

# FREE-PRESS

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DENIED TICKET, KERALA MAHILA CONG CHIEF  
TONSURES, RESIGNS FROM POST Pg-7



## News Brief

Cong-AIUDF alliance forged to divide people, says Rajnath

**BISWANATH :** Attacking the Congress for forging an alliance with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday alleged that the opposition grouping is only interested in grabbing power by dividing people on religious lines. Terrorism and insurgency have declined in the state leading to the speeding up of the government's development activities, the senior BJP leader said while addressing rallies in Biswanath, Gopur and Dergaon assembly seats where election will be held in the first phase on March 27.

**US, Chinese ships patrol same area near Taiwan**

**TAIPEI:** Amid rising tensions in Indo-Pacific, a Chinese destroyer was spotted prowling near American Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS John Finn off the southeast coast of Taiwan on Thursday. US Navy's 7th Fleet on Wednesday announced that USS John Finn had carried out a "routine Taiwan Strait transit" that day "in accordance with international law", Taiwan News reported.

**7 states account for 87.73 pc of new Covid-19 cases**

**NEW DELHI:** States like Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh are showing a steep rise in the daily new COVID-19 cases and have accounted for 87.73 per cent of the new instances of the disease reported in a day, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. Maharashtra registered the highest daily new cases at 15,602, followed by Kerala with 2,035 and Punjab 1,510 new cases.

**Terrorist killed in encounter in Shopian**

**SHOPIAN:** A terrorist was eliminated in an encounter with security forces in the Rawalpora area of Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian on Sunday. "The killed terrorist has been identified as Jahangir Ahmad Wani, a resident of Rakh Narpora of Shopian affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba," the Jammu and Kashmir police said in a statement. According to the Shopian Police, a joint cordon and search operation was launched on Saturday night by the police, 34 Rashtriya Rifles and 14 Battalion of CRPF in the said area.

## Poll panel rules out 'attack' on Mamata

SUSPENDS CHIEF OF SECURITY, SP & REMOVES DM

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA

The Election Commission on Sunday said that the injury caused to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram was not a result of an "attack", as per the findings of state's Observers and Chief Secretary.

The official source of the poll body said that there is no evidence of an attack carried out on Banerjee.

This comes after the EC inspected the reports submitted to it on the Nandigram incident, in which the TMC chief suffered injuries and fractured her leg.

However, the EC has suspended IPS officer Vivek Sahay, acting director of security for the West Bengal Chief Minister, with immediate effect. Charges are likely to be framed against Sahay for lapses that led to Banerjee's leg injury in Nandigram on March 10. Officials said charges will be brought against the IPS officer within a week for failing to protect Banerjee, who is a Z+ protegee.

The poll body has further directed Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay to



CM Mamata Banerjee during her roadshow

Make treatment history public, BJP to EC  
BJP wrote to the Chief Electoral Officer in the state, demanding Chief Minister's treatment history at SSKM hospital to be made public. "The alleged attack has been used to extract the maximum possible political mileage. TMC and its cadre have attempted to use the Chief Minister's purported injury which seems self-inflicted in order to gain sympathy and cause violence in different parts of the state," reads the letter from the BJP state unit.

post Sahay immediately, after consulting with the DGP and following the extant procedure. The posting order has to be submitted to the commission latest by 1 pm Monday. The EC has also placed

CONT'D. ON P8

Purbi Medinipur SP Pravin Prakash under suspension. The decision was made under the observations made by the commission after analysing the reports of the attack.

CONT'D. ON P8

"I have advised Bengal farmers to ask grain seekers to fix an MSP of Rs 1,850 per quintal for paddy before giving them a single grain of rice," Tikait told reporters here. He said after Bengal, he was planning to visit other parts of the country to press for the enactment of a law guaranteeing an MSP for various crops. "In Bihar, the paddy is currently being bought by traders at an abysmally low rate of Rs 750 to Rs 800 per quintal. I want a law guaranteeing the minimum support price for various crops," said Tikait.

CONT'D. ON P8



INDIA WIN 2ND T20: Skipper Virat Kohli and Kishan during second T20 cricket match between India and England, at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, on Sunday

## ANTILIA SCARE NIA gets cop Waze's custody till Mar 25



MUMBAI Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze, arrested in the probe into recovery of explosives from a car near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, was on Sunday remanded to the NIA custody till March 25 by a court here.

The NIA, which arrested Waze (49) on Saturday night, brought him to the court in south Mumbai after taking him to a local hospital for his medical examination, an official said. The court remanded him to the central agency's custody for further probe in the matter, he said.

The NIA, while seeking Waze's custody for 14 days, told the court that they

had received some inputs about his role in placing gelatin sticks in the SUV that was found parked near Ambani's multi-storey residence 'Antilia' on February 25, and that when he was questioned about it, he admitted his involvement.

Following that, Waze was placed under arrest, the probe agency said. Waze has been arrested under IPC sections 286 (negligent conduct with respect to explosive substance) 465 (forgery), 473 (making or possessing counterfeit seal, etc with intent to commit forgery), 506(2) (punishment for criminal intimidation), 120 B (criminal conspiracy) and relevant provisions of the Explosive Substances Act, the official said.

CONT'D. ON P8

The body was found by the couple's relatives on Sunday. They then informed the police. Bheel attacked the victim with a stone leading to her death, said Sampat Singh, SHO, Dabi Police Station.

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## Neeta Ambani to be BHU visiting prof

LUCKNOW

The Reliance Foundation Chairperson and Working Director of Reliance Industries, the country's biggest business conglomerate, Neeta Ambani, has been made a Visiting Professor in the Social Sciences faculty of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). A proposal sent to her by the Women Development Study Centre of the Faculty

of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, has been verbally accepted by Neeta Ambani's office.

The BHU authorities are eagerly awaiting a written acceptance to schedule her lectures for the benefit of girl students in the department.



A senior faculty member Prof Kaushal Kishore said that she was the best person to teach girl students considering her vast experience in the fields of business as well as social activities.

"As per the new policy of the Central govern-

ment, our aim is to link studies with entrepreneurial skills. Neeta Ambani ji fits the slot," claimed Prof Kishore.

She took over Reliance Industries as Working Director in 2014.

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'I AM OKAY WITH EVERY ART FORM AS LONG AS I AM GETTING PAID! Pg-12



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THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

He who is free from ego never feels humiliated.

Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai

Indo-Pak Indus Commissioners to meet on Mar 23

NEW DELHI

The Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan will meet here on March 23 and 24 to discuss a host of issues, including Islamabad's concerns about the design of Indian hydropower projects on the Chenab River, a top official said on Sunday.

This will be the annual meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission. Under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty, both the commissioners are required to meet at least once a year alternately in India and Pakistan.

"The meeting will take place in New Delhi on March 23-24," PK Saxena, India's Indus Commissioner, told PTI. This will also be the first meeting between the two commissioners after the nullification of special provisions under Article 370 that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The state was later carved into two union territories -- Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Since then, India has cleared several hydropower projects in Ladakh. They are Durbul Shyok (19 MW), Nimu Chilling (24 MW), Rongdo (12 MW), Ratan Nag (10.5 MW) for Leh, while Mangdum Sangra (19 MW), Kargil Hunderman (25 MW) and Tamasha (12 MW) have been cleared for Kargil.

STATE GOVT ISSUES FRESH GUIDELINES TO COMBAT COVID

7-day quarantine, thermal screening must for people arriving from M'rashttra

ALLAHABAD



BKU-led farmer agitation against the central farm laws may continue till December, the outfit's national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait said here on Sunday.

Tikait made the statement while talking to reporters here after his recent visit to the poll-bound West Bengal.

"This agitation possibly will stretch up to November or December this year," he said.

Talking about his Bengal visit, Tikait said during poll campaigning there, the central government people have been asking farmers to give them one mealful of rice.

The passengers coming from Maharashtra will be subjected to thermal screening before entering the state and also have to undergo seven-day quarantine, said the home department in a statement.

The passengers coming

OUR STAT REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Amid the surge in Covid-19 cases, the State government has issued fresh guidelines and imposed new restrictions on people travelling from Maharashtra.

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The passengers coming

Business units will have to put social distancing floor markings outside their units. Use to mask has been made mandatory and the admin will penalise those found guilty

Khandwa, Khargone, Barwani, Burhanpur, Ratlam and Ujjain districts to intensify 'roko toko' campaign. The campaign focuses on creating awareness towards Covid-19 guidelines and checking those flouting safety norms. The two agencies have been asked to use public address systems on vehicles to ensure that people follow Covid-29 safety measures like mask wearing and social distancing.

CONT'D. ON P8



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CAG report titled 'Appropriations Accounts, 2018-'19'

# Is the BJP, or Congress interested in making state's residents happy?

**More than 40 per cent of Budget allocated for spreading 'happiness' in the state was left unutilised**

RAJESH THAKUR  
BHOPAL

Both the Congress and BJP governments, it seems, are not much interested in making the people of the state 'happy'. In 2018-'19, more than 40 per cent of the Budget allocated for spreading 'happiness' in the state was left unutilised.

**THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

The BJP was ruling the state till November 2018, after which the Congress formed the government after the Assembly elections in November-December of that year. Government functioning remained paralysed due to the imposition of the election model code of conduct for the Assembly elections from October 6 to December 12. Then, from March 10, 2019, the model

code of conduct for the Lok Sabha elections came into force. Every year, the size of the state Budget has been increasing. Allocations are made and the governments make a lot of song and dance about them. But, at the end of the year, the allocations remain unutilised.

According to the report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General titled 'Appropriations Accounts, 2018-'19', the Happiness Department could use only Rs 3.44 crore of the Rs 8.5 crore allocated to it in that fiscal year. An amount of Rs 5.05 crore remained unutilised.

**WHO CARES ABOUT THE 'ANNADATA'?**

Out of the Rs 4,922 crore allocated to the police department, Rs

**BUDGET ALLOCATION AND UTILISATION (FY 2018-'19)**

AMOUNT (IN CRORE)		
Allocated	Utilised	Unutilised
2.38 lakh crore	1.87 lakh crore	51 thousand crore

1,220 crore remained unutilised in the same year.

The farmers' welfare and agriculture development department was allotted Rs 16,864 crore, but could use just Rs 7,181 crore — less than 50 per cent of the allocation. Both the Congress and the BJP governments have been shouting from the rooftops about their commitment to farmers. But, going by the data, they are not actually interested in the welfare of the 'annadata'.

The health department also failed to utilise Rs 1,393 out of Rs 6,393 crore. The PHE department, which is responsible for water

supply in the state, failed to utilise Rs 592 crore. The urban development and housing department, which was allowed to spend Rs 8,094 crore, could utilise just half of it, with Rs 3,710 crore remaining unutilised. The PWD failed to use the Rs 733 crore allocated for the repair of existing roads and construction of new ones.

**SCHOOL, HIGHER, TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

The school education department, which was allocated Rs 11,058 crore, was not able to use Rs 2,771 crore. The higher education department failed to use an amount of Rs 1,430 crore. The technical education, skill development and employment was voted Rs 12,678 crore but left Rs 3,954 unutilised — this,

when unemployment is growing in the state and students coming out of colleges are said to be unemployed because they lack skills which are in demand in the market.

**TRIBAL, SC & MINORITIES DEPARTMENT**

Out of Rs 12,180 crore, the tribal welfare department failed to use Rs 2,898 crore. The Scheduled Caste welfare department could not spend 2,929 crore. The Food and civil supplies department failed to utilise Rs 2,858 crore out of the total allocation of Rs 5,120 crore. The poor state of minorities welfare department can be judged by the fact that it was allocated a paltry amount of Rs 6 crore. Adding insult to injury was the approach of the officials of the department who spent only Rs 23.31 lakh.

## Gas agency owner found dead under mysterious circumstances

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

A 39-year-old gas agency owner was found dead in his house under mysterious circumstances on Saturday night.

The deceased, Himanshu, was a resident of New Subhash Nagar in Aishbagh and owned a gas agency in Raisen district. On the day, his family was out of station and when they returned home, they found the trader lying unconscious on bed.

Prima facie it appears that the trader died of poison, however, police investi-

**Police suspect poisoning behind his death, but are still to trace bottle from the spot**

gation would establish the exact cause of death and whether it was a suicide or murder. Aishbagh police said Himanshu is survived by wife and two children. The trio had left for Chhindwara in the morning and when they returned at around 9.30 pm, they found the main gate of the house open.

On entering the house, they found Himanshu lying unconscious on bed. The family rushed him to hospital, however, the duty

doctors declared him brought dead. The Aishbagh police were informed and later the body was sent for postmortem.

SHO Aishbagh Ajay Nayar said police suspect poisoning behind his death but have not yet found any bottle of poison from the spot. The statements of family members will further throw light on the case, he added. Police have registered a case and have initiated a probe into the incident.

**ONLINE SESSION ON AUTHOR'S JOURNEY OF WRITING HER FIRST BOOK...**

## Ishavasyam Dash speaks on 'Murder at Moonlight Café'

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Club Literati organised an online session with Ishavasyam Dash on the journey of writing her first book, 'Murder at Moonlight Café and Other Stories', on Zoom.

The session was moderated by her father, PK Dash, who is the author of eight books. He lives in Bhopal and retired as additional chief secretary in the government of Madhya Pradesh.

Ishavasyam Dash is a marketer and works with start-ups in Bangalore. She took a sabbatical from her day job to fulfil her childhood dream of writing a book and released the collection of short stories in January 2020. The book contains 11 short stories in multiple genres, including murder mystery,



magic realism, horror, slice-of-life and mythology, among others, and stands out in its unusual themes and strong woman portrayals.

The daughter-father duo discussed the motivation behind wanting to write a book, the process of writing, experimentation with different styles and how the author built discipline

to write every day. This was followed by PK Dash and Anthony de Sa reading out excerpts from the book. The session was witnessed by such book-lovers as Ashish, Shreya, Nachiketa, Kanishka, Anshul and Mudita.

President of the club Seema Raizada began the session with the introduction of both the authors. She also proposed a vote of thanks.

## Event 'Talash'eJoahar' by MP Urdu Academy

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh Urdu Academy organised an event, 'Talash'eJoahar' at the Mulla Ramuji Sanskriti Bhawan in the city. It was organised under 'Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsava'.

The event was based on three sessions. The first session began with an extempore contest on topics related to Independence. Around 60 young participants took part in the contest. They wrote essays and stories related to patriotism. Asad Hasmi from

Sironj, Altaf Ansari from Burhanpur and Tanvir Raza Barkati from Burhanpur secured the first, second and third positions, respectively.

Sultana Hijab, Nafeesa Sultan Ana and Urooj Ahmed were present on the judges' panel.

Mumtaz Khan conducted the session. It was followed by a second session in which experts Khalid Mahmood and Nauman Khan threw light on the importance of such an event.

The event ended with a musical performance by Rajeev Singh. Director of the academy Nusrat Mehdi was present.

Govt to move SC against HC order on quota in local bodies

HC Gwalior Bench has stayed reservation process for heads of civic bodies

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL**IYC motivates youths for local body polls**

**BHOPAL:** Indian Youth Congress members are going to contribute their efforts towards the local bodies' elections. The decision was taken at the executive body meeting held at the PCC office on Sunday.

The meeting was held by state president Vikrant Bhuria, who motivated the youths to participate in the elections.

He took stock of the programmes executed by the members of the wing. Bhuria asked the members to help the party choose the right candidates for the elections and asked them to respect the party's decision in the elections. State spokesperson Vivek Tripathi has done all the proceedings as mentioned in the law. Same rotation procedure was adopted last time as well," said Singh.

We will urge the apex court to cancel the order of Gwalior High Court and to resume with the electoral process for the local bodies, the minister said.

Earlier, the High Court had directed the state government to conduct local body elections within three months. After this the state government had published the revised voters list on March 3. It was speculated that local body elections could be announced in the same month. After recent developments now all eyes are on the Supreme Court. If the decision comes in the favour of the government

then the elections could be announced in the first week of April.

Gwalior High Court had stayed the reservation process for heads of 81 local bodies on Saturday.

## 2 women boxers selected for world C'ship

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
Bhopal

Two women boxers have been selected for the world championship to be held at Kielce in Poland. Gitika Narval and Nisha Gurjar have been selected at the trials that were held in Rohtak on Sunday. They have been training at the National Centre of Excellence in Bhopal. The trials were organised at the National Centre of Excellence in Rohtak under the Sports Authority of India. The World Championship is set to be held in April.

**ON THIRD DAY OF 10-DAY EXHIBITION-CUM-SALE 'HUNAR HAAT'...**

## Energy of Sufi singing duo Nooran Sisters brims over

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Bhopalites witnessed an energetic performance of Sufi singers, the Nooran Sisters, at the Lal Parade Ground in the city on Sunday evening. It was part of the third day of the 10-day exhibition-cum-sale, 'Hunar Haat'. The event has been organised by the Union ministry of minority affairs to promote artisans on the theme, 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local'.

They presented such songs as 'Allah hoo', 'Ali Ali', 'Tung-tung baje', 'Tere bin nahi lagda mera dholna', 'Mai baar baar tanha', 'Ae we Allah waaleya jugni ji' and Ranjha, ranjha kardi ve main', winning the hearts of the audience who were present in good numbers.

The Nooran Sisters — Jyoti Nooran and Sultana Nooran — are a Sufi singing duo from Jalandhar. They perform classical music of the Sham Chaurasia gharana. The sisters were trained from early childhood by their father, Ustad Gulshan Mir, grandson of Bibi Nooran and son of Swarn Nooran, a Sufi singer of the 1970s. Iqbal Mahal, a Canadian music promoter, discov-

**Products on display & sale**

Besides, artisans from Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and so on have brought rare, elegant and magnificent indigenous handmade products for sale and display.

erred the sisters in 2010 and played a big role in their success. In 2013, they performed at the Baba Murad Shah Dargah in Nakodar for the first time and became very popular from that night onwards. Their song, 'Allah hoo', was a YouTube hit. After that, such songs as 'Mae yaar da diwana' and 'Patakh guddi' played an important role in boosting the duo's popularity. They have sung many songs for Bollywood movies.

## Finally, cultural fest Anugunj to begin today

More than 500 students of government schools to showcase their talents at programme organised by school education department

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

The two-day cultural festival Anugunj, which was earlier scheduled to start from March 12 and was postponed due to bad weather, will now begin from Monday.

The program will be launched by the Minister of State for School Education Inder Singh Parmar on 15 March. The two-day program of the school education department will be held from 6:30 pm at the Government Subhash School of Excellence. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will be the chief guest at the closing ceremony on Tuesday. Parmar will preside over the program.

The first day will see a live performance of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', was earlier scheduled for 12 and 13 March, which was postponed due to adverse weather. The 'Anugunj' function of the School Education Department is a creative endeavor that focuses on the students' education as well as their creative and all-round development.

It is noteworthy that the event of Anugunj-2021, organised on the concept of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat', was earlier scheduled for 12 and 13 March, which was postponed due to adverse weather. The 'Anugunj' function of the School Education Department is a creative endeavor that focuses on the students' education as well as their creative and all-round development.

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Sironj, Altaf Ansari from Burhanpur and Tanvir Raza Barkati from Burhanpur secured the first, second and third positions, respectively.

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The event ended with a musical performance by Rajeev Singh. Director of the academy Nusrat Mehdi was present.

The district administration organised a cycle rally and march on Sunday to spread awareness about cleanliness. The participants were made to pledge that they would keep their surroundings clean. All of them were given a complimentary T-shirt and cap before they went ahead.

The rallies were flagged off from five different spots by officials of Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC). The rallies kicked off from Lalbagh, Iqbal Maidan, Minal Residency, C-21 Mall Hoshangabad Road and Swarn Jayanti Park in Kora.

The divisional commissioner of Bhopal, Kavindra Kiyawat, and director of



the sports and youth welfare department Pawan Jain were present at Lalbagh. Additional commissioner KVS Chowdhary flagged off the rally from C-21 Mall and he, too, took part in it.

The rallies from all the spots visited different areas of Bhopal with the message of cleanliness and environment protection and ended at the TT Nagar Stadium.

The participants were given tokens of different colors in one batch and, in the end, a lucky draw was organised. The Top 2 participants chosen from the lucky draw were given bicycles, while four were given helmets.

On the occasion, Kiyawat said, "Sanitation is a responsibility of all of us and we have to work together to make our city the cleanest in India." He highlighted the efforts that the civic body was making to keep our streets clean.

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## OVERHEARD

## Minister-PS showdown

A powerful principal secretary and a minister have recently locked horns over certain issues. The minister wanted to take a decision on an important matter. There was a consensus on it at a meeting. But when the minister asked the principal secretary to issue an order for it, the latter refused to do that. The minister then said he, himself, was the government. Reacting to the statement, the principal secretary reportedly told the minister to remove him from the post. The officer even said that he would work according to the chief minister and not according to the minister. The principal secretary's words have angered the minister. So much so that he has opened a front against the sahib. The minister has clearly told the important leaders belonging to the RSS and the BJP that the government has begun to incur losses because of the principal secretary's stubbornness. After all, the collision between the minister and the principal secretary is not something new. Once the minister entered the officer's cabin and yelled at him. They have entered into arguments several times. A few other ministers and a few legislators are also angry with the principal secretary, but they cannot do anything against the officer since he is very influential.

## Powerless now!

A retired IPS officer recently got a shock. Once, the sahib was so powerful that everyone had to follow his orders. A recent happening has disappointed him. The sahib, whose wife is posted to an organisation of the central government, has a big government house which was allotted to him. The sahib wanted that, instead of that house, another bungalow should be allotted to his wife on the ground of her being a government officer. The Sahib had lobbied for that for several months and used the clout of a minister, too, to get that done. The minister also wrote a note to the chief minister for allotting a house to the sahib's wife. The higher-ups in the government suddenly changed their mind, nonetheless. Therefore, the decision to allot a bungalow to the sahib's wife was scrapped; besides he has been told to vacate the bungalow where he lives. This incident has put the sahib's nose out of joint. A few months ago, when the officer was handling an important inquiry, he barely gave importance to anyone. Now, the situation has come to such a pass that nobody gives him any weight.

## All-powerful PS

Whether it is the Congress's rule or the BJP's, the influence of a female principal secretary in a department never declines. Many in the department have begun to say, "Na khata na bahi jo PS kahein wo sahi (Principal secretary's is the last word in the department)." During the Congress's rule, too, the then minister of the department used to issue orders for several things, but the principal secretary had the last word. The BJP has returned to power, but the principal secretary is as influential as she was in the Congress rule. The minister or any other officer looks powerless before her. Only what she wants happens in the department. She says 'yes' for everything on the face of the minister. But everything goes according to her, though. It is because of her honesty that she rides herd on everybody. A few people are, however, unhappy about her uprightness. A senior officer has opened a front against her. The officer has begun to say that she favours the people of a particular community.

## 'Kaju' Sahib

Dark clouds are hovering over a few officers close to a principal secretary who is fond of eating cashew nut. He always munches dry fruits sitting in his cabin at Mantralaya. The sahib has given the charge of fetching cashew nuts for him to his subordinates. They get dry fruits for the principal secretary from different places. Any of his subordinates may be asked to bring dry fruits for the sahib. He has projected himself as Mr Clean. Nevertheless, a few persons close to him do everything for the sahib. Every month, many household goods are sent to the sahib's residence. A man fetches those items from a commercial city in the state. The gate to getting anything done through the sahib opens from that commercial city. He may refuse to follow the minister's orders. But, whenever a few people of that city ask him to do something, he never declines that. Now, it is up to anyone to appreciate what actually lies behind the sahib's Mr Clean image.

## Clever officer

The chief minister's words of praise have made a principal secretary very happy. Nevertheless, other officers played a more important role than the sahib did in the work for which he got pat on the back from no less a person than the chief minister. A commissioner-level officer worked hard to discharge his duties, assigned to him to complete the job, without creating any fuss. The principal secretary, however, never said how much work other officers did to finish that job. Once powerful, the principal secretary is now out of the mainstream administration. After the chief minister's praise, he hopes to get an important posting in the coming days. The officer is as slick as a whistler. In the Congress rule, he got an important posting by pleasing the then powerful politicians. He still keeps people happy with his sugar-coated words. At the same time, it is true that wherever he goes he hogs the limelight.

## Troubles ahead

The collector of an important district may be in trouble any time. He is not on good terms with the divisional commissioner. It is because of that bitterness that the commissioner has begun to give adverse feedback about the collector. He informs the higher-ups in the state capital about the collector's misdeeds. There are many complaints against the collector from different places. There are reports that a relative of the collector is in touch with other officers in the district. The relative concerned demands dough from them for getting any work done through the collector. The commissioner complains about it to other officers. As a result of that, the soreness between them has deepened. The government has received complaints against the collector from other sources, too. His name is on the list of officers who are supposed to be shifted in the ensuing administrative reshuffle. He has, however, been able to stick to his position because of a powerful politician who has again swung into action to save the collector.

Nitendra Sharma

Common man is consistently being blamed for coronavirus rebound...

## ...But politicians stand exposed in The Emperor's New Clothes

Smita  
Bhopal

Government functionaries have been consistently blaming the common man for the rebound of the coronavirus. It is being said that the people have become careless; they are not wearing masks, not maintaining social distancing, are holding parties, not visiting doctors upon developing Covid-like symptoms and so on. The government has also declared its intention of imposing night curfew in some cities in the state.

On the other hand, the government, itself, is organising festivals, fairs, rallies and functions where huge crowds gather. On Sunday, a mega-cycle rally was organised by Bhopal Municipal Corporation to promote cleanliness. Around 4,000 boys and girls took part in the event.

A 10-day 'Hunar Haat' is currently underway in the city. The Union government is the organiser of the fest, which was inaugurated by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at the Lal Parade



Ground on Saturday. Exhorting people of the city to visit the event in large numbers, the chief minister has assured the artisans and craftsmen who have set up their stalls at the fair that all their stocks will be exhausted.

Earlier, the state government had organised a 'Hunar Haat' at Bhopal Haat. The

chief minister had also inaugurated the celebrations of the 75 years of Independence at the Shaurya Smarak earlier this week. The government plans to hold hundreds of functions under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava theme in different parts of the state.

On Mahashivaratri, the chief minister had per-

## 'Double standards of govt'

The government is adopting double standards. All the corona norms are meant only for shopkeepers and the common man. The people are suffering, small traders are suffering. However, political rallies, public meetings and fairs are being organised. On Mahashivaratri, we all saw how Shiv bazaars were taken out under the patronage of politicians violating all the norms.

— ANUPAM AGARWAL,  
GENERAL SECRETARY, BHOPAL THOK KIRANA  
VYAPARI MAHASANGH

## 'Just to avoid holding polls'

Who can stop the government? It can do what it wants. But I can tell you that now that Gwalior High Court has stayed the urban local body elections, night curfew will not be imposed. The government was planning to impose night curfew just to avoid holding municipal elections in Bhopal and Indore. Everything is being politicised.

