

# The Sunday Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

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Possession ready Property at Tower G,J,K,L,H & F (for "The VIEWS"), OC/P of Tower J, G, K, L, H & F has already been obtained vide Memo GMADA-SDO(B)/13/14283 Letter dtd 10-06-2013, vide Memo GMADA-SDO(B)/14/21818 Letter dtd 04-08-2014, Memo GMADA/STP/2017/4164 Letter dtd 02-08-2017, vide Memo GMADA-STP/2018/2194 Letter dtd 27-07-2018, respectively and for 'Club House' GMADA-SDO(B)/2019/69511 vide Letter dtd 26-11-2019.

CENTRAL PLAZA (Area 4.83 Acres) AND vide Memo. No.GMADA/DTPS/DS/T/2016/1124 Dated 22-03-2016 issued Completion/Occupation certificate of Central Plaza at sector 105 in Mohali Hills, S.A.S Nagar. (Area of Project 6.18 Acres).

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# Ready for talks with Centre: Farmers

Also want discussion on pollution ordinance, power Bill, loan interest waiver

Tribune News Service



## MEETING ONLY WITH DECISION-MAKERS

- The 30 farmer organisations have made it clear that they won't respond to any informal invite for the meeting conveyed on phone or through BJP leaders
- They said the Centre should reveal the name of the person who will represent it and send only those who are authorised to take decisions

second is the electricity amendment Bill, and the third keeping out farmers from any benefit under interest exemption scheme extended to those who have availed loans," he said.

Kokri alleged the Central Government was hell-bent on protecting the interests of big corporate houses and had unleashed attack on farmers, which was unacceptable. "We want discussion and solution

to every attack unleashed on farmers in the garb of Covid," he said.

However, 30 farmer organisations said they were open to any offer for negotiations but with certain conditions.

"First, we want a formal invitation. We won't respond to any informal invite for meeting conveyed on phone or through local BJP politicians. Second, the government should reveal the name of the person who will represent it and must send only that official/minister for negotiations who is authorised to take decisions," they said.

For over past five weeks farmer organisations have been holding protests across the state. Though they lifted dharnas from railway lines and petrol pumps of corporate houses, they are continuing to gherao houses of BJP leaders across the state and holding protests in front of private thermal plants.

# Non-resumption of trains may lead to unrest: Minister

Tribune News Service

## MPs: MEETING WITH SHAH, GOYAL POSITIVE

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

Reacting sharply to the Railways' decision not to resume trains to Punjab, Congress minister Sukhinder Singh Randhawa and state Congress chief Sunil Jakhar said the Centre's behaviour may lead to unrest in the border state and it seems there was a large conspiracy against the state.

Responding to the statement of Railways Board Chairman RK Yadav that it was not feasible to run trains to Punjab due to protest by farmers, Randhawa said the Centre was playing a dangerous game with the border state. Randhawa was a key

member in the Punjab Government committee on negotiations with farmers and the Centre on Central farm Acts.

Sunil Jakhar, president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, said the move was a part of a larger conspiracy against Punjab and there may be a backlash. "This does not augur well for the region. It is against the federal spirit of the country. It is actually a frightening situation," Jakhar said.

He termed it absurd that the Railways wanted the Punjab Chief Minister to give a guarantee for security of the trains.

## Youth booked for raising Khalistan demand at rally

Tribune News Service

MUKTISAR, NOVEMBER 7

The police have booked a youth of Khubban village in Fazilka district for raising the demand for Khalistan in the "Kisan Bachao Rally" organised by the Congress in Malout town on Friday.

Malout MLA and Deputy Speaker Ajai Singh Bhatti was also present on the stage when one Sukhpreet Singh allegedly said if the farmers' demands were not met, they would raise the demand of Khalistan.

As soon as the statement was made, some Congress activists among the audience stood up and condemned it. Later, Bhatti too during his public address condemned the statement.

Meanwhile, the Malout (City) police registered a case under Sections 124-A and 153-B of the IPC. The accused is however yet to be arrested.—TNS

## Barnala farmers gherao Kalia, other BJP leaders for 5 hrs

Tribune News Service

BARNALA, NOVEMBER 7

Hundreds of farmers today gheraoed the residence of Barnala district BJP president Yadwinder Shanty where former minister Manoranjan Kalia and other party leaders had come for a meeting.

As farmers protested, the BJP leaders remained stuck in the house for around five hours. Farmers relented after getting an assurance from the BJP leaders that they would raise their concerns regarding the farm laws with the Central Government.

Requesting farmers not to fall in the trap of the political parties, Kalia and other BJP leaders said the Central Government would take all steps to protect the farming community. "Our government has brought the latest laws to double the income of farmers. The minimum support price would not end. Our party has done nothing



Farmers protest outside the residence of Barnala district BJP president Yadwinder Shanty on Saturday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

wrong, but our political opponents are spreading misinformation," said Kalia.

Farmers have been protesting in front of Shanty's residence for past many days. When Kalia along with other leaders reached there, more farmers joined the protesters and started rais-

ing slogans against the BJP-led Central Government.

"Had the Central Government been serious, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Cabinet Ministers would have conducted meetings with us. But it is sending officers to talk to us, which is unac-

ceptable," said Rup Singh, a Bhartiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) leader.

Another protesting farmer, Kulwant Singh, said the Central Government should come out of the illusion that the agitation would end in some days, as farmers were men-

tally prepared for a long haul. "Manojranjan Kalia is a Punjab BJP core committee member. He had come here to meet farmers and allay their fears regarding the farm laws. Initially farmers gheraoed him, but later they listened to him," said Shanty.

## BJP: State must help restore train services

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh flayed Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh for not responding positively to the request of the Railway Ministry to clear the tracks in the state for smooth running of passenger and goods trains. He claimed that the Chief Minister was playing a double game on the matter.

In a statement, the BJP national general secretary said the Congress was playing dirty politics in Punjab in the name of farmers. He wondered why the state government, in spite of giving assurance to the Railway Ministry, had failed to persuade the protesting farmers.

He demanded that the Chief Minister should earnestly help in resumption



## WORK EARNESTLY

• The CM should earnestly help in resumption of trains so that the economy of the state does not suffer.

Tarun Chugh, BJP GENERAL SECRETARY

of passenger and goods trains so that the economy of the state does not suffer and people could also commute during the festive season.

"It is the Chief Minister's responsibility to ensure peace on the railway tracks," he said.

## Two Haryana men held with fake notes

## AAP 'endorsed' Sodhi's son for post of SIC

VISHAV BHARTI

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has been making a hue and cry about nepotism in politics, but Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema ended up supporting it when it came to appointment of Cabinet Minister Rana Gurmit Singh Sodhi's son Anumit Sodhi for the post of State Information Commissioner.

Cheema, along with Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and Cabinet Minister Sadhu Singh Dharamsoot, was member of the three-member committee which gave a go-ahead to the appointment.

The State Information Commission (SIC) has to be appointed by the Governor on the basis of recommendations by the committee. The Leader of Opposition is made part of the committee so that government doesn't indulge in any kind of nepotism or favouritism.

Last month, when Anumit Sodhi and Maninder Singh Patti, an aide of Housing and Urban Development Minister Sukhbir Singh Sarkaria, were appointed to the commission, the state government had drawn flak from the media and the Opposition,



## CHEEMA: FAILED TO CHECK ANTECEDENT

Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said the selection committee was provided with a detailed biodata of the candidate, but he failed to check his background. He regretted the lapse.

including AAP

Even AAP MLA from Sunam Aman Arora had flayed the decision and said the government which promised 'ghar-ghar rozgar' is only giving jobs to children of its own ministers. Arora said he was not aware of the fact that Cheema gave consent to the 'controversial' appointment.

He agreed that his party's principles are against this. "I will take up the matter at appropriate platform of the party," he said. AAP state president Bhagwant Mann was not available for comments.

## Protest outside Golden Temple over missing 'saroops'

Tribune News Service

AMRITSAR, NOVEMBER 7

Akal Takht former Jathedar Ranjit Singh along with a few SGPC members and his supporters took out a protest march towards the Golden Temple and held a sit-in today, questioning the SGPC about the whereabouts of 328 missing 'saroops' of Guru Granth Sahib.

They held a four-hour-long sit-in outside the Ghati Ghar Gate where neither representatives from the SGPC nor Akal Takht came out to meet them.

He alleged that the SGPC concealed the original report written by Akal Takht appointed three-member panel headed by Telangana High Court advocate Ishar Singh and had uploaded another report pertaining to misappropriation of 328 'saroops' on its website on October 6.



Protesters gather outside the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Saturday. SUNIL KUMAR

He claimed that the original report carried Ishar Singh's signatures on its each page whereas the secondary report, which contained 1,100

pages, had his signature only on its last page.

Though the SGPC had banned protests in the holy complex, the protesters staged a sit-in at the Golden

Plaza for four hours, raising slogans against SGPC president Gobind Singh Longowal and the Badal family.

