

**WORLD 7**

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**MONEY 8**

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**SPORT 10**

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**Published From**  
**DELHI LUCKNOW**  
**BHUBANESWAR RANCHI**  
**RAIPUR CHANDIGARH**  
**DEHRADUN HYDERABAD**  
**VIJAYWADA**

RNI No. 53466/91, REGD. No. DL (C)-05/1219/2018-20 Posted at DRMS Delhi 6

\*Late City Vol. 31 Issue 16

\*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, SUNDAY JANUARY 17, 2021; PAGES 12+4 ₹4



# Sunday pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



**USUAL SUSPECTS**  
SWAPNA DASGUPTA

## Need for a measure of juridical predictability

The Supreme Court decision to stay the implementation of the legislation on agricultural marketing until it assesses the report of an expert committee on the subject has drawn considerable flak. Although the Government side has chosen to be reticent, many of the organisations representing farmer interests in Punjab and Haryana have been critical of the court's order, despite the fact that it ostensibly favours them, at least momentarily. The reasons for the dissatisfaction may vary but there seems an unlikely convergence of viewpoints which should be considered.

Despite the Government's unwillingness to take a public stand on the court's stay, there is a sense of outrage among the supporters of the reforms. This stems from a belief that the court has clearly exceeded its constitutional mandate governing judicial review. In normal circumstances, a court assesses the legality of legislation, properly enacted by elected representatives, on two counts. First, it assesses whether or not the legislation is in accordance with the letter and, occasionally, spirit of the Constitution. Secondly, it may extend its view to take into account the adherence to natural justice. In recent times, the principle of "judicial conscience" has made an entry in the thinking of some judges. However, since this is a nebulous and totally subjective principle, it is best to disregard it as an aberration.

On the question of the Constitution, the court would have been entirely in order to examine if the Centre had the necessary constitutional mandate to undertake legislation to abolish the APMC and the existing anti-hoarding rules. It is beyond the jurisdiction of the judiciary to question the wisdom and appropriateness of the legislation. That power vests entirely with the legislature, in this case both Houses of Parliament. The debate on the merits and demerits of the new laws belongs in the realms of politics. Although there is a school of thought that believes political decision-making is too crucial to be left to elected politicians and should be

vetoed by a smaller group of wise people, this belief has no place in a democracy. The principle of judicial review has to be selective. If it becomes all-pervasive, the governance of the country passes to the hands of unelected representatives.

What the Indian Constitution stipulates is that governments have the absolute right to take bad decisions as long as they don't violate the "basic structure" of the Constitution. What constitutes the "basic structure" is a matter that the courts have arrogated to themselves. It is not an idea that finds any mention in the Constitution.

There have been a series of protests against the farm bills in northern India. However, I don't see there anyone in their

right mind has presumed to suggest that the right of farmers to sell their produce across state boundaries is unconstitutional. Nor is there any suggestion that it is constitutionally obligatory to inject the Minimum Support Price into the rules governing the relevant Act. The debate on the subject is partly grounded in economics and partly in politics. That is where the battle must be conducted, not in the courtrooms.

The highest court in the land has made some adverse observations on the paucity of public consultations prior to the passage of the Bills. Politically, this is a worthwhile objection, although it could be said that the waging pandemic didn't allow too much scope for village councils all over India to debate its merits and demerits. At an electoral level too, the new laws don't seem to have been a factor in influencing voting intentions in Bihar and in the series of by-elections all over the country, but notably in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Nor for that matter has the apparent haste in which the bills were enacted in Parliament triggered farmer unrest in any part of the country, apart from Punjab and Haryana. The observation by economists that the big farmers who are spearheading the agitation — with a great deal of logistical support from professional, rent-a-agitators who have a track record of dismal failure in electoral politics — are among the top eight per cent in terms of income has also not been challenged.

India is not a plebiscitary democracy. Democracy vests the responsibility of assessing public opinion on elected representatives whose mandate is periodically renewed. It is their duty to uphold the "public interest" — often by championing change. The courts are meant to see that the rule of law is upheld. Safeguarding the public interest is a lofty concept but that is outside the purview of the judges.

It is sometimes mistakenly believed that anything pronounced by the courts is law. It is also presumed that law is absolute and written in stone. Both these ideas are often responsible for facile conclusions, particularly in the media. The reality is that the interpretation of what is law often depends on the subjective orientation and personal philosophies of the judges. A decision by one Bench can often vary dramatically from the same case heard by another Bench. This is why there is such a tussle in the United States over the appointment of "liberal" or "conservative" judges.

The composition of the Bench will shape the verdict — although this is not to say that the judges are wilfully political.

The reactions to the Supreme Court order have initiated a debate which is instructive. It is time that this debate finds reflection in the deliberations of Parliament in the forthcoming Budget session. India needs a measure of juridical predictability to confront turbulent politics.

## 2L get 1st dose of anti-Covid protection

World's largest vaccination drive launched, Modi congratulates citizens and scientists, urges people to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and don't forget to take 2nd dose of vaccine on time



A medic administers Covishield vaccine to sanitation worker Manish Kumar, the first recipient in Delhi, in the presence of Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan at AIIMS in New Delhi on Saturday Ranjan Dhiraj | Pioneer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India launched its mammoth vaccination drive on Saturday to bring the pandemic under control with two locally-produced vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin — with nearly two lakh out of targeted three lakh taking shot against the pathogen on the first day on Saturday.

Launching the "world's largest vaccination drive" against Covid-19, Modi congratulated citizens and scientists for the feat but cautioned people against being careless and not taking precautions after taking the first dose of the vaccination.

The Prime Minister also alerted people against the rumours spread about the vaccines. He said Indian vaccines are the "cheapest and the best in the world".

Modi, in a televised address before the vaccine rollout, said there are several nations whose entire population is less than 3 crore, but India will be vaccinating as many

people in just the first phase. He saluted scientists for developing the vaccines in such a short span of time.

The PM cautioned people to ensure that they take both the doses at one month's gap and show patience as the country begins to give the antidoce to its huge population.

"Don't make the mistake of taking one dose and then forgetting about dose two and don't forget coronavirus appropriate behaviour after getting the dose. The patience with which you fought coronavirus, show the same patience during vaccination now," Modi said.

As the PM kicked off the vaccine rollout with a click of a button, a video message played the Sanskrit chant — *sarve bhavantu sughinah, sarve santu niramaya* (All be happy, all be free of illness).

The Covid-19 vaccination drive was successfully conducted on the first day, Additional Secretary in the Union health Ministry Manohar Agnani said during a press briefing

here organised late evening after the drive was wrapped up for the day. Of three lakh planned to be inoculated, around 1,91,181 beneficiaries were given the shot of Covid-19 vaccines on first day involving 16,755 personnel at 3,351 vaccination sessions.

Agnani said that Covid-19 vaccines Covaxin and Covishield (developed by Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India (SII) respectively) were given at 3,351 session across the country. He refused to take any questions from the reporters.

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### SII CEO receives 1st dose of Covishield

Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla was administered the first dose of the Covishield coronavirus vaccine on Saturday afternoon, hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's nationwide vaccination drive.

### Owl found dead in Delhi Zoo, test at Bhopal lab confirms bird flu

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A dead owl in the Delhi zoo has been infected with bird flu as the samples were found positive for H5N8 avian influenza virus under RT-PCR test done by ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Disease (NIHSAD), Bhopal, on Friday, officials said on Saturday.

The zoo witnessed the death of a brown fish owl in its captivity. Its cloacal, tracheal and ocular swabs were sent to the animal husbandry unit of the Delhi Government for serological examination," zoo Director Ramesh Pandey said.

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### BKU Lokshakti requests SC to replace members of panel

Says nominate those who can do job 'on mutual harmony basis'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Bhartiya Kisan Union Lokshakti approached the Supreme Court on Saturday, requesting it to remove the remaining three members of a committee it had set up to hold talks with the farmers protesting against the three contentious farm laws.

The BKU (Lokshakti) has requested the court to nominate people to the committee who can do the job "on the basis of mutual harmony".

The BKU (Lokshakti) is one of the 40-odd farmer unions spearheading the agitation on various border points of Delhi for about 50 days now, demand-

ing repeal of the farm laws.

In an affidavit, the BKU (Lokshakti) said the principle of natural justice is going to be violated as those appointed to the four-member committee "have already supported these laws".

"It is important to mention here with great regret that the principle of natural justice is going to be violated by making these persons as members of the committee.... how they will hear all farmers on equal parameters when they have already supported these laws," it said.

The union also sought dismissal of a plea of the Central Government, filed through the Delhi Police, seeking an injunction against the proposed tractor march or any other kind of protest by farmers that could disrupt the gathering and celebrations of the Republic Day on January 26.

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## No way to go, no age to go

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It was neither the age, nor the way to go. Usha Srivastava, 59, who headed the Hindi Pioneer since its birth in 2011, passed away at 11.30 am at the Max hospital, Saket, in New Delhi on Saturday.

She left behind a grieving family, shell-shocked colleagues, a large number of friends, well-wishers, and acquaintance who would find it difficult to accept that (the) cheerful, friendly, demure face of Hindi journalism is no more.

Usha was suffering from a liver ailment and had undergone a liver transplant. She could never recover from the post-operation complications with grief," he said.

A host of political leaders and journalists have mourned her death.

An emotional Chandan Mitra, the Editor-in-Chief of *The Pioneer*, nearly broke down on hearing the news of Usha's demise. "She nurtured

those who mourned Usha's death.

The *Pioneer* CEO Shobori Ganguly described Usha as a "valuable" colleague who also cared for everyone around her. "I find it so difficult to come to terms with her passing away. She was such a noble soul," she said.

When her wait for a liver donor ended on December 25 after nearly a fortnight of a wait during which she was bedridden in the hospital, in and out of the ICUs, at *The Pioneer* we took a sigh of relief.

Many of us met her before she was wheeled into the operation theatre the next day. Little did we know that it would be the last time we took a sigh of relief.

Her valiant fight for survival, our prayers, and doctors' efforts could not change what destiny had in store for her. She left us without a word, without even opening her eyes for nearly three weeks.

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USHA SRIVASTAVA

FEB 12, 1961 – JAN 16, 2021

● Bharat Biotech will pay compensation to recipients in case of any serious adverse effects experienced after receiving the antidote

● Prime Minister Narendra Modi kicked off the vaccine rollout with a click of a button, a video message played the Sanskrit chant — *sarve bhavantu sughinah, sarve santu niramaya*

● Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan: These vaccines are "sanjivani" in our fight against this pandemic. We have won the battles against polio and small pox. Now, we have reached the decisive phase of winning the war against coronavirus

● Manish Kumar from Delhi: Many of them (staff) were scared. So, I went to my seniors and said I should be given the vaccine first. I wanted to prove to my colleagues that there is no need to be scared

● Abdul Qayoom, security guard at Era Medical College in UP: There was always fear in mind because of close proximity to coronavirus patients. But now I am feeling much safer after the shot

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**HOME THEATRE**

# Plenty of twists and intrigue



**TANDAV**  
Amazon Prime Video  
\*ing: Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia, Mohd Zeeshan Ayub, Sunil Grover, Gauhar Khan, Kritika Kamra  
Rated: 5.5/10

This 38-minute each episode created by Ali Abbas Zafar may not have been able to scratch the surface as far as intrigue and twists are concerned but that doesn't mean that they are missing. The Season 1 that has nine episodes takes you on a behind closed doors journey of politics where playing person against the other, murder and using the common man as a stepping stone to further one's career is fair game — all that matters is the position and the power that comes with it.

While the story appears to have been told many times, *Tandav* manages to keep one engaged. Who doesn't want to know how the game is played and however fictional the characters may be, a reference to a lady politician can't help one try and draw parallel

even if the said people are no more and the mere mention of the names can be construed in bad taste. But then, this is reel life not reality.

The makers have ensured that no one point is dragged for long and the story moves at a pace that is interesting and offers plenty of turns that may leave one stumped only to be thrown a curve ball with another twist — all within a span of minutes.

The performance too keeps one glued to this series. Sunil Grover as Gupral is a welcome change. It is good to see him move totally away from Dr Gulati's role in *The Kapil Sharma Show*. Saif Ali Khan plays his role just as brilliantly.

As a wannabe king to a kingmaker, his character keeps the interest alive. Dimple Kapadia may look a tad old but one can't take away the elegance with which she portrays herself here. The others actors, and there are so many, do their bit.

It makes for a good watch since it has plenty of twists and turns.

— Shalini Saksena

# Vaccine is safe, scotch rumours, says Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday visited the "Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital" (LNJP) Hospital of the Delhi Government to inspect the preparations made for the Covid-19 vaccination drive in Delhi.

Congratulating the people of Delhi, he said that the vaccination process is running smoothly, and the people who have been vaccinated are not experiencing any difficulties or side-effects.

The Delhi Government has done all the preparations and around 8,100 people will be vaccinated today at 81 locations across the national Capital, he added.

Kejriwal requested the people to not pay heed to any kind of rumours because the vaccine is entirely safe according to the experts, and to continue wearing masks and practicing social distancing even after receiving the vaccine. Health Minister Satyendar Jain was also present on the inspection visit.

The vaccination drive has started across the country from onwards along with Delhi where it has been started in 81 sites. "I have done the inspection of the services provided during the vaccination process. Around eight people have been vaccinated and 30 people were waiting in the line. The process is running smoothly. The people who have been vaccinated are very happy and they are not experiencing any difficulties or side-effects," he said.

"The Delhi Government has done all the preparations, and around 8,100 people will be vaccinated today at 81 locations across the city. I want to request the people to not pay heed to any kind of misinformation or rumors because the vaccine is entirely safe according to the experts."



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal leaves from LNJP hospital after the virtual launch of Covid-19 vaccination drive by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Saturday

## Kejriwal visits LNJP Hospital to inspect preparations made for Covid-19 vaccination drive

"Please continue wearing masks and maintaining social distancing even after being vaccinated," he added.

Kejriwal said, "Every person who has been vaccinated is happy nobody is experiencing any problems. We have started this at 81 sites and we will increase this number to 175 sites in the coming days. As and when the vaccine increases, we will start the vaccination process at 1,000 sites. Only health workers will be vaccinated in the first phase, including doctors, paramedic staff, and other medical workers.

"There is no need to launch a separate app, the Central Government has devised the same system for the entire country," he added.

Jain further said "The vaccination drive has been started across the country and in Delhi from today. The process is

being carried out across 81 sites in Delhi. First to receive the vaccination will be health workers, then frontline workers such as civil defence volunteers and police officials, then people above 50 years and then people below 50 years but with comorbidities.

"We have a target of vaccinating 8,100 people by the end of the day. I have met all the people who have received the vaccine, nobody is experiencing any difficulties."

Dr Suresh Kumar, Director of LNJP Hospital said, "World's largest vaccination drive has started in Delhi from LNJP Hospital. CM Arvind Kejriwal and Health Minister Satyendar Jain inspected the preparations and they spoke to eight people who have received the vaccine.

Our doctors, nurses, technicians, and staff are very happy because the people will finally be relieved from corona. LNJP has treated approximately 11,000 Covid infected people, during which a lot of our health workers were also infected. I want to request people to participate in the vaccination drive."

# Harsh Vardhan assures people of vaccine efficacy

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Saturday carried out a successful vaccination of 100 healthcare workers including doctors, nurses and paramedical staff. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare visited Sir Ganga Ram Hospital to inspect Covishield vaccination programme at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Speaking on the occasion Harsh Vardhan said, "India has launched today the biggest vaccination programme. We should be proud of India's vaccination programme and I assure the people of the efficacy of the vaccination."

"I have visited Sir Ganga Ram Hospital many times during the peak of Covid crisis. That is the reason I am visiting this hospital today as Sir Ganga Ram Hospital has been in the forefront during the fight with Covid. People should not play

politics in this important vaccination programme," he said.

According to Dr DS Rana, Chairman (Board of Management), Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, "We are happy to note that today being the first day, everything went off smoothly and no adverse reaction of Covishield was observed. Altogether, today 100 healthcare workers were given Covishield vaccination. These healthcare workers will now be given the second dose after 28 days."

Some of the prominent doctors who took Covishield vaccine were Dr Shyam Aggarwal (Chairperson, Department of Oncology), Dr Chand Wattal (Chairperson, Department of Microbiology), Dr Sumir Dubey (Sr Cardiac Surgeon), Dr Gaurav Majumdar (Senior Embryologist, Department of IVF), Dr Amita Chaturvedi and many others healthcare workers.

6 lakh kids do not attend anganwadis, 2L due to financial constraint: Survey

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said that the findings of the Delhi Government's Socio-Economic Survey stating that over six lakh children do not attend anganwadis and two lakh students do not attend schools mainly due to financial constraint, has put a question mark on AAP Government, which used to boast of its "Educational Model".

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has no presence instead of addressing the pressing problems of Delhi like the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, soaring pollution levels and the economic distress of the people, he said.

The Congress leader further said that the Kejriwal Government cannot go against the findings of the survey, covering 1.02 crore out of around two crore total population in the Capital.

# Nithari serial killer Koli gets death sentence, Pandher walks free for want of proof

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD

The Special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court on Saturday sentenced Surendra Koli to death in the 12th case related to Nithari murders.

The case relates to the kidnapping, attempted rape and murder of a 20-year-old girl, who worked as domestic help.

The CBI had filed sixteen cases and the agency charged Koli in all of them for kidnapping, rape, murder and the destruction of evidence. While Pandher was charged for immoral trafficking,

# BJP councillor Arti Yadav joins AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Sitting Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) councillor of Kapashera ward Arti Yadav, along with former councillor Anil Yadav, joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday.

Welcoming the newly joined leader, senior AAP leader and MLA Atishi said that several leaders of the BJP are fed up with the corruption of the BJP ruled MCD. To be part of development centric politics they are joining the AAP, he said.

Atishi said that in the last 14

years the BJP has only done corruption in the MCD and today every citizen of Delhi knows about the corruption of the BJP ruled MCD. The BJP has done numerous scams inside the MCD. Scams of the medicines of dengue and malaria, scam of machines to clean the landfills and the recent ₹2500 crore scam the list is too long.

The AAP leader further said that many leaders from different political parties are coming and joining the AAP because they are very much impressed with the work of the Kejriwal Government.

**DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

The Delhi Development Authority announced Mega e-Auction Phase XI for various categories of plots in Jan 2021 with the last date for online submission of mandatory Documents with EMD as 23.01.2021. DDA is pleased to add new commercial plots in the on going e-Auction and the entire process is being extended with online submission upto 30.01.2021 (06.00PM) IST for giving maximum chance to bidders for registration and participation. For further details kindly login the DDA website www.dda.org.in or www.ddaeauction.co.in.

Subu R. Commissioner (LD)

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## Meeting held to review R-Day preparations, law and order at farmers' agitation sites

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner DSN Srivastava on Saturday reviewed the Republic Day security preparations and arrangements at farmers' agitation sites to maintain the law and order situation in the national Capital.

According to Anil Mittal, the additional Public Relation Officer (APRO), Delhi Police, in a crime review meeting held with senior officers of the force, the Commissioner took stock of anti-terrorism measures as well as action taken against criminals involved in NDPS cases, burglary, excise act and gambling cases.

The CP also reviewed pending cases under POCSO, and crime against women. Senior officers examined proposed action against listed criminals under surveillance, like jail/bail/parole, released criminals and Bad Characters," said Mittal.

The officers have been directed to increase vigil through picket checking and updating History Sheets. An action plan for police stations was also reviewed for formation of anti-snatching teams and identification of areas prone to organized crime like liquor/drugs trade and gambling," said Mittal.

The district Deputy Commissioners of Police were also advised to take optimum use of crime teams for investigation, he said

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- Pratapnagar-Kevadiya MEMU
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Prime Minister

(Through Video Conferencing)

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- Impetus to overall Socio-economic development of region



# Bharat Biotech to pay compensation if Covaxin causes side effects

**Hyderabad:** Bharat Biotech, which has received a government purchase order for supply of 55 lakh doses of Covaxin, a Covid-19 vaccine, will pay compensation to recipients in case of any 'serious adverse' effects experienced after receiving the anti-vaccine.

A consent form to be signed by the vaccine recipients said, "In case of any adverse events or serious adverse events, you will be provided medically recognised standard of care in the government designated and authorised centres and hospitals."

The compensation for serious adverse event will be paid by sponsor (BBIL) in case if the SAE is proven to be causally related to the vaccine," the form said.

In phase 1 and 2 clinical trials, Covaxin has demonstrated the ability to produce antibodies against COVID-19.

However the clinical efficacy of the vaccine is yet to be established and it is still being studied in phase 3 clinical trials.

"Hence, it is important to appreciate that receiving the vaccine does not mean that other precautions related to COVID-19 need not be followed," it added.

According to an industry expert, the company is liable to pay compensation to

people in case of serious side effects caused by the vaccine administered while in the clinical trial mode.

