



Happy Women's Day

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WINDOWS



People click photographs in front of illuminated CSMT on the eve of International Women's Day, in Mumbai on Sunday

Gisat-1 launch likely in April

BENGALURU: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will make a second attempt to give India its first state-of-the-art earth observation satellite, by launching the Geo Imaging Satellite (Gisat-1) by the end of this month or the first week of April. The launch of Gisat-1 was first scheduled for March 5, 2020 and was scrubbed minutes before the 26-hour countdown was to begin on March 4, 2020. ISRO chairman K Sivan said the date has not been finalised but they are targeting a launch by the end of this month or in the first week of April.

Markets set to trade with positive bias

Markets continued to remain volatile and have sharp two-sided movements. They gained on the first three days of the week and then witnessed profit booking on the remaining days of the week. BSE Sensex ended the week with gains of 1,305.33 points or 2.66 per cent to close at 50,405.32 points, while Nifty gained 408.95 points or 2.81 per cent to close at 14,938.10 points. ▶ P7

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'KHEL KHATAM, VIKAS SHURU'  
Modi attacks Didi; Says BJP will bring 'asol poriborton'

KOLKATA

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday trained his guns at the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress while addressing an election rally



of the BJP in Kolkata's Brigade Ground.

Accusing the two-time Chief Minister of betraying the people of West Bengal, Modi said the Trinamool Congress has duped the people of Bengal, and the time has come for 'asol poriborton' (real change). "With the blessings of Bharat Mata, we will turn the state into Sonar Bangla", he said.

The Prime Minister said: "TMC's game is over. It is time for development.

- lams TMC for breaking people's trust
- M assures to achieve 'Sonar Bangla'
- accuses Mamata of destroying democracy
- ays BJP will fulfil dreams of Bengal

velopment. Khel khatam, vikaas shuru. People of Bengal had once put faith in Didi to bring 'poriborton'. But Didi and her cadre have destroyed the faith of the people and insulted Bengal. 'Asol poriborton' means peace and development.

better education, more jobs and fulfilling everyone's dreams. We will rebuild Bengal. I have come to give you hope."

"Lakhs of people have turned up today to give their blessings to us. All intellectuals and artists are with us. All of them are hoping that Bengal reaches a new high of development.

Hearing the war cry of the people, it seems May 2 (when poll results will be declared) is already here today. With the blessings of Bharat Mata, we will build a Sonar Bangla," he added. Attacking TMC and the Left-Congress alliance in the same breath, Modi said, "TMC and the Left-Congress alliance are on one side and the people of Bengal on the other. Congress came to power after our Independence but vote-bank politics destroyed Bengal. This politics was furthered by the Left and the TMC."

Khela Hobe



MAMATA DARES MODI FOR ONE-ON-ONE DEBATE

KOLKATA: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a mammoth gathering at the iconic Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool supremo Mamata Banerjee 'dared' him for a one-on-one debate. While Modi accused the CM of backstabbing the people of the State, Didi, who held a roadshow 570 km away in north Bengal, challenged him for a one-on-one debate, saying "Khela hobe", the catchphrase that has taken over the election mood in the state. "Khela Hobe.

Parliament reconvenes today for 2nd part of budget session

NEW DELHI: The second part of Parliament's budget session will commence on Monday. The first part of the session, which had begun on January 29 had ended on February 29. This comes at a time when most political parties are busy campaigning for the upcoming Assembly elections. The main focus of the government in the second part of the session is to get various demands for grants for the year 2021-22 passed along with the Finance Bill which carries various tax proposals. Besides these mandatory agendas, the government has listed various Bills for passage in the session which concludes on April 8.

Worst phase of Covid appears to be over: Naidu

NEW DELHI

REFERRING to the largest vaccination drive in the world against Covid-19 being undertaken in India, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said that the worst phase of the pandemic appears to be over. However, the Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader cautioned people to remain vigilant and continue to take all the necessary precautions till we defeat the virus decisively.

Naidu's comments came as 2,09,22,344 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been administered in the country till date since the mass drive began on January 16.

The third phase of vaccination began on Monday covering 27 crore of people above 60 and those above 45 years of age with comorbidities at 10,000 government and over 20,000 private vaccination centres.

As of Sunday, the country's cumulative

caseload has increased to 1,12,10,799, while the death toll currently stands at 1,57,756.

While addressing the first Graduation Day ceremony of ESIC Medical College (Faridabad) held at Vigyan Bhavan here in the national capital, the Vice President further said that 'resilience, research and reinvention' helped India become a torch-bearer in the global fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Applauding untiring efforts of Indian researchers, scientists and doctors for finding technological solutions to the challenges thrown by the pandemic, Naidu credited their timely and decisive measures for containing the spread of the virus.

"I salute the entire medical fraternity from doctors to nurses, para-medical staff and sanitary workers, technicians and ASHA workers in villages, who, as Team India came together as one to fight the pandemic," Naidu said.

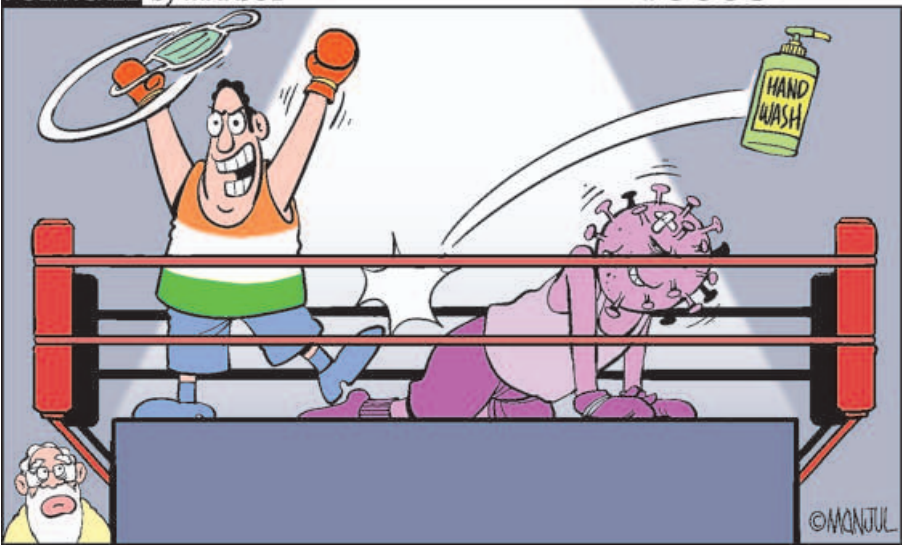


Prime Minister Narendra Modi exchanges greetings with Bollywood actor Mithun Chakraborty after he joined BJP during a public meeting ahead of West Bengal Assembly Polls, at Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata on Sunday

Mithun Chakraborty joins BJP

KOLKATA: Ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections, actor Mithun Chakraborty on Sunday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election rally in Kolkata. Speculations were rife that Mithun Chakraborty and Sourav Ganguly would both be present at the rally and join the BJP. However, Ganguly was not in attendance. BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya met Chakraborty on Saturday evening at his Kolkata residence and announced that the actor will attend Modi's rally. He was present on stage with Chakraborty on Sunday and welcomed him to the party.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Covid nearing 'endemic' phase: Satyendar Jain

NEW DELHI

DELHI Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Sunday said coronavirus was nearing an 'endemic' phase in the national capital.

An infection is said to be endemic in a population when it is constantly maintained at a baseline level in a geographic area without external inputs. "Coronavirus is nearing an endemic phase in Delhi. Experts say some cases continue to occur in the endemic phase. Delhi witnessed a swine flu outbreak around 10 years ago, but still some cases are reported every year.

Coronavirus is not going to end completely... we will have to learn to live with it," Jain said. He said the COVID-19 positivity rate was well below one per cent,

adding that this rate was around 15 per cent in November last year. The positivity rate has remained below one per cent for the last two months. The fluctuation in this rate is not that much, the minister added.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the COVID-19 positivity rate should remain less than 5 per cent.

The health minister added that less than 10 per cent beds reserved for coronavirus patients are occupied in the city hospitals. He said the total number of COVID tests conducted in Delhi was around five times the national average. According to a health bulletin issued on Sunday, over 91,000 COVID-19 tests were conducted in the national capital on Saturday, the highest so far.



Experts say some cases continue to occur in the endemic phase

China to connect Tibet with high-speed bullet trains by July

BEIJING

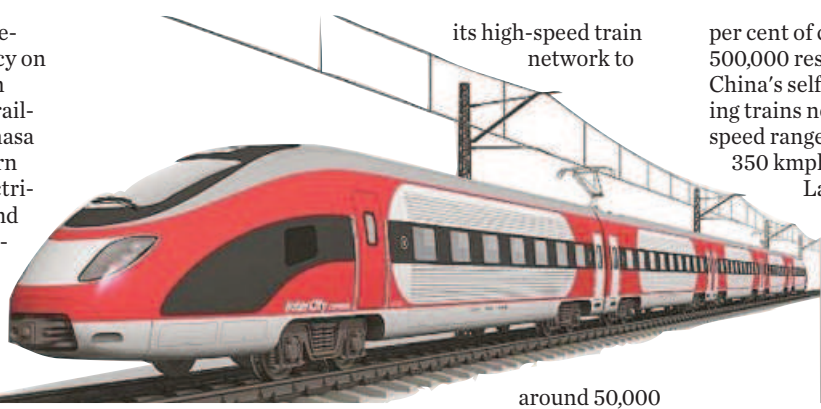
CHINA will operate bullet trains to Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh before July this year, marking the opening of high-speed train services to all Chinese mainland provincial-level regions, a senior official has said.

A 435-km rail link to the regional capital of Lhasa will run Fuxing high-speed trains powered by both internal-combustion and electricity, Lu Dongfu, board chairman of China State Railway Group Com-

pany Limited, told state-run Xinhua news agency on Saturday. Construction started in 2014 on the railway line connecting Lhasa with Nyingchi in eastern Tibet. It is the first electrified railroad in Tibet and is slated to begin operations in June 2021. The track-laying work was completed by the end of 2020, the report said.

The railway has a designed speed of 160 km per hour, according to the Tibet Railway Construction Company Limited, a subsidiary of China State Railway Group.

China aims to extend the total length in operation of



its high-speed train network to

per cent of cities with over 500,000 residents, he said. China's self-developed Fuxing trains now operate at a speed range of 160 kmph to 350 kmph, Lu said.

Last December, the track-laying work was completed for a railway line linking the cities of Lhasa and Nyingchi in Tibet close to Arunachal Pradesh. The Sichuan-Tibet Railway will be the second railway into Tibet after the Qinghai-Ti-

bet Railway. It will go through the southeast of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, one of the world's most geologically active areas. China has also included building of a "passageway" connecting Tibet with South Asia in the 14th Five Year plan which is due to commence from this year.

China will support Tibet in building the passageway to South Asia, the Xinhua report said, quoting the 14th plan document, which was submitted to China's Parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).



# Woménia

## Women rights are human rights

On the auspicious occasion of Women's Day, nothing could be better than giving the rights that every woman deserves to have. Related to the same we spoke to Sunitha Lakshma Reddy the newly appointed chairperson of Telangana Women's Commission on the rights of women and her journey so far

ASKARI JAFFER

Vakiti Sunitha Lakshma Reddy, a former minister in the YS Rajasekhara Reddy and K Rosaiah Cabinets, was named as the State Women's Commission chairperson.

Sunitha Reddy, 52, joined the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in 2019. She was earlier a Congress MLA from Narsapur constituency for three terms. After being appointed as State Women's Commission chairperson, her activities on women issues and women problems are getting appreciations from the public and government. She raised her voice on every issue that the woman is facing in recent times.

### Entering into politics

Sunitha shares, "Initially, I used to be in home and look my family after getting married in 1986 to Lakshma Reddy. My Father-in-Law Ramachandra Reddy served as a sarpanch for 26 years but he lost in the MPP elections in the first attempt. Later he got elected as MPP and my husband was elected as Sarpanch. After this he was elected as ZPTC and at that time



Photo: Srinivas Setty

he got involved in many activities in our constituency. So the party activists and leaders proposed his name from Narsapur constituency, but unfortunately he was expired because of heart stroke."

At that time former Chief Minister Dr YS Raja Shekar Reddy was the PCC chief. Many leaders, activists and Union Minister Janardhan Reddy proposed her name on behalf of her husband. She adds that with the support of YS Raja Shekar Reddy, she entered into the politics.

### Balancing family and political career

It is very difficult to achieve anything without support of the family. She lives in a joint family, so her sister-in-law and aunt took the responsibilities of her children. Sunitha feels blessed to have a supportive family. She says that their support has made her to stand at a position where she is now.

### About women empowerment

A woman needs to be independent. For getting support from the society, enthusiasm to do anything is needed. With their

confidence and will power they can achieve anything.

### Importance of women presence in politics

Right now, women are getting 50 percent reservation from ground level. Even the women elected as Sarpanch, MPP, ZPTC and Chairman, based on the circumstances their husbands are taking major role. She adds, "Now a day's people are becoming educated. With their husband support they are leading meetings and trying to procure some position politically in this society. So in this way women are also going forward politically."

### Human right violation on women

There is a phrase in feminist movement saying 'women rights are human rights'. In today's world, women are competing equally with men in every sector. In recent times, to meet the financial needs, both husband and wife has to work. Women are facing lot of problems in order to balance both family and work. We have to appreciate them for balancing both.

"Now a day's some men are en-

couraging women and trying to protect women rights and we wish even more to come. This gender sensitisation, equality should start from their family then women will get more respect in this society. We have to educate our children how to respect both men and women in the society from their childhood. We shouldn't degrade either women or men. We have to involve that both boy and girl are equal from childhood. Then we can see the result," she adds.