Jagjit Singh Khalsa, president of the religious wing

## ORIGINAL REPORT NOT ON WEBSITE

• The SGPC concealed the original report of a three-member panel led by Telangana High Court advocate Ishar Singh and uploaded another report on missing 'saroops' on its website.

Ranjit Singh, AKAL TAKHT EX-JATHEDAR

of the Lok Insaaf Party, said his party extended support to Jathedar Ranjit Singh-led protest, seeking criminal proceedings against SGPC officials who were involved in misappropriation of the 'saroops'.

He said they were seeking account of those Sikh manuscripts also which were returned by the Army to the SGPC after the Operation Bluestar.

## Abohar MC to inspect all houses to control dengue

ABOHAL, NOVEMBER 7

To curb the spread of dengue in Abohar, the Municipal Corporation, a meeting was convened by MC Commissioner Abhijeet Kapil with representatives of all 33 wards.

It was decided that a joint team of the Municipal Corporation and Health Department would survey all houses in the

## Man killed as car catches fire

BATHINDA, NOVEMBER 7

A man was killed after a car caught fire after colliding with a trolley on Friday night here. In the accident, one more person suffered serious injuries.

After the car caught fire, two persons sitting in the car were trapped and suffered injuries. Both were taken to a hospital where one died. The deceased has been identified as Salim, a resident of Meerut. —TNS

city and ensure that none would have dengue larvae.

The Commissioner appealed to the people not to allow accumulation of water anywhere inside the house. Sources said four patients had died due to dengue here, and the number of active patients was about 300. —OC

## Govt launches mission to achieve 100 pc school results

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday distributed 2,625 tablets to students in 372 primary government schools.

He also launched 'Mission Shat Pratishat' (Mission 100%) for the year 2020-21 to empower schools to achieve 100 per cent result despite the Covid-19 crisis. He also virtually inaugurated 1,467 smart schools in the state.

At the virtual event, which connected him to teachers, students and their parents from more than 4,000 schools, the Chief Minister also announced the creation of

## CM distributes 2,625 tablets to students

8,393 pre-primary school teachers' posts. He said these were filled soon by the Education Department.

Pointing out that services of 14,064 contractual teachers had been regularised, he listed out various measures undertaken for the welfare of the teaching staff. Captain Amarinder disclosed that self-defence training was being given to women physical education teachers below the age of 50 so that they can further train girl students.

Pointing out the challenges in education in view of the Covid situation, Captain Amarinder said the Mission Shat Pratishat was aimed at further strengthening the digital education infrastructure in schools through e-books, EDUSAT lectures, e-content and online classes. The mission, said the Chief Minister, would help further boost the standard in government schools. We will soon

## 6,832 smart schools in state, says Edu Minister

SANGRUR, NOVEMBER 7

School Education Minister Vijay Inder Singh on Saturday said his government had converted 6,832 schools into smart schools and Punjab would soon become the first state to provide smart classrooms in all government schools.

Singh along with Secretary, School Education, Krishan Kumar, was here at Government Senior Secondary Smart School (Girls) to participate in a virtual programme in which CM Capt Amarinder Singh interacted with teachers and launched several schemes. "The state government has spent Rs 700 crore to convert government schools into smart schools. We will soon



## Claim ₹700 crore spent on project

start a campaign to convert smart schools in super smart schools. This year, government schools have witnessed more than 3.5 lakh new admissions which is a clear indicator of improving standard of education," Singh said. —TNS











Govt. of Haryana



## Haryane Ka Badhiya Haal Chokha Bitya Pehla Saal

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

# *Employment and Skill Development Making Haryana Self-Reliant*

Government jobs to more than 80,000 youth on merit basis in the last 6 years, about 10,000 jobs given in one year

Around 80,000 youth employed in contract participation with various companies

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27 ITIs collaborated with 40 Industries in 71 Trades to provide Industry oriented training

75% Reservation in Jobs for Youth of Haryana in Private Companies/ Firms/Trust etc.

'Udyog Mitra Scheme' initiated to ensure the training to youth as per the Industrial requirement

Under Haryana Skill Development Mission skill training facility for 68,770 youth and an arrangement for 71,000 youth at Vishwakarma Skill University



Sanitization



Mask



Social Distancing



## UK, EU to step up efforts on Brexit deal

LONDON, NOVEMBER 7

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the head of the European Union's executive arm agreed to stay in contact as their negotiating teams step up efforts to conclude a post-Brexit trade deal between the UK and the European Union.

With less than two months to go before the UK exits the EU's economic orbit, a spokesman at Johnson's Downing Street office said the negotiating teams would "redouble efforts to reach a deal" when talks resume in London on Monday.

The spokesman said Johnson told European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during a Saturday telephone call that "significant differences" remain despite "some progress" in the negotiators' recent discussions.

In a similar sounding statement, Von der Leyen noted some progress as well as "large differences" in the trade talks, adding that the negotiating teams will "continue working hard" to secure a deal.

Both sides said the main issues at hand related to a so-called "level playing field" governing business regulations and fisheries. — Agencies

## Radical Islam enemy of France, says PM

NICE/DHAKA, NOVEMBER 7

French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on Saturday the government would keep "fighting relentlessly" against radical Islam as he paid tribute to the three victims of a knife attack in the southern city of Nice last month.

In Pakistan and Bangladesh, protests continued against France over republishing of caricatures of Prophet Muhammad.

A Tunisian man shouting "Allahu akbar" (God is the greatest) beheaded a woman and killed two other people in a church in the coastal city on October 29 before being shot and taken away by police.

"We know the enemy. Not only has it been identified, but it has a name, it is radical Islam, a political ideology that disfigures the Muslim religion," Castex said in a speech during the ceremony. "It is an enemy that the government is fighting relentlessly by providing the necessary resources and mobilising all of its forces everyday," he added.

In Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, thousands of Muslims rallied against the French President, Emmanuel Macron. — Agencies

### 'SHOULD APOLOGISE'

I ask the French Government to apologise to the 2 billion Muslims across the world.

Nur-Husain-Kashemi, LEADER, HERAFAT-E-ISLAM

President's support of secular laws that allow caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

The protesters, organised by the Hefazat-e-Islam group, a network of teachers and students at thousands of Islamic schools, gathered outside the main Baitul Mokarram Mosque in downtown Dhaka. "I ask the French government to apologise to the 2 billion Muslims in the world. I also ask the world's Muslims to demonstrate their faith by boycotting French products and terminating diplomatic relations with France," Nur-Husain-Kashemi, a leader of the group, told the protesters.

Protests continued in Pakistan as well. Khadim Rizvi, head of religious and political outfit Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, lead a rally against the French President, Emmanuel



US presidential nominee Joe Biden's supporters during a massive rally in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, US. REUTERS

## Truck with 'fake ballots' seized in US

### SC on mail-in votes

WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 7

The US Supreme Court (SC) has asked elections officials in Pennsylvania to segregate and secure the mail-in ballots received after 8 pm on Election Day. If required, those ballots be counted separately, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito Jr said in his order on Friday night, acting on a petition filed by the

Pennsylvania Chapter of the Republican party.

The Trump campaign has alleged that a significant number of mail-in ballots arrived after the 8 pm deadline of closing of polls on November 3. Trump has demanded that these ballots not be counted, but Biden supporters want every vote to be considered. — PTI

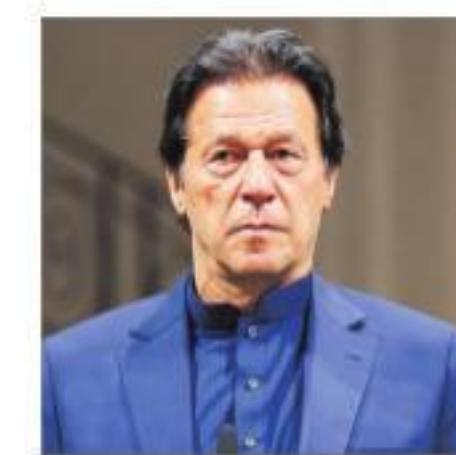


A child holds an anti-Trump sign outside the White House. REUTERS



Biden supporters dance amid vote counting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. REUTERS

## Nawaz wants rebellion in Pak army, says Imran



ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 7

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday lashed out at three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif, describing him as a "jackal" who is trying to create "rebellion" in the army by accusing it of involvement in the country's politics and calling for a change in the military as well as the ISI leadership.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the apex court on graft charges, had last month for the first time directly named army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI head Lt Gen Faiz Hameed

for interfering in the general elections of 2018 to ensure victory of Khan.

Sharif had made the comments virtually on October 16 during a joint rally organised by the Opposition parties under the banner of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), formed to oust the Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government. — PTI

## UK Sikh group loses appeal for census ethnicity tick box

### NOT NEEDED: COURT

LONDON, NOVEMBER 7

The high court in London has dismissed a challenge brought by a British Sikh group against the UK Cabinet Office for its failure to incorporate a separate Sikh ethnicity tick box in the next census in 2021.

