



Jarkiholi supporters protest against Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar
page 8



Trinamool Congress accuses Election Commission of bias
page 9



Suicide bomb hits Palm Sunday Mass in Indonesia, 20 wounded
page 11

Shardul, Bhuvneshwar shine as India claims series in thrilling finish
page 13

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NEARBY



Capital sees 1,881 cases, highest in three months

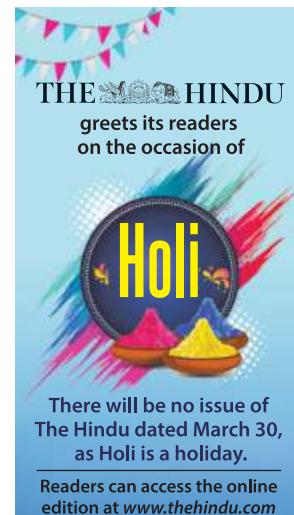
NEW DELHI
Delhi reported 1,881 COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest in over three months, while the positivity rate rose to 2.35%, the Health Department said.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Part of Dwarka e-way collapses, three hurt

GURUGRAM
A portion of an under-construction elevated road on Dwarka Expressway, connecting Delhi and Gurugram, collapsed on Sunday morning. Three persons suffered injuries.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3



There will be no issue of The Hindu dated March 30, as Holi is a holiday.

Readers can access the online edition at www.thehindu.com

EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 5

Rajnath, Yechury spar over Kerala probe

Poll campaign sees debate on State rights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Sunday clashed over the Kerala government's decision to institute a judicial inquiry against Central agencies investigating the UAE consulate-linked gold smuggling case.

Both leaders were in Kerala for electioneering and met the press separately.

Mr. Singh said the LDF government's move was unconstitutional in bringing

The LDF government has committed an unconstitutional act by bringing the Central law enforcement agencies within the ambit of a judicial commission of inquiry

RAJNATH SINGH
Union Defence Minister

The Defence Minister must re-read the Constitution. No Central agency can interfere or work in any State without the concurrence of the State concerned.

SITARAM YECHURY
General secretary
CPI(M)

the Central law enforcement agencies within the ambit of a judicial commission of inquiry. It reflected a certain uneasiness that the investigative and regulatory agencies were edging closer to the truth, he said, adding

that the bogey of a judicial probe would not deter them. Mr. Yechury countered Mr. Singh and said the States were well within their rights to limit cooperation with the Central government on issues that infringed on their

constitutional rights. "The Defence Minister must re-read the Constitution. No Central agency can interfere or work in any State without the concurrence of the State concerned. If the State is not willing to give the concurrence, then it has to get a judicial intervention. It cannot be a direct intervention like what is being done now."

The LDF government's decision on Friday to set a panel to probe the alleged jurisdictional overreach and political bias of Central agencies has reignited the debate on the BJP-led administration's perceived trespasses on federalism.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Centre mulls unique ID for all plots of land by March 2022

ULPIN database to be linked with revenue court records

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

The Centre plans to issue a 14-digit identification number to every plot of land in the country within a year.

It will subsequently integrate its land records database with revenue court records and bank records, as well as Aadhaar numbers on a voluntary basis, according to a parliamentary standing committee report submitted to the Lok Sabha last week.

The Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) scheme has been launched in 10 States this year and will be rolled out across the country by March 2022, the Department of Land Resources told the Standing Committee on Rural Development.

An official, who did not wish to be named, described it as "the Aadhaar for land" – a number that would uniquely identify every sur-

veyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in rural India, where land records are outdated and disputed. The identification will be based on the longitude and latitude of the land parcel, and is dependent on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps, according to a presentation by the Department in September 2020.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

FULL REPORT ON ▶ PAGE 10

NRC rejection slips to be issued soon

VIJAYITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Assam government that "rejection slips" should be issued immediately to those excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) which was published in 2019.

More than 19 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants in Assam were left out of the final register that took five years to compile and cost ₹1,220 crore.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Co-WIN upgraded, 1 cr. can register for jab daily

Capacity raised ahead of roll-out of vaccine for all above 45

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The Co-WIN platform, for COVID-19 vaccination registration, has been ramped up to accept one crore registrations and record vaccination of 50 lakh persons daily, said R.S. Sharma, Chairman, Empowered Group on COVID-19 vaccination.

Mr. Sharma said the system has been geared up to accommodate the registration rush and vaccination load anticipated from April 1, when vaccination will be offered to everyone above 45. The system on Sunday showed more than 6 crore registrations.

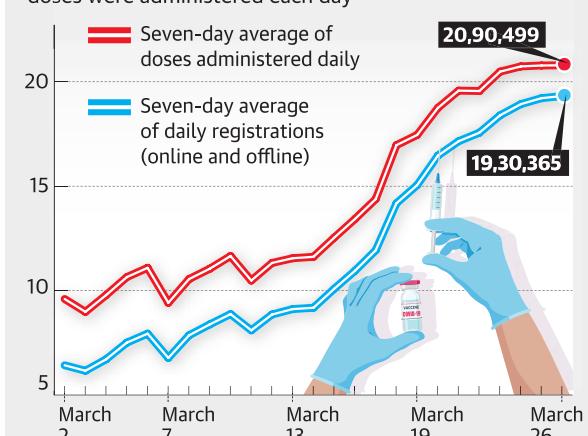
'Continuous process'

"Upgrading the system is a continuous process, the system has been acclimated to take on the load that is expected. We have seen the trends so far and the number of people seeking the vaccine has grown. The system is operating at four levels – the one that is open to public (for registration), the verification level, platform management (open to hospitals giving the vaccine) and the certificate generation," Mr. Sharma said.

Stating that this "100% government-run" system is equipped to offer privacy, Mr. Sharma, however, ad-

Dose count

As of Friday, an average of over 19 lakh individuals registered daily for COVID-19 vaccination and 20.3 lakh doses were administered each day



SOURCE: COVID19INDIA.ORG

mittted that there were reports of errors in registration from several parts of the country.

"During self-registration and spot registration we are seeking only three basic information – name, gender and the year of birth. We expect that this will be provided correctly by the beneficiaries," he said.

Mr. Sharma added that currently the Co-WIN system does not schedule the appointment for the second dose of the vaccine automatically, and beneficiaries should schedule this as per

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
MAHARASHTRA CM CALLS FOR LOCKDOWN PLAN ▶ PAGE 10

NIA fishes out DVR, number plates in Vaze case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday took suspended Mumbai Police officer Sachin Vaze to the Mithi river here and recovered a digital video recorder (DVR), CPUs, a laptop

and two number plates with the help of divers, a police officer said.

The NIA is probing the cases of the recovery of an explosives-laden sports utility vehicle found outside the south Mumbai residence of industrialist Mukesh Ambani

last month, and the subsequent murder of businessman Mansukh Hiran, who was said to be in possession of the vehicle.

The agency also recovered routers, computer cartridges and other items from the river, the officer said. The DVR

was allegedly removed from the housing society in Thane where Mr. Vaze lives.

The NIA team took him to the spot in Bandra Kurla Complex around 3 p.m., the officer said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

HC denies relief to residents of 'extended area' in Bhati village

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled that there is nothing to substantiate the claim by those residing at Extended Lal Dora Abadi of Bhati village here that they are all original inhabitants.

Justice Jayant Nath also vacated the court's November 18, 2019 order asking authorities to maintain status quo with regard to any decision on demolition in the village situated in south Delhi's notified Ridge area.

The HC order came on a plea filed by Bari Bhati and Chhoti Bhati Residents' Welfare Association which claimed that the occupants of Extended Lal Dora Abadi of Bhati village are all original inhabitants, descended from a common ancestor.

The association also sought to settle the rights of the inhabitants of the village as "other traditional forest dwellers" in accordance with the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

Their plea stated that the inhabitants of Bhati village are of Gurjar tribe, which is a traditional herder community engaged in cow-herding and sheep rearing. Only a small portion of village land was cultivated to grow grain for sale/consumption.

MAIDAAN NAYA HAI, KHEL WAHI

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A GAME OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

Ever wondered what laws maintained a check on the government for the smooth functioning of our country? Here's a quick refresher. The need for a government be it a monarchy, autocracy or a democracy stems from the fact that humans are social beings, different from one

TURN TO PAGE 9 TO READ MORE



DEEPIKA REDDY MAGHAM

Balance of Powers in India - Executive, Legislature, Judiciary

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Students attending online class in the Capital; a mother helping her daughter with virtual learning. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA AND R.V. MOORTHY



SHINJINI GHOSH
JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ
NEW DELHI

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in the city after a two-month remission, the hope that students had nurtured of returning to classrooms has been dashed. With online classes continuing to play the role of the substitute, students from across age groups have started to feel the loss.

Patchy Internet connectivity, missed internship or extra-curricular opportunities, lack of "school or college life" and navigating through home to find a place conducive for study are some of the issues students pointed out while looking back at the past year when classes went virtual.

For Harshul Singh, a second-year Political Science (Hons) student, studying in DU had always been an aspiration. However, before he could even complete his first year in the university, he was forced to return to Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, his native place, due to the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.

Problems aplenty

"I have always had the aspiration to be in Delhi University and a part of the intellectual community. While the lockdown has been an introspective one, things were not convenient. Sitting behind a screen with poor connectivity and in an environment not conducive to attending classes was not easy. The lack of access to libraries was an added issue. Overall, in the past year we have missed out on the essence of being a part of DU," said Mr. Singh.

Talking about the difference in the quality of learning, Ramjas College student Sneha Saxena said: "The quality of online class-

BRIDGING THE GAP

A year has passed since virtual learning became commonplace. While students say they miss the essence of campus life and are faced with technical glitches, EdTech companies are launching innovative products and are pushing for a blend of online and offline learning in higher education

es can never match that of physical classrooms. There were network issues due to which we even had to change the format of our mid-term examinations. Even though professors tried to help, the lack of proper discussions in class was a big disadvantage," she said.

"Finding a place at home to attend these online classes was also an issue. I have two other siblings and initially we did not have enough devices for all three of us to attend classes simultaneously," added Ms. Saxena, a native of Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur.

At the school level, the number of hours spent in front of the screen as well as lack of continuous supervision by an adult has led to its own set of problems. Geeta Bisht, who bought a smartphone for her son to attend online classes, says that she was shocked during a parent teacher interaction when told that her son had not been attending class-

Missing campus life

Although online classes can tick the boxes of having finished covering the syllabus, students studying at premier schools or colleges feel they have missed out on the "experience" of studying at an institution that is irreplaceable. Navya Jain, a student of Indraprastha College for Women, lamented: "What I have missed the most in the last one year is the college experience that one looks forward to. Online classes are not as interactive as regular classes as most of the times people have their videos off and it is not the same."

Several students also spoke about the "lack of connect" to professors, fellow classmates and the courses.

Veerangana Chauhan, a student of Political Science in Lady Shri Ram College for Women, said: "It feels like I am not being able to do anything properly these days. The most important factor is lack of connect with whatever I am trying to pursue.

There are 80 people in our class and often with online teaching, professors are not able to devote individual time to all. These days even if there are tutorials scheduled, I am more concerned about saving data for the classes. Attending classes from home was another challenge as distractions were aplenty with family members around."

Lack of internships was another drawback. "When I started college, I was looking forward to an overall experience including opportunities to get good internships. Under current circumstances, the scope for

such opportunities is no longer possible. I was a part of the debating society among others most of which I have had to let go now," said Ms. Chauhan.

Lack of discussions inside and outside classrooms have affected the teaching-learning process over the past year, according to professors. Tanvir Aejaz, professor at Ramjas College, said: "Initially the feeling was that this is going to last momentarily and that we will all be back soon. But at this point, teachers are worried and frustrated. The vibrant discussions in classrooms are missing in online classes. It has become more like someone giving sermons. Usually most of the learning is done outside classrooms, which is no longer an option now."

Teachers' apprehension

Teachers have other doubts too. "In the backdrop of the New Education Policy (NEP) there is also apprehension among teachers that the government is pushing for online classes. Any policy which is top-down will have its repercussions if the primary stakeholders are not taken into account," said Mr. Aejaz.

While at the school level, parents have been sceptical about sending their students back to school due to the virus, at the university level, student groups have been demanding the reopening of colleges at the earliest. Students feel that the digital divide has created a gap

that will be very difficult to bridge as students are not allowed on campus immediately.

The Students' Federation of India along with other organisations that held a protest and hunger strike to demand reopening of campuses earlier this month said: "Students want campuses to reopen. There are so many infrastructural facilities, libraries and laboratories that students are restricted from accessing, thus decreasing the quality of their educational experience. Many students relied on these easily available resources on their campuses and university areas but the prolonged lockdown has reduced their opportunities. It is very evidently exclusionary and against the interests of the student community."

Changing face

To help bridge the gap, EdTech companies have launched a number of innovative products to help create a favourable learning experience. When the lockdown happened, not many institutions were prepared to deal with shifting to online classes but as the year went along, solutions were found to leap over many of the hurdles.

Chandrabhanu Patta Joshi, founder of Glossaread, a platform that helps in making higher education more accessible and convenient, says that despite the challenging times, his company has seen an exponential growth in terms of expansion. "The Ed-Tech industry has undergone a sea change

with the shift towards online learning and greater adoption of technology tools. The lockdown has caused the transition from offline to online, especially for Indian education system at a much faster pace with classes, doubt-solving sessions, remedial and even assessments moving online," Mr. Patta Joshi said.

He added that in a post-pandemic world, we will see a blend of online and offline learning in higher education. The industry believes that in the coming months and years, more students will prefer to study online and access content or study material online as it also addresses challenges such as expensive books, poor library infrastructure, multiple and fragmented sources of study material and the sheer amount of time one takes in gathering the relevant study material.

Sumeet Mehta, co-founder and CEO of LEAD, an EdTech company, observed that adoption of technology has been brought forward by a couple of years and that most schools undertook a 'jugaad' to set up online learning to make up for school shutdown.

However, he feels that going forward as the school reopens, there is a need to cover the learning gaps from last year and hence bridging courses are imperative. "Schools need to follow hybrid schooling which gives an option to switch between school modes [offline/online] and let the schools decide the days students will attend online class or physical school. Despite the challenging environment, we need to continuously add value and reinvent our learning models as we move away from the analogue world to the post-COVID world," Mr. Mehta said.

Virtual school

An indicator to the change the COVID-19 had brought to learning can be seen from the announcement made by the Delhi government during the budget that it plans to launch a Virtual Delhi Model School. Education Minister Manish Sisodia said that the school will be based on the principle of "anywhere living, anytime learning, anytime testing" and it will not have four walls or a building but there will be children, teachers, regular teaching-learning, examinations and assessments.

"It will be a unique experiment in itself, and will probably be the first virtual school in the world. This will benefit students in Delhi as well as all those children who live in any part of the country but want to benefit from the Delhi education model," Mr. Sisodia said.

Foreigner dies after being 'hit by police'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 43-year-old Nigerian national died after allegedly being hit on the head by a policeman in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar on Sunday. The police, however, denied the allegations and said the deceased was not assaulted by them.

The man, Leohand Lyeanyi, used to live in Krishna Puri of Tilak Nagar area, a senior police officer said.

Nigerian nationals, later in the day, created ruckus at Tilak Nagar following his death.

The police said that the Nigerian nationals broke glass at DDU Hospital. They attacked local people on the road. When officials from the High Commission of Nigeria came to meet them, they were also assaulted by a violent mob and their vehicle was vandalised.

The family members of Lyeanyi have alleged that he died after being hit by the police.

On the other hand, the police said that the deceased was not hit by them and there was no fresh external injury on the body.

A senior police officer said they received information about Lyeanyi's death at around 3.30 a.m. on Sunday from the DDU Hospital.

Two cases have been registered against the violent mob, police said, adding that a probe is on in the matter.

Ghazipur protest site gets solar panel to fight power shortage

Protesters say they failed to get any help from the local administration

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

To overcome power shortage in operating kitchens at the Ghazipur border protest site, protesters on Sunday installed a 5KW solar panel.

Protesters said that the solar panel will help them keep running fridges, roti-maker machines and fans inside kitchens. The decision was taken after they failed to get any help from the local administration, they said.

"We decided to switch to solar power as it is a clean source of energy. Power generators operating on diesel could be an option, but not a permanent solution as it will cause pollution," said Bhupinder Singh, a protester.

The solar panel was inaugurated by farmers' leader Rakesh Tikait. "We have installed it under our home, our electricity plan. In future, we will be installing more solar panels at the Gha-



Farmers burning copies of farm laws on the occasion of Holika Dahan at Ghazipur border on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

zipur protest site to meet power demand. The panel has been fixed on a rotatable base to ensure it gets maximum exposure to the sun," said Mr. Tikait, adding that "not withdrawing farm laws will be the biggest mistake of this government".

Another protester said that they have constructed more thatch to keep the roof of their tents cool. They will also sprinkle water on it in case of

intense heat. "We are continuously making changes at the protest site to keep the protesters safe because this fight is going to be big and they have to be prepared for any situation. We all have made such houses in our villages. All farmers are skilled in making chappar [thatch] and know the construction techniques to get cool air," said Vinod Chaudhary, a farmer. Farmers will gather to

burn the copies of the farm laws as part of 'Holika Dahan' celebrations on Sunday. "We have invited security personnel deployed at the Ghazipur border to come and celebrate Holi with us," said Ambrish Singh, another protester.

Power cut on Sunday
BKU-Tikait claimed that electricity was cut off at the agitation site on Sunday. "The power supply on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway above the flyover has been disrupted for several days. On Sunday, the power below the flyover was also cut off," said a statement from the union's spokesperson Dharmendra Malik.

On Sunday, BKU leader Mr. Tikait warned that if power was not restored, farmers would obstruct toll collection on all U.P.'s national highways. After this, power was restored around 6 p.m., said the statement.

Man, son arrested for snatching gold in Delhi

He stocked gold for daughter's wedding

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 50-year-old man was arrested along with his son for allegedly being involved in snatching incidents. He said he was stocking gold for his daughter's marriage, the police said on Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Sarvapal Singh alias Ginni and Jasmeet Singh alias Mocki (24), residents of Bhadurgarh in Haryana, they said.

The police said that on February 17, a case was registered where the complainant alleged that two persons snatched her gold chain and ran away on a black scooter.

The rider was wearing a helmet while the pillion rider was wearing mask, the police said.

On March 17, the accused snatched a gold chain of another person in Dabri area, they said.

"During investigation, the police identified the scooter

used in the snatching incidents. The police got a tip-off that the owner was living on rent at Bahadurgarh.

They raided the area and apprehended both the accused," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said on Sunday.

Mr. Sarvapal used to wear a black mask, a black helmet, and hide the front number plate by pasting white paper on the last four digits and rear number plate by putting mud on it, the DCP said.

He also took his son Jasmeet along with him. He used to come towards Delhi, snatched gold chains and returned to Bahadurgarh, the police said.

Mr. Sarvapal disclosed that he wanted to stock gold for the marriage of his daughter, who is already engaged.

The marriage is due in two months. Mr. Sarvapal had lost his job during the lockdown while his son is a college drop out, said a police officer.

Two injured in road accident in Jyoti Nagar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Two persons sustained injuries in a road accident, which involved a Delhi Transport Corporation bus and a motorcycle in north-east Delhi's Jyoti Nagar area, the police said on Sunday.

The incident happened on Saturday night, the police added.

The persons, who sustained injuries, were riding the two-wheeler, a senior police officer said, adding that they were admitted to Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital in the Capital.

A first information report has been registered in connection with the incident, the senior police officer said.

Driver apprehended

The officer added that the DTC bus has been seized and the driver has been apprehended.

HC orders assault case accused to do community service at de-addiction centre

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered a man, who publicly assaulted a woman at PVR complex, to do a one-month community service at a de-addiction centre here after the victim said she did not want to pursue the case any further.

Justice Subramonium Prasad said, "Since the complainant does not want to pursue the case, it would be futile to continue with the prosecution."

"However, looking at the facts and the conduct of the petitioner [Vikramjeet Singh], this court is inclined to direct the petitioner to do

some social service to atone for his sins. He is also warned not to repeat such actions in future," Justice Prasad added.

As per the complaint registered by the woman at Vikaspuri police station, on July 15 last year, at about 4.30 p.m., after finishing work at office, she was sitting at PVR

complex on the backside of PVR slums beside an open gym with three colleagues. Mr. Singh came towards them and started talking. He said he was a millionaire. However, he was asked to go away and he left. He returned after ten minutes tried to speak to the woman again. When she tried leave,

Mr. Singh held her hand and twisted it behind her back. She also complained that he had hit her on her face and hit her with his bag.

As she raised an alarm, people started gathering and Mr. Singh fled. On the basis of her complaint, he was arrested on July 21 and later released on bail.

The woman stated before the High Court that she and Mr. Singh have amicably settled the matter and no useful purpose would be served in continuing the proceedings.

"In the present case, it is the victim who is the ultimate sufferer. She has been harassed by the petitioner and she is being further ha-

rassed in the proceedings initiated against the petitioner," the court noted.

"A perusal of the complaint shows that the petitioner has acted in a very high-handed manner," the High Court said.

The High Court also imposed a cost of ₹1 lakh on Mr. Singh.

Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, MAR. 29
RISE 06:15 SET 18:38
RISE 19:23 SET 06:44
TUESDAY, MAR. 30
RISE 06:14 SET 18:38
RISE 20:31 SET 07:22
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 31
RISE 06:13 SET 18:39
RISE 21:40 SET 08:02

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	37	18
Safdarjung	37	18
Palam	37	20

Delhi Palam Today
38°C Temperature would rise further. A hot day would prevail with mainly sunny sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Moderate gusty winds would affect the area during day. Comfortable morning and very warm day.

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IN BRIEF

Discourse on Srimad Ramayana from today
NEW DELHI
Akhil Bharata Sadhu Samajam will organise a discourse on Srimad Ramayana by Sri Krishna Premi Swami at Sri Rajaram Temple in Dasarathpuri at 7 p.m. from March 29 to April 6.

Will take action if COVID rules not followed on Holi, say police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
The Delhi police on Sunday said patrolling will be intensified during Holi celebrations and strict action will be taken against those who do not follow COVID-19 guidelines issued by Delhi Disaster Management Authority.

