

the space hotel is expected to begin in 2026, and a sojourn in space could be a reality by 2027.



# Womenia

## These lenswomen prove they are second to none

SIDDHI JAIN

“People always call me ‘sir’ when they first call as they don’t expect a woman to be behind the camera” are the words of Gurugram-based maternity and baby photographer Anega Bawa. While the rise in number of women taking to professional photography may be slow, it sure is steady. But behind the camera, is gender still at play?

**Anega Bawa; Maternity, Newborn and Baby Photographer**

Anega Bawa is a maternity, newborn and baby photographer, having studied at the National Institute of Design she holds an accreditation from The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts - Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation in Copenhagen, Denmark.

“I studied and worked in design for 10 years but eventually realised my love for photography during my pregnancy, I took a sabbatical for two years and further explored this newfound love. I started photographing my own pregnancy and then made my daughter my muse as I could not find any other photographer who made me feel comfortable or one that had the same aesthetics as I did. This is when I decided to become a maternity photographer and I believe that my design background gave me the much-needed glamorous angle during shoots which makes all my clients feel like celebrities. People always call me ‘sir’ when they first call, as they don’t expect a woman to be behind the camera, but then when mothers realise that I am just like them, they feel more comfortable and confident. I am currently using the latest Canon EOS R5 camera because



Sudha Khatri



Anega Bawa

its speed is unparalleled and that is the most essential since babies smile only for a second unlike professional models. I love photography because it enables me to show people how I see beauty in them.”

**Aishwarya Shridhar; Wildlife photographer, film-maker and presenter**

Along with being a wildlife photographer, Aishwarya is a writer, filmmaker, and a passionate conservationist. Last year, Shridhar bagged an award at the 56th Wildlife Photographer of the Year awards, making her the youngest and first girl to win the coveted award from India in the adult competition.

“My tryst with photography started when I was only eleven years old as I used to accompany my father for wildlife treks. During these trips of ours, I yearned to capture those memories forever and that’s when I graduated to photography. I was gifted my first camera on my 11th birthday and soon after it became my favourite toy that went everywhere with me. Initially, I wanted to become a CA but soon after I also realised that I won’t be able

to spend the rest of my life working a 9 to 5 job. I’ve always loved nature and documenting stories of wild animals, that’s when I decided to make it my career and it was the best decision I ever made. When I was younger, men on the field often teased me saying “the camera and lens are bigger than you are” but I never took such comments seriously and let my passion for the wild take over. I grew up watching National Geographic and dreaming of showcasing my work on it and today I have turned that into a reality. My companion for all trips right now is the Canon EOS-1D X Mark II which allows me to capture action in the wild without missing a moment.”

**Sudha Khatri; Wedding Photographer**

Sudha is the co-founder of PixelStory.in. She is an engineer by education, traveller and foodie by passion, and by profession an ace wedding and portrait photographer. She loves to create timeless, natural looking, emotion filled, story driven, creative portraits from wedding and life around her.

“I am an engineer by education having 13 years of corporate ex-



Aishwarya Shridhar

perience but was also pursuing my passion for photography throughout. When I finally reached a position in both my career and passion where the responsibility grew, I picked my love for photography and continued with PixelStory.in. I believe that my experience as an engineer taught me a lot about how to mix art and science together, to create magic on the camera! I always loved travelling and capturing human emotions which led me to the world of wedding photography.”

Sudha shares that what she loves the most about photography is that it changes your perspective about life, it’s called the art of reflection where in you see and capture the beautiful side of everything.

She adds, “Photography has helped me become more positive in my personal life. It is a myth that women should not be photographers and not work late at night. If one is determined, then they can be as or more successful as any male photographer as a woman gets more access and understanding of emotions such as that of bride. Currently the Canon EOS R5 camera with 8K video recording abilities is a gift to every wedding photographer.”

TWEET PATROL



**PRIYANKA**  
**@PRIYANKACHOPRA**

Even before the #COVID19 pandemic locked them down, gender stereotypes locked many girls in, confining their future prospects. But girls around the world are taking charge. From a 16-year-old chemistry student creating virtual labs in Armenia,... to a 17-year-old robotics champion in Afghanistan, teen girls are leading the way. Head to my IG story to check out five incredible girls who are building a more equal world for all - the world is listening! #GenerationEquality #ForEveryChild @UNICEF



### WOMEN'S DAY FETE



‘Big Boss’ Telugu fame Alekhyia Harika celebrated the occasion of Women’s Day with MOM IVF centre. MOM IVF is one of the few IVF centres with very good success rates at affordable prices. Dr Poornima Durga of MOM IVF says that MOM IVF has advanced technology with all forms of technical treatments

## Inmates of ‘CHERISH’ home celebrate IWD

On the occasion of Women’s Day, CHERISH home conducted a dental check-up camp for the kids and also celebrated the occasion by cake cutting. These kids were seen performing on various songs. They aspire to become CA, teacher, fashion designer and doctor.

CHERISH is a home for 40 girls started in 2008. Most of them rescued from railway stations, bus stops and streets. There are 3 staff members. The girls are studying in different classes from third to Intermediate. CHERISH stands for Commitment for Health, Education and Rehabilitation of the Impoverished and Struggling Humans. CHERISH is located in Sai baba nagar Colony, Behind



Poorna Garden Function Hall, Kismathpura, Rajender nagar.

If anyone interested to donate for the well being of these kids can visit the orphanage and can also donate money:

**A/C Name: CHERISH**  
**A/C No: 75590200000660**  
**Bank of Baroda**  
**Saheb nagar Branch**  
**IFSC: BARBOVJSAHE**  
**MICR: 500012084,**  
**Bank of Baroda**

## FLO presents Influential Women Awards



FICCI Ladies Organisation (FICCI) organised its ambitious program ‘FIWA 2021 (FICCI FLO Influential Women Awards) at the UNESCO Heritage site of Chowmahalla palace, near Charminar, Hyderabad on Sunday night.

FIWA 2021 was the first event to be held at Chowmahalla Palace after the lockdown and unlock phase of the pandemic. The magnum opus event was scheduled to mark,

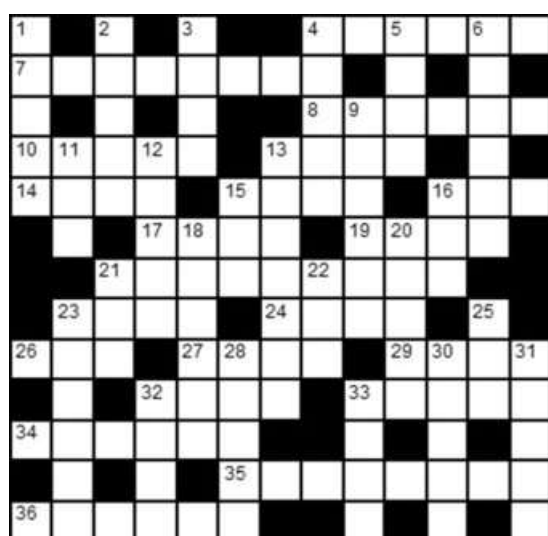
observe and celebrate the empowered women on the occasion of International Women’s Day. Apurva Jain, YFLO Chairperson termed it as the occasion to pay tribute to the role of women.

Speaking on the occasion, Gadwal Mayor, Vijayalakshmi said that entrepreneurship is a magical word. Women occupy only 20% of total enterprises and just 7% in Telangana.

14 distinguished individuals were recognised and honoured

with FIWA Awards for their outstanding achievement and contribution through their work.

The award categories spanned industry and innovation, entrepreneurship and social outreach, public administration and grassroots impact, start-ups, sports and arts. The awards were presented under the categories--- Outstanding Women Achievers, Covid Warriors, Young Achievers and Public Administration.



SOLUTION TO MARCH 8

### CROSSWORD

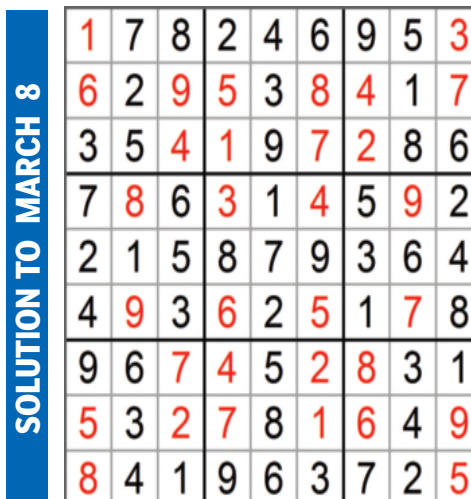
#### Across

- 4 International airline \_\_\_\_ Pacific (6)
- 7 Microscopic organisms (8)
- 8 Son of Daedalus (6)
- 10 Portals (5)
- 13 Farm yield (4)
- 14 Dublin is its capital (4)
- 15 Topping structure (4)
- 16 Cut with blows (3)
- 17 Dandy in Dundee (4)
- 19 Young deer (4)
- 21 Isotope of hydrogen (9)
- 23 Motion picture (4)
- 24 Currency in Capetown (4)
- 26 Cut off (3)
- 27 Quarry (4)
- 29 Muslim leader (4)
- 32 Suffered terribly (4)
- 33 European country (5)
- 34 Capital of Croatia (6)
- 35 Intentionally concealed (8)
- 36 Declare (6)

#### Down

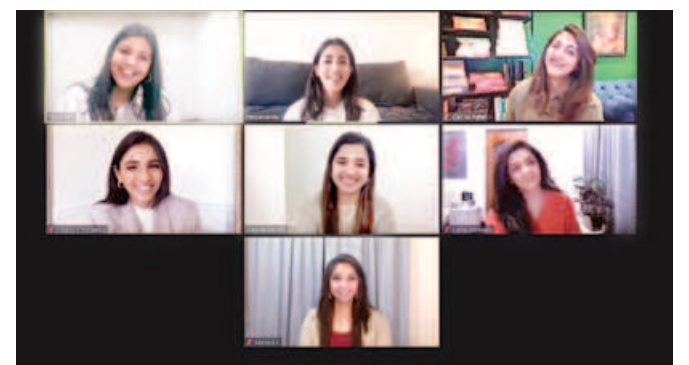
- 1 Tolerate (5)
- 2 Watery humour (5)
- 3 Golf gadgets (4)
- 4 Egyptian capital (5)
- 5 An animal snare (4)
- 6 Mental acuteness (6)
- 9 Casket (6)
- 11 Oaf, lout (3)
- 12 Revolt (5)
- 13 Cringed (7)
- 15 Deserter (3)
- 16 Sing wordlessly (3)
- 18 Tousle (6)
- 20 Check accounts (5)
- 21 Brief swim (3)
- 22 A beam of light (3)
- 23 Raids or initial attempts (6)
- 25 Actor Mineo (3)
- 28 Refute (5)
- 30 Secret organization (5)
- 31 Aromatic resin (5)
- 32 Soft cheese (4)
- 33 Holm oak (4)

### SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO MARCH 8

## Take the road less travelled to find your dreams



With a sweeping response to it’s newest women empowerment digital event - UnStereotype, LXME is set to spend a month celebrating women of substance who challenged the conventional ways of the society. The country’s first financial planning platform for women kickstarted this initiative this women’s day, and through its various live sessions, panel discussions and workshops, UnStereotype had successful women talking about their stories, inspiring other women to become financially independent.

The campaign saw renowned names like Navya Nanda, Founder of project Naveli, Vanishika Goenka, Founder of Kool Kanya, Faye D’Souza, Journalist, Masoom Minawala, Luxury Blogger, Nivedita Bhasin - youngest woman pilot in world civil aviation history and many others come together on a single platform to share their experiences and motivate upcoming professionals.