— SATISH GANGRADE,  
PRESIDENT,  
NEW MARKET VYAPARI SANGH

## 'Should lead by example'

The ministers and top officers should lead by example. Mere sermonising won't do. The government shouldn't organise functions where huge crowds gather. Social distancing is simply not possible at such events.

— JAYA CHATURVEDI, student

## Ab Tak 31L, State seeks 81L more Covid-19 vaccine doses

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPL

**Chief Minister meets Union health minister**  
**Dr Harsh Vardhan, seeks approval for medical colleges in Damoh, Seoni and Chhatarpur**

gas tragedy victims.

Chief Minister also sought Centre's approval for three new medical colleges each in Damoh, Seoni and Chhatarpur. The government in its budget has proposed nine medical colleges in the state.

Chouhan also urged the Union minister to enhance the Centre's contribution towards sharing vaccine expenses at Cancer Institute, Jabalpur.

The Central government was to bear 75 per cent expense and the state government the rest, however, the Centre had reduced its share to 60 per cent.

Besides, in review meeting with the health department, CM expressed

concern over the rising trend of Covid-19 positive cases in major cities like Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior and Jabalpur. Corona cases have also witnessed a rise in districts bordering Maharashtra.

"The surge in the number of cases is a serious concern. I don't want to create a situation of panic but people should continue taking preventive measures, otherwise, government will be compelled to impose night curfew at place witnessing an increase in Covid-19 positive cases," said the Chief Minister. Chouhan appealed to the public for strict adherence to COVID-19 norms. "We must bear in mind that the virus is still here in our midst. We cannot afford to flout the protective measures against the infection. I request the public to observe strict compliance to mask-wearing, social distancing, and hand-washing norms," he added.

## Despite rise in active cases, no increase in sample tests

MP is one of 7 states that are showing a steep rise in daily new Covid-19 cases and accounts for 87.73 per cent of new instances of the disease reported in a day

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPL

Testing has not been increased in Madhya Pradesh in the past one week even after active cases increased. On an average, 16,000 samples were

DATE	ACTIVE CASES	SAMPLES
March 13	4,512	16,040
March 12	4,335	14,873
March 11	4,094	15,950
March 10	3,915	16,635
March 9	3,711	14,886
March 8	3,638	16,023
March 7	3,606	16,777

tested from March 7 onwards. Madhya Pradesh is one of seven states that are showing a rise in daily new Covid-19 cases and accounts for 87.73 per cent of new instances of the disease reported in a day.

Madhya Pradesh has been witnessing a worrying spike in the rate of Covid-19 infection despite an intensive and accelerated inoculation drive through which nearly 15 lakh vaccine doses have been administered to beneficiaries so far.

But the way the health department is carrying out sampling for tests shows that, along with the increasing trend of active cases, sampling has not been increased. Secondly, there is no synchronisation between active cases and samplings and it is leading to an increase in the number of corona-positive cases. Currently, the state has been registering a corona-positive rate of over 4 per cent.

Medical experts stress the need for aggressive testing to curb the number of corona cases and they say that the health department should increase testing accordingly, or else the other districts which have started reporting corona cases will become hotspots again as in the last year.

Burhanpur, which was an ideal district in Madhya Pradesh in 2020 as far as containment of corona cases went, now has over 100 active cases. So, such incidents are an eye-opener for the health department.

## 3Cs must to convert plans into reality: Gadkari

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPL

**Sarthak Edu-Vision inaugurated;**  
**Educationists, vice-chancellors and eminent personalities will deliberate on the educational scenario of Bharat and vision for the next 50 years**

government. The three-day 'Sarthak EduVision' was inaugurated at the RGPV Nornonha Academy of Administration and Management by Gadkari in presence of Chief Minister on Sunday. Higher education minister Mohan Yadav, Sports and youth welfare, technical education and skill development and

employment minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia, school education minister Indra Singh Parmar, culture and tourism minister Usha Thakur, UGC chairman Prof DP Singh and AICTE chairman Dr Anil Sahastrabudhe were present at the inaugural session.

An exhibition has also been organised and various sessions will be held to deliberate on Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Educationists, vice-chancellors and eminent personalities are going to take part in this programme. They will deliberate on the educational scenario of Bharat and vision for the next 50 years.

Nobel laureates Mohammad Yunus and Kailash Satyarthi will also address the conference.

## Corona+ve rate in MP is now 4.5%

BHOPAL: MP reported a 4.5 per cent corona-positive rate on Sunday. The state reported 743 corona cases, pushing the infection tally to 268,594 and toll to 3,887, with two deaths. The state has 4,740 active cases. Around 16,481 samples were sent for testing, while 92 samples were rejected.

Indore reported 263 corona cases and its tally went up to 62,152 and toll to 942, while Bhopal reported 139 corona cases and its tally went up to 621. Other major cities, such as Jabalpur and Gwalior, reported 45 and 30 corona cases. In Indore, active cases reported were 1,629 and, in Bhopal, active

cases reported were 882. Gwalior has 152 active cases, while Jabalpur has 222 cases. Ujjain has 194 active cases with 24 corona cases, while Ratlam has 127 active cases with 24 corona cases.

## 111 MORE SESSION SITES

- 111 session sites were set up for vaccination in Bhopal on Monday
- Vaccination will be for the 60-plus category and co-morbid cases
- In case of co-morbidities, people will have to bring certificates from doctors registered with the MCI
- Those administered the first dose will be administered the second
- CMHO Dr Prabhakar Tiwari said beneficiaries could get themselves registered with the Arogya Setu or CoWin app or go straight to the session site

## Light rain likely again from Thursday through Monday

**But clear weather to prevail for the next three to four days**

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPL

Madhya Pradesh may experience light rain again from March 18 to March 22 as the intensity of the western disturbances has once again picked up pace in March. A good amount of rain and thundershowers, as well as snowfall, has occurred over the western Himalayas.

However, with the clearing of clouds and rain activities, the temperature started soaring in Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. Clear weather is likely to prevail for the next three to four days. Bhopal recorded a day temperature of 34.5 degrees Celsius after a rise of 1.9 degrees Celsius, while it recorded a night temperature of 16.7 degrees Celsius after a rise of 1.1 degrees Celsius. Indore recorded a day temperature of 34.3 degrees Celsius, while it recorded a night temperature of 18.3 degrees Celsius after a rise of 0.9 degrees Celsius.

However, with the clearing of clouds and rain activities,

## IN THE DISTRICTS

Pachmarhi recorded a day temperature of 29.0 degrees Celsius after a rise of 0.8 degrees Celsius, while it recorded a night temperature of 12.6 degrees Celsius after a marginal drop of 0.2 degrees Celsius. Sagar and Umaria recorded a rise of 2.4 degrees Celsius in the day temperature. Both Sagar and Umaria recorded 33.8 degrees Celsius after a rise of 2.4 degrees Celsius. Damoh recorded a rise of 2.5 degrees Celsius in the day temperature, which settled at 34.0 degrees Celsius.



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FREE PRESS FOLLOW-UP: MGNREGA GHOST LABOURERS SCAM

# FINALLY, POLICE BOOK 5 SARPANCHES, 5 EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANTS AND 5 GRAM PANCHAYAT SECRETARIES

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Sardarpur

For the reasons of the state the Sardarpur and Amjhara police have registered FIR against the accused in irregularities in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee fraud, after waiting for almost three months.

Those booked are four sarpanch, five employment assistants and five suspended Gram Panchayat secretaries of Dhar district.

Amjhara police station in-charge Ratanlal Meena confirmed that an FIR has been registered under Section 420

(cheating), 409 (criminal breach of trust), Section 13 (1) (D) of the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 against the Gram Panchayat secretary, employment assistant of Khakedi village.

While Sardarpur police station in-charge Abhinav Shukla said that currently, he is busy in probing a murder case and confirmed that an FIR is registered at his police station. He and added that it's 14-page FIR and he will able to provide a brief only after reaching the police station.

In December, 2020 jandpad chief executive officer (CEO) Shailendra Sharma terminat-



IN FREE PRESS ON DEC 30, 2020

## News in Brief



## Felicitation programme organised

**GUNA:** A felicitation programme was organised under joint aegis of Neki Ki Deewar and Pollution Control Board in which 16 women social workers of the town were felicitated. Team Neki Women's Wing was also constituted. Women were felicitated for their work in different fields. Pollution Board's KB Sharma, Bupendra Namdev, Vishnu Gurjar, Ajay Mewda, Team Neki's Dr OP Birthare, Dr Ramveer Raghuvanshi, Hari Vijayvargiya, Rakesh Mishra and others were present. Programme was presided over by Dr Preeti Saxena. Pushp Raag conducted the programme and Rakesh Sharma proposed vote of thanks.

## CM, kin to immerse ashes of Nandu Bhaiya in the Narmada

**BURHANPUR:** Asthi Kalash Yatra of Late MP Nandkumar Singh Chouhan will be taken out from Shahpur on March 19 at 7am. Yatra will cover the main thoroughfares of the town and will conclude at Omkareshwar by 4pm. There his kin will immerse the remains of beloved Nandu Bhaiya in the holy Narmada River. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will also be present. For the Yatra, BJP district president Manoj Ladhave has allocated various responsibilities to the various mandal in-charges.

## Excise department seizes hand-made liquor, motorcycle

**SARDARPUR:** The excise department of Sardarpur circle seized a Hero Deluxe motorcycle, which was used for transporting 45 litres of hand-made liquor and 130 litres mahua lahan illegally in Fulgawadi village on Saturday. A case has been registered in this connection, said assistant district excise officer Basanti Bhuriya. Free Press published news on March 13 regarding cheap and expensive liquors available and about the increase in sale of hand-made liquor. Consequently, the excise department once again seized hand-made liquor and mahua lahan.

## Legal Awareness Camp held

**KHACHROD:** Legal Awareness Camp was organised by Legal Aid Committee on Saturday in presence of chief guest additional district and sessions judge Alok Saxena. Camp was presided over by Advocate Association president Chandraprakash Choradiya, he said that every citizen must be aware of their duties and rights in order to follow the laws. Association secretary Sandeep Choudhary provided information related to the law to villagers present. Programme was conducted by advocate Shreyansh Dalal and secretary Sandeep Sharma proposed vote of thanks. Paralegal volunteers Mukesh Bhilwala, Savan Singh and others were present.

## World Consumer Day today

**DHAR:** World Consumer Day will be celebrated under the guidance of collector Alok Kumar Singh at district panchayat meeting hall on March 15 at 1pm. District Consumer Forum president PS Patidar will be the chief guest. Discussion and exhibition will also be organised.

## Students demand general promotion

**NAGDA:** Students led by former committee president Narendra Gurjar submitted a memorandum against general promotion of PG students and exams for undergraduate students to Government College principal PB Reddy on Friday. The memorandum was addressed to higher education minister Mohan Yadav. Through the memorandum, students have informed the minister that no classes were held for nine months in 2020-21 academic session due to pandemic. They said that classes resumed after January 20, 2021 and that too were irregular. Hence, students were unable to study properly. They criticized the decision to give general promotion to PG students and hold exams of undergraduate students. Expressing concern over second wave of corona in state they demanded general promotion for all students, including the under graduates.

## Man booked under MP Freedom of Religion Act

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Dhar

A man has been booked in Dhar late on Saturday under recently enacted Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act.

The complainant alleged that one Zoef, son of Rafique barged into her residence and molested her, she alleged.

The girl then approached Kotwali police station. On learning about the incident the members of a Hindu organisation rushed to the Kotwali police station and staged a protest demanding the arrest of the accused.

The complainant is pursuing her graduation and resides at a rented room in Dinalpuram Colony. She alleged that Zoef first introduced himself and be-

## FREE PRESS FOLLOW-UP: MESS IN TRIBAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

## Ex-BEO, mandal coordinator arrested in Rs 16-cr fraud case

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Udaigarh

Udaigarh police have arrested two more accused including ex-block education officer Naval Singh Rawat and Head of pay center and then mandal coordinator Hiram Rajput in connection with the infamous Rs 16 crore embezzlement case in the tribal welfare department.

Rawat is charged for withdrawing Rs 59,26,564 while Rajput has been charged for withdrawing Rs 1,16,453 in an unauthorized manner.

Police investigating officer inspector PS Damor said that four accused including Bholaprasad Patel, accountant Rituraj Singh Solanki have been arrested so far.

Rawat and Rajput were produced before the court and the court has sent them into the police remand.

Damor added that details

■ 4 accused arrested so far  
■ 6 BEOs, 6 staff of accounts section still on the run

of the assets of all the accused are also being collected. According to the rules, the government will be compensated for said embezzlement by confiscating the property of the guilty.

On July 16, 2020, Alirajpur district tribal welfare department's assistant commissioner had lodged a police complaint against school education department accountant Rituraj Singh Solanki under sections 409 (breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 467 (forgery of valuable security), 468 (forgery for purpose of

cheating), 471 (dishonestly uses as genuine any document), 120(B) (criminal conspiracy), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence) of Indian Penal Code.

A probe under the direction of then SP of Alirajpur, Vipul Shrivastava revealed that that Rs 16 crore were misappropriated by the accused including: embezzlement of Rs 1,05,99,520 by the then BEO Dungarsingh Solanki, Rs 2,51,40,510 by Bhola Prasad Patel, Rs 59,26,564 by Nawalsingh Rawat, Rs 40,48,786 by Paramanand Dhakad, Rs

36,79,627 by Madhulal Parmar; Rs 33,49,000 by Ramkumar Tomar, Rs 23,28,239 by Naveen Shrivastava, and Rs 23,67,6809 by Dr Suraj Singh.

Besides eight BEOs, other employees including accountant, assistant grade II, and the center head who were posted in Alirajpur between 2011 and 2017 are accused in the case.

So far only four accused in the case have been arrested, while six BEOs and six other employees of the accounts section are still on the run, said Damor.

Police station in-charge among 3 cops line-attached

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Alirajpur

Taking cognisance of the case in which a Bolero car went missing from the Nanpur police station premises, department on Sunday has taken action against Nanpur police station in-charge and two other police personnel for showing dereliction in duty.

The department has confirmed that police station in-charge Mohan Dawar and two others were reportedly line-attached. On October 26, 2020, a Bolero car (MP 09 WBO 672) was seized in Soliya village for transporting illicit liquor six months ago. A person was also arrested and produced in the court. But, even as the case was going on in the court, the Bolero was parked in the police station premises suddenly went missing.

## Leopard attacks boy in Amjhara

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Dhar

## BIG CAT RESCUED FROM INDORE RELEASED IN NAHAR JHABA

Barely 24-hours after creating havoc in Indore's Limbodi village, a big cat attacked a ten-year-old boy in the Amjhara area. The child has received serious injuries and is undergoing treatment at Amjhara Hospital. His condition is said to be stable.

According to the information, in Jamnipada village of Tanda forest area, the boy Gyan Singh, son of Toofan Singh Vaskel was suddenly attacked by a leopard when he was out to defecate in open.

The leopard dragged him for about 15 feet. The boy sounded an alarm and fortunately his uncle heard his cry for help and rescued him. He was rushed and admitted in the

Amjhara hospital. Dr AK Choudhary provided primary treatment to the boy. The boy has received eight stitches and is under observation, added the doctor.

A minor girl suffered severe injuries when her hair got entangled in a ferris wheel.

A 14-year-old the victim was en-

joying a ferris wheel ride at the fair. But she went too close to the ride and her hair got stuck in the ferris wheel.

In the accident, an entire portion of her hair got ripped off from her scalp, resulting in bleeding from her head.

As soon as she started screaming, the operator stopped ferris immediately and rushed her to the civil hospital.

People who witnessed the incident said that it was a hair-raising incident. The trauma and shrieks of the

girl were unbearable and will haunt the onlookers for long said a villager who witnessed the incident.

The girl was given primary treatment at Civil Hospital and was later referred to Burhanpur by Dr Ansari. Her condition is improving, said doctors.

Meanwhile, the incident exposed security lapses at the fair. Sans adequate safety equipment and rescue facilities the rides at such fares pose risk to the children who fancy them.

## Minor girl sustains serious injuries as her ponytail gets stuck in ferris wheel

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Burhanpur

A tragic incident marred the merriment of the villagers during the Maha Shivaratri fair at Shivali village about six kilometers away from Nepanagar village of Burhanpur district on Saturday late in the evening.

A minor girl suffered severe injuries when her hair got entangled in a ferris wheel.

The 14-year-old the victim was en-

## 'Check corona negative report of people entering from Maha'

## Border check posts inspected

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Burhanpur

Amid rise of cases in Maharashtra, on Friday, collector Praveen Singh and SP Rahul Kumar Lodha inspected border check posts as Burhanpur. The district shares borders with Maharashtra.

SP and collector inspected Loni Checkpost Nachankheda, Dedhatlai, Bhotafata, Antaruli and asked the offi-

cers and staff to check RT-PCR negative report of people who are entering into the district from Maharashtra.

The officials deputed at check posts are imposing fine on people flouting corona norms. The officials are also reminding people to avoid going to hotspot districts, crowded places and to stay safe to keep their city

## Collector gets second dose of corona vax

**BURHANPUR:** Collector Praveen Singh got the second dose of corona vaccine at the district hospital on Saturday. Phase 2 of the vaccination is underway in the district. Chief medical and health officer and civil surgeon Shakeel Khan were present.

and kin safe.

Sub-divisional officer revenue KR Badole, chief municipal and health officer Dr MP Garg and other officials were also present.

## PANCHANG 15.3.2021 (UTTARAYAN)

Samvat 2077

Saka 1942 : Prag Krisna 2 Monday 6.50 P.M.

Month : Nakshatra : Revati 4.43 A.M. then Aswini

Yoga : Shukla 7.46 A.M. then Brahma

Karan : Taitti .....

Moon : Min 4.43 A.M. then Mes

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# Incomplete warehouses should not be made purchase centres: Gupta

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Sehore

Collector Ajay Gupta has directed officials to get ready for procurement of wheat, gram, masoor (red lentil) and mustard seeds. Gupta issued the above directive at a time-limit meeting on Sunday. All sub-divisional magistrates and officials concerned with procurement were present at the meeting.

The collector asked the officials to hand over the procurement work to women self-help groups as early as possible.

Gupta directed the officials not to turn warehouses that are incomplete or under-construction into procurement centres. Only those warehouses that are complete should be made procurement centres. Apart from that, there should not be any problems

for farmers who come to the procurement centres to sell their crops, the collector said. The officials should look into the farmers' complaints and solve them immediately, he added.

The sub-divisional magistrates were told to review the preparations for procurements and transportation of grains. There should be electricity, drinking water and other facilities at the procurement centres.

Chief executive officer Harsh Singh and additional collector Guncha Sanobar also reviewed the work of various departments. The collector directed food officers to open ration shops regularly. He said that all beneficiaries should get rations and women self-help groups should be allotted ration shops.

Food and drugs inspectors have been told to collect samples to check food adulteration.

**Two traders booked for opening fire at neighbouring shopkeeper**

OUR STAFF REPORTER  
Bhopal

Talaiya police have booked two traders for opening fire at their neighbouring shop owner over wall extension. The accused as well as the victim run adjacent shops in Itwara area.

On March 1, the two traders scuffled over extending boundary wall of the shop. Mohammad Nasir was extending his shop's wall to which the other shopkeeper Neeraj Batham and Chintu objected. Following the heated argument, Neeraj Batham and Chintu opened fire at Nasir.

The complainant Mohammad Nasir told police that the duo first threatened and then shot at him. Nasir said his father was against going to police complaining against their neighbours and so he did not approach police on the day. But, Nasir later lodged a complaint with the CM help line and the matter was forwarded to the Talaiya police. A case was registered against the two men on Sunday. ASI Shobharam Verma said the two have been booked under Sections 336, 294, 323 and 506 34 of IPC. Both are absconding.

**12-year-old boy found lying unconscious in tin shed**

**HIS HANDS AND FEET WERE TIED**

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Multai

A 12-year-old boy was found in an unconscious state in a tin shed at the weekly market behind the BRC office on the Nagpur road on Saturday. His hands and feet were tied.

The incident has shocked the residents of the area. According to reports, the 12-year-old son of Shekhjani, resident of the Gandhi ward in Multai, went missing from his house at 2 pm on Saturday. His family

members called him up several times, but he did not receive their calls. Then, his parents began to search for him. He was found lying unconscious under a tin shed late in the evening.

The boy told the police that an unidentified person had brought him to the tin shed. The boy was not in a position to say anything else. Upon getting information, the police rushed to the spot and took the boy out of the tin shed.

The police have begun a probe into the case and said they found a gadda and some playing cards in the tin shed.

**6 held while plotting a robbery at petrol pump**

RAJGARH

Rajgarh police have arrested six armed men while plotting a robbery at Sisodia petrol pump.

The team produced the accused in the court on Sunday. The police were tipped off about the robbers' plan. Police have seized sword, four knives, an iron rod and a safari car from their possession. The accused include Jitendra Kumar Suri, Sunil Kumar Suri, Hamrendra Nayak, Shivshankar Suri, Raju Suri and Abodh Yadav, the residents of Sitamarhi in Bihar.

The victims realised that they were duped when Saxena kept dilly-dallying the land registry process. The residents then filed a complaint against Saxena at Dehat police station. In

**Man poses as colonizer, dupes 12 people of Rs 44.17 lakh**

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Hoshangabad

A man duped 12 people of Rs 44.17 lakh posing as a colonizer in Hoshangabad.

The accused, Akhilesh Saxena, a resident of Golden Silicon City in Malakhedi, fled with money he had collected from the people promising houses in the colony he was developing.

Saxena even performed Bhoomi Pujan to make them believe they would soon be proud owners of the house.

The residents got convinced and handed over the money to Saxena.

Amit Boriya was first to report to police about the fraud and thereafter others too came forward.

**8,315 people vaccinated against Covid-19 in Betul**

BETUL

As many as 3,091 people were administered the vaccine shot against Covid-19 on Saturday.

The chief medical and health officer Dr WA Nagle said that 425 were given the jab in Betul city area, 172 in Amla, 170 in Athner, 519 in Sehra, 131 in Bhainsdehi, 172 in Bheempur, 92 in Chhochi, 394 in Ghodadongari, 472 in Multai, 303 in Prabhat Patti, 178 in Shahpur, 18 in Pathar hospital, 10 in Sanjeevani hospital and 30 in Govardhan critical care unit. As many as 8,315 people have been given the shot in the city so far.

**Vaccination of people above 60 years begins in rural areas**

CHHATARPUR: Vaccination of people above 60 years of age against Covid-19 began at Alipura primary health centre in Naogaon development block. The campaign began with the vaccination of pharmacist BD Rawat. Former legislator Manvendra Singh garlanded Rawat on the occasion. Block medical officer Dr Ravindra Patel, Dr BS Tomar, Dr Neha Vishwakarma and others were present on the occasion. Dr Patel appealed to people to come to the health centre and get vaccinated.

**Drive for using cow-dung cakes for Holika dahan**

Multai: Anusuya Sewa Organisation has launched a campaign to use cow-dung cakes for Holika dahan. The organisation has been protecting trees in the city and this year, they have planned to raise awareness among residents in the city about using cow-dung cakes instead of woods for Holika dahan. The organisation held a meeting on the premises of Anusuya temple. Head of the organisation Krishna Sahu said they would tell people to use cow-dung cakes to burn Holika to save trees. Besides the Multai city, the organisation would campaign in 30 villages, she said. Rajesh Sahu, Makesh Khatri and other members of the organisation took part in the meeting.

**Plan to start drive against drunken driving**

MHOW (FPNS)

Traffic subedar Sanjay Jadon joined as the in-charge of the traffic in Mhow a few months back, and during this period he has done many innovations in terms of traffic management in Mhow and surrounding areas, feel residents and senior officers.

Looking at the issue of drunken driving, he has planned to start a drive for nabbing those drivers and bikers who drive after consuming alcohol. An announcement of this drive will be made on Monday and the drive will start on Tuesday. He said that nobody will be spared if he or she is found driving while drunk.

He said that police will also start taking action against the vehicles permanently parked on roadsides all over the town. Due to these parked vehicles, there is always a danger of accidents on those roads.

## Traders down shutters in city

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Ganj Basoda

The traders in the city put up their shutters on Sunday following an appeal by the Vyapar Mahasangh. In the morning, only milk outlets opened, but they were shut at 10 am. Vegetable shops were open. As it was a weekday, people faced a lot of problems.

**Rs 25K contributed**

A eunuch, Munna Nayak, contributed Rs 25,000 for development of a cremation ground. Nayak also met social worker Vikas Pachauri.

**Woman files harassment plaint**

A 34-year-old woman filed a complaint at the city Kotwali against a man who tried to molest her. According to the police, the woman, a resident of Ambanagar, complained that the man, Kesri Bhavasar, had misbehaved with her. The police began a probe into the case.

**Health camp beginning today**

A health camp, which is starting on Monday, will continue till March 31. Baba Sant Rawal from Ujjain will provide Ayurvedic treatment at the camp which is being organised under the Mahakal Sewa Sangh. Every patient has to follow the corona guidelines at the camp and bring a glass to get the kadha (Ayurvedic medicine). It is also necessary to wear masks. Those who are suffering from incurable diseases will be treated at the camp.

## Speaker Gautam given warm welcome at Deen Dayal Park



FP NEWS SERVICE  
Deen Dayal Park

stood together despite all the hurdles, said Gautam. The speaker flayed the people doing politics in the name of caste and religion. The Speaker said that devotion and unity of the people has led to the construction of the Ram Mandir. Gautam interacted with the people and listened to their issues. The residents apprise the Speaker of the water issues in the area, the latter assured them to take necessary action.



**OUR STAFF REPORTER  
Bhopal**

**125 children undergo check-up at health camp**



FP NEWS SERVICE  
Sagar

A health camp was organised at Lajpatpura and Shanichari wards for the children up to 14 years of age under the Muskan campaign.

The camp was organised at the community health centre in Lajpatpura and at Gaur Smarak Bangla School in Shanichari.

About 125 children underwent health check-up at the camp. The

**Excise team seizes 1,900 kg mahua, 40 litres of liquor**

**Hoshangabad:** The excise department has seized 400 kilogram distilled Mahua and 20 litres hand-furnace liquor from Kuchbandia Mohalla during a raid. The team also confiscated 1,500 kg distilled Mahua and 20 litres of liquor from Bendipura village in Seoni Malwa. The Mahua were destroyed on the spot. The price of the confiscated items has been estimated to be Rs 1.05 lakh.

**MAN GETS 10-YEAR JAIL FOR ABETTING RAPE VICTIM SUICIDE**

**Hoshangabad:** A man has been sentenced to 10 years' jail for abetting a rape victim suicide. The court has also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on him. The convict, Anil Yadav, was in judicial custody for helping the rape accused. When Yadav was let out on bail three months ago, he began harassing the girl prompting her to file another complaint against them. The man even tried to coerce her to make a compromise or to end life. The girl became so scared that she set herself on fire.

**Private schools to follow same fee rule**



FP NEWS SERVICE  
Multai

discussed five important points and took a decision on them.