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases, the DDMA had on Tuesday ordered that there would be no public celebrations in the Capital during upcoming festivals such as Holi and Navaratri. Delhi Police PRO Chinmoy Biswal said patrolling will be intensified during Holi.

"Pickets will be placed by the district police in their respective areas. Patrolling will be increased during the festival. Police will focus on those who are involved in drunken driving," Mr. Biswal said.

Four killed, 2 hurt in vehicle collision

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MATHURA
Four people were killed and two injured in a collision between a car and a bus on the Yamuna Expressway on Sunday, police said.

"While three persons were killed on the spot, the fourth succumbed to injuries in the hospital," a police officer said.

According to the police, the accident took place after the over-speeding car veered off the road and hit a divider. The vehicle then collided with the bus coming from the opposite direction.

SP (rural) Srish Chandra said the deceased include a father-daughter duo and two others. The injured, who have been admitted to the hospital, are in a serious condition, he said.

The victims were heading towards Farrukhabad from Delhi to celebrate Holi festival, the officer added.

THE HINDU
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Three hurt as section of elevated road on Dwarka E-way collapses

20-25 labourers left site 10 minutes before the accident; NHAI forms committee

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A section of the under-construction elevated road on Dwarka Expressway collapsed, injuring three labourers, the police said on Sunday.

The collapse on the National Highway 248-BB, which connects Delhi and Gurugram, is the second such incident in the latter in less than a year.

Similar incident
A portion of the under-construction elevated corridor had collapsed on Gurugram-Alwar Highway in a similar way in August last year.

The under-erection span and the adjoining span of the elevated corridor on the highway came crashing down near Daultabad Chowk at 7.30 a.m. along with the launcher with a deafening sound heard in a radius of several hundred kilometres.

"Of the three labourers who sustained injuries, two of them had superficial injuries and one had fractures. We are recording the statements of the three following which a case would be registered," said Deepak Saharan, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West).

Around two dozen labourers working on the



Three labourers were injured after a section of the under-construction elevated road on Dwarka Expressway collapsed on Sunday. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

night shift had a miraculous escape as they left the site just minutes before the collapse.

"Around 20-25 labourers were present at the construction site standing on top of the section 10 minutes before the collapse. Though their shift ends around 8 a.m., they left early today [on Sunday] because of Holi. It is Sunday so the labourers for the next shift did not come," said Rajbir Singh, an eyewitness.

Dharmendra Yadav, who was in a crane parked under the section, also escaped un-hurt. "Just minutes after I parked the crane under it, I heard a faint cracking sound. I looked outside to see dust falling from the top. Even before I could figure out anything, the two slabs came crashing down. Luckily, they did not land on the vehicle," said Dharmendra.

Rohit Chaudhary, a resident of Paras Dews in Sector 106, said he went rushing to his flat's balcony when he heard a loud thud. He thought maybe a plane had crashed, but he soon spotted the collapsed portion of the corridor on the highway.

The National Highways Authority of India, in a press statement, said an expert committee was being constituted to ascertain the reason for failure leading to the accident and the key officials of the contractor and supervision consultant were suspended.

"The authority has viewed the incident seriously and pending the outcome of the investigation by the committee, the personnel concerned of the Contractor M/s L&T and Supervision Consultant M/s AECOM have been suspended as per Standard Operating Procedure of the NHAI," read the statement.

The National Highways Authority of India, in a press

Happiness Curriculum helped students during lockdown

Sisodia says well-being needs to be made a mainstream subject in education

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday said that during the pandemic, children studying in Delhi government schools endured an immense loss of learning, but it was mindfulness learnt as a part of their Happiness Curriculum that helped them to apply life skills to deal with stressful situations.

"Almost 3-4 lakh students who practiced mindfulness and different activities helped their homes to be strong and emotionally sound.

The Minister was speaking at the Harvard Social Enterprise Conference to deliberate on innovations in



Manish Sisodia spoke at the Harvard Social Enterprise Conference to deliberate on innovations in mental health.

ecosystems to think about long-term approaches to mental health," Mr. Sisodia said.

"I believe that wellbeing needs to be made as a mainstream subject in education. This is the time to change our strategy and push wellbeing into our domains of learning and mainstream subjects. Failures are a part of life, but our students should be able to bounce back from them, analyse and learn from both successes and failures, and relentlessly persevere to achieve their goals," Mr. Sisodia said.

Technology here to stay
He added that the biggest takeaway from COVID-19, for our public education, has been that technology is here

to stay.

"We need to quickly adapt our systems and encourage the use of technology. Adopting the right approaches to inculcate technology within our education would in fact make learning more inclusive," he said.

He said Delhi Board of School Education, which the government is introducing, will eventually move towards testing mindset rather than testing knowledge.

"It will play a key role in ensuring that schools develop a holistic learner profile of students, assessing and pushing for social and emotional learning in schools," he said.

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Inmates tune into new talents with Jail Radio

Some prisoners become radio jockeys at the in-house radio station, others play instruments

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

When Vartika Nanda, a prison reformer, visited Panipat Jail a week ago to talk to the inmates about the newly launched 'Jail Radio', an 80-year-old convict told her that he was feeling elated for the first time ever since he was in jail.

"It was a very interesting conversation. He has been in prison for a long time. He told me that since his entry into this jail, he was happy for the first time.

When asked about the reason behind his smile, he told me that he was to present Ragini [local folk theatrical performance] on Jail Radio that day," recalled Dr. Nanda while speaking to *The Hindu*. Her foundation "Tinka Tinka" has launched this 'Jail Radio' project in Haryana jails in

collaboration with the State government.

"This is what we want," emphasised Dr. Nanda, referring to the conversation with the elderly convict. Though Dr. Nanda's journey as a prison reformer started around a decade ago when she launched "Tinka Tinka" in 2013 to "contribute to society in a serious manner", her association with Haryana jails is just two years old.

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When asked about the reason behind his smile, he told me that he was to present Ragini [local folk theatrical performance] on Jail Radio that day," recalled Dr. Nanda while speaking to *The Hindu*. Her foundation "Tinka Tinka" has launched this 'Jail Radio' project in Haryana jails in



Prison reformer Vartika Nanda with Panipat Jail Superintendent Devi Dyal at the studio inside the jail.
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and had energy and passion didn't want anybody to come with a baggage," said Dr. Nanda. In just six days, these inmates were trained to take up their new roles.

Mr. Dyal said the "Jail Radio" was now a big hit and he was getting a lot of requests from the inmates to be the "Radio Jockeys". In Panipat Jail, the "Tinka Tinka" foundation has also set up a library adjoining the studio. Director General of Prisons, Haryana, K. Selvaraj, said the project was received well and the government planned to extend it to all 19 jails in the State, except Palwal and Rewari, which may be taken up later.

"The project is very useful in these times when we have to create awareness among the inmates. It also has an entertainment quotient. We plan to take up five jails each in the next two phases," said Mr. Selvaraj.

With plans to take the project beyond Haryana to jails across the country, Dr. Nanda reflected that she always wanted to prove that if you do something with a pure heart, you always succeed, but she never expected huge support for her endeavour and this was its "biggest beauty".

"We were looking for people who were interested, wanted to bring a change

In the first phase, three prisons in Haryana – Panipat and Faridabad district jails and Ambala Central Jail – were taken up for the project and 'Jail Radio' was set up. Panipat was the first to get it on January 16 this year. It was followed by setting up of a 'Jail Radio' in Faridabad on January 28 and in Ambala on March 8.

"It is an in-house production run by the inmates. The programmes are broadcast from a studio inside the premises and reach to the inmates through speakers in the barracks. We mostly play Bollywood songs but also encourage them to present their own programmes such as playing musical instruments or presenting raginis," said Devi Dyal, Super-

intendent, Panipat Jail. In the second phase, the project will be launched in four more jails and the preparations for it are almost done.

Important aspect

Dr. Nanda said the most important aspect of the project was that "it is for the inmates". "No commercial interest, no outside intervention, no ads, and no commercial breaks," she remarked. Dr. Nanda said the aim was to bring out the inmates' creativity, give them meaningful engagement. "These inmates would go back to society one day. It is, therefore, important that they are given a meaningful intervention. Many of these repent and regret what happened in

Gangster who escaped custody killed in shoot-out with police

Raid conducted at 1.45 a.m. to avoid crowd, say officers

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A gangster, who had escaped custody, was killed following an exchange of fire with policemen in Rohini on Sunday, the police said.

Teams from Special Cell and Crime Branch were working to nab Kuldeep alias Fajja. The raid was conducted at a flat in Rohini's Sector 14 at 1.45 a.m.



Gangster Kuldeep.
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

missioner of Police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah.

Around 20 rounds were fired – eight by Kuldeep, said an officer. The flat belonged to Yogender Dahiya, also an accomplice of Kuldeep. He has been arrested, they said.

A senior officer said the escape plan for Kuldeep was hatched by his accomplices to revive the Gogi gang.

How he escaped

On March 25 afternoon, Kuldeep escaped from custody after a gunfight broke out at GTB Hospital in east Delhi. At the hospital, the assailants first threw chilli powder at the police team and then started firing at them. The police retaliated with 12 rounds of fire, killing one of them on the spot and injuring another.

AISA demands free vaccine at the earliest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The All India Students' Association (AISA) on Sunday demanded that government provide free vaccinations at the earliest to students, teachers and staffers so that campuses can be opened. They said they don't want to lose another year due to the pandemic.

"Online education resulted in dropouts and students are excluded from learning due to lack of Internet and smart phones. This turmoil in education that we have witnessed in the past year is set to continue if campus remain closed," AISA said. It added that there would be a surge in drop out rates if the discriminatory mode of online education continues.

"Governments should immediately vaccinate students, teachers and staffers from school, colleges and universities in order to save another academic year from destruction. If this is done, the government will not be able to use COVID-19 as an excuse to keep campuses shut," AISA said.

Delhi records maximum temperature

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI
Delhi's maximum temperature on Sunday rose to 37.3 degrees Celsius, five notches above the normal, the India Meteorological Department said.

The mercury inched closer to 40 degrees Celsius at some places. Noida and Faridabad recorded their maximum temperature at 39.2 degrees Celsius and 39.6 degrees Celsius, respectively. "The Safdarjung Observatory recorded a maximum of 37.3 degrees Celsius," an IMD official said. The air quality in the city was recorded in the 'poor' category. The 24-hour average AQI was 233, said CPCB.

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

ASSEMBLY POLLS

DELI THE HINDU | MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Thunderstorm with lightning, hail and gusty winds (speeds reaching 30-40 kmph) very likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Odisha, Kerala, Jammu, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	36.0	19.1	Kozhikode	—	34.1	27.4
Ahmedabad	—	41.7	21.8	Kurnool	—	40.6	27.7
Aizawl	—	29.6	13.8	Lucknow	—	36.2	18.0
Altahabadi	—	38.8	18.5	Madurai	—	37.4	26.4
Bengaluru	—	35.0	22.5	Mangalore	—	36.0	24.7
Bhopal	—	38.9	18.4	Mumbai	—	33.7	26.0
Bhubaneswar	—	37.2	19.5	Mysuru	—	35.0	20.0
Chandigarh	—	34.6	19.0	New Delhi	—	37.3	17.8
Chennai	—	36.2	24.9	Patna	—	37.4	19.4
Coimbatore	—	36.7	25.3	Port Blair	—	33.1	26.7
Dehradoon	—	32.3	16.7	Puducherry	—	34.2	24.6
Gangtok	—	20.0	12.7	Pune	—	38.9	20.1
Goa	—	34.2	27.8	Raipur	—	37.8	18.2
Guwahati	—	35.0	17.0	Ranchi	—	35.0	19.1
Hubballi	—	34.0	23.0	Shillong	—	25.1	13.4
Hyderabad	—	38.8	22.6	Shimla	—	23.9	13.9
Imphal	—	30.1	12.0	Srinagar	—	21.3	10.6
Jaipur	—	39.0	21.7	Thiruvananthapuram	—	0.6	32.4
Kochi	—	32.2	26.6	Tiruchi	—	37.5	26.2
Kohima	—	20.8	12.0	Vijayawada	—	37.2	25.2
Kolkata	—	36.0	25.1	Visakhapatnam	—	32.8	25.8

Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius
Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES SO₂ NO₂ CO PM_{2.5} PM₁₀ CODE
 Ahmedabad ... 30 85 51 119 134 ■■■■■
 Bengaluru ... 10 13 54 150 121 ■■■■■
 Chennai ... 4 6 28 34 79 ■■■■■
 Delhi ... 27 84 16 255 281 ■■■■■
 Hyderabad ... 17 61 25 171 ■■■■■
 Kolkata ... 15 36 25 177 151 ■■■■■
 Lucknow ... 12 82 40 298 261 ■■■■■
 Mumbai ... 12 47 78 251 168 ■■■■■
 Pune ... — — 211 145 ■■■■■
 Visakhapatnam ... 60 40 120 155 ■■■■■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■■ Moderate ■■■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
 SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Will the stars align this Bengal election?

As the BJP and TMC bet on celebrity power in the winner-takes-all battle, some voters say political grounding is a must while others feel their clean slate is just what it takes for *poribortion*

ANKITA SARKAR
KOLKATA

In the first week of March, veteran actor Mithun Chakraborty graced the famous Brigade Parade Ground here to join the BJP and begin his political journey with a new dialogue: "Aami ekobra, jat ghokhro, ek chhobol e chhobi [I am a cobra, I will bring death in one strike]."

Around the time of the inclusion of the actor, once seen as close to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, a host of other celebrities jumped on the bandwagon in the midst of one of India's most interesting elections in recent history.

While the Trinamool Congress is known for bringing celebrities into its fold, the BJP has followed suit, fielding television stars and other popular figures this time.

Will it cut ice or is it just another ploy by political parties that is bound to fall flat on its face?

'Politics not cinema'

Soumyadip Mitra, a 29-year-old techie from Behala East, said the BJP has lost out on a seat by fielding Paayel Sarkar (actor). He says, "Sovan Chatterjee used to win by huge margins when he was with the TMC. Paayel is clueless about the dynamics here."

"TMC candidate Ratna Chatterjee has visited our apartment thrice, but Paayel not once," he said. Mr. Mitra claims Paayel cannot be considered a big star like Dev or Mithun.

In Behala West, where the BJP has fielded actor Srabanti Chatterjee against veteran TMC leader Partha Chatterjee, people seem to be igno-

rant about the "star". Sharmila, a driver, said: "Politics is not cinema. Partha [Chatterjee] has worked for us over the years. Srabanti is an actor, what does she know?"

Asansol Dakshin, an Assembly constituency in Paschim Bardhaman district, is one of the places where celebrities will have a face-off.

A BSc (Hons.) student, Bipin Chakraborty, said: "I want to ask if designer Agnimitra Paul [BJP candidate] or actor Saayoni Ghosh [TMC candidate] will stay with us after their win? One of them stays in Kolkata and the other in Delhi. We need someone from our city, like Sushanto Ghosh (CPI-M). He is an advocate from Asansol."

"Last time, the TMC won because they fielded Tapas Banerjee who is from the city. How many people even watch movies on OTT platforms here to know Saayoni Ghosh?" he said. The same sentiment was reinforced when Maya, a domestic help, said she has just heard that Saayoni is an actor.

Baranagar, once a Left bastion which was taken over by the TMC in 2011, too has an interesting scenario. The TMC is banking on veteran Tapas Roy, while the BJP will go with actor Parno Mitra, a newbie. A housewife, requesting anonymity, said: "We do not know Parno much. She did not even visit us. Mr. Roy, of course, is familiar."

Someone familiar

At Barrackpur, a government official said the TMC should have fielded someone with a political background. "We need someone who knows

the area. Kanchan Mullick [the TMC candidate] is a comic relief."

Namin, a municipal worker, reiterated the same point: "Does the party consider us fools?"

Tollygunje, the south Kolkata locality popularly known as the centre of the Bengali film industry, is not seeing many new faces this electoral battle, except CPI (M)'s Debdut Ghosh.

Retired government employee Ardhendu Narayan Guha said when Mamata Banerjee came to power, there were some communal tensions at a Hindu-dominated slum in the area. "Aroop Biswas [the TMC candidate] might haveirked some people at the time, but his other good work might keep him in good stead."

In Barrackpur, popular film director Raj Chakraborty will face tough competition from BJP candidate Chandramani Shukla. "Mamata tends to discard old team members for new ones. It's more of a 'Tollywood Trinamool Congress' now. The people have understood that *dorkari jake paai, sorkare takei chai* [Whom we get during crisis, we want them in power]," said Nilabhra, a cultural worker.

Mani, a rickshaw-puller, has a slightly different take.

INTERVIEW | SUSHMITA DEV

Bengalis have seen through BJP's lies'

RAHUL KARMAKAR

Former Silchar MP and All India Mahila Congress president Sushmita Dev is the most visible Congress leader in southern Assam's Bengali-dominated Barak Valley, comprising 15 Assembly seats. She says the disillusionment of the people with the BJP's "fake love" for Bengali Hindus could help the Congress regain the valley. Excerpts:



Barak Valley on religious lines. If you look at the demography of Cachar (district), you cannot win seats unless you have the votes of every community. We are not a party of one community. Bengalis have seen through the BJP's lies through steps such as cancellation of holiday on Rabindranath Tagore's birth anniversary. How can you do that?

■ Is there a pro-CAA sentiment in Barak Valley that is perceived to help the BJP?

■ The Hindu Bengalis took the CAA bait because NRC was a fearful exercise for them as well as for Bengali Muslims. I have been asking people mesmerised by CAA if they really think it will protect them. Why then is the BJP speaking about implementing it in West Bengal and not in Assam where there has been opposition to the law (in Brahmaputra Valley)?

■ Is he a Bengali icon or an international icon? And six of the eight BJP legislators are Bengali Hindus from Barak Valley but Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal makes them stand in the back. They have done nothing for Hindu Bengalis.

How important are detention centres and D-voters as issues for Congress?

■ Very. Our manifesto talks about resolving the problem of D-voters, an unconstitutional concept that has hounded the people of Assam for so many years. They are silent about it. I have visited detention centres, our MLAs have, a special team led by Jairam Ramesh did. Has one BJP leader done that? We are talking about these issues, but they are not. All they are promising is to bring the people of Assam away from the Congress. But our vote share will increase.

■ BJP claims it has narrowed the divide between the Assamese-speaking Brahmaputra Valley and the Bengali-speaking Barak Valley. Has it?

■ They talk of bringing the people of the two valleys together. But they drove the wedge deeper with CAA besides polarising the voters of

U.P. policemen blame rats for 'missing' liquor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ETAH (U.P.)

A probe has been initiated into a claim by the officials of a local police station that rats were behind the disappearance of a large number of seized cartons of illicit liquor from a strongroom.

A senior police officer said over 1,400 cartons of liquor have gone missing from the Kotwali Dehat police station here and a case has been registered against Station House Officer Indreshpal Singh and clerk Rishal Singh. However, a general diary at the police station mentions that 239 cartons have been damaged by rats, which, the senior police officer said, seems to be fishy and unacceptable.

Ethah Superintendent of Police Uday Shankar Singh on Sunday confirmed the development and said that a probe is on.

Meanwhile, the BJP leaders and workers held protests at Gurdaspur, Patiala, Jalandhar, Batala and Ludhiana against the attack on Mr. Narang.

Does the Opposition party (BJP) have no right to put forth its views," Mr. Sharma

Odisha suffered losses worth ₹31,945 cr. in eight cyclones

State received only one-sixth of the amount from Centre

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government received Central assistance of meagre one-sixth of the losses incurred in eight different cyclones that visited after the Super Cyclone 1999.

After the Super Cyclone 1999, the State was hit by Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Titli, Phethai and Daye (2018), Bulbul and Fani (2019) and Amphan (2020).

In these cyclones, Odisha suffered losses of life and property worth ₹31,945.80 crore.

The State government had sought assistance to the tune of ₹29,480.37 crore from the Centre. However, the government has received only ₹5,285.65 crore," Sudam Marandi, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister, informed the Assembly.

Meanwhile, Vikas Kumar, a police officer from Aligarh who is probing the case, said, "Efforts are on to ascertain as to where the seized liquor has gone."

As far as the loss is concerned, Phailin was the most devastating, with the State losing ₹14,373.47 crore. The government had then sought ₹4,242.41 crore assistance

BOMBAY

PHOTO BY



from the Centre whereas it received only ₹1,149.83 crore.

Two years ago, coastal Odisha was again devastated by cyclone Fani. The State government estimated the loss at ₹9,336.27 crore. Hudhud and Titli followed the two major cyclones with estimated loss of ₹4,949.39 crore and ₹2,779.32 crore respectively. The Centre had granted ₹3,114.46 crore.

Fani had affected 20,367 villages whereas the impact

of Phailin was experienced in 18,374 villages. Other six cyclones had impacted less than 10,000 numbers of villages.

Loss of life

Total 160 persons had died in the eight cyclones during the past two decades. While highest 72 had died in Titli cyclone, Fani claimed 64 lives. In four out of eight cyclones, as per Mr. Marandi's reply, not a single life was lost.

Bombs hurled at RTI activist in Odisha

He had named BJD MLA, engineer in a fraud cover-up

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Pradyot Kishore Debbarman for allegedly trying to fan trouble in the hills. "He [Mr. Pradyot] has been instigating people with his 'Greater Tipraland' demand," he said at an election rally at Ampura in Khowai district. Mr. Jammia, IPFT leaders and the party candidates are not raising the 'Tipraland' demand.

tacked with bombs.

Two bike-borne miscreants hurled bombs targeting the RTI activist, Sarbeswar Beura, who was returning home with a friend in a car at Imamnagar village in Jajpur district on Saturday evening. He sustained critical injuries. Mr.

■ SHAHNAAZ KHAN

A teacher's role today, goes much beyond just disseminating knowledge. It is about nurturing young learners to be resilient, adaptive, innovative, empathetic and critical thinkers; all of which they need, to be successful in a fast evolving world. As teachers, it is our collective responsibility that we open their minds to not just 'what was', but to 'what can be' and 'what is my role in it'. The bubbles created by social media, and magnified by the pandemic, are mirrors to what an extremely polarised world may look like.

