

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 21 MARCH 2021

## WEATHER

Max: 34.3°C  
Min: 21.0°C  
RH: 29%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky during the day.  
Max/Min temp. 35/21°C



## NATION | 5

Anil set ₹100cr target for Waze: Former CP



## SPORTS | 8

India beat England to claim series 3-2

## TABLOID

Tollywood turns holy?



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## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Uttaraayana

Tithi: Phalguna Shuddha Saptami till 7.09 am

Star: Mrigasira till 7.20 pm

Varjyam: 4.27 am to 6.11 am

(Monday)

Durmuhurtam: 4.47 pm to 5.35 pm

Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Sha'ban 7, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 5.29 am

Zohar: 12.33 pm

Asar: 4.44 pm

Maghrib: 6.33 pm

Isha: 7.41 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.27 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.18 AM

MOONRISE 11.33 AM

MOONSET 12.14 PM

COUNTER POINT



Pss! It's our party 'moneyfesto'... ₹2,000 note inside!

## SHORT TAKES

**MODI WISHES IMRAN SPEEDY RECOVERY**

DC CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

In perhaps yet another sign of the thaw between India and Pakistan at top levels, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday evening wished speedy recovery for his Pakistani counterpart Imran Khan who is down with Covid. "Best wishes to Prime Minister @ImranKhanPTI for a speedy recovery from COVID-19," PM Modi tweeted.

■ Another report on Page 5

**5 NATIONS FOR BETTER SHARING OF MIGRANTS**

Athens (Greece), March 20: The interior ministers of the five Mediterranean countries on the front line of mass migration to Europe want their EU partners to share the burden more equitably.

We can no longer be punished for our geographical position, Malta's Byron Camilleri said Saturday, summing up his position and that of his colleagues from Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Spain after they met in Athens. — PTI

## Title triumph



Indian cricket team poses with the trophy after winning the T20 cricket series against England, at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, Saturday. — PTI

## Didn't see US, India war: US

**PAWAN BALI AND SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, MARCH 20**

overnment and added that "partners need to be able to have those kinds of discussions."

"We have never considered India and China were on the threshold of a war," Austin said during a press conference.

To a question whether he had spoken with Prime Minister Narendra Modi about "violations of human rights especially against Muslim minorities in the Northeast", Austin replied: "I did not have an opportunity to talk with him about that. I

did have a conversation with other members of the Cabinet on this issue."

Austin pointed out that US President Joe Biden has said that human rights and rule of law are important to the United States of America. "We always lead with our values."

As a democracy that's pretty important to us. India is a democratic country and you treasure your values as well. There are a number of things that we can and will work on together," he said.

Sources said that Austin on Saturday told external affairs minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar in an hour-long meeting that "as the two largest democracies in the world, human rights and values are important to us and we will lead with these values".

Jaishankar "agreed and emphasised that a strong relationship between the two democracies was not only important for both countries but for the rest of the world", sources said.

## NIZAMABAD STEPS UP TESTS FOR COVID-19

DC CORRESPONDENT NIZAMABAD, MARCH 20

In view of the huge number of Covid-19 positive cases in neighbouring state Maharashtra, the medical and health department officials of the Telangana state government increased the Covid-19 tests in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts.

These two districts border the Nanded district of Maharashtra state. Earlier, officials used to conduct around 500 tests daily. Presently, it has been increased to 2000 tests.

Earlier, single digit numbers of Covid-19 positive cases were reported and now it is around 25 cases per day.

■ Report on Page 3

## KTR to lead team to Vizag in support of VSP workers

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

TRS working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao stated that he would shortly lead a team of his Cabinet colleagues to Visakhapatnam to support the ongoing agitation against the privatisation of Vizag Steel Plant (VSP).

Rama Rao gave this assurance to AP TD legislator Ganta Srinivasa Rao when the latter met him at his chambers in the Assembly here on Saturday.

Rama Rao had while campaigning for the Legislative Council elections had extended his solidarity with the agitating VSP workers. Srinivasa Rao had tendered his resignation from his Visakhapatnam (North) Assembly seat on

February 6 in support of the agitation. However, it is still pending with the AP Assembly speaker.

In an informal chat with mediapersons after the meeting, Srinivasa Rao said he had met Rama Rao to thank him for extending his support to the agitation by the steel plant's joint action committee.

"He has assured that he will lead a team to Visakhapatnam to study the issue and take part in the agitation," Srinivasa

Rao said. Both leaders reportedly also discussed the latest political situation in Andhra Pradesh.

Srinivasa Rao vowed to mobilise the support of political parties that are against the VSP privatisation.

Rama Rao's proposed visit to Vizag also assumes political significance. His support was received well by AP natives residing in Hyderabad, who constitute a major chunk of graduate voters besides employees of central public sector units like BHEL, BDL, and ECIL.

The victory of TRS candidate Surabhi Vani Devi from this seat indicates that Rama Rao's support to the VSP agitation has worked wonders as the party had never won the seat earlier.

Family members of some

other patients too complained of no power and oxygen supply immediately after the fire incident.

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences director Banoth Balram Naik, however, refuted the allegations made by family members of Aparna.

He underlined that she had already died when the fire started.

There is no connection between the patient's death and the fire incident, he maintained.

The director asserted that safety of all patients in Intensive Care Unit was ensured by shifting them to another ward immediately after the fire broke out.

## PATIENT DIES AT MGM, KIN BLAME POWER FAILURE

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, MARCH 20:

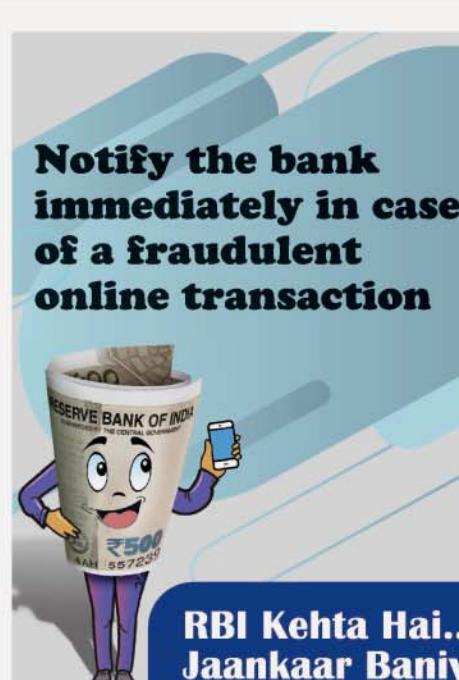
Power failure at the state-run MGM hospital in Warangal led to the death of a Covid-19 patient, who was placed on a ventilator at the MGM hospital on Saturday.

The 38-year-old Ganesh, who hails from Jammikunta, was admitted to the Covid-19 ward in the MGM hospital on February 24.

He was put on ventilator support as he had breathing issues.

Superintendent Dr Nagarjuna Reddy said that the patient has been in a critical condition since he was admitted.

■ Report on Page 2



RBI Kehta Hai...  
Jaankaar Baniye,  
Satark Rahiye!



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## OTHER STORIES

**Two held for snatching bags**

**Hyderabad:** The Banjara Hills police arrested two persons, Mohammad Saiful, 23, and Mirza Haroon Baig, 20, for snatching bags at knifepoint. They were reportedly involved in cases in the Banjara Hills.

**Police officer injured in mishap**

**Hyderabad:** TS Special Police sub-inspector was injured when his car rammed a stationary tractor on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) on Saturday morning. The 2009 batch SI, P. Naresh, has been shifted to hospital. Police said he was driving to his hometown Kodad in Suryapet district with his wife and a relative when the accident occurred. The co-travellers escaped unharmed.

**Canopy at TRS HQ catches fire**

**Hyderabad:** A canopy in front of Telangana Bhavan, the TRS headquarters, in Banjara Hills caught fire when crackers lit by activists to celebrate the party victory in the Legislative Council elections fell on it. Fire officials received a call regarding the fire at about 5.10 pm. "We reached the spot in a few minutes. It was a minor fire accident. It was doused using water in the premises even before a fire tender could reach the spot," said a fire official. No casualties were reported.

A video of the incident showed people running away from the spot in panic. Police personnel can be seen controlling the crowd.

**TS awaiting report on admin service**

**Hyderabad:** A proposal to introduce a Telangana Administrative Service is being looked at by the government, finance minister T. Harish Rao informed the Legislative Council on Saturday. Replying to a question, the minister said the government would take a view on the matter after it receives a report from a committee formed to study all aspects related to introducing a state administration service. The government will discuss in detail every aspect of introducing such a service after the report is received, Harish Rao said.

**45 STUDENTS OF 2 GOVT SCHOOLS TEST POSITIVE**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

Thirty-four students from the Government High School at Mudfot, Secunderabad were among the 45 school kids who were found to be Covid-19 positive on Saturday.

According to officials, another 11 students were found to be positive after tests at a private school in Khammam.

**COVID PATIENT DIES DUE TO POWER FAILURE IN MGM**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**

WARANGAL, MARCH 20

Power failure at the state-run MGM hospital in Warangal led to the death of a Covid-19 patient, who was placed on a ventilator at the MGM hospital on Saturday. The 38-year-old Ganesh, who hails from Jammi-kunta, was admitted to the Covid-19 ward in the MGM hospital on February 24. He was put on ventilator support as he had breathing issues.

Superintendent Dr Nagarjuna Reddy said that the patient has been in a critical condition since he was admitted. "There has been a technical glitch in the generator. As we were arranging another ventilator, but before we could shift him, he died," he said.