### Plan and message for this Women's day

In general, many people think that for women empowerment and for protection of women rights it is enough to educate women but it's not the thing, we have to educate both women and men. Our slogan is "Let girl to be born, live, grow and educated".

She shares, "In women related issues we have to involve, sensitize both women and men equally. Nation women commission also came up with an idea of felicitating men who participated actively to resolve women issues. We are planning to conduct a program on 10th march. We women commission, girl child protection commission are aiming to bring self confidence in every girl and women. We'll try our best to protect their rights and to resolve their issues facing in society. We'll also make them aware of women help line number 181 for the immediate response to their issue. We'll try to educate every woman regarding the existing laws and acts to resolve their issues. And we'll also put an eye on the government schemes for women whether they are correctly reaching or not. Women's hostel and jails will also be checked."

TWEET PATROL



**TWINKLE KHANNA**  
**@MRSFUNNYBONES**

If our little ones can do it right then why are we using our masks as chin straps? Mask up and be safe!



## This Women's Day, meet the trendsetting heroes of Bollywood



Sushmita Sen

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 to honour the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. We mark this special time with a list of some of the most impressive achievers in Bollywood who with their personal and professional choices, have blazed new trails in the industry.

### Ekta Kapoor

Be it the big screen or the small, Ekta Kapoor has stamped her presence on both and has always evoked strong reactions from admirers and critics. Her content has been at times critiqued for being too regressive and occasionally for being too provocative. However, she has grown from strength to strength in an industry known for primarily masculine voices in board rooms. She founded Balaji Telefilms Limited in 1994 and since then, has gone on to become



Ekta Kapoor

a formidable film and television producer and the joint managing director and creative head of her company. She also founded Balaji Motion Pictures in 2002 and ALT Balaji in April 2017.

A Padma Shri awardee, Ekta has grown beyond her lineage and is not just known today as actor Jeetendra's daughter. She is now a starmaker and a path-breaker who unapologetically lives and works on her own terms.

### Twinkle Khanna

Not one to be stymied by the labels of a star-daughter or star-wife, Twinkle Khanna has charted her own course as an author, newspaper columnist, interior designer and film producer. She also gave up her acting career for more fulfilling creative choices. In 2015, her first non-fiction book, 'Mrs Funnybones: She's Just Like You and a Lot Like Me' became a bestseller, and her second book, 'The Legend of Lakshmi Prasad,' also inspired social entrepreneur Arunachalam Muruganantham's biopic, 'Pad Man.' Her production house, Mrs. Funnybones Movies was set up in 2016.

Her first novel, 'Pyjamas Are Forgetting' made her the highest-selling female author in India in 2018. In 2019, Khanna also launched 'Tweak India,' a bilingual digital media platform for women, proving that she is someone who always listens to her inner muse and believes in living a life that is rich in creativity.

### Deepshikha Deshmukh

Starting as a costume assistant on the sets of 2001's 'Mujhe Kuch Kehna Hai', Deepshikha Deshmukh earned her stripes at her family's heritage production house to make her way up to lead the marketing,

strategy making, and production efforts at Pooja Entertainment. She debuted as a producer in 2016 with the critically acclaimed film 'Sarbjit,' starring Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and Randeep Hooda. While constantly balancing her roles as a producer, a mother, and a homemaker, she has continued to expand her horizons and even started a natural skincare brand called, 'Love Organically.' Last year, she took on a global pandemic to complete the start-to-finish shoot for Pooja Entertainment's big-budget production, 'Bellbottom,' in two extended outdoor schedules. In 2021, she will be helming the production of 'Ganapath,' an action thriller starring Tiger Shroff, and will continue to charter new creative territories.

### Sushmita Sen

Sushmita Sen has lived a charmed life but she has never taken it for granted. Defying all predictions, she pipped Aishwarya Rai to the post by winning the Femina Miss India title in 1994 and went on to become the first Indian to win the Miss Universe title at the age of 18. Apart from being a successful actor, she has walked her talk as a social change-maker by adopting two baby girls in 2000 and 2010. She was diagnosed with the Addison's disease, a con-

dition which affects the body's adrenal gland, in September 2014 but fought her way back to health and also made a comeback as an actor in 2020 with the hit OTT series, 'Aarya.' Be it her personal or professional life, Sushmita has always won her battles with unmatched grace and dignity.

### Kareena Kapoor

Kareena Kapoor Khan has proven that it takes more than a family name to survive and thrive for over two decades in the film industry. Even her six Filmfare Awards do not begin to sum up her longevity or the fact that she remains a much in demand leading lady with immense box-office clout.

After making her acting debut in the 2000 with 'Refugee,' her performances in films like 'Asoka,' 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham,' 'Chameli,' 'Dev',



Twinkle Khanna

'Omkaara,' 'Jab We Met,' 'Kurbaan,' 'Heroine,' 'Uda Punjab,' '3 Idiots' and 'Veere Di Wedding' have established her versatility and star power.

Her off-screen life has fascinated fans and popular culture but she has always made her personal decisions with fearless conviction. In a beauty-obsessed industry, she has worked through two pregnancies unselfishly and will now be



Deepshikha Deshmukh

penning a book to tell women how she did it. She has also worked with UNICEF since 2014 as an advocate for the education of girls.



Kareena Kapoor

## Royal Enfield celebrates International Women's Day with 'Ride after Dark' in Hyderabad

Royal Enfield, the global leader in the mid-size motorcycle segment, celebrated International Women's day in Hyderabad with 'Ride After Dark' event. This was a woman only motorcycle riding event to spread awareness about women security and safety, especially after dark.

This event was attended by 18 women riders across Hyderabad. The ride began from the Royal Enfield Regional office covering 120 kms. The ride was conducted with Royal Enfield women riders who rode their motorcycles through the by lanes of Hyderabad. The ride was held over a period of 2 days on 6th and 7th march at Chilkur



Village in Hyderabad.

STRE or 'She Travels on a Royal Enfield, is an initiative by Royal Enfield for the inclusion of women riders and pillars as part of the community at large. Initiated in January 2015, STRE has been actively involved in encouraging more women to be part of the Royal Enfield community while supporting existing women in their journey to ride more and ride pure. As part of STRE, Royal Enfield has taught more than 150 individuals to ride. Himalayan Odyssey Women was another such initiative by STRE wherein women riders participated in a grueling 12-day ride through the Himalayas.

### CROSSWORD

#### Across

- Frenzied woman (6)
- Lopsided (3)
- Equipment (4)
- Neighbour of Yemen (4)
- Foundation author Isaac \_\_\_\_ (6)
- Do not look a \_\_\_\_ in the mouth ? (4-5)
- A wind instrument (4)
- Cry of delight (3)
- Learn by rote (3,2)
- Literary style (5)
- Each (3)
- Father (3)
- Stupefy with drink (5)
- Swordish hot spiced drink (5)
- Secret agent ? (3)
- Asian oxen (4)
- Cosmology or cosmogony ? (9)
- Thick soup (6)
- Elliptical (4)
- Roman France (4)

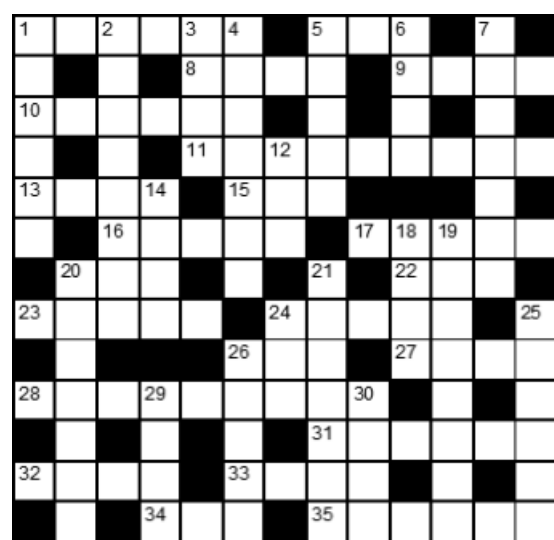
#### Down

- Grazing area (6)
- Concise summaries (8)
- Highly excited (4)
- Circuitous (7)
- Great anger (5)
- Move up and down, fluctuate (2-2)
- Parliamentary report (7)
- Dandy (3)
- Europe's new currency (4)
- Be nervous (4)
- Seaport on W Kyushu (8)
- Contemplative (7)
- Abode of the Greek gods (7)
- Mailing sta. (3)
- Michaelmas daisies (6)
- Hitches (5)
- List of names (4)
- Egg yellow (4)

### SUDOKU

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SOLUTION TO MARCH 6

SOLUTION TO MARCH 6



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

# Women to take centre stage at farmers' protest sites

NEW DELHI

FROM managing the stage, food and security to sharing tales of their struggles, and significance of taking part in the farmers' agitation, thousands of women farmers, students and activists will take over key roles at the Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur protest sites at Delhi's borders on International Women's Day on Monday.

Noting that women contribute significantly to the country's farming sector, the organisers have laid out elaborate plans to let women farm-



ers take centre stage and all the space under the sky to ac-

knowledge the "big but unrecognised" part of the farm-

ing community.

Thousands of women farmers especially from Punjab and Haryana will congregate at Delhi's borders on Monday and the day will be entirely dedicated to women farmers, activists and students, farmer leaders said.

Marked annually on March 8, International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

"To celebrate women's day, the stage will be managed by

women, and the speakers too will be women. And there will be a small march at Singhu border, the details for which will be shared later. We are expecting more women to join at different protest sites," senior farmer leader Kavita Kurganthy, who is also a member of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), told PTI.

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. The protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that these laws would pave the way for the dismantling of the MSP system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporations.

However, the government has maintained that the new laws will bring better opportunities to farmers and introduce new technologies in agriculture.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, around 15,000 women farmers along with college principals, teach-

ers and social workers will join the protest sites at Singhu and Tikri borders, the organisers said. "Women are a big part of the farming community but they don't get recognised. In fact, they work more than the men.

Approximately 10,000 women from different parts of Punjab and Haryana will come to the borders to be part of the women's day program," farmer leader Kulwant Singh Sandhu said. Sandhu said they have also asked women farmers to join the different protest sites in Punjab and Haryana on the occasion.

## Nishad Party distances itself from BJP in UP

LUCKNOW

IN an unexpected move, the Nishad Party has distanced itself from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Uttar Pradesh and said that it will contest the upcoming panchayat polls on its own.

Nishad (Nirbal Indian Shoshit Hamara Aam Dal) Party President Sanjay Nishad told IANS on Sunday that the BJP failed to fulfil the promises made to his party on ensuring reservation for the Nishad community under the Scheduled Caste (SC) category.

"We are ready with our 'charcha' (debate) and 'parcha' (pamphlet) for the upcoming elections," he said.

Incidentally, Sanjay Nishad's son Praveen Nishad is sitting BJP MP from Sant Kabir Nagar

Sanjay Nishad further said that there were 166 Assembly seats where the Nishad community has a sizeable presence.

"Our demand for reservation is justified and I do not know why the BJP is not addressing the issue. If they want our support, they should



give us reservation," he said.

The Nishad community includes sub-castes like Kevat, Malah and Bind.

The Nishad Party had joined hands with the BJP in 2019.

It been fighting for regrouping of 17 OBC communities under the SC category but the matter has been caught in a legal battle.

The Nishad Party has embarked

on a campaign to get over one crore signatures in support of their long pending demand for granting the SC status to the Nishad community and is sending the letters to the Prime Minister.

Along with the signature campaign, the party has also launched a membership drive to garner support from not only Nishads, but other communities too.

## Priest booked for raping minor relative

BALLIA

MAHANT Mouni Baba of the Khaira Mutt in Ballia district has been booked for allegedly raping a 17-year-old girl.

The FIR was registered against the Mahant under the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on the orders of a court, passed on January 3.

Ubhawn police station in-charge Gyaneshwar Mishra said, the court order was received late, leading to the delay in filing the FIR.

The case is being investigated. The victim, meanwhile, told reporters that the Mahant 'is a close relative' and after her father's death, he had brought her to the mutt for teaching her. He had been raping her for the last five years.

The girl said that after her repeated requests to police for justice had failed, she moved the court seeking FIR against the chief priest of the mutt.

## U'khand CM Rawat told to go strict on resentment'

DEHRADUN

THE BJP High Command has asked Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat to take "serious action" in the face of the simmering resentment within a section of the state party MLAs and MPs who are opposed to his style of functioning, top party sources said here on Sunday.

The high command's decision to send former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh to hold an unscheduled meeting of the core committee on Saturday in Dehradun when the assembly session was discussing the state budget at Gairsain has raised many eyebrows both in the Chief Minister's camp as well as that of his opponents.

"Something is going on. Just wait and watch," said a top party leader on the condition of anonymity. A reshuffle as well as the expansion in the state cabinet is also on the cards, the sources said.

The Chief Minister along with the party MLAs was asked to fly to Dehradun by helicopter in the afternoon on Saturday soon after the budget session of the state assembly was adjourned sine die in a hasty way.

"There was something very serious indeed when the party high command suddenly decided to



send Raman ji to Dehradun without any prior information to the CM's office," a source close to the Chief Minister said.

However, the party observers here claim that the party high command is not in favour of a change of guard for the time being. The party high command is likely to summon CM Rawat to New Delhi shortly.

"We believe Rawat is likely to travel to New Delhi to hold further discussions with the party high command before they take any future decision," a senior party leader said. In this context, the leader pointed out that Raman Singh was sent to Dehradun as an independent observer which itself was a surprise element in the core committee meeting.

"In normal circumstances Dushyant Kumar Gautam, who is the incharge of the party affairs in the state is himself a competent to hold such meetings. But the high command by sending Raman Singh has made it a point that it was very serious on the political affairs in the state," the leader said.

