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NEW DELHI, SUNDAY MARCH 7, 2021; PAGES 12+4 ₹4



BJP pits Suvendu against Didi

Bharati Ghosh, pacer Ashok Dinda in BJP list of 57 candidates



SAGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The high-profile Nandigram Assembly seat will see a titanic clash in the West Bengal polls with the BJP fielding Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's former close aide Suvendu Adhikari against her. The BJP on Saturday released the first list of its 57 candidates for the first two phases of Bengal Assembly elections starting from March 27.

The list released a day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Brigade rally in Kolkata carries the names of the party's star campaigner Suvendu Adhikari who will contest from the high-profile seat of Nandigram against



Mamata Banerjee.

The other two notable names on the list are former India pacer Ashok Dinda, who will contest from Moyna in East Midnapore, and former IPS officer Bharati Ghosh, who will take on another retired IPS officer Humayun Kabir from Debra Assembly seat in West Midnapore.

The saffron outfit announced candidates for all but three of the 60 seats which will go to polls in the first two of the eight-phase elections that will start from March 27 and end on April 27. One seat of Bagmundi in Purulia district has been left for alliance partner AJSU.

Adhikari who reached

Nandigram from Delhi — to a rousing welcome by party supporters shouting Jai Shri Ram slogans — hours before the list was published by the party top brass in the national Capital, attacked the Chief Minister for remembering Nandigram during the elections time only.

"She is a rank outsider here and I am the Bhumiputra (son of the soil)... she remembers Nandigram that catapulted her to power in 2011 only when the polls are round the corner... the people of Nandigram have decided to teach her a lesson," said Adhikari, who has already vowed to defeat the Chief Minister by half-a-lakh votes.

Reacting to his statements, senior TMC leader Saugato Roy said, "The Trinamool does not want to talk about traitors who have stabbed in the back of Mamata Banerjee. The people will give him a befitting reply."

Adhikari, a former MP and State Minister left the TMC in December last year. He had been the Man Friday of the Bengal Chief Minister handling the party organisational affairs in about a dozen districts before he left the party.

Mamata had released the list of Trinamool Congress candidates on Friday. The TMC released the list for all the 291 seats and left three seats for alliance partner Gorkha Janmukti Morcha. The Left too had released its list of candidates for the first two phases on Friday.

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Trivedi joins BJP; right man in right party now: Nadda



Former Union Minister Dinesh Trivedi joins BJP in the presence of party president JP Nadda in New Delhi on Saturday PTI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the West Bengal Apolls, former Railway Minister and Trinamool Congress Member of Parliament Dinesh Trivedi on Saturday joined the BJP.

BJP president JP Nadda welcomed him into the party's fold claiming that Trivedi crossed over not on account of "opportunism" but for the "ideological reasons".

The 70-year-old Trivedi maintained that he has switched sides to "serve the country better".

"This was the golden moment I had been waiting for," Trivedi said after joining the BJP at party headquarters here in the presence of Nadda and Union Minister Piyush Goyal.

Trivedi resigned his Rajya Sabha and Trinamool membership on February 12, saying he felt "suffocated" because of the violence in West Bengal and his inability to do anything about it. Alluding to 'parivar' in West Bengal, he said after joining the BJP he felt being with the "janta parivar".

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Centre rushes Covid teams to Maha, Punjab

Return to corona test, track, treat, Health Ministry tells States, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has rushed high-level multi-disciplinary public health teams to Maharashtra and Punjab in view of the increase in the number of daily Covid-19 cases being reported by these States. It has also asked high-case load States and Union Territories like Maharashtra and Gujarat to continue with the strategy of "test, track and treat" that had yielded rich dividends at the height of the pandemic.

The States have been asked to collaborate with private hospitals to open up vaccination time-table for a minimum of 15 days and a maximum of 28 days at a time.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr Vinod Paul on Saturday interacted with health secretaries and MDs of Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Chandigarh, which have reported increased number of Covid cases in the last few days.

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Elderly people wait to get vaccinated against Covid-19 at Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation hospital at Vashi, Navi Mumbai on Saturday PTI

Mental health problems in 20% Covid survivors: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

One in every five Covid-19 survivors are showing symptoms including fatigue, cognitive problems and a range of psychiatric problems, a research review led by Oxford Brookes University has noted. It also painted a gloomy picture for the future, warning that more number of people will be affected by neuropsychiatric and cognitive complications.

The study has come close on the heels of similar observation from the World Health

Organization (WHO) officials who recently noted that the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has caused more "mass trauma" than World War II.

The observation hold importance in the context of India where more number of people with mental health disorder could pose further burden on the already patchy mental health care system. One in seven people or a total of 197.3 million people live with mental illness in India, according to the 2019 Global Burden of Disease Study.

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Adopt world-class systems, PM exhorts defence forces

Modi addresses Combined Commanders' meet in Guj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Urging the defence forces to keep pace with rapid advancements in war fighting capabilities all over world, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked them to "rid themselves of legacy systems and practices that have outlived their utility and relevance".

Making this observation while addressing the Combined Commanders' Conference in Kevadia, Gujarat, Modi also conveyed his appreciation for the "resolute dedication" shown by the armed forces over the past year in the context of the corona pandemic and the challenging situation on the northern border with China.

He stressed the importance of enhancing indigenisation in the national security system, not just in sourcing equipment and weapons but



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits an exhibition of innovations by armed forces during Combined Commanders' Conference at Kevadia, in Narmada district PTI

also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practised in the armed forces, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

Modi was briefed by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) about the discussions during this year's conference, the statement said. He particularly appreciated the inclusion of Junior Commissioned Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers this year.

Incidentally, this was the first time that personnel below

officer rank were part of the high-level meeting held annually. The jawans shared their views on operational matters with the top military leadership besides the Prime Minister.

Emphasising the need for planning in both military and civilian parts of the National security architecture, Modi also called for a "holistic approach, focused on breaking down civil-military silos and on expediting the speed of decision making."

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CM announces Delhi Board of Education for holistic learning

All-year round assessment to end rote learning

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced the setting up of the Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE). It was approved in a meeting held by the Delhi Cabinet on Saturday.

Kejriwal said the DBSE will conduct assessments throughout the year to develop holistic learning outcomes instead of the once-a-year assessment that focuses on rote learning.

"The DBSE will empower students to stand on their own feet and prepare students to take responsibility for their country beyond all religion, caste, and class differences. Around 20-25 schools will become a part of the Delhi Education Board in the 2021-22 academic session, after which the other schools will be looped in eventually in the next 4-5 years. The Delhi Education Board will not only conduct continuous assessments but



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal announces for the establishment of Delhi Board of School Education on Saturday PTI

will become a torchbearer for change in education, he added.

The Chief Minister further said, "Our students will progress towards global education. The Delhi Education Board will function in close alignment with national and international boards. The Board will develop world-class education practices that will enable the shift in teaching-learning practices across Delhi. Through the DEB, an age-old practice of rote learning will be replaced with application-based learning and assessment. The Board will ensure that each student's talent is harnessed, and they apply what they learn."

"In the present education system, we assess a student at

the end of a year for 3 hours but in the new education board, we will assess students throughout the year to develop holistic learning outcomes. Today, the entire system of education focuses on rote learning — this has to change and an emphasis has to be placed on 'understanding' and 'personality development'. The students would not be assessed once, at the end of the year. On the contrary, the assessment process would go on throughout the year," he added.

Kejriwal said, "This international level board is being created for which aid would be sought from various international organisations as well. International practices and teaching methods have been analysed, based on which we would adopt similar practices and methodology in the Delhi schools under DBSE. High-end techniques would be used to impart education, and for the assessment process as well. The interest, need and specialisation of each student would be taken into account by the education system to provide insights on what courses they should opt for concerning their career.

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Remove Modi's photo from jab certificates in poll-bound States: EC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the run-up to Assembly Elections in four States and a Union Territory, the Election Commission (EC) has asked the Centre to remove Prime Minister Narendra Modi's picture from coronavirus vaccination certificates being offered to beneficiaries in these States.

The EC directive came after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress registered a complaint saying that it violates the Model Code of Conduct.

In its letter to the Health Ministry, the EC referred to certain provisions of the Model Code related to the use of advertisement at the cost of the public exchequer. The direction to the Ministry does not mention Prime Minister Narendra Modi's name but says the Ministry has to follow the Model Code of Conduct in letter and spirit. The Government may have used filters to hide the PM's picture from the certificate, which could take some time for the Ministry to fully implement these directions on

the certificates given to those who take the Covid-19 vaccine in poll-bound West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry.

The poll body had first asked the Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal for a report on why Modi's photo was being used on vaccination certificates generated through the Co-WIN platform. The CEO responded by informing the poll panel that the vaccination drive was a Central scheme. The panel then took up the matter with the Health Ministry and sought its response on the "factual position" on the use of the photographs. In its reply, the Ministry said the vaccination drive was an ongoing Government initiative that had started much before the Model Code of Conduct came into force.

The Mamata Banerjee-led party had approached the poll panel this week, citing violation of the model code as PM Modi's image reflected on vaccination certificates generated through the Co-Win platform.

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CAPSULE

PAK PM IMRAN KHAN WINS TRUST VOTE

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday comfortably won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid Opposition boycott, bolstering his Government's position after an embarrassing defeat in this week's Senate elections.

NOTED KANNADA POET NSL BHATTA NO MORE

Bengaluru: Noted Kannada poet, critic and translator NS Lakshminarayana Bhatta died here early on Saturday. He was 84 and was suffering from age related ailments.

RAPE VICTIM SET ABLAZE DIES OF BURNS IN JAIPUR

Jaipur: A 30-year-old rape victim who was allegedly set on fire at her home in Rajasthan's Hanumangar succumbed to her burn injuries at Jaipur's SMS Hospital.

Farmers block KMP to mark 100th protest day

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Farmers protesting the Centre's three farm laws on Saturday blocked the six-lane Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway at some places in Haryana to mark the completion of 100 days of their agitation at the Delhi borders.

The road blockade began at 11 am and continued till 4 pm. Farmers holding black flags and wearing black armbands and some women protesters with black "dupattas" shouted slogans against the BJP-led Government for not acceding to their demands.

Protesters in Sonipat and Hujjar districts and some other places brought their tractor-trolleys and other vehicles and parked them in the middle of the KMP Expressway in some stretches. The Haryana Police



Farmers during Kisan Ektta Morcha protest at KMP Expressway near Kundli in Haryana on Saturday PTI

had made arrangements for traffic diversions and deployed adequate personnel.

The call for blocking the expressway was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of protesting farmer unions which is spearheading the agitation against the legislations.

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150 Rohingyas detained in J&K for illegal stay

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In a major crackdown on Illegal immigrants staying in Jammu & Kashmir more than 150 Rohingyas have been detained at a holding centre in Sub Jail Hiranagar at the end of the verification process of their travel documents.

According to official sources during the special drive conducted at the Maulana Azad stadium in Jammu on Saturday police authorities verified travel documents and collected biometrics of large numbers of illegal immigrants including Rohingyas from Myanmar.

During the verification process the stadium was kept out of bounds for local media persons and none were permitted to enter the premises.

Spinners demolish England

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin once again made a mockery of an eternally confused English batting line-up as India cantered into the inaugural World Test Championship final with a resounding innings and 25 run victory on the third afternoon of the fourth and final Test here on Saturday.

All India needed was a draw to book a Lord's date in June with Kane Williamson's New Zealand but Patel (24-6-48-5), in company of Ashwin (22.5-4-47-5), literally blew England away in a session and half for a paltry 135 in 54.5 overs to complete a 3-1 rout, ensuring that the Anthony De Mello Trophy will stay at the Cricket Centre in Mumbai.

Related reports on P10



Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli holds the trophy after defeating England during the third day's play of the 4th and last test match of the series between India and England, at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Saturday PTI

HOME THEATRE

Big disappointment



COMING TO AMERICA 2
Amazon
***ing: Eddie Murphy, Arsenio Hall, Jermaine Fowler, Wesley Snipes, James Earl Jones**
Rated: 3/10

It is not only strange but bizarre that a movie's sequel would be released 33 years after the prequel. However, what is even worse is that while *Coming To America* (the original) directed by John Landis and based on a story originally created by Eddie Murphy was a rom-com that managed to keep one engrossed in the film — at the end it was a love story, part two is anything but funny or even remotely romantic in

nature. Unless one considers a few scenes spent on two young people talking alone with one of them aspiring to open a salon of her own.

Here she befriends a prince no less and supposedly in love and her dream is to open a salon of her own!

One does manage to get over this rather strange dream but what one can't get over is the unfunny dialogues. Not only are the risque, the hand gestures are even worse. And what the hell was Wesley Snipes thinking when he agreed to this boggles the mind. It does obviate his better work — *Blade* series comes to mind.

Directed by Craig Brewer and produced by Kevin Misher

and Eddie Murphy, this sequel may have started off on a good note but unfortunately all it manages to do in the 110 minutes is make you cringe.

May be Murphy thought that revisiting the original that had a cult following would be a great idea but all he manages to do is makes one wonder why he needed to do this in this horrible manner that take away from its prequel.

Coming To America, the must awaited film ends up disappointing and is a huge bore.

Watch only if you have nothing else to do and want to catch up on the stars of the original movie.

— Shalini Saksena

Riveting true story told well

MURDER AMONG THE MORMONS

Netflix
***ing: A true-Crime**
Rated: 5/10

Of late Netflix has been releasing true-crime sagas. Take for example *The Night Stalker* or *The Cecil Hotel* that recently found their way on the OTT platform. However bizarre or strange such docu-movies may be, one can't shy away from the truth that they are absolutely riveting and unfold rather brilliantly. It could stem from the fact that if there is a murder and then another coupled with a Church in the middle of it all, facts and and how the investigation proceeds are bound to be filled with intrigue and throw up a few suspects.

Murder Among The Mormons relate to a true investigation into twin blasts that killed two people in Salt Lake City, Utah, US. These murders were unlike anything that came to light in the October of 1985. May be because it relates to religion, murder and deception — a lethal combination.

The three-part mini-series — each of approximately 46 minutes — is paced out well with part one giving the history of the town where the blasts occurred, the people who live here and the Mormon Church and the history of the Mormons — a religious group that embrace concepts of Christianity and revelations made by their founder, Joseph

Smith. They primarily belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Of course, the intrigue is already there and the next two part are all about the build up up to the murders and who and why they were killed in the first place.

Though the entire mini-series manages to keep one's interest — anything related to the Church is more so if it involves debunking the faith of the people and making them question the very basis on which the Church stands. It is the second half of part three that makes one sit up straight and watch as the master criminal emerges — a criminal who has perfected his craft since he was a only a teenager.

How he not only managed to dupe the Church but his friends and wife without remorse or guilt for his own gain; a power hungry Mark Hofmann — regarded as one of the most accomplished forger in history. He is infamous for forging documents related to the history of the Latter Day Saint movement. What is more interesting to know is that one doesn't know how many of his forged yet authenticated documents are still in circulation.

Hofmann was given life sentence with no parole since it was found that he felt no guilt or remorse for what he had done. He is now in Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison, Colorado, US.

— Shalini Saksena



Plan Your Day

Treat for all women

Venue: All MOD Outlets
When: March 8, 2021
Time: 1 pm onwards

Age is just a number! Well, the greater the number, the sweeter your treat at Mad Over Donuts. Mad Over Donuts has consistently managed to delight its customers with its new launches and festive offers. They are at it again and this time, the surprise is bigger and better!

Mad Over Donuts is celebrating women's day in order to thank the contribution of women to the society by running a “celebrate your age” campaign. Simply walk into any Mad Over Donuts store on Women's Day to get a treat of their fresh, handmade donuts and get a discount that is equal to your age. That's a sweet treat that's hard to beat, is it not?

Mark your calendar right away and set up a date with your girl gang. After a rollicking day out and about, end it on a delectable note with some of the scrumptious donuts offered by Mad Over Donuts.



Celebrate womanhood

Venue: Horizon Plaza- Artisanal Market, Sec-43, Golf Course road, DLF Phase-5
When: March 7, 2021
Time: 3:30 PM-8:30 pm

This Women's Day, let's celebrate the #Womanhood by appreciating the efforts of our all inspiring women, who empower the Artisanal Market. Join us on Sunday browsing especially curated Artisanal products and produce by our Women Founders, Chefs, Bakers at one of its kind Artisanal Market, handpicked by PC.

Well! your weekend mornings just got healthy with a dose of refreshing handpicked homegrown products at Artisanal Market Handpicked by PC.

Shop and mingle with passionate home bakers, food curators and urban farmers who grow, produce and hand-craft breads, jams, honeys, turmeric, cakes and other eclectic cuisines from different parts of the world with natural ingredients and a whole lot of love.

Get a freshly brewed coffee

or a smoothie, select your fruits and veggies to cook your favorite dish. Stock up natural honey, masala and pickles from different regions of India. Bring your friends and family and to enjoy artisanals flavours.

Flower lovers take home some fresh flowers from our special lady “Phuloon Ki Rani” by Rani Chadha, the 80 year-old entrepreneur. Home chefs get ready to shop your favorite food stuff from our different stalls.

Look no forward, spend this weekend with your family and friends at Artisanal Market and make your day.



TELLY TALE

MANISH DONS EUNUCH LOOK

Zee TV's second season of its immensely successful weekend thriller *Brahmarakshas* has been keeping the audience hooked with the gripping account of the *rakshas* who has returned with twice as much power and is on a mission for immortality. Having enthralled the viewers with unpredictable twists and turns in Kalindi's life, the show recently took a two-year leap, bringing in a package of surprises for its viewers. While a grieving Angad (Pearl V Puri) is seen mourning the loss of his beloved Kalindi (Nikki Sharma) who he believes has died as a result of his own actions, Kalindi's look alike — Chandni enters as the modern *cherni* and is set to bring much chaos in his life. Amidst all of this, actor Manish Khanna who earlier played a pivotal role in the show is all set to return, this time in the character of a eunuch.

Having previously portrayed the character of Jwala, the *tantric*, Khanna will now be seen playing the role of his transgender brother, Irawat who bears a connection with the Brahmarakshas and enters as the new villain in Angad's life and unknowingly in Chandni's life too. The actor couldn't be more thrilled to have returned with yet another interesting character and in fact will be seen donning a look similar to Bollywood actor Ashutosh Rana's character in Sangharsh.

Sharing his thoughts, Khanna said: “From the numerous roles that I have essayed on television, this character is one of the most unique and challenging ones I have had to play until now. I was required to bring a considerable change in my body language and even practise a bit of voice modulation to bring out the perfect essence of this role. Ashutosh Rana, who has been a dear friend became my immediate source of reference when it came to styling this character. He played the role of a eunuch in the film Sangharsh and I absolutely loved his performance including the way his character was showcased. We have tried to bring out a similar look in my character while bringing in a few unique and creative elements to the appearance as well. I just hope the viewers love this comeback of mine.”

YASH TURNS RUDE TO PRANALI

An actor has to look 100 per cent natural on screen, even if he has to act angry, drunk, insane or even a *yogi*. Yash Tonk has been a method actor and has been known to give his takes naturally for every scene in just two takes maximum! While he is known to play comic characters in the past, it was easy for him to deliver in comedy scenes, but what happened when he had to deliver his part in a serious role like Brij Kishore in Sony TV's *Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye*.

To look natural and to not scare off Pranali with his harsh tone and loud pitch, Yash Tonk rehearses his harsh fighting

scenes with Pranali prior to the final take. Those are the scenes where he has to act in a negative zone or even raise his voice on his on screen wife, Tonk could not do that in just the final take without rehearsing it because he considers Pranali as his dear friend. While rehearsing their quarrel scenes, Pranali eases out Tonk saying it's okay to raise his voice on her or even take a rude tone with her for a particular scene to look flawless.

Talking about these quarrel sequences, Tonk says: “I might be a method actor, but I'm a soft hearted person too when it comes to my friends and family. Pranali has become a dear friend ever since we started shooting for *Kyun Utthe Dil Chhod Aaye*. I don't feel like raising my voice at her even for a scene. So for the final take to be flawless, I rehearse my harsh fighting scenes prior to the final take. She eases me out and asks me to yell at her even if that's what the scene demands.”

SHAAN'S VIRTUAL ANTAKSHARI

In a clutter-breaking format innovation, Zee TV launched the world's first-ever music league championship Indian Pro Music League (IPML) on February 26, 2021. While the world of sports has seen several league competitions, this unique music league has six teams representing different regions of India, battling it out against each other in a musical championship. Each of these six teams supported by leading Bollywood and sports celebrities has top playback singers as their captains, one reality show star, and one fresh voice. Celebrated singers — Mika Singh, Kailash Kher, Sajid Khan, Shaan, Ankit Tiwari, Javed Ali, Asees Kaur, Bhoomi Trivedi, AkritiKakar, Payal Dev, Neha Bhasin, Shilpa Rao are captains of these six zonal teams.

After the epic opening ceremony, the six teams are ready to battle it out and the first set of league matches have kicked off. The upcoming episode has a Kishore Kumar theme and during the shoot, Bengal Tigers captains Shaan and Akriti Kakkar gave a spectacular performance to the song *Mere Saamne Wali Khidki Mein*. Right after the act, Shaan shared an emotional memory of his father while speaking to host Karan Wahi about Kishore Kumar. The Bengal Tigers captain mentioned how he lost his father — music composer Manas Mukherjee, in October 1986, but just before that, the legendary composer had written his last song *Ei Jiboner path soja noy jeno* that was sung by Kishore Kumar. The song came out later, but it was a big deal for the whole family, as Shaan revealed: “I felt that if Kishore Kumar is singing a song written by my father, I am sure my father was a well-known man. I have this one last image of them together, where I am walking behind my father and Kishore da. It was raining and they were discussing this song. It's a sweet memory I have of both of them.”

After this sweet revelation, Shaan also kicked off a virtual *antakshari* with ace musicians like Lisa Mishra, Amit Trivedi, Babul Supriyo and others joining in to sing a few Kishore Kumar classics. But wait till you see the mega battle between UP Dabbangs and Bengal Tigers. Shaan, Akriti's and their team will come out all guns blazing as they face off Ankit Tiwari, Payal Dev and their team.

MEHER & SIDDHI'S MAHASANGAM

Colors' latest show *Bawara Dil* has won the audience's heart with its captivating drama and powerful storytelling. The show is about two strong personalities Siddhi (played by Kinjal Dhamecha) and Shiva (played by Aditya Redij) who hate each other yet are brought together by destiny. While fate brings them together, the two vow to destroy each other.

In the current track of the show, Shiva and Siddhi are at loggerheads as Siddhi throws a stone inside Shiva's house and breaks his TV after being upset with his behaviour. She seeks help from Meher from *Choti Sarraaarni* (played by Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia), who help her with some useful advice and motivates her. Meher gives her the much-needed courage to do the right thing.

Commenting on the Mahasangam episode, Dhamecha said, “As a viewer, I have enjoyed watching *Choti Sarraaarni* and I truly admire Nimrit. When I heard that we are going to shoot the *Mahasangam* episode together, I was excited as I knew it will be a great learning experience for me. We are very excited for the episode and I hope that our viewers are too.”

SPOTIFY PRESENTS SUPERHEROES

When it comes to Indian epics such as the Mahabharat or Ramayan, the familiar faces of Krishna, Ram or Hanuman hold dear to many of us. The fascinating characters of these books have come to excite, captivate and inspire generations of readers. However, these mythological tales record thousands of heroes and heroines, with many either overlooked or whose feats simply remain unheard. Spotify's newest podcast *Superheroes of Indian Mythology* spotlights the gamut of these larger-than-life characters — both big and small.

What popular culture refers to as “supporting roles”, often turn out to have the most interesting stories to tell. Let's look at unique names who played a pivotal role in history.

Bheeshma, revered as the eighth son of Goddess Ganga, was a learned scholar and one of the greatest examples of an honorable, loyal, duty-bound commander.

Karna, famously referred to as Suryaputra or Sun's son, is one of the more complex characters of the Mahabharat. There's much more in the list.



‘Crime stories don’t bother but astonish me’

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with MANOJ TIWARI

about why he chose to come on board &TV's latest offering *Mauka-E-Vardaat*, a lesson that he learnt while hosting these shows and how such stories leave him astonished

■ What made you come on board &TV's Mauka-E-Vardaat?

I was on look out for a show that creates awareness among people and this show fits best in the criteria. Also, I was missing my screen appearances and with this show I got to do both. Hence, I decided to take it up.

■ How is this show different from all the other crime-based shows?

I don't know what other shows are doing, but with this show our aim is to show the audience real stories and bring out the truth. However, our bigger aim is to teach people to stay alert and create awareness. This is what I think is the USP of this show.

■ What kinds of stories will be shown?

We will be showcasing shocking stories wherein the culprit has taken to such impossible ways of committing crimes that it becomes hard to understand it. Once the audience will see the show, they will get to know how strangely crimes have been committed.

■ You haven't been a part of many crime-based shows. Is there a particular reason?

Yes, I don't want to take up a show for the sake of it. I want to resonate with it. It should have something interesting to offer. For this particular show, I have two other people with me — Ravi Kishan and Sapna Choudhary — I believe all three of us can make this show a huge success and do good to people by creating awareness.