The central licensing authority has granted permission for the sale or distribution of Covaxin for restricted use in emergency situations in public interest as an abundant caution, in clinical trial mode.

Meanwhile, Joint Managing Director of Bharat Biotech International Ltd, Suchitra Ella in her Twitter account said, "Covaxin & Bharat Biotech is truly humbled & honoured to be of service to the nation & the fraternity of all first responders of covid who have served public health."

Covaxin is a highly purified and inactivated two-dose SARS-CoV-2 vaccine, manufactured in a Vero cell manufacturing platform with an excellent safety track record of more than 300 million doses, the drug maker had said.

Covaxin is India's totally indigenous COVID-19 vaccine developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research and National Institute of Virology.

The inactivated vaccine is developed and manufactured in Bharat Biotech's BSL-3 (Bio-Safety Level 3) bio containment facility, one of its kind in the world.

**PM to perform ground-breaking ceremony for Ahmedabad, Surat metro projects tomorrow**

**PMO on Saturday said the metro projects will provide an environment-friendly mass rapid transit system to the two cities in Gujarat**

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will perform the ground-breaking ceremony for the Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project Phase-II and the Surat Metro Rail Project via video-conferencing on Monday.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Saturday said the metro projects will provide an environment-friendly mass rapid transit system to the two cities in Gujarat.

The Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project Phase-II is 28.25 km long with two corridors. The 22.8-km-long corridor-I is from Motera Stadium to Mahatma Mandir, while the 5.4-km-long corridor-II is from GIFT City to GIFT City. The total completion cost of the Phase-II project is Rs 5,384 crore, a statement issued by the PMO said.

The Surat Metro Rail Project is 40.35 km long and comprises two corridors. The 21.61-km-long corridor-I is from Sarthana to Dream City, while the 18.74-km-long corridor-II is from Bhesan to Saroli. The total completion cost of the project is Rs 12,020 crore, the PMO said.

**PTI**

## UP: Man held for raping, blackmailing woman officer

**Pratapgarh (UP):** A man was arrested for allegedly raping and blackmailing an Uttar Pradesh Government officer, police said on Saturday.

The woman officer, in her complaint, had alleged that the man used to beat and harass her during the days when she was taking coaching, Adhar said.

She alleged that when she got a job in a bank in Bareilly, the accused used to come there and harass her, he said.

**PTI**

## 5-year-old raped in UP village, rushed to hospital in serious condition

**Banda (UP):** The condition of a 5-year-old girl, who was allegedly raped in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, deteriorated after she was rushed to a hospital in Kanpur for better treatment, police said on Saturday.

Chief Medical Officer Uday Bhan Singh said the girl was sent to Kanpur for better treatment and undergoing plastic surgery as she was profusely bleeding.

The incident took place on Friday night in the village under Girwa police station area, they said.

A 23-year-old man has been arrested in this connection, Circle Officer (CO) Naren Siyaram said.

The youth had lured the minor to a secluded spot by offering her Rs 10 and he allegedly raped the girl there, the CO said. When the girl's family went to the house of the accused to complain about the incident, he and his family members threatened to kill them, police said.

**PTI**

## Raghav Chadha conducts door-to-door survey at Sat Nagar, examines basic issues

**STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI**

Continuing with the development work in his constituency, Rajinder Nagar MLA and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader Raghav Chadha conducted a door-to-door survey of Sat Nagar along with the representatives of BSSES, Delhi Jal Board, Municipal Corporations and Public Works Department and examined issues related to water supply, drainage, electricity and road network.

During his visit, Chadha questioned the MCD's lackadaisical approach in resolving residents' issues despite repeated complaints.

"Half the problems of Delhi can be resolved if the MCD

begins to take ownership and do its duty properly vis-a-vis, timely action when people lodge complaints. It is unfortunate that the Corporation has failed in its duty towards the people.

Despite their repeated complaints, the MCD had taken no action. Chadha said, "Garbage disposal comes under the purview of the MCD.

The corporation has failed

to do any upkeep and maintenance of roads that also comes under its purview. Their abject failure has caused multiple problems to residents.

Following this, the Rajinder Nagar MLA issued immediate directions for the affected areas

to be cleaned thoroughly.

er and regular garbage disposal. Their inaction has become a major cause for concern," he said.

During the combined development survey of Sat Nagar, WEA and 100 quarter, the Rajinder Nagar MLA came across several lanes where garbage was not collected nor had the lanes been cleaned properly. Several residents apprised their elected representative of lack of cleanliness and improper garbage disposal, which eventually becomes a major problem.

Despite their repeated complaints, the MCD had taken no action. Chadha said, "Garbage disposal comes under the purview of the MCD.

The corporation has failed

to do any upkeep and maintenance of roads that also comes under its purview. Their abject failure has caused multiple problems to residents.

Following this, the Rajinder Nagar MLA issued immediate directions for the affected areas

to be cleaned thoroughly.

## Reunion plan ends in tragedy: 11 lives lost in road accident

**Dharwad:** Little would 11 of the past school students have expected this: A planned reunion in Goa ending on a tragic note.

All of them being girl students of 1989 batch from Saint Paul's School at Devangere, now in their mid-40s, constituted the group travelling in the ill-fated mini-bus that collided with a tipper-lorry at Itigatti village near the city on Friday, claiming their lives.

The former had planned a three-day sojourn to Goa and visit places of tourist attraction.

Two of them had taken their daughters along.

According to police, 14 left for Davangere in the van in the morning.

While 13 of them hailed from the district headquarters town of Davangere, one was from Bengaluru. They were

on the way to pick up their former classmate from Dharwad when the accident happened, police said.

The deceased have been identified as Preethi Ravikumar (46), Manjula Natesh G B (47), Paramjyothi Hunchur (47), Varshita (47), Rajeshwar Bandammanavar (46), Dr Veena Prakash Mattihalli (47), Ksheera Sureshbabu Poral (21), Hemalatha (48), Yashmitha (20) and mini-bus driver Raju Gorabannavar and cleaner Millikarjun Udagatti (27).

The driver and cleaner hailed from Ranebennur, the police said.

The injured were Asha Betur (47), Veda Manjunath (46), and Praveena Prakash (46), Usharani Ramesh (46), Poornima Prakash (46), and the driver of the truck Basavaraj Khadrolly. **PTI**

## Air quality in Delhi touches hazardous level

**NEW DELHI:** Air quality in Delhi spiked to dangerous levels due to low ventilation and calm surface winds as Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) predicted on Saturday. According to the National Ambient Air Quality Index (NAAQI), the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 492 micrograms per cubic.

According to SAFAR, the values of Suspended Particulate Matters (SPMs) were recorded 436 and 278 microgram per cubic for Particulate Matters (PM) 10 and 2.5. SAFAR, in its short range weather forecast said that the air pollution in Delhi has spiked to dangerous levels due to extremely low ventilation and calm surface winds.

On Saturday morning, the air quality touched the hazardous level with the AQI touching 492. SAFAR further said that slight improvements in surface winds are observed wind speed is moderate and West north-westerly.

Due to slight better ventilation marginal improvement air quality is forecasted for Sunday, AQI likely to improve to the higher end of Very Poor. The SAFAR forecast reveals that AQI will continue at the high end of the Very Poor category for January 18. This is likely to be the first extended extreme air pollution event for 2021. Further improvement is expected on January 19, 20," it added. **SR**

## World has begun to look up to India as a power to reckon with: Jitendra on vaccination drive

**New Delhi:** As the country rolled out the world's largest inoculation drive against the coronavirus on Saturday, Union Minister Jitendra Singh hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and said the world has begun to look up to India as a power to reckon with. He said Prime Minister Modi has always demonstrated the ability to make a virtue out of adversity.

"In the wake of COVID pandemic, the prime minister has placed India on the path of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and the world has begun to look up to India as a power to reckon with," said Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel.

He said with the announcement of early lockdown by Prime Minister Modi way back in March, India was possibly the first to declare a decisive war against the pandemic.

"Today with the launch of vaccination drive, India is possibly the first to herald the beginning of the end of the pandemic. Something which was considered unbelievable to be achieved for a country as populous, as heterogeneous and as diverse, as India, has been made possible under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Singh told PTI. The emerging scenario, he said, has given the people of India a reinforced sense of self-esteem and self-confidence, and also reinforced people's faith and trust in Prime Minister Modi. Singh also lauded India's corona warriors for their enduring fight over the last one year.

## Wait for your turn to get vaccinated, beware of rumours: Yogi to people

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday asked the people to remain alert for rumours regarding Covid-19 vaccines and wait for their turn to get themselves vaccinated.

Healthcare workers at the front-line of India's COVID-19 battle got their first jabs on Saturday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching the world's largest vaccination drive against the pandemic.

"Today is a day of immense happiness and excitement. India is the first country which has launched two vaccines," Chief Minister Adityanath said here. The chief minister visited the Balrampur Hospital in Lucknow in the morning and reviewed the vaccination drive where the first doses were administered to Dr Praveen Kumar and staff nurse Geeta Devi. Adityanath also interacted with the staff of the

hospital. "I have just met the health workers who have got vaccinated and they are all fine," he said told newscasters.

I congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this achievement

and thank the scientists of the country. At this point of time, when the country is moving ahead in this battle against a pandemic, some people with vested interests are spreading rumours about the coronavirus vaccine," he said. "There is a need to avoid any kind of rumour and people should wait for their turn. We have also to remain alert for the people who are spreading rumours," the chief minister said. The vaccine developed in the country is very effective and also reasonably priced, he said, emphasising the need for people to maintain COVID protocol and social distancing even after getting vaccinated. **PTI**

## No way...

**From Page 1**

When she first fell ill in end of October last year, none of us ever thought in two-month time we would lose her forever. After all, we were so used to her presence, her friendly banter and intense political debates, that we thought nothing could ever defeat her. Alas! We were so wrong.

Usha completed her study from Kashi Hindu Vishwavidyalaya and then started her journalist career from Hindi daily *Aaj* as a correspondent from Varanasi. Later, she moved to Delhi and worked with *Amar Ujala*, *Rajasthan Patrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar* before she joined as the Resident Editor of the Hindi Pioneer in 2011.

She would be always the last to leave the office.

But when it came to leave us for one last time, she seemed to be in such a tearing hurry.

Goodbye, Usha...



A milkman rides a horse cart amid dense fog on a winter morning in Jammu on Saturday

## Owl found dead in Delhi Zoo, test at Bhopal lab...

**From Page 1**

As per protocols and guidelines issued by the Centre and the Delhi Government, sanitisation and surveillance drills have been intensified in the zoo and all possible preventive measures are being taken, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change said in a statement.

Pandey said, "Birds in captivity have been isolated and are

under consistent monitoring and care for their behaviour and health. Spray of lime, virkon-S and sodium hypochlorite and foot bath of potassium permanganate are being done on regular intervals every day." Chicken feed to raptors and entry of vehicles inside the zoo have already been stopped. Movement of staff is also being restricted and regulated in view of the bird flu outbreak.

The Delhi zoo has both captive and free-ranging birds, including local migratory waterfowls and waders, in its premises.

On Monday, samples taken from crows and ducks at parks and lakes in the national Capital had tested positive for the avian influenza.

Pandey said in case of any suspected death of birds in future, authorities will collect samples for test as per protocol.

## Assam's Covid death toll climbs to 1,066

**Guwahati:** Assam's COVID-19 toll mounted to 1,066 with one more person succumbing to the virus, while 15 fresh cases pushed the tally to 2,16,777, the National Health Mission said in a bulletin.

The number of new infections, the lowest since May 18, were detected out of 8,400 tests, which was also considerably lower than the daily figure due to the ongoing

Bhogali Bihu festival in the state, it said late on Friday. **PTI**

## 52 adverse events in Delhi, 14 in Maha...

**From Page 1**

We have come to know that the Covid-19 vaccination drive is being conducted by the hospital today itself. Covaxin manufactured by Bharat Biotech is being preferred in our hospital over Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute," it said.

Dr Manish Jangra, founding chairman of the Federation of All India Medical Association (FIAMA), told The Pioneer that the residents were apprehensive about the lack of complete trial in the case of Covaxin.

"We have our family members, what if something happens to us due to the adverse event caused by the Covaxin which is yet to complete its clinical trial. We have requested the MS to vaccinate us with Covishield which has completed all stages of trial before its roll-out," said Dr Jangra.

He asserted that science is not based on belief but on facts and it has to be clinically proven before they administer it in their bodies. Only 31 beneficiaries were inoculated the vaccine on the first day of the vaccination drive at the RML hospital.

Dr Nirmalya Mohapatra, general secretary of RML FIAMA, talked about an adverse event case reported in Norway where 23 elderly people died after receiving Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine. He said in India the Government could have waited for few more months to let the Covaxin developer complete its third clinical trial.

Dr Rahul Bhargava, Director (Institute of Blood Disorder and Bone Marrow Transplant) Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, echoed similar views as he said the Government has tried to modify the protocols related to phase three trials. "We could have given go ahead to the vaccine developed by the Pfizer and SII as they have conducted needed studies. Biotech is still undergoing requisite trial and giving go ahead on the basis of present data can be harmful for the people," said Dr Bhargava adding that there is a need to closely monitor adverse events of special interest.

## Dr Reddy's gets nod to hold ph-3 trials of Sputnik-V in India

**From Page 1**

Sputnik V developed by the Gamaleya National Research Institute of Epidemiology

# Roshni scam: CBI books 13 in Pulwama

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has re-registered J&K ACB FIR in connection with the alleged irregularities committed in transfer of land under the Roshni Scheme against 13 persons of Pulwama, including seven then officials posted in the district like the Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama and his subordinates.

The then Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Mehraj Ahmad Kakroo, the then Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama Iftikhar-ul-Hasnain, the then Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Mohammad Rajab Bhatt, the then Tehsildar Mohammad Hussain, the then Naib Tehsildar, Kakpora, Mohammad Maqbool Ahanger, the then Girdawar, Kakpora, Ghulam Ahmad Sheikh and the then Patwar Halaq, Kakpora, Abdul Razak Wasey have been named in the FIR.

In addition, private persons named in the FIR are Ahmad Pandith, Nabi Naikoo, Mohammad Amin Pandith, Dr Farhat Pandith, Abdul



Majid Sheikh and Ghulam Rasool Wani.

The accused have been booked under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Ranbir Penal Code and relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. "In pursuance of the J&K High Court, FIR No 29/2015 OF Police Station-VOK, now ACB, J&K is re-registered," reads the FIR.

An audit report of the Principal Accountant General (Audit) alleged irregularities committed in the transfer of land under the Roshni scheme. The report revealed that the officers and officials of Revenue department of Pulwama have by abuse and

misuse of their official position as public servants conferred undue pecuniary benefit upon the illegal occupants of state land by arbitrarily fixing the price of land which was lower than the prevailing market rate of the area, incorrect application of rates and unauthorised change of classification of land from residential to agricultural.

Verification revealed that the ownership rights of the state land measuring six Kanals, 10 Marlas and four Sirsai was transferred in the name of the six accused persons under Jammu and Kashmir State Land (vesting of ownership) Act, 2001, it added.

## PC slams Centre for stalemate over farm laws

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister P Chidambaram on Saturday hit out at the Centre over the impasse on the farm laws, alleging that "no one" was consulted for the legislations, and asserted that the only way out for the Government was to agree to start on a "clean slate". His remarks came a day after the Centre asked protesting farmers to form an informal group to prepare a concrete proposal about their objections and suggestions on the farm laws for further discussion at their next meeting on January 19 to end the long-running protest at various Delhi borders.

The protesting farmer unions, however, stuck to their main demand of a complete repeal of the three legislations. In a series of tweets, Chidambaram said that as expected, another round of talks between the farmers and government has failed.

The fault lies with the Government because it will not agree to get rid of the disputed laws, the former Union minister said. "RTI responses have exposed as a lie the government's

claim that there were extensive consultations before the Farm Laws Ordinances were promulgated. The truth is that no one was consulted. In particular, state governments were not consulted," he alleged.

The only way out of the impasse is for the government to admit its mistake and agree to start on a clean slate, Chidambaram said. Thousands of farmers, mostly from Haryana and Punjab, have been protesting at several border points of Delhi since November 28 last year, demanding a repeal of the three laws and a legal guarantee to the minimum support price (MSP) system for their crops.

Enacted in September last year, the three laws have been projected by the Centre as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed their apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of the MSP and do away with the "mandi" (wholesale market) system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

## To promote desi toy makers, CSC joins hands with AICTE for 'Toycathon-2021'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To promote toy manufacturing among domestic players, particularly among rural entrepreneurs, the Common Service Centre (CSC), an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT Ministry, has joined hands with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to organise 'Toycathon-2021'.

"Toycathon-2021 is aimed at understanding the creativity among start-ups in rural areas, students and professionals for developing and manufacturing toys. It is a unique opportunity for students, teachers, start-ups and toy experts/professionals in India to submit their innovative toys/games concepts and win prizes worth Rs.50 lakhs," said CSC Managing Director Dr Dinesh Tyagi.

Toycathon-2021 is an inter-ministerial initiative involving six ministries. Organised by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell with support from AICTE, the initiative is being supported by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of MSME, Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Information and



TOYCATHON-2021 IS AN INTER-MINISTERIAL INITIATIVE INVOLVING SIX MINISTRIES



this unique initiative due to its reach and expertise.

CSC Academies are being utilised to create awareness, promote and conduct Toycathon-2021 in rural areas. The new concepts of toys generated from Toycathon-2021 might also be useful in solving our societal problems," said Tyagi, who is also Secretary of the CSC Academy.

Broadcasting. Toycathon-2021 will be conducted through CSC Academy, an arm of CSC, at 6,000 block and taluka level where CSC Academies are present. "CSC Academy, a not-for-profit society which delivers specialized courses/training programmes, and promotes entrepreneurship among the rural masses, is best suited for

EX-SCBA president urges Bench to end election impasse of lawyers' body

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former president of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and senior advocate Vikas Singh on Saturday requested Chief Justice S A Bobde to constitute a bench to resolve the election stalemate of the professional body of lawyers.

He said Dushyant Dave, who resigned from the post of SCBA president on Thursday, was to constitute the election committee in the first week of November last year as the term of the executive committee was ending on December 13.

"He delayed the decision by a month. Even after deciding on December 4, he delayed communicating to the election committee by another week. When the EC had already decided to conduct the election virtually, there was no occasion for him to call an EC to ratify the election committee decision of appointing NSDL," Singh said in a letter to the Registrar General of the Supreme Court.

If a hybrid mode (of election) was what they wanted, they should have decided on December 4. Now asking the election committee to defer the election to third week of February is again an attempt by Dave to prolong his tenure till then creating a drama of resignation and then making the EC to reject his decision to resign," the letter stated.

The senior lawyer said all the three members of the election committee resigned on Friday night as the SCBA refused to accept its decision to hold elections through NSDL, a digital firm.

## Plea in SC for directing WhatsApp to withdraw its new privacy policy



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Saturday filed a petition in the Supreme Court, making a plea to direct WhatsApp to withdraw its new privacy policy.

The body issued a statement claiming that the new WhatsApp privacy policy encroaches upon various fundamental rights of the citizens.

About the petition, the traders' body said it "has also prayed that Union of India must frame guidelines to govern big technology companies like WhatsApp and frame policies which would protect the privacy of citizens and businesses".

"The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has today filed a petition in the Supreme Court with the prayer to direct WhatsApp to withdraw its new privacy policy, which is encroaching upon various fundamental rights of the citizens granted by Constitution of India," the statement said.

Meanwhile, WhatsApp has announced delaying by three months the implementation of the new privacy policy that has faced a massive backlash.



with tens of millions of its users moving from the platform to rivals like Signal and Telegram.

The policy change was originally scheduled to come into effect on February 8, the Facebook-owned company said.

It has clarified that the update does not affect data sharing with Facebook with regard to personal conversations or other profile information and only addresses business chats in the event a user converses with a company's customer service platform through WhatsApp.

"The petition especially highlights the difference of approach in EU and India countries with respect to the privacy policy of WhatsApp and how the data of Indian users can be misused by such big tech companies," CAIT said.

## SC slaps ₹25K fine on Guj for wasting judicial time

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has imposed a fine of ₹25,000 on Gujarat for wasting judicial time, irked over the "lethargy and incompetence" of the state government in filing a petition before it after a delay of over a year.

A bench, headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, pulled up the state for approaching the apex court in a "casual manner" and dismissed the plea on the ground of delay.

It observed that such kind of "certificate cases" are filed with the only objective to obtain a quietus from the top court on the ground that nothing could be done because the highest court had dismissed the appeal.

The petition was filed in the top court by the state government after a delay of 427 days against an order of the Gujarat High Court passed in March 2019 in a case.

