to the EC, the Assam Government ordered the transfer of 12 IPS and 6 APS officers on the day the election schedule was announced. The Commission, therefore, decided to keep the transfer/posting of these police officers in abeyance till further orders. In West Bengal, the poll body replaced the top cop in charge of law and order for the State. Jag Mohan, who was previously DG (Fire Services), has been named as the new ADG and IGP (Law and Order), replacing Jawed Shamim "with immediate effect and in the interest of public service". Shamim will now take over the DG (Fire Services) position.

In a letter, the EC said "...the particular provisions of Model Code of Conduct relating to the 'party in power' which inter alia says that the party in power whether at the Centre or in the States concerned, shall ensure that no cause is given for any complaint that it has used its official position for the purposes of its election campaign".

"The Ministers shall not combine their official visit with



electioneering work and also shall not make use of official machinery or personnel during the electioneering work." There shall be a total ban on use of official vehicle by any political party, candidate or any other person connected with election (except officials performing any election related official duty) for campaigning, electioneering or election related travel during elections. The government transport including official air-crafts, vehicles, machinery and personnel shall not be used for furtherance of the interest of the party in power," the EC said in its communications.

The EC also stated that public places such as maidans etc., for holding election meetings, and use of helpads for air-flights in connection with elections shall not be monopolised by itself. Other parties and candidates shall be allowed the use of such places and facilities on the same terms and conditions on which they are used by the party in power," it said.

The EC further points out that rest houses, dak bungalows or other government accommodation where elections have been announced or are taking place can be given to the political functionaries who are provided security by the State in Z scale or above or equivalent by various State Governments or

the Central Government under provisions of their laws, on equitable basis.

"This shall be subject to condition that such accommodation is not already allotted or occupied by election related officials or Observers. Such political functionaries shall not carry out any political activity while staying in the Government Guest Houses/Rest Houses or other Government accommodation etc," it said.

The poll body further said that no advertisements shall be issued in electronic and print media highlighting the achievements of the government at the cost of public exchequer. "If any advertisement has already been released for telecast/broadcast or publication in the print media, it must be ensured that the telecast/broadcast of such ads on electronic media is stopped forthwith and that no such ad is published in any newspapers, magazines, etc., i.e. in print media, from today itself and it should be immediately withdrawn," it said.

The MCC is a set of rules put in force by the Election Commission of India to guarantee free and fair elections. It is a set of norms that have evolved with political parties consenting to abide by the principles embodied in the said code.

## 'Hunar Haat boon for Vocal for Local plan'

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Saturday said here that the "Hunar Haat" is playing "phenomenal and perfect" role in making "Vocal for Local" campaign a "mass movement" and as of now given employment to over five lakh people and 'still counting'.

Speaking at the "Hunar Haat" in Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here Naqvi said that "Hunar Haat" has been becoming "Kumbh of backers of brilliance".

Naqvi said that more than 12 lakh people have visited the "Hunar Haat", started from 20th February and become "Proud Promoter" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Vocal for Local" campaign by purchasing handmade products of indigenous artisans and craftsmen worth crores of rupees.

The number of visitors is likely to go above 16 lakh in the next two days, he said. This "Hunar Haat" will be concluding on March first, 2021.

The 10-day "Hunar Haat" was inaugurated by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Several Ministers, MPs, senior government officials, various Diplomats, renowned industrialists have come here to encourage the artisans and



craftsmen.

More than 600 artisans and craftsmen from more than 31 States and UTs participating in the "Hunar Haat". Artisans and craftsmen from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal etc are participating in the "Hunar Haat" to display and sale of their indigenous handmade products.

Naqvi said that indigenous handmade products such as Applique work, dry flowers, jute-cane, brass products, wooden and clay toys, Ajrakh Block Print, Blue Art Pottery, Pashmina Shawl, Khadi products, Banarsi Silk, Wooden Furniture, Chikankari Embroidery, Chanderi Silk, Lac bangles, Rajasthan jewelry, Phulkari, Oil Painting, Leather products, Khurja pottery, Sandalwood artefacts from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Jute products from West Bengal, rare antiques made of glass, mats and carpets etc were available for sale and display at the "Hunar Haat".

Naqvi said that the visitors also enjoyed traditional deli-

cacies from every region of the country at "Bawarchikhana" section.

Besides, different cultural and musical programmes were daily presented by renowned artists of the country such as Vinod Rathore (21 Feb); Nizami Brothers (24 Feb); Sudesh Bhonsle (26 Feb); SI Kailash Kher (27 Feb) and others.

Naqvi said that the "Hunar Haat" has, as of now, provided employment and employment opportunities to more than 5 lakh 30,000 artisans, craftsmen and artists.

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs will provide employment and employment opportunities to 7 lakh 50,000 artisans and craftsmen through 75 "Hunar Haat" which will be organised by completion of 75 years of the country's independence.

The "Hunar Haat" is available on virtual and online platform <http://hunarhaat.org> and on GeM Portal also where the people of the country and abroad can buy products of indigenous artisans and craftsmen digital/online.

Next "Hunar Haat" will be organised in Bhopal (12 to 21 March 2021); Goa (25 March to 04 April); Kota (9 April to 18 April); Surat (23 April to 2 May).

## NIA files chargesheet against four in human trafficking case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Saturday filed a chargesheet against four persons in a case relating to human trafficking in the guise of running placement agencies before the NIA Special Court, Ranchi under various Sections of the IPC, Provisions of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015.

Those charged are Panna Lal Mahto, Sunita Devi (absconding), Gopal Oraon and Shiv Shankar Ganju.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 07/2019 at AHTU police station in Khunti, Jharkhand on July 19, 2019 in which the accused Panna Lal Mahto, aged about 37 years, of village Ganaloya under Murhu police station, Khunti was arrested for running a Human Trafficking network in Jharkhand and New Delhi.

The NIA had taken over the investigation on June 13 last year after re-registering the case as RC-09/2020/NIA/DLI.

"During investigation, it was revealed that Panna Lal Mahto, the kingpin of human trafficking racket, along with his wife, Sunita Devi, was operating a Human Trafficking network in the guise of six Placement Agencies in Delhi. They used to traffic poor and innocent minor boy and girls from Jharkhand on the pretext of providing them jobs in Delhi and neighbouring States. However, the victims were exploited and were never paid the promised remunerations," the NIA said in a statement.

During the investigation, two other accused Gopal Oraon and Shiv Shankar Ganju, both residents of Khunti district were arrested. Both were close associates of the kingpin Panna Lal Mahto, and were actively involved in trafficking vulnerable persons from Jharkhand, it said.

Investigation has also revealed that both were owners of three Placement Agencies in Delhi, involved in human trafficking racket. Another accused Sunita Devi, wife of arrested accused Panna Lal Mahto, is absconding.

## The Pioneer ready to undergo major facelift

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Battling insolvency proceedings, *The Pioneer* media group is gearing up to undergo a major facelift. The group is planning to augment its revenue, improve its contents, and radically change its digital presence through the introduction of new technology, new marketing strategy and revamping of its circulation.

The senior employees of the newspaper both from the management and the editorial side met on Saturday under the leadership of NCLT-appointed Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) Ranjeet Kumar Verma where it was decided to effectively tackle the "existential" challenge the one of the oldest media houses in the country is facing.

"I am here as a representative of the court and my main objective is to keep *The Pioneer* group as a going concern. I've no score to settle or no axe to grind. I want the cooperation of everyone to make *The Pioneer* a vibrant brand again, both in Hindi and English," Verma said during the course of an exchange of idea session. He added that he expected the company operation to return to normal in a short while.

The IRP assured the employees that their priority would be look into a range of



serious issues flagged by them regarding their remuneration and staff shortage. "I will do everything possible to create a proper atmosphere so that everyone can contribute to the revival of the company," he said.

He said he didn't believe in a witch-hunt, but he expected everyone to help him implement the court's order in letter and spirit.

The Delhi bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) last month initiated insolvency proceedings against the CMYK Printech, which runs the operation of *The Pioneer* newspaper, following a plea by one of its directors.

## KVIC's e-market portal touches new milestone, gives big push to 'swadeshi'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Khadi and Village Industry Commission's (KVIC) foray into the online marketing segment has found tremendous public patronage. Testimony to this is the gross turnover of over Rs 1.12 crore in just 8 months of the launch of Khadi's e-portal [www.khadiindia.gov.in](http://www.khadiindia.gov.in).

Launched on July 7, 2020, Khadi e-portal has delivered orders to over 10,000 customers out of the 65,000 people who visited the e-portal till date. The KVIC has also delivered more than 1 lakh articles/commodities to these customers. During this period, the average online purchase has recorded at Rs 11,000 per customer, which is an indication of Khadi's ever-growing popularity and the diversity of its product range.

Minister of MSME Nitin Gadkari has lauded Khadi's successful e-commerce venture saying this provided a wide marketing platform for various Khadi and village industry products to a larger population. "E-marketing of Khadi is proving to be a game-changer. Our efforts should be to reach a turnover of Rs 200 crore per year," Gadkari said.

KVIC has developed the e-portal in-house without spending a single rupee on web-developing. Unlike other online portals, the KVIC takes care of all logistics and infrastructure support like cataloguing, product photograph, maintaining online inventory and packaging and transportation of goods to the customers' doorsteps. This saves Khadi artisans, institutions and PMEGP units man-

ufacturing Khadi products from any financial burden. "All expenses incurred on operating Khadi e-portal is borne by the KVIC. While in case of other e-commerce sites, product cataloguing, packaging and dispatch are the responsibility of the respective sellers, KVIC has a policy that the Khadi institutions and PMEGP units are exempted from any such financial and logistical burden. This saves them a lot of money and, therefore, Khadi's e-portal is a unique platform for lakhs of Khadi artisans," KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

Khadi's online sale that started with just Khadi Face Masks during the Covid-19 lockdown, has evolved into a full-fledged E-market platform with nearly 800 products.

## Statins reduce Covid severity: Research

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People who took statins — widely used cholesterol-lowering medications — may have reduced risk of developing severe Covid-19 disease, a team of researchers said adding that they were approximately 50 per cent less likely to die if hospitalised for the infection.

"Our study is one of the larger studies confirming this hypothesis and the data lay the groundwork for future randomized clinical trials that are needed to confirm the benefit of statins in Covid-19," said Aakriti Gupta, cardiologist at NewYorkPresbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center and one of the co-lead authors of the study published in the Nature

Communications.

"If their beneficial effect bears out in randomized clinical trials, statins could potentially prove to be a low-cost and effective therapeutic strategy for COVID-19," adds co-lead author Mahesh V Madhavan, cardiologist at New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

Gupta, Madhavan, and the study's leadership group are cardiologists who cared for hospitalized Covid-19 patients in the spring and summer of 2020 when the first wave of the pandemic swept through New York City. "We observed that patients who got very sick and required hospitalization had high rates of hyperinflammation and clotting," says Elaine

Wan, the Esther Aboodi Assistant Professor of Medicine in Cardiology and Cardiac Electrophysiology and a cardiac electrophysiologist at NewYork Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, one of the study's senior authors.

"As cardiologists, statins naturally came to mind," Gupta says. "In addition to their well-known cholesterol-lowering effect, statins are known for their anti-inflammatory, anticoagulant and immunomodulatory properties."

Based on their observations, the authors looked at outcomes for 2,626 patients with Covid-19 who were admitted to a quaternary academic medical center in Manhattan during the first 18 weeks of the pandemic.

## Govt should shed its 'arrogance', reduce fuel taxes: Congress

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress Saturday accused the Modi Government of ignoring the woes of common man and asked it to shed its "arrogance" and reduce the tax imposed on petrol, diesel and LPG.

Addressing a press conference here, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said the government should immediately roll back the additional taxes of ₹23.78 and ₹28.37 per litre on petrol and diesel respectively, which will help bring down fuel prices. He quoted Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's words as Gujarat Chief Minister to urge the government to reduce the high tax components on petroleum products. Singhvi said the common man is already hurt due to rising inflation and joblessness amid a decline in the economy post-pandemic.

The PM may ignore the Congress' demand, but he should at least listen to his own words as Gujarat CM during the UPA regime at the Centre, or may heed RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das's advice that the rising fuel prices will have a cascading effect, the Congress leader said.



# Myanmar police deploy early to crank up pressure on protests

AP ■ YANGON

Police in Myanmar escalated their crackdown on demonstrators against this month's military takeover, deploying early and in force on Saturday as protesters sought to assemble in the country's two biggest cities and elsewhere.

Security forces in some areas appeared to become more aggressive in using force and making arrests, utilising more plainclothes officers than had previously revealed themselves. Photos posted on social media showed that residents of at least two cities, Yangon and Monywa, resisted by erecting makeshift street barricades to try to hinder the advance of the police.

Myanmar's crisis took a dramatic turn on the international stage at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday when the country's UN ambassador declared his loyalty to the ousted civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi and called on the world to pressure the military to cede power.