■ Is there a lesson that you learnt while being a part of such shows?

Definitely. When I was doing my previous shows, I realised that I would have not been able to understand the different facets of life and gather so many different thoughts by reading a 100 books that I have learnt during these shows. There is one line that I always remember: *Abhi samaaj mein log apni tarait safaltaon ke liye vyakti aur vastu mein farq karna bhulte jaa rahe hain* (people have forgotten to differentiate between people and things for their own benefits). This holds true and I hope people start

One such story left me shocked. It is about a group which would take fingerprints of dead bodies at the crematorium and used them for getting fake IDs. When they were caught committing a crime, it was revealed that the identities they were using were of people who died years ago

realising what is more important and learn to differentiate between good and bad.

■ Did getting to know so many crimes so closely bother you in any way?

We are narrating the stories that have already happened with the aim of informing people about ways to safeguard themselves and their families. I don't get bothered by it. But yes, I do get astonished with such stories.

■ What makes crime-based shows so popular?

People love to see a story that can shock them up. This is not imaginary, hence the interest level goes even up. The interest factor also depends on how a show has been shot and who is narrating these stories. If the person telling these stories holds a value in the minds of the people, the audience automatically wants to see more such stories.

■ Was there a case that left you shattered?

There is one such story that left me shocked. It is about a group which would take fingerprints of dead bodies at the crematorium and used them for getting fake IDs. When they were caught committing a crime, it was revealed that the identities they were using were of people who died years ago I told my team that it is important to put across such stories. The team too agreed and told me it has to be done in a way where people take lessons from it and stay alert. This story will be shown in *Mauka-E-Vardaat*.

104-yr-old man inoculated at Sir Ganga Ram

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 104-year-old resident of Patel Nagar (New Delhi) Tulsi Das Chawla was inoculated on Saturday at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

“Chawla who was born on 1st November, 1917, was successfully vaccinated with the first dose of Covishield vaccine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital without any adverse effects,” the hospital said in a statement.

Chawla retired from Indian Foreign Service in 1975 and was posted in various countries like the United States of America, Netherlands, Pakistan and Africa.

At the age of 104 Chawla leads an active life and does not suffer from any major Comorbidities .

According to Chawla , “ I urge everyone who is eligible to come forward to take Covid Vaccine . It is totally safe.”

According to Dr D S Rana , Chairman (BOM) , SGRH “ We are witnessing huge enthu-



siasm among more than 60 years of age group. Mr Chawla is an inspiration to all of us to come forward without any hesitation for Covid vaccination.”

On Saturday, 476 people were vaccinated at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Saraswati Vihar SDM gets 2nd Covishield dose



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Mohd Rehan Raza, Sub Divisional Magistrate of Saraswati Vihar got himself inoculated with the second dose of Covishield vaccine at Deep Chand Bandhu Government Hospital (DCBH) on Saturday.

Talking to the media, he said that vaccines are safe and everyone should come forward to get them vaccinated. He also interacted with senior citizens at DCBH to know about their vaccine experience at hospitals and to understand how their experience can be made more convenient by district administration's intervention.

All the people present there expressed their satisfaction with services being provided by the doctors and hospital in subdivision Saraswati Vihar .

Dr Rehan also met with the members of market association, office bearers of RWAs and

general public as part of intensified Information, Education & Communication.(IEC) campaign along with enforcement action at Rana Pratap Bagh market and Lawrence road/Rampura Industrial Area Market.

“The members of RWA and market association were informed about the enforcement of strict Covid appropriate behaviour regulations and violations thereof. Members assured complete support and promised that they will strictly adhere to SOP and Various Government directions,” he said.

The district northwest administration is taking an all out effort to contain the spread of Covid-19 and to make the general public more aware about the precautions about the disease .Several teams are there at ground for enforcement action, he added.

321 new Covid cases, 1 dies in national Capital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital recorded 321 new coronavirus cases and one fresh fatality on Saturday.

According to the health bulletin, these new cases came out of 53,062 Covid-19 tests conducted on Friday. The total number of tests conducted the previous day included 28,685 RT-PCR tests and 24,377 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin stated.

At least 1,779 number of active cases were reported in the city, while the positivity rate rose to 0.60 per cent, as per

the bulletin.

With this, the total number of people infected with life-threatening Covid-19 has reached 6,40,815, according to the health bulletin issued by the Delhi Government.

Besides fall in active cases, the count of home isolation cases have also registered a sustained fall, dropping to below 879 -mark, indicating improvement in the Covid-19 situation, as per the bulletin.

It said that 14 beds in Covid care centres are occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by the

Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights.

From January 15-26, the daily figures ranged from, 148 on January 25 to 299 on January 16, according to official data. On February 9, 13, 17 and 25, and March 2 the death count recorded on all days was zero. On February 9, no fatality from coronavirus infection was registered in the national capital for the first time in that month, and after a gap of nearly nine months.

Delhi had recorded 94 fresh Covid-19 cases on February 16, the lowest in over nine months.

Bullet-riddled body of civil defence staffer found in Bawana

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Saturday found the body of a 22-year-old civil defence staffer, bearing multiple gunshot injuries, in north Delhi's Bawana area.

The deceased has been identified as Shashi Kadyan, a resident of Katewara village in Bawana.

According to Rajiv Ranjan Singh, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer North district, Kadyan's body was found lying near Jogi Wada Chowk.

“Prima facie, it appeared to be a case of personal enmity. A case under Section 302 (murder) of the IPC was registered at Bawana police station and the body was sent for post-mortem,” said the DCP.

“An investigation was underway and police were checking the CCTV footage of the area to identify the accused persons and know the crime sequence,” said police.

AAP alleges ₹546 cr flyover scam by NMC, BJP dismisses charge

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday slammed the BJP-led North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) over “irregularity” in the construction of the Rani Jhansi flyover in Delhi. Presenting the audit report as prepared by the MCDs auditor, senior leader and MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak said that the report has exposed a scam of ₹546 crore in the flyover project which was completed in ₹724 crore in 24 years.

Pathak said that on one hand, the Shastrri Park flyover worth ₹302 crore was constructed in ₹250 crore in just 1.5 years under the AAP Government and on the other hand, the Rani Jhansi flyover worth ₹175 crore was constructed in ₹724 crore.

The AAP leader said that instead of acquiring the land for construction through a Government agency according to the rules, the BJP leaders did personal dealings with the people to spearhead corruption in the project. He also said that around ₹10 crore were spent without any approval from any official or agency.

Addressing the media, he said “I want to thank some honest officials in the BJP-led MCD for realising and fulfilling their responsibility towards the people of Delhi and the constitution of the country. This led us to expose an extremely big issue of public importance. It took around 24 years to complete this flyover. The tender processes and the cost of the flyover project were fixed at ₹175 crore. But the flyover was completed for ₹724 crore, which means that the BJP leaders did corruption of around ₹546 crore from this project.”

Listing out the objections as mentioned in the audit report, Pathak said, “First, when a Government construction takes place, there is a land-owning agency fixed by



THE TENDER PROCESSES AND THE COST OF THE FLYOVER PROJECT WERE FIXED AT ₹175 CRORE. BUT THE FLYOVER WAS COMPLETED FOR ₹724 CRORE, WHICH MEANS THAT THE BJP LEADERS DID CORRUPTION OF AROUND ₹546 CRORE FROM THIS PROJECT

the state Government to acquire the land. Unfortunately, the land-owning agency of the Rani Jhansi project was not a government agency.”

In fact, the BJP leaders and the local engineers did a personal deal with every person. They created a new system and technique for owning every piece of land, which involved corruption by the BJP leaders, he said, adding that secondly, there was a religious place on one of these Government lands and this was acquired for ₹26 crore that was given to a person named Abhishek Gupta. If this was government land, who is Abhishek Gupta and why has the money been given to him? Third, around ₹10 crore were

spent without any approval. No approvals were taken from any official or agency to spend this extra money.”

Responding to AAP allegations, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, “AAP leader Durgesh Pathak's statement calling cost escalation of Rani Jhansi Road Flyover Project as a scam shows that he indulges only in manipulative politics to malign MCDs”.

Everybody knows due to court cases, compensation claims & other humanitarian reasons this flyover project started in 1998 was scheduled to complete by year 2000 got repeatedly stuck and got delayed by 20 years.

The two decade delay escalated the cost of construction from planned ₹175 crore to ultimate ₹724 crore. This is cost escalation due to reasons beyond North DMC's control & not a scam and it will be better if Durgesh Pathak talks on facts instead of manipulations.

Similar cost escalation had taken place in Signature Bridge Project under Arvind Kejriwal's government too and going by Durgesh Pathak's statement it too should be considered as a case of corruption, Kapoor added.

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India at inflection point with over 120 mn young women entering workplace: Lekhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

On the eve of International Women's Day, Member of Parliament (MP) from New Delhi constituency, Meenakshi Lekhi, presided over the conference organised on 'Demystifying Emerging technologies – Women leaders forum' held at New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) convention centre.

Women from various forums attended the programme. She also felicitated women who helped the downtrodden during corona period.

Lekhi said that being a catalyst for change comes with the responsibility of ensuring that the world is prepared for technological transformations that we help to usher in. This has never been truer than it is for emerging technologiessuch as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and we look forward to continuing playing the role of a strategic technology enabler.

Lekhi also said that India is at an inflection point, with over 120 million young women in the country entering into the workplace and playing a larger role in shaping society. Women leaders now have a critical role to play to help shape policies by creating a conducive environment and ecosystem toward leveraging India's women talent.



BJP leader and Member of Parliament Meenakshi Lekhi felicitates a woman who helped downtrodden in Covid times on the eve of International Women's Day in New Delhi

The critical need of the hour for women leaders is to be well informed of the latest trends in technology, as well as the current state of affairs of a wide set of exponential technologies such as AI, 5G, and IoT among others and we have organised this program for the same.

She further said that these technologies, while magical and fantastical in nature, are a double-edged sword. They hold the promise to radically transform the world and bridge several of the gaps that the existing solutions have failed at. Inequalities and access challenges can be resolved with deployment of these solutions at population scale.

The responsibility falls upon us to help architect and

shape a Responsible AI environment where these solutions are being leveraged for positive social impact.

She stated that What better a time than Women's Day to initiate this dialogue and conversation between subject matter experts and India's women leaders. The objective for this workshop was to highlight the potential usage of AI and other emerging technologies and their application in the real world.

“Objective is to expand digital readiness amongst women leaders and highlight the potential usage of AI and other emerging technologies in effective and futuristic policy making, better public engagements and robust deployments in the new normal”, Lekhi added.

3 Bangladeshis nabbed for Gzb dacoity; many cases solved

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Three Bangladesh nationals were arrested by the Delhi Police in connection with the dacoity that has taken place in Ghaziabad. Police said that with their arrest, one case of dacoity of Kavi Nagar in Ghaziabad and 18 cases of burglary committed in Delhi and National Capital Region (NCR) have been worked out.

The accused have been identified as Mohammad Khairul alias Arman (46), Mohammad Sadiq Seikh (29) and Montu Mulla (30), all residents of Bangladesh. Police said that after committing the crime, the accused used to flee to Bangladesh and again returned to India after some time.

According to Shibesh Singh, the Additional Commissioner of Police, Crime, on February 28 around 3:30 am, four persons entered a house in Kavi Nagar after cutting the window.

“They looted all the valuables at the gun point and threatened the family to kill them if they resist. When police analysed several incidents of burglary, reported in Delhi and NCR, with the same modus operandi, they found that these criminals were involved in those incidents,” said the Additional CP.

Heavy rain, rise in temp in 4 decades could have led to rock collapse

New Delhi: Heavy precipitation in the Chamoli region from February 4-6 and an overall rise in temperature in Uttarakhand in last four decades could have led to the rock collapse which triggered the deadly flash floods in the state last month, according to a study by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development.

The report by Kathmandu-based ICIMOD, which was released on Friday, found that a crack had formed prior to the incident at the site where the rock detachment led to a rock-

slide from the Raunti peak.

The rockslide brought along with it mounds of earth and snow which could have triggered the flash floods. With a straight slide line of 1.6 km (5500 to 3900 masl), the kinetic energy during the fall generated enough heat to melt the ice. As the debris moved downstream in the Rishiganga river, it pushed running river water ahead of it, including water from small ponding structures along the river path.

So far 72 bodies and 30 human body parts have been recovered from different places

in the avalanche-hit areas, out of which 41 bodies have been identified. As many as 132 persons are still missing.

The ICIMOD is a regional organisation that works on different aspects in the Himalayan-Hindukush region. It has eight members --- India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. At the same head-wall of the Raunthi peak, a large ice avalanche was previously released somewhere between 19 September and 9 October 2016, which deposited ice and more bedrock in the valley below, the

UTTARAKHAND TRAGEDY

report states.

“The resulting destabilisation of the rock due to the lack of ice cover (glacial debuttressing, stress-release fracturing), and increased exposure to solar radiation and hence an increased freeze thaw cycle, in combination with a large snow-fall event preceding the event of February 7, 2021 and rapid melt water production, may have favoured the fracturing of rock,” the report states.

“This can, however, not explain the depth of the fracture (150 metres), which must have evolved over a longer period of time,” the report states. The ICIMOD report further states that a strong western disturbance passed across Kashmir and northwest India from February 4-6. It was fully charged with convective instability that may have contributed to the heavy precipitation. The Uttarakhand tragedy occurred on February 7. “Numerical simulation of some of the attributes have

been carried out which depict strong evidence of heavy precipitation contributing to high flows downstream,” it said.

The numerical simulation on February 4 shows heavy precipitation over the region. The western disturbance travelled with relatively slower speed and its stagnancy produced concentrated precipitation, the report states. “Precipitation data derived from Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM) Mission suggests that there were continuous precipitation events from February 3-5 which resulted in approxi-

mately 58 mm of cumulative precipitation. Most of the precipitation in the high altitude areas of Chamoli would have occurred as snowfall,” it states.

The temperatures are also rising in Uttarakhand, the report states, saying maximum temperature in the Chamoli area has increased at the rate of 0.032 degrees C per year between 1980 and 2018.

Furthermore, January 2021 was the warmest January on record in Uttarakhand for six decades, the report states.

“While a hazard event like the flood at Chamoli cannot be

directly attributed to climatic changes, the increased thaw-freeze cycle of permafrost could have partially contributed to the event,” it states.

A report by the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) also stated that the collapse of a massive rock, which brought down a large amount of earth and snow, may have triggered the flash floods. The debris also blocked the mouth of a stream in the upper reaches of the Rishiganga river. This led to formation of a glacial lake which is being monitored continuously. **PTI**

BSF kills Pak intruder along IB in Rajasthan

Jaipur/New Delhi: A Pakistani intruder was killed by the Border Security Force (BSF) along the Indo-Pak international border in Rajasthan, officials said on Saturday.

The man was moving in a suspicious manner and he was challenged by the troops. Later, he was shot dead near the border fence by a vigilant BSF trooper, officials said.

The incident took place around 8 pm on Friday in the Anupgarh area of Sri Ganganagar-Bikaner belt, they added.

The officials said the body of the Pakistani man was handed over to the local police and a search of the incident area is being carried out. **PTI**

Noted Kannada poet NS Lakshminarayana Bhatta dies

Bengaluru: Noted Kannada poet, critic and translator N S Lakshminarayana Bhatta died here early on Saturday. He was 84 and was suffering from age related ailments, family sources said. Popularly known as "NSL" in the Kannada literary world, he was born in 1936 in Shivamogga district. Bhatta has been a household name through his bhavageetes (lyrical poems), and is known for his contribution of modern Kannada poetry, critical works and translations.

He had translated about 50 of William Shakespeare's sonnets, the poetry of T S Elliot and works of poet Yeats into Kannada. A recipient of Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award and Kannada Rajyotsava Award among others, his popular works include "Thaye ninna madilali".

He served as Professor at Bengaluru university, and is revered for popularizing the works of saint-poet Shishunala Sharif. Bhatta is survived by wife and two children, sources said adding that his last rites will be performed later in the day. Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa condoled the passing away of Bhatta and said Kannada literary world has lost one of its stars. JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H D Kumaraswamy condoling Bhatta's death, remembered his works on songs or poetry for children. **PTI**

Entire Guj will be covered under Nal Se Jal Yojana by 2022: CM

Ahmedabad: All households in Gujarat will get tap water connections under the Centre's 'Nal Se Jal Yojana' by the year 2022, ahead of the year 2024 target set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani told the Legislative Assembly on Saturday.

Rupani said 17 lakh households in the state are yet to be covered under the ambitious scheme aimed at providing drinking water through taps.

“People of north Gujarat suffered for years due to contaminated ground water. We want to eliminate our dependence on hand pumps and provide drinking water through tap connections. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of the year 2024, Gujarat will meet this target in the next 17 months,” Rupani told the House.

He was responding to queries

raised by Congress MLAs on the status of water supply in the state.

The CM said the state government had allocated Rs 4,000 crore for the 'Nal Se Jal' project. He said 82 per cent of the total work on the project has already been completed.

“We are planning to provide 1 lakh tap connections every month to cover the remaining 17 lakh houses in the next 17 months. Out of the total 95 lakh beneficiaries identified under the project, 17 lakh are yet to be covered,” the CM said.

“We are using the lift irrigation technology to bring water to the doorstep of each and every household. Not a single village will be left out by 2022,” he said.

Listing challenges, the chief minister said providing water tap connections in remote tribal and mountainous regions is proving difficult. **PTI**



Polluted embankment of the Yamuna behind the Taj Mahal in Agra on Saturday

PTI

Trivedi...

From Page 1

“Bengal has huge potential but still people are going out to work to other cities. The State is full of corruption and gundaraj. Today, the people of Bengal are happy that a parivartan is going to take place under BJP,” said Trivedi as he joined the saffron party.

Nadda said, “Former TMC leader Dinesh Trivedi was right person in wrong party, now he is in right party.” The BJP president said Trivedi came over to the BJP on account of “ideological reasons” and not because of “opportunism”.

A number of sitting and former Trinamool members have in recent weeks switched sides and defected to the BJP.

The party's former Rajya Sabha MP, actor Mithun Chakraborty is expected to share the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday at a Kolkata parade ground rally.

Among those who have moved from the Trinamool to the BJP are sitting MPs, State Ministers, MLAs, top leaders besides hordes of grassroots workers. This includes Trinamool stalwarts such as Suvendu Adhikari and Rajib Banerjee.

The State elections will be held across eight phases from March 27 to April 29, the results of which will be declared on May 2.

Rape victim set ablaze dies of burns at Jaipur hospital

Jaipur: A 30-year-old rape victim who was allegedly set on fire at her home in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh succumbed to her burn injuries at a hospital here on Saturday, police said.

Meanwhile, police have detained two people for questioning in the case. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has announced a relief of Rs 5 lakh to the dead woman's family members, an official statement said.

The woman was set on fire in the early hours on Thursday. A man entered her house, sprinkled kerosene on the floor, knocked on the door and called the woman by her name.

As she opened the door, the man dropped a burning stick on the floor, resulting in serious injuries to her, police had said. The victim's maternal grandmother has alleged that her rapist committed the crime. DGP M L Lathar said the people detained are being thoroughly interrogated.

He said investigation is being done by a DSP-level officer under the supervision of Hanumangarh SP Priti Jain.

Policemen trained in cyber technology have been included in the investigation team. Forensic experts are inspecting the crime spot, he added. The incident had taken place in the Goluwala police station area of Hanumangarh district. The victim was referred to Jaipur's SMS Hospital, where she died on Saturday. **PTI**

BJP pits Suvendu...

From Page 1

Meanwhile, intra-TMC unrest that spilled on the streets after many aspirants including sitting MLAs and Ministers were denied tickets by the Chief Minister even as senior leaders like Sonali Guha and Jatu Lahiri openly talked about joining the BJP.

Guha a former Deputy Speaker and four-time MLA from Satgachia seat --- once the bastion of late Chief Minister Jyoti Basu --- broke down saying she had “not expected this kind of treatment from Mamata Didi with whom I have spent decades fighting the Left Front.” She said that she would join the saffron outfit even as BJP vice president Mukul Roy said he had received a call from Guha.

“I have received calls seeking entry in the BJP not only from Sonali but many others who have got tickets to contest even and the party will take a decision on this issue.” Another senior leader and former Howrah MLA Jatu Lahiri said he had already joined the BJP as “I was insulted by party. I do not want a ticket in the BJP. I will work for that party but I want nobody to insult me,” he said.

Similarly, supporters of TMC strongman and former MLA Arabul Islam continued to protest on the streets blocking traffic at many places even as the rebel leader said he would take a decision soon about the future course of action.

Adopt world-class systems, PM...

From Page 1

Highlighting rapidly changing technological landscape, the Prime Minister underlined the need to develop the Indian military into a ‘future force’, the statement said.

Pointing out that the country would be celebrating 75 years of its independence next year, Modi called upon the armed forces to use the occasion to undertake activities and initiatives that would inspire the youth of the country, the statement added.

The top level meeting came days after the first phase of disengagement of troops of Indian and China from the flashpoint in the Pangong Tso (lake) in Eastern Ladakh.

The meeting took place as armies of India and Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment, last week, for the 2003 ceasefire amid escalating firing across the Line of Control (LoC) and other areas.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of enhancing indigenisation in the national security system, not just in sourcing equipment and weapons but also in the doctrines, procedures and customs practiced in the armed forces. The Combined Commanders' conference this year was held near the statue of Sardar Vallabhai Patel in Kevadia and the entire brass stayed in tents for the three-day event.

Since 2014, the top-level conclave was held many times outside the national capital. While the last edition was held at Air Force Station, Jodhpur, two other such high profile events were held at aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and the Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun.

CM announces Delhi Board of...

From Page 1

Education has been the priority for this Government with 25 per cent of the budget being spent on education, he said. Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement to set up Delhi State Education Board is a major setback for Delhi's education standard. “Standard of education in Delhi with 100 per cent schools affiliated to CBSE is much higher than any other State of the country. This is the reason why parents from several States send their wards to study in Delhi. The CBSE is an internationally acclaimed education board with schools from across the country and several countries abroad affiliated to it,” he said. Kapoor further said that despite all its claims and publicity the Delhi Government has failed to improve the standard of education in its schools because of which the overall result of Delhi Government schools taking CBSE exams remains poor. To cover up its bad standards education, the Kejriwal Government has come with this idea to set up its own education board and affiliating its own schools to it, he said.

Remove Modi's photo from jab...

From Page 1

The clause 7 of the ECI Model Code of Conduct says that the “issue of advertisement at the cost of public exchequer... regarding achievements with a view to furthering the prospects of the party in power shall be scrupulously avoided”. On March 5, the EC had directed all petrol pump dealers and other agencies to remove hoardings advertising the Centre's schemes that have Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photographs on the premises of the facilities within 72 hours.

Farmers block KMP to mark...

From Page 1

Protesting farmers squatted on the expressway and criticised the Narendra Modi government for not withdrawing the farm legislations, which they called as “black laws”.

“Our agitation against the three farm laws will continue unless the Centre withdraws these laws. We will not step back,” said a protester in Sonipat. Farmers held protest at the KMP Expressway near Mandothi village in Jhajjar district. Some people from nearby villages joined them.

“We are holding our protest in a peaceful manner,” said a farmer, adding that they were also observing “black day” on Saturday.

Protesting farmers said the government should withdraw these laws. Farmer leader Balbir Singh Rajewal, while addressing a gathering on the KMP Expressway, asked the Modi Government to withdraw these laws.

This agitation will certainly put pressure on the Central Government, he said. Farmers claimed that their five-hour protest remained peaceful.

Sonipat Superintendent of Police Jashandeep Singh Randhawa said arrangements were made for traffic diversions. Heavy vehicles were diverted from Panipat and others from Ganaur to Delhi, said officials.

Traffic was also diverted from Murthal via Sonipat city to Narela and Bawana and from Bahadurgarh to Baghpat, they said.

Officials said traffic resumed at KMP expressway after famers lifted their blockade at 4 pm.

In Palwal district also, farmers staged a ‘dharna’. At some places in Haryana, farmers even put up black flags atop roof of their houses as a mark of their protest against the government for not withdrawing the farm laws.

The 136-km Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway is also known as the Western Peripheral Expressway. The 53-km Manesar-Palwal section was inaugurated by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari in 2016 and 83-km Kundli-Manesar section was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018.

Mental health problems in 20% Covid survivors: Study

From Page 1

Psychologists at Oxford Brookes University and a psychiatrist from Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust, had evaluated published research papers in order to understand more about the possible effects of the SARS-COV-2 infection on the brain, and the extent people can expect to experience short and long-term mental health issues. The study found that in the short-term, a wide range of neuropsychiatric problems were reported. In one examined study, 95 per cent of clinically stable Covid-19 patients had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other studies found between 17-42 per cent of patients experienced affective disorders, such as depression.

The main short-term cognitive problems were found to be impaired attention (reported by 45 per cent patients) and impaired memory (between 13-28 per cent of patients) while in the long-term, neuropsychiatric problems were mostly affective disorders and fatigue, as well as impaired attention (reported by 44 per cent of patients) and memory (reported between 28-50 per cent of patients).