State BJP President Bansidhar Bhagat when contacted stated that the core committee meeting did not discuss anything related to the change of guard in the state. "I have made it clear earlier also that there was no discussion on change of guard," he said.

On March 18, CM Rawat will complete four years in office, an event which will be celebrated in a big way in the state, Bhagat said.

## 2 get 30 yrs jail for raping minor in UP

BULANDSHAHR

A local court in Bulandshahr district has sentenced two persons to 30 years' imprisonment each, for raping a 13-year-old girl in January this year. The Special Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) court Judge, Pallavi Agarwal, on Saturday also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000 each on Biresh, 21, and Gitam, 20, who had raped the girl.

Bulandshahr Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said that both the accused were convicted and sent to 30 years imprisonment within just 52 days of the incident. "A minor girl was raped on January 11 in a village under the Ramghat police station. We arrested two men and under the provisions of the POCSO Act we filed a charge-sheet before the court within nine days of the incident.

## New Sunni Waqf Board constituted in UP

LUCKNOW

THE Uttar Pradesh government has nominated three members to the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board, completing the process of electing the body's 11 members.

This came a day after two candidates withdrew their nomination papers, paving the way for the unopposed election of eight members. The election, in which only Sunni Muslims can contest, was scheduled to be held on Sunday. According to a government notification issued by UP Minority Welfare and Waqf Department's Additional Chief Secretary, B.L. Meena, the election for the Board's chairperson will be held on Tuesday. The government-nominated members of the Board are social worker

Sabeeha Ahmed, Sunni cleric and principal of Darul Uloom Firangi Mahal Maulana Naeem-ur-Rehman Siddiqui, and Uttar Pradesh Department of Health and Family Welfare's joint director Dr Tabassum Khan.

The department's special secretary Shiva

Kant Dwivedi has confirmed the appointments.

Apart from the nominated members, the others on the Board are its former chairman Zufar Ahmad Farooqui, Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) Trust member Adnan Farrukh, Samajwadi Party MP from Moradabad ST Hasan, BSP MP from Amroha Kunwar Danish Ali, SP MLA from Isauli (Sultanpur) Abrar Ahmad, SP MLA from Gopalpur (Azamgarh) Nafees Ahmad, and lawyers Imran Mabood and Abdul Razzaq.



## Story behind making of ventilator in record 90 days

NEW DELHI

A new book released on Sunday tells the riveting story of how 20 Indian minds came together to create a world-class ICU ventilator in a 'record' 90 days amid a raging pandemic and nationwide lockdown.

The book, "The Ventilator Project: How the IIT Kanpur Consortium Built a World-class Product during India's Covid-19 Lockdown", is written by Srikanth Sastri and Amitabha Bandyopadhyay. Published by Pan Macmillan India, it is a Covid-era story of "innovation, hope, ingenuity and triumph" against all odds.

India on March 24 last year had imposed a nationwide lockdown to contain the highly contagious virus. But with the number of cases increasing exponentially, hospitals were staring at a shortage of life-saving equipment and personnel. Taking up the challenge, Bandyopadhyay and Sastri on March 29 formed the 'IIT Kanpur Ventilator Consortium' as a task force to assist a young startup, 'Nocca Robotics', in building not only "affordable" but "world-class ventilators" for hospitals. After working tirelessly against unprecedented odds, the team was successful in bringing out the first batch of high-quality ventilators, Noccare V310, in June.

"We hope this true story that reveals



how the limitations of time, resources and infrastructure can be catapults to success, inspires people to think about innovation and change. This is a story relevant to a new future with constant and accelerated changes, and new ways of working. At its heart, it's very much a story based in India and also one that has traversed the world," write the authors in the book.

The book, with 25 chapters in total, is divided into two sections: 'The Ninety Day Saga' and 'Big Hopes for Future'. Besides providing fascinating insights into what it takes to get things done in India, especially in manufacturing, it


also lays out an optimistic view that the pandemic has actually strengthened India's future trajectory. The foreword is written by professor Abhay Karandikar, director, IIT-Kanpur. "It has shown how close collaboration between industry and academia can drive an innovative and globally competitive product. I hope this book will inspire our academicians, entrepreneurs and industrialists to collaborate more closely to help India become a leader in technology development," writes Karandikar in the foreword. "The Ventilator Project", priced at Rs 599, is available for sale in offline and online stores.





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## TN politics to witness new strategies

As usual, Tamil Nadu is going to witness high drama and excitement which has been a constant feature of politics in the poll-bound Dravidian domain. Till December, it was actor Rajnikanth who had provided theatrics to the political scenario in the southern State. His entry into politics and his abrupt exit were equally dramatic. But still, people of Tamil Nadu will not miss the filmi touch as Kamal Hassan will be there to give that cinematic effect. But still, the main battle is going to be between the AIADMK and the DMK. Jailed leader V K Sasikala, soon after her release from the prison, chose not to speak about her nephew Dinakaran's party AMMK. She used a car

with AIADMK flag on her first visit to Chennai and on the birth anniversary of Jayalalithaa on February 24 she appealed to Jaya's supporters to come together and fight against DMK. A few days later, she announced that she was quitting politics. But do not be under the mistaken impression that she has quit politics for ever. One should try to see what happened behind the scene and what made her make this strategic move. It is nothing but wait and watch strategy and a lot of groundwork was apparently done by the BJP top leadership. The BJP did not want that the ruling AIADMK does not suffer any disadvantage in the elections. It thought that if she was allowed to remain in active politics, it would badly damage the image of AIADMK and the alliance between AIADMK and NDA would not be possible. The BJP which is making desperate but calculated move to strengthen its position in the southern States reportedly convinced her to announce her withdrawal from politics.

This is just her opening move. This strategic retreat will help her come out of the shadow of Jayalalithaa. If AIADMK loses power which appears to be more or less certain, she will be back with bang. Though there is a six-year ban on her due to the disproportionate assets case from contesting elections, she would come up in her new avatar and try to become the Chief Minister after the next elections. A Chief Minister's seat at 72 years is a normal deal. At this point of time, Sasikala may be seen as a corrupt leader but even the Puratchi Thalaivi Jayalalithaa too faced such charges and was also jailed. But she became the Chief Minister in 2016. If Edappadi K Palaniswami returns to power, then it would be difficult to displace him in near future. One interesting factor in Tamil Nadu this time is personality politics which used to play the main role will be replaced with politics of performance, promises and free gifts as neither Jayalalithaa nor Karunanidhi are alive.

# Hike oil price, but use money well

### THE WAY AHEAD



Dr Bharat Jhunjhunwala

The price of crude oil in the international market in the last five years has remained between 40 to 70 United States Dollars per barrel. In this entire period, the price of petrol in our country has remained around

70 to 75 rupees per litre. The present price of crude oil in the international market is about USD 65 per barrel which is within the range of 40 to 70 dollars as previously. Thus, the question arises why the price of petrol in the domestic market has increased to about Rs 90 to Rs 100 per litre?

The story is unravelled by looking at the price of crude oil in 2020. The price had declined to zero in June 2020 when large parts of the global economy went into lockdowns. The government increased the taxes on oil at that time and did not allow the price in the domestic market to decline. Say, the price of crude oil declined from 70 to 10 USD per barrel and the government increased the tax in the same measure; then the price in the domestic market remained at the previous Rs 75 per litre. The situation prevailing toward the beginning of this year, therefore, was low international prices coupled with high domestic taxes. Recently the price of oil in the international market has increased to about USD 65 but the government has not reduced the tax. As a result, today we have high prices in the domestic market.

This does not appear to be justified from the standpoint of the consumer — especially the impact on the “common man.” However, studies show that the impact of oil prices on the rich is more and on the poor is less. I have not been able to access studies from India in the regard. In Mali, a developing country in Africa, I have calculated that if the upper sections pay an additional 80 paise due to increase in oil price, the poor will pay only an additional 5 paise. The upper sections will bear 16 times the burden. Our situation is similar to that of Mali. The upshot is the greater impact of increase in the price of oil will be borne by the upper sections. Therefore, the opposition to the increase in the price of oil in the name of the “common man,” is not acceptable. This is like the factory owner saying that she is not able to buy uniforms for her employees because of the increase in the price of cloth.

There are many indirect benefits of an increase in the price of oil. The consumption of oil is reduced by increase in price of oil. Studies indicate that an



**The use of oil leads to large carbon emissions which, in turn, leads to global warming which, in turn, leads to environmental disasters like droughts and floods. Therefore, a high price of oil and coal will lead to less consumption and less global warming. A caveat here is that we must not produce ethanol for use as petrol from agricultural produce; and also, not generate electricity by making dams on our rivers. We pack our invaluable water and soil in ethanol and burn it in the form of petrol. Similarly, we kill our fishes, destroy our forests, and invite disasters like that has happened recently in Uttarakhand by promoting hydropower**

increase of 10 percent in the price of oil leads to a reduction of 0.4 percent in consumption in the long run. The increase in price will, therefore, lead to less consumption and accordingly the pressure on our economy for oil imports will be less. We are presently selling our produce at reduced prices because of the compulsion to earn dollars. We will then be able to obtain true prices for our exports. Second, high price of oil makes it profitable to develop alternative sources of energy. For example, it becomes beneficial for a consumer to buy an electric car that can be charged by solar power if the price of petrol is high. Third benefit is that of environment. The use of oil leads to large carbon emissions which, in turn, leads to global warming which, in turn, leads to environmental disasters like droughts and floods. Therefore, a high price of oil and coal

will lead to less consumption and less global warming. A caveat here is that we must not produce ethanol for use as petrol from agricultural produce; and also, not generate electricity by making dams on our rivers. We pack our invaluable water and soil in ethanol and burn it in the form of petrol. Similarly, we kill our fishes, destroy our forests, and invite disasters like that has happened recently in Uttarakhand by promoting hydropower.

Fourth and perhaps the most important aspect is that the government is facing a huge funds crunch due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The government will have to per force tax the people in one way or the other to raise revenue to meet this deficit. The choice before the people, therefore, is only whether the government will impose higher taxes on oil or, say, cloth.

Therefore, criticism of the government on this count is not justified in the present situation. The correct criticism is that the money earned from the higher tax collections from oil be used to reduce consumption of oil such as by developing public transport. The government has made highways which is in the right direction. But there is a need to ply buses rather than private cars on them. Metros should be made in large cities so that we reduce the energy consumption in travel.

We are presently using oil and coal that have been made by mother nature over millions of years. We are using this one-time inheritance and burning it up in a short span of a century or two. We have to reduce our consumption of energy to the levels that can be harnessed from present sources such as solar power, sequestration of carbon in our forests, etcetera.

The government should also reduce the burden on the people of government consumption. If the people — both upper and lower sections — have to pay an additional Rs 100 for high price of oil, then the government must reduce its consumption like amount and reduce the taxes in proportion. It is seen that the income of the common man has taken a big hit during the Covid-19 pandemic, but the income and consumption of government servants has remained at the previous levels. The serviceman is making merry while the served, for serving whom they have been appointed, is getting poorer. The oil price may be increased further but the money should be used properly.

*(The writer is formerly Professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)*

## Presenting true history of India, a tortuous process

VISHNU MAKHLJANI



Ever since I began taking a serious interest in history from the time I was in the eighth grade and had yet to turn a teenager, I wondered why the focus was only on two 'eras' - the Mughal and the British. There were references to Ashoka, Chandragupta Maurya and Hyder Ali/Tipu Sultan et al, but these were more in the nature of add-ons rather than to provide a perspective. The Chola dynasty and the Vijaynagar and Bahamani kingdoms got hardly a passing mention. I learnt more about the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort (at both Delhi and Agra) than about Angkor Wat.

Growing up, bits and pieces began falling into place and I wondered when the “true” history of India would come to be written. There have been attempts by various academics and scholars over the years, but these have focused only on specific areas instead of looking at the larger whole.

But then, when the “true” story of India’s freedom movement is yet to be written, as admitted by economist-politician Jairam Ramesh admitted during a reading about a year on his book on V K Krishna Menon, it’s quite clear that the road ahead is tortuous.

Walking this road once again is Francois Gautier, who for more than four decades has been writing on various aspects of India - eight of them as the correspondent for the Le Figaro newspaper - and who is currently Editor-in-Chief of La Revue de l’Inde, a literary magazine devoted to India published by leading French editor Les Belles Lettres. He is also building a Museum of True Indian History, dedicated to Shivaji, in Pune.

“An Entirely New History of India” (Garuda) is Gautier’s fifth on the subject and he spoke with passion during an interview on what drives him to continue to do so.

“Indian history is not written as it happened, because it is mostly recorded by British, who had an interest to show Indians as inferior; example: the Aryan invasion - white people who came from Russia and brought horses, Vedas etc. Also, British Sanskrit scholars had a tendency to postdate Indian history.

“Max Muller, the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time, like any good Christian of the nineteenth century, had read the conclusions of James Ussher, a 17th century Irish theologian, who claimed ‘that God created Heaven and Earth on the evening of October 22, 4004 BC’. It was almost a sacrilege to think that Indians, a colonized and inferior people, could have had a civilization well before the time of Christ... Muller thus dated the writing of the Vedas at 1500 BC, while many recent discoveries trace their existence back to at least around 5000 BC,” Gautier maintained.

Why is presenting a true account of Indian history such a tortuous process?

“Because it’s a touchy subject; you do something on the Goa inquisition (1560-1812 by the Portuguese to enforce Catholic Orthodoxy), Christians are unhappy; you touch upon Arab invasions and their bloodiness and Muslims are unhappy; you speak of Vedas and Mother India and Dalits go up in arms. Also, the clichés still attached to India in the twenty-first century are another cause of the scarcity and conventionality of history books on the Indian subcontinent.