The objective of the campaign is to drive women of the world to get what they seek without being held back by the shackles of stereotypical rules laid down for generations. The initiative is broadly divided into three main segments -

Talking about the initiative, Founder of LXME Priti Rathni Gupta says, “We conceptualized UnStereotype firstly to appreci-

ate every woman out there who remained unfazed by the gender-based restrictions placed on her, and made her mark as an achiever. Secondly, to encourage aspiring professionals, by presenting to them stories and examples of the go-getters. UnStereotype had participants from across the spectrum, belonging to various industries, and this was instrumental in sending across our message - success in any field is possible as it entirely depends on the attitude you foster and outlook you possess. I’m extremely pleased to see the event unfold as several motivating stories came to the forefront allowing clarity to many young minds yet to foray into the business world. The panel discussions resulted in fruitful discussions and immensely insightful conversations that a lot of women found valuable.” LXME is India’s first financial platform for women that supports, educates and encourages women to take independent investing and financial decisions. Recently, Team LXME decided to take a survey focusing on Women, Childhood and Money and ran the survey over 15 days across the country. Last year, LXME had organised an interactive discussion with Women Achievers known as “Girls Just Want To Have Funds” featuring all the badass girl bosses we all love, followed by an open mic.



# Kuda Lao Khana Khao: Garbage cafes' innovative initiative

## Garbage Cafe shops

- ▶ Rajendra Refreshment Cafe, Karmapura
- ▶ Satguru Dhaba, East Patel Nagar
- ▶ Bikaner Wala, Gurudwara Road, Karol Bagh
- ▶ Sitaram Chole Bhature, Paharganj
- ▶ Babi Sweets, East Patel Nagar
- ▶ Sardar ji's Chole Bhature, Dev Nagar
- ▶ Roshan the Kufi, Ajmal Kha Road, Karol Bagh

PURNA SINGH

PLASTIC garbage has been a troubling agent when it comes to disposal. Burning of plastic in the open air leads to environmental pollution due to the release of poisonous chemicals. The polluted air, when inhaled by humans and animals, affects their health and can cause respiratory problem.

But, now times have changed

and with the new and innovative initiative of garbage cafes, people are enjoying food dishes like Gulab Jamun, Chole Bhature, Samosa, Kachori and Roti Sabzi in exchange of plastic waste.

The concepts have been working wonders in foreign nations and now India has also started to move ahead in parallel. The municipal corporations of Chattisgarh and Gujarat have



already implemented the scheme. Now the trends have moved to Delhi with the first cafe of such type opened in Dwarka's Wardhaman Mall.

At present only 24 such cafes are being operated and the results have been remarkable with a net collection of around 400kg of plastic wastes. The concept has been alluring for every trespasser and the num-

ber of hits on these cafes are increasing day by day.

Sanitation and proper disposal of waste has been a serious issue that needs utmost care and attention by both the citizens and the government.

The Deputy Commissioner of Karol Bagh, Himanshu Gupta has taken a great initiative to start a garbage cafe. Food is one of the necessities of

human life and for those who are living below poverty lines like ragpickers, this step will be a boon as they already scrounge for food, but will now get food in lieu of plastic waste.

The benchmark of 1 kg plastic waste has been set that needs to be given to the cafe for food. Somewhere people have started collecting plastic waste and now the plastic wastes are not disposed off here and there. This has been a remarkable step in reducing the waste in the northern corporate landfills. These steps have been leaving a mark in making

the environment eco friendly and the concept of 3 R's i.e. Reduce, reuse and recycle are being executed properly.

The Northern Corporation identified those shops which are famous not only in North corporation but in whole of Delhi, so that people often visit them and publicity is spread. People are coming from different nook and corners to these cafes. The corporation has had table talks with the owners of these cafes so that proper arrangements are made to provide food to the person who brings plastic

At present 24 such cafes are being operated and the results have been remarkable with a net collection of around 400kg of plastic wastes. The concept has been alluring for every trespasser and the number of hits on these cafes are increasing day by day

waste. Hence every citizen now gets food.

These cafes have been introduced from the month of February and the initiative has been spreading like a wildfire thereby making every citizen of Delhi to properly handle plastic waste.

Plastic wastes include empty bottles of water, cold drink bottles, plastic cans and other types of plastic waste can be taken for food dishes.

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash said that the purpose of Garbage Cafe is to make people aware of cleanliness. At the same time, those garbage pickers can also take food from here. He said that plastic waste is not bad, it is a bad thing to not be disposed of properly. Therefore, we must make a habit of segregating plastic waste. This garbage café will create awareness in it.

## Govt maintained consistency in revenue surplus: Sisodia

NEW DELHI

DELHI Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday said the advanced estimate of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Delhi was Rs 7,98,310 crore in 2020-21 with a contraction of 3.92 per cent in the previous financial year 2019-20.

Sisodia, who is also the Finance Minister in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, presented the Economic Survey of the Delhi government on Monday and said Delhi's per capita income during 2020-21 was estimated at Rs 3,54,004 against the per capita income of Rs 1,27,768 at the national level. The Minister claimed that Delhi's per capita income was nearly three times the national average.

He told the House that the Delhi government has maintained consistency in its revenue surplus. He said the revenue surplus was Rs 7,499 crore during 2019-20 as compared to Rs 6,261 crore recorded in the financial year 2018-19.

"There is a fiscal deficit of Rs 3227.79 crore during 2019-20 as compared to Rs 1489.38 crore in 2018-19 which is 0.39 per cent of GSDP as compared to 0.2 per cent during 2018-19," the Delhi Finance Minister said.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal welcomes Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal during the Budget Session of Delhi Assembly, in New Delhi on Monday

Talking about the outstanding debt, Sisodia said the debt-GSDP ratio has declined substantially to 4.15 per cent as compared to 8.61 per cent before coming into power in Delhi during 2011-12.

Sisodia told the House that the education sector would remain the main priority of the AAP-led Delhi government.

In the last financial year, the Delhi government had allocated 23.83 per cent of the total budget for education while it had allocated 14.67 per cent for transport, 13.39 per cent for public health, 13.11 per cent for social security and welfare schemes, 12.62 per cent for housing and urban development and 12.62 per cent for water and sanitation.

## GSDP contracted by 5.68% in 2020-21

DELHI Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal on Monday said the Delhi's economy is estimated to have contracted by 5.68% in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) in the current financial year.

Addressing the Budget session of the seventh legislative assembly of Delhi, Bajjal said, "The year gone by has been

unprecedented. Covid-19 has adversely affected every aspect of the life of Delhi's citizens. The pandemic created the greatest threat to human life and health, ever witnessed in the 21st Century," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He also talked about various initiatives taken by Aam

Aadmi Party-led Delhi government in order to mitigate the impact of the contraction of the economy on people. "Delhi government continued its commitment on electricity subsidy, free water supply to domestic households and confessional ride for students and free ride for women in DTC buses," he said.

## UP Home Guard official found dead in forest

KANPUR

THE body of an assistant company commander (Home Guard) who had gone missing from Malasa area, has been found in the jungles of Vijaypur in the Musanagar area here.

The body was located on Sunday, said police. The police reached the spot after the body was spotted by the locals and have sent it for autopsy to ascertain the cause of death. According to police, the deceased Ram Chandra Verma, 54, a native of the Girauda village and



after he left home to visit a relative on a bike on March 3.

"He did not return home and when his family members found his mobile phone to be constantly switched off, they lodged a missing report with the Bhognipur Kotwali police station," said Inspector Musanagar, Deepak Singh.

Singh said, "During the prelimi-

nary round of investigations, we recovered the deceased's bike from the house of his friend-Chetram, who lives in the Deengh village of the district. His family members have accused Verma's three friends of murdering him."

The inspector further said: "Though his forensic report is yet to come, our preliminary investigation indicates that Verma died of injuries. We are investigating the case, based on his call record history to find out whom he had last spoken to." Verma is survived by his wife and a son.

## Free-of-charge dialysis hospital at Bangla Sahib

NEW DELHI

A 101-bedded dedicated free-of-charge kidney dialysis centre is up and running at the premises of Gurudwara Bangla Sahib.

The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Sunday inaugurated the facility, touted as the country's biggest kidney dialysis hospital.

Established in the gurudwara complex, the Guru Harkishan Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Kidney Dialysis Hospital, has no cash or billing counter to ensure free treatment to the patients admitted there.

In addition to the treatment, the patients along with the attendants



will be provided free food during the course of the treatment. The food will be supplied from the gurudwara's 'langar', hospital authorities informed.

Besides, the hospital will soon increase its capacity to 1,000 beds

from the current 101 beds. For this and operational expenditure, the committee said it will raise donations from corporate giants, individual donations and also implement government schemes.

"All services are being provided

totally free in this most technically advanced hospital. There is no billing or payment counter. The DSGMC will take services from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of corporate houses and from those who are willing to contribute for such initiatives and various government schemes," DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said.

He added that the hospital is equipped with most technically advanced medical facilities and would function round-the-clock.

For now the hospital will take patients who visit in person. The online registration will be started in a week once the system is in place, the authorities added.

## Maha Guv called for discussion as BJP summons U'khand CM

NAVNEET MISHRA  
NEW DELHI

TROUBLES may escalate for Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat as the Bharatiya Janata Party leadership has summoned him to Delhi on Monday. Moreover, many big leaders, including Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari will also be a part of the discussion.

Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh and National General Secretary Dushyant Gautam have already submitted their report to the BJP high-command as observers.

Acting on the report, the BJP leadership has summoned Rawat to Delhi, party sources told IANS.



Meanwhile, according to the information, four ministers and 10 MLAs of Uttarakhand are already present in Delhi. Minister Arvind Pandey, Satpal Maharaj Subodh Uniyal, former MP Balraj Pasi, MLA Khajan Das, Harbans Kapoor, Harbajan Singh Cheema and other leaders are present in the national capital. In view of the ongoing Parlia-

ment Session, Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, MPs from the state Ajay Bhatt, Ajay Tamta and other MPs are already in Delhi.

The issue of Uttarakhand is also likely to be discussed in the meeting of the BJP's parliamentary board on March 9.

According to sources, Rawat on Monday cancelled the visit to the state's summer capital, Gairsain. In Delhi, he is to meet party chief J.P. Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah.

Sources said that the two observers sent by the BJP leadership to Dehradun on Saturday had a separate meeting with several MLAs in Uttarakhand.

During this time, the MLAs said that contesting elections under the leadership of the current Chief Minister could be a

negative deal. Public representatives are being ignored due to the dominance of bureaucracy in the government. This has also caused resentment among the public.

The observers have sent this report to the BJP leadership.

An Uttarakhand BJP leader told IANS, "There is an election in 2022. Due to the displeasure of many MLAs, it could be dangerous to contest election under the leadership of the current Chief Minister. However, the party leaders are trying to do 'damage-control' by counselling the Legislatures. The BJP leadership would take the further decision according to the observers' report. If the Chief Minister's face is not changed then a big reshuffle in the Cabinet is expected."

## Delhi Govt to provide scrapping incentives under EV Policy: Gadkari

NEW DELHI

SCRAPPING incentives, including up to Rs 7,500 per vehicle for auto and light commercial vehicle, is being provided by the Delhi Government under Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy 2020, Parliament was informed on Monday.

The Delhi government notified the Delhi EV Policy 2020 on Aug 7, 2020, with an intention to promote the adoption of clean mobility solution.

The policy aims to establish the feasibility for large scale adoption of electric passenger four wheelers, through transitioning its entire government fleet to electric.