Dr Sanjay Kumar, senior lecturer in Psychology at Oxford Brookes University said: “Understanding the neuropsychiatric and cognitive consequences of Covid-19 is important as millions of people have been affected by the virus, and many cases go undetected.

“These conditions affect people's capacity to work effectively, drive, manage finances, make informed decisions and participate in daily family activities.” If even just a fraction of patients experience neuropsychiatric complications, the impact on public health services could be significant.” Academics say that there is likely to be an increase in patients with psychiatric and cognitive problems who were otherwise healthy prior to COVID-19 infection.

“Detailed cognitive evaluation and robust monitoring of patients should be considered in order to detect new neurological cases,” Dr Kumar continued adding that “This will also enable health care providers to plan adequate health care and resources, and improve the quality of life for many Covid-19 survivors.

Co-author Dr Tina Malhotra, Consultant Psychiatrist working in Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust said: “We are already seeing an impact of Covid-19 on mental health. Patients are presenting with Long Covid syndrome which includes fatigue, cognitive problems and a range of psychiatric problems.

“It is estimated that these problems are experienced by 1 in 5 people who have had COVID. Management of such patients in long-Covid clinics should involve a multidisciplinary team including psychiatrists.

“The world has experienced mass trauma because World War II affected many, many lives,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said recently. The WHO chief added that the pandemic-induced mass trauma is “beyond proportion and even bigger than what the world experienced” after the Second World War.

According to a 2017 profile of India by the World Health Organization, per 100,000 people, India has approximately 0.29 psychiatrists, 0.07 clinical psychologists, 0.06 social workers and 0.80 nurses, a poor doctor-patient ratio. The future is not encouraging in the sector. “Even if we keep the population growth rates and attrition rates of psychiatrists at 0 per cent, we require 2700 new psychiatrists annually to fill in the gap in the next 10 years. However, every year only 700 psychiatrists are trained in PG seats, said Dr Kabir Garg, Dr Prabha S Chandra and Dr C Naveen Kumar Department of Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bengaluru, Karnataka in their study ‘Number of psychiatrists in India: Baby steps forward, but a long way to go’ published in Indian Journal of Psychiatry in 2019.

Centre rushes...

From Page 1

These States and UTs were urged to return to fundamentals of “Test, Track and Treat,” said the Ministry in a statement here.

They have also been asked to increase the share of RT-PCR tests in districts dependent on high levels of antigen testing, refocus on surveillance and stringent containment of those areas in selected districts that are seeing a cluster of cases. They will be required to carry out an average close contact tracing of a minimum of 20 persons per positive case.

The senior health officials reviewed the ongoing public health measures of surveillance, containment and management of Covid cases. The Ministry said that nine districts in Delhi, 15 in Haryana, 10 in Andhra Pradesh, 10 in Odisha, nine in Himachal Pradesh, seven in Uttarakhand, two in Goa, one in Chandigarh continue to be of concern as these districts are seeing a decrease in total tests being conducted, low share of RT-PCR tests, increase in weekly positivity and low number of contact tracing of the Covid positive cases.

“These together can pose high risk of transmission to the

neighbouring States and UTs. A granular analysis of the coronavirus response in the districts was shared with the States and UTs for further action,” said the Ministry.

“Accelerate vaccination for priority population groups in districts reporting higher cases. Make optimal use of the available vaccine doses and focus on critical districts,” the Ministry said.

They have been asked to collaborate with the private hospitals to open up vaccination time-tables for a minimum of 15 days and a maximum of 28 days at a time and promote COVID-appropriate behaviour through communication and enforcement, the statement said. Meanwhile, Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu continue to report a high number of COVID daily new cases. They cumulatively account for 82% of the new cases reported in the past 24 hours. India's total active caseload has reached 1,80,304 as on Saturday while the present active caseload stands at 1.61 per cent of India's total positive cases. So far since the launch of the vaccination drive from January 16, 2021, more than 1.94 crore (1,94,97,704) vaccine doses have been administered through 3,57,478 sessions

PUBLIC NOTICE
Property No. G-85, Preet Vihar Delhi is under litigation vide CS(OS) 1120/2008 titled Ruma Kapur Vs. Gulshan Khullar and others in Hon'ble Delhi High Court and parties have been directed to maintain status quo in respect of title and possession of this property. The public in general is informed not to indulge in any transaction of Sale, Purchase or of any other nature in respect of this property that may result in violation of the orders of the Hon'ble Court.

PRAVIN SHARMA (Advocate)
Ch. No. 706, Lawyers Chambers, Block-III, Delhi High Court, New Delhi-3 (M): 9811129489

PUBLIC NOTICE
Be it known to all that I, Neelam Gupta W/o Kamal Gupta R/o 26 A Pkt 2, Paschim Pun, New Delhi, have applied for Freehold Conversion of above flat. Original Demand Letter and Site Possession Letter of the above flat have been lost. An FIR vide L.R. No. 150787/2021 Dated 18/02/2021 has been lodged. Any person(s) claiming right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may contact with above named person at phone No. 9810539816 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can inform or write to Dy. Director LAB(H), D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General public is Informed that Shiv Ganga Impex having its principal place of business at 29/3947, 2ND Floor, Karol Bagh, New Delhi, 110005 working as a proprietorship firm in the field of tele communication product including mobile phone is changing its firm name to Shiv Ganga Enterprises w.e.f. 01.04.2021. Anyone who has any objection regarding this can raise the objection within 7 days from the date of advertisement.

For Shiv Ganga Impex
Place : Delhi
Dated : 06.03.2021

Vikram Singhal,
Proprietor

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR	
DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE SRINAGAR KASHMIR	
Tel-0194-2474234 Fax - 2482032 – email :- kashflori@rediffmail.com	
Sub: Extension No. 04.	
In view of no response, the last date for submission of bids invited vide this office e-Tender Notice No.13 of 2020 dated 12.12.2020 for Outsourcing of Entry Ticketing System of Mughal Garden Nishat, Shalimar & Cheshmashahi is hereby extended as per the details given below: -	
1. Period of downloading of bidding document	06/03/2021 from 11:00 AM to 20/03/2021 up to 2:00 PM
2. Bid submission Start Date	08/03/2021 from 10:00 AM
3. Bid submission End Date	20/03/2021 up to 2:00 PM
4. Date and time of Opening of Tenders	23/03/2021 at 2:00 PM
Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid Tender Notice.	
By order Sd/- Accounts Officer (Member secretary)	
No. DIPK-1459/120 Dated:- 06-03-2021	

कार्पास वीरिड सयुगा, विद्युत सज्जत-द्वितीय उपग्रह सार्वजनिक प्रकाश व्यवस्था प्रणाली प्रारंभिक नमूना, सफरद रंग-2, पूरा दिल्ली विभाग, दिल्ली, सेनो- माहितीदाता, E-Mail: ed2@upsida.com		
ई-निविदा सूचना		
एनए द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रक्रियागत के अनुसार में निम्न औद्योगिक क्षेत्र एवं/केन्द्र, मृदादायक में स्थापित स्ट्रीट लाइटों का वार्षिक अनुसूचित एवं रख-रखाव के कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों/निगमों/प्रधिकरणों/परिचरों/नगर निगमों में अर्ह 'ए' श्रेणी में पंजीकृत कर्म/उकेदारों से ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। जो निविदा दिनांक 08.03.2021 को 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 15.03.2021 को 17:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। जिसे दिनांक 16.03.2021 को 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात् खोला जायेगा। निविदादाताओं द्वारा साथ में की गई प्रतियों दिनांक 19.03.2021 17:00 बजे तक कार्यालय में जमा की जा सकती है।		
क्रम	कार्य का नाम	अंदाजित मूल्य (₹)
1.	Annual Maintenance Contract of Street lights and high mast lighting system at IA, SEZ Moradabad.	23.42
नोट :- 1. निविदा राता अर्पणी निविदाओं में समस्त कर एवं जीएसटी/सीजीएस सहित की दरें अंकित करें। अलग से कोई कर देय नहीं होगा। 2. विद्युत कार्यों हेतु निविदादाताओं को निविदा अपलोड करते समय 'विद्युत सुरक्षा विभाग' उपग्रह सार्वजनिक प्रकाश व्यवस्था प्रणाली, सफरद रंग-2, पूरा दिल्ली विभाग, दिल्ली, सेनो-माहितीदाता को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। निविदा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी website: www.upsida.com पर स्थापित लिंक यूटिलिटी की website: http://elender.up.nic.in पर देयी जा सकती है।		
परिचर प्रत्यक्ष (वि.), उपकाराऔद्योगिक, माहितीदाता		

Lookout notice against TMC leader's brother

CATTLE SMUGGLING CASE



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has issued a lookout notice against Bijay Mishra, brother of Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Binay Mishra who is a close confidant of party MP Abhishek Banerjee, in a cattle-smuggling case.

The agency is mulling over approaching Interpol to get a Red Corner Notice (RCN) issued against Binay Mishra, who has not joined the probe till now, officials said.

“A lookout notice has been issued against Bijay Mishra, the brother of TMC leader Binay Mishra,” the official said, without divulging any other details.

The agency has also summoned two senior officers of the West Bengal police -- an Inspector General and a Superintendent of Police -- on Monday for questioning in connection with the case, they said.

The agency had named Binay Mishra as a co-accused in its supplementary

chargesheet filed in the cattle-smuggling case last month.

Binay Mishra is suspected to be close to West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee, they further said.

In its chargesheet filed before a designated CBI court in Asansol (West Bengal), the agency has already mentioned Binay Mishra as absconding.

The CBI had filed a chargesheet on February 18 in the case against Border Security Force (BSF) Commandant Satish Kumar and six others for their alleged involvement in a cattle-smuggling racket operating at the India-Bangladesh border.

Recently, the CBI had also questioned Abhishek Banerjee's wife Rujira and sister-in-law Menaka Gambhir in a separate case pertaining to illegal coal mining and pilferage from the mines of the Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL).

ED arrests 2 directors of TN-based firm over ₹325 cr laundering

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday said it has arrested two directors of a Tamil Nadu-based firm in a money laundering case worth ₹325 crore, linked to a bank fraud case.

Hittesh Patel and Suresh N Patel, directors of Shinago Plantations Pvt Ltd, were sent to 10 days' ED custody by a special court on Saturday after they were placed under arrest under sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the agency said in a statement.

The two allegedly laundered funds to the tune of ₹325 crore by using a network of nearly 20 group entities located across Tamil Nadu.

The PMLA investigation revealed that “the accused in collusion with the valuers



availed loans from erstwhile Corporation Bank (now Union Bank of India) on the basis of inflated value of the properties offered as collateral and indulged in wilful diversion of funds through various group accounts.”

It said investigation further revealed that “the funds so availed by various individuals/group concerns in the form of Letter of Credit (LC) and Cash Credit (CC) limits/Agriculture term loans, were transferred within the group entities through circular rotation of money to avail more funds from the Bank without any actual business.”

Donations for Ram Mandir cross more than ₹2,500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Donations for the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya are estimated to have crossed ₹2,500 crore and construction is likely to be completed in three years.

Addressing the media, Ramjanmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust chairman Champat Rai on Saturday said that the construction will commence from April and as per banks' estimations till February 4, the donations have crossed ₹2,500 crore and house-to-house visits for donations have been stopped.

Now only online donations will be received, Rai said adding that 10 crore households in 4 lakh villages had been approached by 9 lakh volunteers in the past 45 days during the fund collection drive.

“Four lakh cubic stones will be used to complete construction within 3 years. While construction has not



begun, the improvement of land for the foundation will start in April.

Around ₹2,500 cr have been received till 4th of March, but can't confirm the figures. We have reached 10 crore households with 9 lakh workers. The campaign is over doesn't mean that dedication towards God is over. Visit our website which has all the details of bank accounts and one can contribute accordingly.”

He also said that a lot of

responses were received from North East States and Southern States.

To a query, Rai said that donations from Rajasthan are expected to be bigger than Uttar Pradesh.

From Arunachal Pradesh donations are estimated to have crossed ₹4.5 crore, followed by ₹2 crore from Manipur. As per the press release issued by VHP, Rs.85 crore has been received from Tamil Nadu and ₹13 crore from Kerala.

Hybrid physical hearings in SC from March 15

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court, which is hearing cases through video-conferencing since March last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will commence hybrid physical hearings from March 15.

The apex court has issued the standard operating procedure (SOP) for the hybrid physical hearings.

The top court has been hearing cases through video-conferencing since March last year due to the pandemic and several bar bodies and lawyers have been demanding that physical hearings should resume immediately.

“On an experimental basis, and as a pilot scheme, the final hearings/regular matters listed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays may be heard in the hybrid mode, as may be



decided by the bench, considering the number of parties in a matter as well as the limited capacity of the courtrooms; all other matters, including those listed on Mondays and Fridays, shall continue to be heard through video/tele-conferencing mode,” said the SOP issued by the apex court.

“The hybrid physical

hearings are to commence with effect from March 15, 2021,” it added.

It said unless otherwise directed by a bench, the final hearings or regular matters where the number of lawyers for the parties is higher than the average working capacity of the courtrooms according to COVID-19 norms, that is

20 per courtroom at any given time, shall invariably be listed for hearing through the video or tele-conferencing mode.

“...However, in case the bench directs hearing of such matters to be held through the hybrid mode, the appearance of the parties, whether by physical presence or through video/tele-conferencing, will be facilitated as per the directions of the bench,” the SOP said.

It said if the number of parties is higher than the specified number in a matter listed for hybrid hearing, then one advocate-on-record (AOR) and one arguing counsel per party would be allowed entry.

It said one registered clerk per party, as may be chosen by the AOR, shall be allowed entry to carry paper-books or journals of lawyers up to the courtrooms.

Cong: Kisan stir period black chapter in India's democracy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the farmers' protest against the Centre's new farm laws completed 100 days, the Congress on Saturday said the period was a “black chapter” in India's democracy for the treatment meted out to the protesters and also marked 100 days of the ruling BJP's “arrogance”.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi hit out at the Centre over the farmers' protest and said nails were laid at Delhi's borders for those, whose sons risk their lives at the country's borders.

His attack came after the farmers' agitation completed 100 days with the protesting union leaders asserting that



their movement is far from over and they are “going strong”. “Whose sons risk their lives at the country's borders, for them nails have been laid at the borders of Delhi. ‘Annadaatas’ demand their rights, government commits atrocities,”

Rahul said in his tweet, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also hit out at the Centre saying, “100 days of farmers' struggle, of fight for rights, of respect for ‘annadaatas’, of the path shown by Gandhiji, Sardar

(Vallabhbhai) Patel, Nehruji, (Lal Bahadur) Shastriji, Shaheed Bhagat Singh.” With the hashtag ‘100Days OFBJParrogance’, she said, “100 days of BJP Government's arrogance, of assault on farmers, of lies and scorn for farmers.”

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the protesting farmers have been braving all odds — of nature and the might of the State — for the last 100 days.

“Each one of us, whichever category we may belong to, have our own struggles and that is the awareness on which the Government depends,” Khera said.

There is one section of the society that has found time to come out and protest — farmers — against these “black laws” and they are “our voice”, he added.

The Congress demands that the three new farm laws should immediately be repealed, Khera said.

Kerala gold smuggling case

CPM accuses Centre of misusing Central agencies against CM, Mins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/KOCHI

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau on Saturday accused the BJP-led Government at the Centre of playing dirty tricks by misusing Central agencies like Customs Department to target Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Ministers during the poll season with tutored affidavits of accused persons in the gold smuggling case.

For his part, Vijayan said: “After declaration of Assembly polls, central investigation agencies' attacks have intensified. The Customs Commissioner, who isn't party to gold smuggling case, included portions of confidential statement by accused (Swapna Suresh) in his statement in High Court. He has also leveled allegations against Kerala Speaker and Ministers to defame the LDF government.”

The Customs Department in Kochi earlier alleged that a political party was trying to intimidate the investigation agency but made it clear that it will not work. “A political party trying intimidation, will not work,” Customs (Preventive) Commissioner Sumit Kumar wrote on his Facebook page.

“She has stated with clarity about smuggling of foreign currency at the instance of the



Hon'ble chief minister and the Hon'ble Speaker with the help of the Consulate,” the Customs has said in a statement filed in the Kerala high court.

The CPI (M) Polit Bureau alleged that the tutored statements of the jailed accused was recorded months ago and leaked to malign the party during the election time.

“The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the Customs Authority's attempt to falsely implicate Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, three other ministers and the Speaker of the Assembly of Kerala in an alleged dollar smuggling case. The customs have cited an affidavit by one of the accused, who is in judicial custody in the gold smuggling case, for this purpose. The fact that this tutored statement was recorded some months ago and pre-

sented after the elections were announced shows the political game behind this move.

“The BJP Central government is systematically misusing the Central agencies for maligning the Chief Minister and the LDF government. The people of Kerala will see through this political chicanery and give a fitting rebuff to the dirty tactics adopted by the BJP and the UDF,” said CPI(M).

In Kerala, the CPI(M) has staged protest marches at Customs offices. Recently, the Customs Department has filed an affidavit before the Court stating that the main accused Swapna Suresh has given statement before the investigators on the knowledge of the Chief Minister and three Ministers and Speaker of the Kerala Assembly about the illegal dollar trade and gold smuggling involving UAE consulate.

Frontier Gandhi's autobiography released in English

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

First published in Pashto in 1983, the autobiography of freedom fighter Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, fondly known as Bacha Khan or Badshah Khan, is now out in English, announced publishing house Roli Books.

The book, titled “The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle”, is translated by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada. This is the “first time” that Khan's autobiography is available in English. An earlier account of his life, published in English in 1969, and with the same title, was based on the interviews conducted with him and was not “his written autobiography”.

“... Bacha Khan felt that the 1969 account of his life and struggle was not complete and began to write his own autobiography thereafter, with the help of numerous associates. Bacha Khan's autobiography was thus first published in Pukhto in 1983, in Kabul.. This book is a translation of Bacha Khan's only written, Pukhto autobiography,” writes Sahibzada in the book.

Khan (1890–1988), popularly called the ‘Frontier Gandhi’, was born in Uthmanzai in the North-West Frontier Province of British India. His life was dedicated to

the social reform of the Pukhtuns and he continues to be revered across the world by them. In India, he is known for his close association with Mahatma Gandhi and his leadership of the Khudai Khidmatgar (Servants of God) movement from 1930 – 47 – one of the most successful and sustained Gandhian non-violent campaigns anywhere in the world.

The book, whose foreword is written by historian and Mahatma Gandhi's grandson Rajmohan Gandhi, brings to life events and personalities of the independence movement as Khan records the untiring energy and sacrifices that went into winning freedom.

“If our world wants to picture non-violent defiance, or inter-faith partnership, .. Or a commitment to the rights of the vulnerable, it cannot do much better than study these two men together: Ghaffar Khan and, older by 21 years, Mohandas Gandhi, brothers in spirit, each armed with the swords of conscience and courage,” writes Rajmohan, who is also the author of Khan's biography, “Ghaffar Khan: Nonviolent Badshah of the Pakhtuns”.

“The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle”, priced at ₹695, is available for sale in offline and online stores.

Scientists develop platform to detect effect of alcohol exposure on red blood cells

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists have developed a platform to detect the effect of prolonged exposure to alcohol on red blood cells (RBC) through high-resolution measurements of their size, according to a statement on Saturday.

The high-resolution platform that shows the reduction in size of RBCs due to alcohol exposure can be tuned for a point-of-care screening of multiple conditions that alter the size and count of red cells in blood.

Although it is known that alcohol affects RBCs, the exact physiological changes are very subtle and difficult to measure.

In order to overcome this challenge, scientists led by Professor Gautam Soni from Raman Research Institute (RRI), an institution funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), have developed a custom-made electro-fluidic platform that can detect the change by measuring the cell size in enhanced resolution.

The device made in RRI relies on the resistive pulse sensing principle.

The team first developed techniques for making tiny micron (1/1000th of a millimetre) sized holes or micro-pores at the tip of a glass capillary with careful fabrication, flame polishing, and image verification.

Pon Radhakrishnan BJP candidate for bypoll to Kanyakumari LS seat

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday nominated senior party leader and former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan as its candidate for the April 6 bypoll to the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency in Tamil Nadu.

As the campaign for the Assembly polls heats up, union Home Minister and former BJP president Amit Shah will be on a one-day visit to Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Sunday to attend various important programmes.

According to a party statement here, Shah will first visit Suchindram Temple in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, and offer prayers. He will then launch “Vetri Kodi Eandhi” (Vijay Sankalp Mahasamprk Abhiyaan - a door to door campaign) in Suchindram Town, Kanyakumari.

The BJP said Shah will hold a massive roadshow “Vetri Kodi Eandhi” from Hindu college to Veppamoodu Kamaraj statue in Kanyakumari. After the roadshow, the Union Home Minister will address a Karyakarta Sabha of the party at Uduppai Hotel in Kanyakumari .

Shah will then proceed to Kerala where he will visit Shri Belur Math at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala and offer prayers. After that, he will address the Valedictory function of BJP's Kerala Vijay Yatra at Shanghumukham in Thiruvananthapuram.

parliamentary and inducted in then Modi-led NDA dispensation as Minister of State.

He lost the subsequent 2019 Lok Sabha elections to Kumar from the same constituency. He was then MoS Finance and Shipping.

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Medha Patkar defamation: Delhi court asks HC clerk to bring original case file

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Court has ordered to summon the court clerk of the record room of Delhi High Court to bring original case file of the petition filed by Medha Patkar for quashing of the defamation case filed by VK Saxena, presently the chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission. The original case file will help settle the dispute about the existence of the so called “defamatory” press

release issued by Patkar, something she has persistently denied in the court.

Saxena has filed two defamation cases against Patkar which are pending in the court of Metropolitan Magistrate, Saket, New Delhi. The one defamation case was related to a press note issued by Patkar on 24.11.2000, in which she claimed that Saxena visited Malegaon, praised Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), and donated a cheque of ₹40,000 to

Lok Samiti, a support group of NBA. The news was published by a news portal rediff.com.

Saxena denied that he ever visited Malegaon or made any such donation to the NBA and said that the press note was full of false allegations and was defamatory. He subsequently issued a legal notice to Patkar. After receiving no response from the NBA leader, Saxena filed a defamation case in January 2001.

During the last 20 years on

various occasions, Patkar denied that she ever issued any such press note and even claimed that it was fabricated by Saxena himself.

Interestingly, Patkar filed a criminal miscellaneous application No 6026 on 26.11.2018, U/S 482 of CrPC in the High Court of Delhi for quashing the proceedings in another defamation case filed by Saxena against her. An advance copy of the petition was also sent to Saxena by her advocate. In the said

criminal petition, Patkar in the list of “dates and events”, mentioned that on 24.11.2000, a press note was released by her which was subsequently published in the news portal rediff.com.

Incidentally, this was precisely the case made out by Saxena. Patkar later withdrew the petition.

Saxena on February 17, 2020 filed an application in the MM Court along with certified copies of the criminal miscel-

laneous application no. 6026 of 2018 filed by Patkar in the Delhi High Court with the request for calling upon additional witness in the case, i.e. the concerned court clerk of the Delhi High Court with original case file of the above case where she has admitted to have issued the press note in question. Counsel for Saxena pleaded that judicial admission cannot be withdrawn.

Metropolitan Magistrate Animesh Kumar after hearing

both the sides said, “it is a case of the complainant (VK Saxena) that on 26.11.2018, accused (Medha Patkar) filed a petition bearing number Crl MC 6026 of 2018 before the Hon'ble Delhi High Court U/S 482 CrPC for quashing the proceedings of CC No. 2866/1/03 pending before this court. Ld Counsel for the complainant submits that the accused has made certain judicial admissions under oath in the said petition filed before the DHC

where she has categorically admitted that she made averments against the complainant.”

The Magistrate further said that relevant record related to Crl MC No. 6026 of 2018 titled “Medha Patkar Vs State of Delhi & Others” should be summoned in the present case.

“Hence, let summon be issued to the concerned clerk of the record room of Hon'ble Delhi High Court to bring the original case file on 19.03.2021,” he ordered.

150 Rohingyas detained in J&K verification drive

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In a major crackdown on illegal immigrants staying in Jammu and Kashmir more than 150 Rohingyas have been detained at a holding centre in Sub Jail Hiranagar at the end of the verification process of their travel documents.

According to official sources, during the special drive conducted at the Maulana Azad stadium in Jammu on Saturday police authorities verified travel documents and collected biometrics of large numbers of illegal immigrants including Rohingyas from Myanmar.

During the verification process the sports stadium was kept out of bounds from the local media persons as none of them were permitted to enter the premises.

Their entry was restricted at the entry gate of the stadium where this verification drive was going on.

After completing the day-



Illegal immigrant Rohingyas being shifted to Sub Jail Hiranagar after a verification process late Saturday evening

long exercise Inspector General of Police, Jammu range, Mukesh Singh in a press statement said, “155 illegal immigrant Rohingyas staying in the Union Territory of J&K were sent to the holding center established vide Home department notification dated 5th

March 2021 on Saturday”. According to police, “sub jail Hiranagar in Kathua district has been converted into a holding centre to accommodate these illegal immigrants”.