There were arrests Saturday in Myanmar's two



Police stand in formation blocking a main road in Mandalay, Myanmar on Saturday

AP

biggest cities, Yangon and Mandalay, where demonstrators have been hitting the streets daily to peacefully demand the restoration of the government of Suu Kyi, whose National League for Democracy party won a landslide election victory in

November. Police have increasingly been enforcing an order by the junta banning gatherings of five or more people.

Many other cities and towns have also hosted large protests against the Feb. 1 coup. Police in Dawei, in the southeast, and Monywa, 135

kilometres northwest of Mandalay, used force against protesters. Both cities, with populations of less than 200,000 each, have been seeing large demonstrations.

Social media carried unconfirmed reports of a protester shot dead in Monywa.

The reports could not immediately be independently confirmed but appeared credible, with both photos and identification of the victim. The reports from Monywa also said dozens or more people were arrested.

The military takeover reversed years of slow progress toward democracy after five decades of military rule. Suu Kyi's party would have been installed for a second five-year term in office, but the army blocked Parliament from convening and detained her and President Win Myint, as well as other top members of her government.

At the General Assembly in New York, Myanmar's UN ambassador, Kyaw Moe Tun, declared in an emotional speech to follow delegates that he represented Suu Kyi's "civilian government elected by the people" and supported the fight against military rule.

He urged all countries to issue public statements strongly condemning the coup, and to refuse to recognise the military regime. He also called for stronger international measures to stop violence by security forces against peaceful demonstrators.

## Myanmar's UN envoy dramatically opposes coup in his country

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Myanmar's UN ambassador strongly opposed the military coup in his country and appealed for the "strongest possible action from the international community" to immediately restore democracy in a dramatic speech to the UN General Assembly Friday that drew loud applause from many diplomats in the 193-nation global body.

Ambassador Kyaw Moe Tun began his statement saying he represented Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy "civilian government elected by the people" in November, and supported their fight for the end of military rule.

He urged all countries to issue public statements strongly condemning the military coup, and to refuse to recognize the military regime and ask its leaders to respect the free and fair elections in November



In this image taken from video by UNTV, Myanmar Ambassador to the United Nations Kyaw Moe Tun flashes the three-fingered salute, a gesture of defiance done by anti-coup protesters in Myanmar, at the end of his speech before the UN General Assembly at the United Nations on Friday

AP

won by Suu Kyi's NLD party. He also urged stronger international measures to stop violence by security forces against peaceful demonstrators.

"It is time for the military to immediately relinquish power and release those detained," Tun said, agreeing

with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "that military coup is not acceptable in this modern world and the coup must cease."

"We will continue to fight for a government which is of the people, by the people, for the people," he vowed.

## GLOBE TROTTER

### 42 ABDUCTED FROM NIGERIAN SCHOOL FREED

**Lagos:** An official says 42 people including 27 students who were abducted two weeks ago from a school in northern Nigeria have been freed. The chief press secretary for the Niger state governor, Mary Noel-Berje, told The Associated Press on Saturday that those released have arrived in the State capital, Minna.

### COVID CASES CONTINUE TO RISE IN PAKISTAN

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's aviation authority on Saturday extended the existing restriction regarding the standard operating procedures for all inbound travellers for another two weeks as the nation continues to witness a surge in the number of coronavirus cases.

### IRAN EXPECTS 2.50,000 JABS FROM CHINA

**Tehran:** Iran's Health Ministry says the country expects to receive 250,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine from China on Saturday. Alireza Raisi, deputy Health Minister, says the country will receive doses of other vaccines, including from India, in the "near future" as the country struggles to fight the worst outbreak of the pandemic.

### GERMANY'S LEFT PICKS 2 WOMEN TO LEAD PARTY

**Berlin:** Germany's Left has picked two women to lead the anti-capitalist party into this fall's national election. A party conference on Saturday elected Janine Wissler and Susanne Hennig-Wellsow as co-leaders.

### UKRAINE SEES SECOND FATAL OXYGEN BLAST

**Kyiv:** An explosion in a Ukrainian hospital where Covid-19 patients are being treated has killed one person and injured another, authorities said on Saturday. The emergency service said that the explosion occurred in an oxygen pipe.

## Biden: Strikes in Syria sent warning to Iran to 'be careful'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden said Friday that Iran should view his decision to authorize US airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or personnel.

"You can't act with impunity. Be careful," Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send with the airstrikes, which the Pentagon said destroyed several buildings in eastern Syria but were not intended to eradicate the militia groups that used them to facilitate attacks inside Iraq.

Administration officials defended the Thursday night airstrikes as legal and appropriate, saying they took out facilities that housed valuable "capabilities" used by Iranian-backed militia groups to attack American and allied forces in Iraq.

John Kirby, the Pentagon's chief spokesperson, said mem-

bers of Congress were notified before the strikes as two Air Force F-15E aircraft launched seven missiles, destroying nine facilities and heavily damaging two others, rendering both "functionally destroyed." He said the facilities, at "entry control points" on the border, had been used by militia

groups the US deems responsible for recent attacks against US interests in Iraq.

In a political twist for the new Democratic administration, several leading Congress members in Biden's own party denounced the strikes, which were the first military actions he authorized.

## President Joe Biden protected US personnel, facilities: White House

**Washington:** The White House has said that through the airstrikes in Syria, President Joe Biden protected US personnel and facilities, and deterred the risk of additional attacks "over the coming weeks."

On Thursday, airstrikes in Syria targeted facilities belonging to a powerful Iranian-backed Iraqi armed group, reportedly killing one fighter and wounding several others.

The strikes came in the

wake of recent attacks on US interests in Iraq, including a rocket attack last week which killed a civilian contractor and injured a US service member and other coalition troops.

"The president is sending an unambiguous message that he's going to act to protect Americans, and when threats are posed, he has the right to take action at the time, and in the manner of his choosing," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters. **PTI**

## Attackers strike gas pipeline in eastern Syria, causing fire

**Damascus:** Attackers struck a gas pipeline in eastern Syria on Saturday, leaving it ablaze but causing no casualties, state news agency SANA reported, the latest incidence of sabotage against Syria's oil and gas infrastructure.

As in the past, no one claimed responsibility for the attack. Syria's nearly 10-year conflict, which has killed about half a million people, has also badly affected oil and gas fields,

many of which are outside government control.

SANA said the attack occurred in the area known as Abu Khashab in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour that borders Iraq.

Sleeper cells of the Islamic State group are known to be active in the area and have targeted government forces and US-backed Kurdish fighters in eastern Syria. **AP**

## Pakistan experts: Religiosity fostering rise in militancy

**Islamabad:** Terrorists attacks are on the rise in Pakistan amid a growing religiosity that has brought greater intolerance, prompting one expert to voice concern the country could be overwhelmed by religious extremism.

Pakistani authorities are embracing strengthening religious belief among the population to bring the country closer together. But it's doing just the opposite, creating intolerance and opening up space for a creeping resurgence in militancy, said Mohammad Amir Rana, executive director of the independent Pakistan

Institute for Peace Studies.

"Unfortunately, instead of helping to inculcate better ethics and integrity, this phenomenon is encouraging a tunnel vision" that encourages violence, intolerance and hate, he wrote recently in a local newspaper.

"Religiosity has begun to define the Pakistani citizenry," Militant violence in Pakistan has spiked: In the past week alone, four vocational school instructors who advocated for women's rights were travelling together when they were gunned down in a Pakistan border region. **AP**

## Officials: 400 escape, 25 dead after Haiti prison breakout

AP ■ PORT-AU-PRINCE (HAITI)

Haitian authorities announced Friday that more than 400 inmates escaped and 25 people died in a prison breakout, making it the country's largest and deadliest one in a decade, with the prison director and a powerful gang leader among those killed.

Some believe on Thursday's jailbreak at the Croix-des-Bouquets Civil Prison in north-east Port-au-Prince was to free gang leader Arnel Joseph, who had been Haiti's most wanted

fugitive until his 2019 arrest on charges including rape, kidnapping and murder.

Joseph was riding on a motorcycle through the Artibonite area in the town of L'Estère on Friday a day after his escape when he was spotted at a checkpoint, police spokesman Gary Desrosiers told *The Associated Press*. He said Joseph pulled out a gun and died in an exchange of gunfire with police.

Joseph ruled Village de Dieu, or Village of God, a shantytown in downtown Port-

au-Prince, and other communities, including some in Artibonite, which is Haiti's largest department.

Authorities have not yet provided much details on the breakout except to say that 60 inmates have been recaptured and the investigation is ongoing. State Secretary Frantz Exantus said authorities have created several commissions to investigate who organized the breakout and why. Among those killed was the prison director, identified as Paul Joseph Hector.

**UJVN Ltd.**  
(An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprises)  
H.O. "UJJWAL" Maharanji Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephone-0135-2763808 Fax 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025986 Website: www.ujvn.com.

RO No. 173 **TENDER NOTICE** Date: 27.02.2021

Office of Executive Engineer (M&G), Dhalipur Power House invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

**Tender No.:** 25/EE/M&G/DLR/2020-21

**Name of the Work:** Repairing and overhauling of damaged thrust bearing oil coolers.

**Estimated Cost:** (Rs) 13,00,000/- Only (GST Extra)

**Date of availability of bid document:** 27-02-2021 from 17:00 Hrs

**Last Date for submission of tender:** 20-03-2021 up to 16:00 Hrs

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvn.com.

**Executive Engineer (M&G)**

**"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"**

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was admitted in LNJP Hospital, Delhi. During treatment doctors declared him dead on 17.02.2021 in the area of PS Kotwali, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 77A u/s 174 CrPc, Dated 17.02.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

**Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 35 years, **Height:** 5'5"

**Feet, Complexion:** Shallow, **Face, Long, Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Green Colour T-Shirt, Black Colour Lower and Bare Footed.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.



S.H.O

P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.

Ph. No. 011-23977100, 23953442

DP/962/N/2021

## US senators introduce legislation to end China's access to multiple year visa

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A legislation has been introduced by a group of influential Republican senators to end China's access to 10-year multi-entry visas until it is certified that Beijing has ceased its campaign of economic and industrial espionage against the US.

The legislation, Visa Security Act, was introduced by Senators Marsha Blackburn, Tom Cotton, Rick Scott, Ted Cruz, and Marco Rubio on Friday. It would prohibit Chinese nationals from receiving 10-year B-1/B-2 visas until the Secretary of State certifies that China has ceased its campaign of economic and industrial espionage against the United States and ended its provocative and coercive behaviour towards Taiwan.

The B-1/B-2 visas are issued to those who come to the US for business, visit or tourism purposes.

Under this legislation, Chinese citizens would be eligible for one-year multi-entry visas. This policy would represent a return to the pre-2014 visa status quo and does not apply to Taiwan or certain residents of Hong Kong.

## WFP: Security protocols, leaks a focus of Congo probe

AP ■ ROME

A UN investigation into the attack on a humanitarian convoy in Congo that killed the Italian ambassador, his bodyguard and driver will look into whether the long-planned mission's security protocols were followed and whether information might have leaked to the unknown gunmen involved in the ambush.

The deputy communications director of the World Food Program, Greg Barrow, told an online briefing Friday that the February 22 mission to bring Ambassador Luca Attanasio to a WFP school feeding program in eastern Congo had been in the works since 2020.

Advance planning and security meetings as well as security briefings took place up to the moment the seven-member team took off from Goma, in Congo's east, in a two-car convoy bound for the program in Rutshuru, he said.

## UK PM Boris reiterates support against Taliban in call with Afghan Prez

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has reiterated Britain's support to Afghanistan in its fight against the Taliban, as part of the wider North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance.

In a phone call from Downing Street in London with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Friday, Johnson also agreed on the importance of making progress in peace talks to secure a sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan.

"He [Johnson] reiterated the UK's longstanding support for the Afghan government's fight against the Taliban as part of the NATO coalition," a Downing Street spokesperson said.

In February last year, the US and Taliban signed a peace agreement in Doha, Qatar, which provisioned withdrawal of all American and NATO troops from war-torn Afghanistan by May 1.

"They agreed on the importance of making progress in peace

talks to secure a sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan, and to preserve the gains made by civil society and women and girls," the Downing Street spokesperson said.

The US-Taliban Peace Agreement also mentioned a pledge from the Taliban to prevent militant forces from operating in its areas, and dialogue between the Taliban and the Afghanistan government.

Besides regional matters, Johnson and Ghani discussed the Covid-19 crisis and global efforts around access to vaccines to combat the pandemic.

"The Prime Minister and President Ghani also discussed global efforts to tackle the pandemic and the rollout of vaccines in Afghanistan and the UK," Downing Street said.

The conversation between the two leaders comes amidst a review of the US-Taliban peace deal by the Joe Biden-led US administration, creating uncertainty over the future course of events.