Justice Akhlaq Choudhury

handed down his judgment on Friday to conclude that the census, as currently designed, will not prevent people from identifying as ethnically as Sikhs as a write-in option, with the auto-fill function in the online version, will enable the respondent to do so, the ruling notes.

"It cannot be right that any challenge to executive

decision-making should require the decision maker to cease ongoing work, particularly in respect of a project of the scale of a national census," it reads.

Sikh Federation UK, represented by the law firm Leigh Day at the Royal Courts of Justice, had earlier claimed that it would be "unlawful" for the Cabinet Office to lay before Parliament a Census Order based on the proposals set out by the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) in its December 2018 White Paper, which had rejected the need for a separate tick box. "Such matters are not for the court to determine," the judge said. — PTI

## Thousands protest in Germany over Covid restrictions

BERLIN, NOVEMBER 7

Thousands of people demonstrated in central Leipzig on Saturday against government-imposed restrictions meant to slow the spread of Covid after a court issued a last-minute decision rejecting the eastern city's attempt to move the protest elsewhere.

"It is hard to explain how only two households are permitted to meet together and yet 16,000 people are allowed to demonstrate on one plaza," city spokesman Matthias Hasberg said after the appeals court decision.

By the city's calculations, only 5,000 people could gather

White House chief of staff tests positive

NATIONS	DEATHS
US	242,427
BRAZIL	1,62,053
MEXICO	94,323
UK	48,888
ITALY	41,063

WORLDOMETER TILL NOV 7, 11 PM

1.5 meters (5 feet) from one another, so administrators had sought to have the demonstration moved to a larger location outside the centre.

Protesters carried German flags and raised slogans. The country's disease control center, the Robert Koch Institute said Saturday that Germany's states had reported 23,300 new cases overnight.

Meanwhile, Mark Meadows, White House chief of staff, has tested positive. The United States reported over 1,25,000 new Covid cases, setting a new record. The country also reported at least 1,137 new fatalities. — Agencies



A demonstrator holds a placard during a rally in Leipzig. REUTERS

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At 12, Nati Binodini took to theatre. At 23, she retired, inspiring generations of artistes. More than a hundred years later, Aishwarya Rai is all set to play her in a film

ARTS page 14



Diwali is round the corner. Create a festive vibe and dress up your house holistically and tastefully, without burning a hole in your pocket

HOMES page 15



The first authoritative biography on Azim Premji sheds light on the life of the billionaire entrepreneur, who is a philanthropist at heart and a businessman by choice

BOOKS page 16

A faux leather jacket is low-maintenance as it is easy to clean and disinfect.



## Back-to-office collection



Comfort wear, such as biz-leisure and loungewear, may remain in for sometime, but formals will make a comeback, along with the inevitable masks. iSTOCK

As Covid-19 forced people to work from home, they discovered the comfort of pyjamas even while attending meetings. However, as offices gradually open, what will be the dress code for work in a pandemic-ridden era? Will loungewear prevail, or will it be back to formals soon?

### MANPRIYA SINGH

**A**s the home became a virtual office and corporates turned to Zoom meetings, heads mattered, heels didn't. However, as we get back to normalcy and work, the post-pandemic era is confusing for everyone, including the fashion world. By now, the majority is habituated to shorts or pyjamas, but longing to doll up.

As the fall transitions into winter and work from home (WFH) transcends into sporadic office visits, many creative heads in the industry predict that work wear in the post-pandemic era would more be on the lines of business leisure.

Designer duo Abraham and Thakore though agree that it won't be easy to get rid of the tees and track pants, how we actually return to work could go either way. "After months at home in sweat pants and tee shirts, comfort is going to be an important factor in how people choose to dress when they return to office. But that also means that one's desire to dress up could be intense after months of being dressed casually."

### GLOBAL IMPRESSIONS

Autumn/Winter collections this year were conceived in a pre-pandemic era. These were showcased in February just before lockdown restrictions in Europe. Everything has since changed. However, there are some takeaway trends that should remain relevant in post-pandemic world, including formal silhouettes and comfort fabrics, PU leather coats, fuzzy cardigans, teddy coats and knitwear. WFH looks, as recommended by Victoria Beckham, include elasticated waistbands, two-piece knitted sets which, as she said, "are warm, comfortable and versatile". Ralph Lauren's 2020 Fall collection focuses on classic pieces that can be repeated and have longevity. Think tweeds, wools and plaids.

### BIZ-LEISURE MEETS LOUNGEWEAR

Designer Ridhi Mehra expects business leisure to stick around for the initial few

months of going back to office. "Loungewear has been a favourite with the working masses across the globe for their WFH routine. However, as things pick up pace, formal business wear is going to make a comeback and with more elegance and sophistication, plus the inevitable masks."

WFH and lack of office parties has directly affected the formal wear sector. "Given the current scenario and the stark market changes post-pandemic, an overall shrink in demand has become the reality," shares the designer whose collection was recently showcased at Lakme Fashion Week 2020 Digital First Season Fluid Edition.

Several other designers showcasing their collections at LFW 2020 agree with this new reality. "Dress code at work has drastically changed during the past few months. The rules of dressing will not change, but it might take some time for everyone to get back to their pre-pandemic office dressing code," says designer Punit Balana, who has turned the pandemic into an inspiration. "Covid-19 has inspired my recently launched collection Muneer." He feels, "Initially the vibe would incline towards business leisure as people are yet to get re-acquainted with their old lifestyle."

### WHAT'S IN VOGUE, WHAT'S NOT

It is the return of practical clothing like never before, shares a stockist of global ath-leisure chain. "Fleece jackets have almost made it to business casuals, courtesy their being somewhat waterproof. Multi-pocket garments have also been in huge demand. Ahead of the winter season, we are stocking them with vengeance," he says.

Customers, too, are in search of garments that can stock up preventive items like masks and sanitisers. Sonika Dhamija, a Ludhiana-based mompreneur agrees. "I am looking at practicality and lots of pockets in clothes I would buy now. Pockets keep masks and sanitizers handy, which is the need of the hour," she says.

According to Ishaaan Sachdeva, director, Alberto Torresi, "Heading back to work is going to be a huge change and challenge —

### FASHION ELEMENTS NECESSITATED BY PANDEMIC

- Multi-pocket garments to stock up essentials like sanitisers and masks.
- Clothing and footwear which is fuss-free, (easy to wash), germ-free (anti-bacterial fabrics) and durable.
- Designer and matching face masks as bona fide accessory.
- Long sleeves as protection from contracting the virus from surfaces, desks in work spaces and tables around canteen.
- Fleece jackets have almost become business casuals as they are somewhat waterproof.
- Hoodies with attached masks are the new norm.



Urvashi Kaur's LFW collection showcased relaxed androgynous apparel.

new precautions, new rules, new hygiene measures, new norms. Masks are mandatory in the new dress code for office post-Covid. Most consumers would prefer clothing and footwear which is fuss-free (easy to wash), germ-free (anti-bacterial fabrics) and durable." He adds, "More and more consumers are preferring espadrilles and

loafers more than formal shoes."

Chahatt Khanna from Ammarzo, a 'made in India' lifestyle brand retailing from most e-commerce platforms, nails it when she says, "Prolonged experience of working from home has taught us that there are myriad ways to dress professionally. There was a time when casuals were acceptable only as part of Friday dressing. The pandemic has, at least temporarily, thwarted fashion's gradual shift back towards a new formality. The concept of business leisure or b-leisure is native to the travel industry, but one we can be inspired from," she feels. She also emphasises on the return of the basics and a decrease in demand for heels and formal shoes.

### LONG SLEEVES FOR BETTER COVER-UP

Designer Gaurang feels there's a concrete shift in dress code. "A face mask is a bona fide accessory now. Another big change is long sleeves, as protection from winter as well as from contracting the virus from surfaces, desks in work spaces and dining tables around canteen, will be paramount. Though there are those looking forward to flaunting new clothing and have the urge to bingo shop as soon as they can."

"We have also discovered new ways to reach out to customers through our e-stores. This gave us an opportunity to tap into new markets and clients hitherto difficult to reach out to," adds Gaurang.

For the duo Abraham and Thakore, creativity responds to every situation differently and it usually thrives on challenge. For a post-Covid world, "We are working on clothing that is easier to wear and crosses the divide easily between formal and casual, loungewear and dress up."

### COVID INFLUENCE ON RAMP

While internationally the business-wear segments of major fashion houses stuck to safe monochromes to reflect the sombre mood, at the recently concluded Lakme Fashion Week 2020 Digital First Season Fluid Edition, designers had myriad interpretations of Covid and as many ways of battling it. Young designer Anmol Sharma's collec-

tion matched the current global scene through hoodies with attached masks, while the embroidered backs of the boiler suit and jacket declared 'Never Give Up' in thread work. Urvashi Kaur's Tahul collection showcased relaxed androgynous apparel.