IG Jammu said, “This was done under section 3(2)e of the Foreigners Act. Due process of

law was followed in this exercise. These immigrants were not holding valid travel documents required in terms of section (3) of the Passports Act”.

The exercise of identifying more such immigrants is still in progress, Mukesh Singh added. “After sending them to the

holding center, the process of nationality verification will be done as per the prescribed process. After completion of the Nationality verification, the process of deportation of these illegal immigrants will be initiated”, IG Jammu Mukesh Singh said.

According to J&K Home department report tabled in the state assembly on February 2, 2018, “a total number of 6523 Rohingyas were found camping across 39 different locations spread across five districts of Jammu and Kashmir”. According to the Home department report, “6461 Rohingyas were staying in Jammu division and 62 in Kashmir division”.

However, local activists and politicians, spearheading a campaign in support of their deportation, often contest these figures claiming large numbers of these illegal immigrants are scattered and even their bio metrics have not been collected by the security personnel.

Five killed, over a dozen hurt as two buses collide in Aligarh

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

Five people were killed in collision of two buses near Lodha Karsua town of Aligarh on Saturday afternoon, while more than a dozen people were injured. Police reached on the information and admitted the injured to the hospital with the help of local people.

According to eyewitnesses, at about 12.30 pm on Saturday, the bus of Haryana Ballabhgarh depot was going from Aligarh to Ballabhgarh and as soon as it reached the village Karsua, the front wheel of the bus got bursted and the bus moved to the other side being uncontrolled. The police were informed about the accident and they reached the spot with force of three police stations and the ambulance. Meanwhile, a bus coming from the front of Palwal hit into the bus. The collision was so horrific that the front of the bus

was badly damaged. Hearing the noise, the villagers also ran.

Tempo overturns on Anoopshahar Road, three dead, 31 injured.

Three people were killed, while 31 people were injured when a Tempo overturned in a pit on late Friday evening on Anoopshahar Road in Jawan police station area. These people were returning from Rajghat after immersing the remains in the Ganges. On receiving the news, the police have admitted the injured to different hospitals in Aligarh. All three bodies have been sent for post-mortem.

Rajaram (75) died 13 days ago in Nagla Kalar of Bannadevi area of ??the city. On Friday, on the 14th day, 34 members of the family and kinship went to Rajghat to immerse the bones by a loader tempo. The Tempo driver himself rescued himself from the truck coming from the front on

the bypass between the CDF and Jawan while returning. Meanwhile another vehicle arrived from the front overtaking the truck.

The tempo driver lost control and overturned into the pit near the road. The police and ambulance reached on the news. The injured trapped in it were sent to Deendayal Joint Hospital, District Hospital. Rajaram's son Darshan (40), his brother-in-law Bhagwandas alias Kalua (65), Kusma Devi (55), daughter-in-law of Delhi's Seemapur resident, were declared dead in the district hospital. The rest of the injured are undergoing treatment, the condition of the two injured remains critical.

In the accident in Jawan area, the injured are being treated by starting immediate relief and rescue operations. The deaths of three people have been confirmed at the level of doctors.

Verma: We will start afresh, take *The Pioneer* to a new height

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The revival of ‘The Pioneer’ media group is on the cards as there are plans to improve its content and increase its digital presence by introducing new technology so that ‘The Pioneer’ becomes the number one newspaper in Uttar Pradesh.

In his maiden interaction with the employees of ‘The Pioneer’ group here on Saturday, NCLT-appointed Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) Ranjeet Kumar Verma said that plans were in place to take ‘The Pioneer’ to its old glory.

“The Pioneer, both English and Hindi, is a big brand and we will ensure that this brand

reaches out to every section of society. We will start afresh and take the company to a new height. There are challenges and we will overcome them and make ‘The Pioneer’ the number one newspaper of Uttar Pradesh,” he said.

Verma said that his priority would be to address serious issues raised by the employees.

“We will ensure all the facilities to the employees, including payment of the dues and timely clearance of the salary,” he said and added that in future the performance of the employees would be incentivised. He also laid thrust on the digital edition of the newspaper and said it would soon be enhanced to extend the reach of the newspaper. Verma also

called for better coordination among various editions of the newspaper.

The Delhi bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had last month Verma as the IRP. “I am here as a representative of the court and my main objective is to keep ‘The Pioneer’ group going. I can assure one and all that ‘The Pioneer’ is not going to close down,” he said.

In the meeting, there was free exchange of ideas among senior members of the newspaper and the IRP. The employees shared their views on the revival of ‘The Pioneer’ and also discussed the problems they were facing. “I expect the working of the company to return to normal very soon,” Verma said.

Raped 27 years ago, woman files complaint against 2 after her son asked his father's name

Shahjahanpur (UP): Raped on several occasions by two men at the age of 12 about 27 years ago, the victim, who had become a mother, has now lodged a case against the accused on court orders after her son enquired about his father's name.

About 27 years ago, the victim was living in the city with her sister and brother-in-law. One Naki Hasan of her locality had entered the house when she was alone and allegedly raped her, Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Kumar told PTI on Saturday.

Referring to the police report lodged on the basis of the woman's complaint, Kumar said after the accused, his younger brother Guddu also raped her. The victim has alleged that she was raped by both the accused on multiple occasions.

She was 12 years of age at the time of the incident, the SP said.

According to the complainant, she became pregnant at the age of 13 and gave birth to a boy in 1994. The infant was given to a person belonging to the victim's native village Udhampur, located within the Shahabad police station limits, while she moved to Rampur as his brother-in-law got transferred there.

The SP said the victim's brother-in-law got her married to a man in Ghazipur district, but after 10 years, when her husband came to know that she was raped, he divorced her and she returned to Udhampur.

Meanwhile, the boy who had grown up by now enquired about his mother and father and was told his mother's name.

The boy met the victim and got to know about the incident, the SP said, adding that on Friday evening, a case of gangrape was lodged against the two accused at the Sadar Bazar police station on the basis of her complaint.

Kumar said the police are investigating the case and the DNA test of the boy would be conducted.

The woman had moved the court after the police refused to entertain her complaint. **PTI**

Class 9 girl raped by senior in school in Fatehpur: Police

Fatehpur (UP): A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 16-year-old boy while she was returning home from school in the Hathgam police station area of this Uttar Pradesh district, police said on Saturday.

Inspector-in-charge (SSI) of the Hathgam police station Ashish Singh said the incident occurred on Wednesday and an FIR was lodged on Friday.

He said the victim, a Class 9 student, was returning home from school when a Class 10 student of the same school, who is also her neighbour, allegedly caught hold of her, forcibly took her to a forest area nearby and raped her.

The SSI said the accused minor student has been held and will be produced before a juvenile court during the day. The girl has been sent to a government hospital for medical examination, he said, adding that further action is being taken. **PTI**

Woman sexually harassed, boy sodomised in Shamli

PTI ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

A 28-year-old woman was allegedly sexually harassed by a man in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, police said on Saturday. SHO Shyambir Singh said the incident took place on Friday when the woman was alone at her house.

Rajbir entered her house and sexually harassed her, the SHO said.

A case was registered under Section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and Section 452 (house-trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful restraint) of the IPC against Rajbir and a probe into the matter was underway, he added.

In another case, a six-year-old boy was allegedly sodomised at a village in Shamli district on Friday, the police said.

According to a complaint lodged at Jhijnjhana police station, a 14-year-old boy took the alleged victim to a nearby field and sodomised him.

The police said an investigation into the matter was underway. **PTI**

Patient given fake corona injection died: Gujarat Govt

Gandhinagar: The Gujarat government on Saturday admitted in the State Assembly that the Ahmedabad patient who was administered a dose of fake Tosilizumeb injection had died later. The state government had nabbed five involved in the manufacturing of the fake injections. Tosilizumeb, a costly drug, is believed to be vital in the corona infection treatment.

Answering an unstarred question raised by Vankaner legislator Mohammed Pirzada, the Deputy Chief Minister and also the health minister, Nitin Patel, replied that the Foods and Drugs Control Authority (FDCA) had nabbed five persons believed to be involved in the manufacturing of fake Tosilizumeb injections on July 27, 2020. The manufacturers of the fake injection had prepared 30 vials of one ml into 250 milligrams off the fake drug.

The Minister also informed the House that all the 30 vials of the fake drug were sold in Ahmedabad district. Out of that, only one vial was administered to a female patient in a private hospital in Ahmedabad.

“The female patient, Lataben Baldua (60) was a comorbid patient, with many complications. She was discharged from the private hospital and later she died at home,” Hemant Koshiya, the FDCA Commissioner, told IANS. The Gujarat FDCA had unearthed a racket in the manufacture and sale of fake Tocilizumeb injections, seizing machinery and raw material valued at Rs 8 lakh from a Surat premises in July last year.

Dr Devang Shah, a medico in a private hospital, had stumbled upon the racket while using 400mg Tocilizumeb injection of dubious quality during the treatment of a patient from Memnagar. **IANS**

Operations of 36 medical stores suspended in Jammu

Jammu: The J&K Drugs Control Organisation (DCO) has suspended the operations of 36 retail sale establishments across the Jammu province for violation of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, officials said on Saturday.

As per the DCO, surprise inspections of retail sale outlets, particularly those situated in the far flung and remote areas, were carried out by the concerned drugs control officers to ensure availability of quality drugs to the end users.

Following the inspections, operations of six stores were disallowed in Jammu, followed by six in Samba, two in Kathua, six in Kishtwar, four in Udhampur and 12 in Ramban district.

The reasons for suspension ranged from non-maintenance of sales records, impersonation, unhygienic/insanitary conditions, improper storage conditions etc.

The licence holders of the stores have been warned of severe action in case the deficiencies are not rectified within the stipulated period of time.

Statutory samples of more than 450 drugs formulations have been collected for determination of strength and purity.

The samples have been referred to the drug testing laboratories located within the Union Territory for framing legal opinion to ascertain their quality parameters. **IANS**

**MUNICIPAL CORPORATION BHOPAL**

NIT No. 9/WS/Water Work/2021 Date 03.03.2021

Tender for online submission are invited on website <https://mptenders.gov.in> under “Live Tender” and Department Name “Bhopal Municipal Corporation” for following works. Document can be purchased on website from **03.03.2021** and online submission till **03.04.2021 at 17.30 hrs.**

Corrigendum for above NIT shall not be issued separately in newspapers. Corrigendum regarding correction can be seen on the website. Detailed NIT and other information can be seen on the website. <https://mptenders.gov.in>

S.No	Details of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. In Lakh)
1. 2021_UAD_132589_1	Providing and laying of new water supply line and installation of tap connection at Amrawadkhurd EWS awas Ward-60, Zone-14 (MP UADD SOR 10 MAY 2012)	172.04 Lakh

**City Engineer
(Water Works)**
Municipal Corporation, Bhopal

T.N.1791/020/021

**ICICI Bank**

Branch Office: ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh Delhi- 110055

PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET

[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Ltd. will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is”, as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Mr. Akkarapatty Murgesh (Borrower), Sumuthi (Co- Borrower) LBNOD00003744398	Plot No. 5/500, Ground Floor, Type E, Sector 5, Vaishali, Ghaziabad- 201014. Area: 855 Sq. Ft.	Rs. 42,35,520/- as on February 20, 2021	Rs. 28,80,000/- From February 20, 2021	Rs. 28,80,000/- From 12 Noon to 01:00 PM	April 06, 2021 From 12 Noon to 11:00 AM Onwards

The online auction will be conducted on website ([URL Link-https://disposalhub.com](https://disposalhub.com)) of our auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited**. The Mortgagors/ noticees are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **April 20, 2021 before 05:00 PM** else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110055** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **April 20, 2021 before 05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, incase prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, 3rd Floor Shal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110055** on or before **April 20, 2021 before 05:00 PM**. Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of “**ICICI Bank Limited**” payable at **Delhi**.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited on 8657476284** or **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited on 9710029933/9810029926/01244233933**

Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited. 2. Augoe Asset Management Pvt Ltd 3. Props AMC.** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.

The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit www.icicibank.com/n4p4s

Date: March 06, 2021
Place: Delhi/ NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF MAN LINKED TO SUV FOUND NEAR AMBANI'S HOME

Encounter specialist Sachin Vaze under scanner

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Assistant police inspector and encounter specialist Sachin Vaze, who has gunned down 63 underworld gangsters during his three-decade-long controversial career, has come under scanner for his role in the mysterious death of Mansukh Hireen, whose “stolen” SUV laden with gelatin sticks from the vehicle was recovered by the police near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in south Mumbai.

Known for his proximity to the ruling Shiv Sena, Vaze was incidentally the first person to reach the spot where a Mahindra Scorpio with 20 gelatin sticks and a letter threatening Ambanis lay abandoned near Mukesh Ambani's skyscraper mansion “Antilia” on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai on February 25.

While speaking in the State Assembly on Friday, former chief minister and current leader of the Opposition Devendra Fadnavis had raised several questions about the role of Vaze in the mysterious circumstances leading to Hireen's death.

Turning the needle of suspicion towards API Vaze who was investigating the case, Fadnavis had said that Hireen appeared to know Vaze, which bears out from his telephone records. “After the car was found abandoned near Ambani's home (on February 25), it was Vaze who reached the spot first and not the local Gamdevi police. He seized the car and also the letter. We were earlier told an Assistant Commissioner of Police will probe the incident. But Vaze was subsequently made in charge of the case. Why?”, Fadnavis had asked.

Deshmukh said that Vaze was not the Investigation Officer as was being claimed by the leader of the Opposition, but Assistant Commissioner of Police Nitin Aluknare.

Contesting the Home Minister's statement, Fadnavis said that Hireen had said in his statement to the police that he had purchased the car from Newton.

On Saturday, BJP leader Ashish Shelar questioned the presence of an “encounter specialist” assistant police inspector Sachin Vaze at the time of Mansukh's post mortem.

“Vaze's presence at the post-mortem of

Mansukh is suspicious as he is neither part of Thane police nor the ATS, which is probing the case. It gives an impression that there is something that this government wants to hide”, Shelar said.

Attached to the Crime Intelligence Unit of the Crime Branch-CID of the Mumbai Police, 49-year-old Vaze is currently handling important cases like the sensational TRP rigging scam, the Anvay Naik suicide case in which he arrested TV anchor-editor Arnab Goswami, sports car scam involving Dilip Chhabria and Bollywood-TV-entertainment industry's casting couch racket

Vaze has in the past solved several cyber-crime and financial frauds and an international credit card fraud.

After joining the police force in 1990 as a Sub-Inspector, Vaze was initially posted in the Naxalite-infested Gadchiroli district. Later on he was posted in Thane.

After joining the Mumbai Police force, Vaze became one of “encounter specialists” He eliminated several gangsters including those belonging to the Dawood Ibrahim and Chhota Rajan gangs.

He has in all 63 encounter killings to his credit. It may be recalled that on 3 March 2004, Vaze was suspended along with 14 other policemen for the alleged custodial death of Khwaja Yunus, a suspect in the December 2, 2002 Ghatkopar bomb blast case. Vaze subsequently resigned from the police on November 30 2007 after requests for his reinstatement were rejected by the Maharashtra government.

The Maharashtra government revoked his suspension and reinstated him in the Mumbai police on June 6, 2020 – after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown during which there was shortage of police staff.

After Vaze's reinstatement, Khawaja Yunus's mother Asiya Begum has filed contempt pleas in the Bombay High Court against Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh and Additional Director General of Police Amitabh Gupta, who was the Principal Secretary of Home department and now Pune Police chief. She has challenged the reinstatement of Vaze in the high court.

Forensic doctors reserve opinion on cause of death; Sena deplores politicisation

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A four-member team of forensic doctors that conducted the post-mortem on late Mansukh Hireen -- whose body was recovered from the Mumbra creek near Thane on Friday -- reserved its opinion on Saturday, even as the Shiv Sena said that “it is wrong to politicise his death and cast aspersions on the MVA government”.

A day after 45-year-old Hireen's body was recovered from the marshy Reti-Bunder creek Mumbra with the help of a crane by the local disaster management workers, the four-team that conducted the autopsy reserved its opinion on the cause of death, while his viscera has been kept in reserve while his viscera has been preserved for forensic analysis.

The post-mortem on Hireen's body was conducted at the Rajiv Gandhi Medical College & Shivaji Hospital, Kalwa, on Friday night. Among other things, the post-mortem report said that “Spine, Spinal intact, not opened”.

Hiren, a Thane-based businessman whose “stolen” SUV with 20 gelatin sticks was recovered by the police near Industrialist Mukesh Ambani's skyscraper mansion “Antilia” in south Mumbai on February 25, hit the headlines after his body was found in mysterious circumstances on Friday afternoon. Hireen had reportedly been from missing from his Thane home since Thursday.

It may be recalled that the police had recovered 20 gelatin sticks and a letter were recovered from what was later described as Mahindra Scorpio that was found abandoned in the vicinity of

Mukesh Ambani's 27-storey residence “Antilia” on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai.

The letter recovered from the car had among other things carried a message: “Ye to sirf ek trailer hai. Neeta Bhabhi, Mukesh Bhaiyya, family... ye to sirf ek jhalak hai. Agli baar ye saaman pura hokar tumhare pass aayega, aur pura intezaam ho gaya hai”.

Meanwhile, ruling Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said: “It is wrong to politicise his (Hiren's) death and cast aspersions on the state government at a time when there are doubts whether Mansukh's death was a suicide or murder. He was an important witness in the case”.

Raut said that the issue involved prestige and image of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and it was essential for the State Home department to unearth the truth in the case.

“The Home department should unearth the truth at the earliest. It is important for the prestige and image of the MVA government,” Raut said. While rejecting the Opposition BJP's demand for an NIA probe into Hireen's death, Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh announced the transfer of the investigations into the case from the Mumbai Crime Branch to the state Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS).

“If the state government were to hand over the case to the NIA as demanded by the Opposition would not have meant that it would be solved immediately. The State Home Minister has handed over the case to the ATS, which is capable of solving it. Let us have faith in ATS,” he said.

Pakistan PM Imran wins trust vote



Supporters of the ruling Pakistan Tehree-e-Insaf political party gather near the National Assembly to celebrate Prime Minister Imran Khan winning a vote of confidence in Islamabad, Pakistan on Saturday

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday comfortably won a trust vote in the National Assembly amid opposition boycott, bolstering his Government's position after an embarrassing defeat in this week's hotly-contested Senate elections.

Prime Minister Khan secured 178 votes in the 342-member lower house of Parliament during a special session convened on the directives of President Arif Alvi. He required 172 votes for a simple majority. The floor test took place without the Opposition as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — an

alliance of 11 parties — boycotted the voting, making it easier for Khan to secure the required numbers.

Khan decided to take a vote of confidence in the National Assembly after his finance minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh was defeated in the Senate election by former prime minister Yusuf Raza

Gilani on Wednesday. The Opposition demanded the Prime Minister's resignation after the debacle.

Addressing the House after securing the trust vote, the 68-year-old cricketer-turned politician thanked all lawmakers from his party and allies for supporting him in Parliament.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi earlier tabled a single-point resolution in the House.

"That this House reposes confidence in the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr Imran Khan, as required under clause (7) of Article 91 of the Constitution Islamic Republic of Pakistan," the resolution said. Speaker Asad Qaiser announced the result, saying Prime Minister Khan had been elected to the post with 176 votes following the 2018 general elections. "Today, he has secured 178 votes," he said.

The ruling coalition had 181 members but after the resignation of one of its lawmakers, Faisal Vowda, its strength was reduced to 180. The Opposition coalition has 160 members in the House. One seat was vacant. According to the breakdown, 155 PTI lawmakers out of 156 voted in favour of the prime minister, Dawn newspaper reported.

Seven lawmakers from the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), five each from the Pakistan Muslim League-Q and the Balochistan Awami

Party, three from the Grand Democratic Alliance, and one each from the Awami Muslim League and the Jamhoori Watan Party voted in favour of the resolution. Independent candidate Aslam Bhotani also voted in favour of Khan.

Earlier, unruly scenes were witnessed outside Parliament building when supporters of the ruling alliance tried to dis-

rupt a press conference of Opposition leaders belonging to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

PML-N leaders alleged that they had been manhandled by the ruling party members who were holding up banners and chanting slogans in favour of Khan. Security forces managed to separate the political workers of the two sides.

Pakistan Opp slams PM, terms vote of confidence 'meaningless'

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's leading Opposition leaders on Saturday demanded Prime Minister Imran Khan's resignation and fresh elections, soon after he won a vote of confidence in the National Assembly.

Khan secured 178 votes in the 342-member lower house of Parliament during a special session convened on the directives of President Arif Alvi.

The floor test took place without the Opposition as the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) — an alliance of 11 parties — boycotted the voting.

The first to respond was chief of the PDM Maulana

Fazlur Rehman, who told the media in Sukkur, Sindh that the vote of confidence has no meaning.

"This was not a confidence vote. We know which agencies watched the members of the assembly the entire night. [We know] who knocked on the doors of each member to ensure they were present," he said.

His reference was towards reports stating that the government kept its members inside lodges in Islamabad under strict watch so that all of them are present in Parliament during the floor test.

Rehman alleged that the lawmakers were forced to vote for Prime Minister Khan.

Imran bats for electoral reforms for fair elections, to introduce EVMs

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Saturday that his government will introduce electoral reforms and electronic voting machines to ensure fair and transparent elections in the country.

Delivering a speech after winning a trust vote in the National Assembly, the cricketer-turned-politician said his government plans to introduce electronic voting, enabling millions of Pakistanis abroad to vote in elections.

"We are bringing modern technology in elections for a transparent election process. We have decided to use Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in the future. It is important to use them to counter the voter fraud claims made by the candidates who lose the polls. We are also working on putting up a system

so that the overseas Pakistanis can cast their votes," Khan said.

"Just like in the US where former president Donald Trump's repeated allegations of electoral malpractice were debunked by a transparent system, Pakistan will also put in place the same system to ensure fair and transparent elections in the country.

"As captain in Cricket, I brought the concept of neutral umpiring, similarly my government will set in motion a fair electoral system," he said.

Khan's remarks came after Pakistan's election commission on Friday expressed shock and disappointment over the prime minister's allegations against it, asserting that the Senate elections were held as per the Constitution and it has "never come under any sort of pressure and God willing, will not in future as well."

Protests, tear gas in Myanmar after UN envoy urges action

AP ■ YANGON

Security forces in Myanmar again used force Saturday to disperse anti-coup protesters, a day after a UN special envoy urged the Security Council to take action to quell junta violence that this past week left more than 50 peaceful demonstrators dead and scores injured.

Protests were reported Saturday morning in the country's biggest city, Yangon, where stun grenades and tear gas were used against demonstrators. On Wednesday, 18 people were reported killed there.

Protests also took place in several other cities, including Mandalay, the second-biggest city, Myitkyina, the capital of the northern state of Kachin, Myeik in the far south, where police fired tear gas at students, and Dawei in the southeast, where tear gas was also used. Officials are believed to



Anti-coup protesters prepare water and wet cloths to help extinguish tear gas canisters during a demonstration in Yangon, Myanmar on Saturday

have exhumed the body of a young woman who was killed during Wednesday's suppression of protests in Mandalay. The woman, Kyal Sin, had been photographed taking part in the protests before her death, and images of her on the front lines have made her a high-pro-

file martyr.

Security forces on Friday night sealed off the cemetery where she was buried, and when residents visited in the morning, her grave was freshly plastered over and shovels and other evidence of digging were found at the site.

Pope to visit Iraq church damaged by ISIS terrorists

Baghdad: The scenes are seared in the memory of the Rev. Ammar Altony Yako: A church that for decades has been the pride of the town of Qaraqosh, a center for Christian life in Iraq, stood badly scarred.

Yako saw it in 2016 when Qaraqosh was liberated from more than two years of Islamic State group rule. Scrawled on a wall was the proclamation, the "Islamic State will remain." Strewn amid the rubble in a courtyard were bullet-riddled mannequins and other telltale signs of a militants' makeshift firing range for target practice.

On Sunday, a new scene will play out for the world to watch at the Church of the Immaculate Conception and new memories will be created. Where the extremists once damaged, Pope Francis will now pray.

"I never could have imagined that his holiness, the pope, would visit this church, not even in my dreams," said Yako, who has been



Pope Francis stands with religious leaders during an interreligious meeting near the archaeological area of the Sumerian city-state of Ur, 20 kilometers south-west of Nasiriyah, Iraq on Saturday

Pope Francis, Iraq's top Shia cleric hold historic meeting

AP ■ PLAINS OF UR (IRAQ)

Pope Francis and Iraq's top Shia cleric delivered a powerful message of peaceful coexistence on Saturday, urging Muslims in the war-weary Arab nation to embrace Iraq's long-beleaguered Christian minority during an historic meeting in the holy city of Najaf.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani said religious authorities have a role in protecting Iraq's Christians, and that they should live in peace and enjoy the same rights as other Iraqis.