Creating classrooms where multiple perspectives are debated and discussed critically and reflectively is imperative towards nurturing 21st century global citizens. However, the question is how ready or equipped are we, to foster this environment? We need to introspect at every level and reflect on our teaching pedagogy. Our own learning process gives us an opportunity to implement methodologies to help the classrooms evolve as healthy spaces to collaborate, and express and respect different voices.

The Social Sciences provide an excellent space to engage in such discussions. The subject is able to unravel normative bin-

The Social Sciences can be an umbrella under which students can explore their lived experience and realities, not just in subject silos but as a cohesive whole

aries, while traversing in the grey zones of right and wrong. The teacher as facilitator of debates and discussions is pivotal to contextualise the text and provide conceptual clarity.

Understanding as reflection

This is the first step to untangle complex narratives and events. What is my stand on an issue, and why have I chosen said stand? Before understanding what makes others take conflicting perspectives, learners need to engage with what makes them hold on to theirs. Any issue of relevance to the learner can be picked up here – from the Partition to the on-

going farmer protests. Before debates and discussions with others, reflection provides learners with the opportunity to consolidate and comprehend their thoughts.

Developing a thinking classroom

Visible thinking routines are effective to get students to share how they feel and reflect, as well as give teachers a sense of the learning. Try to develop independent thinkers by nurturing a culture of creative thinking and encouraging students to have a voice in the classroom. Adopt a concept-based curriculum, a 21st century need in academics to develop inde-

pendent thinkers. This is a research-backed approach to teaching thinking dispositions, and has provided educators with a tool kit to develop a culture of thinking in the classroom. Students should be encouraged to discuss their stand on an issue from multiple stakeholder perspectives, which can show that different people have different connections to the same thing that influence their stand.

Debate as discussion

It is a valuable skill to be able to both debate your 'opponent' and discuss your points of view. The Social Sciences as a curriculum are effective in provid-

ing a space where the learners engage with the human experience and condition as a laboratory in itself. The Socratic Method – using questions to probe values, principles and student beliefs – is a great tool to encourage classroom discourse. Inquiry, rather than facts and topics, drives the discussion. What is the value for a student in 21st century India in learning about the French Revolution? By conceptually unpeeling concepts and context, we understand governance as a system, change as a constant, and state legitimacy as a relationship. So, the student is able to relate these to democracy, dissent, and revolutions as they

see around them.

Contexts and connections

The Social Sciences can be that umbrella under which students can explore their lived experience and realities, not just in subject silos but as a cohesive whole. Learning more about ourselves and the world around can be enlivened by aligning it with other domains, and even using their concepts, knowledge and skills. The school, therefore, needs to evolve towards concept-based

learning to give student voice priority, among other reforms. Connecting the threads of learning, debate and discussion can foster creative thinking beyond traditional Social Science topics.

Including such practices routinely in Social Science classrooms is possible for offline, online or hybrid learning. It is especially crucial given the effect the pandemic has had on education to keep students engaged and informed. Navigating critical issues of our times can seem daunting but, with careful thought and preparation, the teacher can nurture thought leaders and change makers of tomorrow, who are willing to engage with multiple ideas, identities and ideologies.

The writer is the Political Science teacher at Shiv Nadar School, NOIDA.

SAVE THE DATE

■ NITK Surathkal Department of Civil Engineering Research Associateship 2021

NIT Karnataka, Surathkal, invites applications for the project "Impounding of river floodwaters along Dakshina Kannada Coast: A sustainable strategy for water resource development".

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates below 35 years with a Ph.D. in Geotechnical Engineering with a B.E./B.Tech in Civil Engineering and an M.E./M.Tech; experience in GIS or Experimental Geotechnics; and GATE qualification.

PRIZE: Up to ₹36,000 per month plus HRA

DEADLINE: April 3

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/edge/KRA4

■ College Board India Scholars Programme

College Board, in association with Global Higher Education Alliance Institutions, offers financial support to students in Classes 11 and 12 taking admission in Indian universities, based on the SAT.

ELIGIBILITY: For SAT fee discount, the applicant must be an Indian resident with an annual family income less than ₹10 lakh. For a full college tuition scholarship, the applicant's family income should be below ₹4 lakh p.a. The student must have SAT Exam performance of minimum 1350 out of 1600 and an offer of admission from the Global Higher Education Alliance institution.

PRIZES: Up to 90% waiver for SAT examination and complete tuition fee waiver.

DEADLINE: April 5

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/EDGE/CBI2

■ IIT Delhi SIRe Post Doctoral Fellowships

IIT Delhi, invites applications exclusively for research purposes for a maximum of three years.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to citizens of India, Persons of Indian Origin (PIO), or Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) who hold a Ph.D. in Mechanical/Computer Science and Engineering/Electrical Engineering and associated disciplines from a recognised University/Institute with first division or equivalent in the last two degrees; a minimum of three first-author papers in standard international journals or reputed conferences. Male candidates must not be more than 32 years and female candidates not more than 35 years.

PRIZES: ₹60,000 per month and benefits.

DEADLINE: April 2

APPLICATION: Online
b4s.in/EDGE/IIP6

Courtesy: buddy4study.com



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK PHOTO

PERSONALITY



Competition, a catalyst?

Contend not with others but with yourself

■ MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN

■ SUNITA GANDHI

India's education system has been designed around merits and cut-off lists, and a student's future depends on his/her performance. The pressure that surrounds schools and colleges, even at a nascent age, is healthy and beneficial only to an extent. When it begins to affect their morale and confidence, it can lead to stress and depression.

Is it required?

Educators disagree on the need for competition. One hypothesis asserts that, since competition is a part of each culture, education must reflect that and help students get used to it. Another theory sees competition as a malevolent component that must be eliminated. This conflict tends to confuse children who attempt to compete wholeheartedly while making it look as if they're not doing so.

Another issue is rewards. Whether it is getting good grades during school/college or incentives and increments at the workplace, the idea seems to prioritise success rather than effort. Among the youth, this also tends to affect their impression of their peers.

This is not to deny the importance of competition.

But, it should not become the only tool in defining one's future. One should compete with oneself and strive to become a better version of him/herself. This requires scholarly upgrades, magnificent work, ownership, and companionship. Instead of sabotaging and kicking peers down in an assortment of ways, sharing information, creating leaders, and consideration towards our mates can fortify one's character. When you invest energy in improving yourself rather than focusing on what others are doing, it will help you understand which abilities are important to you and what you are capable of. Then you can work on those without feeling jealous of what someone else has achieved. Not only does this help build your character and personality but also creates better relationships.

By diverting our energy away from competing with others, to competition with ourselves, we will discover we are still contending with our companions and that we will head towards our goals together in the best possible facets of the programme.

The writer is the Founder, Global Classroom Pvt. Ltd. (GCPL) and Global Education Training Institute GETI.

UPSKILLING

Fostering future entrepreneurs

Coping with challenges of the future require the right skill-sets and that involves developing entrepreneurial mindset early, says Mekin Maheshwari of the Udyam Learning Foundation

■ MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN

Today, as the focus of education shifts from academic learning to skill-building, developing an entrepreneurial mindset makes students job-ready and helps them address the challenges of the future. This is what the Udyam Learning Foundation (ULF) has been working towards, through its programmes, Udyam Shiksha (for students) and Udyam Vyapar (for micro-entrepreneurs).

Launched in 2017, Udyam Shiksha works on education reforms, co-created with state governments, to enable learning-by-doing. Focused on education modules that are more connected with real-world aspects while increasing learner autonomy among students, it has collaborated with the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Assam, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. The Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC), designed specifically for students from Classes 9 to 12, is currently being implemented across 1,024 schools, in Delhi.

Mekin Maheshwari, Founder and CEO, Udyam Learning Foundation, offers insights into the need for entrepreneurship at the school level and the various facets of the programme.

Need for entrepreneurship
 Humanity is staring at complex social and environmental problems that require us to be more

empathetic, experimental, and collaborative. When entrepreneurial mindsets and skills are built, students are equipped to solve challenges.

Being entrepreneurial adds significant value to every student, irrespective of whether they go on to be a scientist, teacher, doctor, or business leader.

Entrepreneurial people are able to solve more problems, operate with higher grit, try new things, and continuously understand and improve themselves. These mindsets, and the 21st-century skills that students learn, are what employers seek.

Building agency
 Students learn various skills and mindsets through a set of structured activities and reflection questions. One of the mindsets is to develop self-awareness, and this is done in a fun and engaging manner to enable them to understand



Skill-building: Customers interacting with students at a business fair. (Left) Mekin Maheshwari.

themselves and each other.

Every week, on one day, they take a break from teacher-facilitated activities and anchor a student-driven process in which they practise building communication skills through debates and Just-A-Minute talks. Interactions with other professionals and entrepreneurs also help them explore different

careers.

Then there are field projects, where students apply their learnings by running a small venture to create value in any domain that aligns with their strengths and purpose. Every learner receives seed money between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 to run their own business for six weeks, and 91% is returned at the

end of the course. The shift in learners' attitudes towards risk-taking, collective problem-solving, and self-belief can be seen in this level.

During the pandemic

This past year, the focus has been to continue the engagement with the learners. Hence, social media and online

interventions have been used as implementation channels. For students who don't have Internet access, interactive worksheets have been developed. The activities in the curriculum have been re-imagined for a more independent context, to enable learners to experience them without any facilitation from the teachers. It has also opened up more opportunities for integrating real-life learning. For example, now, students can work on situations that are real for them and their immediate contexts, such as family and neighbourhood.

Anyone who is interested in conducting an entrepreneurial mindset programme can write to contact@udyam.org for a copy of the curriculum, which is open-source.



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Opacity rules

The electoral bonds scheme undermines the voters' right to know about funding of parties

The reasons given by the Supreme Court for not staying the issuance of electoral bonds are unconvincing. A Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India, Justice S.A. Bobde, has said there is no justification for staying the scheme as electoral bonds have been released in 2018, 2019 and 2020 without any legal impediment; and that "certain safeguards" have been provided in the Court's interim order of April 12, 2019. The Court ought to have considered that when the earlier order was passed, the time available was deemed to be too limited for an in-depth hearing. An order favouring the continuance of the scheme cannot be repeated year after year. The portion of the 2019 order asking political parties to submit to the Election Commission in a sealed cover all details of the anonymous contributions received through electoral bonds was meant to avoid tilting the balance in favour of either side until the matter was heard in detail. It was also underscored then that "weighty issues which have a tremendous bearing on the sanctity of the electoral process in the country" were involved. In this context, it defies logic for the Court to maintain that no interim stay is necessary while not giving any indication when it will take up the case for final disposal. The latest order also fails to note that the submission of contribution particulars by political parties was a one-time arrangement. There is nothing to suggest that it applies to subsequent tranches of the sale of electoral bonds. Therefore, to describe it as a 'safeguard' has little meaning.

The problem with taking up only applications for stay is that vital constitutional issues do not fall under the zone of consideration. The infirmity in the electoral bonds scheme is not, as the Court seems to suggest, limited to 'black money' being used to fund parties. It has laboured to point out that the scheme works solely through banking channels and can be utilised only with KYC-compliant entities. However, the crux of the issue is the anonymity given to corporate donors in combination with the absence of any ceiling. This means that the right to know of voters, recognised as a constitutional right in past rulings, is abridged. Further, the link between contributions and policy-making remains impenetrable to the citizen. Any number of shell companies can be created, and their bank accounts used for making anonymous contributions. The claim that the veil of anonymity can be pierced with a little effort by matching the audited accounts of parties with the statutory filings of companies is quite way off the mark. Parties declare a cumulative figure of amounts received through the bonds. No inference can be drawn by a company's disclosure of its total contribution to one or more political parties. It is time the Court recognised that the electoral bonds scheme, by its very nature, undermines the voters' right to know.

Limited succour

Policymakers should mitigate the crisis facing borrowers during the pandemic

The Supreme Court's decision on a batch of petitions seeking waiver of all interest during the period of the pandemic-specific moratorium, relief from compound interest for the period for all borrowers without distinction and extension of the moratorium period itself is a fair verdict. The Court has sought to limit the scope of its juridical intervention to the questions of whether any laws have been violated and whether any actions that banks may have taken under the policy guidance of the government and central bank likely violated any rights of the petitioners. Observing that "wisdom and advisability of economic policy are ordinarily not amenable to judicial review", the Bench denied all but one of the petitioners' pleas: it held that the government's decision to limit the waiver of compound interest to loans under ₹2 crore was "arbitrary and discriminatory" and directed a refund of all compound interest levied during the moratorium period. The Court justly flagged the absurdity of levying the compound interest on any category of loans since by its very nature it was a penal interest intended to impose a cost on wilful or deliberate default, while a borrower's decision to defer repayment of instalment by availing of the moratorium could not be considered wilful default by any stretch. This part of the ruling would surely come as a welcome relief to borrowers across categories and loan size, while adding a relatively smaller burden – estimated at about ₹7,500 crore – on lenders (or the Centre, if the government decides to foot the bill and spare banks the cost).

On the other hand, the Court appears to have taken a literal view of whether the National Disaster Management Act's provisions were contravened by authorities' response to the economic fallout of the pandemic, which it acknowledged to be a disaster due to "biological emergencies". While the Centre's and Reserve Bank of India's arguments that any attempt to extend the moratorium and/or widen the waiver to include regular interest would undermine overall stability in the financial system are undeniably germane, the fact that the pandemic has proved to be an unprecedented disaster in terms of the health and economic costs it has imposed on all sections of society and the economy ought to have evoked a more holistic and expansive fiscal response from the government. Vast sections of small formal and informal enterprises as well as lower income households are saddled with debt that they are certainly bound to struggle to service in the absence of some direct credit support mechanism. So, the Court's ruling notwithstanding, it behoves policymakers to urgently come up with measures to help mitigate this crisis before lenders are deluged with more defaults.

Weighing in on the saga of a vaccine

The AstraZeneca story shows that in research and development, logistics, transparency and communication also count



GAGANDEEP KANG

The AstraZeneca SARS-CoV2 AZD1222 vaccine, which was developed at the University of Oxford, is a chimpanzee adenovirus strain which was engineered so that it could not replicate any more in humans. The team at Oxford had already begun to use this chimpanzee adenovirus vaccine technology to produce candidate vaccines against many pathogens including influenza, Zika and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus.

When work began

They had also begun, with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), to use this technology in preparation for 'Disease X'. When the sequence of SARS-CoV2 was released in January 2020, they moved very quickly to engineer a new candidate vaccine and begin work on a trial. Sarah Gilbert who led the team with others at the University of Oxford and the Jenner Institute announced very early on that she thought that we would have a vaccine available by October. This was really quite remarkable given that everyone else was predicting that we would not have vaccines available for at least 12 to 15 months.

The team at Oxford and the Jenner had been working for a long time on candidate vaccines, and had the capacity to make pilot lots for clinical trials, but they did not

have the capacity to make vaccines at scale, particularly those that would require millions or billions of doses. So, working with CEPI and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Oxford team began discussions with multiple companies in order to figure out who could be a manufacturing and development partner for the vaccine. Initially, it was thought that it might be possible to engage with Merck, an American leader producing vast amounts of vaccines, but ultimately it was decided to go with AstraZeneca, a company that had no experience of vaccines other than a nasal flu spray, but was a British-Swedish pharma conglomerate.

The vaccine began to be tested in humans in April 2020 and technology transfer agreements were agreed with SKBio in South Korea and the Serum Institute of India, and others; the goal was to make a vaccine that was suitable for use in immunisation programmes around the world and could be made at very large volumes. By December we had results that indicated the vaccine worked.

Interpreting the vaccine data

But before and after December, it has been an incredibly bumpy road for AstraZeneca. Before the trial results became available, the trial was stopped for a while to investigate a case of transverse myelitis in the United Kingdom. In India, a case of neuroleusus led to questions about the responsibilities of investigators, sponsors and regulators. When the results were announced in December, the first report was by press release and indicated an efficacy of 70%, with some peculiar results showing that



in some groups, efficacy could be as high as 90%. It first turned out there were several issues. The vaccine trials compared a single dose and two doses, and decided to go with two doses, but with supply issues, wound up with some people with a single dose and others with two doses, but with varying intervals because there were long gaps while waiting for supply initially, and then closer to the originally proposed four week interval as enough vaccine became available.

To complicate matters further, there was an error in calculating doses, and some individuals had received vaccine doses that had less of the viral vector. Initially, it was reported that highest efficacy was seen with a lower first dose, and scientists scrambled to try and find an explanation. It was hypothesised that it might be because antibodies made in response to the first dose inhibited response to the second dose, but given that the difference was one of 25 billion and 50 billion viral particles, it seemed a bit unlikely.

Later, as more data became available, it was clear that the longer time there was between doses, the immune response and efficacy were better. But considerable damage had already been done because of the messy sequential communications, even though re-

sults from multiple analyses were being rapidly published by the Oxford team.

The vaccine data were reviewed by the regulator in the United Kingdom, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, which gave emergency use authorisation, and the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation recommended initiation of vaccination in the U.K. with a 12 week gap. The data were reviewed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) which also approved the vaccine and recommended its use. Since this vaccine was suitable for use within routine immunisation programmes, this was a reason to celebrate, because Serum, SKBio and AstraZeneca had all committed to making the vaccine available to the COVAX facility which is committed to providing vaccines to at least 20% of the world's population, irrespective of the ability to pay.

The case in Europe

Unfortunately, the controversies continued. A few European countries refused to use the vaccine in older individuals, citing the lack of data from this subset in clinical trials. And then, cases of haemato-logical side-effects which combined blood clots and low platelets began to be reported. So far, the data do not indicate a signal of side-effects that are above the baseline of thromboembolic events, but in a limited number of cases, the clinical picture is unusual and has been labelled vaccine-induced prothrombotic immune thrombocytopenia by researchers in Norway and Germany. This will continue

to be investigated until we understand the association and the level of risk, but it is clear, and stated by the EMA and WHO, that the benefit far outweighs any rare risk.

Even as the vaccine began to be widely used, the global community awaited trials of the vaccine in the U.S. and South America under Operation Warp Speed, and when a press release in March stated 79% efficacy, there was a sense of relief that, finally, clean and clear data from a study that included 32,000 people were available.

This was followed swiftly by an unusual announcement by the U.S. government's National Institutes of Health to say that the Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) felt it essential to report that the data were outdated. The company said that they were reporting data until February 17 based on 141 cases and scrambled to get a fuller analysis of 190 cases showing an efficacy of 74% which was released last week. This throws up a lot of questions about why the DSMB felt it essential to bring this up, when other companies like Moderna and Pfizer had also reported first interim and then final results. In any case, the data will be independently reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. regulator, and then perhaps all the controversies can finally be put to rest.

This vaccine has potential, but if this saga highlights anything, it is that in clinical research and development, logistics, transparency and communication matter as much as the science.

Gagandeep Kang is Professor, Christian Medical College, Vellore

An antidote to Islamophobia, within and beyond

The Muslim laity must shed its docility and challenge the 'religious authorities' to be open to Islam's pluralistic teachings



A. FAIZUR RAHMAN

If Islamist terror is a major international issue today, so is the response to it. For instance, the UN 'Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief' flagged the "epidemic proportions" of anti-Muslim hatred with the lament that member states responded to security threats "by adopting measures which disproportionately target Muslims and define Muslims as both high risk and at risk of radicalization".

Exploring the reasons

In fact, the spread of Islamophobia across the globe has been so rampant over the last couple of decades that it is now considered an industry and a subject of study in psychiatry. Springer, one of world's leading scientific publishers, brought out a volume in 2019 titled *Islamophobia and Psychiatry: Recognition, Prevention, and Treatment*.

The Cambridge dictionary describes Islamophobia as an "unreasonable dislike or fear of, and prejudice against, Muslims or Islam." But the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims (APPG) goes further and equates it with racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness. The APPG has a point because long before the term

gained currency, Frantz Fanon, the celebrated anti-colonial writer and psychoanalyst, had engaged with Islamophobia without mentioning it, and saw it as an expression of religious racism of the colonising West.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, which Fanon wrote in the context of the French occupation of Muslim Algeria, he described "the church in the colonies," as "the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor."

The West's fear

Despite this depressing reality, the West's fear of Islam or Muslims has little to do with religion and everything to do with cultural frictions and political rivalries as Graham E. Fuller rightly concluded in *A World without Islam*. In the case of India too it was the tussle for power that made people like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Chandranath Basu, Lala Lajpat Rai, and Bhai Parmanand suspect the Muslims.

If in *Ananda Math*, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee fictionalised Hindu nationalistic sentiments by narrating how "everyone was angry with the Muslims for the anarchy and lawlessness of their reign", in the early 1900s, Rai and Parmanand floated the idea of territorially separating Hindus and Muslims long before Jinnah imagined Pakistan.

Even B.R. Ambedkar was not sure about the political stability of an undivided India. In his book

Thoughts on Pakistan he wanted the Hindus to concede Jinnah's demand for a separate Muslim state because without Pakistan, India would have to contend with 65 million Muslims, while after its creation, this number would fall to 20 million thus greatly reducing the proportion of Muslim to Hindu seats in central and provincial legislatures, which would further fall once weightage was cancelled.

It is this same unfounded fear of Muslim numbers that reflects in the recent enactment of laws against "love-jihad" by several Indian States, and raucous calls for a population regulation law in India to "tackle the problem of declining Hindu population and to stop the rise of non-Hindu population".

The Muslim contribution

But what is inexplicable is, more than seven decades after Partition, anti-Muslim sentiment not just exists but continues to surge in India. Why is this so if Muslims have consciously stayed away from terrorism and never betrayed the faith reposed in them by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who in September 2014 had said, "Indian Muslims will live for India. They will die for India. They will not want anything

bad for India."

Apart from the aforementioned reasons, the answer lies in the fact that Muslim religious leaders have done nothing to encourage the community to win the trust of other people, a basic requirement for peaceful coexistence. Unlike political trust in liberal democracies which according to British author Marek Kohn is founded upon the suspicion that the powerful will be tempted to abuse power, social trust (as argued by American political scientist Eric Usner) is based on the optimistic premise that although people may follow different religions or secular ideologies, they hold fundamental values in common.