Fashion influencer Shraddha Gurung aka Lil Miss Gurung, who has 112K followers on Instagram, accurately predicts the mood of the WFH brigade. "We may have fallen in love with our pyjamas but are looking forward to every chance to dress up. I believe the cuts and fits will be more relaxed while the overall look will be more dressed up." Practicality in outfits will be a major factor, "especially the practicality of fabrics and materials. Faux leather seems to be quite a low-maintenance material that would make sense when it comes to cleaning and disinfecting our clothes. It comes in various cuts that would work seamlessly into office wear." For those for whom style still remains the mantra, she sums up the sentiment, "I've always been a dress-up-to-feel-better kind of person. However, now the choice of outfit has taken a 360 degree turn. I'd still want to be fashionable though."



After months at home in sweat pants and tee shirts, comfort is going to be an important factor in how people choose to dress when they return to office. But that also means that one's desire to dress up could be intense after months of being dressed casually.



Masks are mandatory in the new dress code for office in Covid times. Most consumers would prefer clothing and footwear which is fuss-free (easy to wash), germ-free (anti-bacterial fabrics) and durable."

— ISHAAN SACHDEVA | DIRECTOR, ALBERTO TORRESI

"We may have fallen in love with our pyjamas but are looking forward to every chance to dress up. I believe that the cuts and fits will now be more relaxed, while the overall look will be more dressed up."

— SHRADDHA GURUNG | FASHION INFLUENCER

"A face mask is a bona fide accessory now. Another big change is long sleeves, as protection from winter as well as from contracting the virus from surfaces, desks in work spaces and dining tables around canteen, will be paramount."

— GAURANG | DESIGNER

Mishé sketch for LFW 2020.

# The courtesan who saved theatre

SARIKA SHARMA

**I**t was the turn of the century, and here was Binodini Dasi, trying to find her place in a society that abhorred her ilk. Born into a family of sex workers, she turned to theatre at the age of 12 and went on to make a name for herself. Her career was to be shortlived, a mere 11 years. At 23, she had sacrificed her art, and retired, becoming a mistress of the man who saved her theatre company. But not before she had set a glowing example for women in theatre and introduced modern makeup techniques for artistes.

"Flower of native stage", "Queen of Indian stage"... As Binodini's popularity soared, the British bestowed several adjectives on her. Her own people, only prejudice. Time may not have been able to heal her wounds, but it did try to correct the wrongs. Many eulogies have hence followed. Binodini's life (1863-1941) has been brought alive on stage, in jatras and urban theatres, films too. Filmmaker Pradeep Sarkar (of *Parineeta* fame) is the latest to announce a project on her with actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan in the lead.

What is it about Binodini's life that continues to inspire filmmakers and theatre directors, we ask Delhi-based Padma Shri awardee Bapi Bose, whose play — that cast Seema Biswas as Binodini — was the first to bring her life story to North Indian audiences. A graduate from National School of Drama, this was to mark his Hindi debut.

"I wanted to tell people about the woman who had sacrificed her life to save theatre at the cost of her body, her chastity," says Bose. Nati Binodini, as she came to be known, was born in the red light area. She tried to work her way out, but the *bhadralok*, the enlightened Bengalis of the 19th century, weren't welcoming. They just couldn't bear an 'impure' woman playing goddess on stage. The men promised to marry her, but turned their back always. This was a time when women in public spaces, especially theatre, were looked down upon. This patriarchal politics ended her dream to have a theatre of her own and eventually her career. "A theatre was being built with her money and it was to be called B Theatre after her name, but a conspiracy was hatched to stop that from happening. People would not want to come to a theatre that is named after a prostitute, she was told, and it was called Star Theatre," says Bose.



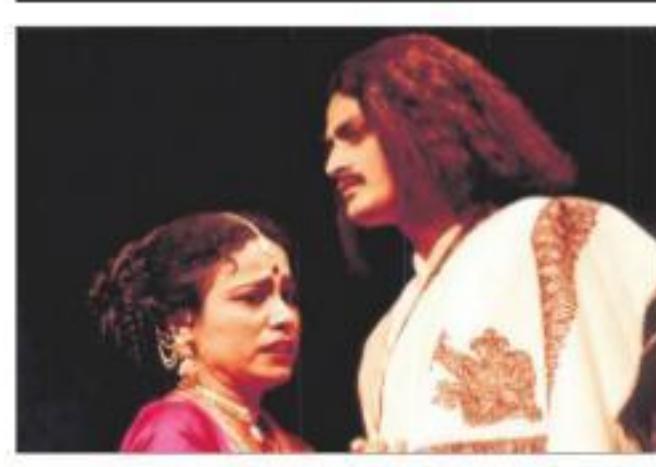
IMAGE COPYRIGHT: ALKAZI THEATRE ARCHIVES; COURTESY: ALKAZI FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS

At 12, Nati Binodini took to theatre. At 23, she left, inspiring generations of artistes. Hundred years later, Aishwarya Rai is all set to play her in a film

It is rare for a thespian to have a play on his/her life. The honour Binodini has is rare. One of the most talked about theatre productions on her life is by Amal Allana, former NSD chairperson. Often hailed as her best work, the play was staged in 2006.

Allana was researching Bengali and Indian theatre in the 1980s when she came across Nati Binodini's autobiography, *Amaar Katha (My Story)*. She knew she would bring Nati's story to stage someday. It was to happen 15 years later. Allana told the story through five Binodinis from different stages of life. She wrote the script, devising the play with her actors, all stellar names — Salima Raza, Swaroopa Ghosh, Kusum Haidar; Sonam Kalra and Amita Ailawadi.

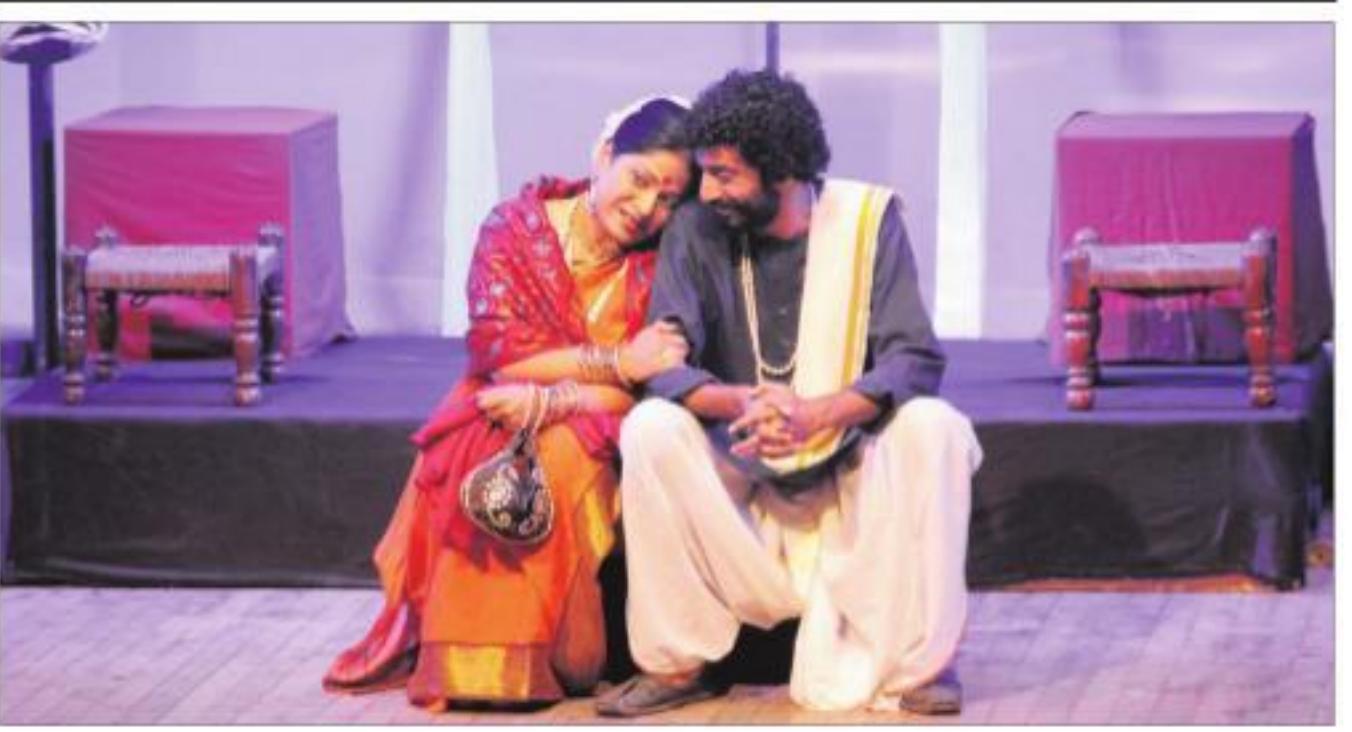
"My story pans out in front of her mentor, theatre stalwart Girish Ghosh, who brought her to theatre, and Ghosh's character often participates in the play, with the Binodinis watching each other. A whole range of emotions are on display. There is one Binodini looking anxiously, another is amused looking at herself in another time, another setting," she tells.