There will be no admission without a 'no-dues' document; all schools will follow the same rules in regard to fees and conducting annual examinations. Non-payment for two years was also discussed at the meeting. Vice-president of the organisation Pradeep Dange said the owners of the schools would follow the same rules in regard to fees.

**No recruitment of teaching staff at leading varsity of the state in last 11 years**

## DAVV ONLY HAS 'THE EXIT GATE'

ATUL GAUTAM  
Indore

Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, the lone Grade A+ accredited university in the state, "only has the exit gate" when it comes to appointments of teachers for its teaching departments.

Around 225 teaching posts are lying vacant but the university is reluctant to fill these vacancies.

The already poor teacher-student ratio is getting worse as senior professors are retiring, but little has been done by the who's who of the university to bring in new teaching hands. "No recruitment of teaching staff has been done in this university in the last 11 years. On one hand, the entry gate is 'closed' and no the other hand the exit gate is wide open for teachers walking out after their retirement. We also lost some teachers

due to their untimely deaths or due to their deputation to other organisations," said a professor wishing anonymity.

DAVV lost around 35 teachers due to retirement, deputation and untimely deaths in the last 11 years (see list) and there has been no new entry to the UTD campus in these years.

This year also, the university will see five senior professors retiring.

The professors who will retire this year include Prof PN Mishra of the Institute of Management Studies - who is currently head of School of Economics, Prof KN Rajeswari of School of Mathematics, Prof AV Bajaj of School of Chemical Sciences, Prof Sheela Joshi of School of Chemical Sciences and Prof Pratima Sen of School of Physics.

While Rajeswari would retire in June, Joshi would bid

adieu to the university in August. Similarly, Sen would leave the university in September and Mishra and Bajaj would retire in October. This is for the first time five professors will be retiring in a year.

### NEARLY 55% TEACHING POSTS VACANT AT DAVV

Nearly 55 per cent of teach-

ing posts are vacant at DAVV. In figures, the sources put the count around 225 vacancies. As per information, more than 65 posts of professors, nearly 60 posts of readers and 75 posts of lecturers are lying vacant on the UTD campus. Currently, the number of professors at the UTD campus is 56, readers 36 and lecturers 109. The lists include

faculty members of both regular and self-financing courses.

### Why VCs shy away from recruitments

VCs come and go but refrain from making appointments. Reason? Complaints of irregularities in appointments are filed against the VC and he/she has to quit or is removed.

The then vice-chancellor Ajit Singh Sehrawat had to resign in March 2010 following complaints of irregularities in recruitments. Narendra Dhakad was removed by the state government following irregularities in recruitments of contractual faculty against permanent vacancies in 2018.

### DAVV not serious about appointments

The process to fill the va-

**Teachers DAVV lost due to different reasons**

- Rajkamal (Retirement)
- Manohar Chandwani (Demise)
- AK Ramani (Demise)
- Shridhar Patil (Retirement)
- Guruprasad (Retirement)
- Suresh Chand (Retirement)
- GP Pandey (Retirement)
- PK Gupta (Retirement)
- Alpana Trehan (Demise)
- Deepak Kaul (Retirement)
- Jayant Sonwalkar (Deputation)
- Rajneesh Jain (Deputation)
- AK Jain (Lien)
- RK Ydas (Retirement)
- AK Sapre (Retirement)
- Prabhakar Singh (Quit)
- RC Sharma (Quit/demise)
- SP Singh (Demise)
- Rama Mishra (Retirement)
- SK Tyagi (Retirement)
- Archana Dubey (Retirement)
- AK Dutta (Retirement)
- Ganesh Kawadia (Retirement)
- Anil Kumar (Retirement)
- Deepak Bhatnagar (Retirement)
- Bhumesh Gupta (Retirement)
- Meena Bhuddhisagar (Retirement)
- Mansingh Parmar (Retirement)
- KK Pandey (Retirement)
- Rajendra Kumar (Retirement)
- AL Sharma (Retirement)
- Dinesh Varshney (Demise)
- Rameshwar Jatwa (Demise)
- Akhilesh Singh (Deputation)





## FREE PRESS

FOR FREE FLOW OF TRUTH

Coronavirus is still here:  
Pair vaccines with masks

The rerudescence of the Covid-19 virus in large parts of the country is a worrying development, underlying its intractable behaviour as also the propensity of people to blatantly abandon basic precautions against getting infected. Despite the on-going vaccination programme which has seen over two crore Indians already getting their first jabs, the virus is far from being defeated. At the minimum it is required of all Indians to wear masks in public and not to congregate in large numbers at social, religious, political events. Unfortunately, it is easier said than done. The images on the day of the Shivratri mocked all concerns about the prevailing pandemic. Be that as it may, the authorities should enforce restrictions whenever these are warranted to stop further spread of the virus. The week-long lockdown imposed in Nagpur last week followed an alarming rise in infections. Such stringent steps are not ruled out in other parts of Maharashtra, including Mumbai which too has seen a surge in the last few days. Since the dip beginning this year, there has been a sharp surge in March with the daily cases touching nearly 25,000. Maharashtra alone, with nearly 16,000 cases, is the worst affected once again, though Delhi and a few other states too have recorded a spurt after the drop till end-February. Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh have reported a sudden spurt. It is also lamentable that in most states and Union Territories the testing drive has slowed down considerably. The number of tests administered has dropped even in the urban centres. Aside from revealing the depth of the virus in densely-populated clusters the tests help in keeping the people alive to the threat of the virus. In recent weeks, such fears seem to have completely vanished from the popular consciousness. As a result, we notice a reckless disregard of even elementary protections such as the wearing of masks, an effective way to insulate oneself against contracting the infection. Meanwhile, there is a strong case for allowing fuller participation by the private sector in the inoculation drive. The Central and state governments by themselves cannot meet the requirement to vaccinate the entire population in the next four or five months. Since India is fortunate to have the world's largest vaccine manufacturer which has the production rights to Covishield, the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 preventive, and the indigenous Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, we should have little problem in speeding up the vaccination drive. Centralised controls on the vaccine distribution to various states might be in order to regulate short supplies but once the vaccine-makers are induced to increase production and accord priority to India the situation will ease automatically. Admittedly, the uniform price of vaccines reflects the Centre's desire to prevent profiteering by the private health sector but such a low price can act as a disincentive as well against the much-needed expansion of the vaccination drive. It seems a certain laxity has crept into the Centre's handling of the pandemic since the launch of the vaccination drive which, given the recent surge in infections, can be counterproductive.

## At the service of the party in power

The misuse of investigating agencies is not new. Soon after the founding of the Republic, Nehru had targeted a prominent industrialist who was his fierce critic. Having said that, it seems the government does not help its cause when in the midst of an intense election campaign for the West Bengal Assembly the central investigating agencies should summon senior leaders of the Trinamool Congress in long-pending cases. Last week, the CBI summoned a minister in the Mamata Banerjee government to appear in connection with a Ponzi scam in which tens of thousands of ordinary people had lost their meagre savings. A few other TMC leaders, including MPs and MLAs, were summoned by the ED in regard to on-going probes into chit-fund bribes and other such scandals. There is no denying merit in these cases which were registered after a great public hue and cry following the collapse of the fly-by-night money-multiplying scams. There is also little doubt that the scamsters had enticed ruling party bigwigs to con the simple folk who usually fall prey to the lure of such easy money cons. But the question is why the agencies had failed to complete the investigations even after registering the cases three-four years ago. And, secondly, if they had to summon the TMC leaders, why at the height of the election campaign? Even the pretence of being independent seems to have been abandoned. This is unfortunate.

FPJ ARCHIVES FEBRUARY 14, 1963

Chinese massing in mid-sector:  
Road links built

The FPJ News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 13: The Chinese are reported to be making a determined bid to concentrate their troops at the borders near the middle sector, threatening Bara Hoti. Thousands of Tibetan conscripts are being deployed on the border on road construction activities. A new road is being attempted by the Chinese to link Rudok on the Tibetan side directly with Bara Hoti and also a number of parallel roads connecting the various defence bases. The implications of the oft-repeated warnings of Prime Minister Nehru and Defence Minister Chavan not to trust China are now becoming increasingly clear.

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## States compete to legislate jobs for locals

Fiscal  
Prudence

★Ajit Ranade

There seems to be a sudden epidemic of sorts, to legislate jobs for locals, in various states of India. Most recently, the state cabinet of Jharkhand approved of a policy to reserve 75 per cent of the jobs in the private sector for local residents only. These are all jobs that pay less than 30,000 rupees a month. While this is not official yet, it is likely to be announced during the ongoing budget session of Jharkhand legislature. This comes barely a fortnight after the state of Haryana passed a similar law. The Haryana threshold is about Rs 50,000 a month. Andhra Pradesh too had passed such a law in 2019.

Many other states, including Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat have all either announced, or are in the process of implementing policies to reserve jobs for locals. In Tamil Nadu, which is among the four states headed for assembly elections, the DMK has promised in its election manifesto that it would implement a policy of 75 per cent jobs reservation for Tamils, if elected to form government. Incidentally, the Haryana legislation also fulfilled a promise from the manifesto of one member of the ruling coalition.

What explains this epidemic? Firstly, it comes from a populist impulse, such as announcing freebies.

But that does not mean it does not have popular support. Indeed, a national survey done by the Centre for Study of Developing Societies and Lokniti in 2017 revealed that nearly two-thirds of the youth support the idea of job reservation for locals. Somehow, this idea has broad appeal. The second reason could be the weakness in the employment situation. Just after last year's lockdown, the unemployment rate had shot up to more than 30 per cent in April, with 122 million people losing their jobs. The hardest hit were migrant workers

much before the actual economy starts recovering, the labour market pick-up is seen much after other signals, such as industrial production, capacity utilisation, consumer spending and exports have improved substantially.

In this sphere, there is also the additional spectre of jobless growth.

As per reports from the World Bank, nearly 70 per cent of India's manufacturing jobs are in danger of becoming obsolete or redundant due to automation. So, improvement in job prospects may take much longer than the speed of the

**Despite the rhetoric and populist impulse, it is worth examining why this idea is ultimately infructuous or irrelevant. Firstly, it goes against the Constitution of India. In fact, it violates several fundamental rights.**

in cities, who are employed in construction, restaurants, malls, courier services etc. Most of these are in the informal sector, i.e. jobs which are not covered by health or retirement benefits. By July, the unemployment rate had dropped below 10 per cent as per the CMIE data. The September and December quarterly results of corporate India showed booming profitability, which is one of the reasons why the stock market is greatly enthused. Foreign direct investment flow has been handsome, and next year's outlook is for a growth of at least 11 per cent in the GDP.

Why then is the employment situation not cheerful? That's because labour market fortunes are typically a lagging indicator of the health of the economy. It recovers the last.

Just as the stock market is a leading indicator; i.e. it becomes bullish

economic revival. A third reason for the appeal of jobs for locals, is inherent xenophobia. This is not unique to India or Indian states, but is universal. It was spectacularly manifest in the Brexit vote, when Britons thought that foreigners were taking away local jobs, and hence voted to secede from the European Union. The actual facts were much less damaging. If anything, the so-called foreign workers contribute to the local economy through their productivity and by paying both consumption and income taxes.

In America too, the anti-immigrant sentiment was exploited during the recent presidential election campaign. Of course, the fact is that the United States remains the most friendly and accepting of immigrants among all developed economies. Indeed, 17.4

per cent of the US labour force is made up of foreign-born workers. Even then every campaign for a sons-of-soil policy, for job reservation, whips up this anti-'outsider' sentiment. In the case of Haryana, one of the reasons given for justifying reservations was the proliferation of slums, presumably attributed to 'outsiders' shifting to the state for work.

Despite the rhetoric and populist impulse, it is worth examining why this idea is ultimately infructuous or irrelevant. Firstly, it goes against the Constitution of India. In fact, it violates several fundamental rights.

violates several fundamental rights, such as the freedom to move anywhere, the right to not be discriminated against on the basis of place of birth, the right to be treated equally before laws and the right to pursue one's livelihood. These are enshrined variously in Articles 14, 15, 16 and 19 of the Constitution. Were the Haryana law to be challenged in court, surely it would be declared unconstitutional.

As such, the topic of reservations is one of India's deep fault lines, but that is more applicable to social identity, not place of domicile. Secondly, the actual data on interstate migration shows that interstate migration is relatively low in India. While the country may have an estimated 100 million migrants, most of them are intra-state, not inter-state. As per rhw 2011 census, India had only 5.6 crore inter-

state migrants. They often bring skills, motivation, energy which may be in short supply or lacking locally. For instance, harvesting of crops like wheat and rice, or sugarcane is largely done by landless workers who are migrants. Construction labour too has a big migrant-component. A third aspect to highlight, is that free movement of labour partly compensates for the uneven economic progress of different states.

Inter-state divergence within India is a puzzling anomaly. One would have expected poorer states to grow more rapidly than richer states, leading to some kind of convergence. The migration pattern is, in some ways, an equilibrium market outcome that partially smooths out labour market rigidities. It also partially addresses the mismatch arising out of the difference in ageing demographics of India. That is why we see migration from high-fertility states to lower-fertility states.

States like Kerala have instituted enlightened policies of training migrant workers in the local language (Malayalam) and also offering good education for their children. In the medium to long term, there is no option but for a big national focus on education, skilling, training and enhancement of human capital, which can get us out of this scarcity mindset of rationing jobs for locals. Clearly this is not the appropriate domain to be 'vocal for local'.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

The Billion Press

LETTERS  
TO THE  
EDITORHow verdant  
was my Vasai

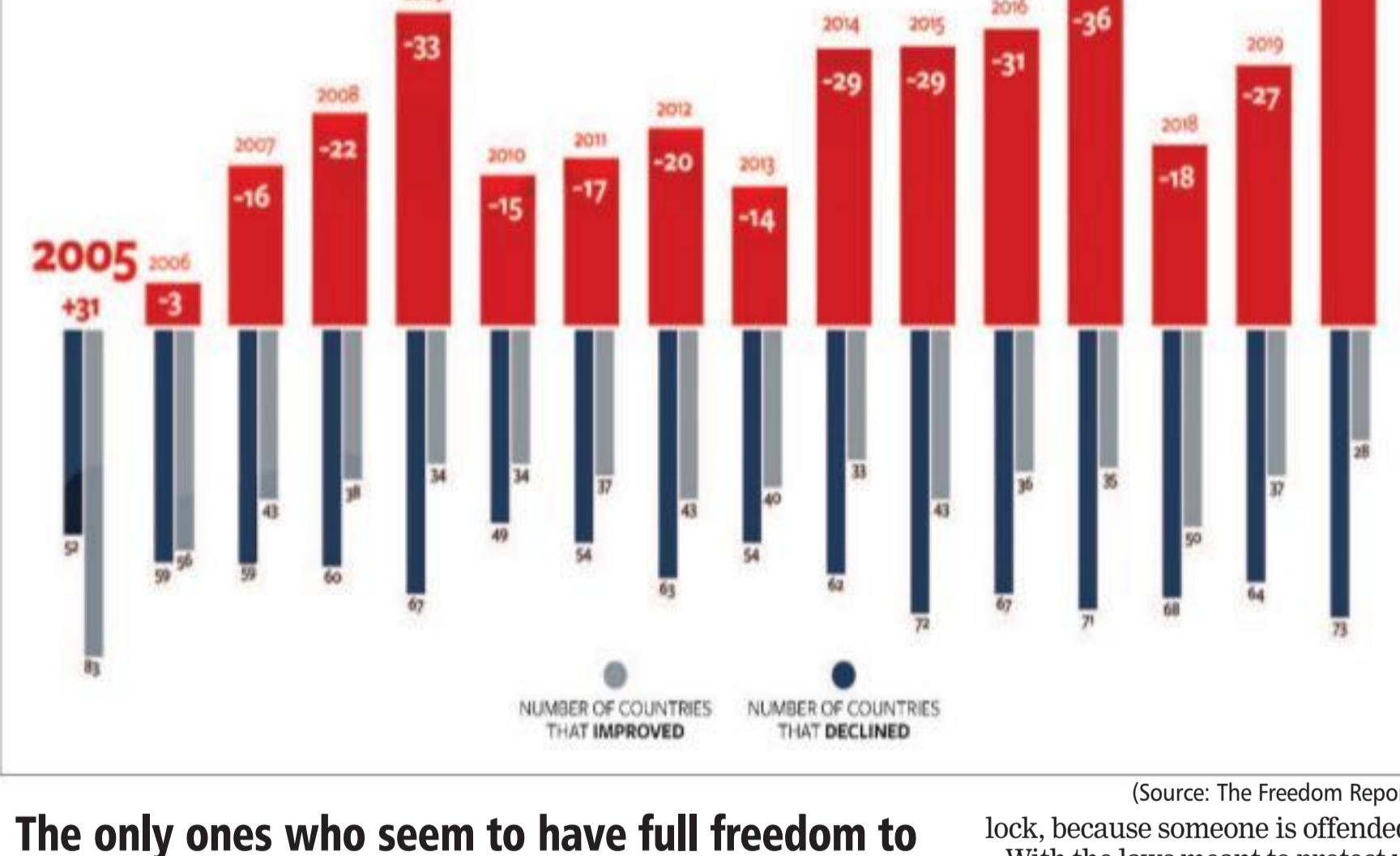
Ref.: 'Stop our cities from becoming ovens' (March 13). Our politicians and officials have destroyed Mumbai in the last forty years. They gave permission to the builder lobby to construct huge buildings. We must not forget that the British chose Mumbai as the commercial capital only because of its weather. Look at our Vasai-Virar belt, it was green expanse and its weather was like a tonic for TB sufferers from Pune, Nashik and Satara. They would come here to stay for six month and go home fully cured. In 2001, our population was nearly three lacs and in just two decades, it has reached 35 lacs. High-rises dot the landscape. As chief minister, Sharad Pawar opened up saltpans for builders, with improved FSI and former CM Devendra Fadnavis further increased this to 3-4. Now, the salubrious air is gone. Winds from the Sahyadri jungle do not reach the western belt because of the buildings. Rainwater does not reach the Vasai creek because of builders who have destroyed 'nalas'. The British had declared this belt as a 'no-development zone' in 1898. Today in this same Vasai-Virar people are suffering from cancer and other diseases because of air pollution. It is time that citizens must oppose further construction here. The Harit Vasai Surakshan Samiti has appealed to Bombay High Court, which has restrained the authorities from construction. But who is listening!

Marcus Dabre

## Pays to slum it out

Ref.: 'Slumdweller can encash in 5 yrs' (March 13). Surely slumdwellers are luckier than the middle class, who spend their whole lives to acquire a home in this city. People who have the patience to stay in unauthorised slums can reap the fruits faster. Earlier, slumdwellers needed to stay in their SRA houses for ten years before they could sell it. It is a fact that most of them hardly live there, but instead, rent out their homes and then sell it. So why take all these pains to reconstruct slums under SRA, in prime areas? Why are these readymade homes offered on a platter when they don't respect it? Most working class Mumbaikars toil for ages to own their own homes in distant suburbs.

Maya Hemant Bhatkar



## The only ones who seem to have full freedom to express seem to be those with a hate agenda

looks at the state of the United States and suggests that the USA "will need to work vigorously to strengthen its institutional safeguards, restore its civic norms, and uphold the promise of its core principles for all segments of society if it is to protect its venerable democracy and regain global credibility". The government of the United States has not even acknowledged them.

In part, the reason things look so bleak for democracy has been the lockdowns world over. States across the world told their peoples that they did not have the freedom to go about their everyday lives. And, people complied. At the core, if you read both reports in detail, this is the underlying sentiment in both reports - the loss of freedoms, and the increase in state control. Combined with media restrictions, forced internment, and social media fuelled hate campaigns, and we have a potent cocktail to doom democracy.

The V-Dem Institute sees similar trends across the world. It logs the straight 10th year of decline in democracy across the world. In a report titled 'Autocratization Goes Viral', it looks at how freedoms across the world have been curtailed. Like the Freedom House report, it lays some of the blame on Covid normalising state surveillance and lockdowns.

The Freedom House report, for example,

judge ordered her released, saying "Difference of opinion, disagreement, divergence, dissent, or for that matter, even disapprobation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies. These are not isolated cases. Between 2017 and 2019, India had over 25,000 cases of 'offences against the state'. There was a case filed against Amitabh Bachchan and KBC because one of the questions asked was: Which book was burnt by BR Ambedkar? The correct answer is, of course, the Manusmriti. But, someone was offended enough to file a FIR for hurting religious (Hindu) sentiments.

Emboldened by a ruling party hierarchy that is receptive to social media chatter and innuendo and looks to its social media fan base for constant validation, groups have become more and more assertive on what defines being Indian, and being Hindu - and use the law to derail anything that they think is against their sensibility.

The shows 'Tandav' and 'Bombay Begums', for example, are facing challenges, despite being on subscription platforms, with parental

lock, because someone is offended. With the laws meant to protect us and our rights, being weaponised by interconnected groups of radicalised cyber and ground level activists - the challenge for the government is how to protect the rights of the majority from this tiny base that can create noise disproportionate to its membership. We are all self-censoring because someone with a Twitter following, may get offended, and we will spend the next few months, or years, of our lives lobbing off sedition charges in some remote court in India. The only ones who seem to have full freedom to express seem to be those with a hate agenda.

While the government has every right to ignore the international think tanks and say that we don't care what others think - it is time it looked at the dangers to our freedoms posed by these hyperactive, hypersensitive, hyper-nationalist, hyper-religious groups - who scream, shout, wail, and whine - till they get their way, eroding our freedoms along the way. Their right to protest and be heard is absolute. But, so are ours.

The writer works at the intersection of digital content, technology, and audiences. She is a writer, columnist, visiting faculty and filmmaker.

Jubel D'Cruz

The incarceration of the 83-year-old Fr Stan Swamy, who has Parkinson's disease, has outraged many Indians. The veteran tribal rights activist has worked for over 50 years in Jharkhand, fighting for labour rights. The charges against this ailing social worker with 'anti-national' conspiracies vis-à-vis the Bhima-Koregaon case, the prosecution is aiming to discredit law professionals and social reformers who raise their voices for the rights of the poorest of the poor. Fr. Stan Swamy must be freed at the earliest before he loses his life in jail.

# Police summon woman involved in sex for job scandal

BENGALURU: The woman, who is said to have featured in a video purportedly showing her in a compromising position with BJP MLA Ramesh Jarkholi, has been summoned by the city police in connection with the scandal, official sources said on Sunday. The police have served a notice to the woman, asking her to appear before them for investigation in the case registered based on a complaint by the former Karnataka Minister. The notice has been pasted on the door of the woman's mother in Vijayapura district, which was locked, police sources said.

## News from South



Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat assumes office as CM for the first time, in Dehradun, on Sunday PTI

### 6 farm workers killed, 8 hurt in AP hit-and-run accident

AMARAVATI: Six farm workers were killed and eight others injured in a hit-and-run accident near Nuzividu in Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh early Sunday. The victims belonged to Lion Tanda, a tribal hamlet near Nuzividu, about 55 kms from Vijayawada, and were on their way to a nearby village in an autorickshaw when an unidentified vehicle rammed into it, police said. While six workers died on the spot, eight were injured. The injured were rushed to hospitals in Nuzividu and Vijayawada.

### Tamil film director SP

#### Jananathan passes away

CHENNAI: Acclaimed film director S P Jananathan, who shot to fame with films such as 'lyarkai', died on Sunday, sources said. Fondly known as 'Jana' among his close circle of friends, the 61-year-old director was a bachelor and has been living with his brothers. He was not keeping well for some time and was admitted to a corporate hospital in the city, where he died this morning, they said. Besides the national award-winning feature film 'lyarkai', the director has also made actor Jeeva starrer 'E', and 'Peraanmai'.

### Telangana Budget session from today

HYDERABAD: The Budget session of the Telangana Legislature would begin from Monday in conformity with the Covid-19 protocols. The session would begin with the address by Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and the agenda would be decided by the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), official sources said on Sunday. The budget is expected to be presented on March 18. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who recently held a meeting with state Finance Minister T Harish Rao and officials on Budget preparation for 2021-22, said there is a possibility of increased allocations in the budget compared to the previous one.

### Spike in Covid cases: Karna CM to hold meeting with officials

BENGALURU: Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has convened a meeting of officials and health experts on Monday in the wake of a spike in Covid-19 cases in the state in recent days, his office said. The meeting would be held at 5 PM in the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and secretariat, the Chief Minister's Office said in a statement on Sunday. For the first time since January 22, the daily Covid-19 cases in the state crossed the 900 mark. It reported 921 cases with 630 of them from Bengaluru Urban district alone.

### Woman, man arrested for marriage-extortion racket

BEED: A woman has been arrested along with her accomplice for allegedly extorting money from men she would get married to fraudulently, police in Ashti in Beed district said on Sunday. The woman may have married at least eight men in this manner and extorted money, an official said. The racket was busted after a 25-year-old man filed a complaint that the woman he had married on March 9 extorted Rs 80,000 after she and her accomplices threatened to implicate him in a rape case, the official said.

### IAF airlifts 381 stranded passengers in J&K

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force (IAF) has airlifted 381 stranded passengers from Jammu and Srinagar to Leh using a C-17 heavy lift transport aircraft, officials said on Sunday. They were airlifted on Saturday. The passengers were stranded after the Srinagar-Leh national highway was closed due to heavy snowfall, the officials said. The IAF regularly provides airlift to the civilian population of the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh in times of distress utilising its C-17, C-130 and An-32 transport aircraft.

### One held for selling pirated copies of movie 'Roberrt'

BENGALURU: One person was arrested on Sunday in Bengaluru for allegedly selling pirated copies of the actor Darshan's recently-released movie titled 'Roberrt'. A case was registered by the Manager of Umapathy Films, Shrikant M at Magadi Road police station under Copyright Act 1957. As of now, one of the accused, Vishwanath has been arrested," he said. "A case has been registered against a group of individuals who were selling pirated copies of 'Roberrt'. The accused were sharing links of this movie via several social media handles," informed DCP of West Bengaluru, Sandeep M Patil.

### CPI announces candidates for six seats

CHENNAI: The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Sunday announced its list of candidates for six seats it is contesting in alliance with the DMK for the Tamil Nadu Assembly election next month. The CPI has fielded veteran leader Marimuthu for the Thiruthuraiyandi (Reserve) constituency. Announcing the names of the candidates here, CPI state secretary R Mutharasan said the party has nominated former MLA T Ramachandran, who is Krishnagiri district secretary, to seek re-election from the Thali constituency. Former MLA P L Sundaram will contest from Bhavaniagar.

# BJP fields Union min, 3 MPs, economist in WB; Metroman in Kerala

AGENCIES  
New Delhi

Union Minister Babul Supriyo, former Chief Economic Advisor Ashok Lahiri, Metroman E Sreedharan, film star Kushboo Sundar as well as five sitting MPs were among the BJP's star-studded list of candidates released on Sunday for the upcoming polls in four states.

The BJP has fielded four MPs, including a Union Minister, in West Bengal, two in Kerala and its national officer bearer in Tamil Nadu. By bringing its best-known faces from these states to the electoral contest, the party has raised its stakes in the assembly polls.