"Under the provision, all leased/hired cars used for commute of GNCTD officers shall be transitioned to electric within a period of twelve



months from the date of issue of this policy," Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Minister Nitin Gadkari informed Rajya Sabha in a written reply. The Delhi Government order issued on February 25, 2021 in this regard mandates conversion of all vehicles owned/leased by the Government of NCT of Delhi to trans-

sition to electric by Aug 6, 2021, the minister said. "Under the Delhi EV Policy, 2020 —scrapping incentive is provided for the vehicles in lieu of scrapping a more polluting conventional vehicle.

However, the scrapping incentive for vehicle is applicable on the evidence of matching contribution from the dealer or OEM, such that Government of NCT of Delhi will provide incentive matching the contribution made by the OEM or dealer on the scrapping value of the vehicle, not exceeding Rs 5,000 per vehicle for two-wheelers and Rs 7,500 per vehicle for Auto and Light Commercial Vehicle," the minister said. He said other incentives are also there. Private and two-wheeler vehicles would also be included in this scheme, the minister said.



# Women’s emancipation, a mirage still

TO enhance the safety and security of women in the country, the Ministry of Home Affairs has taken several initiatives which are funded by the Nirbhaya Fund. A separate Women Safety Division has also been set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to sensitise the States/UTs on women safety related issues including timely completion of investigation of sexual assault cases. Or so the Government claims.

This International Women’s Day was marked by press releases and reiterations of the Government commitment to the uplift of women in every segment. One of the releases says under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership the country has taken a number of steps in the last seven years towards women empowerment and their safety and security. Taking a tough stand against heinous incidents of sexual assaults, Government of India has made the punishment of rape more stringent through the Criminal Law Amendment Act 2018.

However, the real story remains something else. India’s poverty is one of the main reasons for low literacy among women. Only 13 per cent of farm is owned by

women across India, however, this figure is very low when it comes to Dalit women in India. About 41 per cent of women in India make their living by manual labour. Being a non-earning member, it further expands women vulnerability and increases women dependability on their male counterparts. India is ranked 105 amongst 128 countries in its Education for All Development Index.

Among SAARC nations, India stands third behind Sri Lanka, and Maldives. India still has one of the lowest female literacy rates in Asia. As per the India’s last census in 2011, the female literacy stands at 65.46 per cent compared to 82.14 per cent of males. estimates show that for every 100 girls in rural India only a single one reaches class 12 and almost 40 per cent of girls leave school even before reaching the fifth standard. Women’s participation in the force is quite low and has been falling over the last few years. The female to male ratio is only 0.36.

This is worsened by lack of choices that women have to engage in paid work related to work type and location,

patriarchal gender norms, and the undue burdens of unpaid care work that women bear. The wage gap between Indian men and women is amongst the worst in the world by international confederation of charitable organisations, Oxfam, said. The Monster Salary Index (MSI) says, Indian men earn 25 per cent more than women in the same kind of work done by both men and women. The average gender gap is 38.2 per cent.

However, Accenture research says that the gender gap in India is as high as 67 per cent. More than 47 per cent of women in India are involved in agriculture-related works, however the wage gap is beyond comprehension, because of non-uniformity in sectors, which is the same for other unorganised sectors in India. Given to India’s patriarchal nature, domestic violence remains as culturally accepted because of cultural and religious reasons.

In a survey with young men and women in India, 57 per cent of boys and 53 per cent girls accept women beating by husbands is justified. In another recent survey between 2015-2016, it revealed, 80 per cent of working women suffer domestic violence at the hands of their husbands. Let the government ponder over the gaps.



## INDIAN FEMINISM

# Different contexts, Different solutions

DR PINGALI GOPAL

INDIA joins the world in celebrating The International Women’s Day on March 8 with enthusiasm and fervour. A happy women’s Day to all the lovely women of the world who are doing a great job in a still unequal world at many levels- including gender, as professionals, politicians, bureaucrats, artists, and so on. One is almost scared to wish them well as mothers, daughters, and home-makers (spouses if I dare say) in increasingly strident narratives of challenges, equality, and patriarchy.

Nowhere is the disconnectedness and inappropriateness of western philosophies to Indian issues starker than in feminism. Western feminism took the form of waves; the first wave and second wave achieved a huge victory in terms of voting rights, political participation, equal pay, and emancipation of women. In this demand for political, cultural, educational, and economic equality, feminism took various forms like liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, and radical feminism. However, the subsequent approach leads to a confrontation with strong narratives today of ‘patriarchy’, ‘toxic masculinity’, and a general distrust of the males and the institute of marriage.

However, thinkers using western frameworks to define Indian gender issues do not realise that many familial, societal, cultural, marital, and economic factors apart from individual consciousness condition women issues. Indian feminists taking western theories simply washout the divine component of women in Indian scheme of things. The huge number of goddesses and Shakti traditions simply disappears from their understanding of Indian culture. The explanation of Goddess worship as a part of patriarchal and casteist practices, masked as ‘respect for women’, simply undermines the entire civilisational heritage of the country.

India’s huge body of texts and traditions were always about Dharma, rights, harmony, and women working as equals in maintaining the family and society (Sahayogini and a Sahakarmini forming a unit of Dampati). Indian ideas of Ardhanareeshwar (man-Shiva and women-Shakti representing two aspects of one person); women in bhakti traditions achieving gender equality and equal respect; women protesting patriarchy, kings, caste divides, oppressive social norms; hundreds of inspiring women in history and literature do not figure in discussions of Indian feminism. As one author Jasbir Jain says, ‘Draupadi deconstructed the notions of chastity and sati; Sita, of power and motherhood; Kali, of violence; Puru’s young wife, of sexuality; the bhakta women, of marriage and prayer.’

The utilitarianism approach of gender equality in the West finally lost the understanding of the exclusive value that birthing, motherhood and lactating bring to women. A biological function became a matter of rights which is extremely confusing in the Indian context. This is not to suggest that everything is great about Indian women with regards to their educational, political, social, or economical rights and respect, but the

India is large, diverse, and unequal. The stories of feminism are likewise different. It is perhaps the second wave of global feminism which found resonance with some contemporary Indian issues like land rights, political representation, divorce laws, custody, guardianship, sexual harassment at work, alcoholism, dowry, and rape. There are gender issues in India, some very severe, and they need correction but through our own solutions

issues and solutions are simply different.

The low respect for women voicing out choices in lower socio-economic classes and the struggle of an urban woman in balancing work and home leads to the belief that Hindu texts are extremely misogynistic. As is usual with many narratives, an association with traditions becomes the cause of social problems. Some Indian scholars feel that western feminism when applied to the Indian culture leads to anti-Hinduism instead of anti-misogyny. Political and demographical hijacking of feminism by West-funded NGO activism is primarily responsible for it.

The Sabarimala temple entry issue exemplified how traditional belief systems became a set of ideas related to gender discrimination – a direct influence of global feminism. The ridicule of ‘patriarchy’ and ‘regressive nature’ constantly sticks to many Indian festivals and customs. As the later waves spill over to India, the themes of both father and mother as evils, Mangalasutra and sindoor as regressive symbols, and deeply patriarchal social systems tries to unsettle the Hindu family and the marriage system. Many Indian feminists have an acute sense of discomfort as postcolonial theories related to feminism addresses the need of western academia. One Indian scholar says that what counts as ‘marginal’ in relation to the West has often been central and foundational in the non-West.

India is large, diverse, and unequal. The stories of feminism are likewise different. It is perhaps the second wave of global feminism which found resonance with some contemporary Indian issues like land rights, political representation, divorce laws, custody, guardianship, sexual harassment at work, alcoholism, dowry, and rape. There are gender issues in India, some very severe, and they need correction but through our own solutions.

Feminism is a modern expansionist creation of the West based on the ideas of ‘everything patriarchal’ themes, the disparate natures of men and women, and liberal secularism. Transposing it to Indian culture finally hits out at our traditional society. Like for multiculturalism, India perhaps has better solutions for the world which seeks harmony, deifies women, and asks women to be just women, true to their physical, mental, and intellectual natures.

## RANA’S JUDGEMENT RAISES HOPES OF JUSTICE

# ‘Not even an iota of evidence to connect Disha to PJF’



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

Besides granting bail to Octogenarian poet Varavara Rao, one of the most important judicial actions that happened recently is grant of bail to Disha Ravi, who should be remembered on International Women’s Day of 2021. Disha and Varavara Rao were incarcerated for opposing the government’s policies, without proper evidence. The serious threat to personal liberty can only be averted with the upholders of justice.

#ASKINDIAWHY  
GLOBAL FARMERS STRIKE FIRST WAVE  
WILL YOU BE PART OF THE LARGEST PROTEST IN HUMAN HISTORY?  
(A picture showing gathering of few people embedded in the page) TO STAND UP AGAINST INDIA’S FAILING DEMOCRACY (AT THE BEHEST OF THE FASCISTIC RULING PARTY, RSS-BJP)  
TO STAND UP AGAINST UNREGULATED CORPORATISATION OF THE FARMING SECTOR,

This is the so-called toolkit that was used as basis for arresting Disha Ravi on the charge of sedition.

The Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) of Delhi Court, Dharmender Rana deserves all appreciation for bringing out basic truths about the lack of evidence or basis for the charge of Sedition against Disha Ravi and the wounded vanity of the government in booking the young environment activist.

The order quoted from the judgment in Niharendu Dutt Mazumdar v. Emperor AIR 1942 FC 22 to say that the “offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of the governments”.

She was arrested on February 13 and charged with sedition, criminal conspiracy, and inciting to riot. Police said Ravi, along with two other activists, created the toolkit to spread misinformation and incite unrest as part of a global conspiracy. Court recognised that Disha Ravi is a part of the Indian wing of Fridays for Future, a global climate change movement founded by Swedish teen climate activist Greta Thunberg.

Those who exploit and abuse the Sanskrit sayings and rely on Vedic culture of great India to suppress the voices and ar-

“This 5000-year-old civilization of ours has never been averse to ideas from varied quarters. The following couplet in Rig Veda embodies our cultural ethos expressing our respect for divergent opinions”. He quoted from Rig Veda. This is the quote:  
: ( : ) :  
( : ) ( : )  
( : ) ( : ).  
Let noble thoughts come to us from every

rest the critics, the Judge gave a fitting quotation. (see below)

The ASJ rejected the police’s argument and said it could not be presumed on “surmises or conjectures” that Ravi supported secessionist tendencies or violence, simply because she shared a platform with people who gathered to oppose the farm laws.

The ASJ concluded that Ravi had no connection with pro-Khalistani organisations, Poetic Justice Foundation (PJF), and Sikhs for Justice, and that there was not an “iota” of evidence linking her to the violence that rocked Delhi on Republic Day. He pointed out the “scanty and sketchy evidence”. The Judge said: “Considering the scanty and sketchy evidence available on record, I do not find any palpable reasons to breach the general rule of ‘Bail’ against a 22-year-lady, with absolutely blemish free criminal antecedents and having firm roots in the society and send her to jail”.

While granting bail to Disha Ravi on February 23, the ASJ Dharmender Rana said: “I find absolutely nothing objectionable in the said page. Upon perusal of the material available on Genocide.org, it is revealed that it carries certain facts about the status of human right violations in somewhere about 40 countries including India. I concur with the Ld. ASG, without commenting upon the sanctity of the information, that the imputations are really objectionable in the said website. However, even if the said imputations are found to be objectionable in nature, I cannot but disagree with Ld. ASG that the said material is seditious in nature. The imputations may be false, exaggerated or even with a mischievous intent but the same cannot be stigmatized being seditious unless they have tendency to foment violence”.

Any kind of violence was conspicuously absent from the toolkit, and no evidence was on record to suggest Ravi subscribed to secessionist ideas. Activists have repeatedly said the toolkit is an innocuous document used by social media campaigns for strategy and planning.