When questioned if the staff's negligence was the cause for the patient's death, he said, "There was no negligence. The patient was in critical condition. After we realised the power failure, arrangements were being made to shift him. But he died in the meanwhile."

Meanwhile, the relatives of Ganesh held the hospital administration responsible for the death of Ganesh.



TRS MP Santosh Kumar takes selfie with K. Kavitha, Vani Devi and Sabita Indra Reddy after winning the MLC elections on Saturday. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

**VANI DEVI SECURED 1,12,689 FIRST PREFERENCE VOTES**

From Page 1

Since the TRS candidate could not get the 50 per cent-plus-one vote, the requirement to win the Legislative Council election, the process of transferring the votes of Mallanna, the last remaining rival, to Rajeshwar Reddy was going on till reports last came in.

The two candidates shared the second preference votes of TJS founder Prof. Kondadaram who got 1,03,030 prior to his elimination from the race. The TRS candidate has to make up 21,356 votes to reach the victory mark, which he is expected to do with Mallanna's votes.

Ninety-three candidates were in fray for the MRRH constituency and 71 for WKN. The WKN seat saw 3,86,320 votes polled (76.41 percent) and MRRH 3,57,354. Polling was held on March 14, and counting of votes began on March 17. The process has to be completed by March 22.

Vani Devi secured 1,12,689 first preference votes followed by the BJP's Ramchander Rao with 1,04,668, independent candidate Prof. K. Nagashwar (53,610) and the Congress' G. Chinna Reddy (31,554). The TRS had a lead of 8,021 votes in the first preference votes.

Since the victory mark was not reached, the Election Commission initiated the elimination process by the transferring the second preference votes from the candidates with the least votes to the leader of the count.

After eliminating 91 candidates in stages, Vani was given 36,580 second preference votes followed by Ramchander Rao with 32,989. With the winning mark not in sight, election officials deleted Ramchander Rao's vote, as is the process, which resulted in Vani's victory.

The EC declared that Vani had secured 1,89,339 valid votes and the 1,47,700 votes polled for 92 rivals were exhausted.

During the 96 hours of counting, as many as 9,600 officials participated for the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy-Mahabubnagar MLC graduate constituency.

The EC declared that Vani had secured 1,89,339 valid votes and the 1,47,700 votes polled for 92 rivals were exhausted.

With the once ubiquitous sparrow now a rarity in urban areas, particularly cities, the focus on Saturday was on this little bird with people joining hands with forest department officials and political leaders to try and create conducive conditions for the sparrows to try and make a comeback into the lives of people.

As a part of the World Sparrow Day celebrations, special events were held at KBR National Park and the Nehru Zoological Park,

where the theme was efforts to provide nesting sites for sparrows.

At KBR Park, government chief whip D. Vinay Bhaskar called upon people to provide nesting sites and launched a 'Gift a Nest' programme.

The idea of the programme is that anyone who receives a nest box as a gift, will give two more to two others and so on, and in the process, increase nesting sites for sparrows, particularly in

urban areas.

According to Arvind from Orugula Wildlife Society, an NGO, nest boxes, priced at ₹200 each, would be available at the KBR National Park from Monday.

Vinay Bhaskar, who also presented a nest box to Forests Minister A. Indrakaran Reddy, along with the Minister, exhorted people to join the movement, and urged everyone to place a small dish of water outside their windows or other places where birds could stop by for a drink.

In the zoo, the day was celebrated as a way of increasing awareness about protecting sparrows and other small birds.

About 20 wooden nest boxes were installed in the zoo premises by the staff.

Speaking on the occasion, zoo curator V.V.L. Subhadra Devi said the World Sparrow Day is an international initiative to celebrate the sparrow, with an aim to conserve their dwindling population.

**Cong., BJP doubt Budget figures**

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

while finance minister T. Harish Rao had spoken of poor earnings and drop in Centre's devolutions. "Anyone going through the Budget can understand that the figures are imaginary," he said. BJP Dubbak MLA M. Raghumand Rao asked the state government not to blame the Centre as it was supporting all states liberally by releasing GST arrears and funds within 30 days.

The MLA alleged that the government's ₹2.30 lakh crore Budget was a name sake affair and had nothing to offer to the people. He alleged that loans taken from banks were being shown as income. He said the Budget had shown a lower amount as loan and interest repayment as compared to the previous Budget.



Chief whip D. Vinay Bhaskar addressing the meeting called upon people to provide nesting sites and launched a 'Gift a Nest' programme, at KBR National park in Hyderabad on saturday. —DC

**Call to save sparrows from extinction IN TS**

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

With the once ubiquitous sparrow now a rarity in

urban areas, particularly cities, the focus on Saturday was on this little bird with people joining hands with forest department officials and political leaders to try and create conducive conditions for the sparrows to try and make a comeback into the lives of people.

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**GOVT TO SET-UP MONKEY REHAB CENTRE IN TS**

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

they will be released back in the areas where they had been caught from.

The centre in Nirmal, Indrakaran Reddy said, is only the second such facility in the country after the one in Himachal Pradesh. The minister was responding to a Zero Hour mention by Vikarabad MLA Methuku Anand on the monkey menace in his constituency. Anand said there was no movement in creating 'food courts' for monkeys as announced earlier.

**OU conduct PG exams despite students demand to postpone**

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

Under the government's Jeevandan cadaver trans-

plantation programme,

parents of a 21-year old

who died after a head

injury in Janapeta in

Khammam district on

Thursday, donated his

organs at Yashoda

Hospital, Somajiguda.

Venkateshwari and

Srilatha, daily-wage work-

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Under the government's

# STATE

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## OTHER STORIES SUDDEN SPIKE IN CORONAVIRUS CASES IN TS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

Covid-19 cases have seen a sudden spike in the GHMC area with the health department reporting that, on Friday, Hyderabad city and the rest of the GHMC areas recorded 75 new cases of Coronavirus infections.

The total Covid-19 cases found in Telangana were 364, the department said and added that two more people lost their lives on Friday to the disease.

Meanwhile, the number of districts reporting cases in the double digits went up to 12 on Friday from 10 on Thursday. Telangana state has so far recorded 1,666 deaths from Covid-19 while the total cases rose to 3,02,724.

With the number of cases rising every day, health minister Etala Rajendar said the increase in Covid-19 was the result of people coming in from neighbouring Maharashtra where the disease is spreading fast.

He said there was no need for anyone to panic, but it is extremely important that everyone follows safety measures to prevent catching the infection, or spreading it to others without their own knowledge.

He said the government was requesting the Centre to allow everyone to get vaccinated irrespective of their age. In the meanwhile, people should be on their guard.

"The health department is alert and is working round the clock to control the disease and is geared up to meet any challenge," Rajendar said.

## BHAVANI TEMPLE SHUTS AFTER STAFF TEST +VE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

The Vana Durga Bhavani temple at Edupayala in Medak has been shut for a week after four staff, including the temple's executive officer (EO) tested positive for Covid-19. Temple EO had undergone a test after he developed fever and other symptoms, and was confirmed to have the disease. The health department then conducted tests on 91 other staffers at the temple.

Of these, three persons were reported to have tested positive for Covid-19 on Friday. The famous temple at Edupayala had seen tens of thousands of people gathered during the recent Maha Shivaratri festival. Though the temple has been shut for pilgrims, all regular rituals and abhishekams will continue as usual, officials said.

●

HE INQUIRED with the officials about the steps they were taking beforehand for preventing the spread of Coronavirus.

District medical and health officer Puppala Sridhar, Government Hospital superintendent Dr Sudakshana Devi and regional medical officer Rama Krishna were present at the meeting.



Superintendent of scheduled caste welfare department, Balaswamy Reddy inspects the SC boys hostel in Karimnagar on Saturday. —BY ARRANGEMENT



Participants play volleyball as part of sports meet organised by police department in Mulugu on Saturday. —BY ARRANGEMENT

## Sports meet to encourage local youth, says Promod

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MARCH 20

The police department is always ready for not only maintaining peace and security but also for the development of the tribal communities, said Warangal, Karimnagar Range IG and Warangal commissioner of police P. Promod Kumar.

He was speaking during the concluding ceremony of the Medaram trophy sports meeting at Mulugu. The police department organised the sports meet with an intention to bring out the local talent in sports.

District superintendent

● THE OVERALL winner of the Medaram trophy is won by Eturnagaram team. A 100m running race was conducted for inspectors and Sub-inspectors, Eturnagaram SI Srikanth Reddy came first and the second place was bagged by Tadvai SI Venkateshwari.

dent of police Sangram Singh G. Patil said athletes participated in the sports meet with amazing sportsmanship. He said that the first place winners will be taken for a visit of the Ramoji Film City for free and the second-

place winners will be allowed to visit the coal mines in Bhupalpally district.

The overall winner of the Medaram trophy is won by the Eturnagaram team. A 100m running race was conducted for inspectors and Sub-inspectors too in which Srikanth Reddy Eturnagaram SI came first and the second place was bagged by Tadvai SI Venkateshwari and the third place by Tirupati Rao Wajedu SI.

Reserve Inspectors Kiran Kumar, Swamy, and Etnagaram Inspector Kumar took the top three positions in their category.

## Police are 'cycling' into Maoist-hit areas in Tiryani

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD, MARCH 20

Police are 'cycling' their way into interior forest areas to keep a close watch on possible Maoist movement in Tiryani mandal.