The Muslim clergy has miserably failed on this front. It saw the illegal demolition of the Babri Masjid as condemnable act of religious extremism but remained a mute spectator when a Hindu temple was burnt down in Pakistan a few months ago. And when Pakistan's Supreme Court ordered its reconstruction, no Muslim religious organisation welcomed the decision. However, provocative televangelist Zakir Naik issued a statement that non-Muslims in a Muslim state do not have the right to construct their places of worship even with their own funds. The unIslamic conversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque was also greeted with either deafening silence or quiet support.

Similar clerical hypocrisy prevails when it comes to condemning draconian laws in Muslim countries such as those pertaining to blasphemy and apostasy in Pa-

kistan whose blatant misuse has resulted in the murder of both Muslims and non-Muslims. The Islamically baseless concept of *ghazwa al Hind* (war against India) is another issue on which the Indian *ulema* are silent. The issue continues to be invoked by the Hindu right to question the loyalty of Muslims, and thus, is yet another reason for Hindu-Muslim mistrust.

Overcoming the suspicion

If this climate of suspicion has to be overcome, the Indian *ulema* must emphatically declare the concept of *ghazwa al-Hind* to be unIslamic apart from clarifying that India is not *darul harb* (abode of war). They must also announce that the word *kafir* has no pejorative overtones and does not refer to non-Muslims. Apostasy and blasphemy have also got to be removed from the list of capital crimes under Islamic law.

In short, what is needed is a radical rethink of Muslim theology. As this is not possible in India with the outdated *madrasa* system in existence, it is up to the Muslim laity to shed its deferential docility and start challenging the self-proclaimed epistemological supremacy of "religious authorities" and pressurise them into completely revamping the *madrasa* curriculum to harmonise it with the pluralistic teachings of Islam and modernity. There is no other antidote to Islamophobia from within.

A. Faizur Rahman is Secretary-General of the Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought.
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

EVM malfunction

It is baffling that the Election Commission of India (ECI) appears to be complacent by saying Electronic Voting Machines and the voter verifiable paper and audit trail used for the Phase I polls malfunctioned less than in previous polls (Page 1, "Bengal, Assam record high turnout in first phase of polls", March 28). It is a serious issue if a voter pressing the button to cast his vote for a particular party finds the vote having been cast in favour of another party. The ECI has the huge task of conducting elections in a free and fair manner and it should not give rise to suspicion that it is a handmaiden of a particular party.

A. JAINULABDEEN,
Chennai

While it is good news that the first phase of elections was held peacefully in West Bengal and Assam, it is also shocking to learn that at a polling booth in the Majra High Madrasa area of Kanthi in West Bengal, there were allegations that after the vote was cast, the VVPAT slips showed votes for the BJP (Inside pages, "Largely peaceful start to polls in Bengal, Assam", March 28). While the CEO said the error was addressed, one cannot forget that there were many such complaints reported in the last general election also. The electorate has to be vigilant.

THARCUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

Mask wearing
The government survey, that over 50% do not wear face masks, does not bode well for India (Page 1, "Over 50%

don't wear masks, finds govt. survey", March 28). With the health-care systems experiencing COVID-19 fatigue, it will be disastrous if the COVID-19 surge continues and large numbers of people need hospitalisation again. Vaccination and public health campaigns to emphasise the importance of mask wearing and social distancing are the need of the hour if India does not want to find itself in the same situation as last year.

Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

While the fight against COVID-19 is going on, there is another story. Most people on the streets have forgotten to wear masks and practise social distancing. This shows that the urge to protect oneself and others from the virus fading. Vaccination and acceptance

of mask-wearing can help India lessen the chances of another wave happening.

MAYASHANG NK,
Nambishi Khullen, Yairipok, Manipur

Examination results

The result of the Kerala Administrative Service examination was published by the Kerala Public Service Commission on March 24. In the results of Streams 1 and 2 (SL. No.: 27/2021/ERII, Cat.No.: 186/2019 and SL. No.: 27/2021/ERII, Cat.No.: 187/2019) for the KAS Officer (Junior Time Scale) Trainee, on the basis of a written test (descriptive type) held on November 20 and 21, a few roll numbers have appeared in both streams. The numbers 100222, 101032, 101717 and 102748 have been repeated. This shows that there could be other mistakes in the list. Right from the beginning of the

KAS examination, there have been a series of issues.

GAYATHRI S.,
Thiruvananthapuram

Election duty training

I am a college professor appointed for the first time for election duty for the 2021 Assembly election. I attended two training sessions, on March 13 and March 27. The programme organised by the Election Commission was a farce. No SOP was followed as the classrooms were too small to accommodate the trainees. The entire day was spent in watching recorded videos (YouTube) of election duties, which could have been circulated on social media to the trainees,

The needless resurrection of a buried issue

The apex court's order issuing notice on a petition challenging the Places of Worship Act is disturbing



DUSHYANT DAVE

On November 9, 2019, the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court gave its judgment in *M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das*, which is known as the Ram Janmabhoomi temple case. The Bench comprised Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S.A. Bobde, D.Y. Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S. Abdul Nazeer. The record does not show who the author of the judgment was, so all the five judges can be said to have authored it. The judgment is an unequivocal expression of approval of The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991. The Preamble of the Act reads: "An act to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to provide for the maintenance of the religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." Section 5 expressly exempts Ram Janmabhumi-Babri Masjid, situated in Ayodhya, from the Act.

Supreme Court's observations

After analysing the Act, the Supreme Court said: "The law imposes two unwavering and mandatory norms: (i) A bar is imposed by Section 3 on the conversion of a place of worship of any religious denomination or a section of a denomination into a place of worship either of a different section of the same religious denomination or of a distinct religious denomination. The expression 'place of worship' is defined in the broadest possible terms to cover places of public religious worship of all religions and denominations and; (ii) The law preserves the religious character of every place of worship as it existed on 15 August 1947. Towards achieving this purpose, it provides for the abatement of suits and legal proceedings with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on 15 August 1947."

The court said that the Places of Worship Act "protects and secures the fundamental values of the Con-



SANDEEP SAKENA

stitution." It further said, "The law addresses itself to the State as much as to every citizen of the nation. Its norms bind those who govern the affairs of the nation at every level. Those norms implement the Fundamental Duties under Article 51A and are hence positive mandates to every citizen as well."

The court also emphatically held that "the Places of Worship Act is intrinsically related to the obligations of a secular state. It reflects the commitment of India to the equality of all religions. Above all, the Places of Worship Act is an affirmation of the solemn duty which was cast upon the State to preserve and protect the equality of all faiths as an essential constitutional value, a norm which has the status of being a basic feature of the Constitution."

The court more pithily stated: "Historical wrongs cannot be remedied by the people taking the law in their own hands. In preserving the character of places of public worship, Parliament has mandated in no uncertain terms that history and its wrongs shall not be used as instruments to oppress the present and the future."

The court took serious exception to the judgment of Justice D.V. Sharma of the Allahabad High Court wherein he had held, "Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 does not debar those cases where declaration is sought for a period prior to the Act came into force or for enforcement of right which was recognised before coming into force of the Act." The Supreme Court declared that this is directly contrary to Section 4 of the Act.

Despite the fact that Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid was exempted

from the Act, the Supreme Court expressed its anguish. It said, "On 6 December 1992, the structure of the mosque was brought down and the mosque was destroyed... The destruction of the mosque and the obliteration of the Islamic structure was an egregious violation of the rule of law."

A deeply disturbing move

Yet, on March 12, 2021, the Supreme Court issued notice to the Central government on a petition that was filed challenging the validity of certain provisions of the 1991 Act. The petition seeks setting aside of Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Act on the grounds that they "validate 'places of worship', illegally made by barbaric invaders."

The Bench consisted of Chief Justice S.A. Bobde and Justice A.S. Bobanna.

The petition is founded, inter alia, on the basis that, "From 1192-1947, the invaders not only damaged desecrated the places of worship and pilgrimage depicting Indian culture from north to south, east to west but also occupied the same under military power. Therefore, S. 4 is a serious jolt on the cultural and religious heritage of India."

The Supreme Court's order on issuing notice on this petition is deeply disturbing on many counts. Every argument being raised now was repelled by the five judges in their binding judgment in *M. Siddiq v. Mahant Suresh Das*.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all citizens under Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution. The framers of our Constitution debated these Articles extensively. Tajamul Husain said, "As I said, religion is between oneself and his God. Then, honestly profess religion and practise it at

home. Do not demonstrate it for the sake of propagating... If you start propagating religion in this country, you will become a nuisance to others... I submit, Sir, that this is a secular State, and a secular state should not have anything to do with religion. So I would request you to leave me alone, to practise and profess my own religion privately."

Lokanath Misra strongly objected to the right to propagate religion by saying, "Sir, We have declared the State to be a Secular State. For obvious and for good reasons we have so declared..." H. V. Kamath warned, "...because Asoka adopted Buddhism as the State religion, there developed some sort of internecine feud between the Hindus and Buddhists, which ultimately led to the overthrow and the banishment of Buddhism from India. Therefore, it is clear to my mind that if a State identifies itself with any particular religion, there will be rift within the State."

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra said, "By secular State, as I understand it, is meant that the State is not going to make any discrimination whatsoever on the ground of religion or community against any person professing any particular form of religious faith... The great Swami Vivekananda used to say that India is respected and revered all over the world because of her rich spiritual heritage."

T.T. Krishnamachari laid emphasis on the fact that "a new government and the new Constitution have to take things as they are, and unless the status quo has something which offends all ideas of decency, all ideas of equity and all ideas of justice, its continuance has to be provided for in the Constitution so that people who are coming under the regime of a new government may feel that the change is not a change for the worse."

The 1991 law was enacted to assuage the feelings of the Hindus who had been seeking Ram Janmabhoomi for a long, long time and to reassure Muslims that other places of their worship existing on August 15, 1947 shall be protected. The court rightly gave a quietus to this burning issue. Hopefully that was final.

Dushyant Dave is a Senior Advocate practising at the Supreme Court of India and is former President of the Supreme Court Bar Association

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

Confronting opacity

Reporting alone can confront the lack of transparency in the legislature and judiciary



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

On March 24 last year, the Government of India imposed a sudden, harsh lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19. In doing so, it gave the people of the country less than four hours to prepare for the eventuality. How successful have the governmental measures been in containing the pandemic? What explains the second wave we are witnessing now? Apart from the health cost, the pandemic has taken a huge economic, ethical and moral toll on the population. In their research for the UNESCO, with the support of the International Center for Journalists, Julie Posetti and Kalina Bontcheva document how the pandemic has spawned potentially deadly misinformation and disinformation that directly impacts lives and livelihoods around the world. They point out that one of the techniques adopted by political players to deflect attention from their own inadequacies is to discredit journalists and credible news outlets.

In need of transparency

In these times of unprecedented difficulties, a transparent decision-making system is the only way forward. It will help citizens know where we went wrong and how we can course correct. It will create a situation where we do not heap new policy hardships on the populace over and above an imperative decision that has already pushed many to the brink. We hoped that the highest court will stand with the people of the country in their quest for transparency and openness. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court of India, which first introduced the notorious idea of sealed envelopes, has been in the forefront of upholding and valorising opacity. How else can one read the observation of the first bench in the electoral bonds case where it concurred that the scheme protected the identity of purchasers of electoral bonds in a cloak of anonymity, but came to the conclusion that eventually the State Bank of India will know the identity of the buyer? The editorial, 'In-house secrets' (March 27), listed out the perils flowing from adopting opaque methods in dealing with complaints against the judiciary: "Should the confidentiality

rule always hold the field? Is it possible to dismiss the allegations without disclosing who were heard as witnesses and what material was considered as evidence?"

In this environment where seeking accountability is fast being replaced by endorsing those in power and their decisions, however harmful they may be, the question before journalists is this: How do we help people make informed choices? There are two components to good journalism: providing credible information and making sense of complex realities. One of the key elements that distinguishes a journalist from an onlooker is the nature of the observation. A journalist bears witness to events and happenings and that is vastly different from a casual and sometimes voyeuristic gaze.

The heart of journalism

In the last 35 years, I have been a reporter bearing witness and an opinion writer trying to make sense. I have no hesitation in declaring that reporting is the heart of journalism. It brings in elements of transparency, accountability and the voices of people who are impacted by the decisions taken by governments. Filmmaker Vinod Kapri exemplifies this act of bearing witness, in his documentary *1232km*, in which he meticulously records the difficulties encountered by a group of migrant labourers in their arduous journey from Ghaziabad, on the outskirts of Delhi, to Saharsa in Bihar.

Six years ago, British journalist Charlie Beckett posed a crucial question: Is good news really news at all? He asked a pointed question: "News can be informed and informing or crass, shallow and swift, but now it is all networked together. The choice is there for the journalists but it's also there for consumers. Which do you want?" At that time, I did not realise that the executive would become the sole arbitrator of our life.

Let us look at the functioning of our Parliament. In the last six years, the accent has been in getting more bills cleared rather than debating the pros and cons of a policy. Can someone explain the meaning of the claims that the productivity of the Lok Sabha was more than 110% and that of the Rajya Sabha was more than 120%? It was a display of the might of the majority rather than the democratic mediation of ideas. Hence, reporting alone can confront the all-pervasive opacity in the legislature and the judiciary.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Tackling the period taboo

Abhorrent practices discriminating against menstruating women should be considered abnormal

SHIVANI VIJ

In February 2020, college authorities, including the principal, of the Shree Sahajanand Girls' Institute (SSGI) in Bhuj, Gujarat, allegedly forced over 60 girls to remove their undergarments to check if they were menstruating. This shocking act, which rightly caused outrage, followed complaints that the girls had entered the temple and kitchen in the premises while on their period, which is against the institute's rules. Four persons were later arrested.

Notions of purity and pollution
The stigma attached to menstruation and restrictions in the private and public sphere for the duration of menstruation have long been part of women's lives in India. The stigma finds its roots in the notion of purity and pollution attached historically to menstruation. This was explained exceptionally by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud in *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. The State of Kerala* (2018), known popularly as the Sabarimala case, a decision that India is still struggling to accept. He reasoned – and rightly so – that any social practice which excludes women from participation in public life as a result of their menstruation is discriminatory on the ground of their sex. This is because it is drawn from the notion of menstruating women being "impure", a notion which targets the physiological feature of being women.

The first ground for rejecting such practices is thus differential treatment, which directly discriminates women on the ground of their sex and is impermissible under Article 14 of the Constitution. Viewed from another lens, it is also against the notion of substantive equality adopted by the Constitution. In fact, it supports a more formal notion of equality of 'separate but equal treatment'. Women are treated differently because they have distinct physiological features than men but are nevertheless equal to men. An attractive explanation also used to justify caste discrimination previously is nothing but a guise to perpetuate and exacerbate regressive patriarchal notions of our society and must also be readily

dismissed under Article 14.

That apart, such social exclusion can be attacked on the ground of privacy. Incidents such as what took place in SSGI not only attack the 'sex' of women, but also impact a deeply personal and an intrinsic part of their privacy, namely, their menstrual status. Restrictions of movement imposed on these students are one of the many attempts of state and non-state actors to take control of their person. It is an outrageous exercise of power to prevent them from leading a dignified life during their period. It is undoubtedly an excessive invasion of a biological feature that makes them women. This surely cannot be the intent of our Constitution and its values we adopted, and needs to change.

Court intervention

Taking cognisance of the incident at SSGI, the Gujarat High Court, in early March this year, proposed to introduce a set of guidelines that prohibit the social exclusion of menstruating women from private, public, religious and educational places. The court also emphasised on the negative impact created by such practices on a woman's emotional state, lifestyle and, most significantly, her health. While surely a ray of hope, the effect of court intervention is yet to be seen in a society where previous decisions of courts categorically holding menstruation to be a part of the fundamental right to (private) life have failed to change societal notions surrounding it.

The hope for women is that society will slowly but surely get past the taboo around menstruation, and abhorrent practices discriminating against menstruating women will be considered abnormal. That will be a society where no exclusion will be practiced and tolerated, and no discrimination will be perpetrated. It will be a society where women can freely live dignified lives, nurturing all facets of their womanhood. And it will be a society where women will be considered neither polluted nor impure during their menstruation, but will be treated with respect.

Shivani Vij, an advocate, is pursuing a Masters degree from the University of Oxford

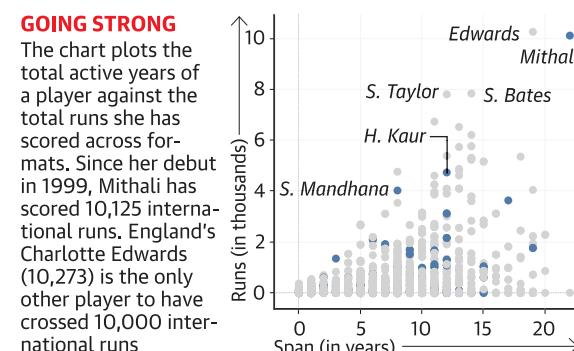


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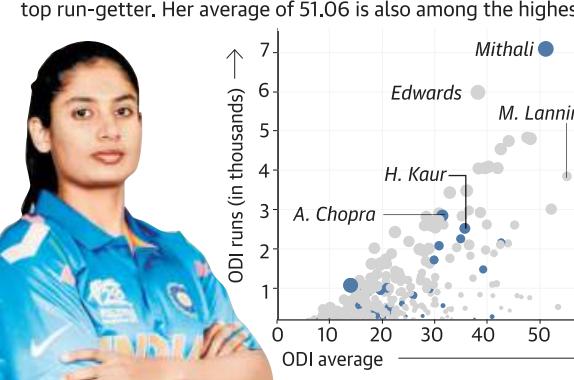
Magnificent Mithali

Second woman player to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats. She achieved the feat during the third ODI in the recently concluded India-South Africa series. In a career spanning 22 years, Mithali has been one of India's most prolific batters, particularly in One Day Internationals. She has scored the most runs in the world in the format and is among the few batters to have an average over 50. By Sumanth Sen, Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Naresh Singaravelu

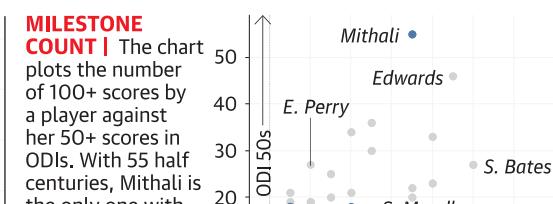
GOING STRONG



AN ODI LEGEND | The chart plots the total runs scored by a player in ODIs against her ODI batting average. Only players with over 200 runs have been plotted. The larger the circle, the more the matches played. With 7,098 runs, Mithali is the top run-getter. Her average of 51.06 is also among the highest



MILESTONE COUNT



STAYING TILL THE END | Mithali remained 'not out' in 54 of the 214 ODIs matches she played, the highest number in the format. In the 20 innnings she scored 75 or above, she was dismissed only in five. In the seven innnings she went past 100, she remained unbeaten in six

Opponent, year	Runs	Opponent, year	Runs
v SL, 2018	125*	v ENG, 2010	91*
v Ire, 1999	114*	v NZ, 2005	91*
v WI, 2011	109*	v AUS, 2016	89
v SL, 2017			

IN BRIEF



NIA arrests TMC leader Chhatradhar Mahato

KOLKATA
The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday arrested Trinamool Congress leader and former convener of the People's Committee on Police Atrocities, Chhatradhar Mahato. The arrest came hours after 30 constituents in southwestern Bengal, where he wields influence, went to the polls. The NIA had earlier in the month issued summons to Mr. Mahato in connection with the murder of a CPI(M) worker in 2009, and for the alleged hijacking of passengers of the Rajdhani Express in the same year.

West Bengal final turnout is 84.63%

KOLKATA
West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer Aariz Aftab on Sunday said 84.63% of the 73.8 lakh voters in 30 constituencies in the State exercised their franchise during the first phase of polling on March 27. After voting concluded at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday, the CEO's office had said that a 79.79% turnout was recorded till 5 p.m. "The poll percentage figure till 6.30 p.m. is 84.63%," Mr. Aftab said. Polling was "mostly peaceful".

56 bombs found in West Bengal, says poll panel

NEW DELHI
The Election Commission said on Sunday that 56 bombs had been recovered from Narendrapur in West Bengal during a search operation based on "secret source information". On the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday, a team of Narendrapur police under Baruipur police district raided a "bamboo fenced tile shed room beside Bheri at Kantipota, Kheadaha II G.P. under Narendrapur P.S.", an EC statement said. The police team recovered 56 bombs during the search, it said.

President gives assent to Delhi Bill

NEW DELHI
President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday gave assent to a Bill to accord primacy to Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (L-G) over the government. The Union government announced the presidential assent to the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 through a gazette notification. The law says the "government" in Delhi means the "Lieutenant Governor and the city government will now have to seek the opinion of the L-G before taking any executive action." The Opposition parties termed the Bill "unconstitutional".

T.N. has highest revenue deficit among election-bound States'

It accounts for 9% of India's economy, says report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has the highest revenue deficit among the poll-bound States, according to a report. It stood at ₹65,994 crore, as per the revised budget estimate for 2020-21.

In terms of size of the economy, Tamil Nadu's economy is the largest among these States (third largest in India), followed by West Bengal (sixth), Kerala (11th), Assam (17th) and Puducherry (26th). Together, they account for around 20% of India's economy, according to a Care Ratings report on the economic and financial profile of the States and the Union Territories headed for elections.

At ₹19 lakh crore, Tamil Nadu accounts for 9% of India's economy, it said.

Assam has witnessed a revenue surplus in 2020-21, as per the revised estimates for the year, while Puducherry had a revenue surplus for 2019-20 and is yet to announce the Budget for 2021-22, the report said. The financial position of West Bengal and Kerala is also stressed, with revenue deficit of ₹34,345 crore and ₹24,206 crore in 2020-21, respectively, the report said.

According to the report, Assam has witnessed the highest average economic growth of 8.6% during the four-year period to 2019-20. West Bengal and Puducherry

States' report card

Among the poll-bound States/UTs, Assam had the highest average economic growth rate (8.6%) in FY16-20, followed by Tamil Nadu (8%).