“In spite of all the sympathy felt by westerners for Indians, when you mention the word ‘India’, the first image that comes to their mind is that of poverty and slums. Now, as this book will establish, not only does India have a rich and vast history, but economically, politically and socially it is surpassing China by its democratic and liberal values. Thus, we need to rewrite the history of India,” Gautier asserted.

Is enough being done to rework the school curricula to present an ‘Indian’ narrative of the country’s history?

“No absolutely not. No government, either Congress or BJP, has dared. The present government is only doing homeopathic changes because of so much resistance,” Gautier maintained, holding the ‘Brown Sahibs’, whom he described as the “descendants” of the British Raj responsible.

“When they took over India, the British set upon establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient instruments to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. The tool to shape these ‘British clones’ was education. In the words of Macaulay, the ‘Pope’ of British schooling in India: ‘We must at present do our best to form a class, who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellects.’

“Macaulay had very little regard for Hindu culture and education, declaiming that ‘all the historical information which can be collected from all the books which have been written in the Sanskrit language, is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgement used at preparatory schools in England’ or that ‘Hindus have a literature of small intrinsic value, hardly reconcilable with morality, full of monstrous superstitions,’” Gautier maintained.

It seems today, Gautier asserted, that India’s Marxist and Muslim intelligentsia could not agree more with Macaulay or with Charles Grant (1746-1823), Chairman of the East India Company, who said: “We cannot avoid recognising in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base... governed by malevolent and licentious passions...and sunk in misery by their vices.”

Question: The NEP grandly talks about introduction of contemporary subjects such as AI, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Living, Global Citizenship et al, but is strangely silent on restoring the imbalances in the true history of India. What are your views on this?

“All western concepts. But Ayurveda had holistic concepts much before the west. These ecologists and India-bashers have denied India its true identity and borrowed blindly from the West, without trying to adapt it to the unique Indian mentality and psychology; and it is they who are refusing to accept ‘an Indianisation, nationalisation and spiritualisation’ of India’s education system, which is totally western-oriented and is churning out machines learning by heart (Indian children must be amongst those having most homework in the world) (and) boring academics which are of little usefulness in life.

“And what India is getting from this education is a youth which apes the West: they go to Mac Donald’s, thrive on MTV culture, wear the latest Klein jeans and Lacoste T Shirts, and in general are useless, rich parasites, in a country which has so many talented youngsters who live in poverty. They will grow-up like millions of other western clones in the developing world, who wear a tie, read the New York Times and swear by liberalism and secularism to save their countries from doom,” Gautier said.

Speaking about the Museum of True Indian History in Pune, which, in its previous avatar, was at the heart of the Maratha empire and is today India’s educational, cultural, automotive and cultural capital, he explained: “It is Shivaji Maharaj’s realm, it is central to India and more than anything, Marathas have a stronger national fiber than in other states and I feel the Museum is better protected there. Today we have 18 pavilions and a unique shrine dedicated to Bharat Mata. We are trying to portray Indian History as it happened, not as it has been written, is also a very sensitive task and at nearly every step, we have encountered obstacles sometimes even from our own people.”

“We even are facing threats from some Shivaji groups, who object to Shivaji Maharaj being associated with Mother India or the Vedas. Shivaji was an instrument of god and whoever binds him to a particular caste, or even a particular guru, demeans him and hampers his work, for he was a supra national figure and his qualities of dedication to Mother India, of respect of human rights and honest administration, are needed today. His extraordinary courage in front of adversity, should also be an example to Hindus, who today, at the slightest threat go underground,” Gautier concluded, unfazed by the hiccup, even as he is engaged in writing a book on Ayurveda in French, a biography of Amritanandamayi and a book on ‘pranayama’.

## Meghan, Harry lift lid on royal split

MICHAEL HOLDEN

A HIGHLY anticipated Oprah Winfrey interview with Prince Harry and his wife Meghan aired on US television on Sunday, amid what one royal watcher called a “toxic” atmosphere between the couple and the British monarchy.

Not since the late Princess Diana appeared on television to share intimate details of her failed marriage to Harry’s father, Prince Charles, has an interview with members of the royal family attracted so much attention.

Having severed their official royal ties, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex explained why they abandoned Britain to move to California and start new lives.

“I’m ready to talk,” Meghan, a former American actress, told Winfrey in an excerpt shown on US station CBS on Friday, saying it was “liberating” to be able to give the interview.

Meghan and Harry’s detractors say the couple want the glamour of their positions without the dedication it requires or scrutiny it brings. To their supporters, their treatment shows how an outdated British institution has lashed out against a modern, biracial woman, with undertones of racism.

In another extract released ahead of the broadcast, Meghan accuses Buckingham Palace of “perpetuating falsehoods” about them, saying they would not be silent in telling their story.

A source close to Harry and Meghan said they wanted to have their say as they began a new chapter - moving home with



a baby on the way after ending royal duties and on the back of a successful court case against a tabloid newspaper.

Some experts said the interview could damage the royal family, just as the split between Charles and Diana did. “The interview is a form of revenge,” royal commentator Richard Fitzwilliams told this correspondent. “The link in people’s minds can only be the constant attacks on each other by Charles and Diana, which were so damaging to the monarchy in the 1990s.”

Since their wedding in May, 2018, which had all the pomp of a traditional British royal occasion with a sprinkling

of Hollywood stardust, Harry and Meghan have become global celebrities.

But they have railed against media intrusion, successfully waging legal battles with photographers and newspapers, including a privacy case against the Mail on Sunday which printed extracts of a letter Meghan wrote to her estranged father.

Rifts within the House of Windsor also appeared, with Harry admitting he had fallen out with elder brother Prince William.

The decision to do the sit-down interview with Winfrey, recorded some two weeks ago, has already attracted criticism, partly because it will air while Harry’s 99-

year-old grandfather Prince Philip, the queen’s husband, is in hospital.

He underwent a procedure for a pre-existing heart condition on Wednesday.

There have also been allegations of bullying against Meghan which first appeared in The Times newspaper. It said a senior aide raised a complaint in October 2018 from staff alleging Meghan had reduced some of her assistants to tears and treated others so badly that they quit.

Buckingham Palace, which has made no comment on the interview, said it would investigate the claims, saying it was “very concerned”.

In response to the report, a spokeswoman for Meghan said she was “saddened by this latest attack on her character, particularly as someone who has been the target of bullying herself.”

Fitzwilliams said the Palace’s move appeared to be a “pre-emptive strike” ahead of the interview.

On the same day as the broadcast, members of Queen Elizabeth’s family will deliver a televised Commonwealth Day message saying how communities have come together during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Winfrey interview is set to be broadcast in Britain on Monday as well as in many other countries around the world.

“I have not seen enthusiasm at this level for a royals-related story since the weddings - the royal weddings of both Meghan and Harry and William and Kate,” said Michelle Tauber, senior editor for US magazine People.



# House sites, health cards for journalists soon: KTR

The government would soon sort out the issues pertaining to the scribes in Telangana. House sites would be given to the eligible journalists and offer better health care facilities to their family members. No other State is providing a welfare fund of Rs 100 crore to journalists in the country like Telangana, says KTR

HYDERABAD

PROMISING to provide house sites to all the journalists in the state of Telangana, Industries and MAUD Minister KT Rama Rao on Sunday assured better healthcare facilities to their family members with a new policy. He was addressing a gathering of journalists at the Jal Vihar along with Press Academy Chairman Allam Narayana, MLA and journalist Kranthi Kiran and other leaders of the journalists association. He gave away cheques towards financial assistance to the deceased and ailing journalists here. While Rs 1 lakh was given to 87 to the kin and a financial assis-



IT, Industries and MAUD Minister K Taraka Rama Rao, along with Media Academy Chairman Allam Narayana and Andole MLA Chanti Kranti Kiran, distributing welfare fund cheques to deceased journalists' families at a meeting with journalist associations in Hyderabad on Sunday. Photo: Adula Krishna

tance of Rs 50,000 each was given to 18 journalists. He said that the government would soon sort out the issues pertaining to the scribes in Telangana. The minister said that the house sites would be given to the eligible journalists and offer better health care facilities to their family members. He asked Narayana and Kranthi to get details of the children of deceased journalists and ensure they get education by the government. However, KTR took a dig at some newspapers and news channels for carrying out more stories on TRS debacle in Dubbaka bypoll and GHMC. We

have been on the winning spree since 2014 and might have lost and now will win the MLC graduate MLC polls, he said. He agreed that the house sites issue caused delay in distribution of the suitable land and now the government would take a call in this regard. The minister accused the opposition parties of BJP and the Congress for their belittling remarks against the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao. The journalists have played a key role in the statehood movement, and not the opposition parties he averred. KTR assured that KCR would soon start a building

for journalists in five floors and a press academy building to offer training to the scribes to update skills. He flayed that BJP chief Bandi Sanjay and other leaders of the party and the Congress are making insulting remarks against the Chief Minister. It is not up to their level to make derogatory remarks against the chief minister and we will teach them a fitting lesson. Both Sanjay and TPCC Chief Utham Kumar Reddy got their posts of Telangana party units only after statehood achieved by KCR, he said. He warned that they would not keep quiet on such bad remarks.

## TRS Ministers urge grads to vote for Vani Devi

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

FINANCE Minister Harish Rao and Excise Minister Srinivas Goud participated in a preparatory meeting held under the auspices of Telangana Social Welfare Residential Teachers and Employees Association on Sunday.

On the occasion, Harish Rao appealed the graduates to vote for the TRS MLC candidate Surabhi Vani Devi who he assured will work for the development. Since Vani Devi, daughter of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao having been running educational institutions, she is aware of the problems of graduates and educated people and she will strive for solving their problems, he added.

Moreover, Srinivas Goud also asked people to support and cast their vote for the TRS MLC. And asked voters to think prudently with restraint. "If Vani Devi wins with majority, justice will be done to all the employees and the unemployed," he added.

MLC Candidate Surabhi Vani Devi, LB Nagar MLA Devireddy Sudheer Reddy, MLCs Elga Mallesham, Buggarao Dayanand, State Beverage Chairman Devi Prasad and others participated in the programme.



## TS reports more Covid recoveries

The total number of recoveries rose to 2,96,373. The recovery rate stands at 98.82 per cent against the national average of 96.9 per cent

HYDERABAD

TELANGANA reported more recoveries than new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours, health officials on Sunday. A total of 207 people recovered from the virus, while 158 new cases were reported which pushed the cumulative tally to 2,99,900.

More recoveries brought down the number of active Covid cases to 1,886, including 748 who are currently in home/institutional isolation. The total number of recoveries rose to 2,96,373. The recovery rate stands at 98.82 per cent against the national average of 96.9 per cent.

One more person succumbed to the virus, taking the death toll to 1,641. The fatality rate remained 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent. While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to Covid, 55.04 per cent had comorbidities. Greater Hyderabad saw the

maximum number of cases at 30 followed by Rangareddy (15) and Medchal Malkajgiri (10). Four districts reported no cases while in the remaining 26 districts the daily count was in single digit.

The health authorities conducted 40,616 tests during the same period. As many as 34,256 samples were tested in government labs, 6,360 in private labs. According to the director of public health and family welfare, cumulative number of tests rose to 89,64,623.

Samples tested per million population climbed to 2,40,854. The daily testing target for the state is 5,600 as per the WHO benchmark of 140 tests per million per day. Over 92 per cent of the beds in hospitals treating Covid cases remained vacant.

As many as 8,204 beds out of 8,577 beds in 62 government hospitals were vacant. Similarly, in 216 private hospitals 6,840 out of 7,605 beds were vacant.

# TDP failed to develop Vijayawada: Vellampalli

- Says TDP chief Naidu has no moral right to seek votes in the city
- Points out that the former CM could not complete the construction of Kanaka Durga flyover during his regime

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

ENDOWMENTS Minister Vellampalli Srinivas slammed Chandrababu Naidu for neglecting Vijayawada city during his term and said he doesn't have any moral right to campaign in the city. Speaking to media here on Sunday, the Minister said Naidu couldn't complete the construction of Kanaka Durga flyover in his regime and not even release any funds for the development of Vijayawada while Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government has completed the flyover construction and also sanctioned



Endowments Minister Vellampalli Srinivas addressing the media in Vijayawada on Sunday

works worth Rs 600 crore for the development of the city. He asserted that the YSRCP would win in all 64 wards in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC). He said the people of Vijayawada are tired of Naidu's

lies and demanded Naidu to seek apology from the people of the city for his utter negligence towards it.

The Minister said TDP leaders themselves were admitting that people belonging to Naidu's caste only are benefitting in the party and demanded that Naidu should respond to the comments of TDP leaders Bonda Uma Maheswar Rao, Buddha Venkanna and Nagul Meera on the domination of Vijayawada MP Kesineni Nani in Vijayawada. He said Naidu has been trying to put TDP on track but in vain due to the domination of his community leaders.

Reminding that it was Chandrababu Naidu who issued G.O to hike water tax by 100 per cent in the previous government, he said people don't believe the false propaganda of TDP on municipal taxes to gain political mileage ahead of civic polls and assured that the new tax policy will not burden the people of the State.

## Naidu's road shows evoke good response in Vij

- Says the earlier TDP govt constructed Pattiseema project and executed works under capital Amaravati project to improve the living conditions of people
- Laments that the YSRCP has destroyed great projects
- Calls upon people to teach a strong lesson to the YSRCP in the municipal polls
- Flays the ruling party for steeply increasing debt burden on the State

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

TDP national president and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday carried out his election campaign for the municipal polls by holding a series of road shows in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation. His road shows in the city attracted good response from people.