"The objective is to complete a mere formality and save the skin of the officers who may be in default in following the due process or may have done it deliberately. We have deprecated such practice and process and we do so again."

"We refuse to grant such certificates and if the government suffers losses, it is time when concerned officers responsible for the same bear the consequences," said the bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Hrishikesh Roy.

"The irony, emphasised by us repeatedly, is that no action is ever taken against the officers and if the court pushes it, some mild warning is all that happens," the bench said in its order passed earlier this week.

## North, north-western parts of country to reel under severe cold for next 3 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There will be no letup in the intense cold and dense to very dense fog conditions in the north and north western parts of the country at least the next three to four days. Dense to very dense fog over north and central India has delayed several trains and rescheduled flights in Delhi, Amritsar and Lucknow on Saturday due to poor visibility of over a year.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), zero visibility was reported over Delhi, Lucknow and Amritsar due to variable and calm lower-level winds on Saturday. "Zero visibility shown over Delhi, Lucknow and Amritsar..." the IMD said in a tweet. This is the third time during this winter season that the visibility has dropped to zero in several cities. Dense fog-induced low visibility conditions led to delay of over 40 flights from the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) here on Saturday. According to airport sources, poor visibility shown over Delhi, Lucknow and Amritsar..." the IMD said in a tweet. This is the third time during this winter season that the visibility has dropped to zero in several cities. Dense fog-induced low visibility conditions led to delay of over 40 flights from the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) here on Saturday. According to airport sources, poor visibility shown over Delhi, Lucknow and Amritsar..." the IMD said in a tweet. 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# Biden plans to give jabs to 30% nationals in 100 days



**Washington:** US President-elect Joe Biden has announced an ambitious goal of inoculating 100 million of total 331 million Americans with Covid-19 vaccines in the first 100 days of his administration, noting the vaccine rollout in the country, the worst hit by the pandemic, has been a "dismal failure."

Ahead of his inauguration on January 20, Biden on Friday held a briefing with his team on addressing the major health crisis that has engulfed the nation for nearly a year now.

The US is the worst-affected country in the world with more than 23,523,000 COVID-19 infections and 391,955 deaths, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus tracker.

During his election campaign, Biden, a Democrat, made tackling COVID-19 and the economic hardships it had put on Americans a core pitch to voters.

"The vaccine rollout in the United States has been a dismal failure thus far and in today's briefing we discussed five things, five things we will do in an attempt to turn things

around, five things to turn frustration into motivation, five things to help us meet our goal of 100 million shots by the end of our first 100 days in office. Some wonder if we are reaching too far for that goal. Is it achievable? It's a legitimate question to ask," Biden told reporters in Wilmington, Delaware.

"Let me be clear; I am convinced we can get it done, and this is the time to set big goals to pursue them with courage and conviction because the health of the nation is literally at stake. First, we will imme-

dately work with states to open up vaccinations to more priority groups," he said.

Biden said that the process of establishing priority groups is driven by science, but the problem is the implementation has been too rigid and confusing.

"If you were to ask most people today they couldn't tell you who exactly is getting vaccinated. What they do know is there are tens of millions of doses of vaccine sitting unused in freezers around the country while people who want and need the vaccine can't get it," he said.

PTI

"Vice President Mike Pence telephoned Vice President-elect Kamala Harris Thursday to congratulate her and offer his belated assistance — filling a leadership role all but abdicated by President Trump, who is planning to fly out of the capital shortly before Joseph R Biden Jr is sworn in next week," The New York Times reported.

Friday's call was the first time Pence, 61, and Harris, 56, had an one-to-one conversation since their vice presidential debate in October last year. It was also the first direct contact between the two leaders since the November 3 presidential

## Pence congratulates Harris, offers peaceful transition of powers

**Washington:** Outgoing US Vice President Mike Pence has called his soon-to-be successor Kamala Harris to congratulate her and offer his full co-operation in the transition of power, according to multiple media reports said.

However, there has been no communication between outgoing President Donald Trump and president-elect Joe Biden, which is unprecedented in recent memory.

"Vice President Mike Pence telephoned Vice President-elect Kamala Harris Thursday to congratulate her and offer his belated assistance — filling a leadership role all but abdicated by President Trump, who is planning to fly out of the capital shortly before Joseph R Biden Jr is sworn in next week," The New York Times reported.

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election.

The traditional in-person meeting between the outgoing president and the president-elect has not happened. Same is the case with the outgoing vice president and his successor.

In a rare departure from the tradition, Trump has announced that he will not attend Biden's inauguration on January 6. Trump would depart the White House for his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida just before the inauguration.

Though Trump has still refused to actually concede his 2020 election loss to Biden, he promised that a "peaceful transition" of power would take place.

He was impeached on Wednesday for inciting the Capitol Hill riot that stemmed from his unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud. The deadly insurrection at the Capitol on January 6 by Trump's supporters, who unsuccessfully tried to stop Congress from certifying Biden's win, resulted in the deaths of five people, including a police officer.

PTI

## Trump admin carries out 13th and final execution

**Terre Haute (US):** The Trump administration has carried out its 13th federal execution since July, an unprecedented run that concluded just five days before the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden — an opponent of the federal death penalty.

Dustin Higgs, convicted in the killings of three women in a Maryland wildlife refuge in 1996, was the third to receive a lethal injection this week at the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana.

President Donald Trump's Justice Department resumed federal executions last year following a 17-year hiatus. No president in more than 120 years had overseen as many federal executions.

Higgs, 48, was pronounced dead at 1:23 am on Friday.

The number of federal death sentences carried out under Trump since 2020 is more than in the previous 56 years combined, reducing the number of prisoners on federal death row by nearly a quarter.

AP

## Woman arrested in Capitol attack: 'I listen to my Prez'

AP ■ DALLAS

ing a video in which she says, "We're gonna go down and storm the Capitol" in front of a bathroom mirror, according to the FBI criminal complaint.

The agent who signed the complaint also noted that Ryan live-streamed a 21-minute Facebook video of her and a group walking toward the Capitol.

"We are going to (expletive) go in here," Ryan said in the video as she approached the top of the stairs on the west side of the Capitol building. "Life or death, it doesn't matter. Here we go." She then turned the camera to expose her face, the complaint noted, and said, "Y'all know who to hire for your Realtor, Jenna Ryan for your Realtor."

Nearly halfway through, Ryan appears to have made it to the front door, chanting, "USA, USA" and "Here we are, in the name of Jesus." In an interview with KTVT-TV in Fort Worth, Ryan said she hoped that Trump would pardon her.

Ryan shared photos and videos on social media, includ-

## European powers press Iran to back off latest nuke move

**Berlin:** Germany, France and Britain pressed Iran on Saturday to back off the latest planned violation of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, saying that Tehran has "no credible civilian use" for uranium metal.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said Thursday Iran had informed it that it had begun installing equipment for the production of uranium metal. It said Tehran maintains its plans to conduct research and development on uranium metal production are part of its "declared aim to design an improved type of fuel."

Uranium metal can also be used for a nuclear bomb, however, and research on its production is specifically prohibited under the nuclear deal — the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

— that Tehran signed with Germany, France, Britain, China, Russia and the United States in 2015.

Since the unilateral American withdrawal from the deal in 2018, the other members have been working to preserve the accord. Iran has been using violations of the deal to put pressure on the other signatories to provide more incentives to Iran to offset crippling American sanctions re-imposed after the US pullout.

A joint statement from the German, French and British foreign ministries said they are "deeply concerned" by the latest Iranian announcement.

"Iran has no credible civilian use for uranium metal" it said. "The production of uranium metal has potentially grave military implications."

AP

## Iranian Guard holds anti-warship ballistic missile drill

**Tehran:** Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard conducted a drill Saturday launching anti-warship ballistic missiles at a simulated target in the Indian Ocean, state television reported, amid heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme and a US pressure campaign against the Islamic Republic.

Footage showed two missiles smash into a target that Iranian state television described as "hypothetical hostile enemy ships" at a distance of 1,800 kilometers (1,120 miles). The report did not specify the type of missiles used.

In the first phase of the drill Friday, the Guard's aerospace division launched surface-to-surface ballistic missiles and drones against "hypothetical enemy bases." Iranian state television described the drill as

taking place in the country's vast central desert, the latest in a series of snap exercises called amid the escalating tensions over its nuclear programme. Footage also showed four unmanned, triangle-shaped drones flying in a tight formation, smashing into targets and exploding. Tensions between Washington and Tehran have increased amid a series of incidents stemming from President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Amid Trump's final days as president, Tehran has recently seized a South Korean oil tanker and begun enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels, while the US has sent B-52 bombers, the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier and a nuclear submarine into the region.

AP

## Uganda says Prez wins 6th term

### Bobi Wine alleges vote rigging

**Kampala:** Uganda's electoral commission says longtime President Yoweri Museveni has won a sixth term while top Opposition challenger Bobi Wine alleges rigging and officials struggle to explain how polling results were compiled amid an internet blackout.

In a generational clash widely watched across the African continent, with a booming young population and a host of aging leaders, the 38-year-old singer-turned-lawmaker Wine posed arguably the greatest challenge yet to Museveni. He had strong support in urban centers where frustration with unemployment and corruption is high.

The electoral commission said Museveni received 58% of ballots and Wine 34%, and voter turnout was 52%. The top United States

diplomat to Africa has called the electoral process "fundamentally flawed."

Thursday's vote followed the East African country's worst pre-election violence since the 76-year-old Museveni took office in 1986. Wine and other opposition candidates were often harassed, and more than 50 people were killed

when security forces put down riots in November over Wine's arrest. Wine petitioned the International Criminal Court this month over alleged torture and other abuses by security forces.

While the president holds on to power, at least 15 of his Cabinet ministers, including the vice president, were voted

out, with many losing to candidates from Wine's party, local media reported.

Wine claimed victory Friday, asserting that he had video evidence of vote-rigging and saying "every legal option is on the table" to challenge the official election results, including peaceful protests. Candidates can challenge election results at the Supreme Court.

Hours later, he tweeted that the military had entered his home compound and "we are in serious trouble," which a military spokeswoman denied. Wine, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, was roughed up and arrested several times while campaigning but was never convicted, and eventually he campaigned wearing a flak jacket and said he feared for his life.

A heavy presence of security forces remained around his home, where he has said he was alone with his wife and a single security guard.



Supporters of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni celebrate in Kampala, Uganda on Saturday

when security forces put down riots in November over Wine's arrest. Wine petitioned the International Criminal Court this month over alleged torture and other abuses by security forces.

While the president holds on to power, at least 15 of his Cabinet ministers, including the vice president, were voted

## Pragmatic Governor Laschet elected to lead Merkel's party

**Berlin:** Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right party on Saturday chose Armin Laschet, the pragmatic Governor of Germany's most populous state, as its new leader — sending a signal of continuity months before an election in which voters will decide who becomes the new chancellor.

Laschet defeated Friedrich Merz, a conservative and one-time Merkel rival, at an online convention of the Christian Democratic Union. Laschet won 521 votes to Merz's 466; a third candidate, prominent lawmaker Norbert Roettgen, was eliminated in a first round of voting.

Saturday's vote isn't the final word on who will run as

the center-right candidate for chancellor in Germany's Sept. 26 election, but Laschet will either run for chancellor or will have a big say in who does. Merkel, who has been chancellor since 2005, announced in late 2018 that she wouldn't seek a fifth term. She also stepped down from the CDU leadership.

The decision ends an 11-month leadership limbo in Germany's strongest party after outgoing leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who had failed to impose her authority on the party, announced her resignation. A vote on her successor was delayed twice because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Laschet pointed Saturday to the value of continuity and moderation.

AP

## Another UN peacekeeper killed in Mali, 5th in a week

**Dakar:** A United Nations peacekeeper from Egypt was killed in Mali's northern Kidal region on Friday, and another was seriously injured, after their vehicle hit an explosive device during a logistics convoy, the UN said.

It brought the toll to five UN peacekeepers killed in

northern Mali in just a week.

Another explosive device was found at the scene in Tessalit and disabled, the UN mission in Mali said late Friday.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday

strongly condemned the attack

and said attacks against peacekeepers may constitute war

crimes, spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Four peacekeepers from Ivory Coast died from an improvised explosive device and an attack Wednesday by unidentified gunmen in the Timbuktu region.

The UN said six were

wounded.

AP

## Sudan imposes curfew in West Darfur amid deadly clashes

**Cairo:** Sudanese authorities on Saturday imposed a round-the-clock curfew in the entire West Darfur province after tribal clashes between Arabs and non-Arabs killed at least six people and wounded at least 28 others.

Gov. Mohammed Abdalla al-Douma said the curfew began Saturday and would last until further notice, and includes the closure of all markets and a ban on gatherings across the province. Al-Douma also granted security forces and soldiers a mandate to use force to control the situation, according to decrees obtained by The Associated Press.

The violence comes two weeks after the U.N. Security Council ended the joint U.N.-African Union peacekeeping force's mandate in the Darfur region, following pressure from Sudan's transitional government, Russia and other African nations. The Darfur region remains scarred by war after a rebellion in the early 2000s was brutally suppressed.

The clashes erupted Friday in Genena, West Darfur's provincial capital, when a man was killed at a market in the Krinding camp for internally displaced people.

General public is here by informed that one girl Namely: Dropdi, D/o Maha Nand Mandal, R/o Jhuggi E 406, Kishan Kunj, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi. Age: 13 years, Height: 152 C.M., Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Built: Medium, Wearing: Black Kurta & Pink Pajama has been missing since 11.09.2019. from the area of PS. Laxmi Nagar, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 292/19, dated 11.09.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Laxmi Nagar, New 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.

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in

Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Fax: 011-24368639

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368638

DP/331/ED/2021

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is publicly informed that the residential house

No. B-538, Sector-19, Noida, Distt. Gautam

Budh Nagar, U.P. allotted G.L. Wadhwa R/o House

No. B-538, Sector-19, Noida and agreement to

sell is not executed so it

is publicly notified that the transfer of the

property bearing residential house No. B-538

Sector-19, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.

U.P. is going to transfer through G.P.A. in the

name of Mrs. Basanti Adhikari W/o Mahendra

Pal

# PM announces ₹1,000-cr 'Startup India Seed Fund'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced the launch of Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas.

Addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit', Modi exuded confidence that the growth of startups will help in generating jobs and improving lives of people in the region.

"In order to provide initial capital for startups, the nation is launching a Rs 1,000 crore Startup India Seed Fund. This will help in setting up new startups and promote their growth," the Prime Minister said.

The summit marked the fifth anniversary of the Startup India initiative launched by Modi on this day in 2016.



The government, Modi added, has been implementing the Fund of Fund Scheme to help startups raise equity capital. Going forward, the government will also help startups in raising debt capital, he added. India, the Prime Minister said, is home to the world's third largest startup ecosystem which has helped several budding entrepreneurs to come up with innovative technologies and become big corporations.

He further said that startups in India are not limited to big cities and about 40 per cent of such budding entrepreneurs are coming from tier-II and -III cities. Modi said in 2014 there were only four startups in the unicorn club, but today there are more than 30.

He informed that 11 startups entered the unicorn club in 2020 itself. India is the world's third largest startup ecosystem. There are over 41,000 startups in the country.

## CAIT moves SC over WhatsApp's new privacy policy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Saturday filed a petition in the Supreme Court, making a plea to direct WhatsApp to withdraw its new privacy policy. The body issued a statement claiming that the new WhatsApp privacy policy encroaches upon various fundamental rights of the citizens.

About the petition, the traders' body said it "has also prayed that Union of India must frame guidelines to govern big technology companies like WhatsApp and frame policies which would protect the privacy of citizens and busi-

nesses".

"The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has today filed a petition in the Supreme Court with the prayer to direct WhatsApp to withdraw its new privacy policy, which is encroaching upon the citizens granted by Constitution of India," the statement said. Meanwhile,

WhatsApp has announced delaying by three months the implementation of the new privacy policy that has faced a massive backlash with tens of millions of its users moving from the platform to rivals like Signal and Telegram.

## Fimmin looks at BIC model after RBI raises concern over zero coupon bonds for PSBs recap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With the RBI raising concern over the issuance of zero coupon bonds for recapitalisation of public sector banks (PSBs), the Finance Ministry is examining other avenues for affordable capital infusion including setting up of a Bank Investment

Company (BIC), sources said. Setting up a BIC as a holding company or a core investment company was suggested by the P J Nayak Committee in its report on 'Governance of Boards of Banks in India'.

The report recommended transferring shares of the government in the banks to the BIC which would become the parent holding company of all these banks, as a result of this,

## RBI remains steadfast to take any further measures to support growth: Das

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday said the central bank remains steadfast to take any further measures as may be required to support growth without compromising on financial stability.

Delivering the 39th Palkhivala Memorial Lecture, the governor said the principal objective during the pandemic period was to support economic activity; and looking back, it is evident that policies of the RBI have helped in easing the severity of the economic impact of the pandemic.

"I would like to unambiguously reiterate that the Reserve Bank remains steadfast to take any further measures, as may be necessary, while at the same time remaining fully committed to maintaining financial stability," he said.

In a bid to maintain financial stability, Das emphasised the need for banks to raise resources in advance as a buffer.

Going ahead, he said,

financial institutions in India have to walk a tightrope in nurturing the economic recovery within the overarching objective of preserving long-term stability of the financial system.

The current COVID-19 pandemic related shock will place greater pressure on the balance sheets of banks in terms of non-performing assets, leading to erosion of capital, he said, adding building buffers and raising capital by banks – both in the public and private sector – will be crucial not only to ensure credit flow but also to build resilience in the financial system.

"We have advised all banks, large non-deposit taking NBFCs and all deposit-taking NBFCs to assess the impact of COVID-19 on their balance sheet, asset quality, liquidity, capital adequacy, and work out possible mitigation measures, including capital planning, capital raising, and contingency liquidity planning, among others," he said.

Prudently, a few large public sector banks (PSBs) and major private sector banks

(PVBs) have already raised capital, and some have plans to raise further resources taking advantage of benign financial conditions. "This process needs to be put on the fast track," he added. The governor said recent experience across countries during the pandemic suggest that banks, non-banks, financial markets and payment systems remain at the core of financial stability issues, there was a need to work much closer at the system in its entirety.

"In this sense, the overall objective of financial stability policies should be closely intertwined with the health of the real economy," he noted.

The financial stability needs to be seen in a broader perspective and must include not just the stability of the financial system and price stability but also 'fiscal sustainability and external sector viability', Das said.

Noting that good governance will have to be supported by effective risk management functions and assurance mechanisms, he said banks and non-banking finance insti-

tutions need to identify risks early, monitor them closely and manage them effectively.

The risk management function in banks and NBFCs should evolve with changing times as technology becomes all-pervasive and should be in sync with international best practices. In this context, instilling an appropriate risk culture in the organisation is important," he said.

A robust assurance mechanism by way of internal audit function was another important component of sound corporate governance and risk management, Das said, adding it provides independent evalua-

tions and assurance to the Board that the "operations were performed in accordance with set policies and procedures".

He said the central bank has already taken a number of measures and would continue to do so. "Recent efforts in this direction were geared towards enhancing the role and stature of compliance and internal audit functions in banks by clarifying supervisor expectations and aligning the guidelines with best practices."

"Some more measures on improving governance in banks and NBFCs are in the pipeline," he said.

## HDFC Bank Q3 profit rises 14.36 pc to ₹8,760 cr; asset quality stable

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank on Saturday reported a 14.36 per cent jump in consolidated net profit to ₹8,760 crore for the December quarter, driven by a surge in core income.

The first test case of the new mechanism was a capital infusion of Rs 5,500 crore into Punjab & Sind Bank by issuing zero-coupon bonds of six different maturities last year. These special securities with tenure of 10-15 years are non-interest bearing and valued at par.

However, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expressed concerns over zero-coupon bonds for the recapitalisation of PSBs.

new chief executive and managing director Sashidhar Jagdishan, who succeeded Aditya Puri as the head of the bank. The bank's credit growth came at 15.6 per cent, while the net interest margin was 4.2 per cent. The non-interest income grew 11 per cent to ₹7,443 crore, largely on the back of a gain or revaluation in an investment at ₹1,109 crore, which stood at ₹676 crore in the year-ago period.

The results showed an improvement in the asset quality with the gross non-performing assets ratio stood at 0.81 per cent of the total assets as against 1.42 per cent in the year-ago period and 1.08 per cent at the end of the preceding September quarter, the bank said. If one were to

exclude the benefit of the Supreme Court order asking banks not to classify stress during the moratorium period in NPA computation, the GNPA ratio would have been at 1.38 per cent, it added. Its overall provisions and contingencies for the reporting quarter, which saw the economy trying to recover from the reverses of the pandemic, grew to ₹3,414 crore as against ₹3,043 crore in the year-ago period.