(Clockwise from above) Seema Biswas in Bapi Bose's production; a scene from Amal Allana's play; Anita Shabdeesh with co-actor Harmanpal Singh.

Allana says Binodini's popularity can be gauged from that fact that her shows went full house, the roles spanning mythology and history. Her audience often included the great 19th-century saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who blessed "the untouchable", much to the irking of the *bhadralok*. What sets her apart, Bose says, is that she sacrificed her life at the cost of her body, her chastity, not for survival, but for theatre.

Mohali-based Anita Shabdeesh brought Binodini's story to her Punjabi audience in



2013. "It was such a powerful character; I didn't want to direct it, I just wanted to play Binodini. I spoke to many directors, asking them to helm the play. But somehow, nothing materialised and I ended up not just writing the script with Shabdeesh, my husband, but also directing it and acting in it." Enacted in Punjabi, the setting was Bengali and so were the costumes. A few years later, when Anita happened to go to Kolkata, she made it a point to visit Star Theatre, the place that Binodini had built with her own sweat and blood. It is now named after Binodini.

Abandoned by her lover, the character in Anita's story says, "Raja babu taan gaye, mera theatre taan bach jaye. Raja babu is gone, I just hope to save my theatre." And that she did.

## Music fest spans the world

SHAILAJA KHANNA

**C**OME December, and people of Kolkata eagerly await the Swara Samrat Festival, an annual feature for the past eight years. This year, fans across the world are connecting with it online. The festival will feature 36 concerts, recorded in five cities every weekend from November till March 2021, making this the biggest and longest online festival of classical music and dance till now.

Named after 'Swara Samrat' Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, the festival is the brainchild of his disciple, Tejendra Narayan Mazumdar, and his sarodist son, Indrayudh. The stellar line-up includes doyens Dr N Rajam (violin), Ulhas Kashalkar (vocal), Ashwini

Bhide (vocal), Kushal Das (sitar), Shubhendra Rao (sitar), Bickram Ghosh (percussion ensemble); Rajendra Gangani (kathak), young vocalists Kaushiki Chakraborty, Aditya Khandwe, Dhananjay Hegde and Brajeshwar Mukherji, Bharatanatyam dancer Rukmini Vijayakumar.



on shehnai and Mysore's icons, Mysore Nagaraj and Mysore Manjunath on violin.

However, it is not the diversity of the artistes that makes this festival distinct from the literally dozens of online festivals available. What is unique is that all the concerts are being produced with the same setup in terms of sound, light, video shooting, and ambience across all the five cities of Kolkata, Bengaluru, Delhi, Pune and Mumbai.

Each concert, around an hour long, is recorded and then sent to the editing centre in Kolkata for the final output. Usually, classical music and dance performances are around 2 hours (Carnatic music concerts are longer at approximately 3 hours each). The costs involved are enormous. Apart from artiste fee, there is additional cost of lighting and recording facilities in each city, editing and promoting the event all over the world through digital and print media. Also, instead of hiring one auditorium for the festival duration, the organisers have had to hire five.

The recordings are being done in auditoriums (as opposed to small recording studios) so that the ambience is that of an actual concert; in some cases even a select audience has been made available to inspire the artistes.

The finest classical music perform-

ances require eye contact and the interchange of energy between the artistes and the audience. Online concerts cannot replicate this magic. As Pune-based Ulhas Kashalkar puts it: "Online concerts are a compromise, and this is the first one I shall be recording." But veteran violinist Dr N Rajam says audience or no audience makes no difference to her. "I play for myself first," she says.

There is careful curation of content. Artistes are being advised on ragas to avoid duplication. Artiste pairings are innovatively conceived. The tabla accompanists too are varied and top performers such as Akram Khan, Yogesh Samsi, Subhankar Bannerji, Tamoy Bose, Satyajit Talwalkar, Ojas Adhiya and Ishan Ghosh have been roped in.

Tejendra Mazumdar thanks his sponsors, Arun Bharat Ram of Shriram Foundation and VP Gupta, owner of Bazm-e-khas, a popular online music portal, for making his grandiose dream come true.

The two concerts streamed on November 1 saw tremendous response worldwide. Mazumdar says the online audience is being carefully nurtured for the future by offering the 36 concerts for viewership for a year, unlike most other online concerts that allow you to view recordings for 48 hours. Additional new musical content will be uploaded too.

## Nothingness as an idea

MONICA ARORA

**D**ONNING the dual of hats of being an architect and an artist, Martand Khosla dwelled into the realms of the mind to curate 'The Thought of Architecture' as a series of 10 virtual experiences created with the works of 10 artists over the span of a year. These are a part of New Delhi-based Nature Morte gallery's virtual viewing room experiences.

The pandemic has compelled artists and galleries to introspect the online space as a means of creating an interface between people and processes and the backlit screens have become one's prime and most critical tool of communication. When Martand was internalising as to how a virtual site is actually a "siteless site", wherein the usual trappings of materiality, light, structure and dimension become redundant, he decided to break free from the conventions of architectural norms to keep his viewing space fluid and free-flowing.

"I started researching histories of architecture, cinema and virtual gaming to form the reference point for my series, when I realised that it is only ideas, stories and emotions that are the genesis of any creative project, architectural or otherwise. What begins as a thought is then translated into sketches followed by actual drawings, and once the idea is firmed and confirmed, three-dimensional models are deployed to give it tangibility," he says.

Since none of this was needed here, he opines, "An object starts the idea of space while an event starts the idea of time. If we remove the object and time from any idea, then it can be articulated in abstraction, without limits and boundaries. I decided to deliberately break away from the idea of a viewing room with walls and displays under perfect focus lights. Instead, I created rectilinear grids within Euclidean geometric constructions and decided to juxtapose the

artist's creations against it. This formed the basis of this iterative 10-series project."

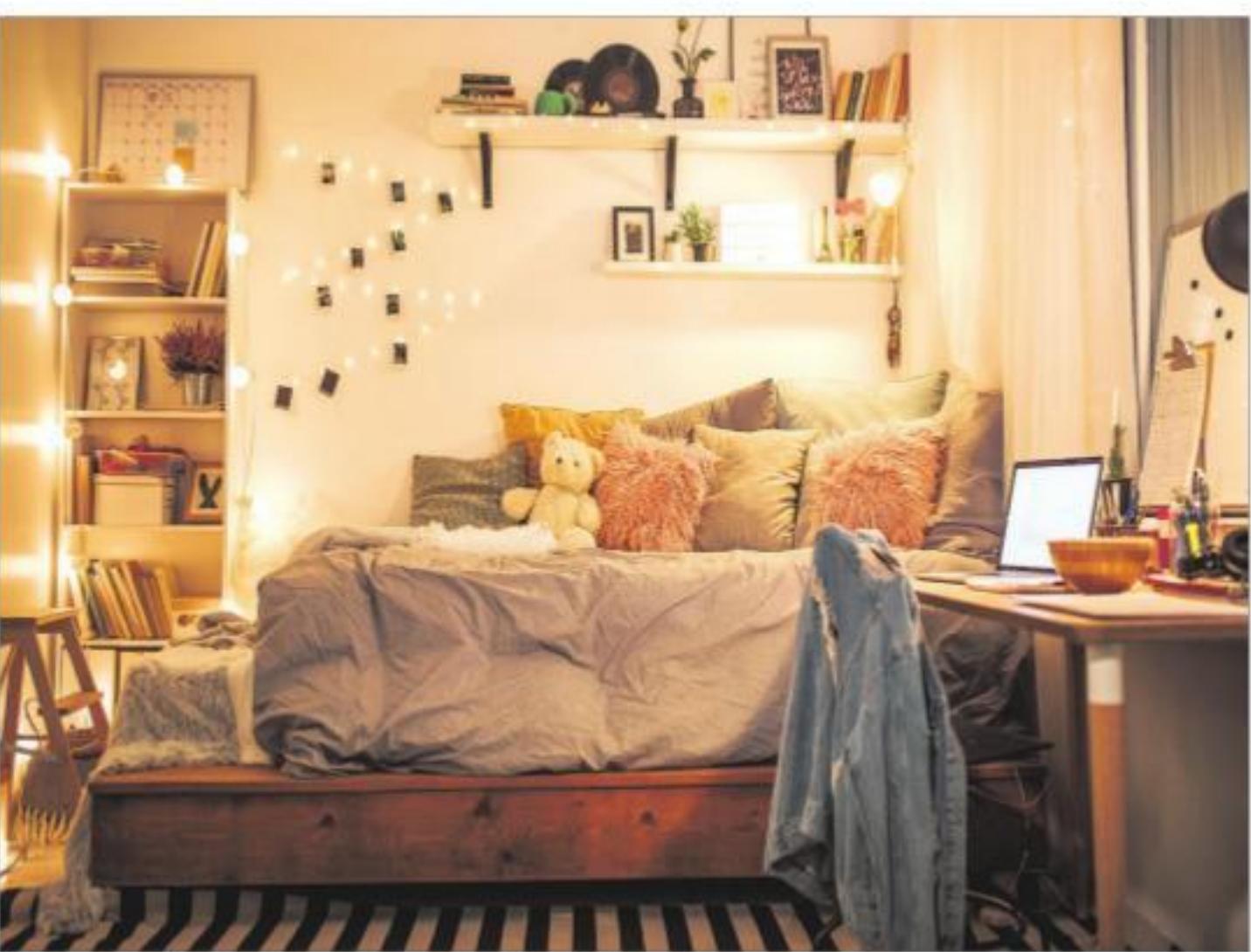
The series kickstarts with Jitish Kallat's 'Circadian Series' comprising a series of drawings created by the artist in March, when he was in isolation in his studio following an overseas journey. Here, he started watering the plants on his terrace and embarked on tracing shadows from fallen twigs. How the sunlight played with the water and created reflections in deeper or lighter shades as dawn turned to dusk was a study in deep observation — a meditative process, which is a part of Jitish's practice of marking passage of time as part of a narrative. What is interesting to observe is that Martand uses nothingness as the genesis of his virtual viewing series and there lies a huge similarity and synchronisation with the philosophy of the world being born out of nothingness, not even time.