It may be recalled around this time last year, some Maoists had reportedly entered the old Adilabad district by taking advantage of the Covid epidemic and the subsequent lockdown.

There has been a steady surge in Covid positive cases in old Adilabad district since some days.

Police officials rode on the hard and hilly terrain to reach Kursiguda village located atop a hill in Tiryani mandal and distributed five bicycles to villagers of Kursiguda for their transportation. Police also distributed solar panels and bulbs to families in four villages in Tiryani mandal.

Over the past one month, the local police have intensified their 'social service' under Police Meekosam and are reaching out to the Maoist-infested interior villages taking advantage of the summer. Most of these villages lack road connectivity and reaching villages is difficult during



A team of Tiryani police led by SI Pushpala Ramarao take new cycles to Kursiguda village of Tiryani mandal to distribute them to villagers for transportation needs. —BY ARRANGEMENT

the rainy season.

It is easy for the police to visit interior villages to collect information about Maoist movements in summer.

Police are visiting Adivasi gudems in Maoist-affected areas to distribute cycles to the people, particularly in Tiryani mandal.

Police officials chose summer as chances of untoward incidents are less during the season.

Generally, Maoists face more hardships like drinking water problems and shelter during the summer in the forests when compared to other seasons.

During visits to Maoist-affected areas, Asifabad Additional SP, Y. V. Sudheendra appealed to Adivasis not to support anti-social elements and to focus on the development.

## CALL TO WIDEN BODHAN, NARSI, INDUR ROAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, MARCH 20

Nizamabad urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta urged the state government to widen the Nizamabad-Bodhan-Narsi interstate road as four lanes. He said that due to huge traffic, accidents occurred regularly. He brought the issue during the Assembly session in Hyderabad on Saturday.

MLA said that Arsapally to Sarangapur stretch on the road is prone for fatal accidents. He also said that the narrow and dilapidated conditioned bridge on Nizamsagar canal at Babansahab Pahad should be replaced with a new bridge. If the narrow bridge collapses, people of Babansahab Pahad will lose the connectivity with Nizamabad, he said.

● MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta said that the narrow and dilapidated conditioned bridge on Nizamsagar canal at Babansahab Pahad should be replaced with a new bridge.

## Officials increase Covid-19 tests in Nizamabad

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NIZAMABAD, MARCH 20

In view of the huge number of Covid-19 positive cases in neighbouring state Maharashtra, the medical and health department officials increased the Covid-19 tests in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts.

These two districts border the Nanded district of Maharashtra state. Earlier, officials used to conduct around 500 tests daily. Presently, it has been increased to 2000 tests.

Earlier, single digit numbers of Covid-19 positive cases were reported and now it is around 25 cases per day. On Saturday the highest 34 Covid-19 positive cases were reported in Nizamabad district. In Maharashtra, the officials are strictly implementing tests, trace and treat of Covid-19 patients. Reportedly, they are conducting more than 10,000 tests per day in each district.

In Telangana state, the officials are conducting tests only for people who visit the government hospitals and primary health centres. Most of the positive cases are reported as asymptomatic.

District collector C. Narayana Reddy directed officials of government general hospital and district medical health officials to be cautious on Covid-19 tests.

He said that proper medication and quarantine should be provided to the needy.

However, selected government and private hospitals are carrying Covid-19 vaccination in Nizamabad district.

Frontline warriors had already got the second dose of the vaccine. People of above 45 years of age with 20 types of health issues allowed to get the Covid-19 vaccine. Based on Aadhar card details, the vaccine is being provided to them.

## NO HIKE IN POWER TARIFF, MINISTER INFORMS HOUSE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 20

discussions in the Rythu Vedikas, farmers can cultivate crops which will give them better yield with less investment, Rajendar said.

He pointed out that the region was historically neglected in the past, and was dry. After the formation of Telangana state, 18 check dams had been constructed in the Huzurabad region which was now getting sufficient quantities of water for irrigation needs and had turned into a fertile area.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Rythu Vedika at Medipally in Jammikunta mandal of Karimnagar district.

To reduce the burden on farmers, the TRS government had taken the initiative for construction of Rythu Vedikas. They will function as research centres and will be useful for the farmers. After holding

discussions in the Rythu Vedikas, farmers can cultivate crops which will give them better yield with less investment, Rajendar said.

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He pointed out that the region was historically neglected in the past, and was dry. After the formation of Telangana state, 18 check dams had been constructed in the Huzurabad region which was now getting sufficient quantities of water for irrigation needs and had turned into a fertile area.

He was speaking after

inaugurating the Rythu Vedika at Medipally in Jammikunta mandal of Karimnagar district.

To reduce the burden

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# DECCAN Chronicle

21 MARCH 2021



Ranjona Banerji

**Off the beaten track**

## What cooking teaches, how tastes are learned

The cooking revolution was perhaps one of the upsides of the pandemic. Entitled people who employed cooks suddenly found themselves staring at unprepossessing bunches of bottle gourd and cabbages and tried to imagine how to make them appetising. I shared with great enthusiasm some 10 "one-pot" recipes with family and friends until I ran out of steam and they ran out of ingredients.

Early in the lockdown of 2020, a friend started a recipe-sharing online group. It was brilliant. A bunch of similarly middle class but otherwise disparate people tried to make each other's lives easier with tips and recipes and answers.

It was a very happy experience for a short while. And then as the group grew, it became a cesspit of gender, ethnic, caste, caste biases. (There would have been race if we had enough varied races in the group.) Anger and accusations, offence and defence, and suddenly we weren't talking about how to best temper a daal but oh, in my high caste family we never eat X, Y and so on.

That something so beautiful in its conception and its early days could descend so quickly into fractious lines of othering and hatred is testament to the human ability to destroy anything worthwhile with our inherent stupidity.

That said, I learnt a lot in my first few weeks and top of the list is an onion chutney for idlis and dosas. With due apologies to our esteemed Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and anyone else who doesn't eat onions or care how much they cost. It is delicious so the loss is not mine.

My journey as a cook started somewhat before the online world governed our lives. Like many of my sort, I tried a little baking. At 10 I proudly made a hard as rock cake that wasn't supposed to be a rock cake and watched in awe as a visiting family friend munched through it saying "delicious" after every long torturous chewing expedition. I haven't forgotten his kindness and he still claims it was delicious!

This story is my Mother's. When I was about 16, my grandparents were horrified that she hadn't taught me how to make proper "Indian" food. Baking did not count in the marriage mart scheme of things. (This turned out to be correct. During one of my parents' many short-lived disasters into the murky world of arranged marriages for me, one grandmother said all her grandson wanted from a bride was the ability to make fried brinjal wheels. The conversation did not go any further nor did the fancy cake I had baked.) My Mother told me that her honour was at stake and it was up to me to uphold it.

I cooked whatever I did. At the end of the meal, my Mother informed the grandparents of the reality. They blustered "but, but you never taught her". My Mother, a teacher, had the last word: "I taught her how to gather knowledge." No answer to that.

But I really learnt how to cook by experimentation. And by eating. To replicate tastes and memories. To try new things and ideas that were floating about in my head. And all that means stepping out of your comfort zone. For instance, when I was in my late teens all I wanted to eat at a Chinese restaurant was chilli chicken. I know, right. Even if "Indian Chinese" in the early 1980s was not as resplendent in choice as it is now, that was a pretty dumb choice to have set in stone.

I also experimented with vegetarianism in my early 20s. Until I got tempted by taste. O dear. Crabs at Kamling and chicken at Baghdadi. I got done in by Bombay, you might argue and that set me on my culinary journey. Underlying that of course is childhood. Bengalis have a terrible phrase inflicted on children and on us by our grandmother: "khete shokho". Learn to eat.

Attached to this phrase were some pretty gruesome vegetables like chichinga or snake gourd and borboti or yardlong or asparagus beans. There is no taste connection between this bean and an asparagus, it has to be made clear. To this day, I cannot and will not eat these. Add to this cluster beans aka gawar ka phalli, which is not a Bengali staple but which I won't eat anyway.

Conversely my Mother hated arbi or taro root or Colocasia corms. So we never ate that at home. I love it. My paternal grandfather hated pumpkin of all kinds so that was banned, but now we find we love it. What sense does it make? None at all. The Chinese ability to get over food taboos may be unpalatable for some, but shows a remarkable ability to adapt. There is no moral high ground in proclaiming that you are too superior to eat onions. It only means that your mind is consumed by taught rigidities.

Food taboos however are a topic of great sensitivity and resultant anger, so let's not go there! To each her own.

But I made two fabulous new finds recently: buds of the *Bombax ceiba* and *Bauhinia* flowers. In both cases, the vegetable vendors were pleasantly amazed that I wanted to buy these local delicacies, having stereotyped me as a 'broccoli and salad patta' buyer. One asked me to look up the Internet for recipes, the other explained how to cook the kachnar. The look of his joy when I came back to buy more was delightful.

I realise I have left the door open for the great controversy of "veg biryani". Maybe for another time?

*The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.*



Kachnar, in the raw and curry (right) forms

Subhani



## Let it rip! Stop us turning into the Republic of Hurt



Pavan K. Varma

**Chanakya's View**

In a land which has valued creativity and creative freedom since time immemorial, there are new glass ceilings — and sometimes steel ones — coming up all around. This sense of creative claustrophobia is the direct result not of "reasonable restrictions", but subjective biases in those who either have the power to decide, or think they have the right to do so because of their proximity to power. The cumulative result is a sense of trepidation and apprehension, even fear, among the artistic fraternity about what they can depict, and what is likely to cause offence, and render them liable to arbitrary legal and punitive action.