It held contingent provisions of ₹8,656 crore and floating provisions of ₹1,451 crore as of Dec 31. It said 0.5 per cent of its ₹10.82 lakh crore in advances have been restructured under the special scheme announced by the RBI to handle the COVID-related stress.

## Petrol, diesel prices unchanged across metros

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices remained unchanged for the second consecutive day on Saturday.

In the national capital, petrol was sold at the record high level of Rs 84.70 per litre. Prices in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were Rs 91.32, Rs 87.40 and Rs 86.15 per litre, respectively.

Across the country, pump price of petrol and diesel remained static on Saturday.

In Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, diesel was sold for Rs 74.88, Rs 81.60, Rs 80.19 and Rs 78.47 per litre, respectively.

Auto fuel price rise was on hold for the last five days after petrol and diesel prices had increased on two successive days last week on Wednesday.

and Thursday taking gasoline to record high levels in Delhi while keeping prices very close to record high levels in other metro cities.

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## Stockbrokers seek rationalisation of tax structure for capital market

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

As the Union Budget for AFY21-22 nears, stockbrokers have sought rationalisation and streamlining of the structure for the capital market.

In a statement, ANMI noted that financial markets worldwide play an important role in garnering growth capital for the economy. In the years following the coronavirus pandemic, catalysing equity market participation will hold the key to reviving India's GDP growth, it added.

The industry has been hit hard due to COVID-19 led disruptions and the most news-

## Newsprint cost up 20% in last 3 months, publishers seek waiver in customs duty

New Delhi: Newsprint cost has jumped 20 per cent in the last three months due to demand-supply imbalance post pandemic, prompting news publishers to petition the government for waiver of 5 per cent import duty to help cut cost.

The industry has been hit hard due to COVID-19 led disruptions and the most news-

papers have stopped sending newspapers to rural areas where there is less than 50 copies to reduce the distribution cost, said the Indian Newspaper Society (INS) President L Adimoolam.

In a representation to the Finance Minister, the INS has asked for a waiver in customs duty on newsprint imports for three months to help cut costs.

The industry has been hit hard due to COVID-19 led disruptions and the most news-

## Raj CM interacts with health workers

Jaipur: Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot said that due to efficient management of corona by the state government, limiting the number of Covid patients in the state and introduction of vaccine today is a happy coincidence.

Just as we have fought the corona in the best way with the cooperation of all, similarly we will set an example by making this vaccination campaign a success.

To ensure that the corona is completely eradicated despite the vaccine, everyone should ensure continued adherence to other health protocols, including masking, social distancing, and more.

Shri Gehlot was addressing the state-level inauguration ceremony of corona vaccination through video conference at the Chief Minister's residence on Saturday. On this occasion

simultaneous vaccination was started at 167 sites in the state. Along with Dr. Sudhir Bhandari, Principal of SMS Medical College, doctors of major medical institutes got vaccinated on these sites on the first day. The CM congratulated all the scientists, experts and other personnel associated with preparing the vaccine in a short time and said that everyone is proud of them. He said that this vaccine, which came after many trials and investigations, would help us in conquering the corona.

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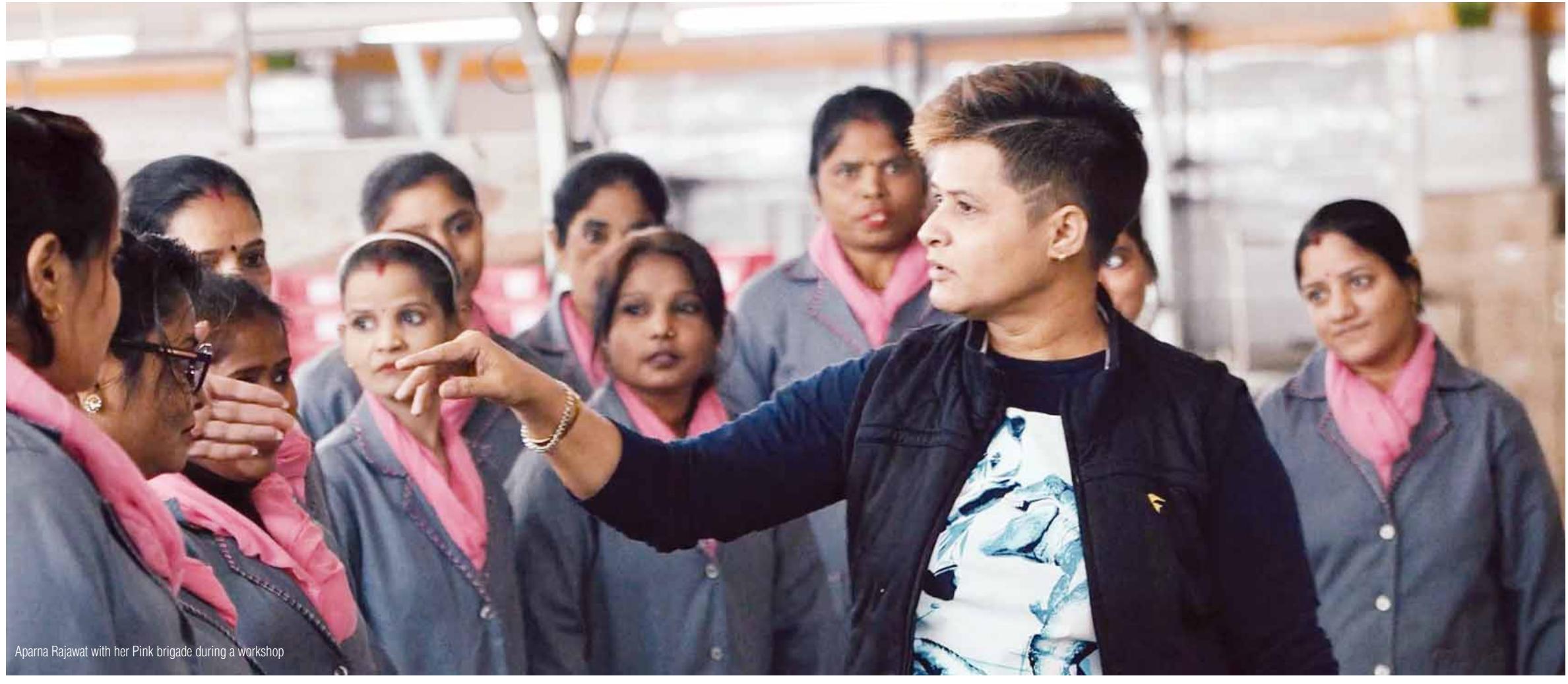
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Aparna Rajawat with her Pink brigade during a workshop

# BIG FIGHTBACK

**SHALINI SAKSENA** brings you a story of 40-year-old APARNA RAJAWAT who has overcome several roadblocks in her life to become India's 16-time national champion in martial arts and to travel the length and breadth of the country teaching 1.5 lakh young girls mental strength, legal rights and self-defence

**S**he was all of seven when a martial arts teacher came to her colony in Agra, Uttar Pradesh to teach children this art. Like all kids, she came home running and told her parents she wanted to join these classes. Her family was extremely conservative and with six siblings — two elder brothers, there was no way that her parents allowed her to learn the art that was considered to be only for boys. The fact that she would be the only girl in the class went against her. Back then, in the late 1980s, it was unthinkable that a girl would learn martial arts. But she never gave up hope and spent the next one year trying to convince her parents. Finally, her mother gave her consent. That day and the next 12 years, she went on to excel in martial arts. So much so that by the time she was 19 years old, she had been 16-time champion. Meet 40-year-old Aparna Rajawat.

Everyone expected great many things from her in the future but a road accident left her with seven fractures in her leg. Her career to compete in martial arts came to an abrupt end. She was in the hospital for several months and the doctors told her that if she tried to compete professionally, she may end up in the wheelchair.

"When the doctors told me to stop competing I didn't know what to do. I could train by not compete. Martial arts had been my life. I didn't know anything else even though I started playing other sports like basketball. Back then there was no scope to take up martial arts as a profession. At best, all I would achieve is to become a coach and teach in a school. This avenue didn't allow any growth. My dream was to join the Army. But after my accident I became unfit for the forces," Rajawat recalls.

She had joined martial art classes to escape the bullying from her elder brothers. They would really trouble her a lot. She thought that if she learnt this art form, she would be able to defend herself. But after the accident she found herself with nothing to do. That is when she turned to her other passion — dancing. She came to Delhi; joined some classes and worked for the likes of Daler Mehndi. She worked as a choreographer for the next few years. But her leg started giving her problems once again.

The doctor didn't have good news for

her. He told her that if she continued to pursue her present occupation she would become paralysed neck down. Another blow to her career. But she never allowed herself to be let down by bad news. Back home in Agra, while thinking of what to do she came across a tour manager with 15-20 foreigners. That got her thinking.

"When I saw this man talk to these foreigners, I realised that the work was something that I could do. I found out everything that there was to know about how to be a tour guide and started looking for work. That was tough, is putting it mildly. Nobody would give me work. Some even told me that this is not a woman's job but a man's and the best option for me would be to take up teaching. But I never gave up. For the next four-five months, I visited as many operators as I could only be come back home frustrated. Finally, I went to a tour operator who agreed to give me chance when I told him that even Amitabh Bachchan was rejected for his voice. I told him how do you know that a woman wouldn't be able to do this job unless you give her a chance. This person agreed to give me work. He told me that he would call if something came up," Rajawat says.

The next day she landed up at the office with a book and her lunch box. The operator was surprised to see her and asked what she was doing. She told him that her house was an hour away and if her called her, it would take her time to reach and she would lose the opportunity. She did this for the next two months.

And finally, her day came. From being a local tour guide to tour manager with a Canadian company in India to an international tour director with a company in London. She would live six-seven months there and the rest here in India for another company that deals with tourists in American and Nepal.

In 2012, she was in London when she heard about Nirbhaya. The next few months really disturbed her as she followed the case. However, she continued to work as an international tour director. But the lockdown put traveling on hold and that is when she decided to do what she had thought of doing while she followed the Nirbhaya case — provide self-defence classes to women.

"I knew that travel will be on hold for

I KNEW THAT TRAVEL WILL BE ON HOLD FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS. SO, I HAVE DECIDED TO SPEND MY TIME TEACHING SELF-DEFENCE TO GIRLS. DURING THE NIRBHAYA TRIAL, I SPENT YEARS TRYING TO READ AND FIND EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT CRIME AGAINST WOMEN. I WAS OBSESSED. I THOUGHT OF NOTHING BUT HOW TO PREVENT CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

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the next few years. So, I have decided to spend my time teaching self-defence. During the Nirbhaya case, I spent the next few years trying to read and find everything there was to know about crime against women. I was obsessed. I thought of nothing but how to prevent crime against them. My bullying days and things that I faced at the hands of cousin came to mind. I wanted to teach women the difference between good and bad touch and how they could defend themselves." Rajawat says.

She tells you that even though she was living a good life — traveling the world, earning big bucks and have every comfort one could think of — her bleed every time she heard of a crime that involved a woman. She spoke with her mother, who was alive back then. She told her that despite her success, she was not content and wanted to do something for the women of this country. Her mother, who had always been

a great support to Rajawat and encouraged her to pursue what she wanted, told her that she must follow her heart.

"When I told her that I wanted to come back home, she told me I must do whatever my heart told me to do. She said that I had overcome every obstacle that life had thrown at me and excelled in whatever I chose to do. At death bed, what will go with you is not the money that you have earned but the good deeds, my mother told me," Rajawat recalls.

That is when she came to India, in 2016. It began with her sponsoring girls who wanted to study more and didn't have the finance. One day she was approached to give a motivational speech at a coaching centre. She spoke for 45 minutes about her journey and given the response she got, Rajawat realised the power of her words and how it can change people's lives. That is when she started talking about the importance

of self-defence. That is how Pink Belt Mission came to life a couple of years later.

"Till now I have taught 1.5 lakh women how to defend themselves on five different dimensions — mental, emotional, legal and digital and physical strength. These are core areas where each woman needs to be taught. Without this even if one handed a loaded gun to the woman, it would be of no use. I hold workshops from time to time as I travel the length and breadth of the country. Each workshop, meant for college going students, attracts 2,000-2,500 girls. At the workshop, I give a motivational speech, basically my life story, and how I overcame them. Of course, not all the girls come for the defense classes that I teach over a period of three days. These classes are extremely taxing and at the end of the day, the girls are well-equipped to defend against any assault. My aim is to teach 50 lakh women self-defence in the next few years," Rajawat tells you.

Once these girls are ready, they are sorted in batches of four-five each. There is a reason why Rajawat chooses only college goers. They are the ones who have the time to go to schools and train the girls there.

However, it is not just the girls who are taught their rights and what is right and wrong. Rajawat holds classes for boys as well to tell them how they should behave in front of women. She tells you that not many know that if a boy stares at a girl more than 15 seconds, it is an offense. That if they look at girl and starting singing, it is an offense.

"It is so unfortunate that we don't teach basic rights to our children. We must teach boys how to respect the women and that they are not second-rate citizens. I tell girls who attend my workshop how they must give their children a good upbringing; this change is what we will see after 20 years," Rajawat says.

She is now working on a campaign to spread awareness on how to provide immediate help to the survivors.

"The law says that if there is an sexual assault on a woman, no hospital can deny her medical treatment; there is no need for police to finish doing its job first. But nobody is aware of this law. We have been working on this. I will travel across the country to spread this message. We hope that this will prevent the crime from taking place to begin with," Rajawat says.



Aparna Rajawat showing moves on how to defend oneself

## 'I cried many times during the filming of Pink Belt Mission'

■ Why did you choose to tell this story in a documentary style?

We chose to shoot *Pink Belt Mission* in documentary style because Aparna Rajawat was attempting to break the Guinness World Record for most persons trained in a self-defence lesson. It was to bring worldwide attention to her cause. I wanted to film her day to day struggle in that attempt. It was thrilling because we didn't know if she would succeed. In the movie you see her, in real life, trying to overcome the obstacles presented to her. It's quite thrilling because you don't know if she and her team can pull it off. For me it was like watching a great sporting event. I wanted her to win but the odds were against her.

■ What made you tell her story?

I wanted to tell this story because she is a fighter, fighting for an important cause, women's safety, education and teaching them self-defence. She is such a dynamic person you can't say no to her. When I met her, her stories were fascinating and movies are only as good as the stories. I hope to give her stories the worldwide attention they deserve.

■ What were the challenges faced?

A big challenge was the language barrier. Half of the movie is in English and half is in Hindi. I only know a few words in Hindi, so I had to have someone translate for me and each subject who didn't speak English. Also,

it is a very tough subject matter and there are stories of violence against women that are heartbreaking. I would go back to the hotel after filming some of the sad stories and I deeply sympathised with these women's pain. I felt it in my heart. I cried many times while filming. That was the most difficult part. And I felt such a responsibility to tell their stories the best that I could.

■ The documentary is being premiered at the Jaipur International Film Festival (JIFF). How do you want people to perceive this?

I hope the film will bring attention to Aparna and the women of Pink Belt. To shine a light on all the wonderful works they are doing. It's a story that



deserves an audience. I hope the audience will be moved and inspired by it. I hope it will reach young girls and women in the world and they will say: 'If Aparna can do it, I can do it.'

■ Don't you think a commercial release would have been a better option?

The movie is in the competition portion of JIFF. I am hoping that it will win an award to help promote Aparna's cause. To shine a light on *Pink Belt Mission*. One of the ways to bring attention to a film is to get laurels from film festivals like JIFF. It is our intention to release this documentary in a wide release in movie theaters when it is safe. This year the festival is online due to COVID-19.

■ When you met Aparna Rajawat, what was your first impression?

My first impression of Aparna was her hair. She had awesome short hair like no other woman I had seen in India. She told me the story of her family taking her to a psychiatrist because she wanted short hair when she was a young girl. That was my very first impression of her, so we filmed the very first scene of the movie at a barbershop. She is getting a haircut and telling the story of the psychiatrist.

■ Do you think watching such documentaries will inspire women to be like her?

I think the *Pink Belt Mission* documentary will inspire young girls

and women in India, but Aparna is such a powerful person I think she will inspire women and men around the world. She never gives up no matter what obstacles cross her path. She continues to fight and it's inspiring.

Even though it's a very serious subject matter, Aparna triumphs and inspires. It's the perfect time for such an uplifting film. I, as an audience member wanted to cheer for Aparna and I hoped she would win.

Ultimately, I didn't know if she would break the world record or not, but that didn't matter. What was important is how many young lives she touched and uplifted. Aparna has really inspired me.

# Rohit's dismissal puts India on backfoot

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Rohit Sharma's indiscreet shot selection pegged India back after rookie bowling attack restricted Australia to 369 on a rain-curtailed second day of the fourth Test on Saturday.

With heavy thundershowers preventing any play in the post tea session, India ended the day at 62 for two.

Rohit was elegant as ever in his 44 off 74 balls before Nathan Lyon in his 100th Test enticed him to come down the track but the half-chip-half-loft was safely pouched by Mitchell Starc in the deep.

India also lost Shubman Gill (7) who edged one off Pat Cummins to Steve Smith.

Cheteshwar Pujara (8) and Ajinkya Rahane (2) added only two runs in the 6.1 overs before the break.

There were six boundaries from Rohit but he did not fiddle at deliveries in and around the off-stump channel even as Cummins and Josh Hazlewood bowled a testing spell under overcast conditions.

The shot of the session was an on-drive off Cummins which came after a streaky boundary through the slips in the same over. Another delightful stroke was an off-drive off Cameron Green as 49 runs were added for the second wicket.

There wasn't much swing on offer but the pace off the track has increased compared to the first day and it only helped that the Australian pace attack is a more well built one with average speed being at least 6-7 kmph more than their Indian counterparts.

Pujara, at the other end was playing his usual 'grinding' out game but it didn't look too arduous



Rohit Sharma reacts on his way to pavilion after getting out on Day 2 of 4th Test BCCI/Twitter

the tea break went after Lyon when the situation demanded that he could have played for session-end.

It was very similar to his dismissal off Moeen Ali at the stroke of tea during the 2014 series and that was also after being set in the middle-order.

India, who have been forced to field a depleted side won't mind an

4th Test, Day 3  
Live from 5:00am IST  
SONY TEN 1, 3 & SIX

inclement weather which effectively makes the home team more jittery as a draw would be enough for Ajinkya Rahane to lift the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

In the first session, India's rookie bowling line-up did put up a lion-hearted effort, getting the last five wickets for 95 runs.

Shardul Thakur (3/94) along with debutants Washington Sundar (3/89) and Thangarasu Natarajan (3/78) got the breakthroughs while Mohammed Siraj (28-10-77-1) got one on the opening day.

For an attack as thin on experience as India, the effort in adverse times can only be commended. India lost five main bowlers through the three Test matches and were forced to hand Test debuts to Natarajan and Washington.

Nathan Lyon (24 off 22 balls) and Mitchell Starc (20 off 35 balls) counter-attacked the inexperienced Indian attack with a brisk 39-run partnership to take Australia past 350-run mark.

Going by statistics, Australia have never lost a Test match at the Gabba after scoring 350 in the first innings.

Resuming at 274 for five, Tim Paine (50) and Cameron Green (47) extended their stand to 98 before the home team encountered a mini-collapse.

Thakur bowled a fuller delivery that shaped away and Paine's lazy drive without going to the pitch of the delivery saw Rohit Sharma take a regulation catch at the second slip.

Paine was just getting into the groove with some good drives

## Rohit has no regret of playing that shot

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Rohit Sharma understands the criticism that his untimely dismissal has invited but the India vice-captain has "no regrets" about going after Nathan Lyon, saying that's his way of putting bowlers under pressure.

Rohit looked in good touch during his 44 off 74 balls but was dismissed trying to loft Lyon over mid-wicket, the kind of shots that has often brought about his dismissal even during earlier Test matches.

"You always have a plan and I actually have no regret of playing that shot. It is something that I always like to do — put pressure on bowlers. Nathan Lyon is a smart bowler and he bowled into me which made it difficult for me to get some elevation," Rohit said at the post-match virtual conference.

His shot selection invited criticism from the commentary box. India were 62 for two at stumps when Rohit could have gone for a big score after a good start.

Rohit understands the disappointment but in his defence would explain why he went for that kind of a high-risk stroke.

"It's not that it is (that shot) coming out of nowhere. It's a shot that I have played well in the past.



That's something that I back myself to play and that's the kind of role I play in this team. When it looks like that, it looks bad, but I don't think too much as my focus is to make it count once I am in," he said.

"Having said that, there is a process I like to follow. Sometimes you get out and sometimes it goes over the ropes. Unfortunate and sad dismissal in the end to be honest. Like I said, those are my shots and I will keep playing them," the senior player was forthright about his mind-set.

when Thakur provided the breakthrough.

With the partnership broken,

Green probably lost his concentration as he played for the turn to an

angle delivery from Sundar which straightened after pitching and breached through his defences.