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL  
NEW DELHI BENCH, COURT-3  
COMPANY PETITION NO.CAA. 8/ND/2021  
IN  
COMPANY APPLICATION NO. CA(CAA)-4/(ND)/2020  
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013  
AND  
PETITION UNDER SECTION 230 TO 232 AND OTHER APPLICABLE PROVISIONS OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013 READ WITH THE COMPANIES (COMPROMISE, ARRANGEMENT & AMALGAMATION) RULES, 2016.  
AND  
IN THE MATTER OF:  
SCHEME OF MERGER  
OF  
M/S FERN PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED  
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070  
AND  
M/S LEMCOM MERCHANTS PRIVATE LIMITED  
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070  
AND  
M/S TECHNO BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED  
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070  
WITH  
M/S UNIPACK MULTIPRODUCT PRIVATE LIMITED  
Regd. Off.: C-8/8289, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070  
Transferee Company

**Notice of Petition for Hearing**

A petition under Section 230-232 of the Companies Act, 2013, for approval of Scheme of Amalgamation of M/s FERN PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company-1), M/s LEMCOM MERCHANTS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company-2), M/S TECHNO BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferor Company-3), with M/s UNIPACK MULTIPRODUCT PRIVATE LIMITED (Transferee Company) was presented jointly by the companies on the 20th day of December, 2020 and the said petition is fixed for hearing before Principal Bench of National Company Law Tribunal on 24th day of March, 2021. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition/application/reference should send to the petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the petitioner's advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition/application/reference. Where he seeks to oppose the petition/application/ reference, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition/application/reference will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Sd/-  
Iswar Ch Mohapatra  
Advocate for Petitioner  
8/43, L.G.F, South Patel Nagar,  
New Delhi-110008

Dated 25/02/2021  
Place: New Delhi



# One Dist One Focus Product list finalised

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday said that the list of One District One Focus Product (ODOFP), which will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the various schemes, has been finalised. The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.

Fruits have been identified for 226 districts, the highest in the list while vegetables for 107 districts and spices for 105 districts are at the second and the third position in the list. The chief food crop paddy has been identified for 40 districts while wheat for 5 districts.

The Ministry of

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in consultation with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has finalised the products for One District One Focus Product, said an official statement.

The list of products have been finalised after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

These products will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the Government of India schemes, to increase the value of the products and with the ultimate aim of increasing the income of the farmers. These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme (PM Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme) of the Ministry of

Food Processing Industries which provides incentives to promoter and micro-enterprises. Many products also include convergence of resources and approach from the other departments. The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare will support ODOFP from its ongoing centrally sponsored schemes such as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY).

The implementation of ODOFP by State Governments will benefit farmers and provide support for realizing the expectations of value addition and subsequently enhancing agricultural exports.

# Hyundai i20 wins Indian Car Of The Year 2021

Indian Motorcycle Of The Year goes to the Royal Enfield Meteor

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Car Of The Year (ICOTY) 2021 and the Indian Motorcycle Of The Year (IMOTY) 2021 awards were announced at a glittering ceremony here in Delhi.

The winner of the ICOTY was the Hyundai i20 and the IMOTY award went to the Royal Enfield Meteor. The ICOTY award, which is celebrating its 16th year this year is well-established as India's top car award and similarly IMOTY is India's leading two-wheeler award.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Yogendra Pratap, Editor of Auto Today and the Chairman of the ICOTY jury said that ICOTY will always remain as India's top car award and not just because of

its name, "the fact that we partner with multiple publications which look at various aspects of



motoring, some are targeted at enthusiasts and other are targeted at practicality.

This in addition to the independent judges who come from various other publications and almost all of us have been evaluating cars for at least a decade makes this award the most influential in India.

Our judges have over 350 years of combined experience evaluating cars and because we are not part of a 'single' publication, I believe ICOTY

carries much more weight with Indian automotive manufacturers as well."

Speaking to The Pioneer, Aspi Bhatena, Editor of Bike Magazine and Chairman of the IMOTY jury said that the award was proof of how Indian manufacturers have progressed. "In all the years we have given this award, we have not given it to a 'lemon', all our winners have enjoyed immense commercial success and some like the 2019 winner, the Royal Enfield Interceptor have had immense global success."

At a function held at the Andaz attended by the senior management of several automotive companies, both awards firmly established themselves as India's leading and most credible awards for the industry.

# 'Improved economic environment to boost FY21 credit growth'

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Improved economic environment in 2HFY21 and the Centre's focus on higher spending especially on infrastructure will give a boost to FY21 credit growth, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.

The agency's February 2021 edition of its credit market tracker showed an upgrade to its FY21 credit growth estimates to 6.9 per cent from 1.8 per cent.

Accordingly, the agency said that amid the pandemic, the credit offtake in the banking system has remained muted, which led to lesser issuances of certificates of deposits (CDs).

"The CD issuances for January 2021 increased for public sector banks, whereas for private banks have remained muted.

Concurrently, the CD yield across maturities was confined to a narrow range, amid subdued issuances. Similarly, the issuances of commercial paper (CP) by corporates have fallen, due to a lesser requirement amid fewer rollovers.

"The CP yields however have largely seen an upward revision, owing to the Reserve Bank of India's announcement of the restoration of liquidity management operations."

Besides, demand from fund houses for corporate bonds and short-term funds has increased by "Rs 52 billion and Rs 10 billion, respectively".

On the other hand, the agency said that CP issuances by non-banking financial companies and housing finance companies have remained encouraging, both in terms of total amount and volumes.

# PM asks toy manufacturers to use less plastic, more eco-friendly material

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday exhorted toy manufacturers to use less plastic and more eco-friendly and recyclable material in a bid to increase the share of the domestic industry in the global market.

Inaugurating the first India Toy Fair, the Prime Minister said, "We have to become Aatmanirbhar in the toy sector and also cater to the global market."

Observing that India's share in the USD 100 billion global toy market is very small, and 85 per cent of the toys in the country are sourced from abroad, Modi said there is a need to change this situation.

"In the field of toys, India has tradition and technology, India has concepts and competence. We can take the world back towards eco-friendly toys. Through our software engineers, computer games can

bring the stories of India to the world," he said.

While referring to the traditional toy industry, the Prime Minister underlined the need for promoting Handmade in India.

If there is a demand for Made in India today, then the demand for Handmade in India is also increasing equally, he said, adding "today people do not only buy toys as a product, but also want to connect with the experience associated with that toy. So, we have to promote Handmade in India as well."

The Prime Minister appealed to the manufacturers to make toys that are better for both ecology and psychology, using less plastic and more of such things that can be recycled.

Referring to the initiatives of the government, Modi said the country has now graded the toy industry in 24 major sectors.

# Govt sets 50 lakh users threshold to define 'significant social media intermediary' under IT rules

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has fixed fifty lakh registered users as the threshold for defining 'significant social media intermediary', which will have to adhere to additional obligations and compliance under the new IT rules that seek to crack down on misuse of social media platforms.

The new rules, announced earlier this week, require 'significant social media intermediaries' to follow additional due diligence, including the appointment of a chief compliance officer, nodal contact person and resident grievance officer. All three officials will have to reside in India.

They will have to publish a monthly compliance report and details of the contents removed proactively.

At present, the country has 53 crore WhatsApp users, 44.8 crore YouTube users, 41 crore Facebook subscribers, 21 crore Instagram clients, while 1.75 crore account holders are on microblogging platform Twitter....The Central

Government hereby specifies fifty lakh registered users in India as the threshold for a social media intermediary to be considered a significant social media intermediary," the notification said.

Earlier on Thursday, the government announced the tightening of the rules governing social media and streaming companies, requiring them to take down contentious content quicker, appoint grievance redressal officers and assist investigations.

The move aims to make social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram - which have seen a phenomenal surge in usage over the past few years in India - more accountable and responsible for the content hosted on their platform. Social media companies will have to remove contentious content flagged by the government or court orders within 36 hours and take down posts depicting nudity or morphed photos within 24 hours of receiving a complaint, as per the latest intermediary rules.

# Gold Bond Scheme 20-21 to be issued at ₹4,662/gm

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

The new series of Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 will be opened for the period March 1-5, 2021.

The issue price of the Bond during the subscription period shall be Rs 4,662 per gram.

The Settlement date under the Series XII scheme had been fixed for March 9.

The Government in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow discount of Rs 50 per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply online and the payment is made through digital mode.

# KVIC's e-market portal achieves ₹1.12 crore turnover in 8 months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The e-market portal unveiled by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has achieved a gross turnover of over Rs 1.12 crore in just eight months of its launch, the MSME Ministry said on Saturday.

"Launched on 7 July 2020, Khadi e-portal has delivered orders to over 10,000 customers out of the 65,000 people who visited the e-portal till date. KVIC has also delivered more than 1 lakh articles/commodities to these customers," an official statement said.

During this period, the average online purchase has been recorded at Rs 11,000 per customer. MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari has lauded

Khadi's successful e-commerce venture saying this provided a wide marketing platform for various khadi and village industry products to a larger population. He said e-marketing of Khadi is proving to be a game-changer. Gadkari also said the effort should be to reach a turnover of Rs 200 crore per year. KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said all expenses incurred on operating Khadi e-portal are borne by KVIC.

"While in case of other e-commerce sites, product cataloguing, packaging and dispatch are the responsibility of the respective sellers; KVIC has a policy that the Khadi institutions and PMEGP units are exempted from any such financial and logistical burden," Saxena said.

# Fuel prices resurge after 3-day break

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Country's petrol and diesel prices continued its northward march on Saturday, after a three-day break, taking its retail rates to unprecedented levels and burning holes in the consumers pockets.

Oil marketing companies raised the pump price of petrol and diesel by 24 paise and 15 paise per litre on Saturday.

With this, petrol is now priced at Rs 91.17 a litre and diesel Rs 81.47 a litre in the capital.

Across the country as well the petrol and diesel prices increased between 20-30 paise per litre depending on the level of local duty at the state level.

**RAJASTHAN STATE FOOD & CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LTD.**  
Head Office: 6th floor, Kirti Bhawan, Lalitpur, Bani Road, Jaipur-302015. Phone: 0141-274460, 0141-274464. Fax No. 0141-2741924, E-Mail: [info@rsfsc.co.in](mailto:info@rsfsc.co.in). CIN : U09332RJ2018SC033489

No. :- F10(101)RSFSC/ICDS/tender/2020-21/18947 Dated :- 26/02/2021

**e-Bid Notice**

e-Bids are invited for transportation work of Food Grain, wheat, Rice & Dal under ICDS in (14) Districts Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Bharatpur, Bikaner, bundi, Jaipur, Jhalawar, Sirohi, Udaipur, Barmer, Nagaur, Sawaimadhopur, Bhilwara & Chittorgarh for one year from the date of agreement. If the tenders of those districts where they are in process, are finally cancelled by the date of uploading this tender, those districts should also upload the new tender. The Bid shall be submitted only through online tendering system at concerned districts on the website [www.eproc.raajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.raajasthan.gov.in). As detailed below:

UBN No. :- FCS2021SLO800053

S. No.	Name of the Service	On line uploading date	On line bid submission end date
1.	Transportation work for ICDS wheat, Rice & Dal	01/03/2021	22/03/2021

For details visit our Website: <https://sppp.raajasthan.gov.in/> <http://eproc.raajasthan.gov.in>  
Raj, Samwad/C/20/10320 General Manager (Adm.)

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Tasleem w/o Late Riyajuddin R/o H. No. 3 B, Gali No. 4B, Aram Park, Shastri Nagar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case F.I.R. No. **189/14 U/s 420 IPC PS. Geeta Colony, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Tasleem** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Tasleem** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person **Tasleem** of F.I.R. No. **189/14 U/s 420 IPC PS. Geeta Colony, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 06.04.2021

By Order  
Sh. Vinod Joshi  
LD. MM, East - 02  
Karkardooma Court, New Delhi

DP/82/Crime/2021  
-Court Matter

**SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL**

General public is hereby informed that one Girl **Name: Ayushi D/o Yogender R/o H. No. 753, Village bakhtiyarpur, Delhi, Age: 17 Years, Height: 5'2", Built: Thin, Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Wearing: Red Colour Jarsi & Blue Colour Payjama** has been missing since 29.01.2021 from the area of P.S. Alipur, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 51/21, dated 30.01.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Alipur, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this Girl but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this Girl kindly inform to the following.

SHO  
Website: <http://cbi.gov.in>  
E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph. 011-24368639, 24368641

P.S. Alipur, Delhi  
Ph. 011-2720 2265  
DP/789/ON/2021

**Metro Railway, Kolkata**  
Kolkata's Pride

**Upgradation of Train Management System**

Dy. CST/Tele, Metro Railway, Kolkata for & on behalf of The President of India invites e-Tender against Open Tender due to open on **05.04.2021** at **12.30 hrs.** Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **Name of Work:** Upgradation of Train Management System in Metro Bhawan in order to improve visibility. **Tender value:** ₹ 3,88,09,800. **Completion Period :** 12 (Twelve) months. The Tender can be viewed at website <https://www.ireps.gov.in> In the tender/bidders must have Class-II Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate on e-Tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-Tender.