The area of morality, religion and societal behaviour is the most contested area. We have new custodians of morality who are easily outraged by anything that does not fit into their conservative, upper-caste, patriarchal and outdated notions of "correct" behavior. Newly appointed CM of Uttarakhand, Tirath Singh Rawat, waxed eloquent on this gem of wisdom just a few days ago. Ladies who wear ripped jeans, he said, "pave the way for societal breakdown leading to substance abuse". He was outraged that this "kainchi ka sanskaar" actually enables females "to reveal their knees" (what sacrilege!), when "the most important thing for women is to look after their family and children".

So much then for women's liberation, and the decades of struggle that has gone into

empowering women rather than confining them only to the home and the perpetuation of progeny. It could be argued, of course, that these are the personal views of a certain Mr. Rawat. In a free Republic anyone has the right to their opinion, and if Rawatji is an unapologetic male chauvinist, so be it. Alas, it is not that simple. People like Rawatji are in power today. They live in a time warp, and the greater their misogyny the more they their conviction that they are right. More worrisome, is the fact that they quote sanskaar or culture as the reason for their indignation. The corollary to this appropriation is only logical: anyone violating sanskaar must be reined in, brought to book, dealt with, and Bharat that is India must remain unsullied from all these evil progressive tendencies.

But sanskaar becomes even more lethal when it is coupled with religion. So, the religious sentiments of two BJP leaders were outraged by the fact that a serial was named *Tandav*, which they interpreted to be an insult to Lord Shiva. Such an allegation needs to be laughed out of the room, simply because the word *Tandav* is both an adjective and a proper noun, and when used as the title of a serial, the content of the story itself makes it obvious that there is not even a remote connection to the dance of destruction of Mahadeva. But a case was filed against

Aangita Dutta. Rahul Gandhi has also told the Youth Congress leaders that this experiment will be replicated at the national level if these candidates perform well in the Assembly polls, provided they intensify their agitations and protests against the government.

deeply regretting the unintended "hurt" that may have been caused, and agreeing to cut out any "objectionable" scenes. What is even more inexplicable is that the Allahabad high court, instead of providing protection to the serial makers, proclaimed that no one has the right to hurt religious sentiments.

The real reason for the ire against *Tandav* may be quite different. In the serial, there is a university suspiciously sounding like "JNU", whose students "subversively" shout slogans of "azadi", and politicians are depicted as having no compunctions in fueling religious divides for political dividends. The whole script sound strangely familiar, and what better way to put this impudence in its place than to file an FIR against the impudent producers on grounds of hurt religious sentiments?

We are fast becoming the Republic of Hurt. Some people were hurt by a Muslim boy kissing a Hindu girl with a temple in the background in the Netflix adaptation of *A Suitable Boy*. The iconic Marathi playwright, Vijay Tendulkar, recently faced a posthumous storm of protest because his play, *Jaat hi Poocho Sadhu ki*, used the Hindu word "sadhu", and thus hurt Hindu religious sentiments.

The fact is the play is not about faith at all, but about the ills of casteism. But obviously the Bajrang Dal, which raised objections, does not read beyond the title of the plays they want

**What is even more inexplicable is that the Allahabad high court, instead of providing protection to the makers of *Tandav*, proclaimed that no one has the right to hurt religious sentiments**

banned. In any case, it succeeded. The staging of the play was cancelled in Madhya Pradesh.

The real problem in our Republic of Hurt is that one doesn't know what will next cause someone to be hurt. For instance, just the other day, the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh government decided to remove eggs from the midday meals given to anganwadi centres. The decision to provide high-protein eggs was taken by the previous Congress government. At the time the BJP had protested, seeing in this "nefarious" move the attempt to change the dietary habits of Hindus. But this begs the question: don't Hindu children eat eggs too? Those who don't are welcome not to, but the decision to replace eggs by milk has been questioned by child health experts. Such experts would, of course, then be called anti-national. The dilemma before filmmakers is that if their next production shows people eating eggs, or eating non-vegetarian food, would they have an FIR filed against them for "hurting religious sentiments". One never knows.

We are fast becoming the Republic of Hurt. Some people were hurt by a Muslim boy kissing a Hindu girl with a temple in the background in the Netflix adaptation of *A Suitable Boy*. The iconic Marathi playwright, Vijay Tendulkar, recently faced a posthumous storm of protest because his play, *Jaat hi Poocho Sadhu ki*, used the Hindu word "sadhu", and thus hurt Hindu religious sentiments. The fact is the play is not about faith at all, but about the ills of casteism. But obviously the Bajrang Dal, which raised objections, does not read beyond the title of the plays they want

**HYDERABAD, MARCH 20**  
A Rs. 12-crore master plan to provide houses to the weaker sections through a co-operative apex federation was announced in the Legislative Assembly today by the Finance Minister Mr. K. Vijayabaskara Reddi.

The Finance Minister was replying to the five-day general discussion on the vote-on-account budget. He announced that the State Government proposed to organise a co-operative apex federation exclusively to look after the housing needs of the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and Denotified Classes.

With loan assistance to the tune of Rs. 12 crores from the Life Insurance Corporation, the Minister said, the proposed Federation would put up 70,000 houses next year, each house costing some Rs. 1,800. Work on the project would start very soon, he added.

*The writer, an author and former diplomat, is in politics*

## LETTERS

### COVID-19 VS EXAMS

The TS government's decision to cancel exams till Class 9 is not good (*State may cancel exams till Class 9, DC, March 21*). Disruption of two academic years is not good for students who are subjected to psychological and physiological stress due to inertia, inactivity and absence of interpersonal interactions. Instead, the government needs to speed up vaccination.

P.R. Ravinder  
Hyderabad

### FEDERAL SPIRIT

An Assembly resolution is an expression of sentiment of the House, representing the voice, will and wisdom of the majority people in that particular state (*Can states criticise Central law? DC, March 20*). Why is the state's freedom of expression against the Central law is being questioned today is the million dollar question.

P.H. Hema Sagar  
Secunderabad

### MLC RESULTS

Even after the government staff burnt the midnight oil for the last four days, counting of votes for two graduate MLC constituencies could not be completed (*Vani, Pallu lead MLC race, third preferential votes turn key, DC, March 20*). MLAs/MPs form governments and make laws but their election process is simple but graduate MLCs, who have almost no powers theirs is complicated and time-consuming. In fact, Legislative Councils are formed to accommodate the political unemployed and so the same should be abolished and wastage of money curbed.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao  
Hyderabad

### SALE OF AIRLINES

Sale of PSUs is needed to overcome the shortage of revenue. Only when the government is flush with funds can it think of controlling price rise. Selling away loss-making PSUs like the airlines is an appropriate step as they too contribute to escalation of prices.

K. Srinivasa Charyulu  
Hyderabad

**50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle**

**Big housing plan for SCs, STs in State**

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Anita Katyal



**Political Gup-Shup**

*The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.*

## Mithun made to wait after biting bait; Mamata's game of drones

## SHORT TAKES

## WOMAN CUTS OFF HER MOLESTER'S GENITALS IN MP

RABINDRA NATH CHOURDHURY | DC Bhopal, March 20

A woman in a Madhya Pradesh village chopped off a man's genitals for attempting to rape her at Amilia under Rampura police station in Siddhi district late on Friday. Both of them were arrested after they lodged cases against each other. According to the police, the accused, Ramesh Saket (45), barged into the house of the 45-year-old victim late on Friday night. The woman was at home with her 13-year-old son; her husband was out of town. The son ran to safety, thinking that the intruder was a thief.

The accused then attempted to rape the woman who resisted him for around 20 minutes. During the course of the struggle, she picked up a sickle from under the bed and cut off the man's genitals.

## Modi-Mamata clash over extortion

PM accuses Didi's nephew for creating single window for industries in West Bengal

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday branded West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress as a pathsalas (school) teaching "brutality, extortion, cut-money, syndicate and anarchy" and accused her MP nephew Abhishek Banerjee of turning the system of "single-window" into "Bhaipo (nephew) window" for business in the state.

Referring to the global outage of some popular social networking applications on Friday night, Mr Modi also said that the state's development has been down for half a century and requested people to give "one chance" to the BJP in the ensuing Assembly election with a promise that

he would devote his "life" for public welfare.

The PM told a mega BJP rally at Kharagpur in West Midnapore, "Didir party hochchhe nirmamata pathshala. Didir pathshala syllabus hochchhe tolabaji. Didir pathshala syllabus hochchhe cut-money. Didir pathshala syl-labus hochchhe syndicate. Didir pathshala ora-joktar training dewa hoy (Didi's party is a school of brutality. Extortion, Cut-Money and Syndicate are the syllabus there. Training of anarchy is imparted there.)"

Tearing into the dynasty politics in the ruling TMC, Mr Modi then targeted the CM's nephew. "On one hand the country is continuously progressing towards the single window system. It is needed in the govern-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a picture of Rabindranath Tagore from a local party leader during an election campaign rally in support of BJP candidates, ahead of State Assembly polls, at BNR Ground, Kharagpur in West Midnapore district, on Saturday. — PTI

ment so that businessmen and entrepreneurs do not have to run from pillar to post. But in West Bengal, a separate single window system has been made. While the people of Bengal are aware of it, the people of the country

do not know about it. What is this single window in Bengal? It is a Bhaipo window. Without passing through this window, nothing happens in Bengal," he alleged without taking Banerjee's name. Modi, who has a

huge fan following on social media, said, "Many of you know last night WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram remained down for 50-55 minutes. People became impatient and worried. Questions cropped up in

their mind. Though it was only for 50-55 minutes, everyone kept thinking about what happened. While some things on social media were down for 50-55 minutes worldwide, in Bengal development has been down for the last 50-55 years. So was the trust, dreams and resolve. I can understand your impatience."