As German polymath and logician Gottfried Leibniz describes: "Space exists only as a relation between objects, and has no existence apart from the existence of those objects. The space, defined as a series of coexistence is not an empirical but a rational truth: it is a virtual entity."

Going forward, Martand leaves his grid more and more unstructured and blurry, trying to undo and un-structure from any sense of confinement. This is deliberate as it sets ground zero for the second artist, thereby starting from a clean slate every time...

**The pandemic compelled architect-artist Martand Khosla to introspect virtual space as a means of interface between people and processes**





The fairy lights or rice lights are available in many designs and colours.

ISTOCK

## Light up your house

RASHMI GOPAL RAO

COME November, and it is time to herald one of India's most celebrated festivals, Diwali. A festival that celebrates the victory of light over darkness and good over evil, lighting lamps and *diyas* is intrinsic to the spirit of the festival. Given the times we live in, the importance of celebrating the festival in a manner that is environment-friendly and sustainable can hardly be overemphasised. The news of the production of 33 crore eco-friendly earthen lamps (*diyas*) made from cow dung for this Diwali made headlines recently when it was announced by Vallabhbhai Kathuria, chairman of the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog as part of the Kamdhenu Deepawali campaign. Well, here is a look at how you can go green with all your Diwali lights too.

### STATEMENT PIECES

Eco-friendly lighting is all about choosing the right bulbs, the right kind of fixture materials and, of course, exercising restraint and rigour in switching them off when not needed. While LED lights are the norm today, light fixtures made from recycled metal, glass, and even paper are sustainable choices. "From *lokta*, banana fibre paper to upcycled cork and quarry waste, one can create several unique lighting options," says Raddeesh Shetty, whose Oorjaa collection includes the use of natural elements like banana fibre, water hyacinth and faux concrete in aesthetic pendant, table and floor lamps. So, if you are looking to add some distinctive pieces to your living room, this is sure to light up your home in more ways than one.

### DECORATIVE OPTIONS

From paper lamps to sky lanterns to earthen *diyas*, there are plenty of options to add an eco-friendly touch



to your Diwali decorations. "*Diyas* made from cork with zero binders, along with soy candles, are a great eco-friendly option. Soy wax also burns slower and is cleaner than paraffin wax. So you will get a candle that lasts longer, and with less soot," says Roshan Ray of Seed Paper India.

Diwali is all about cheer and colour, and given the fact that this year has been exceptionally dark due to the pandemic, spread happiness with some brightly hued *akash kandils* or lanterns made from handmade or recycled paper. Easily available online, these come with colourful tassels and other attractive embellishments, which add in those celebratory vibes in both indoor as well as outdoor spaces. Then there are the ones made from handloom fabrics, which add a traditional touch to your décor.

Hanging lanterns made from bamboo are an apt choice if you want to go green; most of them are foldable too, so you can keep these away after the festival and reuse these as many times as you want. Another option is the multi-colour round lanterns made from rice paper, which are perfect if you want a more contemporary look. Pair these up with dainty fairy lights, and you have an Instagrammable vignette ready!

### DIY CUES

The joy of crafting something yourself compares to none other and whether it is Instagram, Pinterest or YouTube, you can find plenty of inspiration online. From making candle holders with concrete and cement to creating your own natural candle with a perfectly cut orange, there is plenty you can do yourself. "Organic ghee made from cow's milk is a good substitute to light *diyas* with. You can light them in old t-light holders with home-made ghee cotton wicks" says Vandana Sarawgi, designer at SR Artefacts.

Apart from umpteen paper lantern tutorials, you can also find how to make the quintessentially charming yarn lights with either wool, jute or cotton yarn using a balloon.

# Get Diwali-ready with budget décor

SHRISTI NANGALIA

WITH Deepawali right round the corner, you must have started wondering how to create a festive vibe at home. Looking for quick, yet effective, ways to dress up your spaces? Read on for many creative ideas for a warm and welcoming setup that can be achieved with very little effort and cost.

### BUILD AN ACCENT WALL

Turn any plain wall into a statement by introducing a mural depicting any traditional scenery or tribal pattern made of beautiful colours and details to draw the eye. Otherwise, a painting or traditional framed art can attain a strong focal point as well. Another simpler way to achieve an accent wall is to take up a DIY job of printing little motifs with a stencil in a repetitive pattern to give a wallpaper-like look.

### DAZZLE WITH LIGHTS

Table lamps, wall sconces and pendant lights can up the décor game of any space in an instant. Turkish wall lights, Moroccan hanging lights, table lamps with metal work, wall lights with wood carvings, light fixtures with mosaic details, etc. can help bring in oodles of festive vibe to your space. A quick, economical and efficient alternative to pendant lights and wall lights are fairy lights. Also called rice lights, these delightful decor pieces are now available in a plethora of designs and colours options.

### ALLURE WITH MIRROR

Although utterly basic, mirrors are underrated décor elements. Decorative mirrors can not only boost the sense of volume in a room, you can place it strategically to reflect light around to create an intriguing effect also. Mirrors can be paired with a console table or side board to tailor an accent wall which stays with you even after the festive season.

### WATER ELEMENT WITH AN URNI

An *urni* — topped with colourful flowers, tea lights or oil *diyas* — is a timeless crowd-pleaser. These are made in a variety of materials, from bell metal to brass, from cement to terracotta. You can pick the one that appeals to you and place it by the entrance door or living area on the floor, over a high-stand or centre table too.

### PATTERNS IN FABRIC

Nothing beats the personality and character that Indian handloom, patterns and fabrics can foster. While silk, zardosi, velvet, patch-work, zari and sequin fabric can offer a rich and ornamented appeal, ikat, kalamkari, sambalpuri and bandhani fabrics can offer subtle, printed motifs in pleasing colours. You can invite these fabrics to



your interiors in a hassle-free manner by buying ready-made cushion covers, table runners, sofa throws and area rugs.

### TAPESTRY & TORANS ADD TO THE CHARM

Reinforce the traditional, festive atmosphere by dressing the walls and doors with tapestry and *torans*. Tapestries are typically made of woven fabric which can be used as a wall hanging or soft furnishing. *Torans*, or *bandalwals*, are decorative door hangings that are made in multiple material and design options. Pick the ones that go best with your interior style.

### TOUCH-UP WITH TABLE DÉCOR

You do not need to invest a large amount of money and

time to give bland tables a quirky spin. Scented candles, potpourri, tea light stands, decorative lanterns, table lamps, figurines and sculptures are budget friendly decorations that can be mix-matched and arranged in distinct fashions over the centre table, console table and dining table.

### EMBELLISH WITH RANGOLI AND OIL LAMPS

Can Diwali be complete without *rangoli* and *diyas*? Go the organic way by using biodegradable material like rice grains or rice powder, turmeric powder and *mehndi* powder to make your *rangoli* designs. Alternatively, you can make the *rangoli* entirely of flower petals and leaves. Daisies, roses and marigolds can give bright orange, red, pink and maroon colours while mango leaves can be used to add a striking green colour to the *rangoli* design. Add clay *diyas* and voila! Your eco-friendly *rangoli* is ready.

Complete the decorations by making *rangoli* with rice, turmeric powder and flower petals, and place *diyas* on it.