Naidu called upon the voters to vote for the TDP candidates as their victory was greatly needed to counter the chaotic and oppressive regime of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. The TDP candidate should be elected as the Mayor of Vijayawada city in order to put a full stop to the atrocities of the ruling YSRCP leaders in the 'city of victory'. The TDP chief said



TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu taking part in a road show as part of his campaign for municipal polls in Vijayawada on Sunday. TDP's Mayoral candidate Kesineni Swetha is also seen. Photo: Ch V Mastan

that he had the support of the people while the Chief Minister was taking the support of rowdies and criminals to perpetrate his jungle rule on the people. The TDP constructed Amaravati and Pattiseema to improve the living conditions of not just one region but the entire State. The YSRCP has destroyed such great projects. The time has come for the people of Vijayawada to show their pride by teaching a strong lesson to the YSRCP.

Stating that a lot of injustice was done to AP, Naidu said that the Andhra people have returned to their home land having nothing of their own after the bifurca-

tion of the united AP. At that time, there was a deficit budget but still the TDP regime dared to construct a dream capital city for people of the State. Naidu recalled how farmers gave thousands of their acres in response to just one call for the construction of a dream capital. Every person in the State had a duty to strengthen the agitation to save the capital city Amaravati. The agitators should display determination and courage to fight back the vicious plans of the Jagan Reddy regime.

Naidu slammed the Chief Minister and his Ministers for 'using abusive language' against the TDP

leaders without valid reasons. In just 2 years, over 10,000 acres of lands and sites were encroached in Visakhapatnam. Accused No.2 V Vijayasai Reddy has become like a curse for the port city and its development, the TDP chief said.

He lamented that the people of AP were suffering greatly and the younger generations also facing a bleak future under the Jagan regime. Debts have increased manifold in proportion to the unchecked corruption of the YSRCP leaders. Each Andhra citizen was now carrying more than Rs 1 lakh debt on his or her head and they would have to pay it with interest. Taxes were being levied even on pets, dogs, pigs, etc.

Naidu cautioned the voters against accepting the cash offers in the municipal elections since the YSRCP leaders would use this pretext to plunder more and more public property of the Andhra people. A vote for YSRCP would be like giving a licence to rowdies and goondas. The fake liquor policy has destroyed the lives and health of the poor families. With the road show of Naidu in Vijayawada on Sunday all the TDP leaders who had earlier expressed their ire on MP Kesineni came together and participated in the road show.

# Congress slams govt over suicide of Transco staff

HYDERABAD

AICC National Spokesperson Dr Sravan Dasoju on Sunday criticised CM KCR and Minister KTR for their outright failure in providing jobs to the unemployed youth in Telangana and inducing suicides in beleaguered Telangana youth.

Addressing the media today at Gandhi Bhavan, Dr Sravan got emotional over the suicide of Electricity department's artisan Ankam Buchiraju, who had committed suicide, and termed KTR as a killer who has been betraying the Telangana youth with fabricated recruitment numbers for the sake of winning MLC elections at any cost.

"This is not just a suicide but, it is a murder by the Government and the KTR will be remembered as a killer of innocent unemployed youth of Telangana. Koppula Raju and Golla Naresh have also reportedly committed suicide due to failure in securing jobs in Telangana. How many more such youth have to commit suicide?," Dr Sravan asked.

The AICC leader demanded an ex gratia of Rs 50 lakh to Ankam Buchiraju's family and a job to his widow in the electricity department. Buchiraju is survived by wife and a 3-year-old daughter. According to the senior Congress party leader, all the 22,637 artisans working at TS Genco and Transco including Buchiraju, were evidently betrayed by the government as they were regularised on the basis of illegal rules violating the APSEB recruitment service rules and the standing orders under section 17B. Before their services were regularised, they used to get around Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 consolidated salary per month. However, after the illegal regularisation, they are currently placed under Rs 9,000 to 12,000 pay scale per month which is a sheer betrayal to all of them.

## 4.11L textbooks to be distributed to govt, aided schools soon



B Rajasekhar, Principal Secretary of School Education, and Commissioner Chinaveerabhadhrudu addressing a press conference in Vijayawada on Sunday

- The Education Department needs more textbooks due to increase in student enrollment in the govt, aided schools this academic year
- The student strength increases from over 40.84 lakh in Nov 2020 to 45 lakh by March 6, 2021, points out B Rajasekhar, Principal Secretary, School Edn Dept

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
VIJAYAWADA

B Rajasekhar, Principal Secretary, School Education Department, said the education department would distribute 4.11 lakh textbooks and workbooks to students studying in government and aided schools in the State. He said the admissions in the government and aided schools significantly increased since November and December 2020 and total strength crossed 45 lakh in March, 2021.

Addressing the media at the R and B office here on Sunday, Rajasekhar said the arrangements are underway for the distribution of 4.11 lakh textbooks and work books to the students. He said the books printed for the academic year 2020-21 are not sufficient due to increased strength of children.

Giving details of admissions and enrollment compared to 2020, he said the enrollment was 40,84,983 students in November, 2020 and it increased to 43,89,952 by December 2020 and further increased to over 45 lakh by March 6, 2021.

He said the government had printed 40.92 lakh books this academic year and the books are not sufficient now due to new ad-

missions and preparations are underway for printing more text and work books.

He said the Education Department printed text books as per the data of Unified District Information System (UDIS) in September, 2019. He said the government adds five per cent to the strength of existing students for printing of books but it was not sufficient due to huge number of admissions registered in the government and aided schools this academic year.

Rajasekhar said due to implementation of Amma Vodi scheme and other reasons, the strength in the government and aided schools has gone up significantly between November 2020 and March 2021. He said the State government has sanctioned Rs 7 crore for printing of additional textbooks and appealed to the parents not to purchase the text books and the government would supply to the schools within two weeks. Referring to new academic year, he said the schools will be re opened on July 1, 2021 in the State. Replying to a question, he said the government is planning to conduct DSC every year to fill the vacant posts and final decision is yet to be taken on conducting DSC this academic year. He, however, added that the process has been initiated.

## CMRF cheques distributed

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
KADTHAL

KALWAKURTHY MLA Jaipal Yadav distributed Chief Minister's Relief cheque funds to the beneficiaries in Kadthal on Sunday. Through which Chennamma, resident of Raviched village received cheque of Rs 36,000.

On this occasion MLA Jaipal Yadav said that the government aided the poor and needy with the help of CMRF. He further urged people to utilize this opportunity properly. "Telangana government had always come to the rescue of poor people," he added. Elaborating various developmental and welfare schemes undertaken in the constituency, he said that all the schemes implemented by the government aimed to benefit all the sections of the society. ZPTC Dhasarath Nayak, PACS chairman Gampa Venkatesh, Mandal TRS President Srinivas Reddy, TRS leaders Lachiram, Ramakrishna, Gampa Srinu and others attended the programme.



# Plane makes emergency landing after Indian passenger assaults crew

He has been charged with endangering safety of plane. If convicted, he faces 5 to 10 years' jail



LONDON

A "rowdy" Indian passenger on board an Air France flight from Ghana via Paris to New Delhi forced the plane to make an emergency landing at Bulgaria's capital here, according to a media report.

The Indian national, whose identity was not made public, has been detained for 72 hours, Bulgarian News Agency BTA quoted Sofia City Prosecutor Iliana Kirilova as saying on Saturday.

As reported by Reuters, a passenger started quarrelling with fellow passengers soon after the flight took off.

The passenger also assaulted a flight attendant and pummelled the cockpit door,

said Ivailo Angelov, an official from the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

"After the troublemaker's detention, the flight proceeded to its destination," he said. The Indian has been charged with endangering the safety of an aircraft while airborne, said Ivailo Angelov . If convicted, he faces from 5 to 10 years' imprisonment, the report said.

The Indian national has been provided with a court-appointed defence lawyer and an interpreter, the report said, adding that the Embassy of India in Bulgaria has been informed.

The Indian, whose motives are being clarified, rampaged right from the beginning of the flight but did not resist arrest

at Sofia Airport, the report said. "He realises what he has done but does not behave quite adequately," Angelov said.

The report said that the "Air France flight overflying Bulgaria en route from Ghana via Paris to New Delhi had to make an emergency landing at Sofia Airport around 5 PM (local time) on Friday because of a rowdy passenger on board".

Commissioner Teodor Cheshmedjiev, Chief of the Border Police Department at Sofia Airport, said that the request for the emergency landing was received at 4:10 PM on Friday.

The flight later resumed its journey to New Delhi.

# ANOTHER FARMER DIES BY SUICIDE NEAR TIKRI BORDER

PM Modi has time for rally but not for farmers, says Pawar

Will stand with farmers till my last breath, says Priyanka

NEW DELHI

A 49-year-old farmer from Haryana's Hisar district on Sunday allegedly hanged himself from a tree, about seven kilometers from the Tikri border protest site, police said.

The farmer, who supported the agitation against Centre's new farm laws, has purportedly left a suicide note, they said.

"The victim, Rajbir, hailed from a village in Hisar district. He was found hanging from a tree," Bahadurgarh City police station SHO, Vijay Kumar said over phone. His body was found hanging by some farmers who informed the police.

In the suicide note purportedly left behind by Rajbir, it is mentioned that the three farm laws were responsible for him to take the extreme step. He also said that the Centre should fulfil his last wish by repealing the legislations, police said.

Targeting PM Modi for his



Kisan Congress members carry 101 urns with soils collected from various part of the country to mark 101 days of farmers' agitation against new farm laws, in New Delhi on Sunday

public rally in Bengal, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said the PM has time to go to Kolkata but has no time to visit farmers in Delhi who have been protesting against farm laws since November last

year. Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday said that she will continue to fight for the farmers till her last breath, whether it is 100 days or 100 years.

## PM suggests farmers to promote coarse grain

Aiming to double farmers' income by 2022, PM Modi suggested them to promote coarse grain to add to their income as well as to provide nutritious food grain. PM's suggestion came while thousands of farmers are on indefinite strike for over 100 days against withdrawal of three farm laws enacted in September last year.

Coarse grains refer to cereal grains other than wheat and rice or those used primarily for animal feed or brewing. These grains are warm-season cereals valued for their food, feed and fodder uses in various parts of the world. The PM touched upon the UN recognition of year 2023 as International Year of Millets and stressed the need to promote coarse grain as it will not only provide nutritious food grain but will also add to the income of the farmers.

## FUTURE IS OURS



Indian Army officers during a media interaction, a day before International Women's Day, at South Block lawn in New Delhi, on Sunday

## Maha's Covid daily tally breaches 11K mark

MUMBAI

After breaching the 10,000-mark earlier this week, Maharashtra on Sunday logged a new surge as 11,141 fresh Covid-19 infections were reported within 24 hours.

The state, which is one of the top five contributors of Covid-19 in the country, continued to report over 9,000 cases all week promoting authorities to implement additional lockdown curbs in various districts, including Aurangabad.

According to the health bulletin, 6,013 patients were discharged today; 20,68,044 Covid-19 patients

discharged after full recovery until Sunday.

The recovery rate in the state is 93.17 per cent, it stated.

Currently, 4,39,055 people are in home quarantine and 4,650 people are in institutional quarantine.

Authorities have announced partial lockdown in Aurangabad from March 11 and full lockdown on weekends.

Malls and weekly markets will be shut, weddings and public functions disallowed and restaurants will have to be shut at 9 pm, according to official reports.

## Union Min Giriraj 'beat up govt officials' remark

## Nitish hits back

PATNA

Union minister Giriraj Singh has asked people at his Begusarai constituency to beat up government officials with bamboo sticks if they don't listen to grievances. While speaking at a public event in Bihar's Begusarai, Giriraj Singh advised people "beat up with bamboo sticks" those officials who appeared insensitive to their concerns.

Giriraj Singh, who is known for his controversial remarks, was speaking on how frequently he receives complaints from common citizens that government officials often do not pay heed to their complaints. "I say to them, why do you come to me for such small things. MPs, MLAs, village mukhiyas, DMs, SDMs, BDOs... these are all under obligation to serve the people. If they do not listen to you, pick up a bamboo stick with both hands and give a crushing blow on their head," said Giriraj Singh, as the crowd broke into a round of applause.

"If even that does not work, then Giriraj shall throw his weight behind you," Giriraj said, evoking further applause from the crowds even as digni-



ties sharing the dais looked on.

Bihar chief minister and Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar also weighed in. "Aap unhi se puchiye (ask him only)," Kumar said on Sunday after reporters asked what he had to say about the Union minister's remark. Kumar further questioned whether it was justified or appropriate to use words like 'pita' (beating) and then refused to speak on this matter.

Apart from Kumar, opposition parties in Bihar such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) strongly condemned Singh's remark.

The BSP's national spokesperson, Sudhendra Bhadoria, said on Sunday that such a statement might create a law and order problem and added that why hasn't the Centre taken any action against the Union minister. The RJD hit out at Singh as well as CM Kumar and said that whether these two parties were running a government or a 'Mahajungleraj' in the state. The current government in Bihar is under the realm of the alliance between the JD(U) and the BJP.

# Didi asks J'khand CM to campaign for her

NEW DELHI

JHARKHAND Chief Minister Hemant Soren has been requested by Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee to campaign for her in the West Bengal Assembly elections and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha will take a decision on this soon keeping in mind the objective of giving a pushback to the BJP's poll prospects, a senior JMM leader said on Sunday.

The development assumes significance as the JMM is an alliance government with the Congress in Jharkhand and the Sonia Gandhi-led party has tied up with the Left and the Indian Secular Front in West Bengal against the BJP and the TMC. After the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Samajwadi Party and the Shiv Sena, Banerjee had said last week that the TMC has received support from the JMM and the Nationalist Congress Party for the assembly polls.

Mamata Banerjee held a roadshow in north Bengal in protest against the hike in price of LPG and fuel.