Lessons from Judge

These are the lessons from the ASJ to our democratic government:

- The judge said citizens are the conscience-keepers of the government in any democratic nation.
- Citizens cannot be put behind bars simply because they choose to disagree with the state policies.
- The difference of opinion, disagreement, divergence, dissent, or for that matter, even disapprobation, are recognised legitimate tools to infuse objectivity in state policies.
- It added an aware and assertive citizenry, in contradistinction with an indifferent or docile citizenry, is indisputably a sign of a healthy and vibrant democracy.
- The offence of sedition cannot be invoked to minister to the wounded vanity of the government.
- “The right to dissent is firmly enshrined under Article 19 of The Constitution of



India. In my considered opinion the freedom of speech and expression includes the right to seek a global audience.

- There are no geographical barriers on communication.
- A Citizen has the fundamental rights to use the best means of imparting and receiving communication, as long as the same is permissible under the four corners of law and as such have access to audience abroad”.
- It added a citizen has the fundamental rights to use the best means of imparting and receiving communication, as long as the same is permissible under the law and as such have access to the audience abroad.

Editing toolkit not an offence

“In my considered opinion creation of a WhatsApp group or being editor of an innocuous Toolkit is not an offence. Further, since the link with the said toolkit or PJF has not been found to be objectionable, mere deletion of the WhatsApp chat to destroy the evidence linking her with the toolkit and PJF also becomes meaningless. Further, it is rightly pointed out by Defence Counsel that the protest march was duly permitted by the Delhi police therefore there is nothing wrong in co-accused Shantanu reaching Delhi to attend the protest march. Still further, the attempt to conceal her identity seems to be nothing more than an anxious effort to stay away from unnecessary controversies”.

Nothing to show Disha subscribed secession

“It would be worthwhile to observe that there is nothing on record to suggest that the applicant accused subscribed to any secessionist idea”. “Further, the prosecution has, except for pointing out that applicant/accused forwarded the toolkit to Ms. Greta Thunberg, failed to point out as to how the applicant/accused gave global audience to the ‘secessionist elements’.”

Where is violence?

“It is further highlighted that the applicant/accused along with her associates un-

der the pretext of protesting against the farm laws have resolved to vandalize Indian Embassies and specifically attack symbols of India i.e. Yoga and Chai. Except for a bare assertion, no evidence has been brought to my notice to support the contention that any violence took place at any of the Indian Embassies pursuant to the sinister designs of the applicant/accused and her co-conspirators”

“The perusal of the said ‘Toolkit’ reveals that any call for any kind of violence is conspicuously absent. In my considered opinion, Citizens are conscience keepers of government in any democratic Nation. They cannot be put behind the bars simply because they choose to disagree with the State policies”.

Mere engagement with people of dubious credentials not offence

“...it is not mere engagement with persons of dubious credentials which is indictable rather it is the purpose of engagement which is relevant for the purpose of deciding culpability. Any person with dubious credentials may interact with a number of persons during the course of his social intercourse. As long as the engagement/interaction remains within the four corners of law, people interacting with such persons, ignorantly, innocently or for that matter even fully conscious of their dubious credentials, cannot be painted with the same hue. In the absence of any evidence to the effect that the applicant/accused agreed or shared a common purpose to cause violence on 26.01.2021 with the founders of PJF, it cannot be presumed by resorting to surmises or conjectures that she also supported the secessionist tendencies, or the violence caused on 26.01.2021, simply because she shared a platform with people, who have gathered to oppose the legislation. There is not even an iota of evidence brought to my notice connecting the perpetrators of the violence on 26.01.2021 with the said PJF or the applicant/accused”.

(The writer is Professor of Law, Bennett University and former Central Information Commissioner)

## LETTERS

Modi, don’t preach!

THE blistering attack of honourable PM, against Mamata Didi, the only woman CM in India today, that too, on the eve of International Women’s Day has reminded me of the ancient proverb “pot calling the kettle black.” (Khel khatam, Vikas Shuru, 8 March ) The almighty BJP government at the Centre which has kept unsolved many critical issues plaguing the society today has no moral right to preach about porivartan. Take incessant rise in the prices of GDP, that is gas, diesel and petrol. Is it real change?

The farmers’ agitation has already crossed 100 days mark. What parivartan has been brought in the lives of farmers across India? The economy is in doldrums, and there are no jobs for youth. Is there any visible change and development in these Covid times?. Hence, the great leaders are

duty bound to find solutions to the bread and butter issues first and then criticise others.

P H Hema Sagar, Secunderabad

PM comments unbecoming

Narendra Modi’s speech at the Kolkata rally lacks decency and one wonders whether a head of the nation should stoop to such a low just for the sake of capturing power. It is amusing Modi, who failed miserably in curbing black money, unemployment, bad loans, farm crisis, petrol prices and so on promises Asol Paribartan in West Bengal (Khel khatam, Vikas Shuru, March 8). There is no justification that Modi leaves burning issues to wind and participate in a state assembly electioneering. It is a pity Modi, who could earn good number of friends globally, fail to find similar ones locally.

Shirasagara Balaji Rao, Hyderabad

BJP is on the upswing

If the crowd is any indication for any electoral results then message is clear from Brigade Pa-

rade Ground that TMC is going and BJP is coming and moreover uncontrolled exodus continue from TMC which can prove fatal for the party. With fielding of candidate by ISF from Nandigram can shatter the calculation of TMC. and it has to be seen whether Mamata’s decision to contest Nandigram backfire or bring her back to power? Some times a leader like Mamata’s stature chooses to contest from any constituency to has a psychological impact on the voters. TMC seems to have hit the right note by deciding to contest from Nandigram but it can prove counter productive also after fielding of candidate by ISF, which will affect the minority votes Mamata who is beleaguered by a spate of defections from the TMC in the five months preceding the Assembly elections has taken the fight to the BJP’s camp and tried to project a pro-poor image by returning to her political roots.

At a time when Didi is already licking the wounds inflicted by scores of defectors, her special focus on Nandigram might cost TMC dear in West Bengal. Mamata’s decision to contest from the constituency might actually serve the BJP which has already launched it’s “Mission 200+”.

Whether it is Didi’s apprehensiveness or a bold calculated move, or the BJP’s ploy to make Mamata’s channelise all her energy and focus on to Nandigram thus making her a spent force elsewhere, is the moot question which only voters will answer. For now, with the recent turn of events, West Bengal has become a hot spot of politics with the parties doing all that they can to win the elections.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Vicious campaign unleashed

Politics is palpably peaking in West Bengal during the run-up to the mother of all elections. The catchphrase in Bengali Khela hobe (Let us play the game) is on everyone’s lips and captures the electric atmosphere prevailing in the poll-bound state. Still the campaign has become so vitiated and venomous that erstwhile Bollywood actor Mithun Chakraborty on joining the BJP has declared that he is a pure cobra that kills people with one bite and makes them photographs.

The TMC and the BJP appear to be the main contenders for power. Still in the triangular con-

test the Left-Congress alliance may make unexpected gains and bear on the electoral fortunes of the other two parties. Tactical voting that people might resort to this time could decisively determine the results. The one thing for which the election is closely watched across the country is that it is fought as an ideological battle between secularism (something perceived as the biggest threat to India’s traditions by the likes of Yogi Adityanath and used almost defensively in the changed political climate) and Hindutva. It is amplified by the use of Jai Shri Ram chant as a war cry to polarise the voters along religious lines. This election is crucial as it will decide if West Bengal remains multiethn or turns saffron.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s promise of asol poriborton (real change) is in contradistinction to the kind of change that he has brought about at the national level making life more miserable for people minus his corporate friends. No wonder Didi’s ‘From ujwala to jumla’ jibe finds an echo in the hearts of the voters. The BJP has to fear not just Didi, but red-coloured cardboard replicas of LPG cylinders too.

G David Milton, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu



## Pawan slams humiliation of Amaravati women

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
AMARAVATI

THE attitude of the state government towards the capital city women on International Women's Day is undemocratic, said Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan. The way the police treated the women who were fighting to retain the capital city in Amaravati as they were intercepted at Prakasam barrage while they were going to have darshan of Goddess Kanaka durga is insulting, he said.

In a statement here Monday, Pawan said, "Women explained with tears how the male police personnel behaved and insulted them. Their words hurt me immensely. Which rule allows prevention of women from going for darshan?"

Have the Amaravati women no right to have darshan of the Goddess?" he said.

He said farmers who gave their lands for the capital city and their families are fighting relentlessly for the past 15 months. Instead of responding positively, the rulers are insulting them on every occasion. "They arrested them while they were protesting peacefully. They must be released immediately. It's the responsibility of the officials to deal with women in a respectable manner. Action must be taken against the officials who acted tough against the women causing great inconvenience to them at the Prakasam barrage," he said and requested state DGP D Gautam Sawang to issue orders not to repeat such actions in future.



Legislature Returning Officer handing over Election Declaration Form to Mohammed Karimunneesa of Vijayawada on Monday

## 6 YSRCP members elected unopposed to Council

AMARAVATI

SIX candidates of the ruling YSRCP were on Monday elected unopposed to the state Legislative Council. While five candidates were elected for a six-year term in the biennial elections under the MLAs quota, the sixth one was elected for a two-year tenure in a byelection. The Legislature deputy secretary and Returning Officer declared the six candidates elected unanimously as no other nominations were filed. The formality was completed as the deadline for withdrawal of nominations ended on Monday afternoon.

Shaik Mohammed Iqbal has been re-elected for a second term, while senior leader C Ramachandraiah comes back to the Council after a four-year gap. The other candidates elected in the biennial election were Balli Kalyan Chakravarthy, son of

- While 5 are elected under MLAs' quota, one member is elected in byelection

deceased Tirupati MP Durga Prasada Rao, and leaders Mohammed Karimunneesa from Vijayawada and Duvvada Srinivas from Srikakulam.

Challa Bhageerath Reddy of Kurnool will fill the vacancy, caused due to the death of his father Ramakrishna Reddy, till March 29, 2023. Barring Iqbal and Ramachandraiah, the four other candidates received their election declaration from the Returning Officer. The YSRCP's strength in the 58-member Upper House of the state Legislature now rose to 14, including two nominated members, as it gained three seats in the biennial election.

# Uttam accuses TRS leaders of intimidating voters

HANS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD

TELANGANA Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president N Uttam Kumar Reddy has alleged that leaders of ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi were intimidating voters to cast their votes in favour of pink party's candidates in the upcoming MLC polls.

Addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Uttam said that the TRS leaders were adopting illegal means to win the elections at any cost. The TRS leaders, including Ministers, MPs and MLAs, were threatening voters and pressurizing them to take



TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Monday

oath that they would vote for TRS, he claimed.

He said that the Congress party has gathered the videos of such illegal oath-taking events

across six districts and submitted it to the Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking action. Uttam demanded that the ECI take stern action against

such malpractice, and added any inaction by ECI in this regard would lead to suspicion that the Commission was in collusion with the TRS to manipulate the poll outcome.

"We want to work for government employees and unemployed and will fight for their cause under all circumstances," he assured.

He slammed Minister K T Rama Rao for holding a meeting with Brahmin community members to seek their votes. He sought to know why Brahmins would vote for TRS when advocate couple, Vaman Rao and Nagamani, belonging to Brahmin community, were brutally murdered allegedly by TRS leaders? He said Chief Minister

Alleges that the ruling party leaders are forcing voters to take oath that they would cast their votes in favour of pink party candidates

K Chandrashekar Rao did not even condemn the murders, leave alone ordering CBI inquiry into the killings.