## CAPTION CONTEST 1280



Entries are invited to suggest a caption for the above photograph. The caption should only be in English, witty and not exceeding 10 words, and reach Spectrum, The Tribune, Chandigarh, 160030, by Thursday. The best five captions will be published and

awarded ₹300, ₹250, ₹200, ₹150 and ₹100, respectively. Each caption must be accompanied by a clipping of the caption contest and its number. Photocopies of the caption photo will not be accepted. Please mention the pin code in your address.

You have a camera or a phone camera? Click and send us a picture for the caption contest. The selected picture will be used for Caption Contest. Mail the high resolution picture (.jpg format) at [captionpics@tribunemail.com](mailto:captionpics@tribunemail.com)

### Selected entries for Caption Contest 1279

November 1 issue (see photo)

- **Spacecraft**— S P Chopra, Panchkula
- **The more the merrier**— Divyot Uppal, Jalandhar
- **Exceeding the limits**— Santosh Bhatia, Panchkula
- **SUV (Scooter Utility Vehicle)**— Subhash Gogi, Sriganganagar
- **Two-gather**— Kapil Sharma, Kaithal

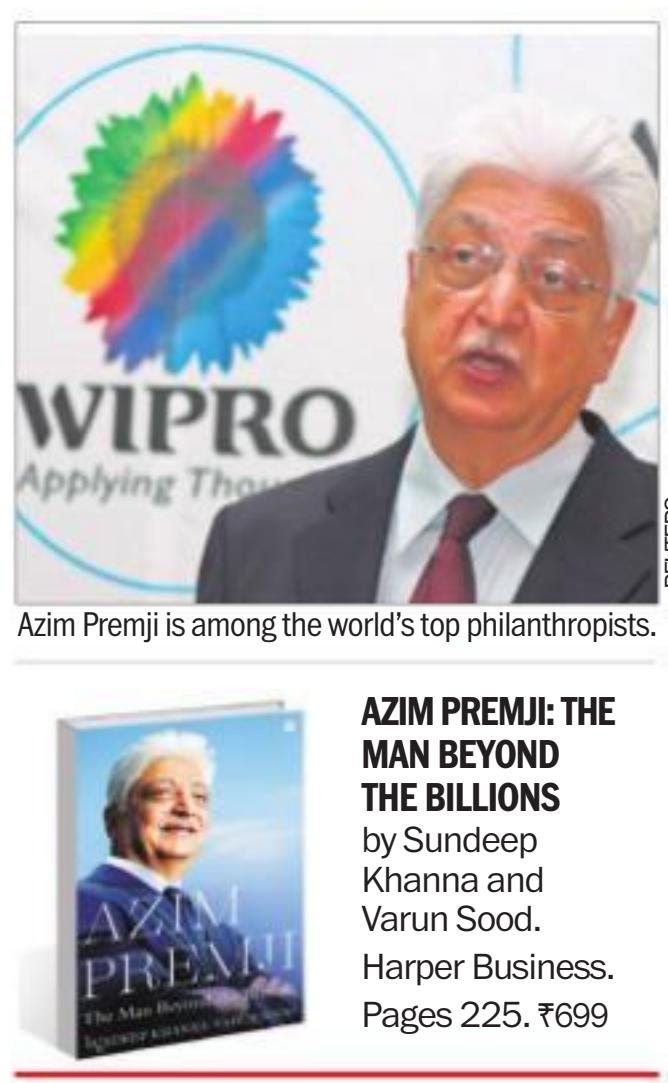


# The uncommon, reclusive billionaire

SEEMA SACHDEVA

**A**ZIM HASHAM PREMJI is an oddball. The 75-year-old business magnate does not conform to any preconceived notions people have about how billionaires should be. He loves chocolates and is not averse to grabbing a few even at midnight. He loves eating street food wherever he travels — be it Singapore, New York or Mumbai. His commitment to thrift has given him the image of Uncle Scrooge in the business world. And yet, he was equally at ease when he donated 75 per cent of his wealth to charity. Totalling around \$21 billion, his donation to Azim Premji Foundation, a non-profit organisation focused on education, made him one of the top philanthropists of the world.

Premji is also one of the most reclusive billionaires. So when two journalists, Sundeep Khanna and Varun Sood, got down to writing the biography of this serial entrepreneur and philanthropist extraordinaire, they found that very little was known about



the man beyond his billions.

The authors went about seeking out people from his past and present who gave an insight into the life of the man who fiercely guards his privacy as well as that of his closely knit family, which comprises his wife Yasmeen and sons Rishad and Tariq.

From battling to save his family's debt-ridden fledgling oil company in Amalner to establishing a bona fide conglomerate with more than \$10 billion in revenue, the book captures the five-decade journey of Azim Premji, called Lalaji by some old-timers. He had no knowledge of the IT industry, but his company became part of the triumvirate of IT start-ups (Infosys, Wipro, TCS) that put India on the global software services map. Wipro was the first Indian IT company to be listed on the NYSE.

Towards the end of 1971, he penned down the principles — integrity, respect for people and customer centricity — according to which he expected to do business. The company is known to fiercely hold on to these values.

About him, Nandan Nilekani, non-executive chairman of Infosys, says, "He is an unusual man." And unusual he is. Unlike most billionaires, he doesn't travel first class. He believes in buying made in India products. Micromanaging everything, Premji gets into the nitty-gritty of every tiny issue. He carries his famous yellow pad in which he takes meticulous notes. His respect for resources is evident in his frugality. When he goes around switching off the lights and fans after everyone has left or insists that both sides of a sheet of paper must be used for photocopying, or when he insists on paying from his pocket for the personal calls he made at work, he sets a precedent for all to follow.

The book is littered with interesting anecdotes such as the one in which his friend and business leader Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw narrates how he disguised himself with a hat and a fake moustache when he wanted to buy some artwork. His reasoning: "The moment they know I'm Azim Premji, they'll charge me too much."

Major personal milestones, including his wedding as well as that of his son Rishad, have been low-key affairs with barely 100 guests invited on each occasion.

The book also takes into account the many missteps the company took, and how it ran into rough weather after it took many wrong decisions.

Premji's business achievements are often overshadowed by the sheer scale of his generosity, a quality he imbibed from his mother Dr Gulbanoo Premji, co-founder of the Society for Rehabilitation of Crippled Children, Mumbai. When Covid-19 knocked on the doors of the country, the Wipro conglomerate donated ₹1,125 crore, the largest amount by an Indian company, besides distributing millions of meals and hospital beds.

At a lecture to Stanford business school students, Premji summed up how he handled the many successes and failures in his career: "It is impossible to generate a few good ideas without a lot of bad ideas. Failure should be forgiven and forgotten completely."

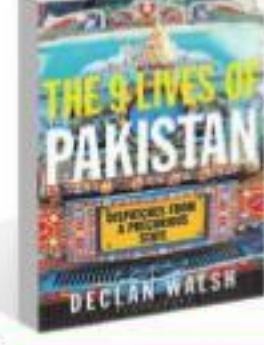
## Wrapping head around Pak

RAHUL SINGH

**I**N 2013, when Pakistan was in the throes of a General Election pitting Nawaz Sharif against Imran Khan (Sharif won), Declan Walsh was served with an expulsion notice, ordering him to leave the country "within 72 hours". He had been reporting on Pakistan for a decade for *The Guardian* and *New York Times*. Such expulsion orders were rare, especially for an experienced foreign correspondent like Walsh. He rushed to Pakistan's acting Information Minister, a former journalist himself. The Minister was genuinely clueless. However, he asked Walsh one key question: "Have you been to Quetta (capital of Balochistan) recently?" The answer would only emerge years later.

Anyway, the author's decade-long stint in Pakistan has resulted in perhaps the best book on that infuriating, troubled, yet fascinating, nation in recent years.

The title evokes the proverb about a cat having nine lives: despite all the odds and contradictions, Pakistan has somehow managed to survive, even though in 1971, the eastern wing broke away to form Bangladesh. The portends of doom have been belied and a democracy of sorts is in place. Some years ago, on a visit to Pakistan to attend a literary festival, this reviewer asked a perceptive Pakistani friend whom he thought had done most damage to Pakistan: "Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq" was his immediate response. This book bears that out. A brilliant maverick, Bhutto could



**THE NINE LIVES OF PAKISTAN: DISPATCHES FROM A PRECARIOUS STATE**  
by Declan Walsh.  
Bloomsbury.  
Pages 332.  
₹799

hold his own among top international leaders. But he was a disaster for his own country. His nationalisation of virtually every industry and enterprise ruined the economy. And when Pakistan's first free and fair election took place after years of military rule, he refused to accept the verdict which would have made Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the Prime Minister of the nation. He persuaded the incompetent army chief, General Yahya Khan, to crack down on East Pakistan, eventually leading to a war with India, Pakistan's defeat, and the creation of an independent Bangladesh.