Mamata held a 'padyatra' from Darjeeling More at the same time PM Modi was in Kolkata. Thousands of supporters holding cardboard replicas of LPG cylinders participated at the 'yatra', which was also attended by TMC minister Chandrima Bhattacharya, and party MPs Mimi Chakraborty and Nusrat Jahan.

Taking a swipe at Narendra Modi over his 'Sonar Bangla' promise, Mamata Banerjee called him a "liar", saying the PM had come to sell dreams in Bengal at a time when fuel prices were rising steeply and banks were being sold.

Home Minister Amit Shah said "I am confident that the AIADMK-BJP-PMK government will be formed in Tamil Nadu. We have started our door to door campaign by visiting 11 homes in Kanyakumari.



BJP supporters during a rally to attend Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election meeting ahead of West Bengal Assembly Polls, outside Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata on Sunday

## Jai Shri Ram works everywhere: Yogi

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has said that the magic of 'Jai Shri Ram' will work across the country. "Jai Shri Ram Uttar Pradesh mein bhi chalega, Bengal mein bhi chalega, aur poore desh mein bhi chalega (Jai Shri Ram will work in Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and all over India)," the Chief Minister said while speaking at a conclave organised by a news channel. "Remember the beginning of 1990s decade when some people were opposing the 'Jai Shri Ram' slogan even in Uttar Pradesh. Today, the country and the world is seeing where they stand. And this is not a new thing. It has been there since the time of Ramayana."

## Always felt at home in Bengal: Gambhir

NEW DELHI: BJP leader and MP Gautam Gambhir who is likely to join party's campaign in poll-bound West Bengal on Sunday said he always felt at home in the state.

The former top order Indian batsman is likely to begin campaigning in West Bengal from March 22. He will campaign in all eight phases of the assembly polls in the state as well as in three phases of the Assam assembly polls, said an aide of the East Delhi MP. This will be Gambhir's first full-fledged election campaign for the BJP outside Delhi. Earlier, he had campaigned for former hockey player Sandip Singh in Haryana assembly polls last year.

## Ex-CM Mahanta's traditional seat given to BJP: AGP

GUWAHATI

THE Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), a constituent of the ruling BJP-led coalition in Assam, on Sunday said that Barhampur, the traditional seat of former chief minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, was allotted to the saffron party this time considering his "winning possibility" from there.

Mahanta, an MLA since 1985, won the Barhampur constituency in Nagaon district for six consecutive terms since 1991. The seat has now gone to the BJP which selected Jitu Goswami to contest the Assembly polls from there.

"There is no conspiracy in giving Barhampur to the BJP. We considered the winning prospect of a seat. We have to see whether the NDA is going to win a seat or not," AGP president Atul Bora said at a press conference here.

When asked if Mahanta, the founder president of the AGP, is unlikely to win Barhampur this time, Bora said that the "decision was made after a discussion".

The AGP chief also refused to say whether Mahanta was taken into confidence before handing over the seat to the BJP. Asked if Mahanta's open opposition to the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act was a reason he did not get the seat he is holding for three decades, Bora said, "That was not a factor. His health was one issue." Following the announcement of the Barhampur seat going to the BJP, Mahanta's followers staged protests and a process has gained momentum to revive the AGP-Progressive, a defunct breakaway faction of the AGP.

# Indian bullet train to be modified to suit climatic conditions

Trains in Japan can handle temp upto 40 degrees Celsius, but in India the temp can cross even 50 degrees

ANAND SINGH  
NEW DELHI

THE Indian version of the High-Speed Rail or the Bullet train will be slightly modified to suit the country's climatic conditions with a stronger air conditioning system, as well as, different filtering system keeping in view of the high temperatures and dusty conditions in the country, as compared to the one operating in Japan, officials said on Sunday.

India is currently constructing the 508-km Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed rail corridor.

The National High Speed Rail Corporation

(NHSRCL), which is executing the project linking the capitals of Maharashtra and Gujarat, believes the trains will have to be customised to suit the Indian conditions so that they run without any hassle.

Speaking to IANS, National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) spokesperson Sushma Gaur said: "The trains that run in Japan are built to handle outside temperature of up to 40 degrees Celsius. But here in India, and especially the section it will run in Maharashtra, the outside temperature can cross even 50 degrees. So, we will need some modifications for that." She further said that special provisions are also being made to combat dust.



"Keeping in view the environmental conditions in India, the air conditioners, blowers, and other important equipment fitted in the high speed trains will have different dust filters."

The spokesperson added that the dust filters installed will work like a barrier and stop the dust entering inside the trains.

"This will be helpful in maintaining ambient air quality inside the trains. They will also safeguard the equipment from harmful dust mites and other pollutants," Gaur said. The NHSRCL has planned to procure E5 series of Shinkansen Bullet train rakes from Japan.

According to NHSRCL officials, India will procure 24 rakes of the E5 series.

They said that initially one train set will have 10 cars with seating capacity of 730 passengers.

However, in future 16 cars train set will be used depending on the traffic on the corridor and the train will have max operational speed of 320 km/h.

The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed rail corridor will have three types of seating arrangements in the train - first, business and standard.

The officials further said that there will be overhead luggage space in all the cars and the train will be aerodynamically designed.



“There are no bad business and investment opportunities, but there are bad entrepreneurs and investors”  
—Robert T Kiyosaki



# HANS INVEST

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THE HANS INDIA  
DELHI MONDAY 8 MARCH 2021

## Wider trading range likely as resistance level moves up

### DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

The resistance and support levels (15,000CE and 14,000PE) remained at same strikes for five weeks in a row until March 1, 2021. However, last week futures and options (F&O) trading witnessed resistance level moved up by 1,000 points as the highest concentration of Open Interest (OI) was seen at 16,000CE, while the 14,000PE strike indicates the same support level for the sixth consecutive week.

The Call OI is seen at 16,000 strike followed by 15,800 strike, 15,600 strike and 15,300 strike. Highest Call OI addition was seen at 15,500/16,000/15,000/15,800 strikes. The 14,000 strike has the

Put-Call ratio of OI at 1.74 indicates more Put writing; price ratio of Bank Nifty-Nifty fell to 2.36 and may move towards 2.32

highest Put OI base followed by 14,500 strike, 15,000 strike and 15,500 strike. The highest build-up of Put OI was at 14,500 /13,500 /14,200 strikes.

Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at SMC Global Securities Ltd, said: “From the derivatives front, Put writers at 15,000 strike are seen unwinding their positions, while Call writers added hefty Open Interest in 15,000 & 15,100 strikes. For upcoming sessions, we believe that tug of war among bulls and bears will likely to keep markets on volatile ground and bias is likely to remain in favour of bears as far Nifty is holding below 15,100 levels.”

As the NSE broad-based Nifty closed below 15,000 level, more writing was seen at 15,300 Call strike. On the Put side, the 14,500

followed by 14,700 strikes saw a good addition of OI. Considering the higher IVs and writing in OTM strike Calls and Puts, derivatives analysts predict consolidation for the NSE Nifty with support at 14,700 strike. For the current week, analysts suggest a short strangle strategy for the Nifty by selling 14,700 Put & 15,300 Call to capitalise on declining time value and retrace-ment in IVs. Indicating the recent highest volume, the Nifty saw 20 per cent OI block on the weekly expiry day (Thursday). Stuck up long positions could limit upsides as traders would look for exit if the Nifty moved above Thursday's high of 15,250 strike.

“It was quite a volatile week for Indian markets as tug of war among bulls and bears kept markets on a roller coaster ride. The

F&O TRADING				
Product	Contracts	Turnover (₹/cr)	PCR	Premium (₹/cr)
Index Futures	4,63,475	45,878.18		-
Stock Futures	8,04,056	76,037.27		-
Index Options	2,29,40,804	22,83,806.02	1.02	19,680.34
Stock Options	15,74,683	1,51,149.32	0.47	3,875.94
F&O Total	2,57,83,018	25,56,870.79	0.98	23,556.28

Source: NSE / As on March 5, 2021

Nifty index, however, closed below the key psychological level of 15,000 as profit booking in the metal counter along with financials and pharma space kept markets under pressure in later part of the week,” remarked Bisht.

For the week ended March 5, 2021, BSE Sensex closed at 50,405.32 points, a net recovery of 1,305.33 points or 2.65 per cent, as against 49,099.99 points. NSE Nifty gained 408.95 points or 2.81 per cent and closed at 14,938.10

points from 14,529.15 points. Bisht forecasts: “On downside, the 14,800 level would act as immediate support for Nifty below which further selling pressure can mount and can drag Nifty towards 14,600 level as well.”

Volatility during the last week remained high for the NSE Nifty. After easing earlier, the volatility index VIX again gained momentum and moved towards 26 level, whereas the rupee depreciated almost 30 paise on Friday. This

situation may result in negative sentiments limiting the upside movement, while triggering selling at higher levels.

“The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 23.58 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 25.12 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 24.15 per cent. Put-Call Ratio of OI for Nifty closed at 1.74 and it indicates more Put writing than Calls,” adds Bisht.

FII trading in the F&O space improved during the last week. The FIIs sold Rs1,289 crore in the index futures segment and bought to the tune of Rs1,932 crore in the stock futures segment and Rs1,608 crore worth index options as well.

**Bank Nifty**  
The NSE's banking index Bank

Nifty closed at 35,228.15 points, a net gain of 424.55 points or 1.21 per cent from 34,803.60 points. The second wave of Covid pandemic is casting a shadow over Dalal Street. The Bank Nifty reverted from 36,600 points, after which fresh short OI blocks took place. This may create selling pressure in the current week.

According to ICICI Direct.com data, the Bank Nifty has the highest Put base at 35,000 below which another 1,000 points fall is expected. However, looking at the Call writing positions in OTM strikes, analysts forecast that 36,500 level may act as a hurdle and fresh long could only be seen if the index manages to close above 36500 points.

The current price ratio of Bank Nifty-Nifty fell to 2.36 and it may move towards 2.32, while the ongoing underperformance in the Bank Nifty could continue, according to ICICI Direct.com.

## THEMATIC INVESTING BEST BET DURING MKT VOLATILITY

Recognising which sector would do well and then allocating appropriately is very difficult



K Naresh Kumar

The last few weeks of this space has been concentrated upon identifying the various trends especially of the various sectors and take advantage by investing in them. I was also encouraging investors to create a core and satellite portfolio so that a bit of zing is added to the experience along with higher alpha. Particularly, while there's enough evidence against timing the markets, sectoral or thematic investing is all about that and specifically the exits. As these cycles happen over a short time spaced between long intervals. It's clear that these are cyclical with each sector playing at its own timing.

For instance, the current rally in metals has been after almost a decade and don't know how long would this last. The conditions of lower interest rates coupled with struggling US Dollar are a good recipe for a rally. Moreover, this time this is coupled with long investment neglect i.e. lack of capital expenditure (capex) in many mining sectors. The other important trigger, however, has been the pandemic induced lockdowns.

The stringent lockdowns across the geographies have disrupted the supply chains worsening the supply constraints. The quicker than an-

ticipated recovery has stimulated the demand which only further exacerbated the gap. The surprising recovery hasn't been executed with apt resource allocations leaving the transition in disarray. This has resulted in the stocks rallying too wild in the last few months having businesses connected to metals and mining. These inconsistencies have been causing varying degree of price fluctuations with the demand-supply dynamics playing out. So, how could one take gain out of this situation!

The simple answer is to invest through various sectoral or thematic oriented funds available in the market. There are multiple funds targeting each of these segments like Pharma, Metals, Commodities, PSU, Consumerism, Banking & Financial Services, etc. As I'd earlier mentioned about the timing criticality in these funds, one may end up at a disadvantageous or even disastrous if the investor were to stay too long or too short in the investment.

Recognising which sector would do well and then allocating appropriately is very difficult, it requires not just mere timing but enormous amount of research and skill. One may foresee a certain sector to do well but what kind of allocation to be done so that it contributes a sizeable wealth to the investor. More prominently when to reduce or exit a particular sector i.e., to identify the topping of a sector's performance is very hard.

For instance, in early 2018, with the Indian economy showing



growth pangs, I realized that this could be the time to bet on defensive stocks or sectors like Pharma, IT and other export-oriented stocks as the global demand seems to remain intact along with continued appreciation of US dollar. Small allocations were made with this in mind, albeit, in a staggered manner over a period of one year. The indices of these sectors almost remained unchanged during this period doubting the conviction. It took another one year i.e., by early 2020 with the pandemic gaining pace, that these sectors began to perform well for the investors. Is it a case of too early entry or just got lucky despite having a devastating episode of once in our lifetime's event?

The other way is to invest through ICICI Prudential Thematic Advantage Fund of Fund. As the name suggests it's a feeder fund to other funds offered by them but exclusively invested in various other themes and sectors. This fund allocates across multiple other sectoral or thematic funds depending upon the discretion of the fund manager in the sole aim to benefit from the emerging

themes at any given point of time. The allocation of this fund as on 31st Jan 2021 is across their India Opportunities fund, Infrastructure fund, Banking & Financial Services fund, Commodities fund and PHD (Pharma Healthcare and Diagnostics) with the remaining exposure to short-term debt.

More than one-third of the fund's exposure at that point was to India Opportunities fund which primarily looks for opportunities caused in the pricing due to policy changes, macro trends, etc.

Over a quarter of the fund was concentrated in Infrastructure fund, possibly to profit from any govt's announcements in the budget and another quarter of the fund was invested into Banking & Fin Services fund. That formed the bulk of the allocation. Compare this to the allocations a year earlier as on 31st Jan '20, Infrastructure fund had a lion's share with over 41 per cent, PHD at about a quarter of the allocation and India Opportunities fund at about another quarter.