**Tender Notice No.: S&T/Work 05-2021**  
**FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) namely: **Rishi S/o Ranbir Singh R/o C-52, Amar Colony, Nangloi, Delhi** has been missing/ kidnapped from the area of PS Nangloi, since **16.12.2020**. In this regard FIR No. **73/21 U/S 363 IPC** dated **10.02.2021** has been registered at **PS. Nangloi, Delhi**. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far.

His physical description is as under:-  
**Sex:** Male, **Age:** 17 years 6 months, **Height:** 5'8" ft., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Blue Jacket-Blue Payjama and White shoes in feet.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following:-  
SHO  
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Tel. No.: 011-24368638/24368641  
Fax No.: 011-24368639

P.S. Nangloi, Delhi  
Ph. No.: 011-25947225  
Mob. No. 7065036127  
DP/684/OD/2021

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person (depicted in the photo) name: **unknown**, residence and family is **unknown about 40 years** of age was found dead at park Nigam Bodh Ghat, Kashmir Gate, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. **4-A U/s 174 CrPc** dated 24.02.2021 has been lodged in Police Station Kashmir Gate, Delhi.

His physical description is as under:-  
**Sex:** Male, **Age:** 40 years, **Height:** 5'5" ft., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** White Shirt & Black Pant

Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or Telephone Numbers.

SHO  
P.S. Kashmir Gate, Delhi  
Ph. No.-011-23967889  
Mob. No- 8750870123

DP/972/N/2021

**UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)  
Corporate Identity No. UA40109UP2001SGC025867/2358, V.C.V. Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001, Telephone:- 0135-2763672-76, Fax: 0135-2760289, Website: [www.uktdenders.gov.in](http://www.uktdenders.gov.in)

**E-TENDER NOTICE (NIT)**

Uttarakhand Power Corporation Ltd., Dehradun invites e-tender for purchase of following items as detailed below :-

Sl. No.	Tender Specification No.	Name of Item	Quantity (in Nos.)	Estimated Cost (₹)	Average Yearly Turn Over of Preceding Three Financial Years (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)	Cost of Tender Document Including GST (₹)	Date & Time of Prebid conference in online mode	Last Date & Time of online request for Tender and submission of Tender in online & offline mode	Date of opening of Part-I of Tender in online & offline mode
1.	CCP-II/33/2020-21	9 KV 10 KA Lightning Arrester	8408	2,920 CRORE	4,380 CRORE	5,840 LAKH	17 700.00	08.03.2021 at 11:30 Hrs.	22.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.	23.03.2021 at 15:30 Hrs.
2.	CCP-II/34/2020-21	30 KV 10 KA Lightning Arrester	1000	1,130 CRORE	2,260 CRORE	2,260 LAKH	11 800.00	22.03.2021 upto 17:00 Hrs.	23.03.2021 at 15:45 Hrs.	

For further details, please visit our website [www.uktdenders.gov.in](http://www.uktdenders.gov.in)  
No.: 101/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated: 27.02.2021

"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION" Use L.E.D. Bulbs to Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912)  
Pay Electricity Bill Online 24x7 from [www.upcl.org](http://www.upcl.org). (For information on Electricity theft, Informer may report to Toll Free No. 1800 180 4185 / Fax No. 0135-2760911)

Superintending Engineer  
Corporate (Contract & Procurement-II)

**WESTERN RAILWAY**

**PROVISION OF MULTI SECTION DIGITAL AXLE COUNTER**

Tender No.: SG 217\_2\_285\_286\_288, WA dated 25/02/2021. Executive: Sr. DSTE(S) MMCT. Name of Work: Provision of Multi Section Digital Axle Counter by Replacing Old AC Track Circuit and ABB make AFTCs in Bandra-Kandivalli Section of Mumbai Suburban Division of Western Railway. Approx. Cost of Work: ₹ 8.93.18.553.19. EMD: Bid Security Declaration Required. Cost of Tender Form: ₹ 0/- . Completion Period: 12 Months. Validity of Offers: 45 Days from the Date of Opening. Type of E-Tender: Open E-Tender. Time & Date for Closure for Submission of E-Tender Documents: At 15.00 hrs. on 26/03/2021. Time & Date for Opening of E-Tender: After 15.30 hrs. on 26/03/2021. Particular Office Where E-Tender Open: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer(S), 2nd Floor, Divisional Railway Manager's Office, Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. The tender can be viewed at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

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# 'Who defines a good cricket surface?' questions Ashwin

Indian off-spinner says all the talk around pitches being used in ongoing Test series is 'getting out of hand'

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India off-spinner Ashwin Ravichandran on Saturday said that the talk around the pitches being used in the ongoing Test series against England is "getting out of hand."

India edged ahead in the four-match series with a 10-wicket win over England in the third Test at the Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad, and a major talking point in the match was the pitch which offered sharp turn from day one.

While several former England cricketers questioned the nature of the Ahmedabad pitch, Ashwin questioned the narrative that is emerging.

"I think I have said that in the past as well, everyone is entitled to their opinion and I am not here to say that your opinion is right and it is wrong. The fact remains that the talk about the surface is getting out of hand," said Ashwin in a virtual press conference on Saturday.

"Why would you talk about the surface and sell that to us time and time again? Is there any instance where the pitch has been talked about this much when we have played games in other countries."

"I somehow find it funny that when they speak about the surface, it immediately gets quoted all over in our press and this is the issue here. There have been instances, we have been to New Zealand, where both the Tests got over in a total of five days."

Ashwin said that the talk around the pitch is unnecessary and there is no set rule on how a cricket pitch should behave over the course of a Test match.

"The bowler wins the game, the batsmen need to bat well to score runs. Who defines what a good surface is? Seam on the first day, then bat well in the next couple of days and spin on the last two days, come on, who makes these rules?"

"We need to get over it and if you are asking whether the pitch in the third Test was a good surface, I do not see any players of England coming out and complaining. You should be hoping for a good cricket match, not the surface," he said.

Ashwin also cited a press conference of Virat Kohli during a South Africa tour where the India captain refused to blame the pitch for the results.

"There is a video doing the rounds where Virat Kohli is talking in South Africa and he says I am not here to talk about the pitch."

That is how we have been taught to play cricket, that's why I say let them sell their thoughts, buying is our choice," he added, similar to the tweets he had put out on Friday.

The 34-year-old off-spinner, who has become second-fastest to 400 Test wickets, tweeted about "ideas being sold" to form public opinion.

"I am not disturbed with things being taken out of context. That is what has been happening for the last decade, if not more. That is why I put out the tweets I did yesterday (Friday). People need to get the context and what is happening," said Ashwin.

"There have been people messaging me that the match has finished in two days. Every pink-ball game we have played has ended within three days. I do not know what to say, unfortunately, many people have not played the pink-ball game, so they will not understand this facet of the game."

"My angst against the whole thing is that someone says one thing, there are so many people watching the same picture but are not able to paint a different one as compared to someone who is driving a certain case and selling a certain case to us. This needs to stop," he added.

## Ashwin has stopped thinking about landmarks long back

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Ravichandran Ashwin has stopped bothering about landmarks "long, long time back" as his only endeavour currently is to work on his craft and be useful every time when he plays for India.

Ashwin has become the fourth Indian bowler to complete 400 wickets in Test cricket and was asked if surpassing 'Peak 619' could be a reality in coming years.

"If you look at it pragmatically, it's 218 wickets away," Ashwin, who is always good with words answered.

"For me, I have stopped thinking about all those landmarks and all long, long time ago."

He said he is looking to become a better cricketer, every time he stepped on the field.

"It's been about what I can do, how I can get better, what more I can offer to the team

because every time you come back into this setup, especially now that I am only playing Test cricket, it's important to come back and offer to the team."

Ashwin wants to be in this happy zone and enjoy his craft as he always does.

"I am looking to get better as an individual and cricketer. That's probably one of the reasons why I am really, really happy and I am enjoying my game and probably the best I have done in the last 15 years. I would like to continue this phase and not think about too much else," the bowler added.

Ashwin has been in the bio-bubble since the IPL and then has been part of the Australia series and the ongoing England series, and he said that it is incredibly hard to be without family but in the same vein said that the team bonding has got better.

"I think without them (family) around it can be



incredibly hard. Yes, we get larger hotel spaces. We do get our entertainment area. We bond much better. One thing that stands out is that the fact that because of this bio-bubble the players are getting together more than ever. I think the team

pink-ball Tests, Ashwin said: "There is no apprehension. If there was apprehension, we would have expressed."

He said it was all about adapting.

"This is a new facet that has been introduced to the game. We are used to playing with the red ball. We are conditioned to playing with the red-ball and now all of a sudden, they have got in the pink ball. The pink ball has got a new dimension to the game, so it's about adapting," he said.

"You play more and more and get used to it, the players are going to adapt better. The same thing with one-dayers. We were used to playing with the red ball and then shifted to the white ball. Initially, the white-ball was doing a lot. Now, it does nothing. That's how this format will also evolve. Anything new is going to have a lot of challenges," he elaborated.

## Motera likely to escape ICC 'Red Eye'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Motera track may have received a lot of flak after the pink ball Test ended inside two days but it is unlikely to attract any severe sanctions from the game's governing body ICC with the pitch for the final game set to be a batting beauty.

With India 2-1 up in the four-Test series and needing a draw to qualify for the World Test Championship final at Lord's from June 18-22, another turner is currently out of question as the home team will be aiming to take minimal risks as far as the track is concerned.

"Expect a good hard surface which will be firm and even bounce. It will be a batting beauty and since it's a traditional red ball match, one can expect a very high scoring contest here from March 4-8," a senior BCCI official privy to the developments told PTI.

Also the BCCI bigwigs along with the team management understands the fact that another dust bowl won't augur



well for the new venue which is expected to host a lot of important matches during IPL as well as ICC T20 World Cup.

"If there are two matches played at the same venue, you can't hold one result in isolation. Let the final Test be over and then only based on match referee Javagal Srinath's report can ICC decide its course of action. Also as of now, the England team hasn't lodged any official complaint," the BCCI official

said. If there has been one good and one bad pitch at the same venue, the ICC is unlikely to take any action. While India would be happy with a 3-1 margin, they will not require a result oriented turner as a draw would suffice their purpose.

Also the Indian team management doesn't want to prepare a track that can ideally backfire on them in a very high-stake game of cricket.

## Bumrah released from Test squad



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah will miss the fourth and final Test against England, beginning here on Thursday, as he was released from the Indian squad, owing to personal reasons.

The BCCI said no addition to India's squad will be made

for the final Test at Motera.

"Jasprit Bumrah made a request to BCCI to be released from India's squad ahead of the fourth Test owing to personal reasons," BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a media release on Saturday.

"Accordingly, the fast bowler has been released and he will not be available for selection for the fourth Test."

Bumrah has already been rested for the limited-over series, comprising five T20Is and three ODIs, beginning on March 12 here as part of the team's extensive workload management programme.

The 27-year-old Indian pace bowling spearhead has been inside bio-secure bubble since August prior to the Indian Premier League in the UAE.

England all-rounder Chris Woakes also has left the Test tour without playing a match as part of the ECB's rotation policy.

## Shikha axed for SA series



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran medium pacer Shikha Pandey was on Saturday dropped from India's ODI and T20 squads that will take on South African women in a twin series starting March 7. The most debatable decision by the Neetu David-led selection committee, however, was the exclusion of teenage batting sensation Shafali Verma in the ODI squad which has plodders like skipper Mithali Raj and Punam Raut, whose strike-rates have come under the scanner time and again.

With 19 T20 Internationals under her belt and an amazing Women's T20 World Cup last year, Shafali is a box-office cricketer.

"It will be interesting to know whether skipper Mithali Raj, who herself loves to bat at the top of the order and consumes more deliveries than permissible, had at all wanted Shafali in the ODI squad," a senior BCCI official, who sounded miffed with the move, told PTI.

Her absence means that India lack firepower save Harmanpreet and Smriti. We lost out on a big hitter," he added.

The selectors, though, have included a lot of rookies based on their last season's domestic performances as well as A and B team series against Bangladesh.

Rookie keeper-batsman

Shwetha Verma, along with the seasoned Sushma Verma, are the two keepers in both formats.

Pandey's exclusion was more to do with the selectors wanting to check out the pace bowling bench strength and rookie right-arm medium pacers C Prathyusha and Monica Patel were included in both the squads.

There is also young seamer Simran Dil Bahadur, who is part of the T20 Internationals team. Left-arm spinner Yastika Bhatia has made way for Ekta Bisht in the 50-over squad while Veda Krishnamurthy, after a prolonged lean phase, has been dropped from both squads.

**ODI squad:** Mithali Raj (Captain), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Yastika Bhatia, Harmanpreet Kaur, D Hemalatha, Deepti Sharma, Sushma Verma, Swetha Verma, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Jhulan Yadav, Mansi Joshi, Goswami, Poonam Yadav, C Prathyusha, Monica Patel

**T20I squad:** Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Harleen Deol, Sushma Verma, Nuzhat Parveen, Ayushi Soni, Arundhati Reddy, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Mansi Joshi, Monica Patel, C Prathyusha, Simran Dil Bahadur.