The Vatican said Francis thanked al-Sistani for having "raised his voice in defense of the weakest and most persecuted" during some of the most violent times in Iraq's recent history.

Al-Sistani, 90, is one of the most senior clerics in Shiite Islam and his rare but powerful political interventions have helped shape present-day Iraq. He is a deeply revered figure in Shia-majority Iraq and his opinions on religious and other matters are sought by Shiites worldwide.

The historic meeting in al-Sistani's humble home was months in the making, with every detail painstakingly discussed and negotiated between the ayatollah's office and the Vatican. Early Saturday, the 84-year-old pontiff's convoy, led by a bullet-proof Mercedes-Benz, pulled up along Najaf's narrow and column-lined Rasool Street, which culminates at the golden-domed Imam Ali Shrine, one of the most revered sites in Shiite Islam. He then walked the few meters (yards) to al-Sistani's modest home, which the cleric has rented for decades.

A group of Iraqis wearing traditional clothes welcomed him outside. As a masked Francis entered the doorway, a few white doves were released in a sign of peace.

He emerged just under an hour later, still limping from an apparent flare-up of sciatica nerve pain that makes walking difficult. The "very positive" meeting lasted a total of 40 minutes, said a religious official in Najaf, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to brief media.

Senate works through night, virus aid on path to passage

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Beary-eyed lawmakers worked through a mountain of amendments Saturday as the Senate plodded toward passage of a \$1.9 trillion Covid-19 relief bill that President Joe Biden and Democrats say is crucial for hoisting the country out of the pandemic.

The Senate commenced a dreaded "vote-a-thon" — a continuous series of votes on amendments — shortly before midnight Friday, and by midmorn-

ing Saturday had dispensed with over two dozen.

Democrats were hoping for final passage by around midday so the Senate could send the modestly revamped bill back to the House, and then to Biden this coming week for his signature.

The Senate had been in session since 9 a.m. EST Friday. Its work on the bill was proving to be a test of both lawmakers' physical stamina and Democrats' ability to pass legislation backed by every senator in the party.

The chamber is divided 50-50, with Vice President Kamala Harris' tiebreaking vote their only edge, and Republicans are arrayed against the legislation. Overnight, the Senate was like an experiment in the best techniques for staying awake. Several lawmakers appeared to rest their eyes or doze at their desks, often burying their faces in their hands. At one point, Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, at 48 one of the younger senators, trotted into the chamber and did a prolonged stretch.

Biden White House: message discipline, no news conference

Washington: No news conference. No Oval Office address. No primetime speech to a joint session of Congress.

President Joe Biden is the first executive in four decades to reach this point in his term without holding a formal question and answer session.

It reflects a White House media strategy meant both to reserve major media set-pieces for the celebration of a legislative victory and to limit unforced errors from a historically gaffe-prone politician. Biden has opted to take questions about as often

as most of his recent predecessors, but he tends to field just one or two informal inquiries at a time, usually in a hurried setting at the end of an event.

In a sharp contrast with the previous administration, the White House is exerting extreme message discipline, empowering staff to speak but doing so with caution.

Recalling both Biden's largely leak-free campaign and the buttoned-up Obama administration, the new White House team has carefully managed the president's appear-

ances, trying to lower the temperature from Donald Trump's Washington and to save a big media moment to mark what could soon be a signature accomplishment: passage of the Covid-19 bill.

The message control may serve the president's purposes but it denies the media opportunities to directly press Biden on major policy issues and to engage in the kind of back-and-forth that can draw out information and thoughts that go beyond the administration's curated talking points. AP

NASA's Perseverance rover performs first test drive on Mars

PTI ■ LOS ANGELES

NASA's latest Mars rover, Perseverance, performed its first test drive on the Red Planet, covering a distance of about 6.5 metres across the Martian landscape, a "major milestone" before it begins its science operations.

The drive lasted about 33 minutes, propelling the rover forward by four metres, where it then turned to the left by 150 degrees and backed up 2.5 metres into its new temporary parking space, the American space agency noted in a statement.

According to NASA, the drive served as a mobility test to check out and calibrate every system, subsystem, and instrument on the Perseverance rover, which it said is a major milestone before the science operations get underway.



This photo made available by NASA was taken during the first drive of the Perseverance rover on Mars. Perseverance landed on February 18, 2021

ROVING ON RED PLANET

- The drive lasted about 33 minutes, propelling the rover forward by four metres, where it then turned to the left by 150 degrees and backed up 2.5 metres into its new temporary parking space
- The drive served as a mobility test to check out and calibrate every system, subsystem, and instrument on the Perseverance rover
- All the while, the space agency said the rover continues to send down images from Mars using the most advanced suite of cameras ever to travel to the Red Planet

fident our drive system is good to go, capable of taking us wherever the science leads us over the next two years," Zarifian said.

Regular commutes of over 200 metres are expected once the rover begins pursuing its science goals, including the search for signs of ancient microbial life, NASA said.

As part of its mission, the rover would characterise the Red Planet's geology and past climate, and pave the way for human exploration of Mars.

It is also expected to be the first to collect and cache Martian rock and soil.

Since its landing on Mars on February 18, the rover has undergone several routine checks, including a software update, replacing the computer program that helped land Perseverance with one NASA will rely on to analyse the

planet.

On March 2, NASA said its engineers unstowed the rover's 2-metre-long robotic arm for the first time, flexing each of its five joints over the course of two hours.

All the while, the space agency said the rover continues to send down images from Mars using the most advanced suite of cameras ever to travel to the Red Planet.

"Every picture from Perseverance is relayed by either the European Space Agency's Trace Gas Orbiter, or NASA's MAVEN, Mars Odyssey, or Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. They are important partners in our explorations and our discoveries," said Justin Maki, chief engineer for imaging and the imaging scientist for the Mars 2020 Perseverance rover mission at JPL.



Rajasthan Skill & Livelihoods Development Corporation

EMI Campus, J.S.A., Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur-302004 (Rajasthan)
Ph: +91-0141-2705917, 9103248, Fax: +91-0141-5103246, www.rajasthanlivelihoods.org
F () No: RSLDC/SDT/2021-22/30976 Dated: 05-03-2021

Office Order

Subject: - Extension of Bid submission last date and opening date for procurement of Services for providing Self-Defence Training to girls/women through training partner for RSLDC.

Reference: - RFP No. RSLDC/SDT/20/30473 dated 3rd Feb, 2021

Due to some unavoidable circumstances the last date and Bid opening date of above referred Bid is hereby extended as per the following –

Activity	Old Date & Time	New Date & Time
Last Date/Time for Submitting / uploading of offer/Bid	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM	18th March, 2021 up to 03:00 PM
Last Date / time for submitting original hard copy of Bid Security Demand Draft	8th March, 2021 up to 3:00 PM	18th March, 2021 up to 03:00 PM
Date & Time for opening of Technical Bid	8th March, 2021 up to 05:00 PM	18th March, 2021 at 05:00 PM

The interested bidders may submit the proposal as per the above amendments and all other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

UBN No. SLD2021RFP0003
Raj.Sanwad/IC/20/10627 Managing Director, RSLDC



AXIS BANK

SME Centre, Delhi: 4th Floor, Ashoka Estate, 24 Barakhamba Road New Delhi-110001. Also at all Floor, Red Fort Capital Parswanath Tower, Shah Vihar Singh Marg, Near Cole Market, New Delhi-110001
Also at: Axis Bank Ltd., Axis House, Tower T-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301. Corporate Office: 'Axis House', Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025
Registered Office: 'Trishul', 3rd floor, opposite Samarthesw Temple, Law garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006

POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice	2. Date of Possession	3. Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1. M/S Lakhmi Chand Om Prakash (Through Its Proprietor) Mr.Ashish Gupta Registered Office At: 2745/9, Sushila Mohan Marg Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006 Also At - : 3963/108, 1st Floor Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006	Equitable Mortgage on Property No -5, in Block C – 5 Out of Khassara No – 262/258/217/4/3 with all roof/terrace rights, Built on land area measuring 105.5 Sq. yards, Situated in the area of village Bharoli, colony known as Adash Nagra on Cottage Road Cottage Road Delhi – 110033	1. 25-11-2020	2. 04-03-2021	3. Rs 3,16,99,855/- (Rupees Three Crore Sixteen lakh ninety nine thousand Eight hundred and fifty five only)
2. Mr. Ashish Gupta At 2745/9 , Sushila Mohan Marg Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006 Also At - : 3963/108, 1st Floor Naya Bazar, Delhi-110006				
Also At - : R/O C-5, Cottage Road,Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi –110033.				
3. Mrs. Shashi Gupta, R/O C-5, Cottage Road,Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi –110033.				
4. Mr.Om Prakash Gupta, R/O C-5, Cottage Road,Near Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi –110033.				

The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: 07-03-2021
Place: Delhi

Sd/-,
Authorized Officer,
Axis Bank Ltd.,

SHARE OF TAX DEVOLUTION TO STATES

15th Fin Comm opted for continuity: Singh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The 15th Finance Commission opted for continuity and predictability and hence retained the share of tax devolution to States at 41 per cent of the total pool, its chairman NK Singh said on Saturday.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), Singh said each Finance Commission in the past has somewhat increased the total amount of devolution to states, but the 15th Finance Commission weighed all the options considering that the fiscal space of both states and the Centre has shrunk on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rajya Sabha member Sushil Kumar Modi highlighted that the share of divisible pool is slowly shrinking as the “cess and surcharge” component in Gross Tax revenue is

increasing.

The 15th Finance Commission has recommended that states be given 41 per cent of the divisible tax pool of the Centre during the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, which is at the same level as was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.

Finance Commission is a constitutional body that gives suggestions on Centre-state financial relations.

As per the Commission, the gross tax revenue (GTR) for the 5-year period is expected to be Rs 135.2 lakh crore. Out of that, divisible pool (after deducting cesses and surcharges and cost of collection) is estimated to be Rs 103 lakh crore. States' share at 41 per cent of divisible pool comes to Rs 42.2 lakh crore for 2021-26 period.

The report of the 15th Finance Commission was tabled in Parliament on

February 2.

Singh said each Finance Commission has somewhat increased the total amount of devolution as percentage of divisible pool.

“We had an option of continuing this trajectory, we had an option of enhancing this devolution to somewhat higher figure. We had the option of somewhat recalibrating downwards looking at the constraints on the fiscal space of the Central Government. Finance Commission is not an encounter with shock and awe, Finance Commission has a legacy which believes in stability, continuity and predictability. We opted for continuity and predictability,” he said.

Modi, in his speech, said cess and surcharge which was 10.4 per cent of GTR in 2011-12, has increased to 20.2 per cent. Even after deducting GST compensation cess, it is 15 per cent.

Govt open to evaluate, explore cryptocurrencies, says Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Anurag Thakur on Saturday said the government is open to evaluate and explore new technologies, including cryptocurrencies, for improving governance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself is a strong advocate of embracing technology in various aspects of governance, the Minister of State for Finance said while addressing an event organised by Entrepreneurs' Organisation - EO Punjab.

“Let me say that we welcome innovation and new technology...Blockchain is a new emerging technology. Cryptocurrency is a form of virtual currency. I firmly believe that we must always evaluate, explore and encourage new ideas with an open mind,” he said.

A High-Level Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) was constituted under the Chairmanship of Economic Affairs Secretary on digital currencies and it has submitted its report.

The government would



The Govt would take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in Parliament following the due process

take a decision on the recommendations of the IMC and the legislative proposal, if any, would be introduced in Parliament following the due process, he said while inviting suggestions and views on this issue.

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said the government is still formulating its opinion on cryptocurrencies and will take a calibrated position.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das had last week said the apex bank has certain “major concerns”

over the impact cryptocurrencies may have on the financial stability in the economy and has conveyed the same to the government.

The RBI had virtually banned cryptocurrency trading in 2018

and had directed all entities regulated by the central bank to cease dealing in virtual currencies. The Supreme Court had also asked the Centre in 2019 to frame policies for crypto, and in 2020, struck down the curbs imposed by the RBI.

The Reserve Bank had through various public notices on December 24, 2013, February 1, 2017 and December 5, 2017, cautioned users, holders and traders of virtual currencies, including bitcoins, regarding various risks associated in dealing with such virtual currencies.

Goyal stresses on manufacturing high quality containers in India

New Delhi: Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday emphasised on the manufacturing of the indigenous high quality containers in India saying that India has excellent steel making capabilities.

Addressing a webinar here at the Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR) on ‘Indigenous Manufacturing of Containers’, Goyal said, “We should be aspiring for a much bigger play in container manufacturing. We have absolutely excellent steel making capabilities, we have an MSME sector with good skills and the frame making capabilities are also good.”

The minister stressed that India's exports are going to increase significantly, as against the imports. “Government has made a conscious decision to support our shipping sector so more and more of the Indian companies start owning Indian flag vessels,” he said.

Goyal said, there is a lot of buzz and excitement in our manufacturing sector, to meet domestic and international requirements. “We are part of the resilient global supply

chain, which are looking at alternate supplies,” he said.

“If India starts manufacturing at scale, we will become cost-competitive to sell to all parts of the world. Scale presents huge cost-benefit opportunities,” he said. Goyal emphasised that if you produce a high-quality product, our neighbours will never be able to match it. And that can be sold in Europe and US.

“If India manufacturers a million containers in a year, we will become cost-competitive,” he said. Goyal said container manufacturing business needed a LIFT, which CONCOR has been able to provide. Elaborating the meaning of LIFT, he said L - efficient logistics, I - depending on indigenous sources, F - futuristic and T - becoming a trendsetter. “We should all collectively take a concrete decision to buy only Indian and support Indian industry, to meet not only India's needs but the world's needs. Container shortage and imported container should be dumped into the flames of history,” the minister said.

IANIS

Tech bids open for Mum-Ahm Bullet train bridge project

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

The National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) on Saturday said that it has opened two technical bids for construction or building of bridges for the 508 km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) corridor in the state of Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli in which nine companies have participated.

NHSRCL spokesperson Sushma Gaur said that the technical bids for contract packages of P-1(B) and P-1(C) for construction or building of

bridges for the MAHSR corridor in the state of Gujarat as well union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

She said that of now, 5 bidders for P-1 (C) whereas four bidders for P-1 (B) have submitted their bids for the package. She said that the P-1 (C) package includes construction of bridges for double line High Speed railway for four PSC Bridges and seven steel truss bridges between Zaroli Village at Maharashtra - Gujarat Border and Vadodara, in Gujarat and the union territory of Dadar and Nagar Haveli for the project.

Tesla, Ford only carmakers not gone bankrupt: Elon Musk

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

As several carmakers bleed in the US and beyond, Tesla is profitable and according to Elon Musk, his electric car company and Ford are the only two carmakers in the US which have not gone bankrupt.

Tesla reported another profitable quarter as revenue hit \$10.74 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020. In last year, Tesla achieved free cash flow of nearly \$2.8 billion after spending more than \$3 billion on building new factories and other expenditures.

US automaker Ford last month announced to more than double its investment in electric and autonomous vehicles to \$29 billion. The

automaker had previously committed to spend \$11.5 billion on electrifying its vehicle lineup through 2022.

“Tesla & Ford are the only American carmakers not to have gone bankrupt out of 1000's of car startups. Prototypes are easy, production is hard & being cash flow positive is excruciating,” Musk said in a tweet on Friday.

Ford CEO Jim Farley responded to his tweet, saying: “Respect”.

In 2020, Tesla produced and delivered half a million vehicles. In addition, Model Y production in Shanghai has begun.

Tesla this year also registered its Indian subsidiary with the Registrar of Companies

(RoC) in Bengaluru, on January 8.

“2020 was a defining year for us on many levels. Despite a challenging environment, we've reached an important milestone of producing and delivering 0.5 million cars,” Musk had said.

On the other hand, Ford's increased investment is aimed at catching up with the EV market leader Tesla and keep pace with other automakers like GM and Volkswagen.

“We are accelerating our plans right now, breaking constraints, increasing battery capacity, improving our costs and getting more battery electrics into our cycle plan,” Ford CEO Farley said last month.

‘Privatisation will lead to increase in service charges’

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Nationalised Banks Officers Federation (AIN-BOF) has opposed privatisation of public sector banks as it will lead to increase in service charges and will take banking beyond the reach of common man.

In a statement, the AIN-BOF said privatisation will primarily impact the general public only as the social objectives will be lost in the name of profitability.

“Service Charges will be increased and customers who are able to bear those charges only will be serviced. This will take banking beyond the reach of the common man which was the primary objective of

nationalization,” it said.

It said though the Government's agenda of privatization started way back in 1991 immediately after the liberalization the trade unions were successful in thwarting the ill-conceived moves of the successive governments over the past three decades and maintaining the public sector status.

“Of the many private sector banks that came into existence, today only a handful which were promoted by the financial houses like ICICI, UTI, IDBI, HDFC are surviving and many of the private sector entities that commenced their banking operations after 1990 were either closed or merged”, it added.

Petrol, diesel prices steady even as crude boils

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies have spared consumers of yet another petrol and diesel price hike even though the global oil market is on the boil with crude reaching within touching distance of year-high level of \$70 a barrel.

Petrol continues to be priced at ₹91.17 a litre and diesel ₹81.47 a litre in the capital on Saturday. Across the country too, the petrol and diesel price remained unchanged.

This is seventh consecutive day when pump prices of auto fuels have remained unchanged.

After a spike in global oil prices seen over last two weeks with crude price jumping close to \$67 a barrel, prices had fallen to around \$63 a barrel but it rose again to cross \$69 a barrel mark now after the OPEC+ decision to continue with crude production cut in April.

Petrol and diesel prices have been rising continuously since February 9.

Public Notice

This is to inform general public that Mrs. Sunita Gujral is the owner of Entire First Floor, Entire Second Floor, Entire Third Floor, with roof rights 'said floors', built on Property bearing No. J-13/63, on Plot No. 63, area measuring 200 sq. yds., in Block J-13, Situated at Rajouri Garden, New Delhi vide Sale Deed dated 11.12.2020 and the same was duly registered with the Sub-Registrar-IIB Delhi, as Document No. 19218, Book No. I, Volume No. 5819, Page No. 110-128, on 17.12.2020. Now, Mrs. Sunita Gujral is mortgaging the above property with Shri Ram Housing Finance Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 15 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhawan/ Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas, Unit no 405, 4th Floor, GD-ITL North Tower, (A-09), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/ 9818228636 (M).

LOST AND FOUND

ORIGINAL SALE DEED OF RESIDENTIAL PLOT NO. G-37, GREEN PARK, NEW DELHI VIDE REGISTRATION NO. 8970 AND 8971, EXECUTED ON 20.11.1992 ARE MISSING IF ANY PERSON, BANK, FINANCIAL INSTITUTION HAVING ANY CLAIM, RIGHT, TITLE OR INTEREST OF ANY NATURE WHATSOEVER IN OR UPON THE ABOVE PROPERTY, IS HEREBY CALLED UPON TO MAKE THE SAME KNOWN, IN WRITING WITH DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY REGISTERED AD POST TO THE UNDERSIGNED AT THE ADDRESS MENTIONED HEREIN BELOW WITHIN 7 (SEVEN) DAYS OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE TO THE UNDERSIGNED ON TELEPHONE NO.-8860074071 ADDRESS: PNB HOUSING FINANCE LTD., S-8 GREEN PARK EXTENSION, NEW DELHI - 110016

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE FOR ENGINEERING WORK

Srl. No. (1) E-Tender No. DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-176-2021, Date: 03.03.2021.
Work: Renewal of existing Channel Sleepers with H-Beam Sleepers under the jurisdiction of DEN/ Central-II/BSP.
Tender Value: ₹ 2,88,36,781.56/-.
Completion Period: 09 Months.
Start Date of Submission of Tender: From 11:00 hrs. on 11.03.2021. Last Date of Submission of Tender: Upto 11:00 hrs. on 25.03.2021.
The Complete information of above e-Tender Notices is available over website <https://www.irops.gov.in>. Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders.
Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.)
CPR/10/468 S.E.C. Railway, Bilsapur
South East Central Railway @secrail

Covestro pulls through fiscal 2020

Mumbai: Covestro saw a strong end to an exceptional year in 2020 and benefited, especially in the second half, from its consistent crisis prevention measures and a recovery in demand.

However, despite the very successful fourth quarter, the group could not fully compensate the massive, pandemic-related cut-backs that arose in the first six months.

“We were able to successfully navigate through this highly exceptional year and maintained our ability to act at all times,” said CEO Markus Steilemann.

Base effect subdues pharma market's growth in Feb

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

High base effect along with volume decline subdued the growth of India's pharmaceuticals market, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.

Accordingly, the volume declined in the anti-infective and respiratory products was pronounced during the month.

“Ind-Ra expects a growth improvement over the coming months as the vaccination drive gains momentum and a lower base leads to better growth momentum.”

“However, IPM grew 1.1 per cent YoY during February 2021, due to a 5.8 per cent volume decline, price growth of 4.8 per cent and products launches at 2.1 per cent.”

According to Ind-Ra, acute therapies such as gastro and vitamins witnessed sales growth of 9.9 per cent YoY and 8.6 per cent YoY, respectively, while anti-infectives declined 11.3 per cent YoY during February 2021.

“A growth outperformance was observed in chronic therapies during the month, with cardiac and anti-diabetic growing 7.3 per cent YoY and 4.3 per cent YoY, respectively.”

NMDC leaves iron ore rates unchanged

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Country's largest iron ore miner NMDC has left the price of lump ore unchanged at ₹5,100 per tonne and ₹4,210 per tonne for fines in its latest price revision announced on Saturday.

Iron ore is the key raw material used in steel making. Any change in its prices has a direct impact on the rates of steel. In a filing to the BSE, NMDC said it fixed the price of lump ore or high-grade iron ore at ₹5,100 per tonne, and that of iron ore fines or inferior grade ore at ₹4,210 a tonne.

The revised prices are effective from March 6, 2021 and exclude royalty, District Mineral Fund (DMF), National Mineral Exploration Trust

(DMET), cess, forest permit fee, and other taxes, the company said.

Last month, NMDC reduced the price of lumps to ₹5,100 per tonne from ₹5,700 per tonne fixed on January 6, 2021, while the rate of fines was also revised downwards to ₹4,210 a tonne from ₹4,810 per tonne.

NMDC, under the Ministry of Steel, is the country's largest iron ore miner.

The company, which has been in the business of mining iron ore for over six decades, produces about 35 MT iron ore from its three iron ore complexes in the country — one in Donimalai in Karnataka and two in the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.

AXIS BANK

SME Centre, Delhi: 4th Floor, Ashoka Estate, 24 Barakhamba Road New Delhi-110001. **Also at** III Floor, Red Fort Capital Park, New Delhi-110001, Bhai Veer Singh Marg, Near Gole Market, New Delhi-110001
Also at: Axis Bank Ltd., Axis House, Tower T-2, 2nd Floor, I-14, Sector-128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens Wishtown, Noida (U.P.)-201301, **Corporate Office:** 'Axis House', Block-B, Bombay Dyeing Mills Compound, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400025
Registered Office: 'Trishul', 3rd floor, opposite Samarsheswar Temple, Law garden, Ellisbridge, Ahmedabad-380006

POSSESSION NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002
Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Axis Bank Ltd.
The Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Co-borrower	Description of Property	1. Date of Demand Notice 2. Date of Possession 3. Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)
1.MNG International , Registered Office At 185-186 , 2nd Floor, D-14, Sector 7 Rohini, Delhi - 110085	1. Equitable Mortgage over ground floor of freehold residential property bearing No. 128, in PKT 14, Sector 24, Rohini, Delhi - 110042, situated in the layout plan Rohini, Residential Scheme, Rohini, Delhi, admeasuring 60sq. mtrs., along with the proportionate free hold rights of the and under the said property owned by Mr. Anshuman Mohanty & Mrs. Pranti Mohanty built on a plot admeasuring 60 sqm.	1. 26-11-2020 2. 04-03-2021 3. Rs. 1,00,04,592/- (Rupees One Crore Four Thousand Five Hundred Ninety Two Only)
2.Mr. Anshuman Mohanty , Proprietor of M/S MNG International 185-186 , 2nd Floor, D-14 Sector 7 , Rohini, Delhi -110085 Also At : House No. 63 , Second Floor, With Roof Rights Pocket 21, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085 Also At - : Property No. 128 in Pkt-14, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi -110042		
3.Ms. Pranti Mohanty 185-186, 2nd Floor, D-14, Sector 7, Rohini, Delhi-110085 Also At - Ms. Pranti Mohanty House No. 63 , Second Floor Pocket 21 , Sector 24 Rohini, Delhi-110085 Also At: Ms. Pranti Mohanty Property No -128.In Pkt-14, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi -110042		

The above-mentioned Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrower(s) Guarantor(s) Mortgagor(s) are hereby given a 30 days' Notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days' from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.
Date : 07-03-2021
Place : Delhi

Sd/-
Authorized Officer,
Axis Bank Ltd.,

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE
Re-Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement System)

1 Name of work with its location	Strengthening of rail and cross girder, providing screen over web of cross girder on Br. No.-176A UP DLI-UMB section under AXEN/Br/Spl/TKJ.
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 26,14,403.75
3 Completion period of Work	(02) Two Months
4 Date & time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 14.00 hrs. on 30.03.2021 Opening of tender after 14.00 hrs. on same day
5 Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.irops.gov.in

Tender Notice No. 32-W-BR-176A-DLI-2021 Date: 06.03.2021 517/2021
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SOUTHERN STAR CO-OPERATIVE (URBAN) THRIFT & CREDIT SOCIETY LTD.
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NOTICE
Notice is being published for general information of the members of the **SOUTHERN STAR CO-OP. (U) THRIFT & CREDIT SOCIETY LTD.** (hereafter referred to as the Society') that the 31st Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of the Society will be held on **Friday, 19th March, 2021 at 02.00 P.M. at the MCD Community Center, New Rajendra Nagar, New Delhi-60**, to consider the Agenda already circulated and also available at the website of the Society.