Pat Cummins (2) was adjudged leg before as he yorked himself to

As he has always maintained, he doesn't have much time for his critics and would rather focus on the role his team wants him to perform.

"The team has shown lot of confidence in me. It's just that I have to do what the team expects me to do and not worry about what happens anywhere else or what people talk about."

On the match situation, Rohit said that although 369 at the Gabba was a very good first innings score and there is no reason why India with two of their most seasoned campaigners at the crease can't match the home team's total on a good batting track.

"We have got solid batters to come in now. Two of the most experienced players are still out there in the middle. The pitch is good and I don't see any reason why we can't get to that total of first innings."

His advice for the batsmen is to play session by session rather than looking at the final total.

"We should focus on what's there in front of us rather than thinking too far ahead. It's a big score and we have to focus on sessions, take it as it comes. The pitch is playing good and we have to back ourselves. We have the guys to do it and I don't see why we can bat well on day three," he said.

a fuller delivery from Thakur as Australia slumped from 311 for five to 315 for eight before the tail wagged once again to beef up the total.

It's not every team that can restrict Australia to less than 400 hundred in six completed innings and that's a big credit to bowling unit.

The A tours must have helped. Shardul, Navdeep and Siraj have played a lot of A team cricket. They know how difficult it can be in Australia. Their understanding of conditions helped them.

"To not let Australia score 400 is an achievement in itself. These tours they have done has helped them stay in control," he said.

## Natarajan is here to stay'

PTI ■ BRISBANE

India's vice-captain Rohit Sharma is extremely impressed with Thangarasu Natarajan's "solid character" and believes that the Tamil Nadu left-arm seamer is here to stay with his insatiable hunger to succeed at the top level.

Natarajan, who came in as a net bowler, joined fellow rookies Mohammed Siraj, Washington Sundar and Shardul Thakur to restrict Australia to 369, which according to Rohit is no

mean feat.

"Natarajan bowled pretty well, to be honest. Playing outside the country (internationals) for the first time and bowling to such batsmen, it wasn't going to be easy and he was not under any pressure," Rohit said about the debutant, who was the pick of the bowlers with 3/78 in 24.2 overs.

"From ball one, he was right up there. He showed a

lot of composure, is a strong character who doesn't speak much but we all know he has a solid personality. He wants to do well for the team and also for himself. He is here to stay," he said.

For Rohit, considering that cumulative experience of the bowling attack was four Test matches, they need to be lauded for keeping Australia under check on a good batting wicket.

"Most of these guys are playing first time in Australia. Siraj has played a couple of games and Saini played in Sydney. Obviously, there's not a lot of experience there.

"They showed a lot of discipline and overall if I had to analyse the performance of these bowlers, I would say they bowled pretty well. It's a good pitch still. This is a great experience for them bowling against the

best batters, and test themselves," he said.

Rohit believes that each and every youngster in this set-up knows that with so much competition for places, there aren't too many chances that will be up for grabs.

"Basically it boils down to where they are coming from. There is a lot of hunger to perform. You don't get a lot of opportunities at this level and we all know that. So when you get an opportunity, you have to make that count."

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## Punjab, Baroda, TN close to Mushtaq Ali knock-outs

PTI ■ ALUR



itive 158 for four.

Right-arm medium pacer Atit Sheth (4/17) then wreaked havoc to scuttle out Maharashtra for a meagre 98 and give his team four full points.

Devdhar was handed the captaincy after regular skipper Krunal Pandya left the bubble following his father's demise.

In Group B match at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, Assam pulled off an upset 13-run win over Bengal while Tamil Nadu won its fourth straight match to go top of the points table.

Bengal opted to field and saw the talented Riyam Parag (77, 54 balls, 5 fours, 5 sixes) help Assam put up a fighting 157 for 5 in 20 overs. The visiting team restricted Bengal to 144 for 8.

In another match, skipper Dinesh Karthik (40 not out, 30 balls, 2X4, 2X6) and N Jagadeesan (78 not out, 51 balls, 4X4, 5X6) saw Tamil Nadu home against Hyderabad after a brief stutter in the middle of the innings.

Earlier, Hyderabad made 152 for 7 in 20 overs thanks to contributions from B Sandeep (41) and Pragnay Reddy (30) and late hitting by C V Milind (30, 11 balls, 3 sixes).

TN leads the group with 16 points after four consecutive wins followed by Bengal (12). The two teams face off on January 18 with the top spot on the line.

As per the format of the tournament, the top ranked teams from each group (Five in Elite and 1 Plate) will qualify for the knockout stage along with the next two teams in Elite Groups A to E with the most points.

Indian fan complains of racism at SCG during 3rd Test

**Sydney:** Sydney Cricket Ground officials have launched an investigation after an Indian supporter alleged that he was subjected to racial profiling and abuse by a security officer during the final day of the third Test against Australia.

The incident took place after Indian fast bowler Mohammed Siraj was allegedly racially abused by spectators on the third and fourth day of the drawn Test at SCG.

Sydney resident Krishna Kumar met Venues NSW legal personnel on Thursday to lodge an official complaint, accusing the security at the venue of racial profiling and unjustified frisking.

He informed the authorities that he felt "stripped and naked" by his treatment on the final day of the third Test (January 11), according to a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Kumar, who attended three days' play of the third Test, told Venues NSW that he was targeted after trying to carry four banners reading: "Rivalry is good, racism is not", "No racism mate", "Brown inclusion matters" and "Cricket Australia more diversity please".

A security officer stopped Kumar, informing him that that one of the banners exceeded the permitted dimensions.

When he requested to speak to a security supervisor, Kumar was asked to leave.

"He told me, 'If you need to address this matter, go back to where you belong,'" Kumar said.

Kumar said the official then told the junior guards to "make sure we give him a complete frisking when he gets back".

"To me this is a pure case of profiling. They changed their entire formation so the guy next to the boundary is standing right in front of me and facing me," Kumar said.

"I want justice. I want accountability. I was feeling stripped, feeling watched and I went there to fight racism.

"Why should I be stopped from addressing racism, especially at a ground where it was debatable whether it was happening or not?" he added.

## Proteas not easy to beat but Pakistan banking on home advantage: Misbah

PTI ■ KARACHI

South Africa have always been a difficult opposition but Pakistan will have the home advantage this time as they host the visitors for the first time in nearly 14 years, said head coach Misbah-ul-Haq.

Back from New Zealand after a disappointing tour which ended with a 0-2 loss in the two-Test series, Pakistan will now play two Tests against South Africa at Karachi (January 26-30) and Rawalpindi (February 4-8), followed by a three-match T20I series at Lahore, beginning from February 11.

"South Africa has never been an easy side to beat, but them playing after 13 years in Pakistan will be an advantage for us, and we have a great chance to improve our record against them," Misbah said.

He said the two Test matches are part of the ICC World Championship and are very important for the home side which will try to get maximum points out of it to improve their position on the table.

"Playing at home ground is always encouraging for the players, and it reflected in our performances in the series against Sri Lanka and Bangladesh last year," Misbah said.

Pakistan won Tests against Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in late 2019

Officials and players of South Africa's cricket team come out from airport terminal upon arrival their arrival in Karachi

is an important one, and I am sure the players selected in the squad have the potential and hunger to give best results in the series," Misbah said.

The South African cricket team, which last toured Pakistan in late 2007, arrived in Karachi on Saturday.

The visiting team's head coach Mark Boucher cautioned his team, saying his batsmen will face a tough task against a "dangerous" side like Pakistan.

"Pakistan is a dangerous side at home; we will have to come up with a proper strategy to beat them at their own backyard," the former wicket-keeper said.

"The wickets here in Pakistan are bat friendly, and we are relying on our batsmen to score runs. Their confidence will be high after scoring runs against Sri Lanka. Our fast bowlers will have to work very hard to get wickets."

Pakistan bowlers will have home advantage, so this series will be a test for our batsmen, but once they are successful in occupying the crease, they will be able to score freely," Boucher said. "We are excited to play in Pakistan again, and expect a great series ahead with all focus on the game."

South Africa had won the two-Test series 1-0 during their last tour of Pakistan in 2007.

"The series against South Africa

and early 2020 at home but have lost successive away Test tours to Australia, England and New Zealand leading to a criticism of the team's performances and selection policies with Misbah under-fire.

Following their dismal tour of New Zealand, Pakistan's new chief selector Muhammad Wasim named nine uncapped players in a revamped 20-member squad for the test series against South Africa.

"The series against South Africa



and early 2020 at home but have lost successive away Test tours to Australia, England and New Zealand leading to a criticism of the team's performances and selection policies with Misbah under-fire.

Following their dismal tour of New Zealand, Pakistan's new chief

# Champions host Challengers

Manchester United visit Anfield for top of table clash against arch-rivals Liverpool

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool and Manchester United face off on Sunday as the Premier League's top two teams for the first time since 1997 — with the rivalry between England's most successful clubs rekindled by a fascinating title race.

United top the table after the New Year for the first time since Alex Ferguson's retirement in 2013 thanks to an 11-match unbeaten run to take them past Jurgen Klopp's men.

Liverpool have surrendered top spot after three league games without a win and could drop to fifth place on Sunday if results go against them.

The last time United and Liverpool locked horns in a title race was 12 years ago.

Back then United were hardened winners under Ferguson, who saw off Rafael Benitez's challengers to win a third consecutive league title.

Now it is United who Ole Gunnar Solskjaer admits are the "hunters" chasing the champions. Ferguson, who arrived at Old Trafford in 1986 with United firmly in Liverpool's shadow, once famously said his goal was to knock them "off their perch" and he went on to win 13 league titles.

But United have been displaced as top dogs even in their own city by Manchester City.

And fans have been forced to watch Klopp spearhead another era of glory at Anfield, winning the Champions League in 2019 before ending the club's 30-year wait for a league title last season — putting them just one behind United's record tally of 20.

But, in a strange and at times soulless season in empty stadiums, the relentless consistency shown by Liverpool in



Liverpool vs Man Utd  
Live from 10:00pm IST  
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

recent years has dropped off.

Hampered by a series of injuries, most notably to talismanic centre-back Virgil van Dijk, Liverpool have already dropped more points in 17 games than they have in either

domestic competition — on their last visit to Anfield.

Since then Bruno Fernandes' arrival has helped transform United's fortunes. On Friday, the Portugal playmaker won his fourth Premier League player-of-the-month award in 2020 by picking up the prize for December.

"Unfortunately a good signing for United," said Klopp. "He is a very influential player for United obviously, involved in a lot of things."

"I know people talk mostly about the goal involvements, which is very important stuff, but he is a link-up in a lot of other situations as well."

Without the silverware on his CV to rival Klopp or City boss Pep Guardiola, Solskjaer's credentials for one of the biggest jobs in football are questioned every time he has a couple of bad results. But the Norwegian has guided United into a position his more storied predecessors, Jose Mourinho and Louis van Gaal, could not manage.

"The last few years, there have been two teams running away with it already by the end of October," said Solskjaer.

"Now, at least, we're in it at half-way. We're a much better side now than a year ago."

Questions remain over whether United's revival is for real or another false dawn, of which there have been several in the post-Ferguson era.

Liverpool's three-decade drought without a league title stands as a warning of how far even giants can fall.

One of Klopp's first iconic phrases when taking charge in 2015 was his ambition to change the fatalism around the club's mentality from "doubter to believer".

Should United become the first visiting side to win at Anfield in the league for nearly four years, it is they who will have the new-found confidence that a 21st league title in 2021 is possible.

# WBA clinch Allardyce's 1st win

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

West Bromwich Albion won for the first time under new boss Sam Allardyce as Matheus Pereira's penalty double clinched a 3-2 Premier League victory at local rivals Wolves on Saturday.

Allardyce had failed to win any of his first five matches since replacing the sacked Slaven Bilic.

But the former England manager was finally able to celebrate after a pulsating Black Country derby at Molineux.

Pereira put Albion ahead from the spot before goals from Fabio Silva and Willy Boly put Wolves in the driving seat at half-time.

Semi Ajayi equalised after the interval and Pereira's second penalty sealed West Brom's first win in eight league games.

Albion remain second bottom of the table after their second league victory this term, but are now just three points from safety.

Wolves are winless in six league games and have not beaten the Baggies in 10 years.

It was the first time these two local rivals had met since 2012 when West Brom won 5-1 at Molineux, and this was an equally memorable success for the visitors.

Wolves had won just one of their eight league games since Mexico striker Raul Jimenez suffered a fractured skull against Arsenal in November.

They fell behind in the eighth minute with a self-inflicted wound.

Boly caught Callum Robinson with a rash challenge and, after a VAR review confirmed the foul was just inside the area, Pereira stepped up to convert the penalty.

That made it nine consecutive league games in which Wolves had fallen behind.

Silva's leveller came in the 38th minute when Albion failed to clear a Romain Saiss cross and Boly's deft backheel found the



West Bromwich Albion's Robert Snodgrass, right, challenges Wolves' Adama Traore during the Premier League game at the Molineux Stadium AP



cued after Moutinho set up a potential equaliser before the unmarked Patrick Cutrone shot over from close range.

Elsewhere, Brighton notched its first Premier League win in nearly two months thanks to Neal Maupay's first-half goal in a 1-0 victory at Leeds.

The French striker applied the finishing touch at the far post following a flowing team move in the 17th minute for his seventh goal of the season.

Brighton halted a 10-game winless run in all competitions. The last triumph was on November 21 at Aston Villa.

It was a successful return to Elland Road for Brighton's Ben White, who helped Leeds win promotion to the top-flight during a loan spell last season. His former club slipped to a third straight loss for the first time in 12 months.

At London Stadium, Michael Antonio scored in his first Premier League start for West Ham since November in a 1-0 win over Burnley.

# Tai, Marin set up Thai final

Men's singles final will be between Viktor Axelsen & Angus Ng Ka Long

AFP ■ BANGKOK

Top-ranked Tai Tzu-ying pushed through a challenging second game to clinch a 21-8, 23-21 victory against Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt at the Thailand Open to set the women's singles final with former world No 1 Carolina Marin. The Spaniard trounced South Korean teenager An Se-young 21-16, 21-16 on Saturday.

The men's singles final will be between Viktor Axelsen and Ka Long Angus Ng. Axelsen mounted a strong comeback against Anthony Sinisuka Ginting to win 21-19, 13-21, 21-13 in 63 minutes while Ang beat the second seed Chou Tien Chen 17-21, 21-18, 21-15.

Tai Tzu player made a strong start, but Blichfeldt's strong defence caused her problems.

"In the second game, the speed of the shuttle was different down that end and I had to adapt to that," said Tai. "I didn't feel any negative situation for myself, and I think if I play like this, I'm so ready for tomorrow," she said.



The Thailand Open is the first of three consecutive tournaments in Bangkok culminating in the World Tour Finals from January 27.

Floated in a week before the start for quarantine and testing, the players are facing off in a bio-secure "bubble", with no spectators allowed.

# Reus fails to deliver from spot



The visitors almost grabbed another shortly afterward when Alexander Hack struck the crossbar with a header.

The 16-year-old Youssoufa Moukoko had just gone on for Dortmund and he played a decisive role for his side's equalizer in the 73rd, keeping the ball in play before sending in a cross that was cleared by Mainz defender Philipp Mwene — only as far as Meunier, who fired back in to equalize.

Meunier was then fouled in the penalty area by Hack, giving Reus a chance to score from the spot. The Dortmund captain sent his kick outside the left post.

It could have been worse for Reus' team as Mainz captain Danny Latza hit the post toward the end of the half and it was as close as Dortmund came to scoring before the break.

Werder Bremen scored late to beat Augsburg 2-0 at home, Cologne drew with Hertha Berlin 0-0, and Hoffenheim vs Arminia Bielefeld also ended scoreless.

# Lazio eye CL after derby win

AP ■ ROME

Lazio revived its chances of staying in the Champions League by convincingly beating third-placed Roma 3-0 in a Serie A derby on Friday.

Luis Alberto scored twice and Ciro Immobile also found the target as Lazio controlled throughout.

Lazio moved up to seventh place, two points behind fourth-placed Juventus, which faces a challenging visit to Inter Milan on Sunday; and three points behind Roma, which saw its title hopes fade.

It was a third straight league win for Lazio, which faces Bayern Munich in the Champions League next month.

"This season it was a bit more important than usual, because we weren't doing as well in Serie A as we wanted," Luis Alberto said of the derby. "We improved a great deal, and we confirmed that in the derby."

It matched Lazio's biggest margin of victory over Roma in Serie A, having also won the derby 3-0 in March 2019 and December 2006.



Immobile opened the scoring 14 minutes in by completing a counterattack when Roma defenders Chris Smalling and Ibañez both slipped to the ground.

Lazio doubled the lead nine minutes later when Ibañez moved again left on the ground following strong play from Manuel Lazzari, who set up Luis Alberto for a clear look.

Immobile threatened throughout yet it was Luis Alberto who sealed it with a shot around a defender into the far corner in the 67th.

AP ■ BERLIN

Borussia Dortmund captain Marco Reus missed a penalty in a 1-1 draw with lowly Mainz while Leipzig again missed the chance to move to the top of the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Leipzig, which was denied top spot in losing to Dortmund 3-1 last weekend, could manage only 2-2 at Wolfsburg and it remains a point behind league leader Bayern Munich. Bayern hosts Freiburg on Sunday.

Dortmund was looking for its fourth win in five league games under new coach Edin Terzic but was frustrated by a committed performance from Mainz in Bo Svensson's second game in charge.

The draw was enough for Mainz to move off the bottom on goal difference from Schalke, which visits Eintracht Frankfurt on Sunday.

Dortmund got off to a fine start with Erling Haaland firing inside the 57th when Levin Öztunali eluded Mats Hummels with a back-heal trick and let fly from 20 meters inside the top



right corner.

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# Argentina tour will be good indicator of where we stand: Rani

PTI ■ BUENOS AIRES

The Indian women's hockey team skipper Rani feels the tour of Argentina will help her side "understand where they stand," nearly a year after the Covid-19 pandemic abruptly halted all competitions around the world.

The women's side will become the first of India's hockey teams to resume international matches as it plays the first of the eight games during the tour of Argentina, starting Sunday.

"It has been a strange period for sports people around the world, but to be resuming doing what we love the most, it is the best feeling," Rani said.

"We are looking forward to testing ourselves against some strong teams, and also understanding where we stand at the moment," she added.

Rani reiterated that a good show in the series will boost her side's confidence heading into this year's Tokyo Olympics.

"I think this tour is really important for us in terms of



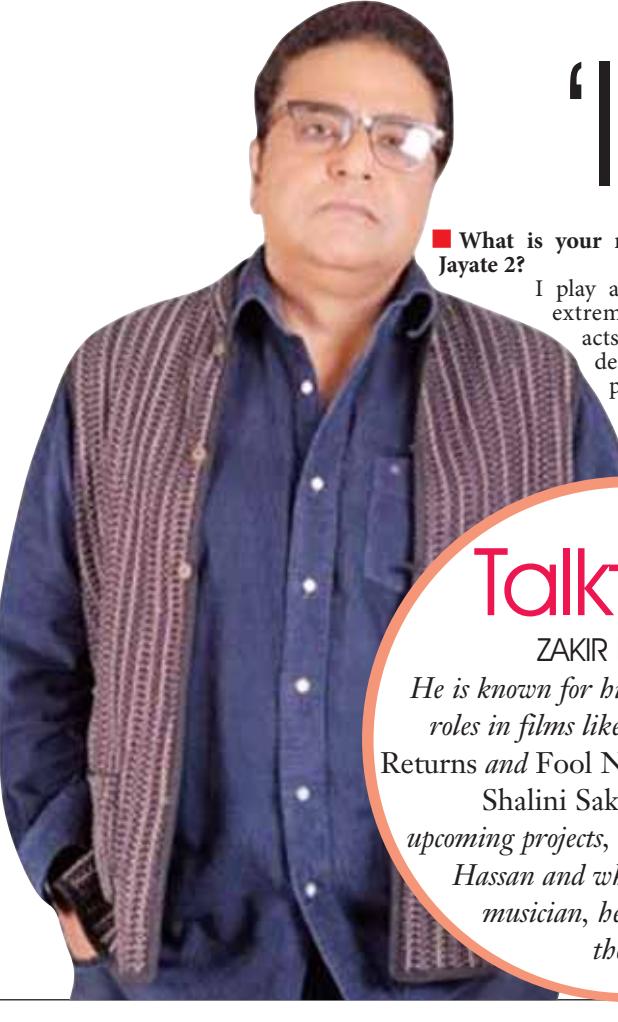
resuming competitive hockey.

"We have a crucial year to look forward to, and with such matches against strong sides, we will be able to keep working hard towards our goal of preparing well for the Tokyo Olympics," Rani said.