State	Average economic growth rate in % (FY16-20)	Inflation for Feb. 2021 (%)	Unemployment rate for Feb. 2021 (%)
Assam	8.6	6.5	3.4
Tamil Nadu	8	7.2	4.8
Puducherry	6.7	8	5.8
West Bengal	6.7	5.3	6.2
Kerala	6.3	4.9	4.3
All India	6.7	5	6.9

Source: CARE Ratings report data sourced from Budget documents, RBI, CMIE, PRS Legislative

ry's economy grew on a par with the national average, while at 6.3%, Kerala's economic growth was lower than the national average due to the devastating floods of 2018 and 2019.

The services sector accounted for 51% or over half of the Tamil Nadu's economic output, followed by industry (38%) and agriculture (11%) for 2020-21, Care Ratings said. Tamil Nadu's economic growth averaged 8% from 2016 to 2020, above the national average of 6.7%.

Unemployment rate

The unemployment rate in Tamil Nadu in February 2021 was 4.8%, lower than the national average of 6.9%, it added. The unemployment rates in other four States were also below the national

average, it added. This could be on account of the State-level measures being undertaken to provide employment opportunities to its population. The process has also been driven by the upcoming elections when more effort is put to create jobs, Care said.

In February 2021, Tamil Nadu's inflation stood at 7.2%, above the national average of 5%. The inflation was 4.9% for Kerala, 5.3% for West Bengal, 8% for Puducherry and 6.5% for Assam.

Although Tamil Nadu has a high quantum of outstanding debt (₹4.85 lakh crore in FY21), it is perceived as being sustainable as it is within the prudential limit, while debt burden of West Bengal and Kerala are above the limits, the report said.

Trinamool accuses EC of bias

Provision for appointing polling agents was relaxed to benefit BJP, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Calling the Election Commission order relaxing the rule for the appointment of polling agents "arbitrary, motivated and biased", the Trinamool Congress has written to the Commission, urging it to withdraw the order.

According to a March 2009 rule, polling agents who are appointed by the contesting candidates shall have to be electors in the same polling stations or from neighbouring polling stations falling in the same constituency. However, the provision was amended recently to allow an elector from any part of an Assembly constituency to be appointed a polling agent.

The Trinamool claimed that this change was brought about on the directions of



Word of advice: West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee with Trinamool Rajerhat candidate Aditi Munshi on Sunday. ■ PTI

the BJP. The party also released an alleged conversation between BJP leader Mukul Roy and another BJP functionary, where the Trinamool claims that this was discussed. The Trinamool said that no other party was consulted.

The commission, the Trinamool alleged, changed the

rule based on inputs and for the convenience of the candidates.

Ambiguous reasoning

"Such reasoning is not only ambiguous in nature but also leads us to a conclusion that it has been implemented to help certain political parties, namely the Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP), due to them not possessing the strength to muster enough polling agents," the party alleged in a letter to the EC dated March 26. It released the letter on Sunday.

The party claimed that the new instructions were made with a "mala fide intention" to benefit the BJP candidates. "Such instruction passed by the Election Commission of India just before the scheduled date of election to take place in West Bengal is arbitrary, motivated and biased," it alleged, and urged the Commission to withdraw the direction and restore the earlier rule.

A delegation led by MP Sudip Bandopadhyay had on Saturday raised the issue at a meeting with Chief Electoral Officer Aariz Aftab in Kolkata.

The party's pointsperson in Barak and former MP, Sushmita Dev, said, adding that the BJP's avoidance of the CAA in Assam while rooting for it in West Bengal revealed its true face.

Few takers

BJP State chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass said the rules of the CAA would be framed after the polls for implementation in the country. But there are few takers in Barak Valley. "CAA will never happen in Assam because the BJP would not like to lose the votes of the Assamese, many of whom are against it. Another factor is Clause 6 of the Assam Accord that guarantees Constitutional safeguards for indigenous communities, and it is unlikely that Bengalis of any religion will be considered indigenous no matter how long they have been living in Assam," said Kamal Chakraborty of the Unconditional Citizenship Demand Forum.

"CAA came as a corollary to the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which did not negate the Brahmaputra Valley

VOTE SHARE		
Party	Barak Valley	Other
BJP	48.7%	34.9%
INC	27.0%	36.9%
AIUDF	21.9%	6.1%
AGP	-	9.4%

SEAT SHARE (LEADS)		
Party	Barak Valley	Other
BJP	53.3%	53.2%
AIUDF	26.7%	7.2%
INC	20.0%	20.7%
AGP	-	9.9%

A valley divided by the CAA cross-currents

The Act has polarised Assam's Barak region, where Bengalis are the majority linguistic group

RAHUL KARMAKAR
SILCHAR

The railway station in Silchar, the political hub of the Bengali-majority Barak Valley comprising 15 Assembly constituencies in Assam, is more than a terminal for train travellers. Named Bhasha Shahid Station, it takes the local people back to May 1961 when the police shot down 11 people who protested against the "imposition" of Assamese through legislation in October 1960.

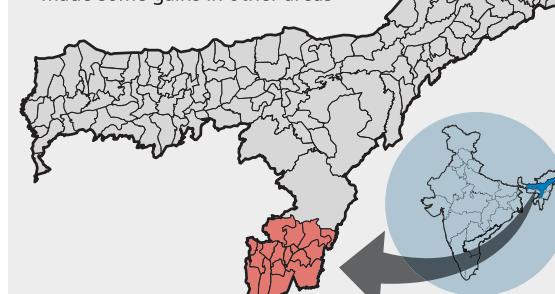
The psychological divide between the valley and the Assamese-majority Brahmaputra Valley has remained since.

The BJP claims to have bridged this divide. "We have taken Barak, Brahmaputra, hills, plains along equally," Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal often says. But the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) appears to have divided the two valleys. While the Brahmaputra Valley has been largely against the law, many in the Barak Valley have supported it.

The CAA seeks to fast-track the citizenship of non-Muslims who fled religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan

Barak battle

The BJP's vote share in the Barak Valley (highlighted) is significantly higher than those of other parties in the 2019 Lok Sabha election, while the Congress made some gains in other areas



and took refuge in India till December 31, 2014.

Keen on wresting Barak back from the BJP, which had won eight Hindu-majority seats in 2016, the Congress appears to have taken a gamble with the "guarantee" of having CAA scrapped if voted to power. The remaining seven seats are Muslim-majority.

"People are gravitating toward Congress because they have called the BJP's bluff on CAA, which fools Bengali Hindus because of the conditions that come with it," the

party's pointsperson in Barak and former MP, Sushmita Dev, said, adding that the BJP's avoidance of the CAA in Assam while rooting for it in West Bengal revealed its true face.

Few takers
BJP State chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass said the rules of the CAA would be framed after the polls for implementation in the country. But there are few takers in Barak Valley.

"CAA will never happen in Assam because the BJP would not like to lose the

A game of checks and balances

Ever wondered what laws maintained a check on the government for the smooth functioning of our country? Here's a quick refresher.

Deepika Reddy Magham
Top Unacademy Educator

of separation of powers proposed by the 18th Century French philosopher Montesquieu. The emphasis is on the mutual exclusiveness of the three organs of the government. The doctrine aims to prevent a concentration of power or misuse or abuse of power by an individual or a group and guards citizens against arbitrary and tyrannical powers of the State.

The need for a government be it a monarchy, autocracy or a democracy stems from the fact that humans are social beings, different from one another in their appearances, preferences, tastes, and aspirations; and therefore need a power that can hold them together, regulate their behaviour and protect them. A government is primarily understood to be an institution formed to manage the affairs of a country, its basic functions being — law making, law enforcement, and adjudication. These have been the functions of any form of government historically. However, the emergence of nation states in the modern period paved the way for governments with limited powers as they are based on written constitutions.

The provisions of the Constitution that provide for separation of functions and powers between the three organs of Government are:

Article 50 directs the State to take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive.

Articles 74 and 163 restrict the courts from inquiring into the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers to the President and the Governor.

Articles 122 and 212 restrict the courts from questioning the validity of proceedings in the Parliament and the Legislatures.

Articles 121 and 211 restrict



the Parliament and the State Legislature from discussing the Judicial conduct of a judge of the Supreme Court and the High Courts unless the resolution of removal of the judge is under consideration.

Article 361 provides immunity to the President or the Governor from being answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his office.

Checks and balances between the three organs are ensured through:

- The power of the Judiciary to exercise judicial review over legislative and executive actions.

- The Judiciary is bound by the procedure established by law in adjudication on question of law.

- Appointment of Judges by the Executive head and removal of judges on the

Register Now

Scan to watch the free live class on 'Balance of Powers in India-Executive, Legislature, Judiciary' on March 30 at 4 PM. Use code UPSCCE.



basis of a resolution passed by the Parliament.

- Parliamentary form of Government where in the executive is responsible to the legislature.

Thus the Constitution of India prevents the possibility of arbitrariness and tyranny by providing for functional separation of powers between the three organs of Government along with effective checks and balances between the three organs wherein one organ exercises control over the other.

This weekly column for civil services aspirants is brought to you by Unacademy. Send your subject specific queries to upsccepreparation@unacademy.com

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BJP will win 26 of 30 seats in Bengal Phase 1: Amit Shah

Home Minister says party will get 37 of 47 seats in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT<br

Maharashtra CM calls for lockdown plan

Uddhav seeks one with 'minimum impact' on the economy; over one lakh cases added last week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

In view of the sharp rise in fresh COVID-19 cases, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday, on the recommendation of the State COVID-19 task force, asked officials to prepare a plan for implementation of a lockdown which will have minimum impact on the economy, an official release said.

In a meeting held with Health Minister Rajesh Tope, the Chief Minister reviewed health infrastructure, including availability of beds, oxygen and medicines, in the State to treat COVID-19 patients.

The task force then recommended that the State government implement measures such as a stricter lockdown to stem the spread. The Chief Minister asked officials to prepare a detailed plan.

"There should not be any kind of confusion among the people once a lockdown is



Stringent measures: A health worker taking a compulsory nasal swab sample of a person at a beach in Mumbai on Saturday. ■ AFP

announced," the Chief Minister said.

Maharashtra has seen a steep rise in COVID-19 cases since the last week. As many as one lakh new infections were added to the State's tally

ly during the period.

"24,619 cases had been reported on a single day in September, 2020. However, on March 27 this year, the State reported 35,726 new cases in a day," the release

said. The State government imposed a ban on gatherings of five or more persons at night beginning March 28.

On Saturday, the government also announced a ban on all types of gatherings, in-

Maharashtra sees highest single-day spike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Maharashtra on Sunday reported 40,414 fresh COVID-19 cases, the highest rise so far in a single day, taking its tally beyond 27 lakh to 27,13,875, the State Health Department said.

The State had reached the 26 lakh-mark of cases on March 25.

With 108 fresh fatalities due to COVID-19 infection, the overall toll in the State reached 54,181, said the release. .

cluding political and religious events.

It also ordered that restaurants, gardens and malls would remain shut between 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. beginning Saturday night.

'Lighting lamps, clapping encouraged health workers'

Janata curfew was an example of discipline, says Modi

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi defended his prescription for honouring frontline health workers during the initial days of the lockdown with measures such as banging steel utensils, clapping and lighting a lamp, saying that these went a long way in keeping the spirits up in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Opposition has often derided these measures.

Mr. Modi also appreciated the discipline shown by the country in over a year, beginning with the Janata curfew on March 22 last year. "It was an unprecedented example of discipline; generations to come will certainly feel proud about that," he said.

Speaking during the 75th edition of 'Mann ki Baat' that started in October 2014, Mr. Modi said these expressions of respecting the "corona warriors" kept them going. "You cannot imagine how much it had touched the hearts of corona warriors ... and that is the very reason they resolutely held on to the whole year, without tiring, without halting. Steadfastly, they endured to save the life of each and every citizen of the country," he said.



Narendra Modi

out, the Prime Minister said it was a matter of pride that the world's largest vaccination drive was under way in India.

On agriculture

He also spoke about modernisation of the country's agriculture. "In India's agriculture sector, modernisation is the need of the hour. It has been delayed and we have already lost a lot of time," he said.

Mr. Modi said in order to create new employment opportunities in the agriculture sector and to increase farmers' income, it was equally important to adopt new alternatives and innovations along with traditional agricultural practices.

His comments on agriculture come at a time when the farmers' agitation is going on relentlessly with farmers camping at the Delhi border.

India attends Myanmar parade

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Amid the crackdown by the military on protesters in Myanmar following the February 1 coup, India is one of the countries that attended the Armed Forces Day parade on March 27, it has been learnt.

"As the norm, the Defence Attaché at the Embassy would attend the parade. It is so as diplomatic ties are still on with Myanmar," two official sources said independently.

There was no official response from the government. According to Nikkei Asia, eight countries – Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand – sent representatives for the annual parade. On Sunday, the defence chiefs of 12 countries, including Australia, the U.K. and the U.S., condemned the "use of lethal force against unarmed people" in what was reported as the bloodiest day since the coup.

27 migratory birds found dead at wildlife sanctuary in Himachal

Officials suspect avian influenza, reports awaited

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

As many as 27 migratory birds have been reported dead on account of avian influenza in the Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary area of Himachal Pradesh since March 25, setting off alarm bells and forcing authorities to shut down the sanctuary.

Archana Sharma, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (wildlife), told *The Hindu* on Sunday that 14 migratory birds, mostly bar-headed geese, were found dead at the sanctuary on March 25. "Another 12 birds were found dead over the next two days. We have sent the samples to the Regional Diseases Diagnostic Laboratory in Jalandhar. Any confirmation about the presence of avian flu could be ascertained only after the reports come," she said.

"As this time of the year, migratory birds are on their way back to their breeding



Alarming situation: Bar-headed geese flying at the Pong Dam wetlands in Himachal Pradesh. ■ FILE PHOTO

grounds in central Asia. Some of them may be infected because immunity levels are low as they are coming from different wetlands. We are assuming that it could be avian influenza – H5N1 or H5N8 – but until the reports come nothing can be confirmed," she said.

"As a precautionary measure, we have closed the sanctuary area for now. The wildlife wing of the Forest

department is working actively to monitor the situation and field staff have been directed to maintain strict vigil and active surveillance on the situation," added Ms. Sharma.

Earlier in January this year, avian influenza (H5N1) led to the death of over 5,000 migratory birds in the Pong Dam Wildlife Sanctuary area in Kangra district of the State.

NRC-excluded to get rejection slips

Centre writes to Assam; 19 lakh of 3.29 crore applicants were left out of final list

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Assam government that "rejection slips" to those excluded from the final National Register of Citizens (NRC) published in 2019 should be issued immediately.

More than 19 lakh of the 3.29 crore applicants in Assam were left out of the final register that took five years to be compiled and cost ₹1,220 crore.

The office of the Registrar General of India (RGI) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) wrote to Assam Home Secretary S.R. Bhuyan on March 23 that the supplementary list of exclusions and inclusions were published on August 31, 2019 on the directions of the Supreme Court. "However, the process of issuing rejection slips to those excluded from the NRC is yet to start."

The MHA had earlier said that "non-inclusion of a person's name in the NRC does not by itself amount to him/her being declared as a fo-

reigner" as they would be given adequate opportunity to present their case before the Foreigners Tribunals (FTs). The time limit to appeal before the FTs, the quasi judicial bodies unique to Assam, has been increased from 60 to 120 days.

Assam is the only State where an NRC was compiled under the supervision of the top court. "In a meeting held under the chairmanship of the Union Home Secretary on February 22, 2020 it was decided that the rejection slip for

the cases which are correct may be issued to the persons left out of the supplementary list of inclusion and exclusion immediately and cases where mismatch in results recorded in hard copy and entered in computer has been found by the SCNR [State coordinator, National Registration] may be referred to the concerned deputy commissioners for clarifications," the letter by Jaspal Singh, Joint Director, office of the RGI, said. The State Coordinator of the NRC is a secretary rank officer of the Assam government who assists the RGI.

Several meetings

The letter added that the NRC coordination committee has been insisting since its meetings held on January 30, 2020 and July 2, 2020 to complete the activities under the approved budget of ₹1,602 crore.

The letter mentions that the State coordinator of the NRC in the July 2 meeting had mentioned that rejec-

tion slips would be issued by the end of December 2020.

The BJP-ruled Assam government has rejected the NRC in its current form and demanded re-verification of 30% of names included in the NRC in areas bordering Bangladesh and 10% in remaining State. The Assembly election is under way in Assam and the results are to be announced on May 2.

According to Article 6 of the Constitution, the cut-off date for migration to India from Pakistan is July 19, 1948 whereas according to the 1985 accord, in Assam, that borders Bangladesh, it is March 24, 1971.

In the letter, the joint director asked the Assam government to assess the software used for managing the register and discontinue the ones not required.

The letter said the State government's requirement of ₹3.22 crore per month for the upkeep of records appeared to be "too high". It also asked to discontinue the additional staff.

Man accused under U.P. conversion law gets bail

Court grants bail to three others

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

her in love, for marriage. Mr. Khan's counsel submitted that the woman was an adult and the accused had been in a relationship with her for the past three or four years. The couple performed their marriage on their own will as per Hindu rites and rituals, he said.

In another case, two women from Prayagraj who were arrested along with a Korean national and an Indian man on charges of allegedly trying to entice two Hindu women to convert to Christianity in Gautam Buddha Nagar were also granted bail by the court.

Mohammad Taufiq Khan was accused by the father of the woman, Priya Verma, of hiding his identity and going under a false name to trap

A Muslim man from Kannauj, who was jailed under Uttar Pradesh's strict anti-conversion law in December 2020 on charges of allegedly hiding his identity to marry a Hindu woman, has been granted bail by the Allahabad High Court. The Hindu woman submitted an affidavit to the district police supporting the case of her husband.

In his column "Rokhthok" in the Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, Mr. Raut also said the Maha Vikas Aghadi go-

Sanjay Raut hits out at Anil Deshmukh

His remarks come amid speculation about Amit Shah's meeting with Pawar



Sanjay Raut

'No meeting took place'

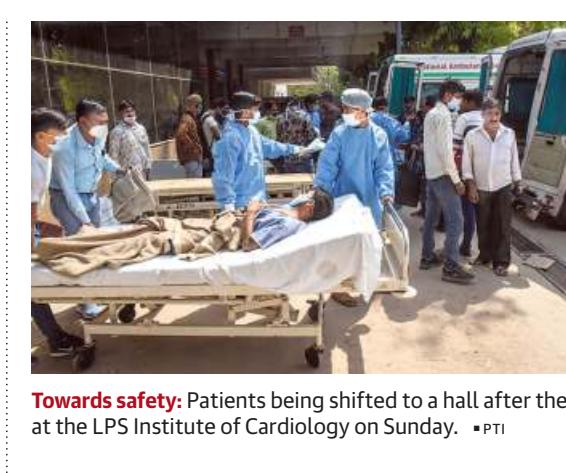
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday "not everything is to be made public", when asked about his meeting with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar in

ers?" Mr. Raut said. "Deshmukh unnecessarily rubbed some police officials the wrong way. A Home Minister cannot function properly if he gets surrounded by suspicious officers," he wrote in the column.

(Inputs from PTI)



Towards safety: Patients being shifted to a hall after the fire at the LPS Institute of Cardiology on Sunday. ■ PTI

Fire breaks out at Kanpur govt. hospital

More than 140 patients rescued

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday initiated an investigation after a fire broke out in the cardiology department of a hospital in Kanpur.

The fire broke out around 7.25 a.m. at a medical store of the ICU of the LPS Institute of Cardiology, a senior police officer said. It was brought under control but smoke spread to the ICU, said Asseem Arun, Commissioner of Police. All 140 patients were safely evacuated, he said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath sought a report from the district administration and directed a team of the Principal Secretary, Health Department, and the Director-General, Fire, to visit the hospital and submit a report.

According to hospital officials, two high-risk patients

died in the morning but the deaths were "not caused by the fire". About the deaths of the two patients, Vinay Krishna, Director of the hospital, said, "Tek Chand died around 6.30 a.m., even before the fire broke out. Raasoolan Bi died later. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem. *Prima facie*, the high-risk patients had normal deaths and the fatalities were not caused by the fire. The post-mortem will reveal the exact cause." Dr. Krishna said the cause was "probably a short-circuit".

"Things are under control now ... There are no casualties. Over 140 patients were evacuated," Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awani Kumar Awasthi said.

Windowpanes on the first floor of the hospital were broken to let the smoke out, an official said.

(With inputs from PTI)

J&K police book youth for disrupting concert

Ruckus broke out over choice of song

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir police lodged an FIR against some youth who raised slogans and vandalised a music concert organised by the J&K Tourism Department, in Srinagar on Sunday.

"A group of miscreants created ruckus on the stage. It was triggered when one boy among the audience demanded a song of his choice to be played. However, his request was not fulfilled im-

mediately. When he took away the microphone, one member of the cultural group slapped that boy," a police spokesman said.

The spokesman said the police used maximum restraint and avoided firing tear-gas shells. "Any use of force would have created a stampede-like situation where people in hundreds, including women and children, were in attendance.", The police have lodged an FIR against the miscreants.

Irate locals set fire to the vehicle and indulged in heavy stone-pelting when the police and administrative officers reached the spot, a senior police officer said.

The accident took place in the Telhada police station

'Fake teacher' taught for 15 years in Unnao

UP STF has been probing such cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

For 15 years, Om Prakash served as a teacher in the basic Education Department in Uttar Pradesh. He was posted as a teacher in an upper primary school in Siriyapur in Unnao. However, his run came to an end with his arrest on Friday.

According to the police, Om Prakash's educational documents dated 2002 were found to be fake. A native of Hardoi, he was arrested after a probe found his arrest on Friday

SOMA BASU

"Why should periods be gross to talk about?" asks Tisca Chopra, mom to eight-year-old Tara. Her parents, says Tisca, never volunteered information and she picked up different versions of pubertal truths from cousins and friends. But with Tara, Tisca has chosen to be open because she realises growing up is a roller-coaster ride. "My husband and I do not hesitate to call the body parts by their biological names during conversations at home," she says. "A breast is breast and a vagina is a vagina, why should basic physiology and biology be such a taboo to discuss?"