S/d
NEW DELHI -60 (VENKIDESWARAN POTTY P.N.)
Date : 01.03.2021 HONY. SECRETARY

HARVEST OF HOPE

There are some who believe in going with the flow and there are others who take the road less travelled. To mark the International Women’s Day, BISWAJEET BANERJEE brings you one such story of a rebel who brushed aside toughest of circumstances to eke out a living

It was October. Economic activities have started. The hum of the machines in factories is back all across the country. There was a sense of hope. Amid this euphoria many migrant labourers in a nondescript village of Nibi, in the rugged Banda district in Bundelkhand, decided not to go back to factories in Vapi in Gujarat. They were working in a cloth factory before lockdown was announced and had returned home during lockdown. Phula Devi, one of them, decided to stay back in her village. The agony and humiliation which she and her family faced during lockdown was fresh in her memory.

She communicated her decision to the women of the group who had returned with her to the village. “My resolve was to stay back and try to earn my living in my own village. I was not ready to face the humiliation yet again of being treated as an outsider. There was a fear that if anything ‘bad’ happens it will push the family to the brink of starvation yet again,” she told this reporter in her village compound which was surrounded by other women, men and small children.

She had no idea what she would do. She was a landless farmer. Majority of the villagers who had shifted to Vaapi with her were landless too and were forced to move out of the village to eke out their earning because of the deprivation they faced in the village.

The Covid pandemic and the subsequent lockdown announced to arrest the spread of Coronavirus pushed them to the same crossroads of deprivation. The factory was closed in March. Devi along with around two dozen village-mates including relatives, who were working as labourers, preferred to stay put with a hope that the situation will improve and they will find work in the city.

The situation deteriorated with every passing day. The owner of the factory refused to help them. He even did not pay ₹8000 as a salary which was due saying he does not have money. They were then forced to dig deep into their savings. When the Gujarat Government announced relief, they were treated as outsiders and were deprived of the Government benefits. Once they exhausted their savings they were left with no option but to return to their village.

It was last week of June. With no money in their pockets they decided to walk down over 1300 km distance on foot from Vaapi to Banda. They were a group of 19 people including five children. For a day and a half they walked braving scorching sun. They tried to hitch a ride but the truck drivers asked exorbitant fare of ₹3,000 per person. They preferred to walk. They survived on the food and water which some NGOs provided them en route.

They reached Nashik where they got a train that brought them to Jhansi and from there they came to Banda.

“It was a second life for us. We fought hunger, frustration and exhaustion to reach our village so that we can live again. And when people started talking about going back after the situation improved, old images started flashing in my mind and I decided not to leave the village again,” Devi tells you.

Her friend Kusuma too agreed to stay back. But the big question staring at their face was what will they do in the village as there are not enough employment opportunities there. The construction work in the village and adjoining Attarra block was limited. The work under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was not easily available. The villagers complained that the Pradhan of the Gram Sabha, who is from upper caste, ignored the residents of the Nibi village because majority of them were from the *dalit* community.

The social barriers which are well defined by caste, proved an impediment in Devi’s entrepreneurial dream. The majority of the farmers were landless and belonged to marginalised communities. The village is dominated by upper caste, followed by backward and intermediary caste people. They have the ownership of the majority of the land. The *dalits*, who like Hindu caste hierarchy, are at the bottom of the resources available in the village.

The *gram sabha* record shows that the village has around 400 households that share 1500 hectare of agricultural land between them. The ownership of land is very skewed. The record says that 15 per cent of the population (which is around 60 households) owns around 60 per cent (around 900 hectares) of land. These are all upper caste people.

There are 140 households of the Backward Community who own almost 600 hectare of land. The rest of the households are *dalits* and they are landless.

Interestingly, Jai Kumar Chaturvedi owns around 100 hectare of land in that village which they give to the landless farmers of the village on sharecropping. In rural India share cropping is a common practice where a landless villager takes the land for tillage for a year on an agreed term and after harvest both can share the crop.



Bimla, Koila, Bhuri and Phula, friends who gave new meaning to contract farming by sharing agri inputs as well as profits

Lending a hand



Raja Bhaiya with women at Nibi village

The decision women took to stay back in the village after unlock was not easy. They needed support from the Government and the local society at every step. The local NGO Vidya Dham Samiti came to their rescue.

“We were there just as a support group. The Vidya Dham Samiti (VDS) extended all possible help including the technical know-how and sometimes we helped these women with money. But the credit goes to these women who showed a resolve to fight back adversities and turned the crisis into an opportunity,” Raja Bhaiya of VDS tells you.

The Samiti works with the marginalised section of the society in Banda and adjoining regions.

Raja Bhaiya tells you that he has seen the plight of migrant workers during lockdown. They came back to villages empty stomach and practically had nothing with them. “Condition of Phula and her relatives was no different. Our Samiti helped them initially and later supported them when they decided to stay back despite getting calls from the factory,” he says.

Regular meetings are held between Samiti members and villagers. “I saw the seeds of women empowerment sowing in the adverse condition of Covid pandemic. These women were coming out of the shadow of their husbands. We allowed these women to spread their wings and now the result is for everyone to see,” Raja Bhaiya tells you.

I AM ILLITERATE. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT FARMING. INITIALLY, I WAS A LABOURER AND THEN WHEN I WAS SHIFTED TO VAAPI, MY WORK WAS TO SIFT SOILED CLOTH PIECES FROM FRESH ONES. SO, MY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FARMING WAS ALMOST ZERO
— PHULA DEVI

looked at us with disbelief because previously we were not in talking terms. ‘*Hamara jhagda ho gaya tha*’ (we had quarreled),” she tells you sheepishly.

Chaturvedi was perplexed when he saw a group of women come one fine morning and ask land for sharecropping. “I was a bit surprised because it is generally men who come to us to discuss the terms and conditions of share cropping. But when I was told these women who are *pravasi mazdoor* want to stay back in the village, we decided to give a small portion of land to them,” he tells you.

Raman agreed to give six *bigha* of land on a 50-50 sharing basis, thus meaning that he will share the cost of agriculture input and will take 50 per cent of the grain produced.

The word spread in the village like fire that Devi was planning farming. Other women like Vimla, Koiri, Murri and Kusuma too joined her. Devi went around the village advising women of the migrant families, who were planning to go back to Vaapi, to stay back. “We had faith in Phula. We had seen the worst in Vaapi and were ready to give new resolve shown by Phula a try,” Murri Devi tells you.

Rajani nods her head in affirmation. “I and my husband had made up our minds to go back and work in a factory. We postponed our visit for a few days to see how things shape up in the village. It is three months since then and have decided to stay back,” she tells you with a smile.

The initial skepticism turned to self belief when villagers saw Devi and Kusuma working in fields. Devi sowed wheat and vegetables while Kusuma opted for vegetables. In between the words spread about the death of Ram Dayal, a villager from Nibi, in Vaapi and how the contractor forced his wife and son to work in the factory to repay a loan Dayal had taken from him.

Slowly the courtyard of Devi’s house became the meeting point for the villagers. Women used to come and sit with Phula discussing the nitty-gritty of farming. This all started with whisper but soon the women became vocal and the resolve to stay back started gathering momentum.

“I am illiterate. I don’t know anything about farming. Initially, I was a labourer and then when I was shifted to Vaapi my work was to sift soiled cloth pieces from fresh ones. So, my knowledge about farming was almost zero,” she says.

Her relative Raju came to her rescue. He provided all the basic information like which seed and fertilizer to use and when. Fortunately, the rains were normal and it came as a big relief.

The heads started turning when Kusuma had a good harvest of vegetables like cabbage, potato, cauliflower and other

seasonal vegetables. She opened a small makeshift shop inside her house and sold vegetables. “I earn anything between ₹125 and ₹150 per day. Some days, I even earned close to ₹250,” Kusuma tells you with a smile.

Kusuma, with her husband, Shiv Avtaar, have even repaired a defunct well near the field which they had taken for *batohi*. “Irrigation is not a big issue now for us as we get water from the well which has been neglected for many decades,” Avtaar says.

More and more women are now ready to take farming. “Phula motivated us. Kusuma showed us the way and now we have dropped the idea of going back to the factory,” Koili says. Many in the group nodded in unison as a mark of confirmation of what Koili said.

The women of this non-descript village have become entrepreneurial. When they realized individually they do not have enough money, they joined hands to do farming. Four friends — Phula, Bimla, Koili and Murri — have entered into their own contract farming where they will share the agricultural input as well as the profit.

All of them have chipped in with ₹3,000 each and the money collected is used for irrigation, seeds and fertilizers. They have grown varieties of vegetables, onion and wheat. “We will give half of the crop to the land owner and share the rest among ourselves. This will be enough for us,” Bimla tells you.

The words have spread around that women in Nibi village have brought a revolution. Around 20 families, all *pravasi mazdoor*, have not gone back despite a call from *thekedar* (contractor). Even people in a village Bhujyari purwan, around 20 kms from Nibi, narrate how some have brought a social change in the village. “We have heard that some women in nearby villages have opted for farming rather than going back to work in factories. People are talking about the revolution brewing in the villages of Attarra,” Vinod Singh, a resident of Bhujyari Purwan said.

Singh, in his early 20s, is also a land owner and gives their land on sharecropping. “Now in villages too women are coming forward and taking decisions themselves,” he says in a sarcastic tone. “Generally, at this time of the year padlocks could be seen at doors and a deadly silence drapes the Nibi village. This year it is different. The sounds of laughter, cries and chatter emanates from all the houses because the villagers have stayed back. Thanks to the women, life is back in the villages,” Raja Bhaiya of Vidya Dham samiti, an NGO that works in the region, says.

Fighting water woes



Kusuma at the well

The decision to opt for farming was not easy for the women. The primary reason being the region is water scarce. So, when Kusuma opted to grow vegetables the first thought that came to her mind was from where to get water for irrigation.

This time her caste came to her rescue. Being a *dalit* her house was at the corner of the village. There was a well at one corner of the field which was lying defunct for many years. The well was built by upper caste people of the village but they stopped using it after they installed pumps in their houses.

“This well was in very bad shape. One day sitting at the base of the well my husband and I discussed if we can install a pump then withdrawing water from the well would be easy. This way we will be able to solve the irrigation problem too,” Kusuma tells you.

Initially, the husband-wife duo had used a bucket to pull water and then irrigated the vegetable with a mug. This was a tedious and time consuming job. Shiv Avtaar, husband of Kusuma, had a little bit of knowledge of machines as he had helped electricians in the factory in Vapi. They took a little loan from a private moneylender and installed a pump.

The water problem is solved to a large extent. After success in the vegetable business I am looking for diversification. My husband is looking for avenues in fisheries and poultry,” she tells you.

INDIA FIX LORD'S DATE

Virat & Co will face Black Caps in WTC final after Axar, Ashwin take five each to thrash England by innings & 25 runs to seal series

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin once again made a mockery of Kane Williamson's New Zealand but Axar (24-6-48-5), in company of Ashwin (22.5-4-47-5), literally blew England away in a session and half for a paltry 135 in 54.5 overs to complete a 3-1 rout, ensuring that the *Anthony De Mello Trophy* will stay at the Cricket Centre in Mumbai.

It was another two and half days finish but even the most partisan England experts like their former skipper Michael Vaughan have admitted that the 22-yard strip had almost nothing to do with their side's abject surrender.

A case in point could be India's first innings score of 365 and a lead of 160 on the same track where England could cumulatively manage only 340 runs across two innings.

This was one Test match where Indians, even before a ball being bowled, created an illusion of a turning track. It was a play of playing with the minds of a team that was already in a negative zone.

There wasn't much turn but enough to ensure that the visitors wilted under pressure as Patel's series tally stood at highest for a newcomer (27) while man of the series Ashwin was peerless as ever with 32 scalps in his kitty.

A lot of credit for this vic-



India captain Virat Kohli along with teammates Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Mohammed Siraj and Rishabh Pant pose with winner's trophy

PTI

India top WTC table

Dubai: India on Saturday finished on top of the league phase of the ICC World Test Championship standings after crushing England by an innings and 25 runs in the fourth Test.

"That victory against England means India finish the league phase of the inaugural ICC World Test Championship with a fine view from the top of the table," the ICC tweeted.

India finished the league phase with 520 points, which includes 12 wins, four losses and one draw.

New Zealand finished in the second spot with 420 points, including seven wins and four losses.

Australia finished third with 332 points ahead of England and Pakistan.

only helplessly look how his colleagues made a mess of Test match batting and Ashwin finally had his number trapping him leg before on the back-foot with another straight ball.

The remaining wickets in the post tea session were a mere formality which the spinners completed in due course of time.

The morning session belonged to Washington, whose 96 off 174 balls was as important as Pant's second day hundred in the final context of the match.

Washington and Axar Patel (43 off 97 balls) added an invaluable 106 runs for the eighth wicket, which ended even a miniscule chance for England to stage a recovery.

tory should go to the indomitable Rishabh Pant, who played the enforcer on the second day with a magnificent hundred, and Washington Sundar, who notched up a chiselled 96.

These two knocks literally made it impossible for England to make a comeback as a total of 365 seemed like 650.

The coming of age of Pant as a real replacement for the iconic Mahendra Singh Dhoni and emergence of Washington as a potent batting all-rounder only augurs well for the team.

So formidable is India's bench strength right now that Hanuma Vihari, who saved an epic Test in Sydney only a couple of months back, may not get

to play a Test in near future.

World's best wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha will also find it difficult to add to his 38 Tests unless the *Roorkee Rockstar* gets injured.

Patel, in his debut Test series, was a powerhouse performer but he also knows that once Ravindra Jadeja is fit and available, he will have to wait for his next Test.

The story of the third day was similar to the one that has played out for most of the series.

With shoulders already drooping after the humiliation inflicted by Pant and Washington, England's openers Zak Crawley (5, 16 balls), Dom Sibley (3, 21 balls) and Jonny

"Every team in International cricket is a quality side and we need to work hard to beat them, even at home. Keeping that intensity going is most important and is the hallmark of our team."

—VIRAT KOHLI

"We haven't matched India in the last three Tests, and we need to keep learning and keep getting better for this experience and this series, and we need to keep evolving and move forward."

—JOE ROOT

Bairstow (0, 1 ball) seemed like "walking wickets" at the start of the post-lunch session.

One had expected two of England's best players in Joe Root (30) and Ben Stokes (2 off 9 balls) to put up a fight but the all-rounder failed to gauge the extra bounce as he went for a sweep shot off Patel.

Kohli accepted the dolly at leg slip as England's resistance was blown away at 30 for 4.

Ollie Pope (15) hit Ashwin for a six, which was more desperation than finesse, and it was only a matter of time before he yorked himself as Pant fumbled while gathering but managed to effect a stumping to make it 65 for 5.

The England skipper could

Ashwin wants to leave his legacy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

To become the best version of himself while learning something new everyday is Ravichandran Ashwin's endeavour as he aims to leave his lasting legacy in the pantheon of Indian cricket greats.

Ashwin has now won eight Man-of-the-Series awards in his 10-year career and is only eight wickets short of equalling Harbhajan Singh's 417 Test wickets.

It could well happen in England this summer but he doesn't want to entertain any such thoughts.

"Honestly, that's not even crossed my mind and if you want me to put my thoughts on it. He is a fantastic bowler. There's a lot that I have learnt from him. I wasn't even an off-spinner when *Bhaji paa* started playing for the Indian team," Ashwin's respect for another practitioner of the same craft was there for all to see.

"He (Harbhajan) was also an inspi-



ration because of the 2001 famous series (32 wickets in 3 Tests). I never imagined in 2001 that I will be an off-spinner, and I mean who would have imagined those things.

"I was fortunate to play alongside *Bhaji paa* when I came into the team and also play under Anil *bhai* but I would now like to leave my own legacy," Ashwin said.

Being a student of the game Ashwin wants to evolve as a cricketer and a person everyday.

"My growth as a cricketer is a direct synonym to the person I am. I want to keep evolving, keep learning and that's my second nature, directly proportional to the kind of cricketer I am and whatever I do, the best that I can be."

Ashwin's apathy for all those pitch critics is well documented and he would love to see how the global media reacts when a green top is given to India when they go for a game outside the sub-continent.

"The series win is a testament to the

fact that this is a really good Indian cricket team. That's all I would like to say. Other day, I was listening to what Sunny *bhai* (Sunil Gavaskar) was saying, makes sense," Ashwin said referring to Gavaskar's statement about not giving too much credence to the British pundits, whose favourite day job had been criticising the Indian tracks.

"Only because we are giving attention to people who are making a mockery of it, we are encouraging them to do it non-stop," he said.

He then sarcastically said that he would keenly watch how foreign media cover the criticism from Indian commentators about the pitches provided when India is on tour abroad.

"I would like to a pitch covered with grass somewhere else in the world and some of our Indian commentators, taking picture and putting an Instagram post and I will like to see how the global media takes notice and then we will know who's at faulty end."

‘Motera track produced fantastic entertainment’



PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

There is no reason to cry over the nature of the Motera track, India head coach Ravi Shastri asserted on Saturday, saying the curator prepared pitches that produced "fantastic entertainment" in the last two matches here.

The pitch for the third Test came in for sharp criticism from a few former England players after the visitors were bowled out for 112 and 81 in the Day/Night match.

"Why should I hold back? I attribute it to the groundsman," Shastri said after India dismissed England for 135 to register an innings and 25 run win.

"Who will complain against a track like this? It is fantastic entertainment, for both teams and the game and the result 3-1 doesn't really suggest how close the series was."

Shastri lauded the team for making it to the WTC final despite the ICC changing the qualification criteria last year.

"For us to be on the top of the table in World Test championship is two-and-a-half years of work and for those years to be successful, it's been six years prior to that," he said.

"The boys took one series at a time, they were not really bothered about the World Test Championship because the goal post gets shifted every time."

"We were heading the table and some rule change came of percentage system when we were not even playing but never mind all that, we have got 520 points, we deserve to be on top of the table and playing that final."

The 58-year-old said it is very satisfying to see the youngsters perform.



Our bench strength is strong: Kohli

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India's supremely talented bench strength has made skipper Virat Kohli quite confident that the team will have a relatively smooth ride when the transition period dawns upon it in the next few years.

With the rise of several young players like Washington Sundar, Mohammed Siraj and the maverick Rishabh Pant, India have been on a roll both at home and abroad.

"Our bench strength is extremely strong and that's a good sign for Indian cricket. When the transition happens, the standards won't fall and Rishabh and *Washy*'s partnership showed exactly that in a crucial juncture of the match," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

After notching up victories in the second and third Tests respectively, India won the fourth match inside three days.

"We had to pick up our body language after the first game in Chennai. Every team in International cricket is a quality side and we need to work hard to beat them, even at home. Keeping that intensity going is most important and is the hallmark of our team," Kohli said.

Star opener Rohit Sharma scored 161 in the first innings of the second Test and the skipper feels the knock changed the complexion of the series alongside seasoned spinner Ravichandran Ashwin's performance of 32 wickets.

"Rohit's knock was the defining moment in Chennai, and Ashwin has been our most bankable player over the years so they have been our best players this series."

"Now we can accept that the World Test Championship final, which was a distraction in New Zealand in 2020, but now it's a reality," Kohli said.

Ashwin, who ended the series with 32 wickets and a century, was named *Man of the series* and the spinner was delighted to qualify for the WTC final, adding that the win was a collective effort.

"The fact that we qualified for the WTC final is very important. The intensity was low after Chennai, despite the high in Australia. Every time there was a challenging time in the series, someone put their hand up, so this series win was right up there," Ashwin said. England skipper Joe Root conceded that his team was outplayed by the hosts in the series.

"The first game was a positive. We haven't matched India in the last three, and we need to keep learning and keep getting better for this experience and this series," Root said.

We failed to grab opportunities: Root

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

England captain Joe Root on Saturday mourned the opportunities his team squandered in the lost fourth Test, saying they let slip the advantageous position from where they could have been on top of the game.

India at one stage were 121 for five but ended up taking a 160-run lead in the first innings which proved to be match-winning.

Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel took the game away from England with their fearless approach.

"There have been times we had a chance to wrestle the game in our favour, to get on top, just didn't manage to do it," Root said at the post-match conference.

"India played those important, key moments better than us in these last three games and credit for being able to do that better than we do."

"So, it has been disappointing, it has been frustrating to finish the series on a note that we have but we are going to keep looking forward as a team," said Root.

The England skipper acknowledged Indian batsman Rishabh Pant's remarkable ability to take the attack by the scruff of its neck. "The way he bats, he



England players react during Day 2 of fourth Test against India

AP

makes it difficult for bowlers to build pressure on him. Sometimes he pulls a reverse sweep to a guy, who has 600 Test wickets.

"So it is quite a skill and a brave move to do and it came off for him and got themselves (India) to a very good position on that wicket," said Root, referring to the reverse sweep which Pant played off James Anderson.

For India, Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed 32 wickets in the series, while Axar snared 27 wickets to leave England floored. Root lavished praise on the

Gujarat left-arm spinner saying he was relentless in his lengths.

"In this series, Axar in particular, has been very accurate and has asked very good questions. He has been relentless with his length and some balls have skidded, some have spun quite big and we are going to just find a way to manage it well."

But not all was doom and gloom for Root, who found solace in the fact that his wicket-keeper Ben Foakes and left-arm spinner Jack Leach performed their roles to the best of their abilities.



Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar was on Saturday felicitated by the BCCI on the 50th anniversary of his Test debut. The 71-year-old former skipper received a commemorative Test cap from BCCI Secretary Jay Shah during the lunch break on Day three of the fourth and final Test between India and England at the Narendra Modi Stadium here in Ahmedabad

PTI

Pant's 101 best counter-attacking knock on Indian soil: Shastri

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

India coach Ravi Shastri on Saturday said Rishabh Pant's game-changing hundred against England in the fourth Test here was the best counter-attacking knock that he has seen by a number six Indian batsman on home soil.

Pant, in an innings that was just the right mix of caution and aggression, notched up 101 off just 118 balls, playing a crucial role in India winning the match by an innings and 25 runs.

Speaking highly of Pant, Shastri said the stumper's hard work is now showing results. "He has worked like hell in the last three or four months and the results are showing. Yesterday's innings is the best counter attacking innings, I have seen in India

by an Indian, especially at number six when the ball was turning," Shastri said after India's emphatic win in the fourth Test.

"We were hard on him. Nothing comes easy and he was told in no uncertain terms that he has got to respect the game a little more. He has got to lose some weight and work hard on his keeping."

"We know the talent he has. He is a genuine match winner and he has responded."

Pant's potential was never in doubt but he struggled to do justice to his talent, often inviting criticism for his shoddy work behind the wickets and average batting show.

However, the Australia tour changed everything for him as he played match-winning knocks in India's historic victory. Since then he has only grown in confidence.



India Eves finally begin WC preparation



PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Indian women's team will finally get to shake off the rust after 12 months of no International cricket and start their ODI World Cup preparation with the five-match series against South Africa beginning here on Sunday.

While the South Africans come into the series fresh from their home rubber against Pakistan last month, the Indians last played on March 8, 2020 when they lost to Australia in the T20 World Cup final.

The quarantine protocol in Covid-19 times have given only

two days of nets to both the teams, making it tougher for the players to be at their best from the word go.

It can be safely said that the Indians have fallen behind in their World Cup preparation compared to the likes of England, New Zealand and Australia, who have played more regularly amid the pandemic.

The new selection committee has come in with its own vision and picked six uncapped players for the eight match contest also comprising three T20Is, leaving out senior players like Shikha Pandey, Taniya Bhatia and Veda Krishnamurthy. The non- selec-

tion of T20 star Shafali Verma for the ODIs has also raised a few eyebrows.

Harmanpreet Kaur, who is Mithali Raj's deputy in ODIs and T20 captain, insisted that rustiness will not be an issue for them and the players are itching to take the field after a long gap.

Though the players did not get much game time over the past one year, they ensured their fitness remained unaffected. Some of the players, including Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma, toured the free time to play in club tournaments as they did not know when the next India assignment would come.

With the ODI World Cup scheduled in New Zealand early next year, the team needs to explore options in the middle-order and the pace department.

South Africa, who recently beat Pakistan 3-0, will miss the services of their regular skipper Dane van Niekerk and all-rounder Chloe Tryon for the India tour. Sune Luus will lead the side in Niekerk's absence.