The 26-year-old forward knows the importance of starting and take into consideration that we haven't played an international match with the maximum intensity in these past 9-10 months, and that we might take time to get back into our groove, and that is what this tour is all about," she added.

Rani reiterated that a good show in the series will boost her side's confidence heading into this year's Tokyo Olympics.

"I think this tour is really



## Talktime

ZAKIR HUSSAIN

*He is known for his negative and comic roles in films like Sarkar, Singham Returns and Fool N Final. He speaks with Shalini Saksena about his upcoming projects, working with Kamal Hassan and why despite being a musician, he didn't pursue the art*

**EHRAZ AHMED,** 24-year-old entrepreneur and ethical hacker, had saved the data of about 700 million Indians in 2019. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with him about his journey, work and how data breach is a major cause of worry

**H**is love for anything tech started at an early age when he used to visit the cyber cafes to play an online game or two. It was then when he realised that one need not visit a cyber cafe everytime he wants to play a game like Counter-Strike and that it can be done at home via a desktop and an internet connection. The idea gave birth to his first-ever game server hosting company when he was merely 14.

"After looking at the craze for Counter-Strike amongst my friends, I started a game server hosting company where I used to provide online gaming servers for players to connect and play the game at home. After a few months, I expanded the company by offering web hosting to websites," Ehraz Ahmed, a Mysore-based ethical hacker and an entrepreneur, tells you.

However, his love for technology didn't remain the same for long. An unfortunate incident made him lose his interest in his company and also studies.

"When I was Class X, my father suffered a heart attack. It was then my interest in my company and studies dropped. I felt that I would not go far with the company. With blurred and confused thoughts, I decided to put everything on hold. But that was a short hiatus and soon after I decided to start afresh with a new purpose in life. I

wanted to stand on my own two feet by doing something better and more significant," Ahmed tells you.

That wasn't a dead-end for Ahmed's curiosity and it grew by leaps and bounds when he came across a Facebook post of a security researcher who was listed on the hall of fame for finding a flaw in Google and was also paid for it.

"It was a Eureka moment for me. The entrepreneur inside me got curious and I started learning how I could do the same and earn. After a matter of few months, my hard work paid off and at 16, I got listed in 50 halls of fame for finding security flaws in companies like Microsoft, Apple, Adobe, BlackBerry, SoundCloud and Netflix," he tells you.

His first hall of fame listing, he says, was on Facebook, where he discovered a cross-site scripting vulnerability that could have allowed attackers to steal your browser cookies. Using this, any hacker could log in to your account without a password.

"I was good at finding security flaws, but I was not making enough money from it. Not all companies offer bug bounty programmes, only a few provide monetary rewards and the rest mention your name for your efforts in finding the flaw," he says.

In a bid to look for ways to make money, Ahmed found someone trad-

I came across news of data breaches in Indian companies and that is when I decided to start finding security flaws to help them. This was back in August 2019. By December that year, I had already safeguarded data of over 700 million users

ing in the financial markets and that got him thinking. "I started exploring this field. And it took me a while to figure out how it all works. In the beginning, I did lose a lot of money but gradually got hold of the process," he says.

At 20, he joined an engineering college to pursue a computer science engineering course and simultaneously started a fintech company called Voxy Wealth Management to offer financial advice and analytics to traders and manage their portfolios.

"It was in 2017, during the second semester of my college that I decided to drop out and start a web security company. The reason was during the lectures, I always felt I was not learning enough and that I was going nowhere. Also, I was not getting enough time to manage my fintech company. That is how, in December of that year, I launched Aspirehive to offer web security solutions for small and medium-sized companies," he tells you.

That was not all. After having started Aspirehive, there was one more tragedy waiting for him. "It was in April 2018 when my brother met with an accident. After seeing the family going through financial crisis, he had desires to start a company. Then we started StackNexo to offer all Web Services and solutions through a single platform," he tells you.

However, with that being on the sidelines, Ahmed once again, in 2019, started finding security flaws in companies.

"I came across news of data breaches in Indian companies, and that is when I decided to start finding security flaws again to help Indian companies. I started finding flaws in August 2019 and by December of that year, I had already safeguarded data of over 700 million users which includes name, address, email address, contact number and date of birth," he tells you. With

all this information, Ahmed says, hackers can conduct phishing scams. They can also log in to your accounts once they have all these details.

One of the most challenging situations that he came across was when he found a security flaw in Airtel that could have allowed hackers to steal sensitive user data of 320 million users. "I was afraid back then because I too was an Airtel user. The data breach risk was very high and it could have resulted in major scams. Once, I was able to find it, the challenge was to inform the company. In such cases, one can't just call up the customer care or send an email to any random address. Through BBC, I was able to inform Airtel about the possible data breach that could have happened because of the security flaws," he tells you.

Ashk Ahmed how he is able to juggle so much work and he is quick to answer — remember why you started.

"One should never forget the reason why he started in the first place. Stay goal oriented, work hard and have patience, things will eventually fall into place," he says.

This is not all, currently he is still busy in secretly finding flaws and getting them fixed. "The most recent was in a company called Thrillophilia that risked sensitive user data of 2 million users. Thankfully, it was saved," he tells you.

## 'Music is my driving force'

SHILPA RAO, who will be seen leading a team on Zee TV's Indian Pro Music League, speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about what attracted her towards the project and whether she see awards as a validation for her music, among other things



■ What made you come onboard Zee TV's Indian Pro Music League as a captain?

There is a special connect that I have with the team. They are like a family. I have worked with them on many shows. That was one reason. The second was that the concept is good and the show is performance-oriented. I am somebody who is music driven. In fact, a lot of media people tell me that 'we don't see you anywhere'. I tell them you can see me at the airport or the studio. I know marketing and face value can take you to another level, but at the end of the day what matters is what happens between you and the mic. I stand for music and that is what this show is about so I was happy to be a part of it. In this show categorically, I was able to perform the kind of music I want and that's what attracted me towards it.

■ What are the qualities that you will look forward to in the contestants?

The qualities that I will be looking for is something that I have learnt from my Guru ji Hariharan that is whenever you listen to a song, always look at the good things they are doing, point it out, work on it and from there take them to the next level. Never start your sentence by taking out flaws in anyone. This is the important thing about music, it's area is so wide that one can never stop learning. The youth nowadays is always in a hurry, they want to reach heights at the drop of a hat. This makes me wonder if this is the case what will they do for the rest of their lives, what will they learn then. One should enjoy the process and have fun.

■ You have given so many hits, but still you work with the same enthusiasm. Doesn't it get monotonous at some point?

The answer to this is music. I love music and I live it. That's what I mentioned before, our youth has to figure out why they are in this field. If their driving force is to become a star, then after a point they will stop enjoying it. But if you do it for the sake and love of music, there will never be a day when you will feel that you don't enjoy it anymore. If you will find happiness in music, you will work with the same enthusiasm every time.

■ You have quite a few awards to your kitty. Do you see them as a validation for your music or you don't take them too seriously?

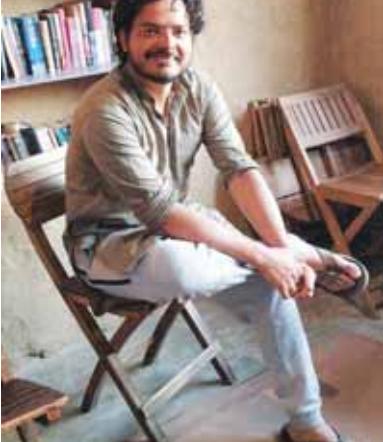
Everything as an affect on you. I won't lie. If you get nominated and win an award, it has an affect on you and if you get nominated but doesn't win that too affects you. A lot of great works of mine which come close to my heart like *Bulleya*, *Mannmarziyaan*, *Malang* and *Meharbaan* these were never nominated at all. From 2010 to 2020, I wasn't nominated as such whereas I was coming up with great songs every year. It does affect you at some point, sometimes you are happy, the other times not, but then next morning you should overcome that. Start afresh, don't let the impact affect you in any way. The only thing that takes me back to work either I win or lose is my love for music.

■ What was the most challenging song for you?

There are a lot of songs that are very tough. *Mudi Mudi* was a difficult one because I was standing in front of such a reputed musician, half nervousness in me was because of that fact. Also, the song was in itself very difficult. *Bulleya* was also difficult because it was a complicated and an emotional song.

## Hi5 'PURPOSE, THOUGHT & INTEREST MAKE ME WRITE'

GAURAV SOLANKI speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about what inspired him to write Tandav and things he keeps in mind while scripting a story



■ How did you get your first break?

Anurag Kashyap asked me to write songs for his film *Ugly*. This happened in 2012. I had been trying to work with him for a long time.

■ What is Tandav about?

About politics and human beings. I have tried to go beyond the obvious chess-like game of politics and talk about human behaviour and human condition.

■ How did you get inspiration to write the story for it?

Inspirations keep changing every day, sometimes some reality pushes you, another day a friend triggers a detail in some character. Sometimes music inspires you, sometimes the setting sun.

■ What are the things you keep in

mind while writing a script?

I keep asking myself constantly why I am writing this particular script. There should be a purpose. There would be some thoughts you want to communicate, and a story you need to tell and characters you want to know more closely. There should be an interesting mix of all these for me to keep writing. Sometimes characters decide their own stories, sometimes stories invent characters to tell themselves.

■ What was the inspiration behind Article 15?

There was a lot of anger against this inhuman hierarchy of human beings. That anger fueled everything else.

■ You graduated from IIT

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CHARACTER

Roorkee. How did you end up in Bollywood?

I wanted to come in films even when I was a kid. I often ask myself how I ended up studying engineering.

■ Writer, poet, screenwriter and lyricist. What role suits you best?

It keeps changing. I don't think all these forms of writing are as different as they are presented. Poetry has often contributed in my screenplay writing and stories quite often seep into my poetry.

■ What next?

I have written a film *Freedom* with Dibakar Banerjee that he is directing. Apart from that, I am writing another series and a feature film that I have to direct.

# the pioneer

# agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



**Death is an interesting affair**  
*Preparing For Death by Arun Shourie & Death: An Inside Story by Sadhguru speak of death in a matter-of-fact manner*

2



4

**Meditate for a better future**  
*The process helps you to disengage from waking state consciousness and instead turns your attention inwards*

You cannot live your life looking at yourself from someone else's point of view  
— Penelope Cruz



A region, that was considered to be shrouded in mystery and inaccessible, is turning into a hot destination for business and leisure, writes SAIMI SATTAR, as she explores the reasons behind it



## NORTH EAST ON THE RADAR

In 2013-14 racial attacks on North Easterners were common. We were more often than not referred to as *Chinkis* or Chinese. In 2014, a boy, Nido Tamam, was killed for his hairstyle in Delhi. This shook the conscience of the entire community, recalls Shyam Kanu Mahanta.

It was this incident that made Mahanta sit up and take notice, egged on by other youngsters from the North Eastern states to do something to bring about a positive change. After careful thought, Mahanta, who after having worked across the country had turned entrepreneur, decided to start a festival that would represent the distinct culture, food and more of the place. Over the years his brainchild, the North East Festival, has become a must-visit event on the capital's social calendar and in many ways representative of the changes that are gradually enveloping the perception about a region which for the longest of time was considered distant, different and inaccessible.

Powering this perception are several reasons which lie within the region as well as in the larger ecosystem of the country and the world.

### FOCUS OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Mahanta believes that while the new government has undertaken several measures, it was former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who kick-started the effort of connecting North East to the rest of the country. "He travelled to the region and then Manmohan Singh carried this integration forward when he became a Member of Parliament from Assam. Though he was not very vocal, this choice registered in the mind space of people," says Mahanta who runs MMS Advisory Pvt Ltd, a consultancy for road construction, besides the festival which he is better known for.

Ranjit Das, President of the Tour Operators Association of Assam (TOAA), while talking about his industry pins the beginning of the rise in tourist numbers to one particular decision. He says, "In 2009-10 the DoNER Minister Mani Shanker Aiyer promoted tourism by persuading government officials to use their Leave Travel Concession to visit the region which led to a huge surge of tourists in the North East."

The changed political thought process, where there was focus on the region, meant that connectivity improved and development accelerated. Mahanta believes that the present government and especially the Prime Minister and the DoNER Minister Jitendra Singh's attention has been important in creating a positive impression among people and has put the region on the highway to development.

Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director, Pride East Entertainments Pvt Ltd, a regional media house, agrees when she says, "With Modi's emphasis on development, investment has poured in and new avenues have opened up." This naturally meant a positive impression all around.

### FALLING INSURGENCY

Earlier the perception within the region of being neglected, and often times exploited, by the Centre gave rise to insur-

gency. "People felt that in order to get even something as simple as a bridge or a refinery meant that they had to struggle for it. The distance from Indian mainland and mindset didn't help resulting in insurgency movements in 80s or 90s against the perceived discrimination of the region by the Centre," says Mahanta who believes that the increased attention was instrumental in bringing peace to the area.

Dr Parvez Ubed, CEO & Founder, ERC Eye Care (P) Limited which works towards democratising digital health (eye) care for the people in India & South-East Asia points out that insurgency affected business in different ways. "It meant that the offices were not operational every day which naturally led to erratic work conditions," he says.

Mahanta says that with more peace having prevailed, the conditions in Guwahati are almost similar to Delhi. "In fact, it is much safer for women. It has good restaurants, discos, all the major brands and a lot of people are coming to work here. It's very cosmopolitan. During insurgency people were scared of flaunting their wealth. Now they are buying expensive cars and splurging money which naturally helps the economy," says Mahanta.

### STATE GOVERNMENT CHIPPING IN

Smitakshi B Goswami, Director, Pratidin Group which owns Asomiya Pratidin (the largest circulated Assamese daily) and Pratidin Time (a 24-hour Assamese news channel) says that the efforts of the state governments shored up the remaining gap. "When Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal conducted Khelo India in January last year, sports tourism got a fillip and people who came here saw the development as well as the future potential of the place. The international level stadiums were important in changing the thought process of the people who came from outside," she says.

### ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

So, rather than the news of a flood or insurgency activities, there was positivity emanating from the region which grabbed eyeballs. While the ones who had visited the area saw the change for themselves, there were still others who were prompted to plan a trip because of the positive impression in the media. Das says, "During the TOAA's annual convention, we discussed the changing perception and dynamics due to the print and electronic media coverage. The international audience became

more aware of the different kinds of experiences that the region held out thanks to programmes on channels like National Geographic." Road shows and participation in travel fairs by tour operators created awareness among domestic and international tourists about the scenic beauty of the region.

Moreover, the growth of social media meant that potential travellers often got the



THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL MEDIA MEANT THAT POTENTIAL TRAVELLERS OFTEN GOT THE INFORMATION FROM PEOPLE IN THEIR OWN CIRCLE WHO HAD BEEN TO THE REGION. LIVE STREAMING OF A DESTINATION CREATES AN IMPACT LIKE NO OTHER. THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY TOO TAPPED INTO THE POTENTIAL OF THE NEW MEDIA

“ ”

information from people in their own circle who had been to the region. "Live streaming of a destination creates an impact like no other. The travel industry too tapped into the potential of the new media," says Das.

### YOUTH POWERING CHANGE

Designer Jenjum Gadi, who calls Delhi home, believes that the change has been brought about primarily by the youngsters. "We have faced a lot of racism in metros and the youngsters worked on countering it by engaging in discussions, both online and offline, about the people, food and culture. This created awareness and dispelled myths." He has noticed a marked shift in the number of people wanting to travel to the region and being more tolerant of the food habits than they were when he came from a remote village in Arunachal Pradesh to the capital to study 16 years back.

The fashion world was the one of the first industries to integrate people from the North East since they have an inherent sense of style. "There are stylists, designers, graphic designers and more in the industry which, to begin with, was always open," feels Gadi.

Sharma believes that the new crop of youngsters has done their bit in bridging the gap which existed on both sides. "Slowly we are trying to assimilate ourselves in the mainstream. Earlier, people found a million reasons not to return to Guwahati after having studied or worked outside. It could be low salaries, standard of living or opportunities," she says and adds that media, like her channel, bring together all the eight states which, in turn, fuels newer ideas for cooperation and development.

"We often hear of stories of a boy from some remote area developing software or something equally amazing. There is no dearth of talent here. With the availability of internet, there is an exchange of ideas and more exposure for the younger generation. The basic education system has been strengthened. The economically independent young minds are applying their knowledge everywhere," she says.

### STARTUPS REVV UP

The entry of youngsters in tourism has transformed the way even this industry operates. Das says, "About 20 colleges and universities in Assam offering a course on tourism came up in the last four-five years. There are thousands of students pursuing these courses and, when they graduate, they are getting into different kinds of activities, exploring new destinations and looking at giving an authentic experience to tourist. People are now looking at tourism as an avenue

of income and employment." Dr Ubed, who faced an uphill task while setting up his company in 2013, recalls, "People were surprised as they felt I was giving up a great career as a doctor. Start-ups were not a badge of honour. It was very difficult to get mentors to structure the business properly. I had to reach out to some friends in the US on Facebook who helped me. When I started in Jorhat, the local chartered accountants were not sure about how to register a local company as they hadn't done it before. Investors liked me, my idea and the opportunity it held out but did not want to come down to Assam to meet me."

He feels that the transformation in the eco system where there is a change in attitude as well as money and mentorship being easily available are the reasons why start-ups are thriving.

Gadi believes that a lot of youngsters have decided to head back home after getting an education in the metros as they no longer want a government job. "Home delivery for medicines, grocery and more are run by start-ups by youngsters. These developments are at par with what is happening in the country. Earlier, they did not think that this kind of thing can happen here as well."

However, Smitakshi says that it is the companies which are working with unique products like Eri Silk, organic farming and ingredients like Bhut Jolokia, the hottest chilli in the world, have created a unique footprint.

The change in the attitude towards start-ups, says Dr Ubed, is evident in the way he can now have the pick of people he employs. "Earlier they asked a lot of questions and would want to work for two-three days to see if the environment was good and whether I could pay or not. There is an attitudinal shift and the start-ups are now considered cool," he says.

### COMMUNICATION, CONNECTIVITY AND AWARENESS

The connectivity has improved dramatically. According to the Ministry for Road Transport & Highways, 4484.9 km of National Highways were built in between 2014-2018 in the region. Guwahati, which was the first airport in the North East, is now the eighth busiest in the country. The Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport, which till three decades ago was handling only two or three flights a day, has over 120 commercial flights — both arrival and departure — in addition to chartered flights and aircrafts of the Indian Air Force. It registered over six million footfalls during 2018-19, which is a 27.46 per cent increase from 2017-18. According to Airports Authority of India the airport handled 55,066 aircraft movements during 2018-19 which is a 20.99 per cent increase of aircraft movement over the previous 12 months.

Gadi's home state does not have an airport but Arunachal Pradesh would be getting one in another three-four years which, he says, would naturally make it more accessible.

Sharma says that there is a flurry of activity, "Airports are coming up, there are investment summits taking place as the CMs take initiatives to improve connectivity."

This naturally has had a positive impact. Das says, "The perception has changed because of the development of communications network and also connectivity. Guwahati, for instance, has direct flights to all the metros."

Gadi feels that a lot of festivals like the Ziro in Arunachal Pradesh, Hornbill in Nagaland have also become must-visit events for travellers. "People who have gone to these festivals return with beautiful memories. That has naturally helped create a positive impression about the people and the place," he says.

Mahanta offers a different take when he says, "The North East festival has united the states of the region. It is a meeting point where disagreements have been sorted out and barriers been broken. There is a common agenda for infrastructure, tourism, industry and more. The festival in Guwahati this year had just 100 visitors but saw three lakh digital footfalls worldwide."