Seeking votes for the BJP, he added, "In the last 70 years you gave chances to many. You have seen the exploitation by the Congress, experienced the destruction by the Left parties and realised how the TMC shattered your dreams in the last 10 years. Give us a chance of five years. We will ensure the waste of the last 70 years is removed. Give us your blessings once. We will not care about our life for your welfare."

## CLASSIFIEDS

## FOR SALE AUTOMOTIVE

## FOUR WHEELERS

**✓ INNOVA-2012, G4 model, vudio, A/C, single owner, good condition vehicle for sale, Hyderabad. Contact: 9000279919, 9396648880 (R/2021/C00028)**

**✓ MARUTI WAGNER VSi Automatic 2018, single owner, red color, unused stepney, full insurance, complete showroom service History. Dealers Excuse. Ph:9849447003. (HYCL/2021/C03418)**

## MACHINERY

**MACHINERY AND 20,000 Sq ft Shed and Fire Brics used for S.W.G Ceramics Pipe Factory for Immediate sale at Mancherial. Contact: 9348544445, 7096822818. (HYCL/2021/C03278)**

**MACHINERY SALE. 1 Ton Open Hammer, Massy Make, Bombay Lettuce-2.5 meters, Between Center 5Nos. Electrical Furnaces-2Nos. Mail: info@kondapallyforgings.com. Ph : 9 8 8 5 5 7 9 1 2 9 . (HYCL/2021/C03463)**

## FOR SALE

## PROPERTY

## COMMERCIAL

**BANJARAHILLS ROAD no.1, 900 yards Brand New Commercial Building, JubileeHills 720, Road no.45 1,000, Road No.36 1200 yards & Ground Floor 1700 sqft, Madhapur Main Road Ground Floor 3040 sqft, Kondapur main road 1400, Jayabheri 934 yards N/E & Rental Income Properties 5 to 50 Cr Ph:9966991449, 9394022449. (W/2021/A00129)**

**✓ 10000 SFT 3rd, 4th and 5th floor Main Road building sale at BanjaraHills. Road no: 1. Hyderabad. Rent 3 lakhs property value 4 cr. Contact: 9991087777 (No realtors) (HYMM/2021/C08424)**

**COMMERCIAL COMPLEX 11000 Sft each floor, Six Floors, Two Cellars parking, Under Construction on Aramghar, Attapur Ring Road, PVNR Expressway Main Road For Sale. Ph:900087652. (B/2021/C0215)**

**M G Road Facing Prime Retail High Street Property For Sale: 1650 Sq Yds land 15000 sq ft building, near Fortune Hotel, Vijayawada, Ph: 9963830277 (W/2021/A00128)**

**✓ NALAGANDLA MAIN Road building under construction 3rd floor for sale commercial 7000 sqft good returns. Only interested parties contact 9908064999 (HYMM/2021/C08427)**

## FLATS

**✓ 2 BHK 1465 sq ft Fully Furnished, Newly Constructed, 100% Vastu, Old Alwal, Main Road Colony, Jyothi Nagar, J.K.Residency. Include Car Parking & Amenities, 24 hours Water, 1st Floor. 68 Lakhs. contact: 8712724938, 9849036381. (S/2021/C02393)**

**NEW 3 BHK flat for sale, 2185 sq ft 3rd floor, east facing, B.K.Guda, Balkampet, Hyderabad. Only genuine buyers Contact: 8866804048. (A/2021/C00670)**

**3 BHK 2300 sq ft in Gated Community, Prime location, 2.25 Crores, 1st floor, fully furnished, west facing, 12 yrs old. Somajiguda, Hyderabad Genuine buyers Contact: 9886804048. (A/2021/C00671)**

**BANLAGUDA JAGRIS near tspa ghachibowl 3bhk flat for sale smr viny harmony county gated community 2nd floor 1530sqft 2car park contact 9866699369, 9951508369 (HYMM/2021/C08017)**

**HOUSING PLOT for Sale 270 sq.yds. Arpna Palm Grove, Gated Compound, Kompal, Walkable Space, Road, Peaceful Community, Rs.65,000 per sq.yd. Agents Excuse. Ph:9985138260. (S/2021/C02742)**

**HYDERABAD NEAR Kompal IT Parks @ Medchal Just 5Km from Orr.18,000/- per sqyd HMDA, Fully Developed, Gated Community, Bank Loans Available. Contact 886785050 (HYMM/2021/C08419) (W/2021/A001231) <COLOUR>**

**ED LIGHT mfg company needs inter/graduate, male Roaming salesexecutives, Female fresh/exp telesales/mktg executives with good communication skills (English hindi telugu), SSC or less, ladies for factory light assembling. Good emoluments apply personally Bigapple Lite behind hdic bank paradise Secunderabad M:9396464939 (W/2021/A001215)**

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**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, MARCH 20**

**WOMAN CUTS OFF HER MOLESTER'S GENITALS IN MP**

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**The accused then attempted to rape the woman who resisted him for around 20 minutes. During the course of the struggle, she picked up a sickle from under the bed and cut off the man's genitals.**

## REAL ESTATE

## PLOT REQUIRED

**PLOTS REQUIRED in Hyderabad surroundings Hayathnagar, Amberpet, Maneguda, Ragangannadu, Kuntihood, Munaganur, Torur, Koheda, Turayamjal, Mangalpally, Basavangaram, Brahmanapally, Ibrahimpatnam. Ph:9666660601. (HYMM/2021/C03134)**

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**INDEPENDENT HOUSE: 289 Sq.yds, Old House, 3 Rooms Slab-3 Rooms Penku, 35,000/- per Sq.yard, Beside Hayagrevachary Compound, Srinivasa Colony, Balasundram, Hanmakonda, Warangal. Ph:9944247569. (HYCL/2021/C03256)**

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**KOMPALLY, SRC Luxury Triple Villas, beside Nuviized Seeds, in gated community. Built-up area 3076 sqft. 4 BHK with lift facility, all modern amenities. Lumpsum amount 1.5 Cr. Ph:9550155023, 9481260314. (S/2021/C00196)**

## FLATS

**FOR RENT/ Sale New Malakpet Anand nagar, Hyd. 4000 Sft Duplex type Flat Fully Furnished With AC's, Two Car Parkings. Contact: 9348544445, 7096822818. (HYCL/2021/C03277)**

## RENTALS

## COMMERCIAL

**G+2 SHOP RCC on Tanuku bypass near Chivatam Junction best for Hotel showroom 8790495119. (W/2021/A001321)**

## GATED COMMUNITY villas &amp; plots

**GATED COMMUNITY villas & plots JubileeHills Whisper valley 320 & 475 yards, Madhapur Preston IVY 250 & vastana emerald, Gachibowli IVR Hill Ridge 490 2000sqft, NE 100% Vastu, Woods, Vessela meadows 350yards, River edge 800, Aditya casa grande, Eden garden and more villas in Gandipet, Tellapur, Kollar 888472389, 9985888511. (W/2021/A001232)**

## LEASE

## COMMERCIAL

**MADINAGUDA COMMERCIAL 4000 sqft, 3200 sqft for corporate office, financial institutions, banks and specialty clinics, ample parking contact: 9987454948, 9849235463. (R/2021/C00027)**

## SOMAJIGUDA RAJBHAVAN road, Lane beside Jaya Gardens, 3Bhk 2000sqft, NE 100% Vastu, Woodwork, 24x7 Water, Car Parking. Ph: 9866308389 (HYMM/2021/C08413)

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## SOMAJIGUDA, AMEERPET

**Commercial space 3200 sqft each, plug-in play office 38 & 54 workstations, 4 cabins, AC, Backup, ample parking suitable for software corporate offices. Contact: 9987454948, 9849235463. (R/2021/C00027)**

## SITUATION VACANT

## ENGINEERS

**WANTED MINIMUM 5yrs Experienced Civil Engineer For Civil Works/ Roads, Levels, Marking, Billing etc. To Work Local and out stations. Email: raksyni-fr2009@gmail.com Ph:7036255666, 998979135. (HYCL/2021/C03218)**

## HR &amp; ADMINISTRATIVE

**✓ REQUIRED ACCOUNTANT for Contracts. Must have knowledge in Bill Recordings, Tally, Contract Agreements and Tendering Location. Panjabgat Ex: 9949004477. (L/2021/C00020)**

## MULTIPLE VACANCIES

**✓ GARUDAVEGA, A leading International Couriers company, requires 1.Customer Care Executives with good communication skills for Hyderabad 2.HR Executive with 2years of experience for Hyderabad. 3.Marketing Executive for Maharashtra. Interested Candidates may send CV to: hr@garudavega.com.Salary is Commensurate with Experience (HYMM/2021/C08288)**

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## M

**IN BRIEF**  
**Lankan bus crash kills 13, injures 31**

**Colombo:** A passenger bus plunged off a road in central Sri Lanka on Saturday, killing 13 people and injuring more than 30. Police said the bus fell into a precipice near the town of Passara, about 240 kilometres east of Colombo, its stated destination. Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said an initial investigation showed the negligence of the driver caused the accident. It wasn't immediately clear if the driver survived.