# Back to back hundreds for Shreyas

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Skipper Shreyas Iyer's fluent 116 and an impressive show by India speedster Shardul Thakur powered Mumbai to a 67-run win over Rajasthan in an Elite Group D game of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Saturday.

This was Mumbai's fourth successive win, having earlier defeated Delhi, Maharashtra and Puducherry.

Opting to bat at the KL Saini stadium, Mumbai rode on Iyer's 103-ball knock to post a competitive 317/7. The elegant right-handed batsman led from the front before his bowlers bundled out the opposition for 250 with Thakur (4/50) doing the bulk of the damage.

Iyer anchored the innings before toying with the Rajasthan attack, scoring his second century of the tournament with the help of 11 fours and three sixes.

He found able partners in Sarfaraz Khan (30) and



Suryakumar Yadav (29), who played their roles to perfection.

For Rajasthan, left-arm spinner Shubham Sharma (3/59) did the bulk of the damage.

Chasing 318, Manender Singh (40) and Mahipal Lomror (76) tried to take the game deep with their 101-run third-wicket stand, but medium pacer Akash Parkar broke the partnership after trapping Singh in front of the wicket. Shardul castled Lomror to leave Rajasthan at 160/4.

From thereon, it was an uphill task for Rajasthan and they were eventually bowled out for 250.

In other matches of the group, India opener Shikhar Dhawan's 153 helps Delhi beat Maharashtra by three wickets at Saiwam Stadium. While Puducherry win by 104 runs against Himachal Pradesh.

**PRERAK SLAMS 174**

**Kolkata:** In Group E clash, middle-order batsman Prerak Mankad took Eden Gardens by storm with a sensational 174 to power

Saurashtra to a 62-run win over Chandigarh. The 26-year-old plundered six sixes and 16 fours in his knock from 130 balls to propel Saurashtra to a massive 388 for 7 after Chandigarh opted to bowl.

In reply, Chandigarh, who have been impressive in their debut Elite season with three wins on the trot, could manage 326 for 7.

The win helped Saurashtra consolidate their lead with 16 points, four clear of Chandigarh to close in on a quarterfinal spot.

The No 4 batsman paced his innings brilliantly taking 53 balls for his half-century before he stepped up to race to his second List A century in the next 39 balls.

There was no stopping Prerak as he took another 27 balls to cruise to 150. He was dismissed by Jagjit Singh in the final over but the damage had been done.

Chasing the target, Chandigarh skipper Manan Vohra (50) and Arslan Khan (61) put on a century-plus stand and then Ankit Kaushik chipped in with 54

but it proved too little in the end.

In other games, Services beat Haryana by 112 runs and Bengal win by 82 runs against Jammu & Kashmir.

**UK, ASSAM WIN**

**Chennai:** Uttarakhand notched up their fourth straight win beating Mizoram by eight wickets in their Plate group match.

Uttarakhand are currently on top of the standings with 16 points from four matches, sharing the position with Assam, who won their match against Sikkim by four wickets.

Leg-spinner Dikshansu Negi took 6 for 21 in a brilliant bowling performance to help Uttarakhand bundle out Mizoram for a paltry 117.

In reply, Uttarakhand knocked off the required runs in just 10.5 overs.

In another match, Assam chased down a target of 246 set by Sikkim in the 48th over to maintain their all-win record in the group.

## Gayle returns to Windies T20I side

PTI ■ ST JOHN'S

Veteran batsman Chris Gayle has returned to the West Indies squad for the first time in nearly two years for the three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka, beginning on March 3.

The 41-year-old top-order batsman was recalled to the 14-man squad under Kieron Pollard on the basis of his good performances in recent tournaments, including the IPL and Pakistan Super League.

Senior fast bowler Fidel Edwards, 39, is also back in the national squad after a nine-

year hiatus.

The three matches of the T20I series will be played on March 3, 5, and 7 at the Coolidge Cricket Ground in Antigua, which will be making its International debut.

The big-hitting Gayle last played for West Indies in their home series against India in August 2019 after

the 50-over World Cup that year.

He had earlier said that the 2019 World Cup matches would be his last appearances for West Indies.

"Chris Gayle has performed very well in recent tournaments and the selection panel thinks that he can still add great value to our team," Roger Harper, Cricket West Indies' (CWI) lead selector, said.

"As we build towards the defence of the T20 World Cup, the opportunity is being taken to determine our best team and squad as we go forward."

The selection panel also named the squad for the ODI series against the visiting Sri Lankans to be played between March 10-14 at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua.

All-rounder Andre Russell is recovering from contracting Covid-19, and despite testing

negative over a week ago has been ruled out of the T20 series.

A West Indies spokesman added that fast bowlers Sheldon Cottrell and Oshane Thomas, along with batsman Shimron Hetmyer and all-rounder Roston Chase have all failed to reach the minimum fitness standard in time to be considered for selection.

**T20I squad:** Kieron Pollard (c), Nicholas Pooran, Fabian Allen Dwayne Bravo, Fidel Edwards, Andre Fletcher, Chris Gayle, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Evin Lewis, Obed McCoy, Rovman Powell, Lendl Simmons, Kevin Sinclair.

**ODI squad:** Kieron Pollard (c), Shai Hope, Fabian Allen, Darren Bravo, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Alzarri Joseph, Evin Lewis, Kyle Mayers, Jason Mohammed, Nicholas Pooran, Romario Shepherd, Kevin Sinclair.

## New Covid case changes NZ-Aus T20I schedule

AFP ■ AUCKLAND

A community coronavirus outbreak in Auckland has forced New Zealand cricket bosses to hastily reschedule two T20 matches against Australia as other affected sports assessed their options.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has ordered Auckland, New Zealand's largest city and the centre of the outbreak, into a seven-day lockdown from Sunday, requiring people to stay at home except for essential shopping and work.

The remainder of the country faces Level Two restrictions which limit the size of public gatherings.

A New Zealand Cricket spokesman said the third match in the current T20 series, to be played in Wellington on



Wednesday, will go ahead but without spectators.

Game four, scheduled for Auckland on Friday, has been moved to Wellington and, again, will be played behind closed doors.

The spokesman said they would wait for Government advice on whether crowd restrictions are to be lifted before deciding if there will be spectators at the final game of the series in Tauranga on Sunday.



# the pioneer agenda

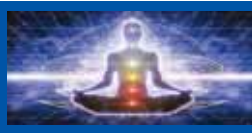
FROM THE INSIDE



## The Magic of Mandu

Mandu's geographical location is what made it such an important city. It prospered greatly under the Sultans of Malwa for nearly 200 years

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## Attaining the state of Yoga

In the state of *Yoga*, mind enters an infinite domain having no distinctive existences

It is so important for girls and boys to have a female, strong superhero to look up to  
— Gal Gadot



As the pandemic brought the world economies to a halt/slowdown, different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. DISHA CHHABRA shares top 5 lessons from senior leaders across industries



# LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM TURBULENT TIMES

In the last one year, our lifestyles and habits have changed forever. The way we live, eat, play, work is all altered. The resulting lockdowns of countries has brought national economies to a standstill. Salary and job cuts are happening throughout the world. Lives versus livelihood is a constant debate. No one living in these times has experienced a crisis that can be remotely equated to this one. And things are still unfolding.

When we are not going out to eat out but cooking more at home; when we prefer services at home rather than going out; when we need high speed internet to work from home, when masks are the new fashion statement; all these changes in our behaviour shape the way different industries are leading their way through the crisis and changing the core strategy. Covid-19 has impacted every sphere of the corporate world.

The pandemic has had a varied impact on different industries. Across the globe, there have been industries where revenue has gone negative; for some it has even gone down to zero. Industries like travel which relied on people physically moving around even needed to refund future bookings. Entertainment like physical events, movie ticketing, are in the same category. It is not sure when revenue is going to return. Some of these industries fall in the bucket of 'putting off for the future'. For example, people are putting off the visit to the hairdresser and are likely to go back when the crisis eases. These industries are shifting their present revenues into the future. The immediate focus is on cash conservation.

During this crisis, we have all indulged in some kind of hoarding. Be it toilet paper in the western countries or Maggi noodles in India; industries selling products which are essentials and non-perishable are seeing their future revenues brought forward as people buy for the next quarter and at some point in future, the present day spends will impact the future spends.

On the other end, being stuck at home and having a lot of time at hand; people are finding time to take up new hobbies; cooking, gardening and other isolation friendly activities. Baking banana breads became a huge trend. Companies that help provide these virtual classes or sell the raw materials one needs for these activities are attracting a large share

of discretionary spends of customers. This is new revenue for the companies but not necessarily brought forward from the future. However, the growth that these industries are seeing may not sustain once people begin to step out for leisure and entertainment.

And then there are big winners in this crisis. Industries like video conferencing, online grocery delivery, digital payments have seen a huge spike in adoption and have reached levels they would have otherwise expected to reach in order of months to years. These are likely fundamental customer behaviour changes and expected to stay even when the crisis eases. These industries are not only making a lot of revenue during the crisis. And when the crisis is over, the new normal of these industries will be at a higher level. These are industries that are mostly constrained on their supply side to handle the exponential growth in demand.

Few years down the line, leadership and business lessons from this crisis will be taught as crisis management case studies in B-schools. Which of these lessons will be permanent armours for future leaders for dealing with any crisis? And do the learnings differ depending on which side of the revenue curve a company finds itself. Does leadership need to be reactive? Here are the top 5 lessons coming directly from senior leaders across different industries and organisations.

### LESSON 1: NIMBLENESS

Ever since the world reported its first case, every day has been a roller coaster ride. Situations on the ground have evolved rapidly. Every day has been different from the previous one.

A week before, leaders were checking the sales numbers and reviewing their 2020 plans. A week later, supply chains were disrupted and businesses asked to temporarily shut until further notice. A day before, all our employees were safe. A day later, an entire department got infected. The time horizon of major events was severely shortened.

In a crisis situation, dealing with uncertainty needs less planning, more execution. This is not the time to draw a product roadmap, a 5-year vision or long-term strategies. Leaders are embracing speed, mitigating the short to mid-term consequences to stabilize the situation and stay afloat. COVID-19



THE PANDEMIC HAS HAD A VARIED IMPACT ON DIFFERENT INDUSTRIES. ACROSS THE GLOBE, THERE HAVE BEEN INDUSTRIES WHERE REVENUE HAS GONE NEGATIVE; FOR SOME IT HAS EVEN GONE DOWN TO ZERO. INDUSTRIES LIKE TRAVEL WHICH RELIED ON PEOPLE PHYSICALLY MOVING AROUND EVEN NEEDED TO REFUND FUTURE BOOKINGS. ENTERTAINMENT LIKE PHYSICAL EVENTS, MOVIE TICKETING, ARE IN THE SAME CATEGORY. IT IS NOT SURE WHEN REVENUE IS GOING TO RETURN

has delivered a crash course in agility for organisations of all stripes.

### LESSON 2 - INNOVATION

It is said that innovation and creativity leave crises and constraints. Crisis brings out constraints and makes innovation almost a forcing function. Leaders often leverage consultants to get a fresh, outside perspective on their organisations to find opportunities to innovate. A crisis can have much the same effect, putting the spotlight on vulnerabilities, problem areas; great and small, that we've been ignoring or are just plain unaware of. When a crisis hits, we are forced to confront the truth about how our systems work (or don't). The places where things could be done better or more efficiently become glaringly obvious. All of a sudden, opportunities for innovation are staring us in the face.

The current crisis is bringing a whole new set of innovations. Services like medicine, education, industrial plant set ups are all going digital. Google and Apple are collaborating on contact tracing. Dunzo is working with brands to get the products delivered at one's doorstep. ITC's personal care team deserves recognition for introducing a range of new health and hygiene products for households. Its hospitality team curated a gourmet menu, which recreates the ITC dining experience for our customers in the comfort of their homes. While these are just a couple of examples, leaders across industries continue to strive to change and innovate to ensure that they deliver nothing short of excellence in their products and services to our customers, despite the pandemic.

### LESSON 3: EMPLOYEE WELL BEING

While it may sound obvious, crises are crises because people suffer. In a situation where emotions and anxieties run high, leaders connect with employees and other stakeholders and acknowledge the personal and professional challenges they are going through. Impactful leaders convey their vision in a manner that the employees feel aligned, motivated and rallied against.

Effective crisis management requires integrity, accountability, and moral courage. Thoughtful, frequent, and empathetic communication signals that the leaders share with their organization show they care and are together in the journey that employees go

through. These messages are delivered with "bounded optimism" — hope combined with realism.

### LESSON 4: RISING ABOVE SELF INTEREST

What makes a leader is not just thinking about self but for the larger community. Be it giving back to the community in cash or kind or even gestures where one takes care of people who are not directly on the organization's payroll but on the frontline; leaders showcase how it is not enough if the organization alone progresses. No true leader sees crisis as a time to carve out a competitive advantage; definitely not at the cost of a struggling competitor. Compassion is leadership, leadership is compassion — compassion not just for self but for everyone else, especially ones where one has no self-interest whatsoever. If anything, the crisis will make leadership more humane and above self-interest.