The visitors got very little time to get used to the conditions but they go into the series with a lot more match time than the hosts.

All the games will be played at state of the art Ekana Stadium with crowd capacity capped at 10 per cent.

TEAMS

India: Mithali Raj (captain), Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Yastika Bhatia, Harmanpreet Kaur, D Hemalatha, Deepti Sharma, Sushma Verma (wicket-keeper), Swetha Verma, Radha Yadav, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Jhulan Wolvaardt, Mansi Joshi, Poonam Yadav, C Prathyusha, Monica Patel.

South Africa: Sune Luus (captain), Ayabonga Khaka, Shabnim Ismail, Laura Wolvaardt, Trisha Chetty, Sinalo Jaftha, Tasmin Britz, Marizanne Kapp, Nondumiso Shangase, Lizelle Lee, Anneke Bosch, Faye Tunncliffe, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Mignon du Preez, Nadine de Klerk, Lara Goodall, Tumi Sekhukhune.

Lack of game time won't be an issue: Mithali

Lucknow: Indian women's ODI captain Mithali Raj on Saturday said lack of game time won't be an issue for the players and they are ready to hit top gear against South Africa in the limited over series as the team begins its World Cup preparation.

"Clearly they had a game time, but we are playing after a gap. Having said that we definitely have put in the efforts, trained ourselves, have these short camps, four days of sessions here," Mithali said during a virtual news conference on the eve of the first ODI here.

"It doesn't look like we are rusty or anything... I think the girls clearly are quite excited to get on the field and start putting our best performances because it's time that we start our campaign for World Cup, and start playing some cricket."

The Neetu David-led selection committee sprung a few surprises by excluding Shafali Verma from the ODI team but the skipper said the explosive opener was very much in their radar.

"She is definitely in the scheme of things. She is in the radar. I think we need to have a little bit of patience and you see her very soon," Mithali said.

The ODI skipper said the series is very important to set their combination right for the World cup slated in New Zealand around this time next year.

"This series is very important in that context. We will try to see the composition of the team but at the same time also see that the team as a unit start to get that momentum right," Mithali said.

"...The series is very important for two reasons, one is to give the young players the right platform, to give them opportunities in the home condition.

"And at the same time, it's important to see that the core players get enough game time to get out there and start to develop that rhythm, and as a unit we come together. And take it from there," she added.

The 38-year-old was last seen in action in the away series against West Indies in November 2019. Mithali said she will look to carry on her good batting form which had helped India beat Windies 2-1.

"It's just like how I prepare myself before any series, it's been no different. In terms of gametime 'yes, we've not really played any matches as such. But in terms of training or preparation at home or back in the academy, I've prepared myself ...," she said.

"All these years we've trained like that and I am definitely looking forward to getting more runs, because the last series against West Indies in 2019 I was in rhythm and I would like to continue from there."

PTI

SINGLES

IBRA POISED FOR SWEDEN COMEBACK

STOCKHOLM: Indian paddlers Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ahilya Mukherjee started their campaign at WTT Star Contender Doha with comfortable victories in the first round of the women's singles qualifying event. While the World No 95 Sutirtha registered a dominating 11-9, 11-3, 11-6 victory over Ala Mohamed of Qatar, World No 131 Ahilya notched up an easy 11-8, 11-3, 11-5 win against Qatar's Maha Faramarzi.

INDIA HOLD QR BRITAIN TO 1-1 DRAW

ANTWERP: Simranjeet Singh produced a late strike as a resilient Indian men's hockey team held Great Britain to a 1-1 draw in its third match of the Europe Tour on Saturday. Simranjeet's late equaliser in the 57th minute ensured India remained unbeaten on the tour. For Britain, Alan Forsyth scored in the 2nd quarter.

RKFC'S FATHER-SON DUO SUSPENDED, FINED

KOLKATA: Real Kashmir head coach David Robertson and his son Mason Robertson, who plays as a centre back, were on Saturday suspended for four matches and fined ₹2 lakh each for abusing the referee in their I-League game against Indian Arrows. The AIFF Disciplinary Committee observed that the father-son duo abused the referee in "filthy vulgar languages" in their match after getting annoyed with a decision.

NEUFC, BAGAN PLAY OUT A 1-1 DRAW

BAMBOLIM: Idrissa Sylla struck in the stoppage-time to help NorthEast United hold ATK Mohun Bagan to a 1-1 draw in the first leg of second semifinal of the ISL on Saturday. Antonio Habas was just minutes away from recording his maiden first-leg playoff win in the League when the second-half substitute struck in the fourth minute of injury time to cancel out David Williams' 34th-minute goal.

WINNING START FOR SUTIRTHA, AHILYA

DOHA: Indian paddlers Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ahilya Mukherjee started their campaign at WTT Star Contender Doha with comfortable victories in the first round of the women's singles qualifying event. While the World No 95 Sutirtha registered a dominating 11-9, 11-3, 11-6 victory over Ala Mohamed of Qatar, World No 131 Ahilya notched up an easy 11-8, 11-3, 11-5 win against Qatar's Maha Faramarzi.

BENZEMA TO RETURN FOR MADRID DERBY

MADRID: Karim Benzema will be fit to play some part in Sunday's derby between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid, Zinedine Zidane said on Friday. Benzema has missed Real Madrid's last three games with a groin injury but Zidane said he will return at the Wanda Metropolitano, although would not say if he will start.

XHAKA SHOCKER COSTS ARSENAL

BURNLEY: Arsenal's chances of a top-four finish in the Premier League look forlorn after Granit Xhaka's error gifted Burnley a 1-1 draw on Saturday, while Southampton ended a nine-game winless run by beating Sheffield United 2-0. The Gunners' best hope of a return to the Champions League for the first time in five years now lies in winning the Europa League after letting two more points slip away at Turf Moor.

RUBLEV TAKES DOWN TSITSIPAS

THE HAUGE: Andrey Rublev beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 7-6 (7/2) on Saturday to advance to the final in Rotterdam and extend his winning run in ATP 500 events to 19 matches. Fourth seed Rublev broke Tsitsipas twice in the opening set and put the second-seeded Greek away with a dominant tie-break to secure victory in 97 minutes.

RANGERS CLOSE TO WITHIN A POINT OF TITLE

GLASGOW: Rangers could be crowned Scottish champions for the first time in 10 years on Sunday after sweeping St Mirren aside 3-0 at Ibrox to move to within a point of the title. On Sunday if Celtic fail to win at Dundee United, Rangers will secure first major trophy since the club went into liquidation and were forced to restart in the fourth tier in 2012. Agencies

IPL to begin on April 9 Spinners lead SL to series-levelling win

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The 2021 edition of the Indian Premier League will begin on April 9, exactly 12 days after the Indian cricket team completes its ongoing assignment against England, a BCCI source revealed on Saturday.

The third and last match of the ODI series against England will be held on March 28 in Pune. The duration of the popular T20 league has been fixed keeping in mind India's International schedule.

"We have provisionally decided that IPL will start on April 9 and end on May 30," a senior BCCI source said.

"The formal approval of dates and venues will be done during Governing Council

meeting next week," the source added.

Considering the prevailing circumstances when efforts are being made to minimise the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the BCCI has decided to host IPL matches in five cities - Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Delhi and Ahmedabad.

The allotment of matches to Chennai and Kolkata would be done, keeping in mind the state Assembly election scheduled there in the next few weeks.

Also, the Asia Cup, that was scheduled in June this year in India, stands cancelled "now that India have qualified for the World Test Championship final, courtesy their 3-1 series win over England."

AFF ■ ST JOHNS

Sri Lanka's spinners bamboozled world champions West Indies to claim a 43-run win in the second T20I at Coolidge Cricket Ground on Friday.

Having lost by four wickets in the opening game on Wednesday, in a game where West Indies skipper Kieron Pollard launched six sixes in an over, the tourists successfully defended 160 on Friday to level the three-match series.

West Indies were all out for 117 in the 19th over as Sri Lanka ended an eight-game losing streak in T20.

The final match is at the same venue on Sunday.

Leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga finished with 3-17, off-break bowler Akila Dananjaya, who was the victim of Pollard's



midweek assault but also claimed a hat-trick, had 1-13.

Wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan took 3-10, including Pollard who made just 13.

"The wicket was a bit slow. I

Lanka with two wickets and a run-out.

Sri Lanka got off to a flying start after winning the toss and openers Danusha Gunathilaka and Pathum Nissanka put on a blistering 94 off the first 10 overs.

But then 37-year-old Bravo was called into action and he responded by running out Nissanka for 37.

Gunathilaka followed just four balls later in the 11th over, caught by Kevin Sinclair off Bravo at mid-off.

The runs then dried up for Sri Lanka.

Having hit eight fours and three sixes in the first 10 overs, they managed just three more fours and one six in the second half of the innings.

That included an eight-over stretch where the ball never crossed the boundary ropes.

Manish Kaushik strikes Gold



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Olympic-bound Indian boxer Manish Kaushik (63kg) struck Gold in his first competitive outing in a year even as five others signed off with Silver medals in the 35th Boxam International Tournament in Castellon.

Manish defeated Denmark's Nikolai Terteryan in a split decision.

However, Mohammed Hussamuddin (57kg) and Vikas Krishan (69kg) ended with Silver medals among men.

Hussamuddin gave a walkover to Jean Paul Rivera of Puerto Rico, which was struck by a positive Covid-19 case. The reasons for the Indian's

pullout were not immediately not known.

Vikas Krishan (69kg), however, lost a gruelling final to Youba Sissokho, a bout in which the Indian was left with a cut above his right eye.

Among women, Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Pooja Rani (75kg) and Jasmine (57kg) ended with Silver medals among women.

The Indian women boxers thus ended their campaign with three Silver and one Bronze medal. Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) had ended with a Bronze after a semifinal loss.

Debutant Jasmine (57kg) also ended with a Silver after going down to European champion Irma Testa of Italy.

Sindhu vs Marin

PTI ■ BASEL

Olympic Silver medalist P V Sindhu dished out a superlative performance to outclass Mia Blichfeldt of Denmark in straight games and enter the women's singles final of the Swiss Open Super 300 tournament here on Saturday.

Sindhu, the reigning world champion, beat fourth seeded Blichfeldt 22-20, 21-10 in 43 minutes to avenge her first-round loss to the Danish world number 12 at the Yonex Thailand Open in January.

"It's been a good win today for me and playing against Mia was a kind of a revenge because in Thailand I had lost to her, so it was very important for me and yeah really looking forward to the finals," Sindhu said.

This is Sindhu's first final appearance since the World championships here in

Sindhu vs Marin in Swiss final

PTI ■ BASEL

2019. The second seeded Indian will take on top seed and Rio Olympics Gold medalist Carolina Marin in the summit clash on Sunday. It will be the first meeting between the two in over two years.

"Carolina is a good player so it won't be an easy match, I have to play my 100 per cent," Sindhu said.

Former champion Kidambi Srikanth, however, couldn't cross the semifinal stage as he went down 13-21, 19-21 to top seed and former world champion Viktor Axelsen.

World number 10 S a t w i k s a i r a j Rankiredy and Chirag Shetty also bowed out after losing 10-21, 17-21 to sixth seeded Danish

pair of Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen in the last-four stage.

The Indian duo had a last four finish in their last event at Toyota Thailand Open in January.

Sindhu thus emerged as the lone Indian survivor in the \$140,000 event, the first tournament in the extended Olympic qualification period which ends on June 15.

In the women's singles match, Sindhu erased a 5-7 deficit in the opening game to grab a 11-8 advantage at the interval. The Indian then zoomed to 17-12 but Blichfeldt clawed back with five straight points.

Sindhu soon grabbed three game points but again her

rival managed to level the score. However, the Indian ensured she had the last laugh as she pocketed the opening game.

Sindhu dominated the proceedings in the second game as she was up 5-2 first and kept moving ahead. She enjoyed a 11-6 lead at the break and continued her good run to eventually shut the door on her opponent.

Indian Olympic hopefuls have been training at the Gachibowli complex for last few days to prepare for the Tokyo Games.

"Training at a bigger stadium, similar to this stadium as I got used to it and it has helped me a lot here," Sindhu said.

"I would once again thank everyone, BAI, SAI, Telangana State and Sports Minister for all the support and helping me with whatever I needed for training and preparation at the Gachibowli Stadium. It has helped me a lot."

Leipzig move top of Bundesliga

AFF ■ BERLIN

RB Leipzig climbed top of the Bundesliga on Saturday with a 3-0 romp at Freiburg to replace previous leaders Bayern Munich.

Christopher Nkunku, Alexander Sorloth, and Emil Forsberg scored the goals in Freiburg which lifted Leipzig one point ahead of Bayern.

"That was a mature performance," Leipzig sports director Markus Krosche told Sky.

"Anything is possible," he replied when asked if Leipzig can stop Bayern winning a ninth straight league title this season.

Leipzig took the lead at Freiburg after a first-half blunder by home goalkeeper Florian Muller.

His loose pass from the back was snapped up by Leipzig striker Yussuf Poulson, who squared for French winger Nkunku to tap home four minutes before the break. Sorloth continued his



great form and midway through the second half he converted Nkunku's assist.

The Norwegian, who scored the last-gasp winner over Monchengladbach a week ago, then set up Forsberg who banged in Leipzig's third goal 11 minutes from time.

Third-placed Wolfsburg are now eight points adrift of Leipzig having stumbled to a 2-1 defeat at mid-table

Hoffenheim whose striker Andrej Kramaric scored the hosts' winning goal just before half-time.

Eintracht Frankfurt stay fourth after Filip Kostic equalised for the home team in a 1-1 draw against Stuttgart.

A late goal by Leverkusen striker Patrik Schick sealed their 1-0 win at Moenchengladbach, who drop to 10th as their miserable run continues.

Vinesh in final, Sarita settles for Silver

PTI ■ ROME

Star wrestler Vinesh Phogat sput herself in contention for a second consecutive Gold by reaching the 53kg final in a jiffy while Sarita Mor settled for a Silver medal at the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event, here.

In her four bouts, Vinesh had to wrestle only twice as she got walkovers in the other two on Saturday.

And the two bouts that she fought, Vinesh won those by pinning her rivals — first her compatriot Nandini Bajirao Saolke in the first round and then Canadian Samantha Leigh Stewart in the semifinal, which lasted a mere 42 seconds.

She did not have to move a sinew in the second round against Kazakhstan's Tatyana Akhmetova Amanzhol and Ecuador's Luisa Elizabeth as they forfeited their bouts against the Indian due to their

respective injuries.

Vinesh came into the competition after winning a Gold in Kiev, Ukraine.

In the wee hours of Saturday, Sarita went down 2-4 to Giulia Penalber of Bulgaria in the title bout to settle for the Silver. The other Indian in the same weight category, Anshu Malik forfeited her Bronze play-off against Italy's Francesca Indelicato due to an injury.

Greco-Roman wrestler Kuldeep Malik though grabbed his chance by winning the 72kg Bronze play-off against Russia's Chingiz Labazanov.

Meanwhile in the men's freestyle competition, Satywart Kadian bowed from the 97kg competition after suffering a crushing 1-8 defeat at the hands of Turkey's Ibrahim Ciftci.

In the 125kg, Sumit Malik could win only one of his four bouts.

Nagal out of Argentina Open

PTI ■ BUENOS AIRES

Playing fearless brand of tennis, India's Sumit Nagal ran world number 46 Albert Ramos-Vinolas close before exiting the ATP Argentina Open after suffering a three-set defeat in the men's singles quarter-final here.

His relentless hitting kept Nagal in the match despite trailing 2-5 in the decider. Eventually errors at key moments spelled his ouster, losing 6-4, 2-6, 5-7 in the quarter-final contest that lasted two hours and 26 minutes.

It is Nagal's best performance on the ATP tour after entering the event as a qualifier.

The gutsy show earned Nagal 45 main draw ranking points that will push him to 132 from the current 150th slot. Yet again Nagal's trademark inside-out forehand was at work as he put the Spaniard under the pump.

Had it not been for some marginal errors from Nagal and luck that favoured Ramos-



Vinolas, it would have been a different result for the Indian, who had shocked world number 22 Christian Garin in the previous round.

Nagal said the performance has strengthened his belief that he can compete at this level.

"I always felt that. I have had lot of close matches with top-60 players recently. So I am there and I am glad I am playing at a

higher level," Nagal said.

Asked about the powerful shots that he kept producing in the marathon match, Nagal said, "I thought that was the right thing to do."

"I still need to improve a lot and be able to keep hitting those with less errors. I am building it (fitness) back as it is different to practice. Mental stress also affects your body a lot," he said.

Nagal admitted that on clay courts, he expresses himself better but he won't put himself under pressure to get into top-100 in this clay court season.

"Definitely, it suits my game. I enjoy it more on clay but at the same time I am getting better on hard courts day by day. It was unfortunate I was so rusty during the Australian trip but those were the circumstances," he said.

"I just want to keep competing and be well. I am not putting myself under any pressure (for breaking into top-100). Let's see," he said.

Nagal earned \$9240 as prize money for his effort.



Talktime
JAMIE LEVER
The comedienne who has been entertaining her fans with bilarious mimicry videos on social media, speaks with Shalini Saksena about how she has finally stepped out of her father's shadow, why and how she ended up with the title Queen of Mimicry and her latest web series LiveltUp 2021

‘I’ve finally stepped out of my father’s shadow’

■ What is LiveltUp 2021 about?

It is an interesting series by Godrej L’Affaire. It is about what everyone went through in 2020 — all things that they complained about or were happy about; we can’t meet our friends, we can’t travel, we are under complete lockdown and sitting and working from home. Then there were good moments

when we got to spend time with family. The series is about celebs and their complaints — what they went through during the lockdown. This is a brilliant concept. For me, 2020 had been significant as an actor and as an artist I jumped on the opportunity when the team approached me. They felt I could bring out all the emotions that we underwent last year. We want people to live it up this year and hence the title.

■ How did you come on board this project?

When I received the call from the team, they were sure they wanted me on board for this project. The emotions that one went through last year, they were sure I could emote them well through my expressions and body language. I am extremely expressive during my shows and the team was sure I would be a perfect fit and be the year 2020.

■ Why choose social media to entertain people?

It is very different. Before last, I was doing stage shows and concentrating on Tv and films. It was only in 2020 that I took social media as a means to entertain. This

is because I was locked up. As an artist I felt that I needed to entertain people. As an artist I have a small fan base. As soon as the lockdown happened there was little in terms of entertainment on TV. Performing on social media is different in terms of the kind of response one gets from the viewers. While on the stage, you will know within a second whether you cracked it or not through the laughter. On social media, people just comment even if they are articulate. But I managed to develop a strong fan base and people enjoyed it. I even had a few viral videos.

■ Have you finally stepped out of your father’s shadow?

I can now say that right now, I have an identity of my own. I have made a mark in the industry. People approach me for what I do. When I first started off, without his help, the minute they would hear the surname Lever, they would know I am his daughter. When people started giving me work, they thought that since I am his daughter, my surname would also be Lever. To being with, I had insisted that I use the initial J as a surname for Janumala since Lever comes with a lot of responsibilities. I wanted to step away from all this. Also,

my father’s name is not Johnny Lever, it is his identity; something that he has created for himself. Now, after seven-eight years people know my work and offer me things because of it rather than due to my father.

■ I understand that besides your dad, you take inspiration from Kapil Sharma and Krushna Abhishek. Why?

Kapil Sharma is known for his spontaneity. The kind of comedy that my father and I do need a lot of preparation and rehearsals. You will see us using hand gestures, doing mimicry, dancing or enacting something. But there are some comedians like Kapil Sharma who just stands at one place and entertains people. These are different styles and I always look at inspiration from them. Bharti is witty. There are many English stand-up comedians from whom I study and learn.

■ How did you end up with the title of Queen on Mimicry?

Mimicry is definitely tough but it comes naturally to me. As a child I would mimic my teachers or copy siblings or people around you; that is how it starts. I would go to Church and come back home

and replicate an accent. I would pick on their body language and expressions. My father was taking notice of this but never encouraged it since he wanted me to finish studies. Marketing is in my background but comedy is in my DNA. Since I am good at mimicry, I just went with it.

■ What are the traits for a comedian in order to excel?

It is important to have a voice of your own and have a unique point of view. Many comedians copy styles of others; this is a strict no-no. It is important to have strong observational powers, something that my father taught me. A comedian looks at things differently and he must capture that and have a USP.

■ What is keeping you busy these days?

I am currently shooting a show that I have on Flipkart app — *For Your Information*. The show is live on the app. It is my first solo show. Apart from this, there is a release in September this year – a web series. I have an interesting character here. I shot for it in Himachal Pradesh once the lock down opened. I am also doing shows on social media since I don’t want to abandon my fans.



A breathtaking view of Lakshmi Temple in Orchha on a bright sunny day, (right) Interior of Lakshmi Temple with paintings engraved on the walls that speak of the Temple’s rich history
Photos: Musba Hashmi



‘Directors like Ray, Tarantino and Fellini inspire me’

DURBA SAHAY, filmmaker-writer who made her directorial debut with *The Pen*, released her latest venture *Aavartan* recently. SHALINI SAKSENA chats her up

■ How did you get the idea for the movie?

A few years back, I used to write for a Hindi literary magazine called *Hans*. Rajendra Yadav was the owner. I have penned a book as well titled *Raftaar*, it is a collection of 11 short stories. When I would meet him, we would talk of many things and stories would come from the conversations. I once asked him how he felt when somebody wrote better than him and is younger to him? His answer was an eye-opener. I feel jealous but I want them to fly and make a place for themselves.

■ Why choose guru-shishya as a subject?

I like art. It could have been a painter or a singer or any other artist. But I love Kathak and wanted Gen Z to know about various dance forms like Odissi, Mohiniyattam and Bharatanatyam. Today’s generation only knows item dance numbers. In every movie there is an item number. I want the youth to watch this movie. I know for sure that if they watch it, they will like it.

■ Was it tough to make a film on this subject?

It was definitely tough. Choosing the location was an issue. There were financial constraints as well. But otherwise, things panned out smoothly.

■ Why is it that the so-called ‘art films’ not get financial backing? What and where are the roadblocks?

This is because a film that has no item song and no known actors has no takers. Financers want names of big actors. My film has neither. But I was determined to make this film and financed it myself.

■ How did you get into directing from being an actor?

I wanted to direct films from the very beginning – from the time I used to watch Satyajit Ray movies. When I saw his movies, something clicked inside me and when I got the opportunity, I took it. I have seen many world classics. I have seen the work of directors like Quentin Tarantino and Federico Fellini. If a person wants to make a brilliant film, they must first watch movies made by them.

■ You have experimented with new and somewhat unconventional ideas. Why?

Like I mentioned, I have been highly motivated and inspired by the work of people like Ray, Tarantino and Fellini. Hence, choosing unconventional subjects comes organically to me.

■ Such movies have few takers. Why make them?

I made *Aavartan* because I love Kathak and the thought that I must make a movie on this came to me and stuck a few years back.

■ What is Aavartan about?

The film is about *guru-shishya parampara* and *pratispardha*; how life is cyclic in nature but in this relationship the evolution takes place. *Aavartan* is a story of a guru and her shishya and features the cycle of it. *Aavartan* means cycle.

■ In the review last week, the starcast was incorrect. Apologies for the same. Why and how did you zero in on Sushma Seth, Shovana Narayan and Sunit Razdan?

Shovana Narayan is a friend; I have known her for 25 years. She is like an elder sister to me. When I started writing the story for this movie, I wanted to make a short length film. But there was so much information and things in my mind that they didn’t fit in the 30-40-minute screenplay that I was writing at the same time. In 2018, I finally decided to make it into a full-length film and completed it in 2020. Sushma Seth, I chose because first, she stays in Delhi and second, she is easily accessible. I love her acting as well. She is such a nice person and extremely accommodating. Sunit Razdan is a family friend.

■ You own a cultural centre with an auditorium which has produced several plays. Tell us about that.

I was introduced to theatre during my school days. But the real magic became in 2003. We had our well-equipped theatre and started theatre repertoire titled Renaissance. This produced several plays and travelled across India. At the same time, we hosted several professional plays.

■ What next?

I have already started on my next project. I have the subject in my mind though I have yet to begin writing it. But I intend to do so soon.

MUSBA HASHMI travels to the hidden gems of Madhya Pradesh to explore what the cities have on offer and how these destinations of eternal beauty call for attention, making them a must visit on your travel list

A not-so-dense forest with rocks up for a toss and an enchanting zigzag road canopied by the trees leading towards nothing less than heaven sound like a faraway fancy land. Often underrated because of famous tourist hubs and numerous hill stations, the place leaves you spellbound with a wish to revisit it innumerable times. A place that gives you a peek into India’s culture and history, Orchha makes you fall for its beauty. Known for its temples, one of the most famous being Raja Ram Temple, Orchha gives you a walk down the memory lane of the country’s remarkable past.

The owl-shaped Lakshmi Temple, now non-functional, takes the visitors on other-worldly experiences filled with spirituality. The exquisite interior and the exterior of the temple are hard to ignore, with every wall telling the history through engraved paintings of mythological stories. According to a local tourist guide, though the paintings have faded with time, the preservation work is trying to bring it back to old glory or save other paintings from a similar fate.