**IMRAN KHAN TESTS POSITIVE FOR CORONAVIRUS**

Islamabad, March 20: Pakistan Prime minister Imran Khan on Saturday tested positive for the Covid-19 and is self-isolating at home, his top aide on health said, two days after he got the first shot of vaccination. Khan, 67, was vaccinated on Thursday as part of the nationwide anti-Coronavirus vaccination campaign which is underway in its first phase.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr Faisal Sultan took to Twitter to confirm that Khan has contracted the coronavirus. "PM Imran Khan has tested positive for Covid-19 and is self isolating at home," he said in a tweet. Khan's spokesman Dr Shehzad Gill said that the prime minister has just a slight fever and cough. —PTI

**AMID PROTESTS, MYANMAR RAIL STAFF MOVE OUT**

Mandalay (Myanmar), March 20: Residents of Myanmar's second-biggest city helped striking railway workers move out of their state-supplied housing on Saturday after the authorities said they would have to leave if they kept supporting the protest movement against last month's military coup.

Mandalay residents carried the workers' furniture and other household items to trucks, van and pickup trucks. The state railway workers last month went on strike as key and early supporters of the civil disobedience movement against the Feb. 1 coup that toppled the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

The military regime has sought to force them back to work through intimidation, which included a nighttime, gun-firing patrol last month through their housing area in Mandalay and a raid in the railway workers' housing area in Yangon. Protests against the coup continued on Saturday in cities and town across the country, including in Mandalay and Yangon. —AP

**7.0 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS NORTHERN JAPAN**

Tokyo, March 20: A strong earthquake struck on Saturday off northern Japan, shaking buildings even in Tokyo and triggering a tsunami advisory for a part of the northern coast. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries.

The US Geological Survey put the strength at magnitude 7.0 and depth at 54 kilometres (33.5 miles). The shaking started just before 6.10 pm. The quake was centered off the coast of Miyagi prefecture, in the country's rugged northeast, which was heavily damaged during the huge earthquake and tsunami of 2011 that left more than 18,000 people dead. Japan's Meteorological Agency issued an advisory for a tsunami up to 1 metre (yard) in height for Miyagi prefecture immediately after the quake, but lifted it about 90 minutes later. The tsunami might have reached parts of the Miyagi coast already, Japan's NHK public television said.

Officials there said there were no immediate reports of damage. The strong tremor caused a temporary blackout in some areas and suspended bullet train services in the area, NHK said. The Nuclear Regulation Authority said no abnormalities have been detected at nuclear power plants in the region. —AP

## EU threatens Astra with ban on export of vaccine

Berlin, March 20: The European Union's executive arm is increasing its pressure on pharmaceutical companies to speed up their vaccine delivery to the continent as virus numbers are rising again in many member countries.

The European Commission said on Saturday that AstraZeneca in particular could face export bans to countries outside

the EU if it didn't quickly deliver the promised amount of vaccines to the 27-nation bloc. "We have the possibility to ban planned exports," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Saturday.

"This is a message to AstraZeneca: You fulfill your part of the deal toward Europe before you start to deliver to other countries," von der

Leyen said in an interview with a German media group. Von der Leyen said the contract between the EU and AstraZeneca clearly regulates how much vaccines the EU gets from AstraZeneca's plants inside the EU and in Britain.

However, von der Leyen added, "We didn't get anything from the Brits while we are delivering vaccines to them." —AP



# PRE RELEASE EVENT

**TODAY  
SILPAKALAVEDIKA, MADHAPUR,  
HYDERABAD. FROM 06:00PM ONWARDS.**



**CHIEF GUEST  
TRIVIKRAM GARU**



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**ADITYA**  
MUSIC

**OUR CRITIC'S RATING** Outstanding ★★★★ | Great ★★★ | Good ★★ | Okay ★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

# A reluctant road film that goes adrift

## Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar

**CAST:** Arjun Kapoor, Parineeti Chopra, Jaideep Ahlawat, Raghbir Yadav, Neena Gupta  
**DIRECTOR:** Dibakar Banerjee  
**RATING:** ★★

Playing in theatres

## SUPARNA SHARMA

There is really no reason to dislike *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*.

The film — directed by Dibakar Banerjee that he's co-written with Varun Grover — opens with a scene that has the sharp bite and gritty traces of Kanu Behl's saga of urban discontent and fury, *Tidi* (2015).

We get a skewed view of three boys in a moving car in Haryana. They are discussing women.

Somewhere nearby, a girl is idling in her room at a posh hotel. She gets dressed, puts on red lipstick and goes to a restaurant to meet someone.

A journalist tries to draw her out, get her attention, invites her to a party.

A text is answered by a cop who arrives with a note and a car.

Bang bang... Two worlds collide.

This opening sequence of events is an exciting forewarning that whips up high expectations. And for a while SAPF is engaging. The characters have layers, they feel real and are inhabited with warmth and confidence by skilled actors.



The problem is that the film's plotting is sparse, and the direction confused.

*Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar* is a road film that doesn't want to go in the usual direction of, "and then they fall in love". That's a welcome though, a noble enterprise! Problem is that SAPF doesn't know what else to do.

So while it takes the same road, and en route picks items from the buffet of events common to almost all road films — two strangers face threat, are forced to escape together, have arguments, reconcile because of fear of discovery, meet creepy and non-creepy people, suffer at least one assault or attempted rape, bad people get closer, tense climatic escape and, finally, ishkh — it just does it all slowly.

It also replaces melodrama with an immersive *dekh* around. Instead of giving us maudlin moments and *mohabbat*, SAPF keeps a straight face, is often sullen, and prefers to gaze at trees and stuff.

As I said, there's nothing to dislike about *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*. It's a decent film that promises more than it eventually delivers.

*S*atinder Dahiya urf Pinky (Arjun Kapoor) is a suspended cop, and Sandeep Walia urf Sandy (Parineeti Chopra) is a top honcho at Parivartan Bank. They are thrown together because of a massive bank scam around a government scheme that has the power to bring down the bank, and maybe the government as well.

Pinky thinks he's just running a chore, doing his former boss a favour till he realises her irrelevance and their treachery. She takes a while to figure what is going on.

Desperate to survive, they head to Pithoragarh to cross over to Nepal. And this journey they undertake together highlights the difference between the two and the worlds they come from.

Sandy has money and Pinky understands how this strange, devious world works. She carries a ₹2 lakh bag and he is helping her for ₹10 lakh.

In Pithoragarh, Uncle (Raghbir Yadav) and Aunty (Neena Gupta) and a shopkeeper father-son duo add some recuperative Uttarakhandi flavour to the film. There are also some cute moments around *roti* and *achar* when

Pinky and Sandeep are forced to play house-house. But then...

**D**ibakar Banerjee is a fabulously director and he does small town India very well. He is also very political.

Here too what's quite nice is that Dibakar and Varun make the girl rich, independent and someone who doesn't think much about sleeping with her boss. "I'm not some local chamiya," Sandy says to Pinky.

And then there is Swabhiman scheme, Parivartan bank and a cop for us to read stuff into.

Shopkeeper's son Munna with his blonde hawk hairdo, Uncle and Aunty who are forever quibbling, try to anchor the film. But SAPF wants to meander in Pithoragarh, instead it goes adrift.

There's a dance at an engagement party, fighting off a creepy bank officer, and then a man dresses as a woman and dances in a *bazaar*. In between are moments of dull nothingness.

What works for *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar* are its actors. All of them are very good though some of them are also playing the same roles we have seen them play before. Jaideep Ahlawat is a cop (*Pataal Lok*), Neena Gupta-Raghbir Yadav are husband wife (*Panchayat*), and Arjun Kapoor-Parineeti Chopra have been a thing since *Ishaqzaade*. She slapped him then, and she slaps him here.

Having said that, both Arjun Kapoor and Parineeti Chopra are quite good. He more than her.

Watch SAPF, but don't expect big thrills and high jinx. Expect some sweet moments and some pointless, dull meandering.

# No style, no substance, just bhai log ki much-much

## SUPARNA SHARMA

### Mumbai Saga

**CAST:** John Abraham, Mahesh Manjrekar, Amol Gupte, Prateik Babbar, Emraan Hashmi, Kajal Aggarwal, Rohit Roy, Samir Soni, Gulshan Grover, Suniel Shetty  
**DIRECTOR:** Sanjay Gupta  
**RATING:** ★★

Playing in theatres

shots of people walking in various types of footwear, of cars and jeeps swerving, of one man bashing, many men flying and blood sprouting, Sanjay Gupta's Mumbai Saga will become a Mini Mumbai Blip.

**T**he film's story, set in the Eighties and Nineties, is purportedly of a real-life Mumbai gangster, one D.K. Rao, who was an aide of Chhota Rajan but then branched off on his own into extortion, escaped three encounter attempts, including one in which he received seven bullets. He is currently in jail.

But Gupta takes liberties with the story, characters, events. He picks random incidents and people from the long history of Mumbai underworld purely because of their swag.

*Mumbai Saga* has four main characters and a story that's been done to death.

There is Bhau (Mahesh Manjrekar) the politician who keeps giving speeches about Marathi Manos,

threatens non-Marathis, talks about renaming Bombay to Mumbai. He wears a beard, a shawl, and he sketches.

Then there's a vegetable seller, Amartya Rao (John Abraham). He's a *seedha-sadha* guy till he is really pissed off by hafta-demanding gangsters. He chops off one guy's hand. This irks Gaitonde (Amol Gupte), who runs Mumbai's EMI hafta scheme from his prison cell.