As for Zia, he left, in Walsh's words, a "poisonous legacy" by his radical Islamisation, Saudi Arabia style. Jihadi fighters at a loose end after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan were unleashed on Jammu and Kashmir. An infamous blasphemy law was enacted and Saudi-funded madrasas, preaching violence and hatred, sprung up all over the country. The "good" and "bad" Taliban came into existence, so "bad" Muslims killed "good" Muslims. Witness the Peshawar attack on a school. Also, the army's seven-day siege of the Red Mosque in Islamabad, which ended in the

killing of its head, Abdul Rashid Ghazi, echoing our own Operation Bluestar. The siege, writes Walsh, was a "watershed in the history of Pakistan", the "first flame of jihadi firestorm" that would "threaten to consume the country".

Walsh's narrative is interspersed by portrayals of some of the characters he interacted with. There is the admirable and gutsy human rights activist Asma Jehangir, who took on the army (she openly called them "useless duffers"). There is also Salman Taseer, successful entrepreneur and politician. Salman courageously opposed the blasphemy law and championed an incarcerated Roman Catholic lady. His radicalised bodyguard gunned him down, another throwback to Indira Gandhi's assassination.

It is only at the end of the book that Walsh learns why he was expelled. A former disillusioned spy of the shadowy Inter-Services Intelligence contacts him in Europe and reveals that he and other ISI operatives had been tracking Walsh's movements while he was covering Balochistan. The province had witnessed several revolts and horrific killings. It was also where nuclear weapons were stored. The Pakistan authorities did not like a foreign correspondent snooping around.

However, one question for which Walsh is unable to find an answer is: who was behind the Mumbai terror attack? Certainly not the Zardari government. Army chief Kayani denied any role. Could it have been rogue elements of the ISI and the army? We will get to know eventually.

## All secrets in black & white

RENU SUD SINHA

**C**OMMANDMENTS have been a way of life with society since the time of Christ. In the Indian context, these can be traced back to Manusmriti. Since then, every era has evolved its own set of rules. God forbid if you are a woman, these then would be much more stringent.

While these unwritten codes of conduct may not have changed with the change in times, thankfully the women have. That's exactly what Tahira Kashyap Khurana's "The 12 Commandments of Being a Woman" is all about.

Tahira, who belongs to Chandigarh, has written about growing up in a small town and the subsequent idiosyncrasies associated with it. Laced



**THE 12 COMMANDMENTS OF BEING A WOMAN**  
by Tahira Kashyap Khurana.  
Juggernaut.  
Pages 200.  
₹299

with wry humour, the book recounts her school years and a teenager's angst with her growing body, or rather the non-growing parts. It brings an acknowledging smile as most women somewhere can relate to those body-image issues, particularly in the growing-up years.

The book is a candid account of her journey and no one has been spared — from nosy neighbours, to how she and her friends foiled

parents while inviting boyfriends overnight. The in-laws have not been spared either; putting their laundry to hang out in public.

Tahira has written about each and every aspect of her life, sans any filter; in microscopic detail — her growing insecurities while husband Ayushmann Khurana was scaling the heights of stardom, her struggles with her lack of identity in a star marriage, her confusion about trying to realise what her true calling is, her forays into spiritualism to calm the chaos in her life and finally, her out-there attitude while battling breast cancer.

This bare-all book is not for the prude-hearted. Candour and humour are the only filters she has used — it does take guts to spill out all your secrets in black and white.

parents while inviting boyfriends overnight. The in-laws have not been spared either; putting their laundry to hang out in public.

But the book claims that it was journalist-turned-politician MJ Akbar who convinced Rajiv otherwise. "MJ Akbar succeeded in convincing Rajiv that if the government were not to challenge the Shah Bano judgment, it would appear to the Muslim community that Rajiv was distancing himself from the defence of the religious rights of Muslims. Rajiv needed to demonstrably recognise the support that the community has always placed on his family," recounts Habibullah of those days.

Tracing the journey of Rajiv

Gandhi from Doon school to the PMO, Habibullah dwells on several crucial events under the late PM, most notably Operation Brasstacks, Bofors, 1987 J&K elections (which, in the writer's words, "were so sullen they fed directly into insurrection"), and the Rajiv-Longowal Accord.

On Brasstacks, the Indian military exercise which escalated into a major confrontation between the armed forces of India and Pakistan in 1986-87, Habibullah writes: "The Prime Minister of India had in fact no inkling of an exercise that had brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war."

He goes on to claim that Rajiv Gandhi learnt of the Operation only on January 15, 1987 from Lt Gen PN Hoon, then GoC-in-C of Western Command, during Army Day celebrations, after which he intervened to control the damage.

In the meantime, the media had been accusing Rajiv Gandhi of having agreed to Brasstacks to divert public attention from Bofors, notes the book, documenting how little the late PM interfered with the work of Arun Singh, his closest friend from school and later his Minister of State for Defence. "This was with consequences," the author says. The memoirs speak of how Rajiv Gandhi assured Parliament that there were no middle-

men in the Bofors deal, "when there indeed were".

In many ways, Habibullah's work sheds the much-needed light on a little-researched leader who ushered in historic reforms — from the 61st constitutional amendment to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years, to championing the cause of the panchayati raj institutions.

The book also uncovers the softer side of Rajiv Gandhi, a friend and a family man. Narrating an incident from 1991 in Kashmir where he was shot outside a mosque in Nowhatta, Habibullah recalls how Rajiv, upon hearing of the incident, sent him a bulletproof vest via an Indian Airlines flight.

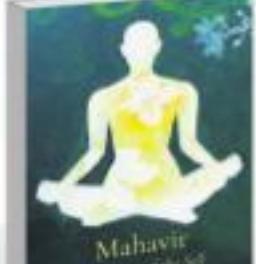
"Years later when I asked Sonia whether it was an old vest, she said no, it was his only bulletproof vest that he had been advised to wear always, but rarely did. When I insisted that I return it to her, Sonia refused, saying Rajiv had wanted me to have it and I must keep it. It remains — and ever will — a treasured possession," writes Habibullah.

Another poignant memory Habibullah records is of Sonia Gandhi and her late husband. The two got married in February of 1968. Years later, after Rajiv's assassination in 1991, a grieving Sonia was to recount their first meeting in England: "As our eyes met for the first time, I could feel my heart pounding. We greeted each other, and as far as I was concerned, it was love at first sight. It was for him, too, he later told me."

Rajiv had met his future wife Sonia at Varsity, a Greek restaurant in Cambridge.

## BACKFLAP

**V**ARDHAMANA MAHAVIR, the last Jain Tirthankara, did not begin his life as a saint. A prince and a householder, he renounced the world, seeking to realise himself. The family he left behind wanted to know why. A part-fictional retelling of Mahavir's story, the book has been written by Arvind Bhandari, country head of Nestlé Nutrition. A Jain himself, he had access to rare texts that are only available to the community.



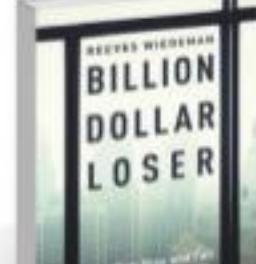
**MAHAVIR: CONQUEROR OF THE SELF**  
by Arvind Bhandari.  
Hachette. Pages 192.  
₹399

**O**NCE upon a time, there was Photoshop, now there are Deep Fakes. Scanning images of a person, AI can create new video images and place them in situations that never actually happened. When combined with voice AI, the results are utterly convincing. A political technology adviser, Nina Schick reveals shocking examples of Deep Fakery and tells us what bad guys can do with cool technology before we start playing catch-up.



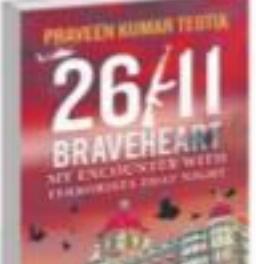
**DEEP FAKES AND THE INFOCALYPSE**  
by Nina Schick.  
Hachette.  
Pages 224. ₹499

**A**DAM NEUMANN started WeWork as an ambitious idea: repurposing surplus office space for the burgeoning freelance class. Over 10 years, WeWork attracted billions of dollars from some of the world's most sought-after investors. A botched IPO forced Neumann's exit and this book is a dramatic chronicle of the five weeks leading to that. The story of Neumann and WeWork is also the story of the decade of start-up excess that was the 2010s.



**BILLION DOLLAR LOSER: THE EPIC RISE AND FALL OF WEWORK**  
by Reeves Wiedeman.  
Hachette. Pages 342.  
₹699

**T**HIS isn't the first account of 26/11. Over the years, we have had many. Yet, each is special for the courage shown, for the fight put up. This account is by Praveen Kumar Teotia, an ex-Marine Commando, who led his team during the counter-terrorist operations. Four bullets ripped through his body, but he had already saved more than 150 lives. A Shaurya Chakra awardee, Teotia overcame his injury and went on to participate in several marathons.



**26/11 BRAVEHEART: MY ENCOUNTER WITH TERRORISTS THAT NIGHT**  
by Praveen Kumar Teotia. Rupa.  
Pages 208. ₹295