Madhya Pradesh does not fail to mesmerize you when you venture out in search of peace, tranquility, and a slice of history. When you drive around and look beyond the usual humdrum of life, Chhatris on River Betwa will open up the book of Bundela dynasty rulers’ grand life as if you are living in that era. These 15 chhatris, resembling a semi-open umbrella, are built in the memory of the rulers and their members.

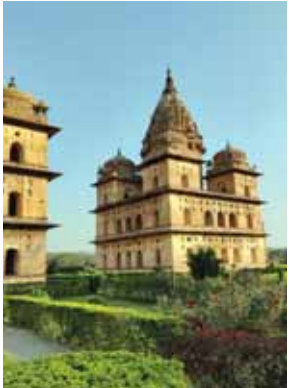
Not only taking you on a trip down memory lane and bask in the glory of the past, but Madhya Pradesh also gives you a lesson or two on conservation of nature’s balance. Being developed as Vulture Conservation Centre by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Chhatris allow you to relive the times when it was normal to spot vultures near your city. Once in abundance, this beautiful bird has been listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List since 2002. It is magical to witness these



A magnificent view of the Western Group of Temples

regal birds going about their daily life and providing the much-needed balance to life. It takes you back to the question: Why humans had to intervene when Mother Nature has provided these scavengers to save us from the rotting carcasses strewn all over the place. Well, the question calls for a different debate altogether; the fact remains that such commendable work needs appreciation as you see these birds happily frolicking here on a piece of land in Madhya Pradesh.

When in Orchha, how can you not hop, skip and jump to a place that is merely at a distance of 200 kms. It is a place that sometimes evokes smirks, but the glimpse it gives in the past life is incomparable. This mystical land is of Khajuraho, which magnetically pulls you towards its highly decorated temple walls with engravings of love etched intricately to make you feel the innate emotions and divinity behind it. A stroll amidst the well-preserved ruins is a must to understand the deeper meaning hid behind the engravings. Well, you might also have to ignore the voyeurs



Chhatris in Orchha



A herd of spotted deer enjoying the morning sun in Panna National Park

FOR A LUXURIOUS STAY

Any trip is incomplete without a beautiful place to stay in. And no matter how enchanting your destination is, if your stay doesn’t speak of luxury, it will definitely leave you with a bad taste. To solve all your travel woes, we have a few options that will make your stay as pleasant as your trip.

WHEN IN ORCHHA, CHOOSE BEST

This beautiful property is situated overlooking the Betwa River and is appealing enough to catch your attention. However, what makes Betwa Retreat, Orchha stand out of the clutter is its half-tent rooms. Yes, you read that right. Giving you a cozy feel, the half-tents gives you a slight feeling of living in a forest. The scenic view of the property also speaks the same.



WELCOME TO KHAJURAHO

This one will definitely give you a luxurious experience. Less than 10 minutes away from Khajuraho Dance Festival, MPT Payal and its staff makes sure that there is nothing to complain about. The best part of these spacious rooms is the view from the window. You open the curtains only to see loads of greenery and langoores soaking in the sun, if you are lucky to make it there on a bright sunny day.



TRUE EXPERIENCE OF PANNA

If you are to visit Panna Tiger Reserve, Tendu Leaf Resort is waiting to give you a grand welcome to the jungle. This beautiful location will small hut-shaped cozy rooms makes you feel at home.

If you are a sea food lover, the resort is heaven for you. The greenery makes sure you to give you a detox so that you can go back home rejuvenated.



in between. Known for nagarastyle architectural symbolism and erotic sculptures, Khajuraho also attracts visitors to the Khajuraho Dance Festival, a one-week long annual fest that is held in February 20 to February 26, that showcases all the classical dance forms and lots of Bundelkhandi food along with options of taking souvenirs for an unforgettable visit.

After a long day, a well-deserved rest is a must and MP Tourism’s Kutni Island, less than 25 minutes away from Khajuraho, having a scenic view of a river makes you forget all the leg work you did to capture the history, culture, and nature of the state. Situated near Kutni Dam, this stay-over place will make your heart skip a beat as

you get down in the sound of flowing water as you grab a cup of coffee sitting at Sunset Point to watch the scorching sun go down to make way for a cool Moon.

Last, but not the least, a trip to The Tiger State of India is definitely incomplete without visiting a National Park.

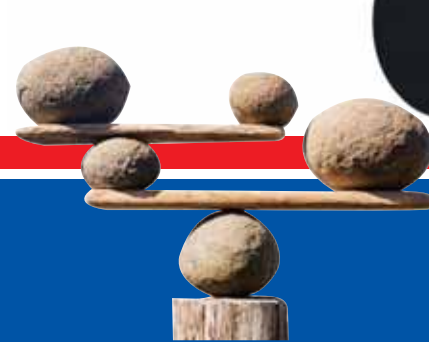
With only a 15 minutes drive away, Panna National Park, spread over 542.7 sq km calls for your attention. More so, if you want to catch a glimpse of P1 51’s (tigress, P stand for born in Panna, 5 stands for fifth generation) recently born cubs who are seen playing in the core area, but only if you are lucky enough.

The rich fauna of the National Park includes leopard, chital (spotted deer), chinkara,

nilgai, sambhar, and sloth bear. It is also home to more than 200 species of birds including the bar-headed goose, honey buzzard, king vulture, blossom-headed parakeet, changeable hawk-eagle and Indian vulture.

However, this is not the sole reason why one should visit Panna, one must go there to experience the serenity of the jungle. And if you dig deep into the forest, you can also experience the wild talking to you.


Even a four-hour safari will fall short to experience and talk to the wild. There are chances that you might not be lucky enough to see too many animals, but don’t be disappointed, you will return rejuvenated and with tranquility because this is what the power of the wild can do to you.



the pioneer

agenda

I think that an actor is more likely to be forgiven in the public's eye than an actress
— Mila Kunis

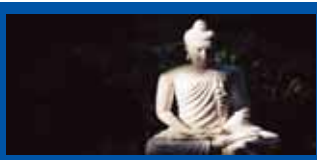


FROM THE INSIDE

The power of attention

The connection to God is not hard to make. It is just a matter of making the choice that this is what we want to do

2



Calm mind for dhyana

Train your mind to remain disengaged as a silent witness. Only when you pay attention, you get affected

4

MAPPING THE SACRED DWELLINGS OF SHAKTI

Renowned writer and historian DR ALKA PANDE narrates that while the Shakti Peethas represent a single philosophical fold, they are a testament to the diverse legends of Shakti. An edited excerpt:

Originating from Sanskrit, the word ‘Peetha’ means ‘seat, altar, shrine or dwelling’. In the case of the Shakti Peethas, it is very specific. It is the sacred space where the Supreme Goddess rakes a strong, well-founded sear on Earth. Each of the Peethas have been turned into shrines for the Goddess by the very people who believe in the absolute power of the feminine. Each site where the 51 body parts of Sati fell, came to be known as a Shakti Peetha.

A teertha is a crossing. As with most Sanskrit words, there are multiple meanings of this too. Teertha is also the passing of the *atman* to the *parmatman* the crossing from the physical world to the metaphysical world. These 51 sacred sites are also linked by theologists and scholars to the 51 alphabets of the Sanskrit language. In each of the Peethas also resides *Kaalbhairava*, which is another name of Shiva. Most of the Shakti Peetha shrines contain a naturally appearing stone which becomes the object of worship around which the temple shrine is built.

Vindhyavasini is an additional Shakti Peetha, which I have deliberately not included in the 51 Peethas. While a powerful dwelling of Shakti, Vindhyavasini is not the abode of Shakti as Sati’s body parts. It is, however, the preferred choice and home of Yogamaya, the sister of Krishna, who escaped from Kamsa’s prison at Mathura.

Kalika Purana indicates that there are four Adi Shakti Peethas, which is further affirmed in the commentary and text of *Brihat Samhita*. It lists the names of the location at various places in India such as Vimla temple, Odisha, where her feet fell, Tara Tarini temple in Behrampur, Odisha, where her breasts fell, Kamakhya temple in Guwahati, Assam, where her *yoni* or vagina fell and lastly, the Kalighat temple in West Bengal, where her right toe fell.

THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE DEVI

Since antiquity, Goddess worship has been part of the Indic tradition of India. In fact, the Goddess is even more popular than Shiva and Vishnu. All the manifestations, avatars or appearances of the many forms of Devi belong to the pantheon of the Shakti cult. The Supreme Goddess can be a gentle life-giver as in the case of Lakshmi, Saraswati or Parvati, or as the mistress of death in the form of Durga, Kali and Chamunda. She is a fascinating juxtaposition, both life-perpetuating and potentially destructive. In her life-giving form, Shakti can be represented as beautiful, benevolent, maternal, knowledgeable, compassionate and even desirable to the best. She invigorates, cheers and brightens the entire universe. She is represented and described as an idealized woman who is imbued with beauty, virtue and righteousness, and adorned with jewels. In fact, her iconography is drawn from the pre-modern depictions of the *salabanjikas*, *apsaras* and *surasundaris*. In this form, Shakti embraces and enlivens all aspects of reality. As the goddess of destruction and disease, she takes on rather unattractive and repulsive forms. As Sitala Devi Manasa, or Kali, the Devi is shown as haggard, ugly, unkempt and emaciated. However, whatever the form, it is always powerful.

I have dipped into both Puranic and Shakta texts to read the many interpretations and mythologies associated with the iconography, rituals of worship, devotion and representation of the Shakti Peetha as sites of immense power and energy. Each devotee enters the site of the Peetha through their own path of worship, through their respective understanding of the Great Goddess. The *wama panthis* or Shakt worshippers, for whom Shakti/Devi is supreme, enter through the tantric path, which is a sectarian movement.

The 51 Peethas have their own singular iconography and their own specific modes of rituals, worship and even prasada, with some standard common offerings like flowers, sweets and vermilion.

RITUALS OF PRAYER AND DARSHAN

While the Shakti Peethas were specific to the body parts of Sati, the rituals of adoration, prayer and worship differed from region to

Kottari Devi (Hinglaj Mata) Temple, Pakistan

region, given the culture and history of the place. Over time, the Peethas became linked to their respective regions. The local people took ownership of them and started claiming rights over the teerthas and sites. Naturally, the local food and religious and cultural traditions started getting preference over the stated Puranic or standard Sanatan *dharmashastras*.

In the temples, the daily rituals of worship were similar to the presiding deity, who was normally male, i.e. Vishnu or Shiva, and the feminine was worshipped in the form of their consorts. However, in the Shakti Peethas, the presiding deity was a body part, which while having its own specific service or prayer, was enfolded in the larger narrative of the worship of Shakti in the form of Devi.

The purpose of puja (prayer) is to appease, soothe and mollify the powerful Goddess and embrace the divine energy expressed as life force. The life force itself has many variations, from auspiciousness, health, desire for children, wealth and success, gaining power over intellectual and artistic skill, even victory over enemies. The ritual of puja is heavily invested in darshan. While doing puja, the concept of making eye contact with the deity is the key. Darshan is a two-way concept where the devotee sees the divinity and in turn, the divinity sees the devotee. The concept of darshan crosses all spaces, from intimate puja corners at home in domestic spaces to large public temples including the 51 Shakti Peethas.

The very act of darshan/view is the crucial key that creates the iconic moment where the devotee and the divine are in complete sync. This is the reason why ‘Shakt’ worshippers make long and arduous journeys to the Shakti

SINCE ANTIQUITY, GODDESS WORSHIP HAS BEEN PART OF THE INDIC TRADITION OF INDIA. IN FACT, THE GODDESS IS EVEN MORE POPULAR THAN SHIVA AND VISHNU. ALL THE MANIFESTATIONS, AVATARS OR APPEARANCES OF THE MANY FORMS OF DEVI BELONG TO THE PANTHEON OF THE SHAKTI CULT

Peethas. The idea is to take the energy of the Supreme Goddess while receiving her blessings. The religious rites have three distinct classifications: *Nitya*, which is daily, normally done at home; *Naimittika*, which are important days of the deity, and particular festivals (some special to the *ishta deva* at home or to the presiding deity of the temple); and finally *Kamyas*, which are optional, but a highly desired teertha being one of them.

The ritual of prayer to Shakti is also vested in the *panchbhootas*, where the five *gnanaindriyas*, or senses, are included in the aspect of puja:

Panchbhoota	Jnanindriya	Sense	Puja	
Akash	Space	Ear	Hear	Pushpam
Vayu	Air	Skin	Touch	Dhoopam
Agni	Fire	Eye	Vision	Lamp
Jal	Water	Tongue	Taste	Water/Ghee
Bhoomi	Earth	Nose	Smell	Chandan

PRASADA

Prasada is both an offering and a blessing. It is offered by the devotee when he/she begins the ritual of puja. In domestic spaces, the devotee performs the puja at an individual, intimate level, often making prasada or an offering of fruits, and a rice and milk pudding with saffron strands and sprinkled with mewa/ nuts, particularly almonds and raisins. What I have observed in the offerings by the devotees, is that for Shakti, it is a bali, or animal sacrifice, normally a lamb and sometimes even a buffalo. The very basic prasada for Shakti is meat, alcohol for Bhairava, and a sweet, normally a rice pudding. Since the Shakti Peethas have been appropriated

by the devotees of the region, naturally the prasada of the Peetha also acquires a local flavour. In Eastern India, it is primarily kichdi and kheer with poori and potato curry; in South India, it is a variation of the local rice, i.e. pulihora; in Andhra Pradesh, a jaggery laddoo; and in Western India, at the Amba temple in Banaskantha, a delicious sweet made of chickpea flour, the mohanthal, is offered along with sindoor, and makhanas, or dried lotus seeds. In this way, almost every region brings in its regional flavour and speciality as part of the prasada offered at the Shakti Peethas.

Meat as prasada is served in the temple community kitchens only on special occasions when specific sacrifices are conducted. Holding water in the palm of their hands, or *achaman*, the devotee asks for forgiveness and blessings before beginning their prayer. In the large public temples, it is the priest who becomes the conduit of devotion and reverence. He is the intermediary who while performing the ritual acts, offers food and flowers to the presiding deity of the temple. Worship in a temple begins by circumambulating the temple and the *garbhagriha* where the deity lives.

The myth of Sati and the 51 Peethas is an important myth in the worship of the Supreme Goddess. It lays down the template for all those who believe in the Absolute Power of the Mother Goddess, crossing borders from Tantra to Mantra, from *Devi Bhagwat Purana* to *Yogini Hridaya Tantra*, right down to the popular Grama Devi in a village to the Kula Devi of a Rajput clan.

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Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

Syrian quagmire: How long and for what?

The Syrian Civil War started as a non-violent uprising in the middle of March 2011. Today it is a full-fledged war which involves several nations and world's prominent jihadi outfits such as Islamic State (ISIS), al-Qaeda and splinter groups of these two mainstream groups. However, the Baathist Syrian Arab Republic headed by President Bashar al-Assad has survived a decade in power despite military challenges from all corners of the country.

Estimates emerging from various human rights agencies and independent media reports say that by end of December last year, the death toll in the war was between 3,87,000 and 5,93,000. The UN reports that more than 5.6 million have already fled the country and over 6 million have been internally displaced so far.

Although many complex events pushed the Syrians into this war, one that stands out is the historic Arab Spring, started in the early months of 2011. This 21st century movement mainly inspired by digital platforms across North Africa through the West Asia finally triggered the uprising in Syria. But then quickly, the Arab Spring had turned into mass gathering in the form of non-violent protests against the authoritarian and family-ruled regimes in all these countries.

In Syria, in the month of March, 15 schoolchildren were arrested and tortured for writing graffiti which was rightly inspired by the Arab Spring. One of the boys was killed as well. The arrest of these schoolchildren sparked outrage across Syria. Soon after, people came out on the road and demanded the release of all the children and raised slogans for basic freedoms for all in the country. The Assad regime responded by killing many protesters and this led to the demand for his resignation by the demonstrators. Subsequently, the clashes broke out between the masses and the supporters of the Government. This gradually spiralled into the full-blown war, what the whole world is witnessing today, involving terror groups of various nations of the world. But at its heart, the conflict highlights the tragic Shia-Sunni divide among the Muslims in the entire region.

The failure of the UN-led efforts to bring the warring parties to the negotiation table last month in Geneva has once



again brought war clouds over this West Asian nation. The United Nations should take the lead and restart the Geneva process. So far, the UN strategies have broadly failed for Syria. If it moves in the same direction, can it be so that the organisation is complicit in the crimes committed by the Assad regime?

Now, what America is doing to bring peace to Syria is that it is back again. The latest American strike in Syria has signalled President Joe Biden's new war game in West Asia.

The so-called messenger of peace and reunion of America badly divided by former President Donald Trump, Biden is now targeting Iran-backed militias in Syria. His administration is justifying the attack as the missile sallies are directed towards rebels that are propping up the Assad regime. The US Air Forces dropped 500-hundred-pound joint direct attack munitions at a crossing used by Iranian backed groups reportedly

killing 17. The particular groups hit by the limited US strike are Kataib Hezbollah and Kataib Syiaid al-Shuhada. Meanwhile, Dennis Ross, a former Senior US official and West Asian expert, says the attack was designed to show that there would be a military response if US forces were targeted, or the militias continued to strike. The Assad administration was quick to remind Biden that the American attacks were a cowardly act and urged Biden not to follow the law of the jungle.

The country's Foreign Ministry condemned the attack on areas in Deir al-Zor, near the Syrian-Iraqi border. The statement released by the Ministry highlighted that Biden Administration is supposed to stick to international legitimacy, not to the law of the jungle as did by the previous administration.

It's really ironic that Biden and Harris, the duo is repeating what once Trump simply did. When Trump ordered a

strike on Iran in 2019, Biden sharply reacted and tried to offer a sermon to him: "Trump's erratic, impulsive actions are the last things we need as Commander-in-Chief. No President should order a military strike without fully understanding the consequences. We do not need another war in the Middle East, but Trump's actions toward Iran only make that likely."

And what Biden is doing now? He knows very well how an American President responds to the crisis zones in the "Middle East". Precisely, nothing has changed in Washington, except the man giving orders. What Obama did, Trump followed and now Biden is taking it forward. America clearly has no strategy for the West Asia and North African (WANA) region. Its policy towards the region is outdated and dangerous. It's meddling carelessly with Iraq, Iran and Syria. Washington has no coherent policy to deal

with Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad. So obviously, finding out a solution for the Syrian war demands a new approach with a purely humanitarian concern.

Only with the collective efforts of the US, Russia, Iran and Turkey, peace can be brought to war-torn Syria. Biden's engagement with Putin, Erdogan, Rouhani and Kadhim (Iraq) would matter the most in bringing a permanent solution to the chaos in Syria. That is why the stability in West Asia demands more than a deal with Iran from Washington. The experts and policy practitioners opine that regional issues in this part of Asia could no way be comprehensively addressed.

They all agree that Iran would no way concede its sustained support for regional proxies and halt its ballistic missile programme in the near future. It is widely felt that isolating Iran was purely counterproductive. So to address, Tehran's troublesome behav-

iour in the region, it is better to handle each regional conflict through separate and parallel platforms at the same time.

Why is Moscow equally concerned about the chaos in Syria? It is not only to save the embattled Assad regime, an old ally of Russia, but also to stave off the growth of the Islamic terror in Russia. Hence, the Syrian conflict is not just a far-away battle for Putin regime. The life-time monarch is longing for stability at any cost. He knows fully well that the jihadists may get enough ground for their subversive models in his vast country. Of course, this might alter Putin's long-term strategies to keep the opposition and western pressure at bay. His regime is not best equipped to counter the ISIS, the way it is raging its ugly head in the WANA region. Russia's relationship with Syria dates back to 1950s and the Cold War. In those days, the USSR used to train the top brass of the Syrian military. What lies ahead in Syria?

By 2020, the Syrian civilians faced another year confronting life-threatening challenges. It is all about their survival as all of them are fighting for basic amenities such as food and medicines.

However, the last year saw the discernible decrease in violent conflicts across the country. But this does not mean that warring groups are retreating. No single rebel group is considering withdrawing from the war zones. The reason behind is that all these groups are backed by strong allies and they want to pursue the war till the fall of the Assad Government.

The Human Rights Watch notes, "With the unprecedented depreciation of national currency, the imposition of further international sanctions and crises in neighboring countries, the Syrian economy went into freefall for much of 2020. For ordinary Syrians, this translated into an inability to procure food, essential drugs, and other basic necessities. As a result, more than 9.3 million Syrians have become food insecure and over 80 per cent of Syrians live below the poverty line."

This correctly reflects the situation on the ground and insurmountable challenges faced by the millions who are caught between warring zones.

Only way to solve the imbroglio in Syria is to establish a UN-backed transitional regime and pressurise Assad to step down. A presidential election is meant to be taking place in Syria this summer. It would be a total disregard to millions of those who are suffering and a sham on global governance platforms such as the UN. The world body is not talking anything about this. And it is abandoning the Geneva peace process.

In fact, the Syria Constitutional Committee that demands a political process would be useless if the UN does not stop the upcoming presidential poll for Assad. This election would offer full immunity and legitimacy to the torturous and autocratic regime in Damascus. It's time to act. Ensure that no more civilians die. There is no need to secure peace when hardly anyone will be there to share the joy of the same. Washington should not employ the old tactics to handle the dictators in WANA.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

India's collective responsibility to eradicate TB

While the prioritisation of TB at the national level has been commendable, States must sustain this momentum by effectively implementing the policies and ensuring optimum fund allocation and utilisation. It is only with the collective approach we will be able to rid the country of this deadly disease



DIGAMBAR BEHERA

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of awareness on infectious diseases. Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease that needs our attention as much as the SARS-CoV2 because it affects over 26.4 lakh Indians each year. An estimated 4.45 lakh Indians lose the battle to this ancient disease that is both preventable and curable.

It has therefore been extremely encouraging to see the heightened commitment towards TB elimination from the highest levels of Government leadership. Since the announcement by the Prime Minister to eliminate TB by 2025, five years ahead of the UN Sustainable Development Goal target, at the End TB Summit in New Delhi in 2018, comprehensive plans have been developed to achieve this goal.

The launch of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination introduced pivotal interventions, including a four-fold increase in funding, launch of private sector engagement to improve access to care as well as initiation of social support schemes to support patients in completing their treatment. However, there is still more to be done.

While the prioritisation of TB at the national level has been commendable, States must sustain this momentum by effectively implementing



the policies and NSP interventions and ensuring optimum fund allocation and utilisation.

The funding of the NTEP is divided on a 60:40 ratio, where 60 per cent of the total funding is provided by the Central Government, and State Governments are expected to fund the remaining 40 per

cent. However, in addition to fund allocation, fund utilisation and efficient implementation of the programme at the State level remains a challenge.

The Central TB Division has developed a State TB Index that highlights the performance of States based on targets achieved, funds utilised, among others towards achieving the

goal of TB elimination. While some States have made significant progress towards these goals, with Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala (among the large States) performing well on all indicators, including fund utilisation, many large States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal still reflect poor fund

utilisation and thus have challenges in the implementation of the programme. Another critical challenge at the State level remains the paucity of human resources — with vacancies in critical positions required to be filled.

The other challenge that the programme faces is the lack of awareness about the disease

that negatively impacts health seeking behaviour. In the past year, the pandemic has brought about a positive change in people and their appetite for information on health, thereby giving us an opportunity on this positive behaviour to generate awareness about TB.

The launch of the TB Harega Desh Jeetega campaign in 2014, with the country's biggest movie star Amitabh Bachchan as the face of the campaign, was a game changer at the national level. However, there is a need to amplify the campaign at all levels, including States, districts, blocks and villages, to improve access to information and generate the demand for TB care.

Along with improving communications for awareness generation, it is also critical for the programme to directly engage with the community at all levels. Not only do community champions aid in generating awareness to destigmatise the disease, but their voices also serve as an important feedback mechanism for the programme.

Under the NSP, the National TB Elimination Programme established TB forums at the State and district levels to bring to the fore community voices, patient perspectives and understand ground-level challenges faced by patients in accessing care.

Continued and effective functioning of these forums will provide the programme with independent monitors who can help in highlighting localised gaps that need to be addressed. At the district levels, elected representatives can also serve as independent monitors of the programme providing oversight and aid in addressing localised challenges to ensure effective implementation.

The call for a Jan Andolan by Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan is timely and aims to engage 1.3 billion people of this country to take ownership of the programme and ensure we achieve the target of a TB free India. It is crucial for the programme to take cue from this call to action and reflect the targets and initiatives through direct and relatable messaging which will generate awareness among the people on where to seek treatments, what incentives they are entitled to, and thereby improve health seeking behaviours. It is only with the collective approach we will be able to rid the country of this deadly disease.

(The author is chairman, National Taskforce, National TB Elimination Programme, and Professor and former HoD, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, PGIMER, Chandigarh)



Lucky number 6
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Friday

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Thursday

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Tuesday

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Magenta
Lucky day Friday

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Calm mind for *dhyana*

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