It was the actor-director-author's childhood friend, Vidhi Bhargava who planted the seed in her to write on body changes so that young girls know what is coming their way. The lockdown gave Tisca time to research and pen a guide that gives practical suggestions to cope with physical and emotional upheavals during hormonal changes at puberty. "It is also about inclusivity," she says. "Boys and girls should be scientifically taught to understand their bodies and also each other's," she says, taking time off for the interview while on a shoot in Jaipur for a web series.

Tisca began writing a letter to her daughter about the biological events she would inevitably face, but the more she spoke with Tara and her friends, she felt the need to address several basic questions in detail in a language easy to comprehend.

From *Taare Zameen Par*'s on-screen sensitive and silent mother, Tisca emerges as the bold and understanding mother off-screen who wishes to empower every girl with knowledge and the guts to laugh off anybody who hushes up discussions around body parts or menstruation. From hair growth over the body, to pimples and acne, pads and hygiene, emotions and self-worth, Tisca talks straight about them all, while drawing lessons from her personal experiences.

"Every girl should feel how amazing she is because the onset of period prepares her to procreate life. There is nothing dirty or shameful about it; we only need to do away with the age old programming of our



Speaking out. PERIOD

Actor Tisca Chopra's book *What's Up With Me?* is a conversation starter between parents and tweens on puberty and periods

minds and irrelevant superstitions," she says.

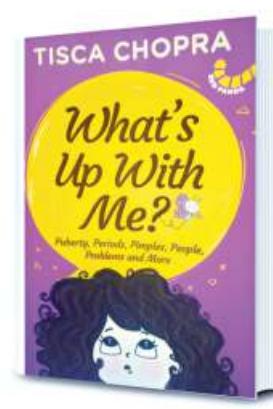
Excerpts from the interview:

Has your daughter Tara read the book?

• Yes she has, and her response is most memorable. She was my inspiration for writing this book. Her reactions to certain conversations, her thoughts and ideas shaped my approach to choosing various topics.

How did she react to the book considering it is her generation the book is aimed at?

• Tara took an hour of intent reading to finish the book, cover to cover, absorbing every word, I guess. I was surprised because suddenly I didn't hear a peep from her, which is unusual for my active, chatty girl. Once done she said to me – "Mumma, you know we talk about boys!" That was enough for me to know that I have hit the right note. Frank



discussions are at the core of understanding normal biological process.

How challenging was it to demystify bodily changes and the angst they bring on in a growing girl?

• Initially I wondered how much detail to go into, but then I decided to stay true. In our home we have honest conversations on every taboo topic. As the narrative took shape, I found myself talking about self-worth and building confidence in the young girls. Menstruation and puberty are natural progression into adulthood. It confounds me that this phase is so shrouded in mystery, and is such a tumultuous time. I want to tell them that they can do anything they want, and they are incredible. Having periods is in no way bad, rather not getting them is worrisome.

What was your approach to the stigma of period shaming?

• When I looked back at my childhood, it struck me that my own learning and discovery of puberty, and the concepts and changes associated with it were fragmented, confusing and ambiguous. So I decided to put basic scientific facts in a fun, candid and empathetic manner for a complete rethink on traditional concepts of sexuality. By talking about sexual preferences, crushes, emotions that peak during puberty, I have tried to let go of the nudge-nudge wink-wink ap-

proach. I have simplified situations and feel the illustrations will appeal to young girls as much as my personal anecdotes.

Changing a hardened mindset is the biggest challenge...

• Yes, my biggest hope is the book will bring about a mindset shift. A girl should be able to ask her father to buy her sanitary napkins and the chemist should stop wrapping them in newspapers. A girl should not feel embarrassed on her first bra-shopping [outing]. We should not use terms like "mammarai" and ostracise or demonise menstruation. Schools need to relook at how sex education is imparted - boys should know girls, and vice versa. A collective shift in thinking and a breaking down of societal pressures and narratives is still a way off. But technology and multiple organisations and movements are taking information on menstrual hygiene across the country and eventually we will stop period shaming.

HYPE OR HAPPENING?

Breast milk as adult superfood



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SWETA AKUNDI

After Netflix's 2020 docu-series, *(Un)well*'s third episode featured people who believed human milk was a superfood (for infants yes, but also for adults), and the women who donated their breast milk to them, Reddit threads on r/breastfeeding were abuzz.

From bodybuilders looking for bulging muscle, people looking to boost their immunity, and a few moms discussing possible business ideas: the question was the same: was breast milk really 'liquid gold' for adults too?

Nutritionists are quick to shut the idea down. "Breast milk is actually

much lower in the proteins required for adults, as compared to cow's milk. For every 250 grams, breast milk contains two grams of protein and cow's milk, eight," says Delhi-based sports nutritionist Lovneet Batra.

For people looking for alternatives to cow milk, Lovneet suggests goat milk. "It has more protein than cow's milk, so it's better for your skin and nails, and also good for your immune system," she says.

Yet, a small subsection of people across the world swear by its nutritional benefits. Its supply and storage is made easier by pumps and refrigeration. So a few moms in the US experiment with breast milk in cooking and in making soaps and lotions, to help with eczema.

HYPE

And then come the food safety issues in the supply chain: how the sample is collected, stored, and transported. "There is a good chance that the mother could be passing on infections, including HIV," she says.

In this column, we decode health trends and decide if it's all just 'hype' or actually 'happening'.

MY MIND MATTERS

M. R. A

My mental illness started four decades ago, in the postpartum period, when I developed symptoms of psychosis. I had grown up in a loving home, so this came as a rude shock to my family. As for me, I did not even realise I was sick. Unlike a number of people though, I had the support of my parents, husband, and in-laws, and received excellent treatment.

This treatment, consisting of very strong pills, did not fully manage the illness, so I had to undergo electro convulsive treatment (ECT, commonly known as electric shock treatment). In time, I could live a normal life, albeit on strong medication with side effects like muscle spasms and cramps, an extremely dry mouth to the point of not being able to speak, constipation, dizziness, drowsiness. The weight gain and the fact that some people sleep over 12 hours each night, make many refuse to take medicines. I realised that they were essential, and that I had to manage the side effects.

Over the last four decades, 'Compliance, Compliance, Compliance' has been my mantra. I have been productive, working, managing a home, and furthering my education.

It was not smooth sailing always. As is the case with grief, I have gone through five stages, spread across five years, in my journey through mental illness.

THE NUMBERS

20-60% of people with bipolar disorder attempt suicide at least once in their lifetime.

- Source: *Suicide Risk in Bipolar Disorder: A Brief Review*

Those in distress may reach iCALL-TISS at 022-25521111.

Available from Monday to Saturday: 10 am to 8 pm.



■ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

Accepting my mercurial mind

This writer talks about the process of living a normal life with bipolar disorder, for decades

The first stage: Apathy

I did not know how ill I was and did not care. I did bizarre things, like showering with my clothes on, writing to NASA with my resume, and ignoring my sweet child. Only my family knew something was wrong. We saw a leading psychiatrist three months after my son was born and I started treatment.

1

The second stage: Denial

'Me? Mentally ill? Of course not. I am a member of MENSA, the society of people in the top 2% of intelligence in the population; how can I be mentally ill?' I had thought. But mental illness does not discriminate. In fact, bipolar disorder strikes the creative and intelligent even more than others.

2

COULD IT BE THAT...



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Indian weddings can be healthy?



SUNALINI MATHEW

fragile and the idea that family is meant to support and help build it up, rather than bring it down by taking up opposite positions, sulking, and laying the foundations of discordant relationships. These make for corrosive memories, often brought up years later, sometimes after grandchildren are born!

Then there are the guests, who are often made to wait long hours – sometimes in the cold – with drinks on an empty stomach and deep-fried snacks that trickle in. Anyone who has attended a Delhi wedding knows that 'shaadi wala khana' is all about oily food that you cannot eat more than that one time. Karan Johar's weddings may look lovely, but real life weddings imitating them feel like the actual shooting process that is neither pretty nor pleasant, and is actually about waiting around, long hours of make-up, and uncomfortable outfits.

What if people picked comfort over discomfort? What if we made the couple – and not the outfit or the décor or who has to touch whose feet – the centre of the celebration? When we shift our focus to why we are doing something, so much falls into place. Everything, including the food and guest list, is likely to be thoughtfully done, the peripheral falls away as does the waste, and relationships take centre stage.

The third stage: Anger

The cliche, 'Why me?' was my leading emotion. This stage lasted a long time till I had to be hospitalised again for a psychotic episode. When I was stabilised, I was determined to learn all I could about my illness and the treatments that were available. Becoming knowledgeable also helped me manage the condition.

The fourth stage: Acceptance

I realised that the condition was not a fault of mine and the best way to handle it was to accept it like any other illness. While I did not 'come out of the closet', I did share my diagnosis with friends I trusted. This gave me the support I needed and I began to live as normal a life as possible. I still have the occasional visit to the hospital for a depressive or manic episode, which cannot be managed at home.

4

The fifth stage: Acceptance with humour

Just the other day somebody made a remark about me and I retorted, "Hey I'm crazy, not stupid." Being able to laugh at mental illness gives me the ability to develop a self-deprecating style of humour. I even did a stand-up comedy routine recently and a good bit of it was about my illness.



My son and me

My son, who is now grown-up and married, is a wonderful person. I always say he has grown up to be so delightful despite me, not because of me. In somewhat of a role reversal, he is very aware of my mental health condition and keeps a lookout for signs that I may be 'speeding'. "Mom have you had your medication?" he will ask me or say, "Shouldn't you be in bed?" if he feels I'm getting to be manic. I take such advice from him very well, though not from anyone else. We decided not to have another child, because it was not considered advisable, though I have always regretted this.

The author is a retired maths teacher based in the US. March 30, Vincent Van Gogh's birthday is celebrated as World Bipolar Day.

From stained glass works in churches, to murals in public spaces and high-end wall art, mosaic is seeing a resurgence

The beauty in broken pieces

PRIYADESHINI S

A tragic incident of self-immolation at Neyyantikara in January was the springboard for Santhosh Vadakkedath's work, *Anarchy of Hope*. Traditionally, mosaic art is identified with Greco-Roman murals, stained-glass Biblical images and still-life themes. This depiction of a news item in shades of yellow, orange, red and black stood out amid other works displayed at Mosaic, a group show of six artists, at David Hall, Fort Kochi.

E.M. Josph, who helmed the show and tutored Sajeet AT, Rajesh Thattasseri, Kunjamol, Paul George and Santhosh, says that very few in India practise mosaic art. This is because "it is exhausting and has too many technicalities".

Though not taught in art schools, there are plenty of hobby classes that teach mosaic art, which involves, composing and designing, cutting out the tiles, pasting, grouting or filling the crevices and polishing the final piece. Joseph, who learnt the art from his father who had interned with the mosaic artist V Balan, began by undertaking stained glass mosaic work for churches, he has done over 40 pieces for churches mostly in Andhra Pradesh, and now wishes to popularise it. Among his early works are images of the Resurrected Christ and Infant Jesus.

He points out that this art form is decorative and is seen at swimming pools, outdoor landscapes, floors and even on photo and mirror frames. "Different materials such as ceramic tiles, stones and glass can be used," he says.

Attention to detail

Bengaluru-based artist Sarah Kurien is working on a 10x10 ft Greek-themed mural as a balcony piece. She is perched on a ladder adding finishing touches to a blue



Intricacy in every frame
(Clockwise from above) One of Sarah's works, Anarchy of Hope by Santhosh Vadakkedath, Sleeping Women by Paul George • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

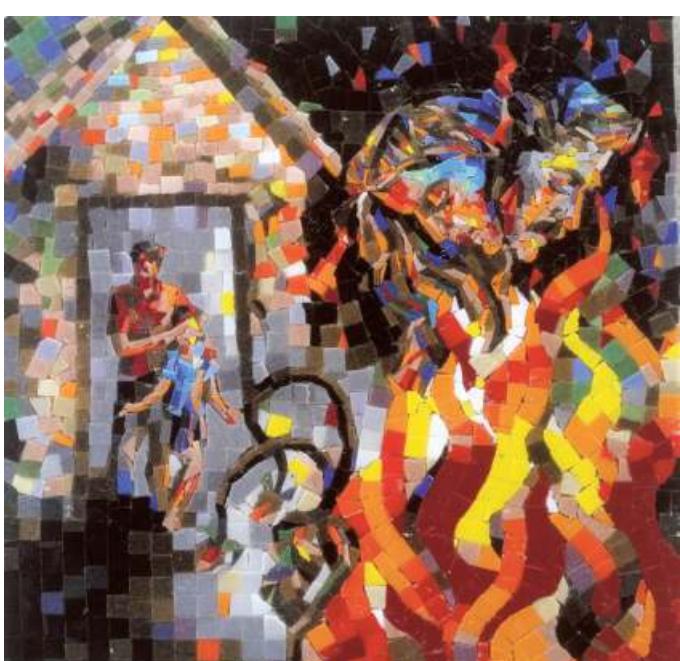


pillars in Brazil that depict rainforests. They are gorgeous and full of fine detailing. In Europe, mosaic art can be seen on tombstones, urns, garden planters, patio tables apart from regular wall panels," says Sarah who dreams of doing a park wall in mosaic.

The mosaics she saw in churches led Delhi-based Renu Sharma to this art form. "I discovered the brilliant work of foreign artists through social media and saw the possibilities of using glass tiles," says Renu who was a children's books artist before she turned to mosaic.

"I like to use pieces of glass as strokes of brush," she says, adding that one can play with col-

Though not taught in art schools, there are plenty of hobby classes that teach this decorative art commonly seen in outdoor landscaping



lours and textures of glass in mosaic. While she likes to create birds and flowers, "you can certainly take it to the level of fine art. It depends on the quality of material and intricacy of expression," she says, adding that this depends on budget restrictions, quality of material and individual aesthetics. The tiles available in India are on par with imported ones, she feels, and the latter tend to push the price up. She estimates a 8x10 ft panel to cost around ₹25 lakh.

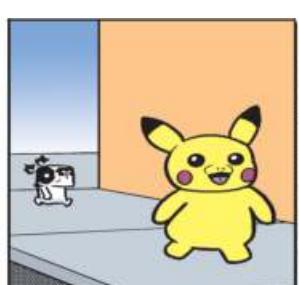
Rising awareness
Senior architect Ramesh Tharakan, who combines regional and contemporary architecture in restoration, has used mosaic art as borders and around water bodies during landscaping. "Architects use a glass mosaic called Bisazza from Italy. Though expensive, it has a vast range of colours and finishes. A thorough knowledge of its aesthetics and application will get the best results," he says.

Well-known artist Vandeepp Kafra, who is based in Kolkata, rues the fact that mosaic art is still nascent in India despite being popular globally. It is visible in many metro stations across Kolkata but not so much elsewhere. Vandeepp also laments that specific tools required for this art from are not easily available.

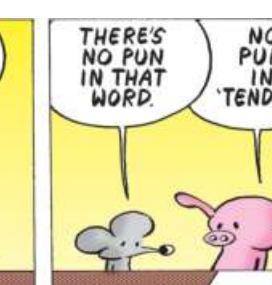
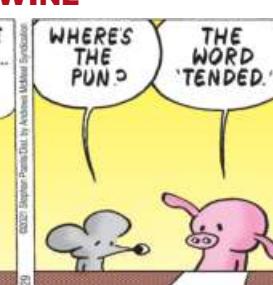
Artimozz, a Delhi-based company that manufactures floor and wall materials, offers mosaic art as a product. Sunny Gupta, the proprietor who has trained his workers to create specific works at the factory in Delhi, says, "We have been in the business for 20 years. Mosaic art was not known earlier but now there is an awareness. The design and materials used for public art and for private individuals is different. High-end luxury work requires double the time compared to a commercial public project."

At the Kochi exhibition, Joseph points to a work by Kunjumol, a domestic worker who learnt mosaic art when she was jobless during the pandemic. "She is not only proud of her work but also ready to assist artists. And this will fetch her some remuneration."

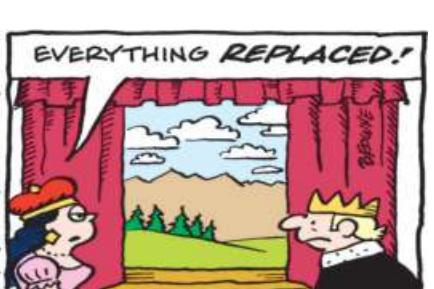
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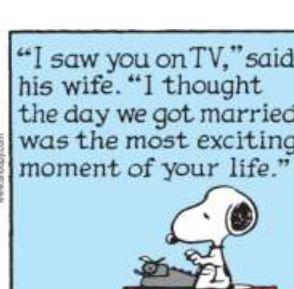
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



On the road, canvas in hand

Four artists from Kerala plan to travel across India and fund their trip by holding roadside exhibitions and selling their works



"We are travelling from Kasaragod and soon we will go to Wayanad. We hope to travel by car through all states in India," says a bearded man, who identifies himself as Vipin Irity, an artist who does mural work and interior design for a living.

Four artist friends from Kasaragod, Kannur and Kochi in Kerala dreamt of a trip to learn more about India, her artisans, villages and people. During the lockdown, when the art world came to a halt, the four got time to firm up their plans. On March 14, Vipin, Shajju K Maloor, Chandran Mottemmal and Benny Devasy, started their journey from Malabar Juma Masjid mosque in Kasaragod.

Pieces of the country

Travelling in a Renault Kwid, the foursome drove down through Kannur and Mahe, before their stop at the beach en route Wayanad. Though vloggers and travel buffs have photographed and filmed many of the well-known places in the country, the artists believe that not many have captured it on canvas like they plan to do.

Four days later, Vipin can't stop talking about the trip to Wayanad where they stayed in an adivasi colony, painted, held painting workshops for the children and conducted an exhibition of their works. They hope to fund their travel by selling these paintings of the places they have visited.

Shajju says with a laugh that it was not easy for them to organise their travel on a shoestring budget. So, they do their own cooking and stay in places of worship if they are allowed to. The Lions Club has promised to help them in Kerala.

"Before we enter Tamil Nadu, we want to visit every district in Kerala and paint at least two monuments of that place. The car is a little cramped for us and so we are exploring if we need to invest in another vehicle. In Thiruvananthapuram, our intention is to organise an exhibition-cum-sale," says Vipin.

They say that their families are supportive though all four have taken a break from their



Colours all around While on the road, the travelling artists do their own cooking and sleep in places of worship • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Global outrage after Myanmar bloodbath claims over 100 lives

Defence chiefs of 12 countries condemn use of lethal force; 3,000 flee to Thailand

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON

Defence chiefs from a dozen countries on Sunday jointly condemned the bloodbath in Myanmar a day earlier, when at least 107 people – including seven children – were killed as security forces opened fire on anti-coup protesters.

The junta on Saturday staged a major show of might for its annual Armed Forces Day as the death toll from crackdowns since the coup climbed to at least 423, according to a local monitoring group. The UN put Saturday's death toll at 107 people – including seven children – but expects it to rise further.

The defence chiefs of 12 countries, including the U.S., Britain, Japan and Australia, condemned the Myanmar military's use of lethal force against civilians.

"A professional military follows international stan-



Protest continues: Protesters taking part in a demonstration against the military coup in Myonwa, Sagaing region. • AFP

dards for conduct and is responsible for protecting – not harming – the people it serves," the rare joint statement said. "We urge the Myanmar Armed Forces to cease violence and work to restore respect and credibility with the people of Myanmar that it has lost through its actions."

Troops fire at funeral
Meanwhile, Myanmar security forces opened fire on Sunday on a crowd attending

the funeral of student who was killed on the bloodiest day yet of a crackdown on protests against last month's coup, local media reported.

According to the report, several people attending the funeral were arrested. It did not say if anyone was hurt or killed. But at least nine people were killed elsewhere on Sunday as the crackdown continued, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which has been tallying deaths dur-

ing demonstrations against the coup.

Relatives of 13-year-old boy Sai Waiyan, who was shot on Saturday while playing outside his house in Yangon, cried over his casket on Sunday afternoon, local media reported.

At some of the funerals held on Sunday, crowd chanted pro-democracy slogans and raised the three-finger salute.

The military is also continuing to battle ethnic Karen fighters in the country's east. About 3,000 villagers from territory controlled by the Karen fled across the border to Thailand on Sunday after military aircraft dropped bombs on a Karen guerrilla position, said workers for two humanitarian relief agencies. The Karen National Union is one of the organisations that have been fighting for decades to gain more autonomy from Myanmar's central government.

Efforts on to dislodge ship stuck in Suez Canal

REUTERS
ISMAILIA

Suez Canal salvage teams were alternating between dredging and tugging on Sunday to dislodge a massive container ship blocking the busy waterway, while two sources said efforts had been complicated by rock under the ship's bow.

Dredgers working to dislodge the stranded vessel have so far shifted 27,000 cubic metres of sand, to a depth of 18 metres (19.7 yards), and efforts would continue around the clock.

according to wind conditions and tides, the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) said.

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has ordered preparations for the possible removal of some of the ship's 18,300 containers, SCA Chairman Osama Rabie told Egypt's Extra News.

Any operation to lighten the ship would not start before Monday, an SCA source said, as salvage teams try to take advantage of high tides before they recede next week to manoeuvre the ship free.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MAKASSAR

Two attackers blew themselves up outside a packed Roman Catholic cathedral during a Palm Sunday Mass on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, wounding at least 20 people, police said.

A video showed body parts scattered near a burning motorbike at the gates of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral in Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi province.

Reverend Wilhelmus Tuklak, a priest at the church,



On vigil: An Indonesian policeman standing guard outside the church after an explosion in Makassar on Sunday. • AFP

said he had just finished celebrating Palm Sunday Mass when a loud bang shocked

Philippines deploys aircraft as China ships spark tensions

Over 200 vessels refuse to leave waters off Whitsun Reef

ANANTH KRISHNAN

The Philippines on Sunday said it has started deploying its Air Force to carry out daily patrols over a flotilla of Chinese vessels that has sparked fresh tensions in the South China Sea.

The latest dispute, Manila said, was triggered by what it described as a swarm of more than 200 Chinese fishing vessels that have refused to withdraw from waters off the Whitsun Reef, near the disputed Spratly Islands, in an area located within Manila's Exclusive Economic Zone.