### LESSON 5: BEING OPEN TO FAILING

In times of crisis, the acceptance of failure and moving on from there to the next step and the next is a critical leadership trait. These are times when given the dynamicity of the situation, decisions need to be made based on the limited information available and many times in decentralized manners. Fail fast is more important than learning and waiting to make the right decision. Different business models are prototyped and many of them may not work. It's ok. Leaders move on.

There are often external circumstances beyond one's control. Leaders are kind to yourself and to their teams. They repivot as many times as necessary. They collaborate with competitors. Leadership is not about the outcome — it is about the process. Even a decision of shutting down the business may look like a failure looking outwards. But the process of arriving at that decision, accepting, communicating and executing the failure can demonstrate leadership. Being open to failure is the biggest lesson from turbulent times.

The onus of leadership lies with each one of us. We all need to lead ourselves, our loved ones, our societies, organisations and countries out of this and every crisis.

The writer is a corporate professional and author of 4 books. Her latest book, Inflection Point – Leadership Lessons from Turbulent Times, has been published by Rupa Publications





The canopy facing the Narmada from where Roopmati looked at the river; Hoshang Shah's tomb; Jami Masjid

# THE MAGIC OF MANDU

Mandu's geographical location is what made it such an important city. It prospered greatly under the Sultans of Malwa for nearly 200 years, writes SMITA TRIPATHI

**A**mar prem ki nagari mein aapka swagat hai (welcome to the city of eternal love), a green-coloured board greets us as we enter Mandu, a small town 100 km west of Indore in Madhya Pradesh.

Myths, legends and Mandu seem to be made for each other. As you drive through lush green fields dotted with palaces and pavilions it is easy to lose yourself in the town's stories of romance, courage and betrayal.

The most fascinating of all tales is the royal love story of Baz Bahadur, the last sultan of Malwa (1555-1562) and his beautiful consort Roopmati. In these parts, Baz Bahadur and Roopmati are no less than Romeo-Juliet, Heer-Ranjha or Laila-Majnu. Legend has it that once when Baz Bahadur was on a hunting trip, he saw a beautiful woman singing. He was so smitten by her beauty and melodious voice that he asked her to accompany him to his capital, Mandu. Roopmati agreed but had only one condition, she needed to set eyes on her beloved river Narmada every day. Thus, two canopies were built on top of a watch tower within 48 hours (if our guide is to be believed) so that Roopmati could see the river Narmada, 23 km away, come rain or shine.

Unfortunately, for the lovers, their romance was short lived. In 1562, Mughal emperor Akbar decided to invade Mandu and sent his general Adam Khan to capture Mandu. Baz Bahadur's small army was no match for the great Mughal army. Mandu fell easily and Baz Bahadur escaped to Mewar. Adam Khan who had heard of Roopmati's beauty requested to meet her. Sensing her fate, she poisoned herself and avoided capture but not before she wrote the following poem:

Chitt Chanderi, sabse Malwa,  
Kyonki bhag gaye Bahadur Baz,  
Preet meet ke din gaye,  
Gaye Bahadur Baz,  
Ab na jiyo jaat hai,  
Yahan kahan hai kazi  
(My heart is sad seeing the sunrise in Mandu since Baz Bahadur has run away. The days of meeting my lover are over. It's difficult for me to live now and I have no more work to do here).

History or legend? The love story lives

on giving rise to poetry and folklore.

As I climb up Rani Roopmati's pavilion, I imagine her standing under one of the canopies gazing at her beloved Narmada on the one side and at the Baz Bahadur palace on the other. Rani Roopmati's pavilion which is on top of a hill was originally a watch tower. Besides the two canopies, Baz Bahadur built a water reservoir (Rewa Kund) so that Narmada water could be provided to Roopmati. The water was supplied in the whole building through an aqueduct.

There is a clear view of Baz Bahadur's palace from Roopmati's Pavilion. The palace is a medley of Rajasthani and Islamic styles of architecture. While strolling through the long corridors, arched entrances and domed pavilions I could sense the echoes of a glorious past.

It was to acquaint the visitors to this historic past of Mandu — as also art, culture and heritage — that Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board recently organised a two-day festival. One that I was apart of.

## MANDU: AN ARCHITECTURAL MARVEL

The first written inscription about Mandu is from the sixth century. But over the years, it changed hands several times. The Parmar rulers moved their capital from Dhar to Mandu in 1261, seemingly to take advantage of its strategic location on top of a plateau. The weakening of the Parmar rule and the attacks from Delhi intensified in the last years of the thirteenth century and in 1305, Alauddin Khilji captured Malwa. Another hundred years later, when Delhi was being ruled by Mohamed Shah Tughlaq, his governor Dilawar Khan Gori and his son Hoshang Shah ruled Mandu for several years and renamed it Shadiabad or the City of Joy.

It was they who turned the town into an architectural marvel by building iconic structures like the imposing Jami Masjid, modelled after the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (Syria). Considered one of the finest and largest models of Afghan architecture in India, the red sandstone mosque has a sprawling courtyard enclosed by huge colonnades with perfectly symmetrical archways, pillars, bays and domes. The variety of domes are not meant only for ornamental purposes but ensured that the Imam's voice could be



heard during prayers all across the large mosque.

Jami Masjid is no longer an active mosque but in its heydays it could accommodate over 5000 people.

The tomb of Jami Masjid's creator, Hoshang Shah, lies next door to it. Considered the first marble mausoleum, local folklore claims that Shahjahan was inspired by this tomb while constructing the Taj Mahal.

Whether that's true or not, Hoshang Shah's tomb built entirely in white marble is a beautiful structure with lattice-work, arched openings, domes and jalis giving it an elegant look.

One of the most striking structures in Mandu is the Jahaz Mahal built by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji, supposedly to house his harem of 15,000 women. It is believed that Mughal Emperor Jehangir, who visited Mandu in 1617 and spent nearly seven months there, writing extensively about Mandu in his memoirs Jehangirnama called the palace Jahaz Mahal because built between two lakes — Munja and Kapur — its shadow looks like a ship. The beautiful palace with its gorgeous halls, cenotaphs, and striking pools is an architectural wonder.

The Jahaz Mahal is part of a larger compound that includes the very interesting

Hindola Mahal, named thus because its sloping outer walls give the impression that the palace is swaying. As per our guide, the structure is built without a foundation and to ensure that it remained standing for centuries it was built at a 77 degree angle. During the monsoons swings were hung in the main hall for the queens to sway. Hindola Mahal has an elegant façade and beautiful symmetrical arches.

Because Mandu changed rulers so many times various structures were built, destroyed and rebuilt. It has over 3,000 structures from the 12th to the 16th century in a 26 sq km area. You cannot walk more than a 100 feet without spotting a beautiful monument, that tells its own story adding to the agelessness of the place.

It was Mandu's geographical location which made it such an important city. It prospered greatly under the Sultans of Malwa for nearly 200 years. At its peak, Mandu had a population of over 9 lakh people. The small town today has a population of just 15,000. Built primarily as a fort, multiple ancient gates herald you every few metres, transporting you to a bygone era.

## THE BAOBAB TREE: FROM MADAGASCAR TO MANDU

If the numerous monuments in Mandu will take your breath away, the presence of several baobab trees, native to Madagascar and mainland Africa, will leave you wondering. These massive, towering trees bereft of leaves and with bulbous trunks dot the Mandu landscape leaving one bewildered. Where did they come from? There seems to be no satisfactory answer.

My guide says it was probably gifted by a traveller from those regions in the mid-15th century but there doesn't seem to be a record of the same. While the presence of the trees surprises tourists like me, for the locals they have always been there. The baobab tree's fruit is sold in the local market as 'Mandu ki imly'. Break open the elongated fruit and you find a cluster of white-coated seeds. The texture is powdery and not fibrous like imly but it is tangy.

As I leave Mandu, I imagine it in all its glory as it lives on in its palaces and pavilions, its ballads and legends and I take a bit of its charm and romance back home with me.

## TRAVEL TIPS

### HOW TO GET THERE

Mandu is located about a 100 km from Indore and the only way to get there is by road.

### HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU NEED

You can cover Mandu's main sights including the Jahaz Mahal, Hindola Mahal, Roopmati Pavilion, Baz Bahadur's Palace and Jami Masjid in a day trip from Indore, if you are prepared to walk quite a bit. If you wish to slow down the pace and explore some of the lesser known monuments, then you can spend two days.

### WHERE TO STAY

There are a few hotels in Mandu and most are fairly basic. The best option is the MPTDC Hotel — Malwa Retreat located next to one of Mandu's Lakes.

### WHEN TO GO

The peak season in Mandu is the monsoon, when there is lush greenery all around. Besides that the weather is pleasant in the winter months from November-February.

### HOW TO GET AROUND

Mandu doesn't have autos or cycle rickshaws as of now and so to get around you need to have your own vehicle or the hotel can organise it for you.

### WHAT TO EAT

Do try 'Mandu ki imly'. It's sold at stalls outside Jami Masjid.

### MUST WATCH

The light and sound show at Hindola Mahal is a must watch. The half an hour show provides a good overview of Mandu's history and legends.

### THINGS TO KNOW

Network is a major issue but if the plan is to be cut-off from your daily life and enjoy Mandu's serenity then it works. There are a couple of ATMs in the main market. But digital payments are accepted by most. Hotels accept credit cards.

# Ranchi War Cemetery : A glory in oblivion

Commonwealth War Cemetery in Ranchi, Jharkhand, bears a silent testimony to a part of British India history that is long forgotten, writes SOMEN SENGUPTA

**O**nce the summer capital of undivided Bihar, known for its wild beauty and cool weather, Ranchi now looks like the poster boy of an unplanned urbanised over-populated city. Despite being the capital of a relatively new state, Jharkhand, town planning is noticeably missing here.

As the state tourism is working to put the state on a larger travel map, there do exist some hidden gems of history waiting to be discovered.

Close to the old Hazari Bagh Road's Netaji Nagar locality (at Kantatoli Chowk), and right behind the old bus stand, a small piece of history sleeps in oblivion. This is Ranchi Commonwealth War Cemetery, where many fallen soldiers of Second World War got their final resting place. These soldiers lost their lives in India and Burma while protecting the glory of the Queen of England.

Interestingly, of the eight World War cemeteries in India, eastern states such as Manipur, Nagaland, Bengal, Assam and Jharkhand house

five. This reflects the impact of the war on the region as a maximum number of Allied soldiers were stationed here to protect India from a probable Japanese invasion in the early 1940s.

One needs to go back in the history to recall that the fall of Singapore and Rangoon in 1942 in the hands of Japan, had caused great panic in British India. By 1944, the Axis forces had already entered India, with Netaji Bose's INA, and had overtaken a large area near Imphal, Manipur. The eastern part of India had a very weak defence with only seven divisions of the army and almost no air fields.

By May 1942, the Allied forces had started amassing their army from the Commonwealth countries and started building logistics infrastructure in form of new air strips and army bases. By the end of 1944, places such as Calcutta, Guwahati, Kohima and some other frontiers of Assam and Bengal were flooded with the American and Commonwealth soldiers arriving from Canada, Australia, Great



Britain, New Zealand and India.

Around the same time, a secret army training camp was opened at Ramgarh near Ranchi where

British and American Army officers gave training to the Chinese soldiers back from the front. Clearly Ranchi was abuzz with action. The suburbs,

however, remained unaffected during the war.

Elsewhere in Assam, Manipur, Arunachal and even Calcutta, there

were high casualties of soldiers. Many a brave-hearts lost their lives. Only some got decent burials as many returned home as badly mutilated bodies. It was a dark moment in time.

As it did at the end of the First World War, Commonwealth War Graves Commission began organising the Army cemetery across the globe. The project in Ranchi was undertaken in 1952. Relics of the fallen soldiers were taken to Ranchi from various battle fields and other military and civil cemeteries and a small war cemetery was designed with all international features. This place was well organised and opened to visitors in 1952. 704 graves from across India were identified and shifted here. Today, the cemetery has 51 gravestones of Indian soldiers, of which four belong to the Bihar Regiment. This cemetery houses three non-war graves as well. There are 200 graves from 12 other civil cemeteries.

Green open field lends a sad beauty to the cemetery. At the centre, stands a long freestanding Latin

cross called the "Cross of Sacrifice", a very common feature in any World War cemetery with more than 40 graves. This cross of sacrifice was designed by Reginald Blomfield. Row upon rows of headstones tell a saga of pain, pangs and exoriated sacrifices.

Every headstone mentions the name of the soldier, his designation and his age at time of death. Every headstone is decorated with the regimental badge of the dead and a personal line dedicated to him by his family.