The BJP has fielded four MPs, including a Union Minister, in West Bengal, two in Kerala and its national officer bearer in Tamil Nadu. By bringing its best-known faces from these states to the electoral contest, the party has raised its stakes in the assembly polls.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters, party general secretary Arun Singh along with Union Ministers Babul Supriyo and Debasree Chaudhuri released the names of 63 candidates for West Bengal assembly polls, 17 candidates each for Assam and Tamil Nadu and 112 for the elections in Kerala.

Singh said the party will contest in 115 out of 140 assembly seats in Kerala and on remaining seats its allies will field their candidates. For the high-stakes battle for West Bengal assembly, the BJP has fielded a Union Minister,



Supriyo



Lahiri



Sreedharan



Kushboo

three sitting MPs, a noted economist and several Tollywood personalities.

Union Minister Supriyo is BJP's candidate from Tollygunge. Lok Sabha MPs Nishit Pramanik and Locket Chatterjee have been fielded from Dinhata and Chunchura respectively.

Senior journalist and Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta is the BJP's nominee for Tarakeswar assembly segment in West Bengal. Outgoing MLA of Singur and veteran leader Rabindranath Bhattacharya, who had crossed over from the Trinamool Congress after it denied him ticket, has been fielded from the same seat by the BJP.

Besides Chatterjee, the party has given ticket to several Bengali film personalities, in-

cluding Tanushree Chakraborty from Shyampur, Payal Sarkar from Behala Purba and actor Yash Dasgupta from Chanditala in Kolkata.

In allocating tickets in West Bengal, the BJP has expanded its candidature beyond film personalities by nominating former Chief Economic Advisor Ashok Lahiri from Alipurduar.

Lahiri has also served as chairman of the Kolkata-based Bandhan Bank and was member of the Finance Commission from 2017 to 2020.

By fielding columnist Dasgupta and the economist Lahiri, the BJP has sought to impress the 'Bhadralok' sensibilities in the eastern state, political observers said, noting the

Bengali intelligentsia had generally refrained from the backing the saffron party in 2019 Lok Sabha polls despite a large consolidation of Hindu votes around it.

The similar trend was visible in Kerala as well, where the BJP fielded 'metroman' E Sreedharan from Palakkad and former Union Minister and sitting MP K J Alphons from the Kanjirappally assembly seat. The party has also fielded another sitting Rajya Sabha MP Suresh Gopi from Thrissur. The BJP's Kerala state unit president K Surendran will contest from two seats — Manjeshwar and Konni.

For Tamil Nadu, the BJP announced actor-turned-politician Khushbu Sundar as its candidate from the Thousand Lights Assembly seat. The BJP's women cell chief Vanathi Srinivasan has been fielded against noted filmstar Kamal Haasan from Coimbatore South seat.

At the programme to announce the name of the candidates, Congress leader and former Puducherry minister P Kannan joined the BJP in presence of Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal.

In Assam, Hasinara Khatoon has been fielded from Baghbar and Suman Haripriya from Hajo Assembly constituency.

## Cong releases list of 86 candidates for Kerala polls

Chandy to contest from Puthuppally, Muraleedaran from Nemom and Chennithala from Haripad

AGENCIES  
Thiruvananthapuram



gress candidate in Ballusseri. In Kollam, where there were huge protests from the district Congress committee over not considering Bindu Krishna for the candidature, made the Congress High Command relent and she had been made candidate in the Kollam seat.

When KC Joseph, a staunch A Group (led by Oommen Chandy) leader, was denied the seat, K Babu, another Chandy loyalist, was given Thripunithura overcoming protests from leaders belonging to I Group (led by Ramesh Chennithala). Senior Congress leader VS Sathasivam will face polls from Paravoor.

Youth Congress state president Shafi Parambil will seek a mandate from his sitting seat of Palakkad and Congress strongman Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan would again represent Kottayam.

In Thrithala, VT Balram will

be Congress' candidate while in Aruvikkara KS Sabarinathan will again seek the mandate.

Roji M John is a candidate in Angamali while Shanmoli Uman will face polls from Aroor. In Kovalam, M Vincent is fielded again to his sitting seat and VS Shivakumar is Congress' candidate in Thiruvananthapuram. Anil Akkara will contest from Wadakkancherry and Padmaja Venugopal from Thrissur.

PT Thomas will be the candidate in Thrikakara and KM Abijith will face polls from Kozhikode. From Malampuzha, CK Ananthakrishnan has been fielded and from Aranmula, K Sivadasan Nair will contest. The election for the 140-member Kerala assembly in 14 districts will be held in a single phase on April 6. The counting of votes will take place on May 2.

## Denied ticket, Kerala Mahila Cong chief tonsures, resigns from post

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In an embarrassment to the Congress in Kerala, party's women's wing President Lathika Subhash on Sunday resigned from the post hurt over the denial of Etumanoor seat to her, shortly after the candidates list for the April 6 Assembly polls was released in New Delhi.

The 56-year-old senior leader also shaved her head sitting in front of the Congress office here as a mark of protest.

Subhash, who met reporters at the party headquarters Indira Bhawan here, soon after the KPCC chief Mullappally Ramachandran announced the party list at New Delhi, said it was short of women candidates.

Of the list of 86 candidates released today by the Congress, only 9 are women.

It may be for the first time that any leader in any political party in Kerala has taken such a drastic step in protest against the party leadership for denial of poll ticket.

A known woman face among party leaders and activists, Lathika Subhash had taken over as the head of Mahila Congress in 2018 from Bindhu Krishna,



Kerala Mahila Congress Chief Lathika Subhash gets her head tonsured in front of the KPCC office in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday PTI

now a party candidate in Kollam.

A weeping Subhash said she had tonsured her head as a symbol of protest for all the women in the party who have been toiling hard for the success of other candidates, have been sidelined and ignored by the leadership for years.

She also said she does not want to continue in a position which could not earn her even a deserved election ticket. "I am saddened by the candidate selection

of KPCC. We sought for 20 per cent seats for women.. but at least expected one woman candidate from each district.

But those women leaders who used to work for the party have been totally ignored," she said.

Recalling her journey with the Congress through these years, the woman leader said her name used to be heard during the time of elections, but never found a place in the candidate list.

## DMK MLA joins BJP

Second legislator from Dravidian party to switch to saffron camp

CHENNAI



Weeks before assembly elections, DMK legislator P Saravanan on Sunday joined the BJP, which promptly named him the candidate from Madurai North constituency in southern Tamil Nadu.

The MLA joined the BJP protesting against what he called the 'dominance' and 'silent torture' by the district-level officer-bearers of the Dravidian party.

His name figures in the list of 17 nominees released by the BJP's Central Election Committee in Delhi. Saffron party's state unit chief L Murugan, actor-politician Khushbu Sundar, former Minister Nainar Nagendran who joined the BJP from AIADMK in 2017 were among the nominees announced by the saffron party.

Joining the BJP party in the presence of state unit president Murugan, Saravanan indicated arm-twisting by district level officer-bearers as the reason for quitting the Dravidian outfit, which is leaving no stone unturned to return to power in the state after being in opposition for 10 years.

## Barring Assam, BJP may lose all states, predicts Pawar

PUNE



Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) President Sharad Pawar on Sunday claimed that barring Assam, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is set to lose the upcoming Assembly elections in the other three states and a Union Territory.

Addressing the media in his hometown Baramati, Pawar said his assessment was based on the ground level situation and reports emanating from these states and UT.

About West Bengal, Pawar accused the BJP government at the Centre of 'grossly abusing its power' to target Trinamool Congress supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who is fighting a single-handed battle for the people of her state.

"The people of West Bengal are self-respecting. If anyone tries to attack the Bengali culture and pride, the whole state will stand up unitedly and retaliate," warned Pawar.

He said in such a scenario, no matter what anybody may claim, he was confident that 'Mamata Banerjee will return to power'. In Kerala, Pawar said the NCP is in alliance with the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) and there is little doubt that they would attain a majority in the coming elections to retain power.

The much-anticipated re-

union, likely to be mutually beneficial, comes on the back of hectic parleys between the two leaders in the recent past.

Soon after he was inducted into the JDU, Kumar announced Kushwaha's appointment as the national parliamentary board president "with immediate effect".

Raut also said the government should take "very seriously" the issue of sensitive information reaching the opposition leaders first.

The opposition should explain what the CBI's probe found into the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death which the Mumbai Police had not investigated.

In his weekly column 'Rokhrot' in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana', Raut said it was not a good sign for the state government that Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis had "access first" to all confidential documents in case of the explosives-laden SUV and Hiran's mysterious death.

## NIA taking over SUV case amounts to demoralising Mumbai police: Raut

MUMBAI



pur that the ATS and NIA were probing the recovery of the explosives-laden vehicle and the case of Hiran's death.

"The truth will come out and action will be taken accordingly," he said.

When asked if Waze would be suspended, Deshmukh did not comment.

A Scorpio found parked near Ambani's house on Carmichael Road in south Mumbai on February 25 contained some gelatin sticks and a threat letter.

Waze, an "encounter specialist", is also facing heat in the murder case of Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hiran who was in possession of the Scorpio. Hiran was found dead in a creek in Thane district on March 5.

The state Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) is investigating the Hiran mur-



der case. It had registered an FIR against unidentified persons days after Hiran's body was found.

Continued from page 1

## Poll panel rules...

Under the observations, DM of Purba Medinipur Vibhu Goel has been removed following the Nandigram incident. IAS officer Smita Pandey was asked to be posted immediately as District Magistrate of Purba Medinipur in place of IAS officer Vibhu Goel, who shall be transferred to a non-election post. The Election Commission also appointed Anil Kumar Sharma, former DGP (Director General of Police) Intelligence Punjab, as Special Police Observer for West Bengal assembly elections. Sharma will be the second Special Police Observer, in addition to Vivek Dube. Banerjee, who was on a two-day visit to Nandigram from where she filed her nomination on Wednesday, alleged that she was pushed by a few unidentified people during election campaigning. She had sustained "severe bone injuries" on her left foot and ankle as well as bruises and injuries on her shoulder, forearm and neck, according to the report of her initial medical examination. Elections to the 294-member assembly will be held from March 27 to April 29. Results will be declared on May 2.

## Farmers' stir may...

He said he was not going to sit in Delhi alone but was planning to visit all over the country, including MP on March 14 and 15, Ganga Nagar in Rajasthan on March 17, Ghazipur's UP Gate border in Delhi on March 18, Odisha on March 19 and Karnataka on March 21 and 22. During his visit here, Tikait also garlanded a statue of his late father and farmer leader Mahendra Singh Tikait at Tikait Park in Jhalwa near here. The BKU spokesperson claimed the three central laws will lead to the closure of all small-time neighbourhood shops, leaving only big commercial malls to survive. "These farm laws will ruin traders and lead to the closure of small business utilities and the collapse of small industries. These laws will bring in big multinational firms like Walmart," claimed Tikait. "Had this government belonged to a political party, it would have talked to farmers and resolved the matter," Tikait said. "But this government is being run by big business houses. It is bent upon selling the entire country," he alleged.

## 7-day quarantine, thermal...

In Bhopal, Indore and districts adjoining Maharashtra, for gathering in closed spaces, a maximum of 50% of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 200 visitors. All business establishments will have to put social distancing floor markings using limestone and other methods outside their units. The use to mask has been made mandatory and the district administration will penalise those found violating the norm. The district crisis management committees have been directed to call the meetings and take the decisions accordingly.

## NIA gets cop...

In its remand plea, the NIA submitted witnesses' statements to show Waze's involvement in the case. The central agency also told the court that his custodial interrogation was required to unearth the conspiracy and gather evidence. Talking to PTI, Waze's advocate Sudeep Pasbola, however, said the arrest has been made only on the basis of suspicion and that there was no concrete evidence against him. "The court remanded Waze till March 25, but kept the matter for further hearing on Monday. The court has asked the NIA to show what evidence it has collected and what is the stage of investigation," Pasbola said. Another defence lawyer, Sunny Pumamia, submitted before the court that Waze's arrest was "completely illegal".

"The argument placed before the court was that the accused has been arrested solely based on suspicion and no prima facie case is established in the FIR. Therefore, if no prima facie case is established on a bare reading of the FIR against the accused, the detainment and arrest of the accused itself is completely illegal and even one day's incarceration of the accused would be violative of his constitutional rights," he said. The lawyer also said that Waze's arrest was also illegal as the accused was not informed of the grounds of the arrest, and he wasn't given an option to seek legal help and make a call to a relative of his choice. On these grounds, his custodial interrogation is not warranted, it's arbitrary and the accused must be released on bail forthwith as the investigation has not been conducted on the settled principles of law, he added. Waze was summoned at the agency's Mumbai office at Cumballa Hill in south Mumbai around 11.30 am on Saturday to record his statement. The spokesperson said that Waze was arrested after being questioned by the NIA officials for around 12 hours. The case was handed over to the NIA after the mysterious death of Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hirani, who claimed that the vehicle had been stolen a week earlier. His body was found in a creek at Thane on March 5.

## Delhi reports 407 new Covid cases in last 24 hours

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi reported 407 new COVID-19 cases in last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 6,43,696 in the national capital, as per the health bulletin on Sunday evening. According to the state health bulletin, as many as 350 people recovered in the national capital from the disease in the said period. With this, the total number of recoveries in Delhi goes to 6,30,493 so far. However, the active number of COVID-19 cases stands at 2,262.

Two deaths were reported due to COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative death toll to 10,941. The country reported 25,320 new COVID-19 cases and 16,637 recoveries in the last 24 hours, the union health ministry informed on Sunday morning.

People not adhering to social distancing norms throng a market, amid the coronavirus pandemic, at Sarojini Nagar Market, in New Delhi, on Sunday PTI

## JAMMU

A terrorist, who was arrested recently along with a cache of arms and ammunition, was planning to execute "sensational" political killings in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir, the Army said on Sunday.

Firdous Ahmad Natnoo was arrested in a joint operation by the Army, police and paramilitary forces from his native Bekhriyan village in Doda on Friday. Three

Chinese pistols along with five magazines, 15 rounds and a silencer were recovered from him.

"Based on reliable intelligence inputs, it was learnt that Natnoo was planning to execute sensational political killings in Doda district to declare terror revitalisation as well as to grab headlines thus, he and his associates were being tracked by security forces for the last two months," Jammu-based Army PRO Lt Col Devender Anand said.

Acting on reliable intelligence input, a joint team of the Army and

He said Natnoo was involved in the revival of terror footprints in the district which was declared terrorist-free post neutralisation of hardcore Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Tahir Ahmed Bhatt alias Uqab in May last year.

"He was involved in recruitment, procurement of arms and ammunition and fund raising," Anand said.

Acting on reliable intelligence input, a joint team of the Army and

police launched a cordon and search operation simultaneously at Bekhriyan, Udhianpur and Nagri early Friday and Natnoo was apprehended while trying to escape, he said.

Besides arms and ammunition, the army officer said incriminating material like personal diaries, a photo album, a will cum suicide note and a machine to probably dig hideouts beneath the ground were recovered from the terrorist.

## Arrested terrorist was planning to execute political killings in J&amp;K's Doda: Army

## One dead, two hurt in separate firings

**NEW DELHI:** A 47-year-old man was shot dead and two others were injured in three separate firing incidents in northeast Delhi in the last two days, police said on Sunday. In the first incident on Friday, Suhail and Gazi fired four rounds at a bike mechanic, Al Tasleem, in Jafrabad area, a senior police officer said. There was no casualty, he said. While Suhail was arrested on the same day, Gazi was held on Saturday, police said.

## Cong allying with outfits that wish to divide nation: Shah

AGENCIES  
Margherita/Nazira

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday launched a scathing attack on the Congress for entering into alliances with political parties who are "out to divide the country", and asserted that the BJP does not practise vote-bank politics.

Shah, during his rallies in Upper Assam constituencies of Nazira and Margherita, claimed that the grand old party, despite "ruling the state for 15 years and having a prime minister who was a representative of the state", did nothing to solve the issue of illegal immigration.

Shah was referring to Manmohan Singh, who has represented Assam in the Upper House of Parliament.

"The Congress can go to any length to win an election."



It has aligned with Badruddin Ajmal's AIUDF in Assam, the Muslim League in Kerala and the Indian Secular Front in Bengal. Assam cannot be safe in the hands of Ajmal.

"People can decide for themselves who is more concerned about their welfare -- Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Badruddin Ajmal," Shah said at a poll rally in Margherita, current-

ly held by BJP MLA Bhaskar Sharma. The BJP, during the last five years, has successfully ousted infiltrators who had encroached land at Kaziranga National Park and occupied plots owned by religious bodies, the Union minister said.

"Now, if you vote for the Congress, your vote will go to Ajmal's AIUDF, which, in turn, will encourage infiltration."

You have to decide whether you want a government that shelters infiltrators or the one that will oust them.

"Five years ago, I, as BJP president, had promised to make Assam 'an-dolan mukt'(agitation-free) and 'aatankbad mukt'(militancy-free). We have fulfilled our pledge, and there is no longer any agitation or militancy in the state. More than two thousand militants have returned to the mainstream."

## RSS' decision-making body to meet on March 19-20

## BENGALURU

Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS), the highest decision-making body of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), will meet here on March 19 and 20. The proceedings of the ABPS would begin on March 19 and conclude on March 20 at Janaseva Vidya Kendra, the RSS said in a press release.

The ABPS meets once a year in different cities of the country, and this is the 8th such meet happening in Karnataka.

The meet would discuss ways to take RSS work to the unreached and undertake planning for expansion and consolidation of organisational work, the release

said. The organisational work includes improving Shakkhas, increasing training camps, sharing of innovative practices and experiences by representatives of various states and other activities for the coming year, it said. During the meeting of elected representatives of RSS, several delegates are expected to attend it and resolutions are passed which have a direct connection with the ongoing in society and the people. Swayamsevaks working in different areas and sections of society through different organisations are also invited for sharing their experiences and inputs on different issues of national importance, the release said.

## FIR against farmers for raising concrete wall on NH-44, digging borewell

## SONIPAT

Police have registered two separate cases against farmers for allegedly raising concrete wall structure and digging a borewell on National Highway-44 in Haryana's Sonipat district, close to the Singhu border protest site.

"Two separate cases have been registered against those who raised a concrete wall structure and dug a borewell on NH-44," Station House Officer, Kundli, Inspector Ravi Kumar said over the phone on Sunday.

The cases have been registered under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the National Highways Act after complaints from the National Highways Authority of India and the local civic authorities, he said. He added the structure and the borewell were coming up illegally.

Kumar said the work on raising permanent structures with bricks and

digging of borewell has been stopped after the cases were lodged. Some farmers protesting the Centre's three agriculture laws have started raising concrete structures near the Singhu border protest site.

Having faced chilly winters and heavy rains earlier, the construction of these concrete structures is among a slew of measures that farmers are

taking to prepare themselves for the impending summer. Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at the Delhi border points - Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur - for over three months, demanding the repeal of farm laws and a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for their crops.

## UP STF arrests PFI training commander

**BASTI:** The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) has arrested a man whom they alleged to be a training commander of the Popular Front of India (PFI).

Mohammad Rashid was apprehended from near Basti railway station when he was trying to go to Mumbai via Lucknow to take part in the upcoming meetings and training sessions of the PFI. Superintendent of Police, Basti, Hemraj Meena said on Sunday: "Acting on a tip-off, an STF team, late on Saturday night, arrested Mohammad Rashid from near Basti railway station. Police have also recovered some documents with anti-national material, a CD, a fake Aadhar card and a mobile phone from him.

## Irregularities in officers' selection in Punjab

## ARMY HANDS OVER PROBE TO CBI

## NEW DELHI

was initiated based on inputs by its military intelligence wing and other complaints.

"The probe has been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation as multiple agencies, including several civilian ones, are involved in the entire process," said a source.

The Army had launched a probe into the alleged malpractices after receiving complaints about them.

"The Army does not tolerate any irregularities or corruption. So, a CBI probe has been ordered into the case," the source said.

The Service Selection Board test was being conducted by Service Selection Centres in Punjab sometime back, the sources said.

The probe by the Army

## YSRCP sweeps Andhra civic elections

## AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) on Sunday scored a landslide victory in the urban local body elections by winning almost all the 11 municipal corporations and 70 municipalities.

The ruling party, which captured Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in all the districts, won majority of the divisions.

Barring a couple of municipalities where main the Opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) could give some fight to YSRCP, other Opposition parties -- Jana Sena Party (JSP) of actor politician Pawan Kalyan and its ally BJP were wiped out.

The ruling party bagged eight corporations and was leading in three others. It also won 67 out of 70 municipalities.

The landslide win for YSRCP came close on the heels of its massive victory in panchayat elections, where it won 80 per cent of seats.

## SIR-AMPRI makes radiation shielding material with industrial waste

## NEW DELHI

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Advanced Materials and Processes Research Institute (CSIR-AMPRI) has been adopting "Waste to Wealth" strategy. Union minister Harsh Vardhan said, adding that the institute has developed radiation shielding material by utilising industrial waste as raw materials.

A novel process for making lead free and highly effective shielding material useful for the construction of X-ray diagnostic and CT scanner room has been developed by utilising industrial waste, namely red mud and fly ash, the CSIR said in a statement.

Vardhan inaugurated the Centre for Advanced Radiation Shielding and Geopolymeric Materials and Analytical High-Resolution Transmission Electron Microscope Laboratory during his visit to CSIR con-

stituent lab AMPRI based in Bhopal on March 13. He also laid the foundation stone of CSIR-AMPRI Bamboo Composite Structure.

The Science and Technology minister stated that the institute is working in cutting-edge areas of advanced technologies. It is in the forefront in the pandemic time by undertaking research in collaboration with AIIMS, Bhopal in the area of development of rapid electrochemical based diagnostic for detection of SARS-CoV infection, he said. Various geopolymeric materials have been developed by CSIR-AMPRI by utilising coal-based thermal power plant waste like fly ash. Three US patents have been granted on geopolymeric materials. A unique Centre for Advanced Radiation Shielding and Geopolymeric Materials, with a total area of 455.52 sqm and carpet rea of 906.24 sq.m, is being established.

## Jobs, floods, foreigners in Cong charge sheet against Assam govt

**GUWAHATI:** Weeks ahead of the first phase of Assam Assembly elections, the opposition Congress on Sunday released a 12-point charge sheet against the state's BJP government, alleging that no basic crisis was solved by it in the past five years.

Party General Secretary in-charge of Assam Jitendra Singh and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel simultaneously released the charge sheet from Guwahati and Dibrugarh, respectively, highlighting issues ranging from unemployment to floods, foreigners' problems, farmers and tea workers and the Assam accord.

The charge sheet said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that after May 16, 2014, all Bangladeshis would have to leave bag and baggage and the BJP had also stated that there were 50 lakh Bangladeshis in Assam.

"All these are false statements as these figures are different in the statements of Union Home Ministry, according to which 989 people in 2014, 474 in 2015, 308 in 2016 and 51 persons in 2017 were expelled as Bangladeshis."

## Four of family booked for female infanticide

**MEHSANA:** An offence was registered against four members of a family for allegedly killing a month-old baby girl in December 2019 at Kadi town of Gujarat's Mehsana district in a case of female infanticide, police said on Sunday. The infant's parents and grandparents had falsely told the investigators that she had died due to suffocation during breastfeeding, but her post-mortem revealed that she was strangulated to death, police said.

The deceased infant's parents and grandparents were booked for murder at Kadi police station on Saturday night after the post-mortem report, a police official said. The case was registered against them under IPC sections 302 (murder), 120 (B) (criminal conspiracy), and 34 (act done by several persons in furtherance of common intention), and effort was on to arrest them, he said.

The parents of the murdered infant - Hardik and Rina Patel, who have a four-year-old daughter, were booked along with the infant's grandparents - Nita and Upendra Patel, they said. Deputy Superintendent of Police R R Ahir, who carried out the probe and is a complainant in the case, said that after the infant died, a case of accidental death was filed at Kadi police station on December 22, 2019, with the family members giving the cause of her death to suffocation during breastfeeding.

## Railways' parcel management system to be extended to 523 locations

## NEW DELHI

The new parcel management system (PMS) of the Indian Railways will soon be extended from 84 locations to 523 as part of its transformation geared towards providing transportation for small consignments over a vast network of stations.

As per a statement, small businesses and traders in smaller cities and towns have been using these services for transportation of their merchandise from bigger cities and production centres to the place of consignment, barcoding on each consignment, tracking, status updates of packages through GPRS network transmission of data, and SMS updates to customers at each stage. The new PMS will include an FSLA (Freight System Ledger Accounting) module for online preparation of manifest for registered newspapers and magazines.

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**KABUL:** Militancy and conflicts have increased in the war-torn Afghanistan as more than 30 people were killed over the past 24 hours amid accelerated peace efforts to find a negotiated solution to the country's lingering crisis. In the latest wave of violent incidents, a roadside bomb struck a mini-bus in Uruzgan province on Saturday morning, killing three people and wounding four others, all civilians, the provincial government confirmed in a statement.



# MYANMAR CIVILIAN LEADER VOWS 'REVOLUTION' AGAINST JUNTA



Protesters take cover behind homemade shields as they confront the police during a crackdown on demonstrations against the military coup in Hlaing Tharyar township in Yangon on Sunday. -AFP

**MANDALAY:** The civilian leader of Myanmar's government in hiding vowed to continue supporting a "revolution" to oust the military that seized power in last month's coup, as security forces again met protesters with lethal forces, killing at least seven.

Mahn Win Khaing Than, who was named the acting vice president by Myanmar's ousted lawmakers and is a member of deposed

leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party, addressed the public on Saturday for the first time since the February 1 military takeover.

"This is the darkest moment of the nation and the moment that the dawn is close," he said in a video posted on the shadow government's website and social media.

"In order to form a federal democracy, which all ethnic brothers who have been suffering various kinds of op-

pressions from the dictatorship for decades really desired, this revolution is the chance for us to put our efforts together," he said.

He added, "We will never give up to an unjust military but we will carve our future together with our united power. Our mission must be accomplished." At the end of the message he flashed a three-finger salute that has become a symbol of resistance to the military rule.

## Protests continue; death toll on the rise

**YANGON:** Earlier on Saturday, security forces opened fire at demonstrators, killing four in Mandalay, two in Pyay in south-central Myanmar, and one in Twante, a suburb of Yangon. Details of all seven deaths were posted on multiple social media accounts, some accompanied by photos of the victims.

The actual death toll is likely to be higher, as police apparently seized some bodies, and some of the victims suffered serious gunshot wounds that doctors and nurses working at makeshift clinics will be hard-pressed to treat. Many hospitals are occupied by security forces, and as a result are boycotted by medical personnel and shunned by protesters.

The independent UN human rights expert for Myanmar, Tom Andrews, said last week that credible reports indicated at least 70 people had died so far, and cited growing evidence of crimes against humanity by the military.