The fund manager as deems suitable to the investment prospects tweaks the allocations across various funds in order to generate returns. Part of the satellite portfolio could be allocated into this fund to make higher returns; however, the risks are higher than any of the diversified equity funds.

(The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

## Rise in dollar, bond yield impacts mkt

Stay selective, avoid leverage exposures on either side

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

The trend and the sentiment in the equity markets were affected because of a spike in the US Treasury Bond yields, which had its obvious effect on the emerging markets. The spikes and the strengthening US Dollar index caused some gap down opening and corrective moves in the Indian equity markets, particularly in the second half of the week. The BSE Sensex lost 2.7 per cent. The broader indices, Nifty Midcap-100 and Smallcap-100 outperformed 3.5 per cent and 3.9 per cent, respectively. On the sectoral front, barring the PSU Bank index, all the indices closed higher. PSU Bank index down by 2.2 per cent. Nifty Media index is highest gainer with 6.6 per cent. The FIIs bought Rs 2,199.74 crore during the first week of March and the DIIs sold Rs 2,635.39 crore. Many of the large-cap stock underperformed compared to the mid and small caps during the last week.

In the last seven days, there are four gap ups and three gap downs. Interestingly, all the gaps are over the 100 to 250 points range. In these huge gap openings, positional trading has become walking on a razor edge. After breaking out of last week's high, the Nifty failed to sustain above it. Because of this failure, the previous week's confirmation of the bearish engulfing at lifetime is still valid. The Nifty gained 408.95 points since last week's close, but the bearish shooting star candle on daily and weekly charts. In fact, last week's candle is an inside bar. So, 15,177-14,467 range is an important support and resistance for next week.

The Nifty closed below the 20DMA again with a bearish candle. The critical 50 DMA support (14,585) is just 2.42 per cent away



from now. Earlier, since October 30th it worked as support. During last week too, it exactly took support at the 50DMA. For a bearish confirmation, the Nifty must close below 14,585 for at least two days. Below 50DMA, the previous week's low of 14,467 is another short-term support. The upward trend line is also at a similar level. On post budget day, the gap of February 2nd, 14,336-14,469 is also a support for the market. Below these levels. On the upside, closing above the 15,100 is important; above 15,200 will resume the uptrend again.

Indicators again fell below the 20DMA, and the negative divergences still present in the RSI. The Nifty registered a failed breakout as it closed below the breakout level. At the same time, it also closed below the previous day low. On the 75 minute chart, the Nifty came inside the channel again. The bearish momentum has increased again because of the last two days of fall. As mentioned earlier, the ADX declined further and continued to be below the -DMI and +DMI. Also -DMI is moving above the +DMI. This structure shows the weaker trend strength. Below this level, the previous week's low of 14,467 is another short-term support. Below these levels, the market will change its status to a clear downtrend. On the upside, closing above the 15,100 is important; above 15,200 will resume the uptrend again.

The bond yields and dollar index rise is impacting the equity market because of their inverse

relationship. Let us wait and see whether the bond yields and the dollar index will continue to rise or take a breather. The FII flows completely depend on their movement. The domestic market is already experiencing profit booking in a scattered manner. Moreover, the India VIX closed above 25.5 level, which is negative for the markets. This VIX is making higher highs and higher lower for the past few weeks. This is an indication of the volatility going to be increased in the near term.

As the calculation of Price-Earnings is also changing, there is no relevance for PE anymore. The changes are looking for convenient changes according to the market condition. The price-book value ratio is still over 12 years high. In these conditions, many of the fundamentals lost their relevance in overall market conditions. Individual stocks still outperforms the broader market because of many reasons. This is the reason the market has become a highly selective market. The defence sectors like FMCG, IT and Pharma will continue to show relative improving strength. Since the US bond yield spikes and strengthening dollar will continue to have their overhang on the markets, we recommend staying highly selective, avoiding leveraged exposures on either side and protecting profits with every move in the markets.

(The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbchary@gmail.com)

## Gold likely to shed extra weight

DR HC UPADHYAY

A couple of factors impacted the gold market globally during the week ended Saturday. First, the US dollar continued to be strong vis-à-vis other major currencies including the Indian Rupee. Second, the corporate sector and funds reported higher yields. Now that Covid-19 restrictions have been eased in the US, new optimism has been generated.

Consequently the New York gold further declined and closed at \$1,700 (per Ounce). While silver followed the suit and closed at \$25.22 (per Ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$1,126 (per Ounce) and \$2,248 (per Ounce) respectively. With the progressive return of normalcy in the US, gold is expected to shed its extra weight in the foreseeable future and likely to stabilize at the realistic level of 1,500 (per Ounce).

Other economic parameters remained stable. Brent closed at \$69.36 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4,858 (per barrel).

Markets continued to remain volatile and have sharp two-sided movements. They gained on the first three days of the week and then witnessed profit booking on the remaining days of the week. BSE Sensex ended the week with gains of 1,305.33 points or 2.66 per cent to close at 50,405.32 points, while Nifty gained 408.95 points or 2.81 per cent to close at 14,938.10 points. The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE 200 and BSE 500 gain 2.84 per cent, 2.97 per cent and 2.99 per cent, respectively. BSE midcap was up 3.05 per cent while BSE samllcap gained 3.87 per cent. The rally was widespread and there were no sectoral losers. The top gainer was BSE IT up 4.13 per cent, while the one to rise the least was BSE metal up 1.36 per cent.

The Indian Rupee recovered quite sharply and made up quite a bit of the previous week's losses. The Rupee gained 63 paise or 0.86 per cent to close at Rs 72.83 to the US dollar. Dow Jones gained 563.63 points or 1.82 per cent to close at 31,496.30 points. The government has sold spectrum and realised Rs 77,800 crore. Of this,

Reliance Jio has bid for Rs 57,100 crore, Airtel for Rs 18,700 crore and Vodafone Idea for Rs 2,000 crore. From the above amount Rs 19-20,000 crore would be received before March 31 and another 7,000 crore by the calendar year end. Balance would be over the next 15-20 years.

In primary market news, the issue from Heranba Industries listed on Friday. Shares of the company were issued at Rs 627 and debuted at Rs 900. After hitting a high of Rs 945, the share was under pressure and went below Rs 800 as well. The share closed at Rs 812.25, a gain of Rs 85.25 or 29.55 per cent.

The issue from MTAR Technologies Limited received overwhelming support and was subscribed over 200 times. The company had tapped the markets with a fresh issue of 21.48 lakh shares and an offer for sale of 82.24 lakh shares in a price band of Rs 574-575. The QIB portion was subscribed 165 times, HNI portion was subscribed 650 times and Retail portion was subscribed 28.40 times.

There is one issue opening for



subscription on Monday the 8th of March and closing on Wednesday the 10th of March. Easy Trip Planners which runs an online travel portal is tapping the markets with its offer for sale of Rs 510 crore in a issue price band of Rs 186-187. The company reported revenues of Rs 181 crore for the year ended March 2020 and a net profit of Rs 33 crore. In the nine-month period ended December 2020, the revenues were Rs 81.5 crore while the net profit was Rs 30.5 crore. The company reported an EPS of Rs 3.04 for year ended March 2020. Based on this EPS, the PE ratio is 61.51 to 61.81 times.

The EPS for the nine-month period has improved significantly to Rs 2.81. The company is in an interesting business and a sweet spot. Not having PE investors, it did not have free cash to burn which has turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Getting listed will get the company to be a more recognised name and earn it better respectability as well. This would help the company's business grow. Small size of issue and the present market craze for new issues is the one factor against the company.

SEBI had auctioned the demat accounts and trading accounts held with Karvy Stock Broking,

who had fraudulently pledged shares held by its customers and not returned them. After SEBI conducted the auction, Karvy has challenged the same in the high court and is now trying to act as if it has been wronged. A custodian of shares, Karvy in the first place used the shares from client demat accounts and fraudulently usurped them and for reasons best known to the powers that be managed to get extension for over 12 months to cover his backside. He failed in covering up is a secondary story but his now crying wolf is indeed amusing. More on this matter as it progresses in court.

Mondays have been very interesting for the markets recently. Right since the 1st of February 2021, when the FM presented the budget, markets have gained on four of the five Monday's that have come. The only exception was the 22nd February when we actually lost about 1,100 points on the BSE sensex. Monday the 8th of March will be no exception and we should see a smart gap up opening. There are various factors due to which this would happen. Firstly, markets corrected on Thursday and Friday.

Secondly the technical position of the market indicates that it is oversold. Thirdly we had a smart rally in the Dow Jones as well on Friday.

On the Covid-19 front, the world saw 11,70,81,763 patients, 26,00,048 deaths and 9,26,60,995 patients recovering. In India we saw 1,12,10,799 patients, 1,57,791 deaths and 1,08,68,520 patients recovering. During the week the world saw 27,15,812 new patients, 63,337 deaths and 27,39,737 patients who had recovered. In India we saw 1,14,359 new patients, 704 deaths and 95,245 patients who had recovered. There is a surge in new cases and extra care needs to be taken to ensure that things do not go out of control.

The week ahead would open with a bang and then continue its choppy and volatile manner. We have a midweek holiday on Thursday which is likely to add to the volatility as weekly options would expire on Wednesday this time around. With markets expected to trade with a positive bias, expect sharp intra-day moves and volatility to continue. Trade cautiously. (IANS)



# MI face RCB in April 9 IPL opener

## Call on fans to be taken later

NEW DELHI

THE 2021 Indian Premier League (IPL) will start on April 9 and its final will be held on May 30, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Sunday. Mumbai Indians face Royal Challengers Bangalore in the first match of the season which will be played in Chennai.

The matches will be played in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata, the BCCI said. The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad will host the final and the rest of the playoffs.

All matches will be played behind closed doors, with the BCCI saying that a call on allowing spectators will be taken at a later stage of the tournament.

Each team will play at four venues during the league stage. Out of the 56 league matches, Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Ben-

galuru will host 10 matches each while Ahmedabad and Delhi will host eight matches each.

The board said that matches have been designed in such a way that each team will travel only three times during the league stage.

"One of the highlights of this edition of the VIVO IPL will be the fact that all matches will be played at neutral venues, no team will play at their home venue. All teams will play at four out of six venues during the league stage," said the BCCI in its statement.

There will be a total of 11 double headers where six teams will play three afternoon matches and two teams will play two afternoon matches. The afternoon games are slated for a 3.30pm IST start while the evening games will have a 7.30pm start. (ANS)



VIVO IPL 2021 FULL SCHEDULE	
April 9, Friday 7.30 PM Chennai: Mumbai Indians vs Royal Challengers Bangalore	May 2, Sunday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Punjab Kings Vs Delhi Capitals
April 10, Saturday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Chennai Super Kings vs Delhi Capitals	May 3, Monday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Kolkata Knight Riders vs Royal Challengers Bangalore
April 11, Sunday 7.30 PM Chennai: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Kolkata Knight Riders	May 4, Tuesday 7.30 PM Delhi: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Mumbai Indians
April 12, Monday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Rajasthan Royals vs Punjab Kings	May 5, Wednesday 7.30 PM Delhi: Rajasthan Royals vs Chennai Super Kings
April 13, Tuesday 7.30 PM Chennai: Kolkata Knight Riders vs Mumbai Indians	May 6, Thursday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Punjab Kings
April 14, Wednesday 7.30 PM Chennai: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Royal Challengers Bangalore	May 7, Friday 7.30 PM Delhi: Sunrisers Hyderabad v Chennai Super Kings
April 15, Thursday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Rajasthan Royals vs Delhi Capitals	May 8, Saturday 3.30 PM Ahmedabad: Kolkata Knight Riders v Delhi Capitals
April 16, Friday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Punjab Kings vs Chennai Super Kings	May 8, Saturday 7.30 PM Delhi: Rajasthan Royals v Mumbai Indians
April 17, Saturday 7.30 PM Chennai: Mumbai Indians vs Sunrisers Hyderabad	May 9, Sunday 3.30 PM Bengaluru: Chennai Super Kings v Punjab Kings
April 18, Sunday 3.30 PM Chennai: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Kolkata Knight Riders	May 9, Sunday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Royal Challengers Bangalore v Sunrisers Hyderabad
April 18, Sunday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Delhi Capitals vs Punjab Kings	May 10, Monday 7.30 PM Bengaluru: Mumbai Indians v Kolkata Knight Riders
April 19, Monday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals	May 11, Tuesday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Delhi Capitals v Rajasthan Royals
April 20, Tuesday 7.30 PM Chennai: Delhi Capitals vs Mumbai Indians	May 12, Wednesday 7.30 PM Bengaluru: Chennai Super Kings v Kolkata Knight Riders
April 21, Wednesday 3.30 PM Chennai: Punjab Kings vs Sunrisers Hyderabad	May 13, Thursday 3.30 PM Bengaluru: Mumbai Indians v Punjab Kings
April 21, Wednesday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Kolkata Knight Riders vs Chennai Super Kings	May 13, Thursday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Sunrisers Hyderabad v Rajasthan Royals
April 22, Thursday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Rajasthan Royals	May 14, Friday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Royal Challengers Bangalore v Delhi Capitals
April 23, Friday 7.30 PM Chennai: Punjab Kings vs Mumbai Indians	May 15, Saturday 7.30 PM Bengaluru: Kolkata Knight Riders v Punjab Kings
April 24, Saturday 7.30 PM Mumbai: Rajasthan Royals vs Kolkata Knight Riders	May 16, Sunday 3.30 PM Kolkata: Rajasthan Royals v Royal Challengers Bangalore
April 25, Sunday 3.30 PM Mumbai: Chennai Super Kings vs Royal Challengers Bangalore	May 16, Sunday 7.30 PM Bengaluru: Chennai Super Kings v Mumbai Indians
April 25, Sunday 7.30 PM Chennai: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Capitals	May 17, Monday 3.30 PM Kolkata: Delhi Capitals v Sunrisers Hyderabad
April 26, Monday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Punjab Kings vs Kolkata Knight Riders	May 18, Tuesday 3.30 PM Bengaluru: Kolkata Knight Riders v Rajasthan Royals
April 27, Tuesday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bangalore	May 19, Wednesday 3.30 PM Bengaluru: Sunrisers Hyderabad v Punjab Kings
April 28, Wednesday 7.30 PM Delhi: Chennai Super Kings vs Sunrisers Hyderabad	May 20, Thursday 3.30 PM Kolkata: Royal Challengers Bangalore v Mumbai Indians
April 29, Thursday 3.30 PM Delhi: Mumbai Indians vs Rajasthan Royals	May 21, Friday 3.30 PM Bengaluru: Kolkata Knight Riders v Sunrisers Hyderabad
April 29, Thursday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Delhi Capitals vs Kolkata Knight Riders	May 21, Friday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Delhi Capitals v Chennai Super Kings
April 30, Friday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Punjab Kings vs Royal Challengers Bangalore	May 22, Saturday 7.30 PM Bengaluru: Punjab Kings v Rajasthan Royals
May 1, Saturday 7.30 PM Delhi: Mumbai Indians vs Chennai Super Kings	May 23, Sunday 3.30 PM Kolkata: Mumbai Indians v Delhi Capitals
May 2, Sunday 3.30 PM Delhi: Rajasthan Royals vs Sunrisers Hyderabad	May 23, Sunday 7.30 PM Kolkata: Royal Challengers Bangalore v Chennai Super Kings