The cemetery is the final resting place of soldiers belong to regiments such as the Royal Australian Air Forces, Royal Canadian Air Forces, East Yorkshire Regiment, West African Army, Royal Army Ordinance, East Lancashire Regiment, Westmorland & Cumberland Yeomanry, among others that lost their lives to lost cause. It is heart breaking to see that many soldiers were as young as 20 years old. The pain of the loved ones is reflected in the memoriam lines etched on the stones.

Though the cemetery is not easy to locate and gets only few visitors, it is very well maintained. So next time you visit Ranchi, do make time to visit this piece of history. As reads a message at one of the resting places: *Thoughts go back to bygone days. Life moves on but memory stays.*



# Lankan Civil War and human rights violation

The Mahinda Rajapaksa Government in Sri Lanka is in trouble again. The horrors of the three decades of Lankan Civil War are revisiting the Government. The two brothers — Mahinda and Gotabaya — are holding the two crucial posts, Prime Minister and President, respectively.

Earlier, Mahinda served as the President from 2005 to 2010, when Gotabaya was the Defence Secretary. During this period, both the brothers crushed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and put an end to the longest Civil War in the country.

However it was the leadership of former Lieutenant Colonel Gotabaya, who finally led the Lankan Army to the successful war against the dreaded LTTE leadership of Velupillai Prabhakaran in 2009. It was good that an ethnic terror movement came to an end that took the lives of many in the past. And the armed forces of this tiny island nation and its political leadership breathed a sigh of relief. Prabhakaran's torture regime was over with his killing in May 2009 at the hands of the Lankan Army.

This had not only shattered the command structure of the Tamil Tigers, but also pushed the outfit to the brink of closure. The organisation had lost both its firepower and manpower. The Lankan Government forces too had received severe casualties though the forces received abundant supply of arms from China.

The end of the war brought the most vital question to the fore — the massive violation of human rights by the Lankan Army. Though the Rajapaksa Government had justified the war, the humanitarian concerns emerging from the number of dead, missing and post-war rehabilitation of the Tamil civilians exposed the extreme level of brutalities that the Lankan forces resorted to.

Both the Rajapaksa brothers turned out to be heroes among the majority Sinhalese population, but questions of the violation of fundamental rights of the Tamils in the North and Eastern part of the country remained unanswered.



And this has been haunting the Rajapaksa Government since the end of the Civil War and now also with the returning of the duo to power.

Sri Lanka is facing a new UN Resolution at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), calling on the human rights abusers to account and asking the country's Government to deliver immediate justice to the victims. Britain and others have circulated a draft of the resolution among the members of the UNHRC.

It is expected to be adopted at the end of the four-week Spring Session of the UN's top human rights body. The session began on February 22 in Geneva.

Both the Tamil Tigers and the Lankan Army were accused of massive violations of human

rights during the war. Therefore, the UN human rights office blames both for carrying out unparalleled brutalities against the innocent civilians during the war.

Germany and Canada are among the six countries that formed the core group along with Britain to bring the resolution on Lanka. Lord Ahmad, Britain's Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, said: "The victims from all communities of Sri Lanka's brutal Civil War are, a decade later, still awaiting justice for loved ones murdered or missing and dealing with the repercussions of violence and conflict".

He further commented that the current resolution moved by his country in the UNHRC is a vital step towards reconciliation and peaceful

relations among all of Sri Lanka's diverse communities and faith groups. This will bring an added pressure on the Lankan Government, but then how Colombo will respond may only decide the future of the families of the victims.

UN Human Rights chief Michelle Bachelet has submitted her report on Sri Lanka to the UNHRC. While introducing the report to the Council, she said the effect of the conflict on thousands of survivors from all communities was devastating.

She highlighted that 12 years after the end of the armed conflict in Lanka, the domestic efforts to ensure justice for victims have failed. Further she stated, "Despite commitments made in 2015, the current Government, like its predecessor, has failed to

pursue genuine truth-seeking or accountability processes... Moreover, the systems, structures, policies and personnel that gave rise to such grave violations in the past remain and have recently been reinforced".

This has put the Rajapaksa Government in the dock. All efforts are on to pressurise Colombo so as to offer justice to the families of thousands of victims and missing persons in this devastating war.

As per the records made available by the international media and human rights agencies, the war killed about 1,00,000 people, including 40,000 Tamil civilians, massacred by the Lankan Army in the final onslaught.

However, the Rajapaksa Government completely denies these allegations. An estimated 1,50,000 people were

trapped on the coast at the end of the war. Besides thousands went missing and the Lankan security forces were blamed for the disappearance of the Tamil rebels who either surrendered or captured.

Recently in a meeting with a UN envoy, Lankan President Gotabaya acknowledged for the first time that more than 20,000 people who disappeared during the country's Civil War were dead.

Further his office released a statement that steps would be taken to issue death certificates for those missing. This has certainly dampened the hopes of those who were expecting a positive response from the Government.

Sri Lanka, the island nation, had witnessed the scourge of terrorism for about three decades. The terror fuelled by the monstrous LTTE had claimed many lives, including the civilians, soldiers and high-profile political leaders within and outside the country.

The LTTE under the leadership of Prabhakaran was simply running a parallel Government in the North-Eastern parts of Lanka. Today, the Tamils and other minority groups like the Muslims and Christians are alleging massive violation of human rights by the Lankan forces in the final war against the LTTE in 2009. But the international community must not forget the reign of terror brought by Prabhakaran and his team over innocent civilians across the island.

The LTTE, formed on May 5, 1976, by Prabhakaran was once used to be the only terror group in the world possessing its own military. Its political headquarters was in Kilinochchi, situating at a distance of 200 miles north of Lanka's capital city of Colombo. And this military consisted of three distinct branches — the Tigers (Infantry), Sea Tigers (Sea Wing) and Air Tigers (Air Wing). It had gradually emerged as the most lethal and well-organised terror group.

In fact, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in its report published in January 2008, stated that the LTTE was one of the most dangerous

and deadly extremist outfits in the world and the world should be concerned about the outfit as they had inspired networks worldwide, including the al-Qaeda in Iraq. The brutal tactics and the employment of child soldiers by the LTTE were causing concerns across South Asia in its heydays.

Further some reports indicate that women were also forced to join the organisation. Only after seven years of its formation in 1983, the organisation opened its Women's Front of the Liberation Tigers under the leadership of Vithusha. Like many other African terror groups, the LTTE used to recruit children for combat forces.

As per the estimates of the Sri Lankan Directorate of Military Intelligence, as much as 60 per cent of the outfit's fighters were below 18 years. It was also revealed that the fighters of the Tamil Tigers who were killed in the war were mostly between 9 and 18 years.

These were some of the harrowing episodes of the LTTE that rightly underlines how the terror organisation was simply twisting and undermining the epithets of basic human rights. Initially, it seemed to be an endless saga of terror, violence, torture and a parallel state run by an authoritarian leader.

Today the Tamils are calling for accountability and justice for the crimes committed during the Civil War by the Lankan forces. It is hard time for the Rajapaksa duo to respond to the Tamil minority in their country and to the world Tamil diaspora on this sensitive issue. What is expected from Colombo is quick redressal of the grievances of the minorities in the North and Eastern part of the country.

It is time to accept the responsibility of war crimes on the part of the Lankan Government. It is time to heal the wounds. Else, relationship between the Sinhalese majority and rest of the minority communities, particularly with the Tamils, would further deteriorate.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)

**Today the Tamils are calling for accountability and justice for the crimes committed during the Civil War. The Government should heal the wounds. Otherwise, the relationship between the Sinhalese majority and the rest would deteriorate**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Wastewater surveillance for detecting early spread of Covid

**Sewers or sewage treatment plants can provide near real-time outbreak data as they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health**

The ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019, caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), has been declared as a public health emergency of international concern (WHO, 2020).

Several research studies across the globe have confirmed that SARS-CoV-2 ribonucleic acid (RNA) has been detected in faeces of not only symptomatic but also asymptomatic patients. It has also been seen that sewers or sewage treatment plants (STPs) can provide near-real-time outbreak data because they constantly collect human fluids shed by infected population.

Thus, wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE) is a promising approach to understand the prevalence of viruses in any given wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) catchment population.

A densely populated country like India will require constant vigilance to contain Covid-19 infection hot spots, unless and until either a vaccine is proven to be effective or herd immunity is achieved, to combat the spread of SARS-CoV-2. Real-time community sewage detection can be taken as early as possible to restrict the movement of the local population, working to minimise the pathogen spread and threat to public health.

This could help the timely

determination of whether there are Covid-19 carriers (both asymptomatic and symptomatic) in an area to enable preventive measures such as rapid screening and quarantine, even before the residents of that city have been tested.

In India, the pandemic steadily rose from April 2020 with peaking in mid-August 2020. The cumulative confirmed cases have significantly lowered at present.

Several research groups across the globe have reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater. In Switzerland, École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) researchers, working in association with the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG) on wastewater sampling and analysis developed a study in March 2020, which acts as an early warning signal for spread of SARS-CoV-2 in communities. Similarly, in April 2020, sewage sampling across greater Paris (France) for more than one month, researchers have detected a rise and fall in novel coronavirus concentrations that correspond to the shape of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak in the region.

Other researchers have also reported detecting novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in countries such as: Australia (Ahmed et al, 2020),

Cyprus (Michael-Kordatou et al, 2020), Ireland (Cahill et al, 2020), Italy (La Rosa et al, 2020), Japan (Haramoto et al, 2020), South Africa (Street et al, 2020), The Netherlands (Dutch Water Sector, 2020), Spain (Chavarria-Miró et al, 2020), USA (Peccia et al and Hart & Halden et al, 2020), and India (Kumar et al and Arora et al, 2020).

For effective dissemination of knowledge created by the current research efforts, and to empower collaboration on a global scale for wastewater-based epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2, there are various ongoing initiatives such as the European Union's NORMAN-SCORE Joint Initiative (Sewage Analysis CORE group Europe) (score-cost.eu/), COVID-19 WBE Collaborative (covid19wbec.org/), Biobot Analytics (biobot.io/), NSF Research Coordination Network (RCN) (sites.nd.edu/rcn-wastewater-sarscov2/), COVIDPoops19 (https://twitter.com/COVIDPoops19?s=20), Global Water Pathogen Project (GWPP) (waterpathogens.org/) and others.

In IIT Gandhinagar, India, Kumar et al, 2020, for the first time, detected the presence of three SARS-CoV-2 genes (ORF1ab, N and S virus) in wastewater. The samples were collected in May 2020 from Old Pirana WWTP in Ahmedabad

(Gujarat) to understand the application of WBE surveillance in India.

The WWTP has a capacity of 106 MLD receiving effluents of Civil Hospital treating Covid-19 patients. The number of gene copies was found comparable to that reported in the untreated wastewaters of Australia, China, and Turkey and lower than that of the USA, France, and Spain. A similar study was conducted by researchers of Dr B Lal Institute of Biotechnology (Rajasthan) with samples from hospital wastewater as well as from WWTPs of Jaipur, which has been a pandemic hotspot (red zone) since April 2020.

To analyse the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in the community wastewater of different catchments in Chennai city in India, a group of scientists led by Chakraborty et al from SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Mu Gamma Consultants Pvt Ltd (MGC) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) jointly implemented an intensive wastewater surveillance study, the first-of-its-kind in the southern region of India.

The study entailed partial lockdown and post lockdown survey along the wastewater discharge points in Adayar and Cooum Riverine belt flowing through the densely populated region of Chennai to

develop an early signalling spread of Covid-19 in communities during partial and post-lockdown periods in 2020. This study gave interesting insights for informing policy actions.

The wastewater surveillance study in Chennai has the potential for replication in other Indian cities like Delhi as well as upscaling it for larger geographic areas covering a large population. Also, it could potentially be one of the bases for scientifically informed decisions to implement public health intervention strategies consistent with legal and ethical considerations in India.

At present, Delhi has 41 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) with a cumulative treatment capacity of 3,149 MLD. Out of 41 STPs, 32 STPs (2,775 MLD) are operational and 9 STPs (373 MLD) are non-operational. Also, importantly, 75 per cent of pollution is contributed by three major drains (Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara) out of all the drains falling into the river Yamuna. Given the current sewage management scenario of Delhi, a wastewater surveillance study (similar to the one conducted by SRM IST, MGC and TERI in Chennai) can be taken up in the national Capital to track the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the wastewater samples from major drains

falling into the Yamuna river and select STPs.

The advantages of wastewater surveillance in Delhi will include the monitoring of wastewater samples from sewage treatment plants and major drains of the Yamuna river in Delhi can help in estimating the number of infected individuals, and hence provide robust scientific evidence for informed decision making at the policy level.

This is an early, cost-effective, unbiased community-level indicator of the presence of Covid-19 and of "hot-spots" within a community. It will support risk mitigation decisions for the communities, and guide decisions about where and when to impose or relax more targeted restrictions on movement and activity. It will help alert asymptomatic infections in the community through real-time community sewage detection could be determined.

It will be very useful for positioning resources and triggering public actions for improved health outcomes. It will also alert second and subsequent waves, and develop preparedness towards outbreak of other pandemics in the future.