Uttam further ridiculed KT Rama Rao's assurance of providing housing sites to journalists. "Chief Minister did nothing to provide house sites to journalists in the first term. But just before 2018 elections, he gave an assurance that he would resolve the issues of journalists. Once the elections were over, he forgot the promise. Now his son and Minister KT Rama Rao enacting the same drama ahead of MLC polls. The previous Congress regimes provided house sites to hundreds of journalists thrice without any trouble," he reminded.

## Police Dept stands out in IWD celebrations

Free medical camps, distribution of gifts candle light processions mark International Women's Day in the State

AMARAVATI

BOUQUETS, discount offers, free medical camps, felicitations, candle light processions and several other forms of celebrations have been employed to mark the International Women's Day in the state on Monday.

Especially, the state police department stood out in gleefully commemorating the event.

In Kurnool town, a local hospital offered free medical tests to women police and their family members, commemorating the Women's Day. A medical camp was organised in the district police office.

In Visakhapatnam's Anakapalle police sub-division, women officers were felicitated with gifts and bouquets. They were honoured in the presence of senior officials.

Likewise, Vizianagaram district superintendent of police (SP) B Rajakumari gifted saris to some women police officers.

"Women should prosper in all realms. Students should accord primacy to education and fulfil the dreams of their parents," said Rajakumari.

Similarly, Visakhapatnam range deputy inspector general of police (DIG) L K V Ranga Rao also honoured women police officers above the rank of inspector with



DGP D Gautam Sawang with women police officials who were given awards on the occasion of International Women's Day at DGP office in Mangalagiri on Monday

gifts in his office.

West Godavari district SP Narayan Nayak arranged a tricycle for a specially-abled woman, Gorji Ramatulasi, as part of Women's Day.

Similar events were held across the southern state by the police department.

On Friday, the state government issued directives that the Women's Day should be celebrated on a grand scale, including felicitating two women constables from each wing.

A special day off was declared on Monday for all the women working in the police department.

Likewise, the government has decided to set up 2,000 stands with QR codes to enable women to easily download Disha app.

Short film competitions have been planned to be organised to celebrate the event, along with offering 10 per cent discount on purchase of cell phones at select shopping malls for women who downloaded the Disha app.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy agreed to give five casual leaves to female employees and also announced Rs 5 lakh on behalf of the government to the non-gazetted women employees union.

## Will not give up our struggle, says Ukku stir committee

RANI DEVALLA  
VISAKHAPATNAM

NOTWITHSTANDING the growing protests to save Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) from privatisation, the Union government appears to be taking firm steps towards giving wings to its proposal of the 100 percent disinvestment.

With Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman making it clear on Monday in the Lok Sabha that Andhra Pradesh government has no share in the VSP and that the Modi government is sure to handover the plant to the private sector to infuse capital and help recoup financial losses as 100 per cent disinvestment will aid in increasing its production.

She responded in a written format to Araku MP G Madhavi and Visakhapatnam MP MVV Satyanarayana's query on VSP privatisation.

While the BJP State leaders maintain that the privatisation of steel plant will take a long time, the Centre is, however, trying to speed up the process.

Responding to the Finance Minister's statement on Monday, Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee chairman Ch Narasinga Rao says, "Despite the Centre's decision, we are not going to give up. The Ukku stir will be intensified. It will be taken to the national level, seeking the support of the national parties, trade unions as well as the farmers demanding a repeal of the three farm laws."

- Responding to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement on Monday, Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee chairman Ch Narasinga Rao says despite the Centre's decision, they are not going to give up

ified. It will be taken to the national level, seeking the support of the national parties, trade unions as well as the farmers demanding a repeal of the three farm laws."

Sharing his views, INTUC State general secretary Mantri Rajasekhara mentioned that the trade unions will not be a mute spectator and the Ukku stir will not be stopped unless the Centre takes back its decision.

Meanwhile, president of the recognised Union of RINL J Ayodhya Ram says, "The BJP leaders have been misleading the people of Andhra Pradesh for quite a while. In case if the Union government marches ahead with 100 per

- The Ukku stir will be intensified, he asserts
- INTUC State general secretary Mantri Rajasekhara says the Ukku stir will not be stopped unless the Centre takes back its decision
- Members of different trade unions resolve to meet and decide their next course of action in 48 hours

cent disinvestment move, it is sure to witness dire consequences. Despite being in power, the BJP-led NDA government cannot take unilateral decisions,

nuzzling people's voices."

In the next 48 hours, trade union leaders plan to gather and take a call on their next course of action on VSP stir.



A view of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant



Ch Narasinga Rao



J Ayodhya Ram



Mantri Rajasekhara

## Can drones be flown to capture aerial views of old TS Secretariat?

VRC PHANI HARAN  
HYDERABAD

CAN we or can we not, is the question that has been popping up in the minds of enthusiastic drone flyers who want to capture the new Secretariat buildings which are under construction.

It can be recalled that the Telangana government demolished the old secretariat buildings in a bid to come up with new building, and shifted the departments to nearby Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (BRK) Bhavan in August 2019.

N Lakshmi Prasad, an engineering graduate, speaking to The Hans India, said that before 2018, the rules of restrictive operations of drones were not strictly enforced. "Occasionally, my friends and I used to fly small drones to capture the aerial view of Necklace Road, Buddha statue etc. Sometimes, we would also capture NTR Ghat and secretariat buildings too," he said, adding that several enthusiastic students and event managers, without knowing the rules and regulations, would operate the drones.

However, the rules have become stringent after August 2018 with the new regulations coming into force. "We cannot fly the drones like earlier," said SV Kumar, who has taken interest in drone technologies while studying B Tech electronics.

As per the new set of rules that have come into force, there is an exception to licensing of drone operations only in the case of nano category drones weighing 250 grams or less, being operated less than 50 feet above the ground level in uncontrolled airspace as well as in the enclosed premises. Similarly, the rule applies to the micro category of drones of more than 250 grams and up to 2 kilograms operating below 200 feet in the uncontrolled and enclosed airspace.





# Batla House case: IM man convicted for killing police inspector

## Digvijay had voiced doubts over police claims; SP, BSP had demanded a judicial inquiry into the matter

NEW DELHI

A court here on Monday convicted Ariz Khan, allegedly associated with the terror outfit Indian Mujahideen, for the murder of Delhi police inspector Mohan Chand Sharma in a case related to 2008 Batla House encounter which was questioned by certain political parties and leaders. Additional Sessions Judge Sandeep Yadav said “the evidence produced by the prosecution duly proved the case beyond reasonable doubts.” The judge said that it was “duly proved that Ariz Khan and his associates caused murder of police official and fired gunshot on the police official.”

The court will hear arguments on the quantum of sentence on March 15. Ariz Khan faces a maximum punishment of death penalty while the minimum sentence for murder is life imprisonment. He was arrested on

February 14, 2018, after a decade being on run.

The judgement assumes importance as Congress leader Digvijay Singh had voiced his doubts over the police claims about the encounter and Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) had also demanded a judicial inquiry into the matter. However, the Congress party had distanced itself from the comment of Singh, who later in 2016 had also claimed that there was no evidence to prove the guilt of the accused arrested in the matter and had asked the central government to order a judicial probe into the encounter by dubbing it as “fake”.

Following his comment, the BJP had staged a protest near the Congress headquarters in Delhi demanding an apology from its top leadership over the statements of the party leaders over the Batla House encounter issue. Inspector Sharma of the Special Cell of Delhi Police was



killed during the encounter which took place a week after five serial blasts had hit the national capital on September 13, 2008 in which at least 30 people were killed and over 100 injured. After the encounter of September 19, 2008, protest rallies were organised against it by teachers and students of Jamia Islamia University.

National Human Rights Commission(NHRC), which had conducted inquiry in the case on the direction of the Delhi High Court, gave clean chit to Delhi Police. Two suspected terrorists, Atif Ameen and Mohammad Sajid were killed while two other suspects -- Mohammad Saif and Zeeshan were arrested earlier. Besides murder, the court on Monday also convicted the accused under various other sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), including 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 333 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt to a public servant in the discharge of his

official duty), 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (common intention) and under section 27 (punishment for using arms) of the Arms Act.

Ariz Khan is also accused in a separate case related to the terror activities that had taken place prior to the encounter at Batla House in Jamia Nagar in south Delhi. During the arguments, additional public prosecutor A T Ansari, representing police, had claimed that Ariz Khan was present at Batla House, along with four others, and had managed to give police the slip during the encounter. Defence advocate Qaswar Khan had countered police claim and said that the prosecution lacked evidence against the accused. Earlier, a trial court in July 2013 had sentenced Indian Mujahideen terrorist Shahzad Ahmed to life imprisonment in connection with the Batla House encounter case.

# CJI: REMARKS ON RAPE CASE COMPLETELY MISREPORTED

## We asked are you going to marry? We didn't order him to marry Several women's rights activists had demanded an apology

NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde on Monday said its observations during the hearing of a rape case last week were “completely misreported” and added that it has the “highest respect for women”.

The comments -- on International Women's Day -- come in the wake of recent criticism against the Supreme Court that it had purportedly asked a rape accused whether he would marry the victim, who was a minor when the crime was committed. “We (had) asked are you going to marry? We didn't order (him to) ‘marry’,” the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said.

It also said the reputation of the judiciary is in the hands of its lawyers. The observations by the bench were made while it was hearing another case -- that of a 14-year-old pregnant rape survivor seeking permission to abort



Chief Justice S A Bobde (left)

the foetus of almost 26 weeks.

In the proceedings conducted through video conferencing, it referred to a provision of the Evi-

dence Act and said the query was posed in the context of the records, but the issue was “completely misreported”.

It was earlier stated that the apex court's query asking a rape accused whether he would marry the victim was based on ‘judicial records’ containing an undertaking from the man that he would marry the minor girl, a relative, after she turns 18 years of age.

CPI(M) politburo member Brinda Karat had written to the chief justice asking him to withdraw his remarks reportedly made during the March 1 hearing on the anticipatory bail plea of the accused.

Several women's rights activists, eminent citizens, intellectuals, writers and artists had also penned an open letter to the chief justice demanding an apology and retraction of the remarks.

The Bar Council of India had backed the Supreme Court and asked activists who had written to the CJI to withdraw his remarks to not “scandalise” the highest judiciary and take “political mileage” of its proceedings.

## INDEPENDENT!



Independent MP Navneet Kaur at Parliament, during the ongoing Budget Session, in New Delhi, on Monday

## Teacher removed from RSS-run school for refusing to donate for Ram Temple

LUCKNOW

A teacher has alleged that he was removed from an RSS-run school after he refused to donate Rs 1,000 for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, a charge denied by the institution.

Yashwant Pratap Singh, who worked as an acharya (teacher) at Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Jagdishpur locality, also claimed that the school has withheld his eight months' salary.

Singh said he was given a receipt book for the collection of funds for the temple. He deposited around Rs 80,000 collected for it, he said.

Singh claimed that he was pressured to donate Rs 1,000 for the temple when the district pracharak of the Rashtriya Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS), Satyendra, came to the school.

When he refused, the school authorities “misbehaved” and removed him from the school, Singh alleged, adding that he has given a written complaint in this regard at the district magistrate's office.

Singh said he will approach a court if justice is not done to him.

Meanwhile, school principal Dharendra said all employees were given receipt books for the collection of funds as per their capacity.

“Singh also took three receipt books willingly but later did not deposit them.

He himself resigned,” he said, denying the allegations.

RSS district pracharak Satyendra too said no one is being pressured for the collection of funds. He accused Singh of indiscipline and not having interest in teaching.

## Denied ticket, four TMC MLAs join BJP

KOLKATA

FOUR Trinamool Congress MLAs, who were denied a ticket for the upcoming assembly elections, joined the BJP on Monday.