May 25, Tuesday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Qualifier 1

May 26, Wednesday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Eliminator

May 28, Friday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Qualifier 2

May 30, Sunday 7.30 PM Ahmedabad: Final

## New Delhi Marathon: Bugatha, Sudha win, miss Olympic qualification

NEW DELHI

ARMY'S Srinu Bugatha and Asian Games gold medallist Sudha Singh won the men's and women's titles respectively of the sixth New Delhi Marathon on Sunday. Both the winners, however, fell short of the qualification timings of this year's Olympic Games.

Bugatha clocked 2 hours 14 minutes and 59 seconds while Sudha's winning time was 2 hours 43 minutes and 41 seconds. The distance of both men's and women's race is 42km.

Bugatha, though, improved his personal best by three minutes, but was far off the Olympics qualification time of 2 hours 11 minutes and 30 seconds.

Sudha, an Asian Games 3,000m steeplechase gold winner, too failed to live up to her expectations of cracking the Olympic qualification time of 2 hours 29 minutes and 30 seconds.

The pre-race hype of Sudha cracking the Olympic qualification time vanished half way through the race. She clocked one hour 16 minutes for the 21km mark, the halfway stage of the race.

But to stay on course for Olympic qualification she had to cover the second half of the race, 21km, in less than one hour 14 minutes. Going by her pre-race expectation, she was prepared to run the second half faster than the first one.

Unexpectedly for Sudha, at 25km, she suffered cramps in her legs. She wanted to quit the race at that moment but her team persuaded her to carry on. Disappointment was writ large on her face when she crossed the finish line.

"I wasn't expecting this. After running endless miles at training, I was supposed to achieve a good result. I'm unhappy," she told IANS during the post-race media interaction.

According to Sudha's coach Surendra Singh, it would take four to six weeks to recover from Sunday's marathon race before aiming for the next race.

"Sudha has pain in the lower



legs. Once she is fit to resume hard training again we would think of the next race - maybe, sometime in May," he said.

Jyoti Shankarrao Gawate was distant second with a time of 2 hours 58 minutes and 23 seconds. Jigmet Dolma was third in 3 hours 04.52 seconds.

Bugatha's hope of making a cut for the Tokyo Olympics too evaporated half way through the gruelling race.

The Army runner, however, had the consolation of clocking his personal best of 2 hours 14 minutes and 59 seconds.

The runners from the Army took the second and third spots. Olympian Nitendra Singh Rawat finished second with a time of 2 hours 18 minutes 54 seconds while Rashpal Singh clocked 2 hours 18 minutes 57 seconds for the third place. (ANS)



## 1<sup>st</sup> ODI: SA cruise to 8-wicket win over India

LUCKNOW

OPENERS Laura Wolvaardt and and Lizelle Lee led South Africa to a eight-wicket win over India after spinner Shabnim Ismail's 3/28 restricted the hosts to 177/9 in the first ODI at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium on Sunday. South Africa have thus taken a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

Veteran fast bowler Jhulan Goswami was the lone wicket-taker for India, dismissing Wolvaardt for 80 and thus ending South Africa's opening partnership on 169. Jhulan then got the wicket of South Africa captain Sune Luus after which a wide delivery from Harmanpreet Kaur gave the visitors the winning run.

Earlier, captain Mithali Raj's 54th ODI half century was followed by a late collapse which led to India being restricted to a low total. This is India's first international match since the final of the T20I World Cup in Melbourne, Australia on March 8, 2020. It is also the first time that India are playing an ODI match since November 6, 2019 when they faced West



Indies in North Sound, Antigua.

Earlier, Mithali and Harmanpreet put up a 62-run partnership for the fourth wicket that took India past the 100-run mark. Harmanpreet, who is playing her 100th ODI, was especially aggressive, hitting six fours in her 40-run knock. However, she was denied a 12th ODI half-century when she mistimed a lofted shot off South Africa captain Sune Luus and holed out at long off.

**We didn't get any international cricket for a year. Apart from three IPL games we didn't get much time to work as a unit. As a team you need to spend time and get ready for any series. Nowadays everybody is looking for a big total, every game we want to score more than 250 but for that you need some time and matches. In the past few years we had built a rhythm but we will need time to create that rhythm and next game we will try to do that as a unit**

— Harmanpreet Kaur

Deepti Sharma then stood strong with Mithali and the pair put up 52 runs for the fifth wicket. Mithali was dismissed on 50 in the 38th over after which India lost their last four wickets for 21 runs.

**Brief scores:** India 177/9 in 50 overs (Mithali Raj 50, Harmanpreet Kaur 30; Shabnim Ismail 3/28) lost to South Africa 178/2 in 40.1 overs (Lizelle Lee 83 not out, Laura Wolvaardt 80, Jhulan Goswami 2/38) by nine wickets with 59 balls remaining. (ANS)

## Barca close in on Atletico at top

MADRID: FC Barcelona moved to within two points of Atletico Madrid to increase the pressure at the top of La Liga less than 24 hours before Sunday's derby between Atletico and Real Madrid, thanks to a 2-0 win away to Osasuna.

Goals from Jordi Alba and Illax Moriba gave Barca a hard-fought win against a rival that caused them lots of problems, especially in the first half in the El Sadar Stadium on Saturday. Xinhua news agency reported.

Osasuna started the brighter of the two sides and Jonathan Calleri almost opened the scoring from the halfway line in just the second minute with Marc-Andre Ter Stegen chasing back.

The Barca keeper then saved well from Kike Barja as the home side continued to defend well and move the ball confidently.

Despite Osasuna's control of the game, Barca took the lead in the 30th minute when Messi picked out Jordi Alba, who finished with a powerful shot into the top of the net.

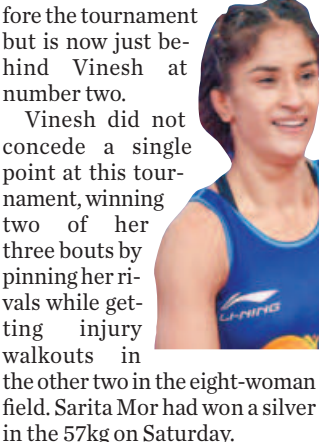
## Vinesh clinches gold, reclaims number one rank; Bajrang in final

ROME

LIVING up to the expectations, star Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat grabbed the 53kg gold medal along with world number one rank while Bajrang Punia booked his spot in the final of the men's 65kg event at the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event, here on Sunday.

It was second gold medal for Vinesh in as many weeks with a dominant win as the 26-year-old World bronze medallist blanked Canada's Diana Mary Helen Weicker 4-0 in the title clash. Vinesh scored all her points in the first period and held on to her lead in the second to ensure a top-of-the-podium finish.

Vinesh had won a gold medal in Kiev last week and this performance would give her the belief that her preparations for the Tokyo Olympics are on the right track. The Indian had entered the event as world number three but is back to world number one by jumping 14 points. The Canadian was ranked as low as 40 before the tournament but is now just behind Vinesh at number two.



Vinesh did not concede a single point at this tournament, winning two of her three bouts by pinning her rivals while getting injury walkouts in the other two in the eight-woman field. Sarita Mor had won a silver in the 57kg on Saturday. For Bajrang, first up was Selim Kozan, a former cadet world champion from Turkey. The Indian easily crushed him by 7-0 scoreline. Kozan made several attacks, especially from the right, but the Indian defended well. Bajrang scored off with take down and gut wrench moves. He faced stiff competition from America's Joseph Christopher Mc Kenna but prevailed 6-3 in the semifinal. Bajrang seemed to have improved upon his leg defence yet

the American thrice got hold of his right leg. Bajrang, though, ensured that Mc Kenna does not take advantage of the grip. In the fast-paced bout, Bajrang took break with a 4-2 lead, scoring points with a take downs.

The American narrowed the gap to 3-4 late in the second period with a push out but Bajrang sealed the issue with a two-point throw. He will now face Mongolia's Tugla Tumur Ochir, who prevented an all-Indian final by defeating Rohit 4-0 in the other 65kg semifinal.

Rohit will now fight for bronze. In the 74kg quarterfinal, Narsingh Pancham Yadav began with a comfortable win by technical superiority against Italian Finizio but lost to 2012 Olympic champion and four-time World champion Jordan Ernest Burroughs in the semifinal. He will also fight for bronze. (PTI)

## Sindhu suffers demoralising defeat in Swiss Open final

BASEL

WORLD Champion P V Sindhu finished a distant second best in the Swiss Open final after being completely routed by Olympic gold medallist Carolina Marin of Spain in a lop-sided women's singles title clash here on Sunday.

The 25-year-old Indian, who had won the coveted World Championship gold medal here in 2019, couldn't match the speed and accuracy of Marin during her 12-21 5-21 defeat in the final that lasted only 35 minutes. It was Sindhu's third successive loss to Marin, who had won both the Super 1000 events in Thai-

land in January before finishing runners-up at the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals. Playing her first final in 18 months, Sindhu, ranked 7th in the world, entered the match with a 5-8 head-to-head record against Marin, having lost her last two matches against the former world no 1.

The world no 7 Indian, who didn't drop a game in the last four matches this week, however, failed to summon her 'A' game under pressure as Marin came up with trumps to claim her third title of the year. Marin, the current world no 3, had also defeated Sindhu in the final of the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Sindhu seemed completely clueless against a rampaging Marin, who outclassed the Indian with her pace, power and precision during the summit clash. In the opening game, Marin opened up a 2-0 lead early on, which was quickly erased by Sindhu as she looked to step up the pace.

The Indian moved ahead 6-4 -- the only time she had a lead in the match -- but Marin again clawed

back with Sindhu finding the net more often than not. Sindhu missed a shot at the backline and committed a couple of unforced errors as Marin lead 9-6.

The Spaniard erred twice before winning a video referral. She then entered the mid-game interval with a healthy 11-8 advantage. It was a one way traffic after the break as Marin continued the momentum, grabbing four straight points to move to 15-8.

A precise return at backline helped Sindhu to break the run of play. But Sindhu couldn't vary the pace or take control of the net as Marin continued to march on, grabbing nine game points. Sindhu saved one before sending her backhand return to net to hand over the game to Marin.



Marin didn't take the foot off the pedal and continued to dominate the proceedings, zooming to a 5-0 lead in the second game. A net error gave Sindhu the serve but the Indian just couldn't get going as she again faltered at the net and then miscued a forehand return.

Marin soon moved to 8-2. Sindhu then changed her racquet but that didn't change her luck as she went long next as Marin took a nine-point advantage at the interval. Marin continued her ruthless march, moving to 14-2 before cruising to a winning position with a 18-3 lead leaving the Indian in complete despair.

The Spaniard eventually had 15 match points at her disposal and Spaniard sealed the issue with a cross-court return at the net which caught the Indian napping. Sindhu will next compete at the USD 850,000 All England Championships, a Super 1000 event to be held from March 17 to 21. (PTI)

## STEALS THE SHOW



Ashish vardhan claims five wickets while conceding 38 runs in a HCA A3 Division one day league match played recently. Playing his first league of this season he demolished the opponents Saffiguda CC's batting ending with figures 9.1-0-38-5

## Mumbai face depleted Goa in quest for 1<sup>st</sup> ISL final

BAMBOLIM (GOA): Mumbai City and FC Goa start on a clean slate in the second leg of their Indian Super League (ISL) semi-final on Monday at the GMC Stadium after the first leg ended in a 2-2 draw.

Mumbai came back from one goal down twice in the match League Winners' Shield holders were not at their best as Goa fashioned better chances and dominated the majority of the game.

Mumbai registered a total of 12 shots in the first leg, more than their opponents, but only three were on target, highlighting their wastefulness in front of goal. Coach Sergio Lobera admitted that his side needed to put up a better show in the return leg.

"I am not happy (with the result)," Lobera said. "We had chances to score more goals and we need to be clinical in these situations. The game was very open (but) we didn't have control of the game during some periods and gave them the opportunity to play between the lines. We need to improve on this."

Goa, meanwhile, will be at a slight disadvantage after losing a few key players to injuries in the first leg.