To track any resurgence of Covid-19, national wastewater surveillance programmes are being implemented in various countries like the USA,

Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Pakistan. The same can be planned for India. In the past, WBE has played an important role in the eradication of polio in 2011 in India, and at present, wastewater surveillance continues at 52 WWTPs and unregulated catchment areas for detection of poliovirus.

This surveillance network can be a viable resource for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater in the country, including the national Capital Delhi.

There is a need to identify the key issues and challenges related to the development of validated methodological protocols for the quantitative analysis of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater.

The data generated from the SARS-CoV-2 wastewater monitoring system in Delhi might be used to show a roadmap for tracking disease, intensifying testing, re-introducing public orders related to social distancing or quarantines (if needed), and even lifting restrictions once a cessation of infection is confirmed.

(Paromita Chakraborty is Associate Professor, SRM Institute of Science & Technology, and Girija K Bharat is director, Mu Gamma Consultants Pvt Ltd, Gurugram)



PAROMITA CHAKRABORTY



GIRIJA K BHARAT





REMAIN CALM, SERENE, ALWAYS  
IN COMMAND OF YOURSELF. YOU  
WILL THEN FIND OUT HOW EASY IT  
IS TO GET ALONG  
— PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

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February 28, 2021



**YOUR  
WEEK  
AHEAD**

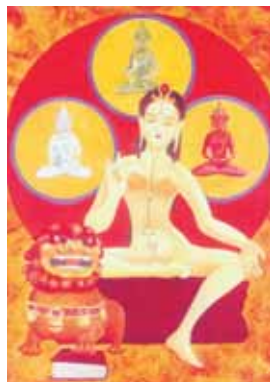
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week you will be filled with enthusiasm. You will find yourself in spotlight with people waiting to listen to your views. Your health remains good. You'll decide to leave for a long drive to experience some change. You may connect with people from different places. On the career front, you'll get the chance to kick start your career. Students will get to prepare well beforehand to remain in tune with their curriculum. You have got the talent, intelligence but need the right guidance to enhance them and brace oneself against a brighter future. Research related work is on the cards. On the personal front, you will have the power to influence your near and dear ones. Think before you speak as your words might affect a relationship.

**Lucky number:** 6  
**Lucky colour:** Purple  
**Lucky day:** Friday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week there might be some turning points in your health. Be accountable to yourself and move forward. Sometimes things just happen, know that you are not alone. If needed, reach out for support. Resisting change is often bad for your health. Do whatever it takes to maintain your stress level in check. Remember that meditation and yoga is the best treatment for the mind. On the career front, if you're signing any deal in the week then read the documents carefully. Bonding with a colleague may become stressful. In such a case, work ahead with a diplomatic approach else you find it difficult to reach your set targets. On the love front, your spouse may turn a little arrogant and demand something out of your limitation. This might upset your routine life.

**Lucky number:** 17  
**Lucky colour:** Silver  
**Lucky day:** Saturday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week many issues are bothering you and it's going to be difficult to retain your peace of mind. In the beginning, you'll feel restricted mentally, physically and financially. As the week progresses, you'll start building upon your motivation. Have a positive outlook. For perfect health, take excellent care of yourself. It's never too late to try to do the proper thing. You earn good money this week. Professionally, there's a particular element of perfectionism related to you. You're careful in your approach and you ensure that everything is planned and executed well for overall success. You'll not leave any task half done. You want to complete all assigned tasks and projects as per a particular standard. On the personal front, you find yourself in a situation where you'll use your energies productively.

**Lucky number:** 28  
**Lucky colour:** Orange  
**Lucky day:** Tuesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week you will get busy with the nitty-gritty of life. You need to form some decisions. At the beginning of the week, there will be a big shift in your schedule. Some exercises, yoga practices and solitude will be beneficial for you. On the career front, a sudden change within the circumstance may surprise you. Some unexpected job opportunities are on the cards. You would possibly be offered a dream project. This may lead you to feel positive. You have got all the explanations to feel proud and contented today. In terms of private affairs, you are going to confront your near and dear one during a get-together occasion. You need to keep your anger and aggression under control. There is no need to be hyper to point out your dislikes.

**Lucky number:** 30  
**Lucky colour:** Yellow  
**Lucky day:** Tuesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week health will remain good. You will realize that in the past you were too busy for spiritual practices. Now you'll find an urgency to take the time for those things that feed your soul. You've got faith in yourself and therefore the Almighty. Joining a religious group with different sorts of people will enhance your personality. On the career front, there's a transition period. You're trying to find a change. Hospitable change is the only way through which you'll make smooth job transitions. Your confusion which has been a part of your routine life will come to an end now. You find yourself on the proper track, and things are turning towards positivity. On the personal front, you are likely to stress. This is definitely not the right time to start another relationship.

**Lucky number:** 17  
**Lucky colour:** Mint Green  
**Lucky day:** Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

The week is crammed with fear and doubts and this might confuse you. You are feeling tired, inactive and fail to move ahead during this situation. Often, this the time to refresh and seek advice from the expert. You're constantly under a self-created dilemma that has shaped into a baseless fear. Stay positive, as this is a temporary phase and goals are going to be attained. On the career front, new opportunities will make you creative this week. You are feeling the drive to improve your career. This is the time to write down what you had aspired and wish to accomplish. A positive time to place ideas into practices. Success is foreseen. Relationships are likely to suffer this week. Things might not add up as you would have expected with a love relationship. Be honest with yourself first, then with your beloved.

**Lucky number:** 11  
**Lucky colour:** Pink  
**Lucky day:** Monday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week you are feeling restricted, indecisive, and confused. You have recently come through a really difficult time. Now you've come up with some solutions to enhance your situation which is a good sign. Take care that you don't repeat the same mistakes which contributed to the matter that you just solved. On the work front, those who are trying to find work you'll be looking in the wrong place. Your professional matters need your attention. Having an honest knowledge of your area of interest is most desirable. But having the ability to precise this data is equally important. On the private front, others may feel envy for you. With your mental abilities, you come across as a sharp person. Written language needs attention be gentle and soft in your approach and expression.

**Lucky number:** 8  
**Lucky colour:** Magenta  
**Lucky day:** Friday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

You need immediate attention to your health and should come out of your fanciful imagination. This week you would like to vary your routine and check out new things for health. Start with the fundamentals. Make sure you are getting enough sleep, exercise, and eating healthy foods. You don't need to undergo any uncomfortable, and difficult regime to feel better. Small, positive steps are presumably the type of change that you simply can accept. For an honest life, a disciplined lifestyle is vital. Professionally, the week is marked for intellectual activities, and your involvement will fetch you great dividends. Those in the artistic field may get very busy in the week. Haste, anger and aggression should be avoided to get the simplest results. In the matter of heart, you'll feel as if you've not been properly judged by your partner.

**Lucky number:** 9  
**Lucky colour:** Black  
**Lucky day:** Saturday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week your health needs your attention. For those affected by BP, heart and diabetes problems, it's advised that you simply get yourself checked and be under observation. A strict diet is a must. You would like to maintain a positive attitude that's required for a balanced life. Get rid of all the tensions and mental worries. Professionally, this may be a busy week for you, perhaps it might be challenging also. You ought to know your limitations and resources to be more proactive and successful in your work. On the private front, you'll found yourself in a network of old and new friends. You're likely to contact new people, adding new friends to your network. Getting nostalgic while speaking to an old childhood friend is likely. Those in a relationship, suddenly your ex may come to you and enrich your life.

**Lucky number:** 11  
**Lucky colour:** Beige  
**Lucky day:** Sunday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week is an excellent time to think about what you're doing and what you ought to do to enhance your health. It might be more exercise or more rest. Think over it through and you'll do better with moderate changes in what you're doing currently. You will be in a mood of enjoyment and celebrations because as the week progresses, you'll enter solitude in search of spiritual awakening. On the career front, some baseless fear has captured your mind making you restless. Worrying about your job will not help things. Specialise in what you have control over and let go of your anxiety. On the personal front, your intention is true, and you show care to your near and dear ones. On the other hand, people in your life are contributing to your anger and aggression. Stay positive and calm.

**Lucky number:** 13  
**Lucky colour:** Rose Gold  
**Lucky day:** Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

You feel good and will pamper yourself this week. You ought to experience pleasures, sumptuous food, and entertainment activities. To rejuvenate yourself, do some basic grooming. This may draw your attention. Professionally, it's an excellent week for your career. Your emotional level is amazingly creative and focused. News of promotion or appraisal is on the cards. Self-confidence keeps your morale high. In the week you will handle any situation together with your intelligence. Your dreams are big and may create a world of your own and make a mark for yourself. In the matter of heart, you're living in illusions and an imaginary world. Ensure to have an honest and motivating friend circle. You're expecting an excessive amount of out of life and relationships. Don't keep high expectations.

**Lucky number:** 10  
**Lucky colour:** Off-White  
**Lucky day:** Monday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week there are push and pull sort of energy which can cause negativity. This won't be unfamiliar for you as you've often faced such mood swings. Get yourself examined because the energy of the week isn't very positive. Take advice from a healthcare professional. If something is wrong, don't hesitate to take a second opinion and set about the treatment before it's too late. On the career front, make sure you have updated all of your financial documents and kept an account of your income and therefore the expenditure. A slight carelessness may give you a jolt. How you speak your mind is as important as what you say. There could also be some unfairness at play in your workplace. Ensure your behaviour is impeccable. Expect something good to happen in the relationship.

**Lucky number:** 20  
**Lucky colour:** Mauve  
**Lucky day:** Monday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Attaining the state of *Yoga*

There are two working tools of the Dhyana process — an imagery to focus upon and a *mantra* related to the image — as has been explained in the previous issue. Mantra is usually a set of syllables placed in a logical sequence to create a particular sound effect. It could be just a seed letter, syllable, word, or a set of words, which as a sequel to stress created and uttered by mouth, is heard by ears, and apprehended by mind. *Mantra* is so called, because it involves a mental process. The word as such comprises of 'man' out of 'manana' and 'tra' out of 'trāna'. Mana stands for mind; manana implies reflection in mind; and trana stands for liberation.

So, chanting of *mantra* helps attain liberation from mental limitations. It, thus, serves a great purpose, as *mantra* happens to be a radiant energy, rather a sound-body of consciousness, set in correspondence with the consciousness of the related imagery. Following repeated chanting of the *mantra* with focus on the related imagery, consciousness of the seeker, in the first place, comes to terms with that of the *mantra* and the imagery. Eventually the seeker's consciousness becomes one with the eternal element of

consciousness over a period of time.

Pursuing the process doesn't happen without meeting difficulties on the way. Invariably, the seeker is confronted with distracting thoughts that drift our attention away from our focal point, again and again. Don't confront those distracting thoughts. If you ever do that, they will stay put in mind, and keep visiting again and again. The only way out is training one's mind to remain disengaged from them. Mind it; unless you pay attention to something, it won't affect you.

Keep chanting the *mantra* and try to bring back attention to the imagery sought after again and again. Gradually, the distracting thoughts will go out of reckoning, and you may be able to remain focused for a longer stretch of time. Let me add here that when the sound notes of the *mantra* resonate to the imagery in focus, over a period of time, one gets so involved that distracting thoughts if any are left far behind. When one gets fully established in the process, mind becomes one pointed. In the process, one also inculcates a value system, coming as it may with the educative import of the imagery in focus.



**SAMĀDHI:** As one gets established in the *dhāranā* process, the seeker is in harmony with the imagery and its related educative import, as well as the resonating *mantra*. We, thus, enter into a state of *dhyana*. Pursuing the process further, a stage is arrived at when *mantra* gets dropped. Eventually all thoughts drop but one remains steadfast with the concept synonymous with the imagery in focus. This state is termed as being in *savikār samādhi* (immersed in the iconic figure targeted). Further down the line, even the iconic figure drops. Following which the *mantra*, the imagery, and the mind become one seamless awareness, which means attaining the state of *nirvikalpa* (formless) *samādhi*.

In *samādhi*, mind, free from any thought input, becomes quiet. For, all thoughts prevailing in mind, which otherwise condition one's mind, get dropped. These very thoughts hold the key to your futuristic aspirations also. You are free from any sense of the past or future. So, there remains nothing in hand to process, and hence at peace. It is a state of being when you are just enjoying your present

moment in 'as is where is' condition.

The question now is: If all about life, including the mind, is manifestation of nature driven energy orchestra, which would be continuously pulsating, how comes mind gets into a state of no activity for becoming at peace with the self? Well, mind can never get into an inactive state the way a running vehicle is halted. But pursuing the *dhyāna* process, a state is arrived at when mind is in perfect harmony with the element of consciousness. The unitary mind then submerges with the cosmic mind. Evidently then, mind becomes an integrated part of cosmic flow, and so is at peace with the self and the rest. It is something like someone standing on earth plane not able to have a feel of tremendous speed at which the latter would be spinning. For, the person and the earth are synonymous. This is what may be termed as being in a state of *Yoga*. In the state of *Yoga*, mind enters an infinite domain having no distinctive existences.

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