Other unofficial but carefully compiled tallies put the number of deaths since the coup at around 90. Saturday's killings did not faze demonstrators in Yangon who crowded a downtown commercial area past the official 8 pm curfew to hold a mass candlelight vigil and sing about their cause. The mostly young protesters rallied at an intersection where they usually gather for daytime protests. After-dark rallies were also held in Mandalay and elsewhere.

## 2 killed at party on Chicago's South Side

**CHICAGO:** Gunfire erupted at a party on Chicago's South Side early Sunday, killing two people and wounding 13 others, authorities said. Officers responded at around 4:40 a.m., police spokesman Jose Jara said in a statement. Those shot were between the ages of 20 to 44. Jara earlier said 12 people had been shot, but police later raised the figure to 15.

Seven of the wounded were taken to hospitals in serious to critical condition, fire department spokesman Larry Merritt told the Chicago Sun-Times.

Speaking to reporters near the scene of the shooting in Chicago's Park Manor neighborhood, Police Superintendent David Brown said investigators were still seeking a possible motive. Brown said four guns were recovered at the scene, but he didn't say whether investigators believe more than one person fired shots. No arrests had been made.

"We have a lot of work to do," Brown said. "Detectives are really just getting started."

## GLOBE-TROTTING



ALMOST 100 AND STILL DANCING: A dancer who is on the verge of turning 100 is putting her skills to use to raise money for NHS charities. Dinkie Flowers, from Shoreham, West Sussex, ran her own dance school right up until last year's lockdown. Now she is fundraising by taking part in workout sessions three times a week.

## Piers Morgan in '£10m bidding war' after GMB exit

Morgan is said to have TV executives desperate to snap him up after he left Good Morning Britain over Meghan Markle's tell-all Oprah Winfrey interview, according to Metro. The 55-year-old presenter dramatically quit the ITV show on Tuesday after clashing with Alex Beresford, who criticised him for 'continuing to trash' the Duchess of Sussex, and it remains to be seen what he'll do next. It's been reported that Piers has had talks with Simon Cowell about teaming up for a new project, while Andrew Neil reckons Piers would be a 'huge asset' to GB News, which launches later this year. Either way, Piers hasn't been shy of job offers and some have reached the £10million mark. 'He has had millions of pounds worth of offers,' a source claimed.

## Pope renews appeal for Syria on 10th anniversary of conflict

Vatican City: Pope Francis has renewed his "heartfelt appeal" to all sides in the Syria conflict to demonstrate "signs of goodwill so that a glimmer of hope can be opened for the exhausted population." The pope offered prayers for Syria during his traditional Sunday blessing in St. Peter's Square, noting that a decade has passed since the start of the "bloody conflict." Francis also expressed hope for "a decisive and renewed commitment" in the international community, so that "once arms are laid down, the social fabric can be mended to launch reconstruction and economic recovery."

## Malala Yousafzai signs Apple TV deal

Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai, who won the Nobel Peace Prize as a teenager after surviving a Taliban assassination attempt, has signed a deal with Apple TV+ that will see her produce dramas and documentaries that focus on women and children. The multi-year partnership would "draw on her ability to inspire people around the world," the company said. Speaking to a virtual panel, Malala, 23, said educating girls and young women, particularly in developing countries, would give them a chance to pursue green jobs and be part of solving the climate crisis in their communities.

## Pak cleric sentenced for raping minor

Islamabad: A Pakistani court has sentenced a cleric to death for sexually assaulting an eight-year-old girl in Peshawar city two years ago. A child protection court on Saturday convicted a cleric for sexually assaulting the minor in 2019, the Dawn reported.

## Buckingham Palace to get law firm to conduct Meghan bullying probe

ADITI KHANNA  
London



spokesperson said.

Earlier this month, the palace had confirmed that a probe would be conducted after The Times published a leaked email from a staff member alleging that the former American actress drove two personal assistants out of the royal household and undermined the confidence of a third member of staff.

Now, The Sunday Times' reports that it has been decided that the inquiry would be handed to a third-party law firm to conduct an independent investigation, rather than an inhouse inquiry.

"Our commitment to look into the circumstances around the allegations from former staff of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex is being taken forward but we will not be providing a public commentary on it," a Palace

The palace inquiry into the exact circumstances was announced days before the explosive interview with Oprah Winfrey was aired

last weekend, in which the couple made a series of shocking claims around the lack of mental health support offered to a suicidal Meghan and unnamed royals raising concerns about the skin colour of their mixed-race son Archie.

Meanwhile, their father Prince Charles is said to be "upset and cut up" after Harry had spoken of his hurt at the Prince of Wales not taking his calls after he announced his decision to step back as a frontline royal last year and cut him off financially. "It was a surprise to hear he'd been cut off, given the bank statements. The prince continued to provide Harry and Meghan with financial support after their move to America, while they found their feet," a source close to Charles told The Sunday Times.

## N. Korea giving no response to US outreach attempts

**PYONGYANG:** Washington's Policy review on North Korea remains stalled, as no response was received from Pyongyang, since a year of the denuclearisation talks with the US government. North Korea remains unresponsive even after trying several threads to communicate, cited a senior US administration official to CNN.

The official also added, "To

reduce the risks of escalation, we reached out to the North Korean government through several channels starting in mid-February, including in New York, we have not received any response from Pyongyang, despite multiple attempts by the US to engage." The US senior did not provide further details of what the outreach entailed but noted the

administration has been conducting its inter-agency review of the US' policy towards N. Korea, "including evaluation of all available options to address the increasing threat posed by N. Korea to its neighbours and the broader international community," the CNN said.

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Asian and Pacific Affairs for the State De-

partment Sung Kim said Washington will complete its policy review on N. Korea in the coming week.

Sung said, "a planned schedule was made, with officials of Tokyo and Seoul, on the due date of March 16 to 18, to provide a policy review prepared by the US Presidential administrations of N. Korea by the US Secretary of State Antony

Blinken to his counterpart. A possible input was expected before the review finalisation, which remains unattended now.

According to CNN, Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are expected to discuss matters concerning North Korea's nuclear weapons program, among other topics, during their trip to Japan and South Korea.

## Xi's dream project 'Belt Road Initiative' in trouble

**KABUL:** Chinese President Xi Jinping's dream of setting a new world order has come crashing down after Covid-19 slowed down the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), pushing it towards becoming financially unviable, reported the Kabul Times.

China has been forced to cut back on new loans and investments under the BRI due to the country's shrinking economy, which is aggravated by Covid-19. Chinese investment had reduced to USD 47 billion in 2020 – a whopping slump of 54 per cent in just one year; observed the Green Belt and Road Initiative Centre, a research organisation.

Wang Xiaolong, director-general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's International Economic Affairs Department, said 20% of the BRI projects were seriously affected while other 30-40% witnessed adverse impact, reported The Kabul Times.

China's economy has slumped drastically during the pandemic. There are reports that the lending under the BRI has come down from USD 75 billion in 2020 to just USD 3 billion in 2020. Besides, the BRI projects are embroiled under different problems such as corruption, lack of financial transparency, unfair loan conditions, fears of debt-traps, and negative social and environmental impacts. Even in China's ally Pakistan, just 32 of the total 122 projects announced under the BRI

could be completed so far, reported The Kabul Times. The reduced growth rate has forced the Beijing government to tighten fiscal discipline and work on financial risk, which would translate into lower prospects of China pumping money into the BRI projects now. China had been wooing developing or poor African and Asian countries since the inception of BRI projects through loans and investments. The Covid-19 outbreak however has caused millions of Chinese businesses to go bankrupt and cash flow to be disrupted, thus making a huge impact on the country's economy.

Now the contraction in Chinese lending is going to widen the overseas lending gap as well. As the BRI stumbles, China's diplomatic image as a dependable development partner would be dented, reported The Kabul Times.



## Indian envoy in Lanka visits Northern and Eastern Provinces

**COLOMBO:** India's top diplomat in Colombo held talks with senior Tamil leaders during his visit to the Northern and Eastern Provinces and emphasised that achieving the legitimate aspirations of the minority Tamil community through meaningful devolution within united Sri Lanka will contribute to peace, inclusive progress and strength of the island nation. During his three-day visit to the two provinces from March 11 to 13, High Commissioner Gopal Baglay also highlighted India's long-standing cooperation and commitment to the development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces in accordance with the requirements of the people and priorities set by their elected representatives, the Indian High Commission said on Sunday.

## Pak Hindu community pardons mob accused of vandalising temple

**PESHAWAR:** The Hindu community in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to pardon the mob that vandalised and burnt down a century-old temple in the province.

The local clerics and members of the Hindu community held a meeting on Saturday to resolve the dispute. As per the dialogue, informally called 'jirga', the accused have tendered an apology over the attack and a similar incident in 1997. The Muslim clerics have assured full protection to the Hindus and their rights as per the country's Constitution.

A reconciliation statement from the meeting would be presented to the Supreme Court, in a bid to secure the release of the accused from detention.

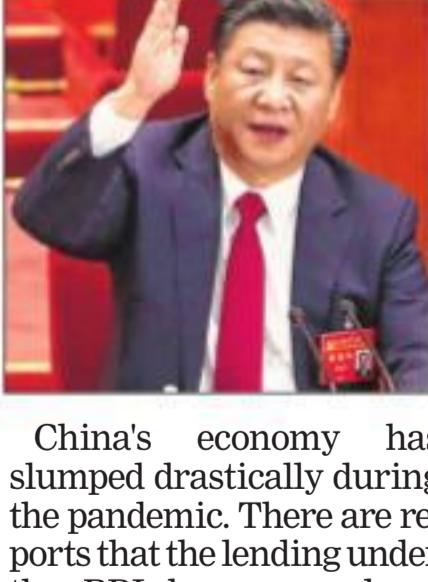
On December 30, 2020, a mob led by some local clerics and members of radical Islamists Islamists Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam vandalised the temple and an adjoining 'samadhi' and set it on fire in Terri

village of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district. Speaking to the media after the meeting with the local Ulama, Pakistan Hindu Council Chairman Ramesh Kumar said the incident had hurt the feelings of Hindus across the world.

Mahmood Khan, in his address to jirga members, called it an attempt to pollute the peaceful environment in the province. The attack on the temple had drawn strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders, prompting the Supreme Court to order its reconstruction.

Nearly 50 people have been arrested in the case. Following the incident, India had lodged a strong protest with Pakistan. The MEA had conveyed its serious concerns to the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi over the repeated instances of similar incidents and atrocities against the minority community.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan. According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan.



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**Tirupur garment units to down shutters on Mon against steep rise in yarn prices**

**NEW DELHI:** Garment manufacturers based in Tirupur, a major textile cluster in Tamil Nadu, will shut their units on Monday to protest against the steep hike in yarn prices over the last six months which industry officials said has crippled the industry. Tirupur-based industry representatives spoke to PTI about their ordeal in terms of order cancellations and margins being hit owing to the yarn price hike, and appealed that the Centre must regulate the exports of yarn, the key raw material in garment manufacturing.

**Mines ministry issues framework for non-ferrous metal scrap recycling**

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has issued a framework for scrap recycling of non-ferrous metals, including aluminium and copper, in a bid to cut down the scrap imports. The mines ministry is also of the view that one of the key challenges faced by the non-ferrous metals industry is its heavy dependence on import of metal scrap and stressed that a major share of the demand is served by imports owing to the underdeveloped metal scrap collection, segregation and processing infrastructure in the domestic market.

**'Consumer cos expected to reach pre-Covid sales levels in Q4FY21'**

**MUMBAI:** Consumer companies are expected to either return to and in some cases exceed pre-Covid sales levels in Q4FY21, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said in a report. Accordingly, it cited lower base in the previous year, increased mobility on the back of lesser Covid cases, strong rural demand, record high Rabi sowing, recovery in celebratory occasions, and improved consumer sentiment as factors behind the expected trend.

**IndiaFirst Life Insurance considers premium hike amid rising claims ratio**

**KOLKATA:** Amidst rising claims ratio and higher re-insurance cost, IndiaFirst Life Insurance is contemplating a hike in premium from the next fiscal while some other insurers have already effected the price revision in the current year. IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company Ltd (IndiaFirst Life) has sought approval from the regulator for an increase in policy premium for term plans for the next year due to a higher claims ratio, according to a top company official.

**DGCA monitoring 737 Max performance, re-certification to take time**

**MUMBAI:** The approval for Boeing 737 Max operations in India may take some more time as the regulator is closely monitoring the aircraft's performance. Accordingly, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is closely watching the performance of the aircraft in foreign jurisdictions. Till March 9, 14 airlines globally have returned the aircraft into service.

**'Gaming sector attracted funds worth \$544 mn during Aug 2020-Jan 2021'**

**MUMBAI:** The gaming sector in India attracted USD 544 million in investments during August 2020-January 2021 period, and this is set to double over the next 12-18 months on the back of higher user awareness and accelerated engagement, said Maple Capital Advisors. With more than 400 million gamers, a plethora of investors are looking to deploy funds in the sector, and with over 15% of the global gaming traffic, Indian gaming market is at an inflection point.

**Power consumption grows 16.5% in first 12 days of March**

**NEW DELHI:** Power consumption in the country grew 16.5% in the first 12 days of this month at 47.67 billion units over the corresponding period a year ago, showing a revival in the economic activities, according to power ministry data. Power consumption during March 1-12 last year was recorded at 40.92 BU. On the other hand, the peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during this 12-day period of March 2021 remained well above the highest record of 170.16 GW in the entire March 2020.

**Tech adoption across sectors; startups helping to expand markets: Report**

**NEW DELHI:** Amid technology adoption across the board, startups in most sectors are helping to expand markets bringing new customers into the fold, instead of disruption of existing companies, according to a latest report. BoFA Securities note described India as a supply constrained market (rather than demand constrained), and said Jio's launch of 4G services at affordable prices had underlined that a 'value for money' proposition, consumer uptake picks up.

**Rupee likely to slip on the back of high oil prices and subdued macro data**

**MUMBAI:** After sustaining its winning streak, Indian Rupee is expected to slip during this week on the back of high crude oil prices along with somber macro-economic data. Accordingly, crude oil at over \$68 per barrel is expected to exert pressure on the currency as well as stroke domestic inflation.

**'India's merchandise exports expected to grow at 4.9% in fourth quarter'**

**MUMBAI:** India's merchandise export is expected to grow at 4.9% in Q4FY21, predicted Export-Import Bank of India in a report. Accordingly, the report cited that total merchandise exports can amount to \$78.6 billion, growing at 4.9%. Similarly, the non-oil exports are expected to grow. They might reach \$73.9 billion, growing at 12% during the fourth quarter of 2020-21.

**Need to limit, streamline independent directors' liability: CII tells govt**

**MUMBAI:** Industry body CII has suggested putting in place safe harbour for independent directors, calling for proceedings against them to be initiated only when there is prima facie evidence of their involvement in a matter. The government recently concluded the exercise of decriminalising the Companies Act, 2013. In this connection, CII has submitted a Paper to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs highlighting matters with respect to framework for settlement of offences; liability of independent directors; vicarious liability, etc.

**SOMBRE MACROECONOMIC DATA LIKELY TO DENT EQUITIES ON INFLATIONARY RISKS; COVID SITUATION TO WEIGH****Fed interest rate decision, macro data to guide equities**

**MUMBAI:** Indian equity markets will be guided by the US Federal Reserve's call on interest rates and domestic macroeconomic data this week, analysts said.

Market participants will also be keenly focusing on the US Fed's plan to tackle the volatility in the bond yields. Rising US bond yields have attracted safe-haven bets and caused a correction in global equities mainly technology stocks recent weeks.

Indian equities followed global cues throughout the last week. The rise in US bond yield kept the volatility high, swaying between gains and losses.

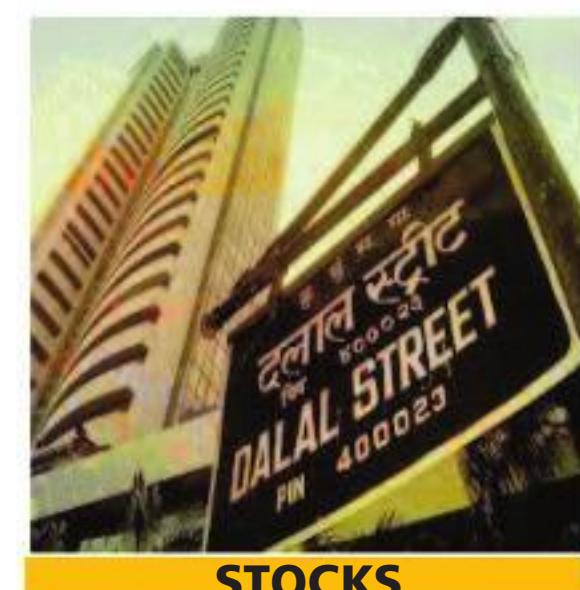
Although a fall in US unemployment rate and the signing of the stim-

ulus bill helped the market in between, but continuous rising bond yields outweighed market sentiments, analysts said.

During the holiday-shortened last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark index gained 386.76 points or 0.78 per cent. Markets were closed on Thursday on account of Mahashivratri.

"Markets will first react to macroeconomic data viz IIP and CPI inflation, which came in after market hours on Friday. Next, WPI inflation is scheduled for March 15. Besides, updates on COVID-19 situation and related news will remain on participants' radars."

"On the global front, the market will



STOCKS THIS WEEK

be closely eyeing the US Fed meet for their stance on interest rates and plans to tackle the volatility in the bond yields," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking.

In a double whammy for the economy, industrial production growth re-entered the negative territory by contracting by 1.6 per cent in January, while retail inflation soared to a three-month high of 5.03 per cent in February on costlier food items.

"The market will be keenly focusing on the upcoming Fed meeting scheduled to be held on the 16th & 17th of March," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said.

The market would also depend on

**Rajan against selling PSBs to corporates**

AGENCIES  
— Mumbai



As the economy slowly comes out of the pandemic blues, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan on Sunday cautioned that "drastic changes" in India's monetary policy framework can upset the bond market as the current system has helped in containing inflation and promoting growth.

Rajan, also a noted economist, opined that the government's ambitious target to make India a USD 5-trillion economy by 2024-25 was "more aspirational, rather than a carefully computed one even before the pandemic".

"I believe the (monetary policy) framework has helped bring inflation down, while giving the RBI some flexibility to support the economy. It is hard to think of what would have happened if we had to run such large fiscal deficits without such a framework in place," Rajan told PTI in an interview.

About the proposed privatisation of two banks, Rajan said there is very little detail on how this will be done.

"I think it would be a colossal mistake to sell the banks to industrial houses," he said, adding that it will also be politically infeasible to sell any decent-sized bank to foreign banks.

The former Reserve Bank of India chief said that perhaps one of India's private banks may be in a position to acquire a public sector bank, but he is not sure whether they have the appetite.

**Civil aviation ministry offers 392 routes under Udan 4.1****Airports Authority to sell stakes in JVs running Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad airports**

holds 26%, while Fraport AG and Eraman Malaysia holds 10% stake each.

AAI along with the Government of Andhra Pradesh holds 26 per cent in Hyderabad International Airport Ltd. It holds a similar stake in Bangalore International Airport along with the Karnataka Government.

The civil aviation ministry has invited bids for around 392 routes under the regional air connectivity scheme as part of continuing efforts to improve domestic connectivity as well as make flying more affordable.

On the commencement of the Union government's 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75)', around 392 routes have been proposed under UDAN 4.1 bidding process, the ministry said.

The latest bidding process is expected to be completed in six weeks.

According to the ministry, some operational flexibilities will be extended to airlines under the UDAN 4.1 to ensure suitable operation models to connect smaller cities/ airstrips.

**Kalyan Jewellers among five IPOs seeking to raise Rs 3,764 cr this week**

► Craftsman Automation and Laxmi Organics IPO today

► Kalyan Jewellers India opens on Tuesday

► Suryoday SFB, Nazara Tech issues on Wednesday

band of Rs 1,488-1,490 a share, will open on March 15 and close on March 17.

Laxmi Organics' IPO consists of fresh issuance of shares aggregating to Rs 300 crore and an offer for sale worth Rs 300 crore by the promoter Yellow Stone Trust. The price band has been fixed at Rs 129-130 per share for the IPO, which will open for public subscription during March 15-17.

The Rs 1,175-crore IPO of Kalyan Jewellers India Ltd comprises issuance of fresh equity aggregating up to Rs 800 crore and an offer for sale worth Rs 375 crore.

Kalyan Jewellers' promoter T S Kalyanaraman would be offloading shares worth up to Rs 125 crore, while Highdell Investment Ltd, an affiliate of Warburg Pincus, would sell up to Rs 250 crore worth of shares through the OFS route. It has set the price band at Rs 86-87 a share for the initial share-sale, which will conclude on March 18.

- manager research, Morningstar India.

The dollar index climbing above 92 and firmness in US 10-year bond yield impacted sentiments which may be seen as profit-booking since FPIs are sitting on huge profits, VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, added.

"FPIs have been big buyers in IT and financials where earnings visibility is high," he further said.

Besides, for debt segment, Srivastava said FPIs have been on a selling spree in the segment for a long time now mainly on concerns around COVID-19, calibrated support by RBI and low interest rates.

FPI flows across emerging markets remains mixed, said Rumsik Oza, executive vice president, head of fundamental research at Kotak Securities.

Autotrader Craftsman Auto-

maton's Rs 824-crore IPO comprises a fresh issue of eq-

uity shares aggregating up to Rs 150 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of up to 45.21,450 shares by promoter and existing shareholders.

Those offloading shares in the offer-for-sale are Srinivasan Ravi, K Gomatheswaran, Marina III (Singapore) Pte Ltd and International Finance Corporation (IFC). The issue, with a price

band of Rs 150-155 a share, will open on March 15 and close on March 17.

Shares of these companies will be listed on BSE and NSE.

Besides, the initial public offering (IPO) Anupam Rasayan is currently underway. Apart from these, nine companies have already floated their initial share-sales so far.

The analysis of February 2021 MF portfolios shows that none of the fund houses crosses the threshold of 10% of such instruments at the asset management company (AMC) level. However, 36 schemes spread across 13 fund houses breach the cap of 10% per scheme in securities.

The latest directive caps investments by a mutual fund house under all its schemes in bonds with special features to not more than 10% from one issuer. It also specifies that no MF scheme can hold more than 10% of its net asset value (NAV) of its debt portfolio in such bonds, and not more than 5% of the NAV of the debt portfolio should be due to such bonds from one issuer.

**No fund house crosses SEBI's exposure limits on AT1, AT2 bonds'**

India's fund houses do not cross the threshold set by SEBI directive on restricting their exposure to additional AT1 and AT2 bonds, a

Crisis analysis of February 2021 MF portfolios showed.

Recently, SEBI restricted the exposure of mutual funds (MFs) to additional Tier I and II (AT1 and AT2) bonds. The move has been termed as a risk mitigation measure to reduce portfolio risk in debt MF portfolios and comes after write-offs hit investors in such bonds issued by two banks in the past year.

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**AC firms plan 5-8% price hike this summer to offset cost rise**

pandemic. They are also providing no-cost EMI, cashback and easy accessibility to boost sales.

Daikin Airconditioning is going to increase the prices by 3 to 5 per cent this month as prices of metals and compressor, which are largely imported, have gone up.

"It will have some impact on the sales but the pent-up demand is there and summers would be hot

this year. We are expecting that even if there is some price increase, demand would be there," Daikin Airconditioning India MD & CEO Kanwal Jeet Jawa told PTI.

Panasonic, which is having "robust sales" across regions, primarily helped by the pent-up demand from last year, is also going for a price increase and expects a high double-digit growth this season.

"We are looking at market trends and plan to raise prices of ACs in the range of 6-8 per cent while refrigerators will see an increase in the range of 3 to 4 per cent. This is due to the rise in production cost due to the increasing cost of commodities in the last few months," said Panasonic India and South Asia President and CEO Manish Sharma.

Quoting the TRAI report, the report said industry-wide revenue continued to grow for the fifth quarter in a row during Q3FY21 to Rs 443 billion, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.

Accordingly, this trend was supported by the industry-wide tariff hikes implemented in the last 12-18 months, increasing penetration of high ARPU (average revenue per user) broadband subscribers, and increasing subscriber base.

Quoting the TRAI report, the report said industry-wide revenue continued to grow for the fifth quarter in a row during Q3FY21 to INR443 billion". Reliance Jio Infocomm continued to be the largest telecom player by revenue market share (RMS) in December 2020 with RMS of 39.3% in 3QFY21, followed by 32.8% RMS of Bharti Airtel 20.8% RMS of Vodafone Idea Limited and a 6.8% market share of Bharat Sanchar Niigam.

Besides, the number of broadband subscribers increased to 63% of the overall wireless subscriber base in December 2020 from 62% in November 2020 and 47% in March 2019. In December 2020, the number grew by strong 5 million (November 2020: 6.9 million). This along with a rise in data tariffs reflects that the Indian telecom industry is moving towards a higher ARPU regime."

"The tariff differentials for the prepaid and postpaid tariff plans among the telcos are already narrowing down over the past one year." According to the report, post-paid tariff plans by RJio and tariff hike announced by VIL for select plans, a few months back, indicated the inclination of industry players towards a higher ARPU regime in the long run.

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Although a fall in US unemployment rate and the signing of the stim-

# FEARLESS KISHAN CASHES IN

Debutant's blitzkrieg powers India to 7-wkt win; series level at 1-1

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Ahmedabad

**I**shan Kishan's 32-ball 56 on debut and his 94-run partnership for the second wicket with skipper Virat Kohli (73 not out off 49 balls) in nine overs helped India thrash England by seven wickets in the second T20I at the Narendra Modi Stadium to bring the 5-match series level at 1-1.

**K**ishan, opening the innings in place of Shikhar Dhawan who was benched, hammered four sixes and five fours in his innings and made easy work of the 165-run target that England had set up.

At the time of his dismissal A-leg-before to Adil Rashid, India needed just 71 in 10 overs. If England thought that

they were back, Rishabh Pant (26 off 13), another big-hitter, joined Kohli and the two added 36 for the third wicket in just 3.3 overs. By the time of Pant's dismissal, England were down and out. India reached the target with 13 balls to spare.

India had lost the wicket of K.L. Rahul early in the first over. The Karnataka batsman fell for a duck.

Earlier, the Indian bowlers brought in charge of pace towards the end of the England innings to restrict the visitors to 164 for six in 20 overs.

England were coasting along well at 129 for four in 15 overs and looked good at putting up a huge total. However, tight bowling from Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Shardul Thakur and Hardik Pandya allowed Eng-

land to get only 35 runs in the last five overs.

India began well getting rid of Jos Buttler early, in the very first over, but a 63-run partnership between Jason Roy (46 off 35 balls) and Dawid Malan (24 off 23 balls) helped the visitors get back on track.

Jonny

Bairstow (20 off 15 balls), captain Eoin Morgan (28 off 20 deliveries) and Ben Stokes (24 off 21 balls) got good starts but just as they were looking to take the total forward with power-hitting, they were dismissed.