Among those who joined the saffron party were three-time MLA from Singur Rabinathan Bhattacharya, four-time MLA from Satgachia in South 24 Parganas Sonali Guha, Basirhat Dakshin (North 24 Parganas) MLA Dipendu Biswas, and Shibpur MLA Jatu Lahiri. Besides them, TMC's candidate from Malda's Habibpur Sarala Murmu and Bengali film actress Tanushree Chakraborty also joined the BJP.

Mamata Banerjee asserted that women are safe in West Bengal but not in BJP-ruled states like Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, while claiming that a day will come when the country will be named after Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“He (Modi) is lecturing us on women's safety and empowerment. What is the situation of women's safety in BJP-ruled states? What is the situation in Modi's favourite Gujarat?”

Media reports say that there have been two murders and four rapes on an average daily in Gujarat in the last two years in Ahmedabad.”

# Owaisi's MIM ties up with Dhinakaran's AMMK

CHENNAI

its Bihar election splash, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM has tied up with TTV Dhinakaran's Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) for the Tamil Nadu polls next month.

As part of its seat share with the AMMK for the April 6 election, the AIMIM will contest three of Tamil Nadu's 234 seats -- Vaniyambadi, Krishnagiri and Sankarapuram.

TTV Dhinakaran, a lone player since his aunt VK Sasikala decided to step away from politics ahead of the election, is hoping to at least dent the votes of the AIADMK.

In 2017, Mr Dhinakaran jolted the AIADMK by winning the RK Nagar assembly constituency of their charismatic leader and former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa, who died in office in 2016.

A day after an all-women grand show in Siliguri, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Monday hit the road with a massive rally in the heart of Kolkata to observe International Women's Day.

The mega rally started from central Kolkata's College Street crossing and culminated at the Dorian crossing in Esplanade. Armed with placards and posters, thousands of women activists from the state's ruling Trinamool Congress took part in the rally, raising 'Mahilara Didikei Chae' (women want Didi, as Banerjee is popularly known) slogans.

“We are always with Didi. She is a symbol of inspiration for the women in Bengal. The Trinamool government has done a lot for our empowerment in the society. The Kanyashree scheme has helped thousands of women in rural Bengal,” said Priya Dey from Maniktala, who took part in the rally.



Rajior Dal candidate and jailed peasant activist Akhil Gogoi being taken by security personnel, after submitting his nomination papers to the returning officers via video-conference, ahead of the Assam Assembly polls, in Guwahati on Monday

## BJP not to announce CM face in Assam

GUWAHATI: BJP will not announce the chief ministerial candidate before the Assam polls and a decision in this regard will be taken by its Parliamentary Board at the time of forming the next government, the saffron party state unit president Ranjeet Kumar Dass said. Incumbent CM Sarbananda Sonowal and influential minister and convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) Himanta Biswa Sarma have also said the decision on selecting a person for the chief minister chair in the new government will be that of the party's Parliamentary board. This is in contrary to the position in 2016, when BJP had projected the then Sonowal as its chief ministerial face before the elections were held.

## Scindia could've become CM: Rahul

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party leader Jyotiraditya Scindia could have become chief minister with the Congress but has become a backbencher in the BJP, said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday.

Gandhi said, “He (Scindia) would have become the Chief Minister had he stayed with Congress but Scindia has become a backbencher in the BJP. Scindia had the option to strengthen the organisation by working with Congress workers. I told him - One day you will become the Chief Minister. But he chose another route.”

Sources further informed that Gandhi further said, “Write it down, he will never become Chief Minister there. He will have to come back here for that.”

## AINR likely to go solo in Puducherry Assembly polls

CHENNAI

N.Rangaswamy, former Chief Minister of Puducherry and President All Indian N.Rangaswamy Congress (AINR) is likely to go it alone in the Assembly elections to be held on April 6. The AINR Congress has been in a strategic alliance with the BJP since 2018 and was also instrumental in unseating the Congress government. However, ever since Union Home Minister Amit Shah made a public announcement that the BJP would rule the state after the Assembly elections and that the state will have a new BJP Chief Minister, N. Rangaswamy has been sulking.

BJP leader and party national spokesperson Rajeev Chandrashekar MP, who is in-charge of Puducherry told IANS, “Union Home Minister had publicly spoken for an NDA Chief Minister and not a BJP Chief Minister. There are no issues between the BJP and AINR and if there are any differences of opinion, we will sort them out.”

However, highly placed sources in the AINR told IANS that Rangaswamy will budge only if the party is provided 18 seats out of a total of 30 seats.

A senior leader of the BJP while speaking to IANS on condition of anonymity said, “BJP has to take a call in consultation with the high command. The party national leadership will be consulted and a final decision will be taken. However, there will not be any bad blood and we want to come to power in Puducherry and for that if compromises are necessary, we will take a decision”.

## NIA to probe bomb threat to Ambani's home

MUMBAI

MAHARASHTRA CIO Uddhav Thackeray said the NIA taking over the case of a vehicle laden with explosives being found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai suggests something was “fishy”.

Thackeray said governments come and go, but the official administrative machinery remains the same and one needs to trust it. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) took over the case following orders from the Ministry of Home Affairs, an official spokesperson said on Monday.

The agency is in the process of re-registering the case, the spokesperson added.

On Sunday, the Maharashtra Anti-terrorism Squad (ATS) registered the FIR against unidentified persons on the order of the state home department under IPC Sections 302 (murder), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence) and 120(b) (criminal conspiracy). Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said in the Assembly on Monday that state police were capable of solving the case of auto parts dealer Mansukh Hiran's death and the recovery of the explosives-laden car near Ambani's residence. Hiran, the purported owner of the vehicle, was found dead in a creek in neighbouring Thane on Friday. Thackeray said, “We had handed over the case of the vehicle laden with explosives and the mysterious death of Mansukh Hiran to the ATS. The NIA taking over the case shows something was fishy.”

# Army Major sent to 8-day police custody in recruitment scam

## The officer played a key role in leaking the paper, which he sent from his phone to another accused

PUNE

THIRU Murugan (47), an Army Major who was arrested by Pune police in connection with the paper leak in the soldier recruitment examination, was remanded to police custody for eight days on Monday.

Police said in court that Major Murugan had sent the paper from his phone to another accused in the case.

In a joint operation by the Military Intelligence and the Crime Branch of Pune city police, multiple raids were conducted in the last week of February, leading to the discovery that the question paper of the Common Entrance Exam (CEE) for recruitment of Soldier (General

Duty), had been leaked. The exam, which was scheduled to take place on February 28, was cancelled after the leak was confirmed.

On Saturday, a team of police officers from Pune city had brought Major Murugan to Pune from the Army establishment in Tamil Nadu where he was posted. On Sunday, he was formally placed under arrest.

He was produced before the court of Additional Sessions Judge SR Navandar on Monday, where police sought his custodial remand for further interrogation.

The police told the court through a prosecution lawyer that the officer has played a key role in leaking the paper, which he sent from his phone to another ac-



cused. Police invoked the Prevention of Corruption Act in the case and sought custody to probe involvement of other persons and also to probe the money trail. The court remanded the Army officer to police custody for eight days after hearing both sides.

Earlier, after the leak had come to light, the Pune police registered two separate cases for offences at Wanawadi and Vishrantwadi police stations, denoting probes by two separate teams of the crime branch into the malpractices related to the examination process. In connection with the case registered at Vishrantwadi police station, three persons, including an ex-serviceman, have been arrested.

In the other case, two serving Army personnel and two others were initially arrested. Two more persons were arrested at a later stage.

Meanwhile, a senior officer, who is part of the investigation, said that the role of two more ‘serving individuals’ from the Army was being probed in the case. “Our teams are currently at various locations conducting probe. We are expecting more breakthroughs in the case.”

The Army has said that the existing system of the recruitment process will be made more foolproof and robust by incorporating the findings of joint investigation by Army authorities and Maharashtra police.



## TODAY'S QUOTE

### Vivad Se Vishwas nets ₹53,346 cr

“The central government has realised Rs 53,346 crore through direct tax dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas till February 22. This include Rs 27,720 crore worth payments made by the central public sector undertakings (PSUs), Rs 1,023 crore by state PSUs, and Rs 24,603 crore by others.”

— Anurag Singh Thakur, Union Minister



## MARKET

### Sebi tweaks framework on PAN

Market regulator Sebi on Monday rationalised the compliance requirement of collecting and maintaining copies of PAN of clients by members of the exchanges having commodity derivatives segment and enhanced the use of e-PAN. In the Union budget 2020, launch of instant PAN facility was announced

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)			
US Dollar	77.64	South	
Euro	91.33	African Rand	5.42
UAE Dirham	21.93	Hong Kong Dollar	10.84
Thai Baht	2.73	Japanese Yen	0.78
British Pound	105.4	New Zealand Dollar	54.69
Australian Dollar	58.81	Saudi Riyal	21.47
Canadian Dollar	60.61	Swedish Krona	9.82
Swiss Franc	81.6	Singapore Dollar	57.04

DELHI TUESDAY 9 MARCH 2021

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Cadbury unveils campaign

Cadbury Perk, one of Mondelez India's brands, launched another campaign with Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt as brand ambassador. Through a delightful digital film featuring the youth icon, Cadbury Perk is encouraging consumers to face life's twist and turns, with a light attitude. Alia Bhatt said: "Super thrilled to be back with brand Cadbury Perk – one of my favorite chocolate brands. A brand that is fun and easy-going, Cadbury Perk reflects my own playful personality and mantra in life – to 'Take It Light'". Anil Viswanathan, Senior Director, Marketing (Chocolates), Insights and Analytics, Mondelez India, said, "Today's youth believe in facing life's stresses with lightness. Our launch film and tagline 'Perk khao, Light ho jao' attempts to land the message that Perk is The light chocolate, in a fun manner, through the route of levitation."

### De Beers' new initiative

De Beers Group has extended its global partnership with UN Women for a further five years. Joining the newly formed HeForShe Alliance, the company committed to increasing the representation of women in technical and leadership roles within its business. The commitment will focus on overcoming historic barriers to women's advancement in science and technology and will also aim to enhance talent development and succession programmes. Bruce Cleaver, CEO, De Beers Group and UN Women HeForShe Champion, said: "We are thrilled to be extending our partnership with UN Women for another five years and to be joining the newly-formed HeForShe Alliance. Achieving gender parity across our workforce is a business-critical priority for De Beers Group."

### Haier launches air conditioner

Haier India introduced new energy-efficient air conditioner Haier Clean Cool, which is suitable for all seasons. The air conditioner comes with 1.5-tonne cooling capacity and Triple Inverter Plus technology that self-adjusts temperature, helping consumers to save up to 65 per cent energy. The air conditioner is fitted with the best-in-class motor, optimized fan, and air duct which enable it to blow air for 15 metres. "We have launched the all-new revolutionary Clean Cool air conditioner for all seasons. This air conditioner allows customers to enjoy both summers and winters in the comfort of their homes. With the introduction of such user-centric products, we are looking at creating a new era of smart technology in the white goods space," said Eric Braganza, President, Haier India.

### Radico Khaitan's CSR initiative

Radico Khaitan, manufacturer of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) in India, has collaborated with SheWings to kick-start a drive to eradicate traditional unhygienic methods of dealing with the menstruation cycle and make women aware of the health hazard associated with them. A month-long campaign will include host of activities including workshops with doctors and gynaecologists, distribution of hygiene products, sessions on proper disposal of menstrual waste. The campaign will take place in multiple cities. Amar Sinha, Chief Operating Officer, Radico Khaitan, said: "As a responsible corporate, Radico Khaitan has always been at the forefront to serve the people in every possible way. Hence, it gives us immense pleasure to join hands with She Wings in their effort to spread awareness about menstrual hygiene."