As Sharma puts it, "Earlier, the odds seemed to be insurmountable but now the dots are being joined and everything is coming together." This is certainly not the last we have heard of the North East success story. ■



READING IS A  
CONVERSATION. ALL BOOKS  
TALK. BUT A GOOD BOOK  
LISTENS AS WELL  
— MARK HADDON

## Preparing For Death by Arun Shourie & Death: An Inside Story by Sadhguru speak of death in a manner that is matter-of-fact and yet eye-opening at the same time, writes KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

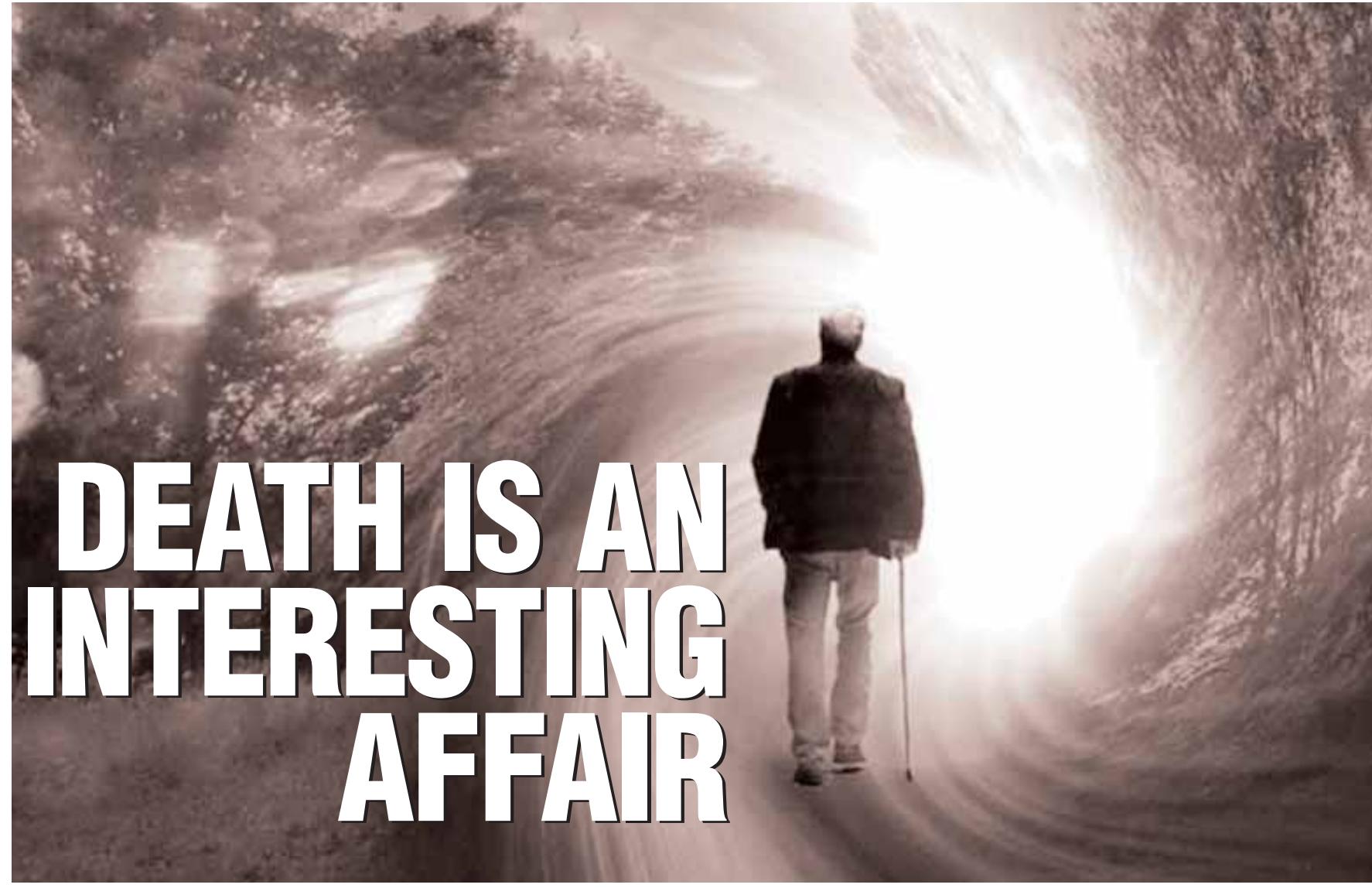
**K**arthiyani Kunhamma, my mother, passed away peacefully on November 6, 2020. Her departure from this world was as uneventful as she lived for 90 years. There were no theatrics or high drama accompanying the event. She was there alive one moment and then the other she was gone. My long-time friend and physician Dr Rajiv rushed home upon hearing the news and certified that Amma was no more.

Death was not a painful event as far as my mother's departure was concerned. On the seventh day, we completed the last rites immersing the ashes in Poorna River flowing through Perumbavoor. Within the next two days, I was admitted to the ICU of Kochi Medical College having tested positive for Covid-19 and diagnosed with pneumonia. Two books that gave me company during this period were *Preparing For Death* by Dr Arun Shourie and *Death: An Inside Story* by Sadhguru.

The books were an eye opener for me, surrounded as I was by more than 25 Covid-19 patients who were in various phases of the pandemic. Some of them highly critical while others in an aggressive mood, testing the patience of doctors, nurses and other paramedical staff, working round the clock taking care of the patients.

It was the stay in ICU which made me think about my own death for the first time. I was worried only about whether my demise would be painful, suffocating or peaceful. The only time I have read about a person's last minutes in this world was about Sir C P Ramaswamy Aiyer, the former Divan of the princely State of Travancore who was also a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the Constituent Assembly. Sir CP, as he was addressed had the "most sudden, painless and peaceful end," according to his biographer Saroja Sundararajan.

A journalist who came to the National Liberal Club where he was staying in London at 11.30 am on 26 September 1966, enquired if he was not well, thinking Sir CP had a cold. CP laughed loudly at this and replied in a cheerful voice, "My dear lady, I have never been ill a day in my life." So saying he leaned back in his upholstered chair when his head drooped and he was no more,"



## DEATH IS AN INTERESTING AFFAIR

writes Sundararajan. Prof TMP Mahadevan, eminent philosopher, has been quoted as saying in his tributes: "The world envies various aspects of the life of Sir CP, from his birth with a silver spoon in his mouth, through a multi-faceted career. I envy him his death. What a wonderful way to die!"

With the oxygen mask connected to my face, I had nothing else to do other than 'scanning'

the pages of *Preparing for Death*, Dr Shourie's account of the final hours of some of the great men and a woman in the sub continent.

He recounts the last days and last moments of Lord Budha, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Ramana Maharshi, Kasturba, Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. What makes the book unique is Dr Shourie's description about his own life and how fate

had been cruel to him throughout this life.

Even if one is born great or becomes great through his/her deeds, death follows us from the moment we come into this world as an uninvited friend. But the tragic truth is that none of us

think or worry about this eternal and omnipresent character shadowing us all from mother's womb.

The pain and sufferings undergone by Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Ramana Maharshi in the prelude to their *samadhi* should be read to be believed. These great men never prayed to God Almighty to lessen their sufferings and tribulations. The reminiscences stand out because of the unique Arun Shourie style. Dr Shourie is brilliant in his description of the final hours of Ramakrishna, Ramana,

Kasturba and Gandhiji. The books he refers to, the quotes he uses and the way he projects the events on a wide canvas... only a master story teller could do the same.

Add to this his sense of humor even in the face of adversities.

"Just like those whom we don't know, our closest relatives, among them whom we have loved the most and our friends die ever so often—some months it seems as if we have to set up a camp office at the Lodhi Road crematorium. Fed up, a relative has declared, "I am not going to any more cremations. If possible, I will skip my own too."

Thus begins Dr Shourie his latest work that also includes his recent brush with death in Pune. The collage like articles have everything that elevates the readers to new levels of thinking. While there are ever so many

books and articles about life post-death, the sad thing is that we are ignorant about the complex nature of death. This is a subject one should be thorough and knowledgeable to condition us about our own final hours.

When it was time for me to be discharged from the ICU and transported to Ernakulam Medical Centre, I had graduated to reading *Death: An Inside Story* by Sadhguru. I don't have words to describe this pathbreaking book, full of humour and one which opens the windows to the world of death. "You must understand that what you refer to as death is a unique happening. It is the very last moment of your life. Almost everything in your life may happen many times over, but the final moment when you transcend the limitations of your physical body will happen only once in your life-

time. It is the last thing that you will do in your life. Moving from the physical to non-physical is the greatest moment in your life.

A lot has been discussed about life after death, rebirth, salvation and post-death phenomenon. But we are yet to discuss in detail the mysteries associated with the final moments of our life. Sadhguru, in his own inimitable style, asks hitherto unasked questions on death and explains in a scintillating style facts associated with death. I have seen Sadhguru demolishing and destroying the arguments of "self-styled intellectuals" who dared to challenge the Indian system of knowledge. But this is the first time I read a book authored by him and that too about death. What I feel after reading the book, especially the chapters, *Preparing For a Good Death* and *Assistance For The Dying*, is that I under-



stood that death is an interesting and entertaining phenomenon and it's not something bad as propagated by the Abrahamic religion. All one could feel after going through the book is, fine, here I am, waiting happily for me rendezvous with the person whom I was born with but yet to see face to face with him.

Vayalar Ramavarma, a leftist poet in Kerala, had written a poem way back in the 1970s spitting venom at death. "Oh death, get lost. I am not willing to join you in your solitude as I don't have death and I am immortal" he had written in the revolutionary song. Had Ramavarma read what Sadhguru has to speak about death, I am sure, he would have simply welcomed death for that enlightening encounter. Yes, Death is beautiful provided you learn the basics of its science.

## NEW ARRIVALS

### OUT OF PRINT: TEN YEARS : AN ANTHOLOGY OF STORIES

Indira Chandrasekhar Context/Westland, ₹499

A decade ago, in 2010, Indira Chandrasekhar set up *Out of Print* to address a need she felt as a writer: a focused platform for the short story; a space for robust editorial discussions as well as one that would serve as a platform for discoveries — of newer facets of the form itself and of new writing. This commemorative volume hopes to capture something of that adventure. It is, thus, not a 'best of' volume, but one that speaks to the spirit of the magazine: its diversity of literary voices, its openness to experimentation, its focus on Indian-language publishing and its stand against mediocrity. Most crucially, of course, this is an ode to the short-story form, its 'art of brevity and honesty.'

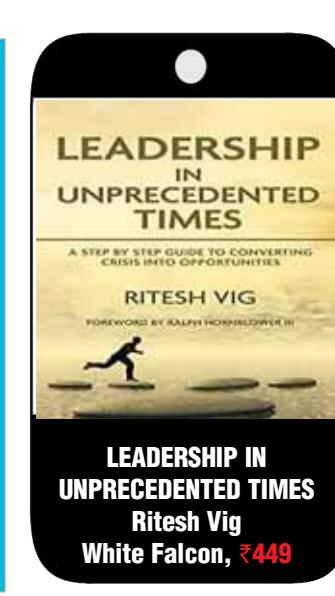
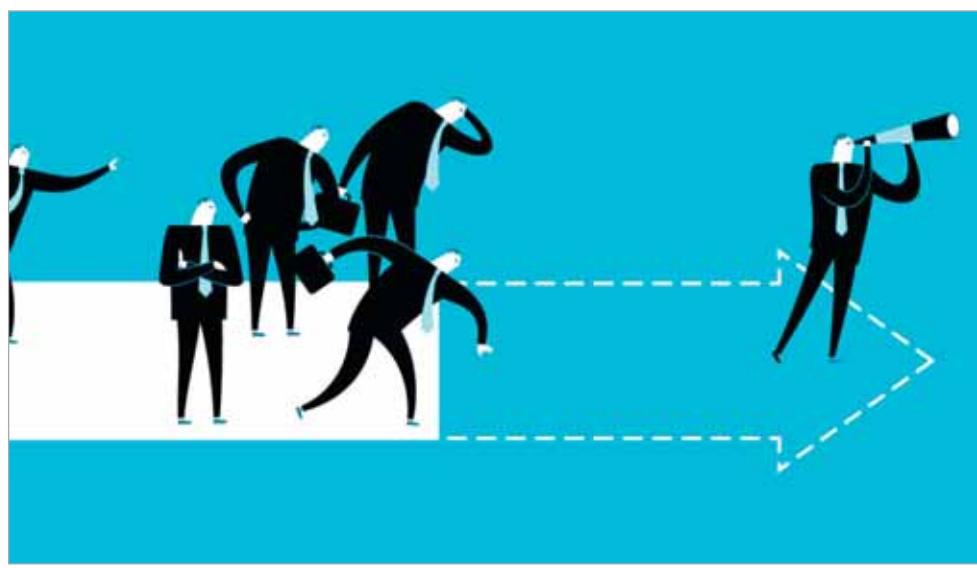
### THE RUNAWAY BOY (CHANDAL JIBON TRILOGY)

Manoranjan Byapari (Author), V. Ramaswamy (Translator) Eka, ₹599

The first part of Byapari's extraordinary trilogy of novels begins in East Pakistan. It tells the story of little Jibon, who arrives at a refugee camp in West Bengal as an infant in the arms of his Dalit parents escaping from the Muslim-majority nation. He grows up perpetually hungry for hot rice in the camp where the treatment meted out to dispossessed families like his is deplorable. Jibon runs away when he's barely thirteen to Calcutta because he's heard that money flies in the air in the big city. And once he leaves home, through the travails of this starving, bewildered but gritty boy, we witness a newly independent India as it grapples with communalism and grave disparities of all kinds.

## A guide to turning crisis into opportunity

Ritesh Vig's book on leadership is a handy guide of possible solutions and has the potential to transform the outlook of the readers for better in difficult times, writes ARCHANA JYOTI



**A**t a time when the entire world is struggling with Covid-19 pandemic, which has brought the economy almost to a standstill, it becomes impending on the leaders to go the extra mile, exhibit resilient behaviour and leadership qualities to help the common man sail through this trying time safely.

And, the passion to drive this resilience requires a clear understanding to help and guide the right behaviour. Author Ritesh Vig has tried to catalyse this human trait through his book *Leadership in Unprecedented Times* that offers help to business leaders, special business entrepreneurs, common man and youngsters to build confidence to fight back by deploying unprecedented measures.

There are no set rules to find solutions to times of uncertainty in the midst of whirlwind, rightly asserts Vig, a financial strategist in his debut book. He tries to address today's unprecedented challenges being faced by the leaders while laying the foundation that is needed to emerge stronger. When confidence level of many people is at its low, leaders need to retain their moral high, maintaining 'never say die' attitude, says the writer, who has over two decades of experience as a financial consultant.

Soft Bank, India Country Head Manoj Kohli who launched the book at an online event recently, lauded the writer's thoughtful initiative of penning the inspiration, saying that it provides a future context of constant disruption for entrepreneurs and

senior management. In this regard, he also drew the attention towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (Self-reliant India) in the unprecedented times which, he said, has given us opportunity to be part of the changing face of the market where digital and start-ups are the focus of the business.

Agreeing with the book's pitch, Kohli said that leaders need to keep in mind that "It is about acceptance of the change. We can say there are courageous and bold decisions to be made, but it isn't like that. It is sometimes difficult to accept major change and this causes problems. According to me (and the book), look at the change; accept, embrace, and love it. Once you do that, it will be easier for you to

change the model, the culture, and the product range accordingly. All changes become easy then."

Kohli goes on to share that every company will go through multiple crisis situations. "There is competition crisis, there are regulation and government crisis, there are cost issues, and then performance and culture crisis. Strong, forward-looking leadership is the only way to success. If the leadership can do things in a systematic and orderly way, it can overcome every single crisis."

Published by 'White Falcon' the book, divided in seven sections or 'milestones', aims to offer a step by step guidance to convert crisis into opportunities and presents a strategy to define robust framework, evaluate new busi-

ness scenarios and redefine business shields for any crisis ahead.

Last but not the least, it defines the new normal for the growth of the business. To put it in other words, whether you feel like you've hit a wall, lost your fire, or are looking for innovative strategies to take your business to the next level, *Leadership in Unprecedented Times* has attempted to answers all.

According to the author, people from all walks of life and all kinds of readers will be enlightened by this book, which he says, has the potential to transform their outlook for better in difficult times. In one of the milestones, for instance, the writer tries to advise a clueless business leader to how to identify strategic live asset and minimise losses besides understanding internal

strengths of his business.

Leadership quality is not just a domain of a certain group of people.

Vig writes that a common man too can display leadership at three levels: at home as parents, at job as an employee and for the nation, building true values in children.

Parents should use these unprecedented times as an opportunity to inculcate leadership qualities in their children and save them from anxiety and fears. The book is more relevant for youngsters, who the author says, can understand how leadership should be embedded within them to take on the future role of leaders.

Vig has also chronicled the integrity and strength of the leaders required to fight the pandem-

ic, sharing the thoughts that 'there are no set rules to find solutions to times of uncertainty'.

Real leadership, Vig stresses, requires clear communication, compassion for others, and a commitment to truth-telling — no matter how frightening the times may be. Going further, the writer has also touched upon the past pandemics and key learnings from them. For instance, Vig points out, how soon after The Great Depression that started in 1929 till 1941 left the economy reeling with unemployment, poverty, deflation and ill regulated loans among other financial crises.

But that did not overshadow the spirit of leaders of those times who rose to the occasion to face challenges thrown by the turbulent environment. Ralph Hornblower III, a well known global investment manager in his foreword compliment the writer for reminding "us that we must stay positive if we want to succeed and vanquish the tsunami waves of humanitarian challenges that such calamities as the 2008 financial crisis and the present Covid 19 pandemic have brought to the doorstep of virtually every country on the planet".

Priced at ₹449, the book, overall is a good read, that no business leader, entrepreneur or a serious executive or for that matter a common man can afford to miss. For, it attempts to help driving people out of the myriad of crises created by the coronavirus pandemic.

# China angle: Biden to cement India-USA relations

There has been understandable concern in India at the change of guard in the United States of America on January 20 after the election of Democratic candidate Joe Biden as the new President, particularly since the bilateral relations registered remarkable progress under President Donald Trump, given his determination to deal with China headlong and his hard-line views on Pakistan's complicity and direct involvement in international Islamic terrorism. Trump was outspoken and made his point without any prevarication which was liked in India. Warm personal chemistry between him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi also, no doubt, has been seen as a positive contributing factor.

However, it needs to be noted that Biden has been very supportive of strong ties with India. As Chairman of powerful Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate, he played a pivotal role in getting the India-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement cleared. Later, he served as Vice President in the Obama Administration when the US and India signed LEMOA paving the way for India's recognition by the USA as a "major Defence partner" and licence free access to a wide range of dual use technologies.

Writing in an ethnic Indian community journal, Biden promised that his administration would "build on the great progress" made in the relationship with India during Obama years. He also asserted that India and the USA "can and should be natural allies". Significantly, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had also described the India-USA relationship as being that between natural allies.

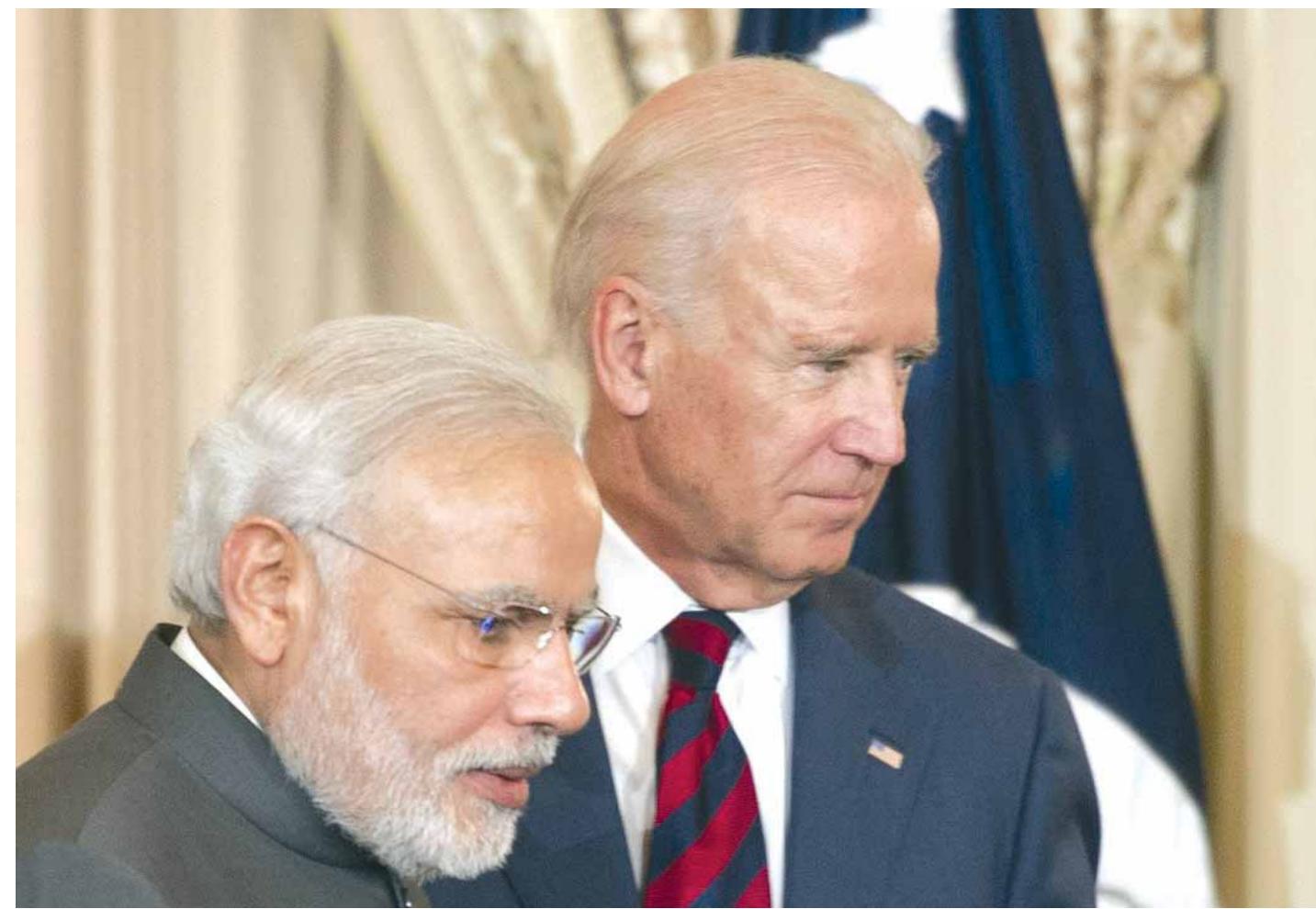
In geo-political terms, it is widely expected that the firm line against China initiated under the Trump presidency would broadly continue because of rather combative stance of China, which seems to be in a hurry to assert its primacy on the global stage. Its aggression against India and other neighbouring countries surrounding South China Sea has also not gone unnoticed by the Biden team. In fact, Secretary of State nominee Blinken has been on record as having said that "strengthening and deepening of relationship with India is going to be a high priority" for the US particularly in the context of its objectives of peace, stability and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific

region. Under these circumstances it can be expected that the USA under Biden would continue to regard India as a "key partner". Notably, India's External Affairs Minister Jaishankar, while commenting on this issue, expressed his confidence that Indo-US relations could only move up further in the coming months.