Shardul Thakur (2/29) and Washington Sundar (2/29) took two wickets each whereas Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/28) and Yuzvendra Chahal (1/34) took a wicket each.



## THE SHAW REDEMPTION

Mumbai thrash UP by 6 wkts, win 4th Vijay Hazare title

FP NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

**A**diya Tare scored an unbeaten 118 after captain Prithvi Shaw smashed 73 off 39 balls to help Mumbai beat Uttar Pradesh by six wickets and win the 2021 Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday.

Shaw and Yashavali Jaiswal got Mumbai off to a flying start to the chase with an opening partnership of 89 runs that came in just over nine overs. The Mumbai captain scored most of the runs and he eventually fell to Shiv-



UP vs Mum **BRIEF SCORES**

**Uttar Pradesh 312/4 in 50 overs** (Madhav Kaushik 158 not out, Akshdeep Nath 55, Samarth Singh 55; Tanush Kotian 2/54) **lost to Mumbai 315/4 in 41.3 overs** (Aditya Tare 118 not out, Prithvi Shaw 73; Sameer Choudhary 1/43) **by 6 wickets with 51 balls remaining**

### Shaw first to cross 800 in one season

**N**EW DELHI: Prithvi Shaw on Sunday became the first player to score more than 800 runs in a single Vijay Hazare Trophy season. Shaw scored 73 for Mumbai in the Vijay Hazare Trophy final against Uttar Pradesh to take his tally to 827 runs in eight matches at an average of 165.40. Shaw, 21, smashed his 73 in just 39 balls, hitting 10 fours and four sixes. He also scored an unbeaten 227 against Puducherry which made him only the eighth Indian to score a double century in senior 50-over cricket.

## Spirited India eves lose

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Lucknow

**M**ignon du Preez and Lizelle Lee led a clinical batting effort from South Africa women as they beat India by seven wickets in the fourth ODI here. Punam Raut earlier scored an unbeaten century but it went in vain as the visitors chased down India's 266/4 with eight balls in hand.

South Africa have thus taken an unassailable 3-

**Ind vs SA** **BRIEF SCORES**  
**INDIA 266/4 in 50 overs** (Punam Raut 104 not out, Harmanpreet Kaur 54, Mithali Raj 45; Tumi Sekhukhune 2/63) **lost to SOUTH AFRICA 269/3 in 48.4 overs** (Lizelle Lee 69, Mignon du Preez 61, Lara Goodall 59 not out; Rajeswari Gayakwad 1/39) **by seven wickets with eight balls remaining**

1 lead in the five-match series. Lee (69), captain Laura Wolvaardt (53), Lara Goodall (59 not out) and Mignon du Preez (61) all scored half centuries while Mansi Joshi, Rajeshwari Gayakwad and Harmanpreet Kaur took a wicket each at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium.

Earlier, Punam hit a century as India women scored 266/4 against South Africa. It was Punam's third consecutive score above 50 in the series.



Hosts 3-1 down in 5-match series

## INDORE SPORTS

### PUNEET AGGARWAL MEMORIAL INDORE OPEN \$15,000 ITF MEN'S WORLD TENNIS

### Zane Khan of US is champion



**INDORE:** A marathon match was seen here at Indore Tennis Club on Sunday when US' 19-year-old unseeded Zane Khan defeated third-seeded Aidan McHugh of the UK in the title match of Puneet Aggarwal Memorial Indore Open \$15,000 prize ITF men's World Tennis Tour Tournament played at Indore Tennis Club on Sunday. It is second consecutive ITF title for Zane, who won another title recently in Lucknow.

The match was hard fought and both the players contested for each point. Visitors were lucky to see some excellent service and ground strokes. In the end, Zane defeated Aidan McHugh 6-7 (8), 7-6 (6), 7-6 (4) in a three-and-a-half-hour contest. This was the first encounter for both the players in any international tournament. Zane was ahead 4-1 in the first set but Aidan bounced back to take the score to a tiebreak and also win the set 7-6 (8). The first set ran for about one and a half hours, with both the players performing great tennis.

**ADAM LOSES SET BY DOUBLE FAULT:** In the second, Zane took a 3-1 lead. Aidan then equalized after trailing for some time and took the set to tiebreak. Here Aidan

missed a double fault, taking advantage of this. Zane captured the set. The set lasted for 50 minutes. Aidan started strongly in the third set and took early lead by breaking Zane's serve. This time, Zane made a strong comeback to take the score to 6-6 and then had to resort to a tiebreak for the result, where Zane made no mistake serving the best and clinching the second consecutive ITF title.

**PRIZE DISTRIBUTION FUNCTION:** The award was distributed in the chief hospitality of Major General Sanjeev Dogra, Deputy Commandant and Chief Instructor of Infantry School Mhow and Mrs. Dogra. Nitin Agarwal and Niti Agarwal Directors Path India Pvt. Ltd. were present as special guests. On this occasion, M.P. Tennis association president Anil Mahajan secretary Anil Dhupar and chief adjudicator Abhishek Mukherjee were also present. The operation was conducted by Sajid Lodi. The players were awarded with attractive trophies. The winning player Jane Khan received a prize money of \$ 2160 and 10 ITF points. The runner-up Aidan got \$ 1272 and 6 ITF points. The players who played the semi-finals also received a sum of \$ 753.

### Indore bt Umaria, retain handball title

**INDORE:** Indore defeated Umaria 11-5 in the final of the state-level boys handball competition here on Sunday. Indore managed to win the title for 11 consecutive years. Hoshangabad and Jabalpur were joint winners in the 3rd place. For Indore, Vivekanand, Gurman Singh, and



Shubham performed brilliantly. Prize distribution function was held in the presence of SP Shakuntala Rohul, former Assistant Commissioner Custom Deepak Mishra, Sandeep Rohul, Anita Shukla, and Rashmi Mishra. On this occasion, Arun Saini, Naveen Punia, Kulwant Singh Saini, Rajesh Kanungo, Sudarshan Thakur, HS Dhillion, Sunil Yadav were also present. Based on this competition, the Vikas Pandey.

### Simran Royal and Power Shutters in final

**INDORE:** The final of Indore Badminton League-2 organized by Indore-Duke Badminton Academy will be played



between Simran Royal and Pooja Power Shutters. Six teams are participating in the league match. The Spartans finished third place in the tournament. Former international badminton players who won the national doubles badminton title 8 times and at present in the Indian Badminton Junior coaches panel, Avantika Deka was introduced to players. On this occasion, Duke instructor Vishal Chandwani, Director Suresh Ingiani and Prashant Hemani welcomed the guest. The five-day event was inaugurated by MLA An Mahendra Hardia, R P Singh Nayyar, Prakash Dhakad and Dharmesh Yashlha were also present. Vishal Chandwani expressed the gratitude.

### Yazhini sets tune, Pritha goes out of sync

**INDORE:** Yazhini Madhurakavi knocked

Pritha Virtikar out of contention to sail into the Youth Girls main draw in the UTT 82nd Junior and Youth National Table Tennis Championships at the Abhay Prashad here Sunday. Pritha, a promising youngster from Pune, went out of sync against the Tamil Nadu girl after taking a 2-1 lead. That was the chance Yazhini waited for before bouncing back to win the fourth with ease and the last, with some effort. It must have been a disappointing experience for the Maharashtra girl who reached the main draw last time at Jammu.

Kajol Ramjali of Andhra Pradesh qualified for the second stage, but not before facing resistance from Daman and Diu's Shanaya Shah. The latter was down and out when she lost the first two games and fought back well to restore some balance.

However, in the fifth game, she struggled to keep the ball on the table, helping her opponent right from the word go.

Radhika Sharma from Rajasthan proved too strong for Trisha Gogoi, a wildcard entrant. The latter, who is from Assam, led 2-1 but let off her Rajasthan rival off the hook to move in. Young Sayali Wan from Maharashtra was 0-2 down but managed to pick herself up in time to outsmart Tanzia Sharma, also a TTFI wildcard.

Gujarat's Aafreen Murad defeated Neha Kumari of Bengal, but not before the latter showed some defiance. Aafreen won the crucial fifth game to qualify.

Seeds feel at home

The open seeding draw in the morning made seeds feel at home. Prapti Sen, the



top-ranked paddler, got the pride of place, while Anusha Kutumbale from MP followed suit, placed in the bottom half. Diya Chitale, the title-holder, finds herself placed in the fourth spot and is expected no resistance until the quarters, where she could meet fifth-seed Selenadeepth from Tamil Nadu. Even Prapti Sen finds a good draw, barring early hiccups, should go on to meet eighth seed Deepika Neelakanthan in the last-eight stages, also from Tamil Nadu.

The MP girl and second-seed Anusha has a few tough opponents in her quarter—unseeded Yashini Shivashankar from the Railways and a chopper in Anjali Rohilla from Haryana and, finally, Swastika Ghosh, the seventh seed, from Maharashtra. For the third-seed Surbhi Patwari, it is equally difficult in the third quarter. She has four players—Jennifer Varghese, Shreya Deshpande, Nithyashree Mani, and

Anannya Basak—who can change the complexion if they get going. During matches, Digvijay Singh, Secretary of the Madhya Pradesh Olympics Association introduced players.

### ODA wins Rajgarh Cricket Cup

**INDORE:** Daly College is celebrating his 150th year of imparting education. The celebration began with Rajgarh cup cricket.

The match was played between Old Dilians and the Daly College Staff at Scindia Ground.

After winning the toss, the Daly College Staff team decided to field first.

The ODA team scored 166 runs for 9 wickets in 25 overs. From ODA side, Aman Narang and Sumit Chandok scored 54 and 30 runs respectively. Chain Singh from the DC staff team claimed 4 wickets. In response, DC staff team scored 165 runs on the loss of 8 wickets in 25 over and lost the match by 1 run. Prent Dubey and Sanjay Thakkar scored 63 (not out) and 33 runs respectively for their team. Tejveer Juneja and Abhishek Bagadi claimed 3-3 wickets each for ODA. In the closing ceremony, former Secretary of BCCI Sanjay Jagdale and Principal Neeraj Kumar Bedhotiya distributed the prizes. Chain Singh (best bowler), Jai Singh Jhabua, Amit

Bidwal & Pushkal Choudhary (best fielders), Prent Dubey & Aman Narang (best batsman) and Tejveer Juneja (Man of the Match) were adjudged. On this occasion,

Daly College Board members Sandeep Parikh, Sumit Chandok, Jai Singh Jhabua, Ex Board Members Thakur Narendra Singh Bidwal and Harish Chandok, ODA Secretary Prateek Modi, ODA Sports Secretary Mayur Singh Jhabua, Vice Principal A Ansari, Bursar Harishwaran Singh, Dean of Sports Harish Benbi and many other distinguished dignitaries were present.

Daly College Board members Sandeep Parikh, Sumit Chandok, Jai Singh Jhabua, Ex Board Members Thakur Narendra Singh Bidwal and Harish Chandok, ODA Secretary Prateek Modi, ODA Sports Secretary Mayur Singh Jhabua, Vice Principal A Ansari, Bursar Harishwaran Singh, Dean of Sports Harish Benbi and many other distinguished dignitaries were present.

Sharath bows out

**INDORE:** World No. 32 and India's ace paddler A. Sharath Kamal failed to capitalize on his first-round bye and went down meekly to Niagol Stoyanov of Italy 11-9, 6-11, 8-11, 4-11, 11-8, 10-12 on Sunday. Manika Batra, too, had an easy first-round draw when she beat Maria Yovkova of Bulgaria, winning in 11-5, 11-7, 11-4, 11-0.

ENGLAND				
Batsmen	R	B	4s	6s
Jason Roy c Kumar b Sundar	46	35	4	2
Jos Buttler f lbw b Kumar	0	1	0	0
Dawid Malan lbw b Chahal	24	23	4	0
Jonny Bairstow c Yadav b Sundar	20	15	1	1
Eoin Morgan (c) tPant b Thakur	28	20	4	0
Ben Stokes c Pandya b Thakur	24	21	1	0
Sam Curran not out	6	5	1	0
Chris Jordan not out	0	0	0	0
Extras	(b 1, lb 10, w 5)			16
TOTAL	(20 Ov, RR: 8.20)			164/6
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Jos Buttler, 0.3 ov), 2-64 (Dawid Malan, 8.2 ov), 3-91 (Jason Roy, 11.1 ov), 4-119 (Jonny Bairstow, 13.5 ov), 5-142 (Eoin Morgan, 17.1 ov), 6-160 (Ben Stokes, 19.4 ov)				
BOWLING	O	M	R	W
Bhuvneshwar Kumar	4	0	28	2
Washington Sundar	4	0	29	2
Shardul Thakur	4	0	29	2
Hardik Pandya	4	0	33	0
Yuzvendra Chahal	4	0	34	1

INDIA				
Batsmen	R</			

# Benzema brace saves Real's title hopes



**MADRID:** Karim Benzema was once again Real Madrid's savior as the striker scored two late goals to keep their slim hopes of winning the La Liga title alive with a 2-1 win at home to Elche. Elche once again showed how much they have improved since Fran Escriba returned as coach and Dani Calvo's 61st minute header off the underside of the bar gave them the lead against a lackluster Real Madrid, who once again failed to perform against a rival in the bottom half of the table on Saturday. Xinhua news reports.

Sergio Ramos was back in Real Madrid's starting 11 after a minor knee operation, while Zinedine Zidane rested midfielders Luka Modric and Toni Kroos ahead of next week's Champions League tie at

home to Atalanta. However, Vinicius Jr, Fede Valverde and Isco, who were given a rare starting chance, all failed to chance to shine, as Madrid dominated but only created one chance in the first half as Benzema failed to score from the edge of the area. The pair quickly combined after Kroos played a short corner to Modric, whose cross was perfectly headed home by

Benzema in the 73rd minute. Eden Hazard returned after his latest muscle injury following the goal, but Elche looked as if they would hold on for a vital point until injury-time when Benzema netted the winner. The Frenchman collected a chested pass from Rodrygo before firing across the face of goal and in off the post to keep all three points in Madrid.

## Lewandowski gets 32nd Bundesliga goal

Robert Lewandowski scored again as Bayern Munich extended its Bundesliga lead with a 3-1 win at Werder Bremen. Lewandowski took his season tally to 32 league goals and matched the record of scoring against 16 different teams within a season. He managed the same feat last season. Former Bayern great Gerd Müller and Bremen striker Aíton are the only others to manage it. Lewandowski has so far only failed to score against Leipzig this season. The teams meet in Leipzig on April 3, when the Poland striker will be aiming to become the first player to score against every opponent in a season. By scoring his 268th league goal on Saturday, Lewandowski also matched Klaus Fischer's haul from 1968-88. Only Gerd Müller, who scored 365 goals for Bayern between 1965-79, has more. Lewandowski is closing in on Müller's league record of 40 goals from the 1971-72 season.



# Rashid breaks Zimbabwe resistance

The spinner turns into bowling machine to bowl 99.2 overs; most in a Test since 1998

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Abu Dhabi

Afghanistan secured a six-wicket win over Zimbabwe in the second Test at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium here on Sunday, thus levelling the two-match series 1-1.

On Day Five of the Test match, Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan created the record for bowling the most number of overs in a single Test in the 21st century. The spinner bowled a total of 99.2 overs and this is the most number of overs bowled by a bowler in a Test since 1998. In 1998, Muttiah Muralitharan had bowled 113.5 overs against England at The Oval.

In the first innings, Rashid returned with the figures of 4-138 from 36.3 overs while in the second innings, the spinner returned with seven wickets. Because of Rashid's



**Afg vs Zim BRIEF SCORES**

Afghanistan 545/4d & 108/4 (Rahmat Shah 58, Ibrahim Zadran 29; Blessing Muzarabani 2-25); Zimbabwe 287 & 365 (Sean Williams 151*, Donald Tiripano 95; Rashid Khan 7-137).
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brilliance in the second innings, Zimbabwe only managed to set a target of 108 runs for Afghanistan which they chased down, riding on Rahmat Shah's half-century. During the first innings, Afghanistan batsman Hashmatullah Shahidi (200\*) had become the first crick-

eter from his country to score a double century in an innings of a Test match. Shahidi had become only the third Afghanistan batsman to hit a century in the longest format of the game. Rahmat Shah and skipper Asghar Afghan are the other two batsmen who have hit a

## Motera pitch for two-day Test given 'average rating': ICC

**NEW DELHI:** The pitch for the day-night Test between India and England in Ahmedabad has been given an average rating by the ICC. The ICC in its "Rules and Regulations" page has updated the ratings of all recent games and the pitch at Motera was rated "average" for the third 'Test' and "Good" for the final Test. It was rated "Very Good" for the first 20 International. Incidentally, the pitch at the SCG for the third Test between India and Australia was also rated "average".



## WEST INDIES ANNOUNCE 13-MAN SQUAD

KINGSTON (JAMAICA)

All-rounder Jason Holder and batsman Darren Bravo returned to the West Indies Test squad that will face Sri Lanka in the first Test from March 21, a 13-man squad for which was announced on Sunday. The match will be the first assignment for opening batsman Kraigg Brathwaite as captain. The first Test will be played at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium from March 21-25.

"A number of players seized the opportunity that the tour of Bangladesh presented and booked a place for themselves in the Test team for this series. This now means that there is keen competition for places which should drive better individual performances and that of the team. I also think that these players are looking forward to displaying their skills on home soil," said West Indies' chief selector Roger Harper.

**WEST INDIES 13-MAN SQUAD:** Kraigg Brathwaite (captain), Jermaine Blackwood (vice-captain), Nkrumah Bonner, Darren Bravo, John Campbell, Rahkeem Cornwall, Joshua da Silva, Shannon Gabriel, Jason Holder, Alzarri Joseph, Kyle Mayers, Kemar Roach, Jomel Worrican.

# 'Special chat' with AB helps Kohli get back to his best

FP NEWS SERVICE  
Ahmedabad

Shifting his focus to the basics and a "special chat" with his Royal Challengers Bangalore teammate AB de Villiers helped India skipper Virat Kohli to comeback to his best in the second T20 International against England here on Sunday.

Kohli, who did not have the best of times in the preceding Test series by his standards and got out cheaply in the first T20, made an unbeaten 73 off 49 balls to power India to a seven-wicket win.

"I had to shift the focus back to the basics. Probably thinking of too many variables on the outside. I've always taken pride in doing the job for the team, so more happy about that than scoring 70 odd."

"Kept my eye on the ball. The management spoke to me about things. Anushka is here so she also keeps speaking to me about thinks. And I had a special chat with AB de Villiers before this game and he told me just to watch the



ball. So I did," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"Special mention to Ishan. I tried to do what I can but he just took the game away from the opposition. Quality innings on debut. When you play in the IPL with such dominance like he has, against quality bowlers."

"We've seen him hit international fast bowlers for big sixes. He knew he was hitting

the ball well but he was calculated, not reckless. Today that counter-attacking innings of his and our partnership was something the team needed," said Kohli praising the young southpaw.

**I had to shift the focus back to the basics. Probably thinking of too many variables on the outside ,**

"I think we ticked all the boxes we wanted to. Especially in the first innnings with the ball. To give away only 34 in the last five, it was very smart bowling. Especially Washy (Washington Sundar), he had only one left-hander to bowl to and he used the big boundary to the right-handers better." Kohli is pleased that his star all-rounder Hardik Pandya is back to bowling regularly, having gained full fitness.

## Motera pitch for 2-day Test rated as 'average'

FP NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

was rated "Very Good" for the first T20 International.

Incidentally, the pitch at the SCG for the third Test between India and Australia was also rated "average".

India had won the pink-ball game by 10 wickets with both teams unable to pass 150 on that rank turner. India made 145 and 49 for no loss and England were blown away by the Axar Patel juggernaut, folding up for 112 and 81 in their two innings.

A substandard pitch could have attracted sanctions for the refurbished Narendra Modi Stadium.



tions for the refurbished Narendra Modi Stadium.

## Yuvraj trends after hitting four successive sixes in 22-balls 52

**RAIPUR:** The flamboyant Yuvraj Singh started trending early on Sunday morning following his four successive sixes during a Road Safety World Series T20 here, rising again nearly two years after walking into international sunset.

The iconic Sachin Tendulkar and Yuvraj turned back the clock and took Raipur by storm in their inimitable style as India Legends registered a thumping 57-run win over South Africa Legends in the Shaha Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium on Saturday.

South Africa, chasing 205 to win, were restricted to 148 for 7 in 20 overs.

Tendulkar got his maiden half century of the tournament while the stylish

Yuvraj showed his true colours with an unbeaten 52 in India's huge win.

The win took India back to the top spot with 16 points, overtaking Sri Lanka on net run rate.

The 47-year-old Tendulkar cracked a 37-ball 60 with nine boundaries and a six while Yuvraj starred with an unbeaten 22-ball 52 with six towering sixes including four in succession and two hits to the ropes.

**Brief scores:** India Legends 204/3 in 20 overs (Sachin Tendulkar 60, Yuvraj Singh 52 not out, S Badrinath 42, Yusuf Pathan 23, Manpreet Singh 40; 16; Monde Zondeki 2/35) beat South Africa 148/7 in 20 overs (Andrew Puttick 41, Morne van Wyk 48; Yusuf Pathan 3/34, Yuvraj Singh 2/18).



## Bhavani Devi becomes first Indian fencer to qualify for Olympics



**CHENNAI:** Tamil Nadu's C A Bhavani Devi has become the first ever Indian fencer to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games. The sabre fencer secured a spot in the World Cup in Hungary after the hosts lost in the quarterfinals of the team event, allowing South Korea to progress to the semi-final.

Bhavani Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official

Ranking (AOR) Method. Two individual spots were up for grabs for the Asia and Oceania region based on the World Rankings as of April 5, 2021. She is ranked 45th and occupies one of the two available slots based on the ranking. The 27-year-old's qualification will be confirmed when the rankings are made official on the aforementioned date.

## Women sub junior hockey Bihar, MP register wins

**SIMDEGA (JHARKHAND):** Hockey Bihar and Hockey Madhya Pradesh registered wins on the fifth day of the 11th Hockey India Sub Junior Women's National Championship 2021 here in Simdega on Sunday. In the first match of the day, Hockey Bihar edged out Kerala Hockey by a narrow 2-1 margin in Pool D. Shanti Kumari (23 min) and Rajina Marandi (52 min) scored to give Hockey Bihar a 2-0 lead. S. Krishnendu (46 min) pulled one goal back for Kerala Hockey in the final quarter.

In Pool F, Hockey Madhya Pradesh beat Le Puducherry Hockey by a comprehensive 8-0 margin. Shweta (33, 40, 46, 60 min) starred with four goals for Hockey Madhya Pradesh. Mamta Banjara (20, 28 min) scored two goals while Kritika Singh (45 min) and Tanu Bisen (48 min) scored a goal each. The Pool E match between Assam Hockey and Manipur Hockey was forfeited. The quarterfinals will start on Monday.



## 'Voice of F1' Walker passes away at 97

**LONDON:** Murray Walker, often called the "Voice of Formula 1" due to his long stint as commentator for the sport, passed away at the age of 97. The British Racing Drivers' Club (BRDC), which owns and operates the Silverstone circuit, announced the news on Saturday. "It's with great sadness we share the news of the passing of BRDC Associate Member Murray Walker OBE. A friend, a true motorsport legend, the nation's favourite commentator and a contagious smile," said the BRDC.

Walker commented on a Grand Prix for the first time for the BBC in 1949. He has been on the mike for some of the most famous moments in Formula 1 including the famous rivalry between McLaren's Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost and the early stages of Michael Schumacher's dominance. Walker partnered with former F1 world champion James Hunt until the latter's death in 1993 after which he partnered with former driver Martin Brundle.

**WHAT'S ON**

00:15 AM Football Extraaa On SONY TEN 2  
1:15 AM Milan vs Napoli On SONY TEN 2  
8:00 PM Wrestlemania 14 On SONY SIX

## 1876 THIS DAY, THAT YEAR

The day Test cricket began. The match between Australia and England, at the MCG, was only subsequently awarded Test status, and was originally billed as "All England v A Combined New South Wales and Victoria XI". Neither side was at full strength: Australia, who were effectively a combined Melbourne and Sydney XI, had no Frederick Spofforth. England had no amateurs - which meant no Grace, for a start - and no wicketkeeper, after Surrey's Ted Pooley was arrested in New Zealand the day after a gambling scam. Australia's Charles Bannerman, who was born in Kent, faced the first ball from Alfred Shaw, scored the first run, off the next ball, and the first hundred as well. Australia eventually won by 45 runs.

## TENNIS NEWS



### Basilashvili beats Agut to win Qatar Open

**DOHA:** Nikoloz Basilashvili downed Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6 (5), 6-2 in the final of the Qatar Open for his fourth ATP title. The Georgian earned the first two break points at 3-2 in the second set, and he took his chance before going on to close out the match in 90 minutes. Basilashvili had only won two matches from his previous 16 going into the tournament, but he saved a match point to defeat Roger Federer in the quarterfinals.

**MEDVEDEV TO MEET HERBERT :** Top-seeded Daniil Medvedev will bid for his 10th career title when he meets unseeded Pierre-Hugues Herbert in an unusual-looking Open 13 final.

Medvedev, who climbs to No. 2 in the rankings next week, led 6-4, 3-0 against qualifier Matthew Ebden when the Australian retired through an unspecified injury on Saturday.

**MUGURUZA ENDS LONG WAIT, BEATS KREJKOVA:** Garbine Muguruza ended her almost two-year wait for a title with a 7-6 (6), 6-3 win against Barbora Krejčíková in the final of the Dubai Championships.

It's the 27-year-old Spanish player's first title since winning in Monterrey in April 2019. Muguruza lost the Qatar Open final last week to Petra Kvitová and the Yarra Valley Classic final last month to Ash Barty. Overall, it's Muguruza's eighth career singles title, including two Grand Slam titles at Roland Garros in 2016 and Wimbledon in 2017.

## Murray blessed with fourth child

**F**ormer world No. 1 Andy Murray and his wife, Kim Sears, have welcomed the birth of their fourth child. The couple, who have been married for six years, already have two daughters — five-year-old Sophia and three-year-old Edie, and a one-year-old son Teddy, according to ATP Tour website.

The 33-year-old British star has competed at three tournaments this year, including a runner-up finish last month at the Biella Challenger Indoor 1 on the ATP Challenger Tour. Last spring, Murray spoke about fami-



ly life under lockdown as he joined legend Billie Jean King and CNN Chief International Anchor Christiane Amanpour for a special interview.

"It's been tough, obviously, tough for everybody just now, but it has also given us the opportunity to spend time — and a lot of time — at home with my family, which with my job and the travelling that we usually do, I don't usually get that opportunity," he said." Murray also explained the photo he posted of himself wearing a kilt and tiara, a request from his daughters.

In Pool F, Hockey Madhya Pradesh beat Le Puducherry Hockey by a comprehensive 8-0 margin. Shweta (33, 40, 46, 60 min) starred with four goals for Hockey Madhya Pradesh. Mamta Banjara (20, 28 min) scored two goals while Kritika Singh (45 min) and Tanu Bisen (48 min) scored a goal each. The Pool E match between Assam Hockey and Manipur Hockey was forfeited. The quarterfinals will start on Monday.