China, which claims almost the entire South China Sea, has said the ships were sheltering there because of weather conditions, a claim that Manila, which has lodged a protest with China over what it called an incursion, has rejected.

Philippines Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the Air Force has now



Water row: A satellite image shows Chinese vessels anchored near the Whitsun Reef in the South China Sea. • AFP/MAXAR

begun daily patrols over the fishing vessels, Agence France-Presse reported from Manila on Sunday. The Navy and Coast Guard have also been deployed in the vicinity of the Chinese ships, sparking a stand-off near the reef.

"We are ready to defend our national sovereignty and protect the marine resources of the Philippines," Mr. Lorenzana said.

The stand-off follows a similar incident in 2019 trig-

gered by Chinese fishing vessels near another disputed island in the Spratlys. As it did then, Manila has called on Beijing to acknowledge the 2016 arbitration case which recognised many of its claims. President Rodrigo Duterte mentioned the ruling in a meeting with the Chinese envoy in Manila this week, his spokesperson said. Beijing has rejected the arbitration, emphasising its sovereignty over the South China Sea.



Over 100 mn vaccinated, says China

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China has administered 102.4 million doses of its home-developed COVID-19 vaccines as of Saturday, the country's National Health Commission (NHC) has said.

China crossed the 100 million-landmark amid a stepped up campaign at home, which reached a new daily high of 6.12 million vaccines administered on Friday.

Wu Liangyou, deputy director of the NHC's disease control bureau, said on Sunday the plan "focuses on key groups, including people who are in large or mid-sized cities, port cities or border areas, state-owned enterprise staff, college students and lecturers, and supermarket staff", the Global Times newspaper quoted him as saying.

In contrast to many other countries, China has focused on the 18-59 age group initially rather than on its senior citizens, with officials saying the idea was to inoculate those who are more likely to spread the virus, even if local transmission in China has been broadly controlled.

China is now ranked second in the world in terms of total administered doses, with the U.S. having administered 130 million, the Global Times noted, with a plan to cover 40% of the entire population by June, which will require a stepped up daily rate of 10 million doses.

Suicide bombers target Indonesia cathedral

20 injured as two attackers blew themselves up as guards confronted them during Palm Sunday event

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MAKASSAR



On vigil: An Indonesian policeman standing guard outside the church after an explosion in Makassar on Sunday. • AFP

churchgoers was walking out of the church and another group was coming in.

He said security guards at the church were suspicious of two men on a motorcycle who wanted to enter the building and when they went to confront them, one of the men detonated his explosives.

Woman suspect

Police later said both attackers were killed instantly and evidence collected at the scene indicated one of the two was a woman. The

wounded included four guards and several churchgoers, police said.

The attack, a week before Easter in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, came as the country was on high alert following December's arrest of the leader of militant group, Je-maah Islamiyah, which has been designated a terror group by many nations.

Indonesia has been battling militants since bombings on the resort island of Bali in 2002 killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists.

UN in dialogue with China for 'unrestricted' Xinjiang visit

Rights groups allege abuse of at least one million Uighurs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MONTREAL

The UN is in negotiations with Beijing for a visit "without restrictions" to Xinjiang to see how the Uighur minority is being treated, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in an interview broadcast on Sunday.

At least one million Uighurs and people from other mostly Muslim groups have been held in camps in the northwestern region, according to U.S. and Australian rights groups, which accuse Chinese authorities of forcibly sterilising women



Antonio Guterres

and imposing forced labour.

China has repeatedly denied at criticism of its treatment of the group.

"A serious negotiation is at the present moment taking place between the Office of the (UN Human Rights) Commissioner and the Chinese authorities," Mr. Guterres told Canada's CBC te-

levision network.

"I hope that they will reach an agreement soon" to allow a visit "without restrictions or limitations," he added.

Mr. Guterres said the Chinese had repeatedly affirmed to him "that they want that mission to take place."

On Saturday, Beijing announced sanctions against two Americans, a Canadian and a rights advocacy body that had criticised its treatment of the Uighurs, which U.S. officials have said constitutes genocide.

Teen dies in Bangladesh violence

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NARAYANGANJ

A teenager has died and at least a dozen people were injured during clashes between police and demonstrators in Bangladesh on Sunday, officials and reports said, on the third day of Islamist protests against the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The protesters – mostly from the hardline Islamist group Hefazat-e-Islam – were angry at the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Bangladesh marked 50 years of independence, accusing him of stoking communal violence against Muslims in India.

Five people died on Friday and another six the next day, after police shot at demonstrators in several major districts across the Muslim-majority nation of 168 million people.

The 19-year-old died in a hospital in Brahmanbaria after being caught up in clashes in Sarail on Sunday, Shawkat Hossain, a doctor said.

Bangladesh's Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan called for the protests to be halted. "Our security forces are observing this with patience," Mr. Khan said.

"We think if this is not stopped, we'll take necessary actions."

ELSEWHERE



Court orders Bolsonaro to compensate journalist

RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has been ordered by a court to compensate a journalist for making remarks against her. He had alleged that reporter Patricia Campos Mello had offered sex to a source in exchange for negative information about him. REUTERS

Mountbatten's bracelet, other artefacts auctioned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

Mountbatten was the Second Countess Mountbatten of Burma and had a strong royal connection as the great-great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria and first cousin to Prince Philip, the 99-year-old husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II.

The Indian heirlooms up for auction included a diamond set and enamelled gold bracelet made in India, which fetched over £5.6 million at Sotheby's auction in London.

Patricia Edwina Victoria

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"We think if this is not stopped, we'll take necessary actions."

Virginia shootings leave two dead; three arrested

ASSOCIATED PRESS

VIRGINIA BEACH

Overnight shootings near the Atlantic oceanfront in Virginia Beach left two people dead and eight wounded in a scene described by authorities on Saturday as "very chaotic."

A woman who died was likely an innocent bystander, authorities said, while

the other person, a Black man, was killed by a police officer. It was not clear if the man was armed and the officer's body camera was not activated at the time.

Three men ranging in age from 18 to 22 have been arrested and face charges that include felonious assault and reckless handling of a firearm, police said.

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THE HINDU GROUP

COVER NOTE

A pension plan can fund your retired life

K. NITYA KALYANI

An annuity policy should find a place in your basket of retirement investments. The return on investment may not look attractive, but remember it is not an investment but a protection against the risk of living too long. For this, the life insurance company charges you a premium. Living for 30 years after retirement is common now and the pension policy will fund you. If you live for 35 or 40 years after retirement, it will still be there.

There are two types of annuity policies. An immediate annuity where the pension starts immediately when you pay the purchase price, and the deferred annuity where you accumulate a corpus over years and this is used to purchase an annuity on a pre-decided 'vesting' date - usually your retirement date. With over 25 companies and hundreds of options, which policy to buy is the haunting question.

Standardised policies

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's (IRDAI) recent strategy has been to design standardised policies to serve as awareness as well as reference points for product benefits and costs.

A standardised policy helps you compare pricing across companies for the same set of benefits. Comparing the benefits and pricing of this policy with other policies of the same company in the same category helps you guess the pricing matrix.

Enter 'Saral Pension,' the standardised immediate annuity policy that all life insurers have to offer from April 1.

'XYZ Life Insurance Company Saral Pension,' as they will be called, has to be a single-premium, non-linked, non-participating immediate annuity plan. Non-linked means your premium will not be invested in the capital markets, but in a safe set of baskets as per regulations. Non-participating or non-par means that the policy will not participate in the profits of such investment. Your annuity will be fixed and guaranteed with no risk of loss and no promise of bonuses.

Saral Pension will have only two annuity options viz. annuity for life with 100% return of purchase price and joint life annuity with 100% annuity to the primary annuitant, on their death to the secondary annuitant and then, return of 100% purchase price on the death of last survivor.

This saves you from being befuddled by 8 or 10 options and lends clarity to the benefits and their pricing. The policy will cover male, female and transgender lives in the age group 40 to 80, on an individual basis.

Minimum annuity of ₹1,000 if monthly, ₹3,000 if quarterly, ₹6,000 if half-yearly and ₹12,000 if annual, all in arrears, are to be offered, and the purchase price depends on the target annuity amount.

There is no maturity benefit, but a loan is possible after six months after start of the policy. The interest rate will be equal to the 10-year government securities rate as on April 1 of that year plus not over 200 basis points. The loan is recovered from payable annuities and capped so that the interest is not more than 50% of the annuity amount.

After six months from the date of commencement, the policy can be surrendered on diagnosis of specified critical illness of the annuitant(s) or any of their children. The surrender value is 95% of the purchase price less any outstanding loans and interest and the policy is terminated after this.

While pricing is left to the insurers, band-wise annuity rates are to be derived based on purchase price ranges viz. less than ₹2 lakh, ₹2 lakh to less than ₹5 lakh, ₹5 lakh to less than ₹10 lakh, ₹10 lakh to less than ₹25 lakh and ₹25 lakh and above.

Sounds like a lot of details? Remember, data becomes relevant only when there is a reference point for comparison. So, you can either buy the standard policy itself or use it to interpret the cost benefit of comparable policies.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Give yourself GUARANTEED RETURNS

Such products help you with protection, while aiding in wealth-building

VIVEK JAIN

It was about this time last year when the Reserve Bank of India reduced the repo rate by 75 bps (basis points) to 4.4% - a historic low - in an attempt to mitigate the economic impact due to the pandemic.

The announcement had a secular impact on most savings schemes with bank fixed deposits (FDs) being impacted the most. Soon after the cut, rates for savings schemes were also reduced.

The rate of interest on bank fixed deposits have been declining, from 8.5% in 2014 to 5.4% in 2020. With the constant drop in rates, these products have now become less attractive among customers looking for products that guarantee returns for a longer time period.

The idea behind any investment is to get a return that will at least beat longevity risk and ensures that real return is guaranteed.

It is important to know that as the economy develops, returns on products offered by

the government will continue to drop.

Financial future

Over the last one year, the life insurance-products category has emerged as the most preferred financial solution owing to its role in securing the family's financial future.

Concerned about the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic, a majority of the population today believes that it is pivotal to have a long term guaranteed-return plan in the financial portfolio.

A big advantage with investing in guaranteed-return products is that the downside of the portfolio would be substantially limited.

In case of market volatility when market-linked products underperform, fixed/guaranteed-return products continue

to give the same return. With such products, you can lock in the rate of interest being offered for a maximum of 45 years.

Liquidity risk

Most people purchase gu-

ranteed-return products - also known as savings-plus protection plans offered by insurance companies - with an objective of availing protection and building wealth for the future. However, often customers have to liquidate the investments made for the long-term goal for unexpected exigencies such as financial hardships due to health emergencies.

This process of terminating insurance-cum-savings plans before maturity is termed as surrender. Most invest-

ment instruments

available in the market do not allow you to liquidate savings during the mandatory lock-in period while those that allow you to surrender your policy levy a hefty surrender charge.

To tackle this drawback of savings-plus protection plans, insurers have come up with, or will soon introduce, a new variant of guaranteed-return plans under which you can easily surrender your policy in case of financial emergen-

cy within the

first five years, without paying any surrender charges. The customers get back 100% of the invested capital without any deductions.

Tax benefits

Guaranteed-return plans come with triple-taxation benefit. There is no tax on the amount invested, accruals (the amount that grows) and the maturity amount. However, bank FDs lack such features.

For instance, Rajeev Nigam, earning ₹20 lakh per annum, decides to buy an existing guaranteed-return plan by investing ₹10 lakh as a lump sum. On this, he will save ₹46,800 in tax benefit. Further, on maturity, Mr. Nigam would receive ₹40.4

lakh that would be completely tax-free.

Had Mr. Nigam invested the same amount in a bank FD, though his invested amount would have been tax-free, he would have had to pay tax on the maturity amount as income from FD is not tax-free.

On the maturity amount, Mr. Nigam would need to pay ₹9.1 lakh in tax - as he would fall under the 30% tax bracket.

By investing in the product, Mr. Nigam would save a total of ₹9.58 lakh. Guaranteed-return products offer promising IRR - the annual rate of growth the investment may generate - ranging between 5.3% and 5.8%.

Life cover

Often an unfortunate event such as the sudden demise of the breadwinner of the family proves disturbing for financial dependents in more ways than one. To address such situations, guaranteed-return plans are a composite solution.

They assure long-term, guaranteed income along with security against unforeseen financial emergencies.

Customers investing in such plans even get a life cover equal to 10 times the annual premium. Hence, these plans attract the attention of even those customers who traditionally invest in FDs.

(The writer is Head of Investments, Policybazaar.com)

ASK US

Financial planning requires expertise, RIAs may be able to help

AARATI KRISHNAN

Q. I am a 30-year-old government employee. My net monthly savings is ₹30,000 and I have just started investing ₹7,000 a month in two ELSS SIPs with a return of about 7%. I want to invest my remaining savings of ₹23,000 to help me achieve my target of a ₹15 lakh corpus in 3-4 years. I can bear moderate-to-high risks and my taxable income for FY21 is nil. Please advise.

DILEEP KUMAR

A. If you have a goal within 3-4 years, it is not a good idea to invest in equity funds in order to achieve it. Therefore, ELSS

funds are not a good vehicle for this goal. Though you've set your return expectations modest at 7%, we've been in a bull market in stocks for the last six years, as a result of which most stocks have turned quite expensive, if not overvalued.

You can stick to safe instruments that offer capital preservation. A simple recurring deposit with HDFC Bank (5.3%) or Axis Bank (5.4%) can get you to over ₹16 lakh with minimal risk to your capital.

You can also consider SIPs in very conservatively-managed ultra-short term debt and liquid funds. If you go for the growth option, it is more tax efficient than the dividend option and also recurring deposits. Your gains after 3 years will be taxed as capital gains after considering inflation indexation.

Q. I am 30-year-old government servant. I invest the maximum limit of ₹1.5 lakh every year in PPF. I want to invest via SIPs beginning with ₹5,000 a month. Could you please recommend the best fund manager to invest with? My risk appetite is moderate.

you were not aware of these factors before commencing them. In future, if you don't need tax benefits, avoid ELSS and invest in plain index funds.

If you are able to free up ₹30,000 to invest every month for the next 4 years, you can easily get to ₹15 lakh as the value of your capital alone over these 4 years will be ₹14.4 lakh.

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SACHIN THAKUR

A. The Public Provident Fund is a good choice for any new investor with its high tax-free

return and you should continue your savings with it. Before getting down to starting SIPs or choosing funds, it would be good to map out your financial goals with their timelines. It would also be good to put your investment basics in place by building an emergency fund, buying life and health insurance

to protect your income in case of unfortunate circumstances.

First, save up to six months' worth of living expenses in bank FDs to take care of any interruption to your income or sudden emergencies. If you have dependents, you should buy a pure term insurance policy so that your family isn't left short of financial security in case something happens to you. To prevent health issues from putting a big dent in your finances, get a basic ₹5-lakh health insurance policy.

Once these building blocks are in place, list out your

For goals beyond 7 years, SIPs in carefully chosen multi-cap equity funds or broad market index funds would be ideal. A qualified financial adviser can help plan out all this. But if you want to choose funds on your own, it would be best to do SIPs in index funds like Nifty500 and Nifty100 rather than attempt to choose actively-managed equity funds on your own.

Q. I am 38 years old and am in the private sector. I save ₹5,000 a month, which I've been investing in MFs for the past six years. I would like to target ₹1 crore for retirement...

ANBU A

A. At an assumed return of 10% CAGR, you will need to invest a total of about ₹13,100 a month in equity funds or other avenues over the next 20 years to get to a ₹1-crore corpus.

However, you are wrong to assume that a ₹1-crore corpus would be adequate for your retirement. Remember, even at 5% inflation rate, monthly expenses of ₹50,000 today would have bloated to ₹1.32 lakh in 20 years. As a thumb rule, you should strive to have at least 25 years' worth of living expenses by the time you retire (you can use online retirement calculators for more precise calculations).

So, your retirement corpus should be roughly ₹3.9 crore in 20 years' time (1.32*12*25).

Retirement planning would require you to also step up those SIPs over the years, adjust your retirement targets based on your lifestyle and liabilities

and constantly monitor and rebuild your portfolio to ensure its on track. Do use the services of a qualified financial planner to do a really systematic job of this if you won't have the time or the skills.

Q. Is there a government licensing agency website that can provide a list of licensed financial planners? If not, what is the best way to find a genuine and reliable financial planner?

Could you give an idea of a financial planner's indicative fee for consultations?

CHANDRANATH PATRA

A. It is very wise of you, indeed, to seek professional help to construct a financial plan and to help you with your investment journey.

Most folks who consult doctors, lawyers, accountants and a variety of other professionals for their other requirements, like to think that they can manage their financial journey by themselves.

Financial planning requires considerable expertise as it requires gauging your goals and risk profile, prioritising your goals and setting timelines, putting portfolio basics like insurance in place and making an asset allocation plan, before getting on to product choices. Your financial plan is also not a one-shot exercise and will need constant attention throughout your life. As most folks do not have requisite expertise and cannot devote sufficient time to this, it is best to engage a fee-based Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) or Certified Financial Planner.

This listing on SEBI's website will allow you to look for an RIA in your city: <https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/>

OtherAction.do?doRecognised Fpi=yes&intmld=13. This link from the Financial Planning Standards Board will allow you to find a financial planner in your city: <https://india.fpsb.org/cfp-certificants-directory/>.

Unfortunately, there's no publicly-available rating or feedback process which will allow you to assess financial planners before selecting one.

A test of a good RIA is how much time he or she spends understanding your financial situation, goals and risk profile before getting down to your financial plan. An adviser who starts pushing products from the word go is best avoided.

Look for a systematic process and a fairly large roster of existing clients before you sign up. Ask for client testimonies. If you can get friends or acquaintances to recommend good financial advisers they've been using, that would be a good start. Fee structures range from flat to ones based on a percentage of assets managed.

SEBI's guidelines cap the maximum fee at ₹1.25 lakh per annum per client or 2.5% of assets under advice for registered investment advisers. However, actual fees can be much lower. Professional planners will ask you to sign a written agreement of what they will offer before proceeding.

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Could I have something with 20% more vitamins and minerals or 10% more discount?"

Life insurance term plan premium

Male: 30 Years, Sum Insured- ₹1 crore, Cover upto- 70 Years

Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover Up to (Years)	Annual premium (₹)
Aditya Birla Capital	Life Shield Plan	85	12,998
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	85	10,911
Bharti AXA	Premier Protect Plan	75	11,092**
Canara HSBC OBC Life	iSelect Star Term Plan	99	11,605
HDFC Life	Click2Protect Plus	85	12,601
ICICI Prudential	i		

Shardul, Bhuvi thwart England's spirited chase as India wins thriller

Sam Curran nearly denies the home team with a sensational assault; Pant, Hardik build on Dhawan's half-century to help the hosts post an imposing total



HAVING THE LAST LAUGH: The Indian team overcame many a hiccup to eventually clinch the series decider. ■ GETTY IMAGES

ENGLAND IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
PUNE

Sam Curran unleashed one of the finest assaults by a lower-order batsman on Indian soil. However, the southpaw couldn't take England home as the visiting side fell agonisingly short of what could have been one of the most memorable comeback wins to hand India the third and final ODI, and the trophy, on Sunday.

After India adopted an aggressive approach from the start and got bowled out for

329 in the penultimate over on yet another belter of a surface at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, England staged a remarkable late charge, thanks to Curran's exploits. But T. Natarajan defended 12 runs in the last over to help India clinch a seven-run win to seal the series.

All-format success

The ODI series win meant India triumphed in each of the three formats against England over two months.

When Curran joined Moeen Ali at the crease in

the 26th over, India looked to be cruising towards victory after Shardul Thakur had broken the back of England's middle-order.

Well out of sight

At 168 for six, the target of 330 seemed well out of sight for England.

When Moeen's uppish drive was latched on to by Hardik at mid-off to give Bhuvneshwar his third scalp in the 31st over, India was the only likely winner.

However, with brother Tom making way for Mark Wood, Sam had to rely on

Adil Rashid to hang in there along with him.

Had Hardik – who had earlier dropped a skier to hand Ben Stokes a reprieve in the evening – not dropped running to his right from long-on off M. Prasidh Krishna, the game would have come to an early finish. But once he got the let-off, the left-handed Curran showed his ability as a batsman.

Mounting pressure

Just when Curran and Rashid's 57-run stand was giving India a headache, Shardul was reintroduced into the at-

tack and captain Kohli caught a stunner at short-cover to see Rashid's back.

Then on, till the last over, Curran farmed strike and Wood batted sensibly whenever he had to and the pressure continued to mount on India.

Curran's assault on Shardul in the 47th over brought England within touching distance. In the penultimate over, India dropped two more chances, thus raising England's hopes.

However, with 12 required off the last over, Curran slipped while turning back

for the second and Hardik's rocket throw from long-on caught Wood short of the crease. Natarajan then bowled tight to help India cross the line.

Earlier in the afternoon, India took a cue from England's crash-bang-wallop approach and executed it to near-perfection.

Outlandish swat

When Kohli attempted an outlandish swat off Moeen's offspin in the 18th over, the world champion could have been hoping to end the tour on a high. Kohli's dismissal was the third wicket to lose in 19 balls and the home

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Bhuvneshwar 1 (4b), Ben Stokes c Dhawan b Natarajan 35 (39b, 4x4, 1x6), Dawid Malan c Rohit b Rashid 67 (56b, 10x4), Virat Kohli b Moeen 7 (10b, 1x4), Rishabh Pant c Buttler b Curran 78 (62b, 4x4, 4x6), K.L. Rahul c Moeen b Livingstone 7 (18b), Hardik Pandya b Stokes 64 (44b, 5x4, 4x6), Krunal Pandya c Roy b Wood 25 (34b), Shardul Thakur c Buttler b Wood 30 (21b, 1x4, 3x6), Bhuvneshwar Kumar c Curran b Topley 3 (5b), M. Prasidh Krishna b Wood 0 (3b), T. Natarajan (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-1, w-10) 11; Total (in 48.2 overs): 329.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-103 (Rohit, 14.4 overs), 2-117 (Dhawan, 16.4), 3-121 (Kohli, 17.4), 4-157 (Rahul, 24.2), 5-256 (Pant, 35.6), 6-276 (Hardik, 38.6), 7-321 (Thakur, 45.6), 8-328 (Krunal, 47.2), 9-329 (Prasidh, 47.6).