And finally there is Inspector Vijay (Emraan Hashmi) who introduces himself as "Encounter Specialist", as if Police Encounter were a legit department, like narcotics and accounts.

The plot is about a simple man becoming a don by doing lots of don-giri on the instructions of Bhau. This is all made up of scenes in slo-mo where Amartya and his minions in terrible wigs do bodily harm to goons with fists and guns. In between there are some pointless appearances by Suniel Shetty, Gulshan Grover, Arjun (Prateik Babbar) and Seema (Kajal Aggarwal) the chattering box. And for dialogue, there are gems such as these:

"Mard ka kaleja bada hona  
chahiye,  
moonth  
h e  
nahi."

"Dumm (tail) toh teri hai  
hanin, toh Gayatonde ke saamne  
kyा hilate ho?"

The plot contrives and makes its way to one Harvard educated businessman who strikes a deal with Gaitonde to evict people and sell mill land.

But Amartya warms him, "Teri gaadi bullet proof hai, tu nahin."

**G**aneshji and an item girl make their respective appearances before Encounter Specialist Vijay chases and shoots them all — in a brothel, at an anda-pav stand, at a petrol pump and eventually while fighting off a plane.

There is no reason to waste your time on this nonsense in slo-mo except for three things:

One, Mahesh Manjrekar as Balasabeh is eerily fabulous. Two, to study the camera angles every time Amole Gupte is on screen. He's always shot from low angles as if the camera man was asked to do *pochka* while shooting him during Covid-lockdown. Three, when some people are doing drugs, the text at the bottom of the screen said, "Give hugs not drugs."

I swear: *Bhai kasam*.



# In Yes Day, kids get their way for 24 hours

## Yes Day

**CAST:** Jennifer Garner, Edgar Ramírez, Jenna Ortega  
**DIRECTOR:** Miguel Arteta  
**RATING:** ★★

Streaming on Netflix

## JAKE COYLE

**L**ike an innocuous kid version of *The Purge*, Miguel Arteta's *Yes Day* imagines an annual 24-hour holiday of lawlessness.

The concept comes from Amy Krouse Rosenthal's 2009 picture book, which suggested a day when parents — regularly such fonts of "No!" — have to answer in the positive to their children's demands. For some, the idea had real appeal not just for giving kids a shot at decision-making freedom but for momentarily relieving parents of the burden of constant disapproval.

One parent, in particular, took to *Yes Day*: Jennifer Garner. The actress has previously spoken on social media about holding the holiday with her three children. And she's a producer of

the film, which debuts Friday on Netflix.

"No is part of the job," narrates Allison Torres (Garner) in the film's opening scenes. But so stern is Allison — the bad cop next to her more easy-going husband Carlos (Edgar Ramírez) — that her three children's school projects suggest a dictatorship in need of a coup. One makes a video comparing her to Stalin and Mussolini.

When a guidance counselor (Nat Faxon) suggests *Yes Day* as a remedy, Allison goes along, with a few stipulations. You can't break laws and you've got to stay within 20 miles of home. This leads to a day of wall-to-wall fun, with bed-jumping, ice-cream feasts, a car wash trip with the windows down and a surprise theme-park visit. The day tests both Allison's helicopter parenting impulses and the kids' own desire for independence. That's especially true for 14-year-old Katie (Jenna Ortega, an impressively poised young actor), who wants to attend a concert without her mom.

It's all lightly predictable as the family works out a level of comfort that isn't all yes or entirely no.

There's something to be said for lower-stakes family films, a genre that



has increasingly aped the world-ending scale of superhero films. (One pandemic discovery for my family was

charming British film about kids just playing on a lake. On their own, they're plenty capable of making their own tents and adventures.)

*Yes Day* isn't nearly so sweet. Arteta (*The Good Girl, Cedar Rapids*) has an underrated ability at crafting comic, humanistic movies out of commercial concepts. But *Yes Day* slides too often into contrived, loudly scored montages of "fun" that don't transfer to those of us watching. And while Garner and Ramírez are both very fine actors, neither of them is funny. Not to be negative on *Yes Day*, but it would be a lot better if, say Will Ferrell and Maya Rudolph played the parents. (Though what movie wouldn't be improved with that casting?) The film's best moments come courtesy of Faxon and the very funny Arturo Castro, the *Broad City* actor who makes every scene he's in better. Here he plays a hapless and needy police officer.

Of course, after a pandemic year that has ruled out so much for kids, *Yes Day* may be a welcome reprieve for them. My kids, naturally, loved the idea and will probably take me to task for saying anything but "Yes" to *Yes Day*.

*Yes Day*, a Netflix release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for some rude and suggestive material, and brief language. Running time: 86 minutes. Two stars out of four. —AP

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₹245\* | 2 L

## SHORT TAKES

## Yashaswini pips Manu for gold

**New Delhi:** India's Yashaswini Singh Deswal personified consistency and calmness on her way to winning the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol ahead of the more celebrated Manu Bhaker in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday. Deswal shot 238.8 to comfortably finish on top of the podium in the eight-women final while Bhaker managed 236.7 to settle for the silver medal.

Viktoria Chaika of Belarus bagged the bronze medal with 215.9. The other Indian in the final, Shri Nivetha, started well but had to eventually settle for the fourth place with 193.5. Deswal secured her Tokyo Games quota with her gold medal in Rio. Deswal and Bhaker added to the bronze medal won by Divyansh Singh Panwar in the men's 10m air rifle earlier on the second competition day. — PTI

## Three shooters test +ve at WC

**New Delhi:** Three shooters, including two from the Indian pistol men's team, have tested positive for Covid-19. National Rifle Association of India sources said on the second competition day of the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday. The shooters are currently self-isolating in their team hotel. Those who were sharing the rooms with the three shooters as well as their other teammates have also been isolated after undergoing Covid tests. The results of the roommates and other team members, though, have returned negative. A source said two among the three shooters are from the Indian contingent. "The shooters have been sent into isolation as per protocols. Testing is being done on a daily basis and that's their results have come to light," a source close to the federation said. — PTI

## Vijender's winning run ends on 'ship'

**Panaji:** The unbeaten run of star Indian boxer Vijender Singh in the professional circuit ended on Friday night after he was defeated by his Russian opponent Artysh Lopisan in the 'Battle on Ship' here. Vijender, who had turned professional in 2015, entered the bout with a 12-0 record. In the opening round, Vijender was cautious in his approach as the Russian outplayed the Haryana boxer and used his height to perfection. The Russian, who was fighting his seventh bout, out-punched Vijender on the rooftop of the 'Majestic Prida Casino' ship, which resulted in a heart-break for the partisan crowd. The referee, after one minute and nine seconds in the fifth round, declared the Russian as the winner as the eight-round game ended in a knockout. — PTI

## Leeds end London hoodoo with win

**London:** Patrick Bamford responded to his omission from the England squad with a goal as Leeds ended their misfortunes in London by beating Fulham 2-1 in the Premier League. Fulham missed a chance to move out of the relegation zone for the first time since December. After Bamford's 29th-minute opener, Fulham's Joachim Andersen equalized with his first goal for the club, and Raphinha notched Leeds' winner. Leeds have lost all five of their games in London this season, and were winless in their last 16 visits to the capital in all competitions, losing 14. Leeds took the lead when Jack Harrison's cross found Bamford, who put it past goalkeeper Alphonse Areola just before the half-hour mark. — AP

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

India vs South Africa women: 2nd T20 from 7 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

## BADMINTON

All England Open: Finals from 3.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 3

## FOOTBALL

FA Cup Quarterfinals: Chelsea vs Sheffield United from 7 pm; Leicester City vs Manchester United from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2

English Premier League: West Ham vs Arsenal from 8.30 pm; Aston Villa vs Tottenham Hotspur from 1 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Italian League: Juventus vs Benevento from 7.30 pm; Fiorentina vs AC Milan from 10.30 pm on Sony Six, HD

## LAST LAUGH

## India crush England in last T20 to clinch 'see-saw' series

**Ahmedabad, March 20:** India defeated England by 36 runs in the fifth Twenty20 International to claim the series 3-2 here on Saturday.

Rohit Sharma's sensational 64 and skipper Virat Kohli's well-crafted 80 powered India to a massive 224 for two, their best ever total against England, in the winner-takes-all fifth Twenty20.

Skipper Virat Kohli contributed an unbeaten 80 while Suryakumar Yadav scored 32 off 17 balls before Chris Jordan's stunning piece of fielding resulted in his dismissal off Adil Rashid.

Hardik Pandya remained unbeaten on 39. India struck early with Bhuvneshwar Kumar dismissing dangerous Jason Roy for a duck and kept consistent pressure on England.

Dawid Malan (68) and Jos Buttler (52) scored half-centuries but the required run rate kept mounting. They managed 188/8 for in their 20 overs.

After losing the toss for the fourth time in the series, India were predictably put in to bat by Eoin Morgan. Preparing themselves for success in all conditions ahead of the T20 World Cup, India thrived under the pressure of a series-decider to produce their best total of the series.

Jofra Archer and Mark Wood had troubled the Indians with their extra pace in earlier games but Rohit and Kohli sent them to the cleaners on way to their 94-run stand.

The hosts hammered 67 runs in the last five overs to give the innings a perfect finish.

Barring Ben Stokes and Adil Rashid, all England bowlers leaked more than 10 runs per over with Chris Jordan (0/57) being the most expensive.