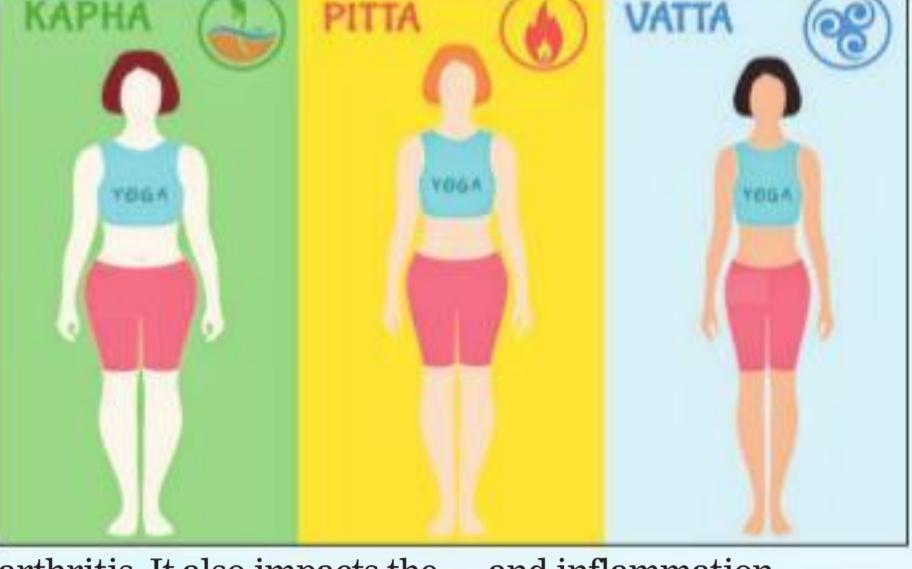
**San Francisco:** Apple iPhone 13 models expected to be launched later this year would "likely" feature a fingerprint scanner embedded under the display for authentication, in addition to Face ID. According to Barclays analyst Andrew Gardiner and three of his colleagues, iPhone 13 models would feature a smaller notch and that the LiDAR scanner would remain limited to iPhone 13 Pro models this year. Barclays said its research is at least partly based

on "extensive industry conversations" with suppliers in recent weeks, reports MacRumors. In addition, the upcoming iPhone 13 series would use Qualcomm's Snapdragon X60 5G modem. The iPhone 13 lineup may mirror the iPhone 12 family of phones. The iPhone 13/Pro models may feature Wi-Fi 6E. The Wi-Fi 6E provides Wi-Fi 6 features and capabilities, including higher performance, lower latency and faster data rates. —IANS



## Understanding Ayurvedic body type

NAMITA PIPARIYA



The foundation of Ayurvedic wellness and healing is the knowledge that well-being is not a 'one size fits all' proposition. One must honour the unique nature of each person and their environment. With Ayurveda we can develop a greater understanding of ourselves by learning about the three dosha's: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These doshas rule our physical and emotional processes and offer every living being with a discrete blueprint for well-being.

Doshas are derived from the five elements of nature and their allied properties, in which Vata is composed of space and air; Pitta of fire and water and Kapha of earth and water.

Ayurveda states that as long as we live in harmony with our Ayurvedic personality, we will stay healthy. Since we are most vulnerable to imbalances associated with our doshas, having an understanding of these concepts is vital.

Vata dosha (Wind energy): Inspired by the elements like space and air, Vata dosha is known as the kinetic energy and it creates movement in our bodily processes as well as in our thoughts. When balanced Vata types are vibrant, enthusiastic and active with the natural capability to express and communicate well. They can be the life of a party, are out-of-the-box thinkers and are always full of new ideas.

But in case of a vata imbalance, they can become impulsive, depict mood swings and respond to stress with anxiety. People of Vata body type have a lean body frame with prominent joints and veins. Since the air element embodies movement, dryness, and cold, it reflects in their physical features. Hence the Vata type skin and hair can be dry and rough. This quality of dryness makes the Vata type prone to stiff and cracking joints or

arthritis. It also impacts the digestive system, making them prone to dry stools or constipation. As the wind likes to move, Vata people have tendency to move from one thing to another and like to multi-task.

A few ways to balance Vata is by following a disciplined routine to ensure the Vata person gives enough time to one task before moving on to the other. Eating warm food with healthy fats can help counter the dryness and lightness created by the air element. Focusing on grounding principles like Hatha Yoga can help to balance the space element.

Pitta Dosha (Fire energy): Pitta is fire and water and signifies the body's metabolic and digestive capacity. When balanced pitta types are intelligent and depict the emotions of courage, determination, joy and willpower. They can quickly grasp situations and react with agility. Considered to be good orators, they possess excellent management and leadership skills, are usually competitive by nature and enjoy taking up challenges. Pitta controls the body's digestive process these types have a strong metabolism and digestion and hence end up having a strong appetite.

Since earth likes to stay, being stable and grounded reflects in their personality trait. However, when there is a kapha imbalance, they can stagnate or become rigid and may face obesity and congestive issues. They are a little larger in build, with thick lustrous skin and good muscle development.

Kapha can benefit from establishing a regular sleep routine, following a plant-based diet, and eating warm foods. Kapha people can engage in more strenuous exercises and vinyasa style of yoga but they should build their capacity gradually.

(The writer is a Yoga and Ayurveda Lifestyle Specialist, Founder – Yoganama)

## Egypt announces new archaeological discovery

REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE  
AGENCIES Cairo

Egypt's Tourism and Antiquities Ministry has announced the discovery of a number of ancient churches and rooms in the Bahariya Oasis, southwest of Cairo. In a statement, the Ministry said on Saturday that a Norwegian-French archaeological mission working at the Tal site in the Bahariya Oasis discovered a number of buildings constructed of basalt stone and carved into the rocks, as well as other buildings constructed of mud bricks, reports Xinhua news agency.

The buildings made of mud bricks date back from the 4th to the 7th century AD, the statement said, adding that the remains are parts of three churches and rooms for monks. This discovery is important as it led the mission to know the planning of buildings as well as understanding the formation of the early monastic congregations in this region, said the statement. The North African country has witnessed several large-scale archaeological discoveries in recent years in different parts of the country, including Pharaonic tombs, statues, coffins and mummies. —IANS

## Head injuries at young age can lead to cognitive decline later

AGENCIES London

The findings of a new study led by University College London researchers found that individuals who previously experienced head injuries in their 50s or younger score lower than expected on cognitive tests at the age of 70. Head injuries did not appear to contribute to brain damage characteristic of Alzheimer's disease, but might make people more vulnerable to dementia symptoms, according to the findings published in Annals of Clinical and Translational Neurology. —ANI

## NASA astronauts conduct fifth spacewalk of 2021

AGENCIES Texas

US astronauts Victor Glover and Mike Hopkins have now returned to the International Space Station (ISS) after completing a spacewalk for technical and maintenance tasks, NASA said. According to CNN, the spacewalk, which assisted with continued upgrades to the orbiting laboratory, began at 8:14 a.m. ET and ended at 3:01 p.m. ET, lasting for six hours and 47 minutes. Glover and Hopkins arrived on the space station in November as part of the NASA-SpaceX Crew-1 mission. This will be Glover's fourth spacewalk and the

fifth for Hopkins.

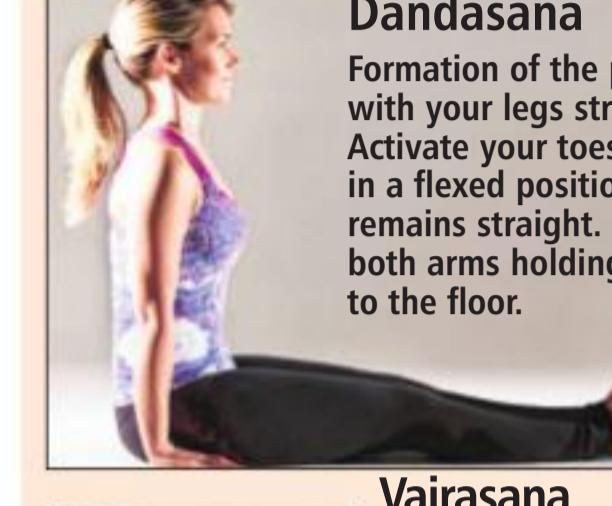
The spacewalk occurred around the one-year anniversary of many Americans going into quarantine. Hopkins and Glover addressed the timing in a video released by NASA on Friday. "We're there for each other," Glover said as quoted by CNN.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, NASA has been able to safely continue launching astronauts to the space station, including the historic Crew-1 mission that carried Glover and Hopkins, as well as NASA astronaut Shannon Walker and Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency astronaut Soichi Noguchi. —ANI

ach, causes stomach aches, constipation and even loss of appetite in some cases. Practicing yoga regularly will get you on the path towards good health, longevity, fitness, increased stamina, and boost immunity as well. Grand Master Akshar shares four simple yoga asanas that can help get rid of bloating and boost digestion.

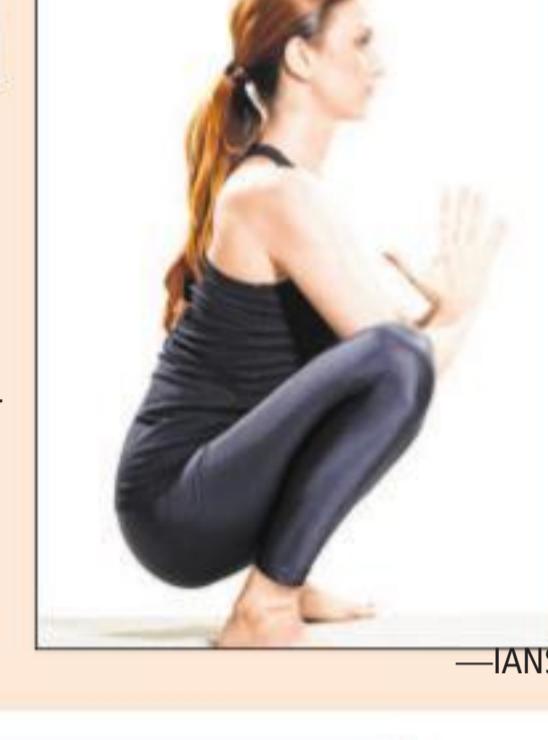
### Dandasana

**Formation of the posture:** Sit with your legs stretched out. Activate your toes keeping them in a flexed position. Back remains straight. Stretch out both arms holding them parallel to the floor.



### Vajrasana

The only pose that can be done right after a meal, can be performed on a full stomach.  
**Formation:** Stand in Samasthiti, slowly breathing in and out. You may keep your eyes closed. Keep your arms straight by your side. Slowly open your eyes and kneel down on your mat. Sit on your heels turning your toes outward. Keep your heels close. Place your palms on your knees facing. Keep your spine erect and look forward. Hold this asana for a while.



## Amazing Ayurveda

### Makoyark

**Key property:** This ayurvedic formulation is effective against heart diseases. It can also treat swelling and inflammation. It helps detoxify the liver and spleen.

**Ingredient:** Makoy (Black night shade).

**Quantity:** 10 ml. It should be taken after dinner along with water. Or as directed by the physician.

**(To know more about Shri Mohtas Parichay Patrak, call on 0151-2523227 or reach at mohtarasayan-shala@gmail.com)**

**Disclaimer:** The description of the above-mentioned products is an excerpt from a booklet, Sankshipit Aushad Parichay Patrak. Please consult your doctor/ or contact the clinic before taking them.

### Medhohar Ark

**Key property:** It can boost brain health, improve cognitive skills etc.

**Ingredient:** Gau Mutra (Cow urine) and saffron.  
**Quantity:** 5 to 10 ml in an equal quantity of water. Or as directed by the physician.

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## ARCHANGEL MICHAEL MESSAGE FOR THE DAY



Today matters related to home will be of focus. Some of you will receive good news regarding an addition in your family.

Give your insecurities to me and I will bless you with the shield of security.

A day of learning and teaching. Do not be stubborn. Respect your elders and teachers. Listen to them with an open mind.

**Tip for the day:** Visualise a purple energy sphere and say "Dear God, Goddess and Archangel Michael, please protect my home and everyone in & around it, this or better thank you".

Lots of divine miracles your way, Sheetal Sapan Mhatre.



### BRINGING UP FATHER / FRANK JONSON

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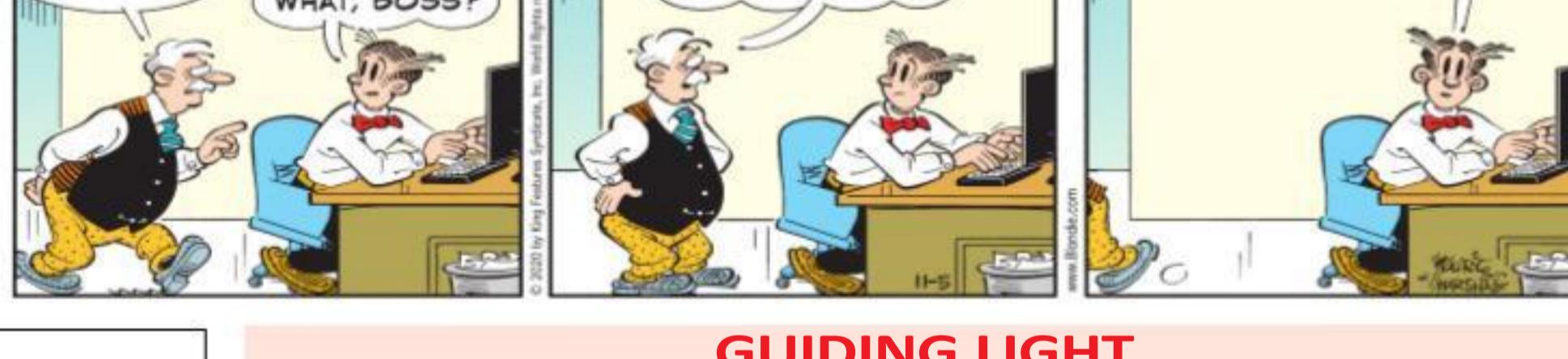
BUT THE LAST ONE?



### DENNIS THE MENACE

BY RON LEE © 2000 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

IT WOULDNT HAVE BEEN IF I HADN'T SMOKED THE SECOND TO LAST ONE FIRST!



### BLONDIE / Dean Young & Mile Gersher

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YOU KNOW EXACTLY WHAT YOU'VE DONE, AND I'VE GOT MY EYE ON YOU

WHATEVER I DID, I SURE HOPE IT WAS WORTH IT!

## GUIDING LIGHT

## You are love

— Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

**L**ove is so enormous. And for ages, people have tried to express their love and finally, they felt they cannot. Even the great sage Narada said, "Anirvachaniyam prema swarupam". You cannot express it. The nature of true love is that it is beyond expression. Love with wisdom is bliss. Love without knowledge or wisdom is pain. It is not love which is giving you pain. If it is just purely love, that means you just care for someone, you want the best for them, and then there is no pain. But when you want something in return from them or you have demands from them, then there is pain.

Jealousy, hatred, greed, arrogance and attachment are all love's distortions. Love by itself doesn't bring misery. That is why knowledge and centredness are so important. If you are centred, you can handle all these distortions, they come for a while and they disappear. Feelings are like clouds. They are like the waves on the surface of the ocean. They arise, they come and they go. Love is a gift. You can't force anyone

to feel love. Your wanting to feel love becomes a hindrance to feel love. Just relax. When you want love, that want itself is turning or delaying love from manifesting. So all that you need to do is to let go and relax. You will see your nature is love. Love is always there. It will manifest when it should. Like the sun is always there but it comes at its own time.

In the same way, all the beautiful feelings in your life are there with you all the time. You can't forcefully manifest them. They will manifest at different times in life. And that's why be more relaxed and take them as they come. You ARE Love. You cannot make an effort to love, either yourself or anybody. You simply have to relax and realise that you are love. Love is the shadow of the Self. The bigger the Self, the bigger the shadow, and the bigger the love. When the love is cast over the entire creation, then you are the Big Self. That is Lordship. When Lordship dawns on the Self, there is a perennial celebration.

(Spiritual organisations keen to be featured in this space contact : features@ipj.co.in)

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### CROSSWORD

3 Shining or gleaming (5)

8 European ermine (5)

10 Butter up? (5)

11 Advertisements, abbr. (3)

12 More loyal (5)

13 Particular (7)

15 Long for (5)

18 Deadly snake (3)

19 Take up again (6)

21 Modified (7)

22 Troubles (4)

23 Hawaiian honeycreeper (4)

24 Giddiness (7)

26 One-sided (6)

29 Somewhere to stay when you're out? (3)

31 Curses (5)

32 Affairs (7)

34 Composition (5)

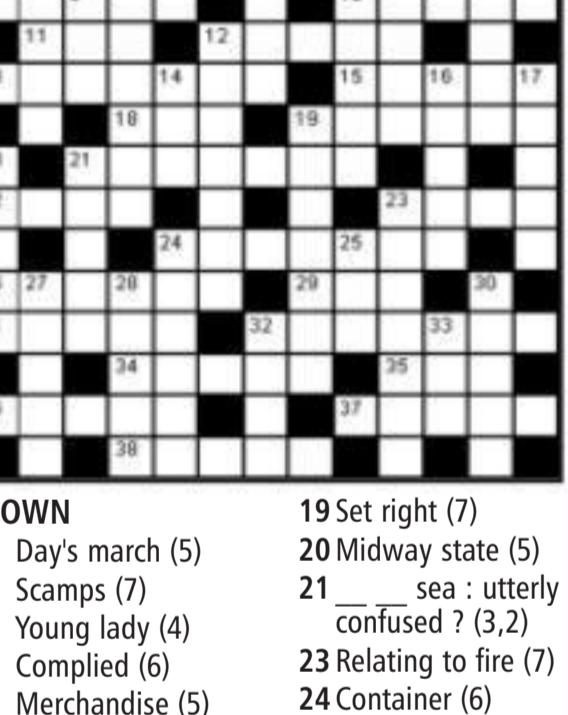
35 French assent (3)

36 A Eurasian tree - "Be lea" anagram? (5)

37 Babble (3,2)

38 Flow out suddenly (5)

### Crossword #043



19 Set right (7)  
20 Midway state (5)  
21 Sea; utterly confused? (3,2)  
23 Relating to fire (7)  
24 Container (6)  
25 Information, in short? (3)  
27 Metrical feet (5)  
28 Ledge (5)  
30 Form of speech (5)  
32 Rowing implements (4)  
33 Religious woman (3)

Across: 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124,

# 'Leave alone being invited for award shows, my father was not even nominated'

**Son of music composer Daboo Malik, Amaal Mallik opens up on the lack of acknowledgement for his father in the industry, the struggles he faced despite hailing from an illustrious music family**

VINAY MR MISHRA

**S**eeing 40 people playing in masks, giving it their all and witnessing it virtually was a different kind of high." That's what Amaal Mallik said on recording the song *Parinda*, from *Saina*, with a live orchestra during the pandemic. Composing *Saina*'s album, which was his life's "most special album", he said that it has an energy and grunge that portrays with honesty the passion and grandeur of the film. With this, Mallik debuts as a background scorer and his excitement, truly, knows no bounds.

However, this was not the scenario four years ago. Back in November 2017, when Mallik signed *Saina*, he was just 26, and had decided to go on a self-sabbatical to discover himself after being completely drained out. "I was too exhausted and burnt out. I wasn't enjoying making music and once you start feeling that making music is a laborious task, it's time you need to take a break. In serendipity and peace, I found the right music for this film."

Amaal, who has remixed a few songs in his short musical career, reveals that in the meantime, he was offered to do remixes of several Hindi numbers. "It was okay to do a few remixes. However, I felt that I did not fit in the zone of just remixing songs and that I'm a better flag-bearer of originals." Speaking about letting go of several meaty offers for the sports biopic based on *Saina Nehwal*, he said "I didn't lose anything by investing in this film because I only said no to projects that I didn't believe in. I was disheartened by remixes, and didn't want to do 20,000 remixes a



biopic. Sometimes things don't work out because there are directors and producers who have other factors involved. However, I hope that for another female led film, it isn't me, but a female singer who composes its music. I am sure that they'll put forth a different emotion all together."

On his upcoming projects, he will reunite with brother Armaan for a beautiful love ballad, *Main Hoon Na*, which as per the elder Mallik, "will invoke a different feeling of love in people". With so many beautiful unrequited love songs coming from Amaal's den, it doesn't stop one from wondering if there is someone in his life, who inspires him. "There is no one, in particular, who inspired me for the song. Hopefully, after listening to this song, I will find someone special. I'm not dying for love but longing, maybe," he laughs.

year. I'm fine doing two or three. Also, I know that if I do films like *Saina*, I will earn a little less, but at least I will leave a legacy behind and I am contended with that."

Mallik could relate to *Saina*'s story because he was an underdog himself in the industry. "Due to the perception of the Mallik tag, people tend to believe that it's been easier for me in this industry and that life was just a bed of roses. However, I never benefited out of it. Yes, I agree that nepotism exists in the industry but Armaan (his brother) and I have carved our spaces." A lot of people might recommend you but it's the hard work that matters in the end, he adds. Walking us through the days when his family struggled, Mallik says, "Despite coming from a music family that has a legacy of 60 years, we are not the sons of the most successful composers. We are sons of Daboo Malik, who had a decent and small share of success. Leave alone being invited for award shows, he was not even nominated. As kids, we felt that our father deserved awards. Nobody noticed that, at the age 11, Armaan started his career with a reality show and that I've been working and assisting from the age of 15. So, in our family of illustrious musicians, we

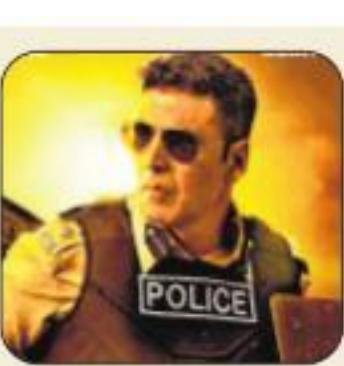
were the underdogs. We were always compared to our father, uncle and grandfather. That is difficult to cope as a newcomer."

Commenting on what singer Shreya Ghoshal said in a recent interview about filmmakers getting male composers on board despite the theme of the movie/song being female oriented, further engendering lesser opportunities for females, Amaal said that he audaciously accepted the accusation. "It was the director's decision to use my voice for the anthem (*Parinda*) as my voice is grungier. Maybe, I too would have used a female's voice," Mallik suggests. "She (Shreya) was completely right in saying that songs sung by female singers are reducing in numbers. I feel, that at least one or two songs should be sung by female singers in a female

singers in a female

kshay Kumar's much-awaited actioner *Sooryavanshi*, directed by filmmaker Rohit Shetty, is set to open theatrically on April 30 worldwide, the makers announced Sunday. The cop-action-drama was originally scheduled for a release on March 24 last year, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, which led to theaters shutdown across the country. Kumar took to Twitter to share the release announcement video of the film. "We promised you all a cinematic experience and that's what you will get. The wait is finally over! Aa Rahi Hai Police. #Sooryavanshi releasing worldwide in cinemas on 30th April 2021," Kumar captioned the video. *Sooryavanshi* is the fourth film in Shetty's cop universe after Devgn's *Singham*, *Singham Returns*, and Singh's *Simmba*. —PTI

**Sooryavanshi to release on April 30 in theatres**



**'Indian classical music never needed publicity'**

**Singer Pratibha Baghel** says classical music never needed any helping hand to keep itself relevant as it was always popular and way ahead of its time

SHOWLI CHAKRABORTY

**P**ratibha won the Lata Mangeshkar Alankaran Award in 2008, and was one of the top finalists of the music reality show, SaReGaMaPa Challenge in 2009. Besides, she was also the winner of Shankar Mahadevan Gharana. In an exclusive interview to *Cinema Journal*, she talks about her latest tie-up with South Asian music channel, Sufiscore, to launch a non-film album *Bole Naina, Silences Speak* with lyrics by Gulzar, rhythm by Ustad Zakir Hussain and music by composer and violinist, Deepak Pandit. Excerpts:

**Tell us about your latest collaboration with Sufiscore.**

This album titled *Bole Naina, Silences Speak* is a *thumri* and a *ghazal* album. Sufiscore is the best platform to project independent music in the country, right now. They give you a lot of liberty in terms of creativity, which is vital for any person in this industry. This is the best thing that has happened to the music industry in a long time.

**As an artiste do you rely on film music solely for work? Why?**

No artiste should limit himself/herself to film music or any particular school of music, for that matter. You can achieve from anywhere you want to. That is why I don't rely on film music alone because that will only limit my creativity. Music in any form is staple for me.

**The independent music scene in India is still quite immature. Your take?**

I don't quite agree to this because the scenario is changing. Our album *Bole Naina, Silences Speak* has made a major impact. It is a completely independent album in the Indian classical music scene. So, keeping this progress in mind, I feel that day is not far when the Indian audience will appreciate independent music as much as they appreciate film music. I'm sure that we will get there soon.

**Do you think Indian classical music is at its height of popularity now?**

Indian classical music never needed any kind of publicity to promote it. It was always very popular and also ahead of its times. It was always talked about, globally. Our maestros such as Ustad Zakir Hussain, Pandit Ravi Shankar and others have made Indian classic music popular in the West. As a musician, I feel lucky that I have an opportunity to carry forward this legacy.

**How did you get this project? How was the experience of working with Zakir Hussain and Gulzar sahab?**

Renowned violinist Deepak Pandit ji actually got me on board, so that I could be part of this project. It was like a dream come true for me. Working with them is a different thing altogether. I have learnt a lot from these maestros while working together.

**Has Bollywood failed Indian classical music?**

What Bollywood churns out on a daily basis is a mix of various genres of music. So, it has not failed classical music. Rather, it has experimented with



several genres. The music scene is definitely more difficult now than it was in the yesteryears. However, I hope that things will be better soon.

There has been a lot of speculation about older artistes not introducing fresh talents due to insecurities. Have you faced any of that? How have you navigated your path through it? No, these things don't really exist anymore. Talent can neither be hidden, nor suppressed. However, talent has to be blended with devotion, hard work and dedication to earn successes in life. With all these in right proportions, nobody can stop you from achieving your goal. There is a certain way that the industry functions here, not just here but in every field per se and it is important to know how to make one's way through that. My seniors in this industry have always supported and encouraged me. I don't ponder over setbacks. If something does not work out, I move on to the next assignment.

**What advice would you give to upcoming independent musicians?**

As an independent musician, I would request all upcoming talents to never take rejections seriously. Everyone must take strength from positive experiences and keep working hard as that's the key to success.