## CAIRN TAX DISPUTE WITH INDIA

# US, UK, 3 others confirm \$1.4 bn arbitration award

NEW DELHI

COURTS in five countries including the US and the UK have given recognition to an arbitration award that asked India to return \$1.4 billion to Cairn Energy plc – a step that now opens the possibility of the British firm seizing Indian assets in those countries if New Delhi does not pay, sources said. Cairn Energy had moved courts in nine countries to enforce its \$1.4 billion arbitral award against India, which the company won after a dispute with the country's revenue authority over a retroactively applied capital gains tax.

Of these, the December 21 award from a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Netherlands has been recognised and confirmed by courts in the US, the UK, Netherlands, Canada and France, three people with knowledge of the matter said. Cairn has started the process to register the award in Singapore, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Cayman Islands, they said. The registration of the award is the first step towards its enforcement in the event of the government not paying the firm. Once the court recognises an arbitration award, the company can then petition it for seizing any Indian government assets such as bank accounts, payments to state-owned entities, airplanes and ships in those jurisdictions, to recover the monies due to it, they said. So far the government has not directly commented on honouring or challenging the Cairn arbitration



award, but Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had last week indicated of going in for an appeal. Cairn's shareholders, who include top financial institutions of the world, want the company to go for enforcement action should New Delhi fail to pay it. While the company spokesperson wasn't reachable for comments, Cairn had on Sunday stated that it will "begin meetings this week with shareholders in the UK and US, with the international arbitration award high on the agenda."

"The company met the Government of India last month and is taking all the necessary steps to protect their shareholders' interests," it had said. The tribunal had on December 21 ruled that the government breached an investment treaty with

the UK and was therefore liable to return the value of shares it had seized and sold, dividend confiscated and tax refund stopped to adjust Rs 10,247 crore tax demand. Cairn in its filings to the courts in the nine countries is seeking "to confirm this final and binding award under the New York Convention and commence enforcement proceedings to recover the losses caused by (India's) unfair and inequitable treatment of their investments." After losing in the Supreme Court a case against levying tax on capital gains made in the 2007 sale by Hutchison of its India business to Vodafone for \$11.2 billion, the government had in 2012 enacted legislation that gave it powers to tax such deals retrospectively. Thereafter, the tax department

● Cairn moved courts in nine countries to enforce \$1.4 bn arbitral award against India

● Courts in five countries ask India to return \$1.4 billion to Cairn

● FM of India indicates the government's intent to appeal against the award

raised demands on Vodafone as well as Cairn over alleged capital gains it made on reorganising its India business prior to its listing. But unlike Vodafone where no enforcement action was taken, it seized and sold Cairn's residual stake in the India unit, confiscated dividends due from such holding, and stopped tax refund due to it. The Hague panel found that a 2012 law passed by the Indian Parliament was a new tax, not a clarification of prior law that could be applied to earlier years. Formally, the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards, the United Nations-backed document requires courts of contracting states to allow private agreements for arbitration and to recognize and enforce resulting awards from other contracting states.

## 'Banking sector outlook to be worse in next fiscal'

NEW DELHI

FITCH Ratings on Monday said it expects a moderately worse sector outlook for Indian banks for the next fiscal beginning April 1 based on muted expectations for new business and revenue generation, and deteriorating asset quality. Fitch believes that the disproportionate shock to India's informal economy and small businesses, coupled with high unemployment and declining private consumption, have yet to fully manifest on bank balance sheets. The rating agency said the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to pose challenges to Indian banks' improving financial performance once asset-quality risks manifest in the financial year ending March 2022. Indian banks reported lower impaired loans and improved profitability for the nine months ended December 2020 due to various forbearance measures and continued large write-offs. Indian banks – particularly state banks – remained more risk-averse than in prior years, which was reflected



in their weak credit growth. "Fitch expects a moderately worse sector outlook for Indian banks for 2021-2022 based on muted expectations for new business and revenue generation, and deteriorating asset quality," it said in a statement.

The state's less-than-adequate recapitalisation plans for its banks further underscores the risk, which will likely keep risk aversion high among banks amid continuing uncertainty about asset quality and an uneven economic recovery. As the forbearance measures unwind, Fitch expects Indian banks to reverse the improvements in asset quality and profitability, with state banks more vulnerable to higher stress than private banks, which have better profitability and higher contingent reserves and capitalisation.

## DIPAM, Niti to brainstorm on asset monetisation

NEW DELHI

Finance Ministry and Niti Aayog officials will on Tuesday brainstorm on the way forward in CPSE asset monetisation, including identification of non-core assets and procedural simplification.

Officials said the workshop by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) and Niti Aayog will delve into the modalities of the selection of non-core assets and fast-tracking their sale. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had last month said that 100 under-utilised or unutilised assets with public sector units (PSUs), such as those in the oil and gas and power sectors, will be monetised, creating Rs 2.5 lakh crore of investment opportunities.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2021-22 Budget speech had said monetising operating public infrastructure assets is a very important financing option for new infrastructure construction.

## IIFL NCD issue begins; offers 10% interest

HANS BUSINESS HYDERABAD

IIFL Finance, non-banking finance company, announced issue of the Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) from March 3 to 23, 2021. The NCDs will be offered with interest up to 10.03 per cent per annum for 87 months.

The NCDs are available in several options – monthly, annual, and at maturity. The offering has a high yield and double the interest rate offered by bank fixed deposit, liquid funds etc.

The company aims to raise a minimum of Rs 100 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription up to Rs 900 crore (aggregating to a total of Rs 1,000 crore).

The lead managers to the issue are Edelweiss Financial Services Limited, IIFL Securities Limited and Equirus Capital Private Limited. The NCDs are listed on the BSE and NSE. The IIFL Bonds



The funds raised will help IIFL Finance to meet credit needs of underserved population who are primarily our customers

would be issued at a face value of Rs 1,000 and the minimum application size is Rs 10,000 across all categories. The allotment will be made on first come first served basis.

IIFL Finance has a credit rating of AA by Crisil and AA+ by Brickwork.

"The funds raised will help IIFL Finance to meet credit needs of underserved population who are primarily our customers. Through the crisis, credit rating of IIFL Finance has been reaffirmed by agencies, which indicates that the instruments are considered to have a high degree of safety for timely servicing of financial obligations and carry very low credit risk," said Sreekanth Ramela, Vice President, IIFL.

## Nita Mukesh Ambani launches 'Her Circle'

MUMBAI



NITA Mukesh Ambani, Chairperson, Reliance Foundation, has launched 'Her Circle', a unique new initiative that synergises women's power with the power of the digital revolution on March 7, 2021 on the eve of International Women's Day. The digital networking platform aims to accelerate women's empowerment and strengthen the bonds of sisterhood globally.

On the occasion of the launch, Nita M Ambani, said "I am delighted that we can create such a circle of support and solidarity for millions of women through Her Circle.in, a digital platform that invites every woman to join and make her own. With the Digital Revolution enabling 24x7 global networking and collaboration, Her Circle welcomes ideas and initiatives of women from all cultures, communities and countries. We make sisterhood and equality our touchpoints on this platform." Ambani added.

# Number of women borrowers on rise

Their indebtedness growing at 21% since 2014; Women borrowers account for 28% of retail loans

MUMBAI

INDICATING the increasing indebtedness of women as well as their financial inclusion, 28 per cent of retail borrowers are women whose dependence on external finance in comparison to men have been growing at 21 per cent since 2014, shows industry data.

According to the data from the largest credit bureau Transunion Cibil released on Monday, women borrowers today number 47 million in the retail credit market and over the past six years, the share of women borrowers has grown to 28 per cent as of September 2020, up from 23 per cent in September 2014, indicating the increasing inclusion of women in the credit market.

This is an annual growth rate of 21 per cent, while the same by male borrowers have grown at 16 per cent

Insights on credit availed by women show that 45 million new loan accounts were opened by women borrowers during the 12-month period ending September 2020, marking a 17 per cent annual growth over the past six years

during the same period, says the report. In terms of sanctioned loan amount, women borrowers account for Rs 15.1 lakh crore of retail loans today, a growth of 12 per cent annually over the last six years. The report has attributed the same to improved access to economic opportunities leading to better financial inclusion of women.

Transunion Cibil Chief Operating Officer Harshala Chandorkar said the increased participation of women in the labour force, coupled with any government initiatives and

policies on improving access to economic opportunities for women have driven this growth. She also said factors like lower stamp duty for women consumers on home purchase in some States along with lenders offering better terms and conditions and lower rate of interest for them have further catalysed this. Another key reason is that women are better at repayment, leading to higher credit scores than their male counterparts, indicating lesser probability of default which makes them better customers for



## SAUDI OIL SITE ATTACK

# Oil prices hit 1-year high, cross \$70

BANGKOK

OIL prices pressed higher Monday after strikes on major oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, shook energy markets already rattled by a decision by oil producers last week to not lift output. Brent crude, the international standard, surpassed \$70 per barrel for the first time in over a year, gaining \$1.14 to \$70.47 a barrel. It surged \$2.62 on Friday. Benchmark US crude oil added \$1.10 to \$67.19 per barrel, up 1.7 per cent, falling back from bigger gains earlier in the day. It jumped \$2.26 to \$66.09 per bar-



rel on Friday. Prices have been recovering in the past few months after plunging last year with the onset of the pandemic. The devastating winter freeze that hit Texas and other parts of the southern United States last month knocked out production of roughly 4 million barrels per day of US oil, pushing prices above \$60 a barrel. Last week, with oil prices rising, some observers were expecting the OPEC cartel and its allies to lift more restrictions and let the oil flow more freely. But OPEC agreed to leave most restrictions in place, despite growing demand.



T20 DILEMMAS

# Tough calls between Dhawan/Rahul, Chahar/Bhuvneshwar, Shreyas/Surya

AHMEDABAD

THE Indian team management faces a problem of plenty going into the five T20 Internationals against England, an assignment which marks the beginning of the side's build-up to this year's T20 World Cup at home.

There are 19 players available for selection and with two in contention for each slot, the XI for the five games, starting here on Friday, will be an indication to how head coach Ravi

Shastri, captain Virat Kohli and bowling coach Bharat

Arun are looking at the next six to seven months for the shortest format. Will they look for a settled combination to first clinch the series and then experiment or will they field absolute rookies in the squad looking at the bigger picture?

For a team that's so closely followed, the result does matter and that's why one can expect a settled first eleven for the first three games since all matches are at the same venue on similar kind of tracks.

The roaring comeback of Rishabh Pant will lead to a lot of interesting developments at the top of the order. Pant's inclusion means that KL Rahul, who till a few months back was the first choice keeper-opener, is unlikely to don the big gloves.

Shikhar Dhawan and Rohit Sharma were a settled white ball opening pair till recently but Rahul's emergence as a potent white ball specialist has spiced up the competition.

Dhawan recently had a score of 150 odd in the Vijay Hazare Trophy for Delhi and when it comes to Rohit, there's nothing to be discussed.

So where does the team management fit in Rahul, who has been a successful IPL opener? Will he be slotted in the middle-order as Dhawan's game is not suited to batting lower down? These are two pertinent questions and in the answer, will be a follow-up question.

With skipper Kohli himself coming in at No 3 and two game-changers like Pant and all-rounder Hardik

Pandya expected to play the big shots at Nos 5 and 6, where does it ideally leave Rahul? The only place he can be slotted is No 4 but Shreyas Iyer and

Suryakumar Yadav are also jostling for a place.