ENGLAND BOWLING

Curran 5-0-43-1, Topley 9.2-0-66-1, Wood 7-1-34-3, Stokes 7-0-45-1, Rashid 10-0-81-2, Moeen 7-0-39-1, Livingstone 3-0-20-1.

ENGLAND

Jason Roy b Bhuvneshwar 14 (6b, 3x4), Jonny Bairstow lbw b

team was in danger of throwing away the advantage.

Despite pressing the accelerator from the beginning, Rohit (bowled through the gate) and Dhawan (caught and bowled) had been undone by Adil Rashid's googlies in successive overs after they put on 103 in less than 15 overs.

But Pant and Hardik's flawless strokeplay resulted in a 99-run stand off just 70 balls.

Shardul's cameo ensured India crossed the 320-run mark despite losing the last four wickets quickly.

IN BRIEF

Chhetri recovers from COVID-19

NEW DELHI
India football captain Sunil Chhetri said on Sunday he had recovered from COVID-19. He had tested positive on March 11. PTI

Stimac ready to experiment again

DUBAI
India will the United Arab Emirates in its second football friendly here on Monday, with head coach Igor Stimac again set to experiment with a fresh set of rookies. He said even senior defender Sandesh Jhingan will not start while goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu is set to play instead of Amrinder Singh and captain the side. PTI

Daruvala finishes sixth

SAKHIR
India's Jehan Daruvala finished sixth in the third race of the opening weekend of the FIA Formula 2 championship here on Sunday. Daruvala is now third in the standings after the first round with 28 points, 13 behind leader Guanyu Zhou. PTI

Bhuvneshwar all praise for Shardul

Says the Mumbai seamer changed the course of the match



Key wicket: Shardul Thakur successfully appeals against Jos Buttler. ■ AFP

seven runs. Bhuvneshwar said Shardul has emerged as a confident player over the last three months.

"He has improved quite a

lot. He's a typical player that the team aspires for. He is high on confidence and perform really well, be it in T20s or ODIs," he said.

Buttler points to lack of partnerships

S. DIPAK RAGAV

England skipper Jos Buttler bemoaned the lack of partnerships and poor dismissals for his side's seven-run loss on Sunday.

"We lost wickets at regular intervals and never got those big partnerships together that we wanted to," said Buttler. "We never felt like the run rate was going to be the biggest issue. We were happy to chase that score."

"When chasing big scores like that, you are looking for someone to go on to make 80 or 100, a really match-defining contribution."

"Sam Curran nearly did that but just as we got partnerships up and running we lost wickets. We knew that score was manageable. We just needed the ownership from a couple of guys to go and make those starts into big scores."

Hamilton bags edge-of-the-seat opener

Pips pole-sitter Verstappen; Bottas finishes third

BAHRAIN GP

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE SAKHIR



That's how you do it! Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton celebrates yet another winning drive. ■ AP

leaving third placed Valtteri Bottas, in the second Mercedes, to finish adrift by 37 seconds.

The results: 1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1hr 32mins

03.895s, 2. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) + 0.745s, 3. Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) 37.383s, 4. Lando Norris (McLaren)

46.466s, 5. Sergio Perez (Red Bull-Honda) 52.047s, 6. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 59.090s, 7. Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren)

1:06.004s, 8. Carlos Sainz Jr (Ferrari) 1:07.100s, 9. Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri) 1:25.692s, 10. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin) 1:26.713s, 11. Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo) 1:28.864s.

1 lap: 12. Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo), 13. Esteban Ocon (Renault), 14. George Russell (Williams), 15. Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin), 16. Mick Schumacher (Haas) (all 1 lap).

4 laps: 17. Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri) 4 laps and 18. Nicholas Latifi (Williams) 4 laps.

SUDOKU

9	4	3						
7	2	9	6	3	4			
						5	7	
4			7					
	9			4				
2		3			5			
1	8							
4	6	8	1	7	5			
			4	6	8			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13206

L	F	A	F	A	B	P
P	E	E	B	R	A	I
G	O	B	I	O	I	E
T	S	E	R	E	B	A
H	I	L	S	T	S	E
A	N	N	C	R	O	W
E	L	K	H	A	E	N
O	N	U	H	S	E	T
F	I	D	G	U	A	M
R	Y	O	U	I	I	N
C	O	U	D	E	T	N
N	S	R	E	S	Y	T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

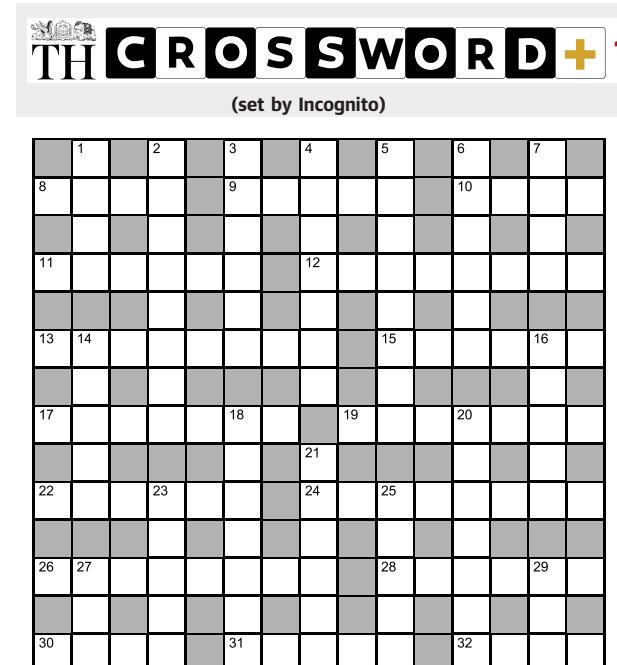
FAITH

Serving the Lord

In Vishnu temples, Divya Prabandham (the verses of the Azhvars) and the Vedas are recited whenever the utsava idol (processional deity) is taken round the town. In Kanchipuram, in the month of May, these groups of devotees walk with the utsava idol of Lord Varadaraja, reciting praises of Him, as He moves through the streets of Kanchi. And they walk in the scorching summer heat, without footwear! They are out there on the streets until noon or even later, when the deity returns to the temple. And even after their return, they do not rest, but serve Him in other ways. There is a Vedic mantra for the star Uttarattadi, which says that obeisance is paid to Uttarattadi, the star which serves Ahirbudhnya. Ahirbudhnya is none other than Lord Narayana Himself, said V.S. Karunakarachariar, in a discourse.

The star Uttarattadi is like the scores of devotees one sees in the Kanchi Varadaraja temple, sincere devotion and service being the hallmark of this star as well. When His devotees sing His praises, it seems as if He is more effulgent than usual. Uttarattadi is lauded by sage Valmiki in his Ramayana. He compares the four sons of Dasaratha to the asterisms Poorva Bhadra and Uttara Bhadra. Each of these asterisms has two stars. So in all, we have four stars. Just as these stars are in pairs, Lakshmana is inseparable from Rama, serving Him devotedly. In the same way, Shatrugna is always concerned about the welfare of Bharata, and is close to him.

Sage Bodhayana lays down that the mantra for the star Uttarattadi must be recited for the udaka santhi ritual. In astrology, those born in this star have a magnetic personality. They are just and intelligent, with an inclination to the fine arts.



- ACROSS**
- 8 Detest hotel at end of avenue (4)
 - 9 Entertainment, initially on platform, before time (5)
 - 10 First man in Dharwad, a musician (4)
 - 11 Arterial blocks... may be mobile (6)
 - 12 Mice bite concoction for fool (8)
 - 13 Outdated and damaged bootees wrapped around leg initially (8)
 - 15 Dancing lads with half tutu for grown ups (6)
 - 16 Hot beverage at beginning of match session for groups of players (5)
 - 18 Mad Pat eying Pharaoh, for example (8)
 - 20 Fight saint on mat with broken leg (8)
 - 21 Saw something like a leopard (7)
 - 23 Loops ring into snouts (6)
 - 25 Indian legal panel's loss (6)
 - 27 That guy's sister starts to make sibilant sound (4)
 - 29 Middle Easterner found in car abroad (4)

■ DOWN

- 1 Moderately heated fight by militants in the beginning (4)
- 2 Scheduled time for military operation? 00:00 (4,4)
- 3 Submissive doctor is endlessly ill... has some earache (6)
- 4 Also next to ship (7)

TV PICKS

International friendlies: India vs UAE, Eurosport (SD & HD), 9.45 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Badrinarath tests positive for COVID-19

Former India batsman S. Badrinarath on Sunday said he has tested positive for COVID-19 and is currently in home isolation, making him the third ex-India cricketer from the Road Safety World Series tournament to be infected by the virus in the last couple of days. The 40-year-old Badrinarath recently played in the veteran's tournament in Raipur. "I have tested positive for COVID-19 and have some mild symptoms," Badrinarath said in his Twitter handle. PTI

Ratra joins Delhi Capitals as assistant coach

NEW DELHI
IPL franchisee Delhi Capitals on Sunday announced the appointment of former India wicketkeeper Ajay Ratra as the team's assistant coach ahead of the 14th edition. Ratra said: "This is a very exciting team to work with, abundant with talent. I can't wait to meet the team and contribute to its success. I am grateful to the Delhi Capitals management for giving me this wonderful opportunity." PTI

Indian teams trap gold in style

Host finishes on top with 30 medals, far ahead of the USA

SHOOTING WC

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

It was a brilliant climax for the host, as the men's and women's teams nailed the elusive trap gold in the shooting World Cup that concluded at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, on Sunday.

Even though the team's spearhead Kynan Chenai was not at his best in the single-barrel competition, the Indian team pulled together remarkably well to beat the tricky Slovakian team 6-4.

Michal Slama, Adrian Drobny and Filip Marinov had helped Slovakia top the qualification four points ahead of the host, but India had the last laugh.

When one point was required with three shots to go for India, Kynan missed. But Prithviraj smashed the clay to celebrate with a clenched fist. Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran put the icing on the cake by hitting the last target and triggering a celebration.

The Indian women's team of Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer and Rajeshwari Kumari had it relatively easy, as it outclassed Kazakhstan 6-0.

The Indian team had to earlier endure the ignominy of being beaten to the gold in the men's rapid fire pistol team competition by USA.



Signing off in style: Gold-winning trap teams (women) Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer and Rajeshwari Kumari and (men) Lakshay Sheoran, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Kynan Chenai.

• KAMESH SRINIVASAN

Keith Sanderson, Jack Hobson and Henry Turner were quite sharp as USA beat India 10-2.

Olympian Gurpreet Singh struggled to find his rhythm, but Vijayveer Sidhu and Adarsh Singh tried to make a fight of it, albeit in patches.

India topped the medals table with 15 gold, nine silver and six bronze. USA followed a distant second with four gold, three silver and a bronze.

Italy and Denmark had two golds each, while Kazakhstan, Slovakia, Iran, Estonia, Britain and Slovenia won at least one gold. The 82 medals, with 30 gold and 30 silver were shared by 22 of the 59 countries.

The results: Men: 25m rapid fire pistol team: 1. USA (Keith Sanderson, Jack Hobson, Henry Turner) 10 (571) 868; 2. India (Gurpreet Singh, Vijayveer Sidhu, Adarsh Singh) 2 (552) 857.

Trap: 1. India (Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman, Lakshay Sheoran) 6 (494); 2. Slovakia (Michal Slama, Adrian Drobny, Filip Marinov) 4 (498); 3. Kazakhstan (Viktor Khassyanov, Maxim Kolomyets, Andrey Mogilevskiy) 6 (489); 4. Qatar (Saeed Abusharab, Nasser Ali Al Hemadi, Mohammed Al Rumaihi) 4 (466).

Women: Trap: 1. India (Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer, Rajeshwari Kumari) 6 (321); 2. Kazakhstan (Mariya Dmitriyenko, Aizhan Dosmagambetova, Sarsenkul Rysbekova) 0 (308).

Soorya, Navneeth duo clinch title

The pair also tops the Pro-Stock 301-400cc category

MOTORSPORTS

SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI
Chennai's P.M. Soorya and Puducherry's Navneeth Kumar annexed the overall title in the TVS Eurogrip MMSC Motorcycle Endurance race at the MMRT here on Sunday.

The pair also topped the Pro-Stock 301-400cc category while completing 55 laps over two hours.

Finishing second a minute in arrears were pole-sitters from Hyderabad, Satyanarayana Raju and Sahil Shetty, while the team of Abhimanyu Gautam and R. Anand was third with 54 laps.

A. Anfal and Subramani Gandan, completing 52 laps, won in the Stock 165cc category, restricted to those under 15 years of age. Lani Zena Fernandez and Arpittha Bhat emerged champions in



Triumphant: Soorya and Navneeth, winners of the TVS Eurogrip MMSC Motorcycle Endurance race.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the Girls (TVS Apache RTR 200), completing 48 laps.

The results (provisional):

Overall and pro-Stock 301-400cc: 1. P.M. Soorya & Navneeth Kumar (55 laps, 2hrs, 00:38.471s); 2. Satyanarayana Raju & P. Sahil (55L; 2:01:29.921); 3. Abhimanyu Gautam & R. Anand (54L; 2:01:22.055).

Stock 165cc: 1. A. Anfal & Sub-

ramani Gandan (52L; 2:02:05.716); 2. Mohan Babu & Udayi Prakash (52L; 2:02:18.551); 3. N. Jagadeesh & Allwin Xavier (51L; 2:02:29.670).

Girls (TVS Apache RTR 200): 1. Lani Zena Fernandez & Arpittha Bhat (48L; 2:01:11.352); 2. Rakshita Dave & Baddam Dipika (47L; 2:00:44.209); 3. Nivedha Jessica & Layaka Lee (47L; 2:01:20.940).

Mitchell stars in Jazz's win over Grizzlies

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Utah's Donovan Mitchell scored 35 points and handed out seven assists as the Jazz posted a 126-110 victory over Memphis Grizzlies on Saturday.

Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to add 28 points and Rudy Gobert added 16 points and 14 rebounds for Utah, who pushed the lead to as many as 30 in the third quarter.

Clippers down Sixers
Los Angeles Clippers, chasing Utah and Phoenix Suns in the West, won a fifth straight game, 122-112 over the Eastern Conference-leading Philadelphia 76ers.

Kawhi Leonard led the Clippers with 28 points, Paul George added 24.

The results: New Orleans Pelicans 112 bt Dallas Mavericks 103; Oklahoma City Thunder 94 lost to Boston Celtics 111.

Washington Wizards 106 bt Detroit Pistons 92; San Antonio Spurs 120 bt Chicago Bulls 104.

LA Clippers 122 bt Philadelphia 76ers 112; Sacramento Kings 100 bt Cleveland Cavaliers 98; Utah Jazz 126 bt Memphis Grizzlies 110.

Milwaukee Bucks 96 lost to New York Knicks 102; Minnesota Timberwolves 107 lost to Houston Rockets 129.

Portugal blows a two-goal lead

Lukaku salvages a draw for Belgium; Dutch beat Latvia

WC QUALIFIERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Cristiano Ronaldo was controversially denied an injury-time winner as Portugal blew a two-goal lead to be held by Serbia in World Cup qualifying on Saturday, while Romelu Lukaku's 59th international goal was only enough to salvage Belgium a 1-1 draw with the Czech Republic.

The Netherlands saw off Latvia 2-0 after its opening Group G defeat by Turkey, which backed up that performance with an impressive 3-0 victory over Norway.

Portugal appeared to be cruising to three points in Belgrade when leading 2-0 at the interval through Liverpool winger Diogo Jota's first-half double.

Crucial performance
Nemanja Radonjic's half-time introduction proved crucial for Serbia, though, as he set up Aleksandar Mitrovic and Filip Kostic to net in the first 15 minutes of the second period.

Portugal had to settle for a 2-2 draw, with Ronaldo left seven short of Iranian Ali Daei's all-time record of 109 international goals after failing to score for a second straight match.



Bliss: Aleksandar Mitrovic celebrates after his strike that sparked Serbia's comeback against Portugal. • REUTERS

He appeared to have netted in the 93rd minute, but without VAR or goal-line technology in use, officials decided that Serbia defender Stefan Mitrovic had cleared the ball before it crossed the line.

Belgium, the world number one-ranked side, sits behind the Czech Republic on goal difference in the early Group E standings.

Something to cheer

Frank de Boer's Netherlands gave the 5,000 fans allowed to attend at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam something to cheer as Steven Berghuis's 32nd-minute curling effort and Luuk de Jong's second-half header saw off Latvia.

Fenerbahce midfielder Ozan Tufan scored twice as

Turkey beat a dangerous Norway side.

The results: Group A: Serbia 2 (A. Mitrovic 46, Kostic 60) drew with Portugal 2 (Diogo Jota 11, 36); Republic of Ireland 0 lost to Luxembourg 1 (Rodrigues 85).

Group E: Czech Republic 1 (Provod 50) drew with Belgium 1 (Lukaku 60); Belarus 4 (Lisakovich 45-pen, 83, Kendysh 64, Savitski 81) bt Estonia 2 (Henri Anier 31, 55).

Group G: the Netherlands 2 (Berghuis 32, L. de Jong 69) bt Latvia 0; Norway 0 lost to Turkey 3 (Ozan Tufan 4, 59, Caglar Soyuncu 28); Montenegro 4 (Beciraj 25, Simic 43, Tomasevic 53, Jovetic 80) bt Gibraltar 1 (Styche 30-pen).

Group H: Slovakia 2 (Strelec 49, Skriniar 53) drew with Malta 2 (Gambin 16, Satariano 20); Croatia 1 (Pasalic 40) bt Cyprus 0; Russia 2 (Dzyuba 26, 35) bt Slovenia 1 (Ilicic 36).

Group I: Fenerbahce 2 (Ozan Tufan 4, 59) and M. Opinion (A. Inran Khan) 4-3, 4-2, 2-3/4 and 2. 2m 29.49s. (19) w, 19 and 72 (p).

Group J: Slovakia 2 (Strelec 49, Skriniar 53) drew with Malta 2 (Gambin 16, Satariano 20); Croatia 1 (Pasalic 40) bt Cyprus 0; Russia 2 (Dzyuba 26, 35) bt Slovenia 1 (Ilicic 36).

Turkey beat a dangerous Norway side.

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Immortality stamps her class in the Indian Derby

Mission accomplished: Jockey Suraj Narredu raises his arm in triumph after steering Immortality to victory in the Kingfisher Ultra Indian Derby, much to the delight of owners Liane Luthoria (left) and Ameeta Mehra (third from right), and trainer P. Shroff (right). • VIVEK BENDRE

Mumbai: Trainer P. Shroff's classic filly Immortality (Suraj Narredu up) proved her mettle by winning the prestigious Kingfisher Ultra Indian Derby (Gr. I) at the Mahalaxmi race course here on Sunday (March 28). The winner is owned by Ms. Ameeta Mehra representing Mehra Stud And Agricultural Farms Pvt. Ltd. & Mrs. Liane Luthoria. Trainer Shroff saddled two more winners of the day.

Ace jockey Suraj Narredu, who was declared to guide the daughter of Multidimensional out of Psychic Light in the Indian Derby, confidently kept her in sixth position throughout the race till the 1000m.

As the field entered the home stretch, Alluring Silver, another filly from Shroff's yard, went into the lead even as Immortality and Forest Flame were seen engaging into a battle similar to the Indian Oaks. But, Immortality unleashed a terrific turn of foot and cruised past her rivals to win by a comfortable margin.

Memorable hat-trick

Suraj Narredu achieved another feat by scoring a Indian Derby hat-trick. He had won on War Hammer in 2020 and Star Super in 2019. Suraj is the second jockey to achieve this feat immortality's trainer P. Shroff, who claimed three-in-a-row between 1989 and 1991.

1. ZAVARAY S. POONAH MILLION (2,400m), Cl. III, rated 40 to 66: **GIANT STAR** (Suraj Narredu) 1, FOREST FLAME (Leitir Mor-Memory Bay) (Trevor) 2, ALLURING SILVER (Leitir Mor-Personal Allure) (Chouhan) 3 and **TAIMUR** (Multidimensional-Tammy O) (Sandesh) 4. Not run: Pissaro, 1-2, 1-2/2 and 4-3, 2m, 28.67s. ₹33 (w), 18, 13 and 27 (p). SHP: 40, FP: 165, Q: 60, Tanala: 500 and 443. Favourite: Immortality.

Owners: Ms. Ameeta Mehra rep. Mehta Stud and Agricultural Farms Pvt. Ltd. & Mrs. Liane Luthoria. Trainer: P. Shroff.

6. KINGFISHER ULTRA INDIAN DERBY (Gr. I), (2,400m), (TERMS)

INDIAN HORSE, 4-Y-O ONLY: IMMORTALITY (MULTIDIMENSIONAL-PSYCHIC LIGHT) (SURAJ NARREDU) 1, FOREST FLAME (Leitir Mor-Memory Bay) (Trevor) 2, ALLURING SILVER (Leitir Mor-Personal Allure) (Chouhan) 3 and **TAIMUR** (Multidimensional-Tammy O) (Sandesh) 4. Not run: Pissaro, 1-2, 1-2/2 and 4-3, 2m, 28.67s. ₹33 (w), 18, 13 and 27 (p). SHP: 40, FP: 165, Q: 60, Tanala: 500 and 443. Favourite: Immortality.

Owners: Mr. Meherwanji GOCULDAS

MILLION (1,400m), Cl. II, rated 40 to 66: **Giant Star** (Suraj Narredu) 1, Scramjet (J. Chinoy) 2, Rays Of Sun (T.S. Jodha) 3 and The Sovereign Orb (Trevor) 4. Sh, Nk and Nk. Im, 23.85s. ₹24 (w), 16, 48 and 76 (p). SHP: 45, FP: 445, Q: 234, Tanala: 7.741 and 3,318. Favourite: Giant Star.

Owners: Mrs. B. E. Saldhana,

Mr. Mark Saldhana, Mr. Shashi Chand Jain, M/S. Vivek S. Jain,