India decided to drop



India captain Virat Kohli (right) and batting partner Hardik Pandya celebrate scoring runs against England in the fifth Twenty20 at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Saturday. India won by 36 runs. — AP

opener K.L. Rahul to accommodate an extra bowling option in left-arm pacer T Natarajan.

With no Rahul at the top, Kohli moved himself up the order to open with Rohit. The move worked wonders with Kohli and Rohit sharing a 94-run stand off 54 balls. Rohit did the bulk of the scoring in their partnership as Kohli was more than happy to enjoy a sensational display of stroke-making from the other end.

## NUMBERS GAME

● Virat Kohli sets the record of most runs against England in Twenty20. The Indian skipper reached this milestone during his unbeaten 80-run knock in the final Twenty20 in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

● He made 577 runs at an average of 44.38 and a strike rate of 136.72 in 17 innings of as many matches with four fifties till the end of the Indian innings.

● India recorded their highest total against England by making 224 runs for the loss of two wickets in 20 overs.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

## KIWIS HAMMER BANGLADESH IN FIRST ONE-DAY

**Dunedin, March 20:**

New Zealand needed just over 21 overs Saturday to overtake Bangladesh's total of 131 and win the first of three one-day internationals by eight wickets.

Bangladesh, recently out of managed isolation, was never comfortable in unfamiliar batting conditions at the University Oval and was bowled out by New Zealand in only 41.5 overs.

Mahmudullah's 27 from 54 balls was their highest score.

After Martin Guptill crashed 38 runs from 19 balls with three fours and four sixes at the top of the order, New Zealand was always on target to win plenty of overs to spare.

Henry Nicholls made an unbeaten 49 in his 50th ODI to steer New Zealand to victory in the 22nd over, combining in a 65-run partnership for the second wicket with Devon Conway (27). — AP

**Brief scores:** Bangladesh 131 in 41.5 overs (Mahmudullah 27, Boult 12-2) lost to New Zealand 132/2 in 21.2 overs (Nicholls 49 n.o., Guptill 38).

## SCORECARD

**India:** Rohit Sharma b Stokes 64, Virat Kohli (not out) 80, Suryakumar Yadav c Roy b Rashid 32, Hardik Pandya (not out) 39. Extras (lb-3, wd-6) 9. Total (For 2 wkt, in 20 overs) 224.

FoW: 1-94, 2-143.

**Bowling:** Adil Rashid 4-0-31-1, Jofra Archer 4-0-43-0, Mark Wood 4-0-53-0, Chris Jordan 4-0-57-0, Sam Curran 1-0-11-0, Ben Stokes 3-0-26-1.

**England:** Jason Roy b Kumar 0, Jos Buttler c Pandya b Kumar 52, Dawid Malan b Thakur 68, Jonny Bairstow c Yadav b Thakur 7, Eoin Morgan (c) c sub (K.L. Rahul) b Pandya 1, Ben Stokes c Pant b Natarajan 14, Chris Jordan c Yadav b Thakur 11, Jofra Archer run out (Yadav/Pant) 1, Sam Curran (not out) 14, Adil Rashid (not out) 0. Extras (lb-9, w-11) 20. Total (For 8 wkt, in 20 over) 188.

FoW: 1-0, 2-10, 3-140, 4-142, 5-142, 6-165, 7-168, 8-174.

**Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-15-2, Hardik Pandya 4-0-34-1, Washington Sundar 1-0-13-0, Shardul Thakur 4-0-45-3, T. Natarajan 4-0-39-1, Rahul Chahar 3-0-33-0.

## Sharath, Manika seal Tokyo spot



She was outstanding.

"I never thought we could win the tournament. Now we are three games for winning an Olympic medal. It will be tough but it is our best shot," Sharath said referring to the 16-pairing draw at the Tokyo Games.

Sharath, who has also qualified for the singles event alongside G. Sathiyan, has now set sights at reaching at least the mixed doubles quarterfinals at the Games.

"Manika was unstoppable today. It is very important for her to play with flow so that I am able to play my power game. That is the only way we compliment each other."

"I think if we can reach the quarters, it would be a fantastic result for us at the Games. Anything else from there is a bonus," said the world number 32.

The unprecedented result in mixed doubles means India will now have five entries in Tokyo (two each in men and women singles besides mixed).

The delayed Tokyo Games will be held from July 23 to August 8 this year.

"I was really happy with

myself to be able to withstand the attack and services of a player like Lee Sang Su and Jion Jihee.

Sharath bhaiya capitalised well with his attack to keep the pressure on them," Manika said.

On Friday, Sharath and Manika had defeated Singapore's Koen Pang Yew En and Lin Ye 4-2 in the semifinals to get to touching distance of making it to the showpiece event.

— PTI

## SA WOMEN EASE PAST INDIA IN T20 OPENER

**Lucknow, March 20:** All-rounder Anneke Bosch first pegged the Indian women with a couple of wickets and then smashed an unbeaten 66 off 48 balls to ensure an easy eight wicket victory for South Africa in the first T20 International here on Saturday.

Harleen Deol's (52) confident maiden international fifty was the only silver lining for an otherwise lacklustre display by the Indians who posted a modest 130 for 6 after being invited to bat.

The Proteas chased down the target easily with five balls to spare with opener Bosch (66 not out) and captain Sune Luus (43 off 49 balls) sharing 90 runs for the second wicket. SA reached to 133 for 2 in 19.1 overs.

**Brief Scores:** India 130/6 in 20 overs (Harleen Deol 52, Jemimah Rodrigues 30) lost to South Africa 133/2 in 19.1 overs (Anneke Bosch 66 not out; A Reddy 1/20).

## No Spectators from abroad at Olympics

fans from overseas attending.

Japan has attributed about 8,800 deaths to Covid-19 and has controlled the virus better than most countries.

"In order to give clarity to ticket holders living overseas and to enable them to adjust their travel plans at this stage, the parties on the Japanese side have come to the conclusion that they will not be able to enter into Japan at the time of the Olympic and Paralympic Games," the Tokyo organising committee said in a statement.

Organisers said 600,000 tickets were sold to fans from outside Japan. They have promised refunds, but this will be determined by so-called Authorised Ticket Resellers that handle sales outside Japan.

These dealers charge fees of up to 20 per cent above the ticket price. It is not clear if the fees will be refunded.

Toshiro Muto, the CEO of the organising committee, said organisers are not responsible for money lost on flights or hotel reservations. He said these did not involve any "contract arrangement with Tokyo."

Organising committee President Seiko Hashimoto, who appeared in seven Olympics as an athlete she won bronze in speedskating in 1992 said there was pressure to wait longer to make a decision. But she said fans could now plan. She also lamented the move.

"So the fact that spectators are not able to attend the games from abroad that is very disappointing and it's regrettable," she said.

"But solely as spectators for watching games no, they will not be allowed to make an entry," Muto added.

The financial burden of lost ticket sales falls on Japan. The local organiz-

ing committee budget called for \$800 million income from ticket sales, the third largest income source in the privately financed budget. Any shortfall in the budget will have to be made up by Japanese government entities.

"The ticketing revenue will be in the decline," Muto said.

Muto also hinted at more cuts for people on the periphery of the Olympics. He also said volunteers from overseas would be dealt with in the same manner" but said details would be forthcoming later. "But as far as other people related to the games or whether we should maintain the same number perhaps we will have to reduce the number. That is the consensus. That is the premise," he said.

— PTI

## Sindhu's quest halts in semis

**Birmingham, March 20:** Reigning world champion P. V. Sindhu suffered yet another semifinal defeat at the prestigious All England Championships as she went down tamely in straight games to Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand in the women's singles here on Saturday.

Sindhu, the Olympic silver medallist, couldn't match the pace, power and precision of her younger world number 11 rival Chochuwong and lost 17-21, 9-21 in a match that lasted 43 minutes.

The world No. 7 Indian had also lost at the semi-final at the 2018 edition as well.

Sindhu came into the semifinal contest with an overwhelming 4-1 head-to-head lead over the 23-year-old Chochuwong, whom she had beaten at the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals in January. But all that statistics didn't matter as Chochuwong showed immaculate defence and played at a searing pace to outclass the Indian.

On Friday night, Sindhu had defeated Japan's third seed Akane Yamaguchi 16-21, 21-16, 21-19 in an intriguing quarterfinal match to make it to the last eight stage. Sindhu had battled for an hour and 16 minutes to eke out her first win over world number five Yamaguchi in last four meetings.

Sindhu played an aggressive game, matching Yamaguchi with her speed and retrieving skills but unforced errors allowed the Japanese to jump to a 11-lead.

P. V. Sindhu plays a shot against Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong in their All England Open Badminton Championships semifinal match at the Utilita Arena in Birmingham on Saturday. — AP

## Bronze for Nikhat and Solanki

**New Delhi, March 20:** Indian boxers Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Gaurav Solanki (57kg) settled for bronze medals after going down in their respective semifinals at the Bosphorus boxing tournament in Istanbul.

Asian Championship bronze medallist Nikhat suffered a 0-5 loss to 2019 Worlds silver medallist Busenaz Cakiroglu of Turkey in the semifinal on Friday. The opening round had both the boxers playing the waiting game but the subsequent rounds saw them attack a lot in an intense bout. However, the home favourite landed more punches and secured an unanimous win.

Commonwealth Games gold medallist Solanki, who notched up impressive wins in the previous rounds, lost 0-5 to Argentina's Nirco Cueillo. He fought hard and displayed his attacking prowess but his efforts went in vain. — PTI

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