If one closely follows the pattern of picking the playing XI, Surya, a sentimental favourite, will have to wait for his turn as Shreyas has done nothing wrong. But when it comes to a three-way battle between Rahul, Shreyas and Surya, the Karnataka man beats the two Mumbai boys hollow with his repertoire of strokes and ability to shift gears.

Similarly, in the pace department, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, once upon a time India's best white ball exponent, is coming back after a long lay-off and will be engaged in a two-way fight with Deepak Chahar and Shardul Thakur.

For Bhuvneshwar, his experience and being a better bowler at the death compared to Chahar holds him in good stead but he hasn't played a lot of cricket save a few Mushtaq Ali games. Ditto for Chahar, a potent outswinging bowler but more of a one-trick pony with lack of varia-

tions during the back-10.

Shardul is a crafty bowler who can swing it at brisk pace and among the three can use the long handle to the best effect. Yuzvendra Chahal, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel are the three spinners expected to feature in the playing XI on the sluggish Motera tracks.

In another three-way fight, Thangarasu Natarajan, with his variation of yorkers, stands a better chance to start off compared to Navdeep Saini. Two players, who will only get a look-in if someone is injured or forcefully rested are Ishan Kishan and Rahul Tewatia as the two simply can't be fitted anywhere.

In all, there are too many good players and very little space to fit all of them with three sure-shot picks -- Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah already resting or recuperating from injury. Once they comeback, it will be a bigger selection headache for the management but one that they won't mind. (PTI)

# Bajrang bags gold, number 1 rank, bronze for Kaliramana

ROME

OLYMPIC-bound Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia pulled off a two-pointer in the last 30 seconds of the gold medal bout to defend his title at the Matteo Pellicone Ranking Series event, a result that propelled him back to world number one rank.

Up against Mongolia's Tulga Tumor Ochir, Bajrang was trailing 0-2 till the final moments of the 65kg final but managed to level the scores, 30 seconds from the final whistle. Since the last scoring point came from the Indian, he was declared the winner on criteria on Sunday night.

Bajrang's leg defence seemed to be a particularly improved aspect of his game in the one-year break, forced by the coronavirus pandemic. The 27-year-old though said he needs to work more on his defence as he is eyeing a medal at the Tokyo Games.

"I found that my leg defence has improved compared to where it was before the break. I have got better but it still needs more work. I also need to be better on my attacking moves," Bajrang told PTI. Asked about his struggle in the final against the Mongolian, one of the three men's Indian wrestlers to have qualified for the Tokyo Games said it indeed was tough.

"Look, the 65kg category is extremely competitive. The Mongolian has qualified for the Tokyo Games. He is not a weak opponent. All the wrestlers in this category have the same

aim of doing well in Tokyo, so all are tough and we are all almost at same level," he said.

"It is such a sport, that you go up and down. I am just glad that I am back to the mat and competing," he said. Bajrang will now be back in the national camp but wants to train outside before the Asian championship, scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan from April 9 to 11.

"I am looking for a training stint abroad. Let's see if it happens because restrictions are back in Europe because of rising virus cases. Travelling is not easy these days. You have to fill a lot of forms, download apps, fill too much information."

Bajrang was placed second in the rankings before the event and is now on top of the table in the 65kg category with 14 points. The fresh rankings are based on results of only this tournament which means that gold-medallists get the top spot.

Vishal Kaliramana too impressed in the non-Olympic 70kg category by winning a bronze with a 5-1 win over Syrbaz Talgat from Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, Narsingh Pancham Yadav, who recently made a return to competitive wrestling after a four-year doping ban, lost his bronze medal play-off 0-5 to Kazakhstan's Daniyar Kaisanov. The loss notwithstanding, he was impressive with his power and temperament.

India returned with seven medals from the first Ranking Series event in a year with Vinesh Phogat and Sarita Mor winning gold and a silver respectively in the women's event. Greco Roman wrestlers -- Neeraj (63kg), Kuldeep Malik (72kg), Naveen (130kg) -- bagged three bronze medals. (PTI)



NEW DELHI

INDIA will play their inaugural World Test Championship final against New Zealand at Southampton's Ageas Bowl Stadium from June 18-22, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly confirmed on Monday.

Initially, the final was supposed to be held at the Lord's but Southampton, with a five-star facility inside the stadium, will make it easier for both the ICC and the England and Wales Cricket Board to create a bio-bubble for the two teams. "Yes, the final will be held at Ageas Bowl," Ganguly replied to a query from PTI. India qualified for the marquee clash after beating England 3-1 in a just-concluded Test series. The BCCI president, who has been on a medical break after undergoing a bypass surgery, is expected to travel to UK to watch the final match.

Southampton, with its slowish track, puts India on even keel with New Zealand as spinners will come into the game at the venue. "I will go for the World Test Championship and hopefully we can get past New Zealand in the final. New Zealand will be there before us and they will play a couple of Test matches (against England)," Ganguly told 'India Today' channel.

He lavished praise on the team for its stupendous performance in both the away series against Australia and home games against England. Massive achievement? "Oh yes, specially after what players have gone through to be in those bubbles and play cricket day in and day out. It was remarkable. Right from IPL till now. What they

# India-New Zealand World Test C'ship final in Southampton: BCCI president Ganguly

have achieved is fantastic," he told the channel.

"I think we must congratulate Ajinkya Rahane, first in Australia and Virat Kohli in England, the head coach, support staff, everybody. (Rahul) Dravid who does a lot of work behind the scenes with these boys. To see that day in Brisbane was outstanding," he said.

Ganguly believes that Rishabh Pant is a match winner in the mould of Virender Sehwag, Yuvraj Singh and Mahendra Singh Dhoni. "I have seen him for past two years and I have belief in match-winners. A player, who on his day will win you games. Pant is one such guy."

"Sydney Test, if he had been there for six more overs, he would have won us that game too. He is like Dhoni, Sehwag and Yuvraj, who can win matches alone," said the former India captain.

He was mighty impressed with Pant's game sense during his under pressure hundred at Motera. "...and look at how he played in Ahmedabad. His game sense while facing the second new ball against James Anderson, who has bowled well in the series. He counter-attacked and changed it."

He also lauded National Cricket Academy head Rahul Dravid, whose behind the scenes work has helped in creating a solid bench strength. "That's why I say Dravid has done a great job. Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur did so well in Australia and we won the final Test without Jasprit Bumrah."

On his health, he said that it was a "small blemish" but he is back to work now. (PTI)

## Vijay Hazare Trophy: Karnataka, Gujarat enter semi-finals

NEW DELHI

CAPTAIN Ravikumar Samarth (192, 158 balls, 22x4s, 3x6s) and Devdutt Padikkal (101, 119 balls, 10x4s, 2x6s) scored centuries as Karnataka beat Kerala by 80 runs in a quarter-final match and storm into the semis of the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Palam Air Force Ground on Monday here.

In the other quarter-final game, captain Priyank Panchal scored a 131-ball 134 to help Gujarat secure a 117-run win over Andhra at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, and enter the semis.

For Karnataka, Samarth, and Padikkal put up an opening partnership of 249 runs as Karnataka scored 338/3 while batting first. For Kerala, NP Basil captured three wickets for 57. In response, Kerala were all out for 258, as Vathsar Govind's 92 (96 balls, 6x4s, 3x6s) Mohammed Azharuddeen's 52 (34 balls, 5x4s, 2x6s) went in vain. Pacer Ronit More took five wickets for 36 runs.

In the other match, apart from opener Panchal's century, Rahul V. Shah (36), and Ripal Patel (35) were

the other significant contributors for Gujarat. For Andhra, Harishankar Reddy was the best bowler with 3/60.

In reply, Andhra's innings struggled against left-arm pacer Arzan Nagwaswalla, who took four wickets for 28 runs, and veteran spinner Piyush Chawla, who recorded figures of 3/33. The top scorers for Andhra were Ricky Bhui with 67 (76 balls, 3x4s, 4x6s) and Naren Reddy (28, 25 balls, 3x4s).

In the two remaining last 8 matches, Mumbai face Saurashtra at Palam while Uttar Pradesh play Delhi at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday.

**Brief scores (quarter-finals)**

Gujarat 299/7 in 50 overs (Priyank Panchal 134, Rahul Shah 36; Harishankar Reddy 3/60) beat Andhra 182 in 41.2 overs (Ricky Bhui 67, Naren Reddy 28; Arzan Nagwaswalla 4/30, Piyush Chawla 3/33) by 116 runs.

Karnataka 338/3 in 50 overs (Ravikumar Samarth 192, Devdutt Padikkal 101; Nedumankuzhy Basil 3/57) beat Kerala 258 in 43.3 overs (Vathsar Govind 92, Mohammed Azharuddeen 52; Ronit More 5/36) by 80 runs.

## Humpy bags BBC award for second time

NEW DELHI: Koneru Humpy, the reigning world chess champion in the rapid format, was on Monday won the second edition of the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award. Once the youngest ever chess Grandmaster at the age of 15, Humpy bagged the award after receiving the highest number of votes from the fans. A 40-member jury had nominated Humpy, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, sprinter Dutee Chand, shooter Manu Bhaker and hockey skipper Rani Rampal for this year's honour, last month. "This award is very precious, not only to me but to the entire chess fraternity. Being an indoor game, chess doesn't get as much attention as sports like cricket in India. But with this award, I hope, the game will draw people's attention," Humpy, the Cairns Cup holder, was quoted as saying in a BBC release. "I could win over the years because of my willpower and confidence. A female player should never think about quitting her game. Marriage and motherhood are just a part of our life and they should not change the course of our lives," added the 33-year-old, who is now mother of a four-year-old daughter. BBC Director General, Tim Davie hosted the virtual awards ceremony and announced the winner. This year's Lifetime Achievement award went to the veteran athlete, Anju Bobby George, the only Indian athlete to have won a world championship medal in long jump in 2003. England all-rounder Ben Stokes announced young shooter Manu Bhaker as the winner of the Emerging player of the Year award, a new category added to this year's BBC ISWOTY. (PTI)

## 3rd T20I: Windies beat SL by 3 wkts, win series 2-1

ANTIGUA: West Indies beat Sri Lanka by three wickets in the third T20I to win the three-match series 2-1 at the Coolidge Cricket Ground. Fabian Allen smashed three sixes in the second last over of the match to help the West Indies chase down Sri Lanka's 131/4 with an over to spare. Brief scores: Lanka 131/4 in 20 overs (Dinesh Chandimal 54 not out, Ashen Bandara 44 not out; Fabian Allen 1/13) lost to Windies 134/7 in 19 overs (Lendl Simmons 26, Nicholas Pooran 23; Wanindu Hasaranga 2/13). (ANSS)

## Boxam boxing: India finish with 10 medals

NEW DELHI: Continuing his splendid run, Manish Kaushik clinched gold as Indian boxers concluded their impressive campaign at the Boxam International Tourney with 10 medals in Castellon, Spain.

# Bagan, NorthEast face off with ISL final at stake

MARGAO (GOA)



ATK Mohun Bagan and NorthEast United face each other in the second leg of the Indian Super League (ISL) semi-final at the Fatorada Stadium here on Tuesday.

A late equaliser from Idrissa

Sylla had helped NorthEast snatch a 1-1 draw in the first leg. Bagan have had a solid defence throughout the season, having conceded just 15 goals in the league stage.


But the team has conceded five goals in the last three games which cost them the ISL League Winners' Shield as well as an advantage in the first leg. However, coach Antonio Habas feels such situations do arise in the games where players tend to lose concentration.

"There is no pressure. It's all about a big opportunity and this opportunity wouldn't come again. We have to enjoy now. We have to give our best and enjoy the semi-finals," said Habas.

### SEMIS FINAL 1 RESULT


Mumbai City FC in final, beat FC Goa in penalties 6 - 5





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