The presence of Kamala Harris as Vice President and likely induction of several persons of Indian origins (PIOs) in senior position in the new administration is also a factor which would favourably impact on the bilateral relationship. In fact, election of a PIO as the Vice President of the country itself is a landmark development. The credit for it obviously goes to Biden for having chosen Kamala Harris as his running mate, but it also signifies the coming of age of the vast and influential Indian community in the USA. It is well recognised that given their large numbers and relatively high income levels, PIOs in the USA have begun to play increasingly salient role in the country's politics and in providing a generally positive thrust to furthering India-US ties.

In the last two decades there has been a steady and continuing growth in Indo-US Defence and intelligence cooperation despite government changes in both countries indicating a broad bipartisan support on both sides for closer relations. Shared democratic and liberal values and generally positive perception that both countries have about each other have, no doubt, contributed to creation of a positive climate but there is no denying that common threat from China and consequent convergence of geo-political interests has mainly brought the two countries together.

Starting with the "General security of military information agreement" in 2002, India and the USA have now completed the full spectrum of foundational Defence agreements at the recently concluded 2+2 dialogue with the signing of BECA providing for sharing of geo-spatial intelligence. In the meanwhile, the USA has also eased export restrictions on India for high tech equipment, including sensitive Defence technologies by designating it as a "Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1)" country even though India is yet to gain entry into the



Then-Vice President Joe Biden escorts Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi off stage during a luncheon in his honor at the State Department in Washington DC, on Sept. 30, 2014

AP/File

NSG club. In fact, the USA has emerged as a major arms supplier to India over the last few years. This momentum is bound to continue because both countries face the joint challenge of countering China's growing military weight. India and the USA also actively cooperate in countering terrorism, another major threat to the world peace and stability. There are understandable concerns in India about the need to maintain country's strategic autonomy but that does not get compromised by a closer military coordination with the USA in order to deal with our existing security threat perception.

India has a massive economic and commercial relationship with the USA with trade in goods and services totaling \$150 billion. Unlike China with whom we have a huge deficit, India enjoys considerable trade sur-

plus with the USA. Energy partnership has also emerged as an important constituent of that relationship contributing greatly to India's quest to diversify its sources of energy supplies.

Biden has been quite emphatic about bringing the USA back into the Paris Climate Accord and in ensuring greater coordination and alignment with the allies on global political and economic issues. India's sterling record on promised reduction of emission levels jells quite well with his priorities.

It is widely expected that under Biden, the USA will seek to reclaim its centre stage role in global affairs which could, inter alia, see it playing a reinvigorated role in Indo-pacific region involving closer coordination with India and traditional allies such as Japan and Australia, includ-

to enhance inter-operability both in bilateral and "quad" framework.

The onset of Covid-19 pandemic which has affected millions across the world resulting in heavy casualties would in all likelihood deepen the fissures between China and the western countries. China's dubious role in the spread of virus and suppression of information in the early stages has already come in for sharp criticism by western leaders and general population alike. Consequently, one could well see the western countries acting in concert to keep China's rise in check and India could play a pivotal role in that effort.

They would also move at least some of the manufacturing facilities out of China and India could offer itself as a credible alternative if we are to take further steps to improve the manufacturing climate in India and

bring our practices and regulations more in line with the international best practices.

To conclude, the evolution of geo-political dynamics in the Indo-pacific region and indeed the world at large and emergent threat from China's aggressive posture would require both India and the USA to continue to work as close strategic partners. Based on current indications and affirmations on both sides, the cooperation between them at the Government level is likely to further solidify in Biden presidency.

(The writer retired from the Indian Foreign Service a few years ago after having served as Indian Ambassador in several countries and continues to take active interest in foreign policy issues. He is currently president of well-known NGO Antar Rashtriya Sahyog Parishad).

**The evolution of geo-political dynamics in the Indo-pacific region and the world at large and emergent threat from China's aggressive posture would require both India and the USA to continue to work as close strategic partners**



VIRENDRA GUPTA

## PERSPECTIVE

# NEP can change dynamics of Defence services

Over the years sufficient literature has appeared on India's strategic planning. Many foreign scholars have made contributions towards the research on the modernisation of our Defence programme and the need for gearing up and updating.

One rarely comes across a balanced and dispassionate assessment of the issue since there hasn't been enough focus on a precise strategic planning.

However, the National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 is a sincere effort to fill the gap in the existing realms of knowledge about the contemporary importance of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies.

As India needs to diversify its strategies to counter the challenges it faces from Pakistan and China, the strategic knowledge and anticipating the move and motive would be helpful in nipping the problems in the bud.

Recently Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat lauded the NEP and found it quite useful for armed forces to identify the inner strength, resilience, intellect and accuracy of thinking and excellent coordination between mind and body among the youth, particularly from rural areas, for serving the nation with all the integrity and conviction. This is not only an attempt to bring them to the mainstream but a major step towards fulfilling the inner penchant of integrity and social justice.

The procedure of accountability and disclosure were anxiously awaited and would make system foolproof. The NEP involving more practical-based approach at the tertiary level would help catching and identifying the inclination

among the new generation towards strengthening country's forces.

The new attention and scope for innovation would attract the talent and enlighten them to seek career opportunities in Defence services. The NEP 2020 has provided a new gateway to problem-solving mechanism and a huge platform for education sector in India. Undoubtedly tremendous efforts have been made towards creating an environment that generates smooth, easily understandable yet cognitive, constructive and analytical skills among the harbingers of future.

The provision of a single regulator and numerous entry and exit options with regard to formal degrees have been some of the salient features of the NEP which deserve all the appreciation as a new beginning to understand the core security problems which can be comprehended in brighter manner with an option of choosing Defence and security as one of the important subjects of the larger discipline either at the undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

The research on such issues would invite tremendous receptiveness on the part of higher education since the ongoing low intensity insurgency perpetuated by Pakistan and over expansionist mission of China have reaffirmed the obnoxious conspiracy to hit India where it matters the most by creating socio-religious and security quagmire.

Besides, it will send out a loud and clear message that India cannot reciprocate in the same manner as it has certain firm convictions and policies towards ensuring peace through defensive mechanism.



This has carried forward the question of reestablishing the credibility and confidence among people that India is not a soft state but it wants to avoid war and conflict as far as possible.

The new learning of socio-political aspects of the problem of insurgency, terrorism and Naxal violence would help security personnel get well versed with the psychology of terrorists and criminals.

John Milton once commented "hours have wings and they fly up to the author of fame dedicated to their cause". The attempt to sensitise about exploring our domestic underpinnings with renewed focus on the role of addressing the myriad shades such as gender

sensitisation and concern of marginalised communities by way of creation of Special Education Zones through inclusive social democratic ideas and values in the process deserves all the appreciation.

The provisions of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) on par with IITs and IIMs, the National Research Foundation, the National Educational Technology Forum and Indian Institutes of Translation and Interpretation would create an environment for students to reach their potential best by encouraging academic excellence of global level, embracing new information on the one hand and opening new areas of job-ori-

ented courses on the other.

Besides, it would help in understanding social responsibility. In addition to this a new approach can also provide a clear way forward for students interested in Defence studies by getting them to learn new techniques.

The much talked about new provisions of new educational orientation "5+3+3+4" and learning in mother tongue or regional language till Class V would open up fresh outlook and generate an introspective discourse and seek multiple options and viewpoints to see one's right place according to one's interest.

There are numerous provisions under NEP which can ensure a collaborative creation

of ideas and providing tips to comprehend even the tedious and complex issues.

As far as education at the tertiary level is concerned, NEP's approach appears to set out a very clear way forward by getting the mentors fully involved in new techniques and developing challenging strategies to meet the need of all categories of students.

The vision of the NEP is

bound to make India the most competitive in the field of Defence education and would have many takers. The new facilities in security and Defence areas would enthral new generation and provide new perspective to all the aspiring academicians and students who are shortly going to step out into the world of competition much beyond a regulated framework.

Our Defence policies should be able to adapt to the challenging environment as well as efficiently implement recommendations.

A modern, vigilant and assertive military, intelligence, police and paramilitary network should replace the old one.

Since it has always been the academic class which provides policy orientation to the policy makers, the NEP has the potential to produce a new breed of intellectuals to ensure fullest realisation of the much-needed strategic thinking in the Defence and security area.

(The author is a professor and expert on strategic affairs)

**Since it has always been the academic class which provides policy orientation to the policy makers, the NEP has the potential to produce a new breed of intellectuals to ensure fullest realisation of the much-needed strategic thinking in the Defence and security area**



SUDHIR HINDWAN

WE CAN LIVE WITHOUT  
RELIGION AND MEDITATION,  
BUT WE CANNOT SURVIVE  
WITHOUT HUMAN AFFECTION  
— DALAI LAMA



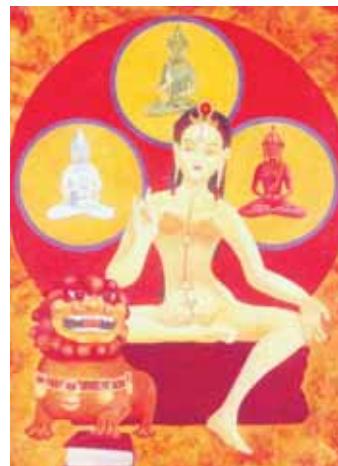
## YOUR YEAR AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA

**ARIES** March 21-April 19

As the week proceeds, you will overcome all your struggles. Your determination will help you achieve your goals and it will be acknowledged and celebrated. On the work front, you have done a good job on a project and now deserve all the credit. A fulfilled ambition and greater success than you expected will make you happy. Domestic travel is also indicated. Be cautious as this success may make you heady and you may go wild. Uncertainty in some matters may prove harmful. On the relationship front, you are likely to make a choice in family matters. The week does not predict stability on emotional front. You might face disappointment in love affairs. Open discussion with your loved ones will help improve the situation.

Lucky number 9  
Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Saturday

**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

Do not become the prey to external forces like fears, addictions, and other harmful impulses. You are likely to fall victim of deception and illusion. Follow meditation or *pranayama* to stay focused. On the career front, this is not the right time to look for another job or enter any venture. A rash decision could result in loss. An honest and genuine methodology will pay rich dividend later in life. You live life king size. More projects or business opportunities are coming your way, that will keep you busy. Your skill and expertise will be in demand. On the relationship front, your connection with the partner is getting stronger. By the end of the week, you will experience a celebration or an auspicious moment of your life.

Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Friday

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This week you would be energetic. Take time out to pamper yourself. You will have the drive and determination to move towards your goals. Do not try to force things, as it might backfire on you. On the career front, do not engage in arguments that might make the environment tense. Secret motives and information will keep you in a troublesome situation. You need to go deep into the topic and look for your anxieties, fears, and psychic blocks. You need to keep an eye on your subordinates. On the relationship front, avoid heated arguments. While taking decisions, be grounded and firm. In love relationships, your partner may be very challenging. You are likely to be very emotional and critical and this may affect your relationship.

Lucky number 3  
Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Wednesday

**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week your home and family life will keep you happy. There will be discussions concerning future events. You will experience family traditions and learn wisdom of the elders. On the work front, you would like a career that gives you a sense of completion, financial security and connection with others. This week you need to use your intelligence to get your way. Your generous, insightful and analytical approach can bring transformation in your life. You will experience financial security and will attain a comfortable life. You have the time to breathe and enjoy the material pleasures. On the personal front, relationships will be satisfactory. Ensure that your partner and you discuss issues to avoid complex situations. Avoid arguments with family members.

Lucky number 18  
Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Friday

**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

You will complete all essential work with confidence, self-discipline and patience. You will realise the importance of self-awareness and comfort. As the days pass, you will evaluate what matters in life. There will be peace and happiness at home. You may enjoy solitary leisure. On the work front, a salary increase is indicated in the cards. You shall draw support and protection from your past ties. Avoid conflicts with conflicts. Finance inflow looks good but do not consider any kind of investment at this point. On the personal front, shopping, eating, earning and spending money shall be the theme of the week. There is fortune and security in your life. Relationship with family members will give warmth and confidence. A marriage ceremony is likely to take place.

Lucky number 10  
Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Tuesday

**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You will feel healing and rejuvenating energy around you. Purity of energy will enhance your creativity. Positive thought will come to you. Ensure you continue with your health regime. Physical workout will add extra charm to your personality. Those who are having health issues are likely to recover, but it is still advisable to consult a doctor. On the career front, you are creative, original, and free from restrictions imposed by ideas and criticisms. How you speak your mind is as important as what you say. For some, promotion, salary hike or desirable transfer is on the cards. This is a very eventful week in all aspects. In a relationship, you are making a lot of efforts. Be very clear about your boundaries and preferences. Whatever is the final decision, you need to stick to it.

Lucky number 20  
Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Tuesday

**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week you would be enthusiastic, innovative and all set to get things rolling. Some of you may be impatient too. You want your self-worth acknowledged; self-realisation is the theme of the week. To test your limits, you may go to an extent to accomplish any difficult task. Some of you will experience a creative restlessness, that will unlock a new phase of life. This will be an opportunity to change your destiny. Your curiosity urges you to express yourself and your personality. Domestic travel for business purpose is likely. The card foretells a new beginning of a business or a new careers field. On the personal front, those who are dreaming of a house may move into a new house. Bonding with your near and dear ones are satisfactory.

Lucky number 12  
Lucky colour Golden  
Lucky day Sunday

**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week try to stay cool and avoid getting into any arguments. Else, you might get into a fight. You need to experience what competition means. Respect your opponent but stand up to your point of view. Since the past is over and the future is uncertain, there is no need for you to be faithless or fearful. Be at peace with yourself, independent. Devote your full attention to your situation. Professionally, you may experience heated arguments and violence in the work area. Focus on the work and be friendly with your juniors or peers. This will get you some support in terms of harsh times. On the personal front, you are likely to be a victim of the seriousness of a mature personality which is lacking emotion. Conflict with a family member is likely.

Lucky number 19  
Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Friday

**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you will be filled with immense energy and vitality. You are likely to enjoy sports and adventurous activities. You must follow a strict health regime like diet, exercise, and vitamins/minerals. A brief vacation to enjoy the energy is indicated. On the career front, there could be frequent journeys which may open great avenues for your professional growth. Those who are appearing for an interview or competitive exam, stars are favourable. Patience and persistence will help resolve business-related issues. You are likely to face some challenges in terms of a relationship. Accusation and misunderstandings between the married couples is indicated. As for singles, this is not the right time for a relationship.

Lucky number 22  
Lucky colour Red  
Lucky day Wednesday

**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Your persistence, determination and efforts will allow you to make your dreams true. Enhancing your skill will help increase the chance of success. Ensure continuation of craft, educational pursuits. On the career front, promotions or increase in salary is likely. Respond to friends and opponents equally. Your achievements will make you the subject of envy. Doing your work with commitment will lead to self-development. By the end of the week, you may spend time alone to re-evaluate your life. On the personal front, you may need some privacy to recharge our battery and rejuvenate the spirit. This will help you experience greater inner strength and confidence. Relationships will give you the strength.

Lucky number 21  
Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Wednesday

**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 22

This week evaluate where you stand now and where you feel you should be to increase your effectiveness and make the move accordingly. You will be full of enthusiasm and energy. You are likely to get a helping hand from a male friend or a relative. You are in rush with everything in life. This rashness, an impulsive nature may turn a good situation into a bad one. On the work front, you may be concerned about the lack of business or money and may feel that you have made a mistake with decisions made in the past. But you will try to take a positive point of view and wait for the final verdict. On the personal front, you need to experience childlike happiness. Spend time with younger members of the family.

Lucky number 13  
Lucky colour Blue  
Lucky day Thursday

**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

Your sentiments and emotions will rule your heart and mind this week. You will have the opportunity to resolve a conflict over an important issue or a discord with important people in your life. You are likely to help or make amends with your family. Irrespective of negotiation, one must stay try to maintain balance. There will be times when you need to spend time alone to re-evaluate your life and situation. A fourfold process is experienced at the levels of consciousness, mental, emotional, spiritual and physical. Surrender yourself to the higher wisdom, conquer material temptation and giving up something to gain something better is beneficial. Your patience and endurance will be put to test.

Lucky number 11  
Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Monday

**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Meditate for a better future

No sooner I get into the process suggested to calm my overtaxed mind, I get into sleep mode. Obviously, when I get up, I feel temporarily relaxed. But soon after my monkey mind comes into active play. Tell me where I am going wrong. So asked a disciple, who is serious about getting over the limitations of his mind. "Getting into sleep mode during the process is not desirable," I answered. "Why then is it happening?" he asked. Well, as you close your eyes, you get cut off from all that you would be consciously watching in the outer world as well as the self-excited thoughts within, which includes lot of negative impressions. Nothing to process, mind gets into sleep mode. "How do I get over this syndrome?" he then asked.

While introducing you to the 8 fold course of *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, I had explained that meditation proper begins by getting into state of *Pratyahara*. I had also explained the significance and application of *Pratyahara*. The process calls for getting disengaged from waking state consciousness and instead turning your attention inwards. Fact remains that you have ignored the most impor-



tant part of the process, which is why you get into sleep mode. Should you look within, your sub-conscious mind will come into full play. That will bring into focus random thoughts picked up in the immediate past, many of them unpleasant and inconsequential. Those thoughts keep alive your grieving mind. Also, persistent desires and feelings may keep knocking you. These thoughts engage your attention so much, that you are hardly have the space necessary to process any fresh thoughts objectively, and with obvious consequences.

Remember, mind-calming process is true to the calling of *Pratyahara*. Should you follow the process correctly, mind will have a task in hand. It has to witness the inflowing thoughts, but at the same time train it to remain disengaged from them. Following which, those thoughts will go out of reckoning over a period of time. Consequently, you will not only feel relaxed, but also fresh mind-space will be available to process any fresh thoughts objectively. And that makes the difference. I could make out that this fellow is not able to turn his attention inwards. To facilitate that, I suggested him to keep his attention on

his breath cycle during the process — inbreath and outbreath both included. The next time the person visited me, informed that he no longer gets into sleep mode. "In fact, I am able to see a pattern in my thought flow, which makes me understand and acknowledge my mental traits. I have realised that I carry a sense of fear and insecurity. I also suffer from a sense of 'identity crisis' which tempts me prove my point whatever way I can. Where does it come from? Also, I wish to realise my dream perceptions fast, which is not happening on expected lines. You have to now guide me how to resolve them and also realise my potential fast," the person asked.

The sense of fear and identity crisis has actually become a part of your psyche, coming as them may as reflection of your unpleasant memory imprints picked up during early childhood. The Sun, which is marked with your identity and confidence level is in debility, and is placed opposite its dire enemy Saturn, which too is in debility. It implies that during early childhood, your parents would have tried to forcefully discipline you. You would have been subject to beating and chastised on every occasion

you committed some mistake or when your performance level was not on expected lines. Your parent's intent can't be questioned. But instead of handling you with a sense of love, they forcefully tried to impose their whip on you. The irony of the whole situation is that born with Aries lagna ruled by fiery Mars, and prominently placed, it was difficult for you to digest commandeer. In the process, your confidence level got down and developed a sense of fear, which with time became a part of your psyche.

Now that you are on your own, there is no relevance of those past happenings. Once, this thought gets registered in your mind, you will get over this hang. He began working on suggested lines, and soon he overcame this problem.

This way, with time, he went on identifying and acknowledging his mental limitations one by one, and then got over them. As he got over his negatives, his performance level too began to improve.

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