# 'How can I say a good bye to Hindi film industry'

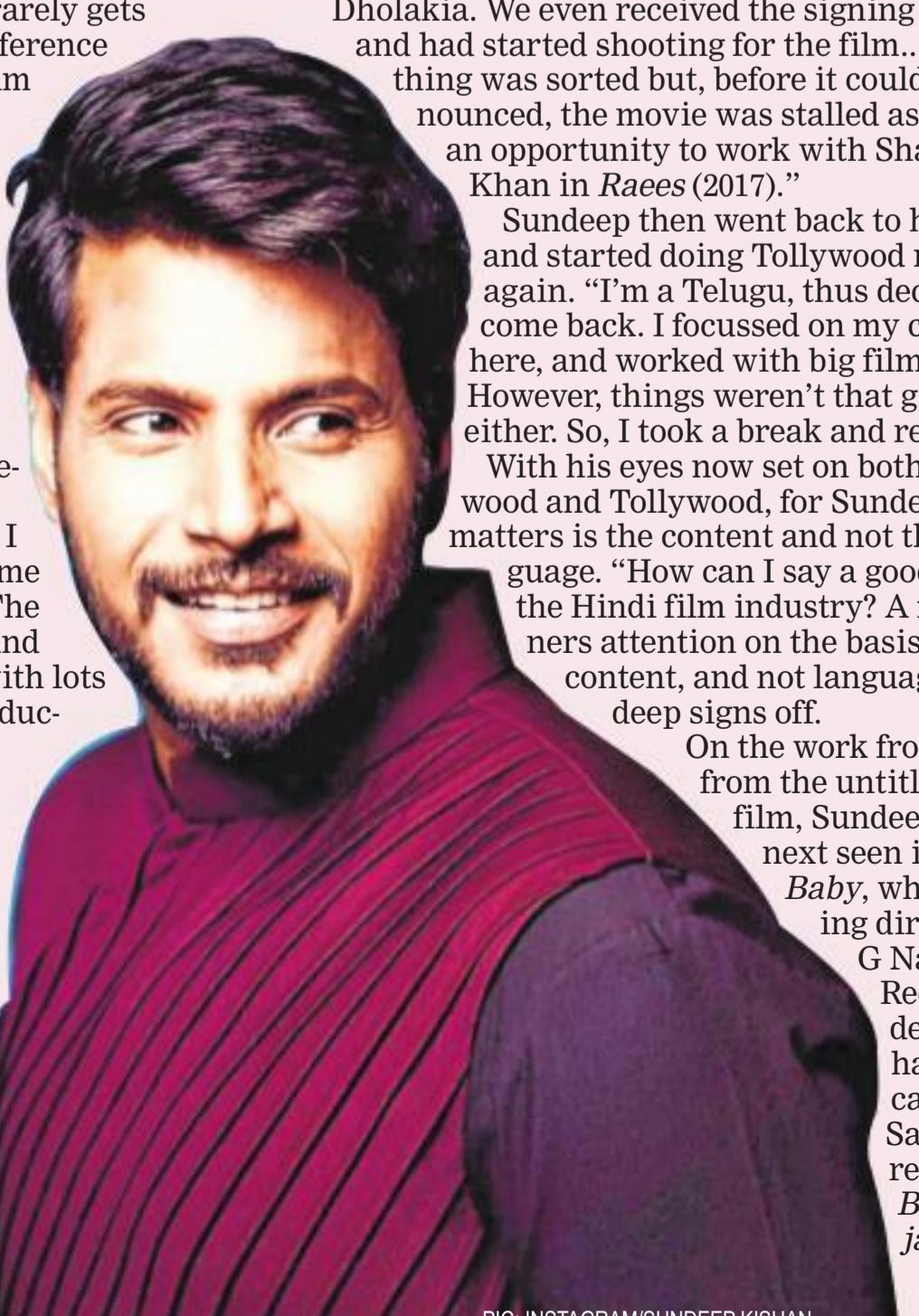
**Says Tollywood actor Sundeep Kishan, as he returns to Bollywood after a decade**

LIPIKA VARMA

**I**n 2007, Shah Rukh Khan brought hockey in mainstream cinema with the critically-acclaimed film *Chak De! India*. Now, Tollywood actor Sundeep Kishan has put spotlight on the sport again with his recent Telugu release *AJ Express*. The movie has been directed by Dennis Jeevan Kanukolanu and produced by TG Vishwa Prasad. Sundeep is happy that he got a chance to work in a movie that focusses on a sport that rarely gets its due. "We have a kind of reference to *Chak De*. I won't say our film will be a game-changer, but I hope people take notice of the sport again," Sundeep says.

Sundeep, who made his Hindi film debut with the movie *Shor in the City* (2010), might have his kitty full with several Tollywood movies. However, the actor reveals that he is soon making a comeback in Bollywood as well. "I have signed a Hindi film, and I will begin shooting for the same by the end of July this year. The film will be shot in Mumbai and Hyderabad. It's a love story with lots of action, and I will be co-producing it," the actor adds.

It is said the film will also feature a few Bollywood actors. Without divulging into the details of the film, Sundeep says, "The cast will mostly comprise actors from Bollywood. We are yet to finalise the female lead, who is expected to be from Bollywood. Nothing has been finalised yet; talks are still on. We are also in the process of finalising another prominent Bollywood actor."



Though *Shor in the City* garnered critical appreciation, the film didn't really work in Sundeep's favour. "When I did *Shor in the City*, there were a lot of interesting offers coming my way in Bollywood. In fact, I had even signed three films. Unfortunately, two films, which were being made under Vikram sir's production house, were stalled. One was to be directed by Magbool Khan, who directed *Khaali Peeli*, and I walked away from the second one. The third film I had signed was with filmmaker Rahul Dhokia. We even received the signing amount, and had started shooting for the film... everything was sorted but, before it could be announced, the movie was stalled as he got an opportunity to work with Shah Rukh Khan in *Raees* (2017)."

Sundeep then went back to his roots, and started doing Tollywood movies again. "I'm a Telugu, thus decided to come back. I focussed on my career here, and worked with big filmmakers. However, things weren't that great here either. So, I took a break and restarted."

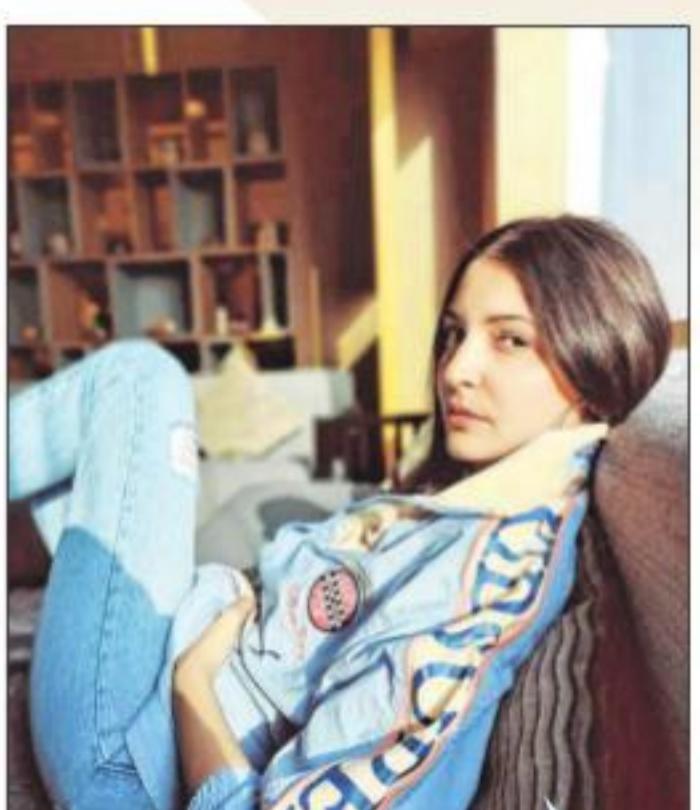
With his eyes now set on both Bollywood and Tollywood, for Sundeep what matters is the content and not the language. "How can I say a good bye to the Hindi film industry? A film garners attention on the basis of its content, and not language," Sundeep signs off.

On the work front, apart from the untitled Hindi film, Sundeep will next seen in *Rowdy Baby*, which is being directed by G Nageswara Reddy. Sundeep also has a cameo in Satya starrer *Vivaha Bhojanambu*.

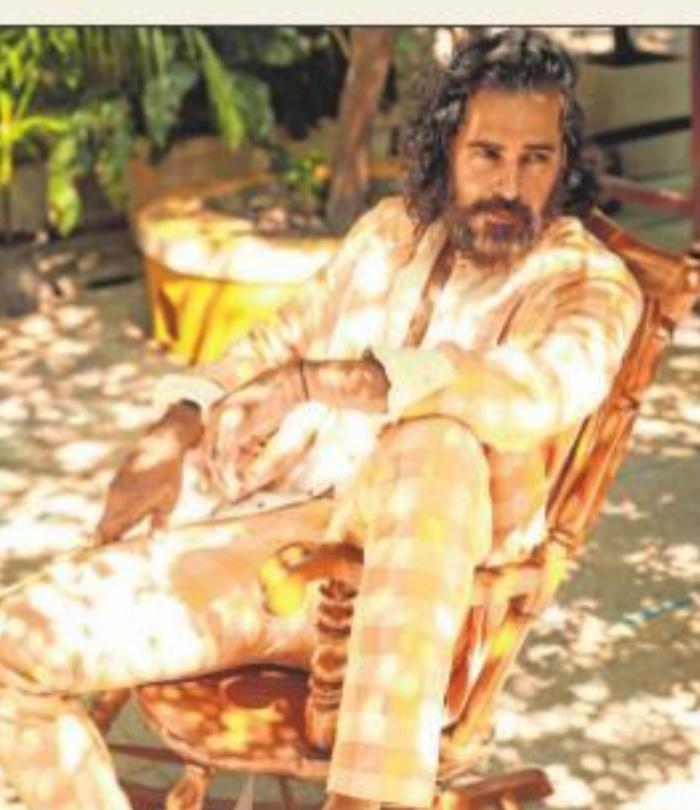
# Hot on Insta

## Sunday with the stars

From lazy Sunday posts to giving us a tour of their new abodes, several Bollywood stars took to Instagram to give a peek into their lives. Here are some that stole our hearts!



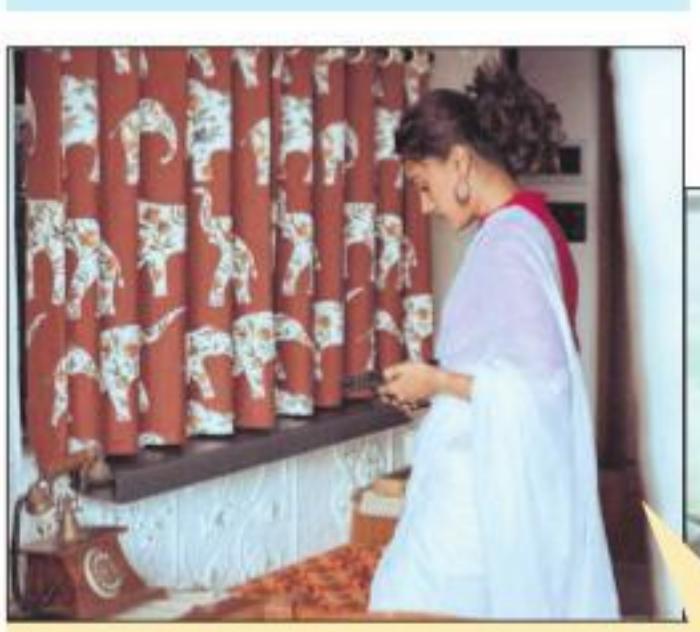
Actor-producer Anushka Sharma treated fans to a gorgeous picture, looking like a million bucks in it. Sporting a loosely-fitted denim jacket with ripped jeans as she lies back on a couch and poses effortlessly for the camera, reflecting the spirit of a suncatcher/lightcatcher.



Ace photographer Rohan Shrestha shared this picture of Dino Morea. The actor, who stunned the audiences with his performance in *Tandav*, seems to be channelling his inner Jason Mamoa in these sun-kissed snaps.



Showing off a tiny baby bump, Geeta Basra and husband, Harbhajan Singh, surprised their fans by announcing her second pregnancy. Their first daughter, Himaya Singh, was seen holding a black T-shirt that said "Soon to be big sister."



For Taapsee Pannu, home is truly where the heart is! She gave her fans a glimpse of her new house, which she named 'Pannu Pind'. The interiors is a mix of, to put it in her words, 'the old and the new technology', which gives the home a vintage vibe. The interiors have been done by her sister, Shagun Pannu.



Well, Bhumi Pednekar doesn't look dazed at all, but we do agree that Sun-daze are absolute laze-days. Bhumi took to Instagram to share a lazy, early morning Sunday selfie.

PICS: INSTAGRAM

# FREE PRESS

## SCHOOL

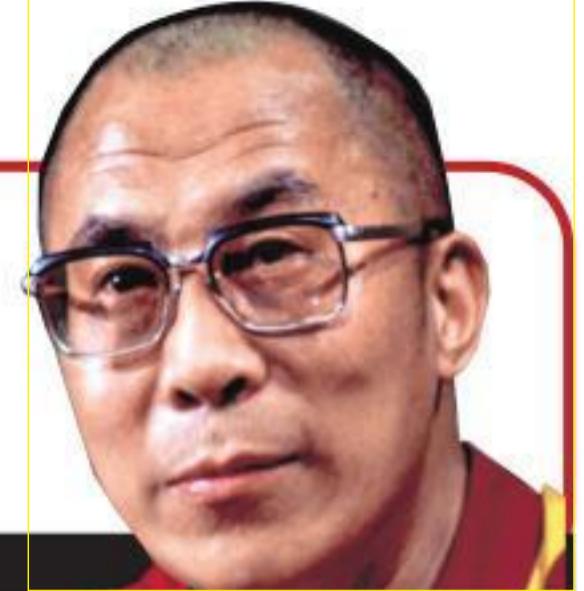
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INDORE | MONDAY | MARCH 15, 2021

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Give the ones you  
love wings to fly,  
roots to come back  
and reasons to stay

DALAI LAMA



Surpassing Russia's

## INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES 4<sup>th</sup> LARGEST IN WORLD

India's foreign exchange reserves surpassed Russia's to become the world's fourth-largest, as the South Asian nation's central bank continues to hoard dollars to cushion the economy against any sudden outflows. Reserves for both countries have mostly flattened out this year after months of rapid increase. India pulled ahead as Russian holdings declined at a faster rate in recent weeks.

India's foreign currency holdings fell by \$4.3 billion



to \$580.3 billion as of March 5, the Reserve Bank of India said on Friday, edging out Russia's \$580.1 billion pile. China has the largest reserves, followed by Japan and Switzerland on the International Monetary Fund table. India's reserves,

enough to cover roughly 18 months of imports, have been bolstered by a rare current-account surplus, rising inflows into the local stock market and foreign direct investment. Analysts say a strong reserves position gives foreign investors and credit rating companies added comfort that the government can meet its debt obligations despite a deteriorating fiscal outlook and the economy heading for its first full-year contraction in four decades.



### Avatar is highest grosser

Disney recently confirmed that James Cameron's 'Avatar' has once again become the highest-grossing film of all time at the global box office, surpassing Disney/Marvel's 'Avengers: Endgame'. According to Deadline, the film's re-release in China on Friday, in its two-day run added an estimated RMB 80M (USD 12.3M) to the total collections. Currently, Avatar's worldwide gross is at an estimated USD 2.802 Billion versus Endgame's USD 2.797 Billion. After the acquisition of Fox studios, 'Avatar' now is a property of Disney.

### No mask: 9K fined in city



A total fine of Rs 4.65 lakh has been collected from 9,183 people in Indore so far this month for not wearing masks at public places. "We have ramped up the drive against people not wearing face masks in the wake of a spurt in Covid-19 cases. Such people are being fined from Rs 50 to Rs 100 individually," an official of Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) said on Sunday. He said that 73,526 people have been fined Rs 96 lakh for disobeying the Covid-19 rules.

### India restrict Eng to 164

The Indian bowlers used change in pace towards the end of the England innings to restrict the visitors to 164 for six in 20 overs in the second T20 International at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Motera in Ahmedabad on Sunday. England were coasting along well at 129 for four in 15 overs. However, tight bowling from Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Shardul Thakur and Hardik Pandya allowed England to get only 35 runs



Another glass ceiling shattered  
India's first woman bouncer



If people think that only men can become bouncers to tackle unwanted situations, then Meherunisha Shaukat Ali is an iconoclast for this orthodox mentality. The 34-year-old Meherunisha works as a bouncer in a nightclub, and besides handling frequent quarrels she also keeps an eye on female customers. No one can predict from Meherunisha's politeness, which she adopts towards the customers, that a strict bouncer is hid-

den inside her. She has six siblings at home - three brothers and three sisters. Interestingly, one of her sisters is also following in her footsteps. Meherunisha hails from Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. She started working as a bouncer in 2004 when she was studying in Class 10. Meherunisha said, "I am the first woman bouncer in the country, I fought a lot to get this status. I used to get very angry when I was called guard."

ONE FOR INSPIRATION

# The Tortoise and the Geese



Once upon a time, beside a lake, there lived a tortoise and two geese who were great friends. As the lake had started drying up, the geese decided to migrate to a new lake with enough water. The tortoise also wanted to move with them, but he couldn't fly, and so he pleaded with the geese to take him with them. After trying really hard to convince them, finally, the geese agreed. They held a stick with their beaks and

asked the tortoise to hold the stick with his mouth, warning him to not open his mouth and let go of the stick. As they flew high, some onlookers thought that the tortoise was kidnapped and commented: "Oh, the poor tortoise!" This angered the tortoise and he immediately opened his mouth to say something back. As soon as he did so, he fell to the ground and died. He did not think before opening his mouth.

## US 'hoarding' C-vaccines



The US administration has ordered "almost enough Covid-19 vaccine to fully inoculate every American adult twice," and its hoarding could fuel a vaccine gap worldwide, a media report said. US President Joe Biden announced on Wednesday that his administration will double the order of Johnson &



COMPARED TO OUR ANCESTORS

## We are programmed to use less water

Among primates, humans evolved to be the low-flow model: Our bodies use 30% to 50% less water per day than those of our closest animal cousins, research finds. Our bodies are constantly losing water: When we sweat, go to the bathroom, even when we breathe. That water needs to be replenished to keep blood volume and other body fluids within normal ranges. An ancient shift in our body's ability to conserve water may have enabled our hunter-gatherer ancestors to venture farther from streams and watering holes in search of food, says

Herman Pontzer, associate professor of evolutionary anthropology at Duke University and lead author of the paper in *Current Biology*.

The study compares the water turnover of 309 people with a range of lifestyles-including farmers, huntergatherers, and office workers-with that of 72 apes living in zoos and sanctuaries. To maintain fluid balance within a healthy range, the body of a human or any other animal is a bit like a bathtub. Lose water by sweating, for example, and the body's thirst signals kick in, telling us to drink.



## IAF airlifts 381

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has airlifted 381 stranded passengers from Jammu and Srinagar to Leh using a C-17 heavy lift transport aircraft, officials said on Sunday. They were airlifted on Saturday. The passengers were stranded after the Srinagar-Leh national highway was closed due to heavy snowfall, the officials said. The IAF regularly provides airlift to the civilian population of the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

### QUICK NEWS

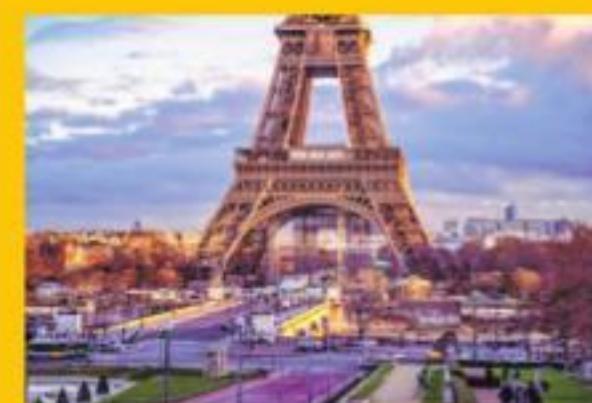
#### 108MP camera

Realme recently unveiled industry-leading 108MP camera and now the company is expected to launch a smartphone with this camera on March 24. Realme confirmed the launch date via teaser video which features Madhav Sheth - VP of Realme and CEO of Realme India and Europe - who's shown driving a sports car at the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida.

#### 'It was accident'

The Election Commission on Sunday said that the injury caused to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram was not a result of an "attack. The poll body said that there is no evidence of an attack carried out on Banerjee. This comes after the Election Commission inspected the reports submitted to it on the Nandigram incident, in which the TMC chief suffered injuries and fractured her leg.

## Paris eyes lockdown



Officials say the Paris region may be headed towards a new lockdown as new variants of the virus fill up intensive-care units and limited vaccine supplies drag down inoculation efforts. Special medical planes dispatched patients from the Paris area to less-saturated regions over the weekend. "If we have to lock down, we will do it," the head of the national health agency, Jerome Salomon, said on BFM television Sunday.

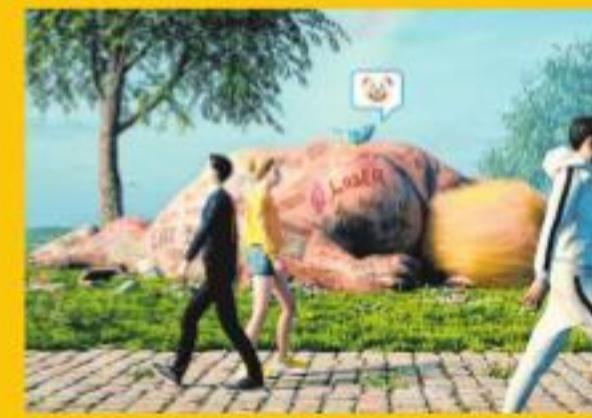
## Metroman in poll fray

The BJP on Sunday announced names of 112 candidates for April 6 Kerala Assembly polls, including "Metroman" E. Sreedharan, from Palakkad while Kerala BJP chief K. Surendran will contest from two seats -- Manjeshwar and Konni.



Former Kerala BJP chief Kummanam Rajasekhran will contest from Nemom constituency, former Union Minister and Rajya Sabha member K.J. Alphons from Kanjirappally and former DGP Jacob Thomas from Irinjalakuda.

## PIO buys artwork for \$69.3 million



Singapore-based Indian cryptocurrency investor Metakovan has bought an artwork by digital artist Beeple for \$69.3 million. Metakova is a pseudonym of the investor, which means King of Meta in the Tamil language. His real identity is not known, but the investor is the co-founder of the NFT collection called Metaverse. The investor successfully acquired the piece, titled -- Everydays: The First 5,000 Days -- for \$69,346,250 (Rs 504 crore approx), according to the auction house Christie's.

#### More shootings in Myanmar

At least four people were shot dead during protests in Myanmar on Sunday, as security forces continued their violent crackdown against dissent following last month's military coup. Two of the victims were killed in Yangon, the country's largest city. One of them was shot in the head and another was shot in the abdomen.



#### Bhavani qualifies for Olympics

Fencer Bhavani Devi on Sunday scripted history by becoming the first fencer from India to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics. Soon after her qualification, Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju took to Twitter and congratulated Devi on her achievement. "Congratulations to Indian fencer Bhavani Devi who has qualified for Tokyo Olympics! She has become the 1st ever Indian fencer to achieve the feat. Tokyo Olympics are set to take place from July 23 to August 8 this year."



## Veteran F1 commentator dead

Murray Walker, the voice of Formula One as a commentator on British television with a high-octane style, has died. He was 97.

The British Racing Drivers' Club announced Walker's death on Saturday. Walker's broadcasting career spanned more than 50 years, working for the BBC and ITV before he retired from commentating in 2001. "His passion and love of the sport inspired millions of fans around the world," F1 tweeted. "He will forever be a part of our history, and will be dearly missed."



## Sooryavanshi release on April 30

Bollywood star Akshay Kumar's much-awaited actioner "Sooryavanshi", directed by filmmaker Rohit Shetty, is set to open theatrically



on April 30 worldwide, the makers announced Sunday. The cop-action-drama was originally scheduled for a release on March 24 last year, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, which led to theatres shutdown across the country. Kumar took to Twitter to share the release date announcement video of the film.

### CBFC DIRECTIVE



## Aamir's b'day in China

Chinese fans of Bollywood star Aamir Khan celebrated his 56th birthday on Sunday at the Indian Embassy at Beijing, highlighting his popular films like Three Idiots and Dangal. Fans, mostly youth, fondly recollect

the influence of Khan's movies on them. Watched and commented upon by the top Chinese leaders, including President Xi Jinping, Aamir Khan's movies starting with Three Idiots and followed by Dangal and Secret Super Star have become popular in China. Dangal has earned over Rs 1300 crores in China.

## PUNAM'S 3RD ODI CENTURY

Punam Raut scored her third ODI century as India women scored 266/4 against South Africa on Sunday. Harmanpreet Kaur smashed 54 off 35 balls to give India the stimulus in the final stages of their innings during the fourth ODI. Punam and captain Mithali Raj (45) earlier put up 103 runs for the third wicket at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium.



## Mumbai win Hazare trophy

Aditya Tare scored an unbeaten 118 after captain Prithvi Shaw smashed 73 off 39 balls to help Mumbai beat Uttar Pradesh by six wickets and win the 2021 Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Arun Jaitley Stadium at New Delhi on Sunday. Shaw and Yashasvi Jaiswal got Mumbai off to a flying start to the chase with an opening partnership of 89 runs that came in just over nine overs.



## Roohi clicks with audience

Bollywood actors Janhvi Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh's recently-released horror-comedy film 'Roohi', which had opened to mixed responses, witnessed an uprise in its third-day collection. The film, which also stars Varun Sharma, minted a total of Rs 3.42 crore on the third day of its release, witnessing



a 0.36 per cent uprise from the opening day. The horror-comedy had earned Rs 3.06 crores on its first day. On the second day of its release, it garnered Rs 2.25 crores.

### STORY

### The Clever Old Woman

In Tamil Nadu, the name of Veerapandy Kattabomman is familiar to adults and children alike. Kattabomman and his brother Umaithurai were brave and strong generals who governed a small kingdom.

Once, the soldiers of the East India Company attacked their kingdom. Both brothers fought back fearlessly. But Umaithurai was hurt. His bodyguards managed to take him to the safety of their village.

There, they hid him in their house. Sometime later, they were shocked at the news that English soldiers were making a house-to-house search of their village. Their old mother came



up with a plan. She asked Umaithurai to lie down on the floor. Then she covered him with a white sheet and sprinkled it liberally with neem leaves and turmeric. She persuaded her sons to do likewise. She then quickly strung up bunches of neem leaves over the front of the house.

When the soldiers arrived, she was prepared. "Hey, you old woman!" shouted one. "We want to search your house!"

"You ignorant fellow!" she replied. "Can't you see? Neem leaves outside a house mean that the inmates have contracted smallpox."

The soldiers hesitated. Then, one of them pushed open the door and peeked in. When he saw three figures swathed in white, he hurriedly shut the door.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said to his mates. "Do you want to catch the pox?"

The old lady smiled as they marched away.



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