

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 28 MARCH 2021

## WEATHER

Max: 39°C  
Min: 22.6°C  
RH: 18%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky. Max/min temp.  
39/23°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Uttarayana

Tithi: Phalgun Shuddha

Pournami till 12.15 am (Monday)

Star: Uttara till 5.32 pm

Varjyam: 1.03 am to 2.29 am (Monday)

Durmuhurtam: 4.48 pm to 5.36 pm

Rahu Kalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

## HJRI CALENDAR

Sha'ban 14,1441 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.13 am

Zohar: 12.31 pm

Asar: 4.43 pm

Maghrib: 6.34 pm

Isha: 7.42 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.28 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.13 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 6.28 PM

MOONSET TODAY 5.56 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Not Holi colours! That is the result of mudslinging by the voters!

## SHORT TAKES

**PREZ STABLE, IN AIIMS FOR HEART SURGERY**

New Delhi, March 27: President Ram Nath Kovind was on Saturday shifted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here for a planned bypass procedure which is expected to be performed on Tuesday, a statement issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan said. The President's health condition is stable and he is under the care of experts, it said.

Mr Kovind, 75, had undergone a health check-up at the Army Hospital (R&R) here following chest discomfort on Friday morning. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind has been shifted to the AIIMS, Delhi, in the afternoon today (March 27, 2021). Post investigations, doctors have advised him to undergo a planned bypass procedure which is expected to be performed on the morning of March 30, Tuesday.

"The President's health is stable and he is under the care of the experts at the AIIMS, the statement said. Earlier on Saturday, the Army hospital said in a medical bulletin that the president is being referred to AIIMS, Delhi for further investigation.

— PTI



## WORLD | 6

Myanmar junta kills over 90 protesters



## SPORTS | 8

India-England ODI series decider today

## TABLOID

Persistence needed to survive: Elnaaz Norouzi



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## TRS taps beneficiaries of govt sops in N'Sagar

**MLAs covering all villages in constituency**

L. VENKAT RAM  
REDDY IDC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

IT WAS found that there are 1.53 lakh beneficiaries of flagship schemes like Asaras pensions, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima, sheep distribution, fee reimbursement, scholarships, Arogyasri and ₹1 per kg of ration rice.

ers to meet every beneficiary in the next two weeks as part of the door-to-door campaigning for the bypoll.

The TRS is reaching out to beneficiaries of the government's welfare schemes in the Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency ahead of the April 17 byelection. Beneficiaries have been identified by the various departments of the government.

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Speaking in the Assembly on Friday, Chandrashekhar Rao had said "Our welfare schemes are reaching every house in Telangana. When we reviewed Nagarjunasagar Assembly constituency recently, it was found that there were 1.53 lakh beneficiaries of various schemes. I asked my party men why they were not meeting the beneficiaries and told them to do so without any further delay."

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## SHORT TAKES

**TWO ARRESTED IN ₹41 LAKH CHEATING CASE**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Two persons for Noida, Uttar Pradesh — Kaushal Chaudhary, 30, and Umesh Yadav, 21, who cheated a city resident of ₹41 lakh after offering dating services were nabbed by Hyderabad cybercrime police on Saturday.

K.V.M. Prasad, assistant commissioner of police, Hyderabad cybercrime said the duo posted advertisements on websites and social media sites about dating services. Those approaching them were asked to deposit huge sums of money into the scamster's bank accounts.

To gain the confidence of their targets, they used to arrange calls from women. Based on a complaint from a resident, police investigated the case and nabbed the accused.

**URDU ACADEMY HOLDS PANEL DEBATE ON APRIL 3**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

The Urdu Academy is holding a panel debate on Deccanit ka Mutalia (Deccan Studies) on April 3 at Urdu Maskan, Khilwat. Prof. Majeed Bedar, Prof. Naseemuddin Farees, Prof. Habeeb Nisar, Dr Zareena Parveen and Dr Mohammed Saifiullah Dy. CEO Wakf Board, will participate in the debate.

**SAFIULLAH INSPECTS DARGAH YOUSUFAIN**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Dr Mohammed Saifiullah, after assuming the charge of Deputy CEO of Wakf Board, on Saturday inspected the Dargah Yousufain, Nampally and Idgah Guttala Begumpet.

He interacted with the staff members of the Board, took stock of the functioning of the various sections and assured the employees that he would streamline their work.

At Dargah Yousufain, he interacted with the staff and shopkeepers. Idgah Guttala Begumpet has 90 acres of land in the HiTec City area.

**HEAT FORCES TIGERS TO MOVE AROUND RIVER**DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD, MARCH 27

Tigers that have migrated into Kaggaznagar division from the Tadoba Andhari tiger reserve in Maharashtra are moving along the river Pranhita for drinking water and frequently entering the river following soaring temperatures. Old Adilabad district has been recording high temperatures for the last 15 days.

Forest officials say that they were tracking the movement of tigers on the state borders. Of late, the tigers are also returning to the Tadoba reserve by crossing the river.

Forest officials of Penchikalpet and Bejjur mandal say that most of the time the big cats are moving along river Pranhita since plenty of drinking water is available and where the animals can cool their body.

Forest officials said that they did not find much tiger movement around villages located on the fringes of forest areas.

Meanwhile, there is a possibility of poachers' targeting the big cat during summer when they come to the water bodies to quench their thirst.

The safety and security of the tigers has become a cause of concern following a series of deaths of tigers and leopards in recent months in the Tadoba Andhari tiger reserve.

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**Fish market on wheels**

Ministers T. Harish Rao and Talasani Srinivas Yadav at the launch of mobile fish retail outlets, at HMDA Ground near Necklace Road in Hyderabad on Sunday.

— S.SURENDER REDDY

**Dharani portal filled with owners' plaints**

**Portal gets 500 applications per day in past 20 days**

L VENKAT RAM REDDY I DC HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

The Dharani portal for agricultural land transactions is being flooded with grievances of landowners.

The revenue department on March 6 launched a nine-option grievance module, 'Apply for specific land matters', on the portal to enable landowners to file grievances on

errors in agriculture land records. Land owners can file their grievances on Aadhaar linkage, discrepancies in land extent, missing survey numbers and seek redressal. They have to file grievances online only through Mee Seva centres.

According to official sources in the revenue department, the portal, on an average, has been receiving 500 applications per day in the past

● **WITH THE** addition of new features on Dharani since its launch on October 29, the portal has become user-friendly.

20 days. These grievances are directly reaching respective collectors. With the addition of new features on Dharani since its launch on October 29, the portal has become user-friendly. The features that have been

added recently include 'cancellation of registration', 'application for pending non-agriculture land assessment (NALA)', and 'apply for pattaar passbook (PPB) semi-urban land'.

In all, over 30 main features exist in the portal right from slot booking and registration of agricultural lands, slot reschedule to market value of lands for stamp duty and registered document details.

**23 DWMA employees test Covid-19 positive in Kadapa**DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, MARCH 27

Fear broke out at Kadapa collector's office here on Saturday after news spread that 23 staff of District Water Management Authority (DWMA)

in D Block of the collectorate had tested positive for Coronavirus.

Two employees working in the DWMA social audit department here showed fever symptoms on Thursday. Following this, all employees in the section underwent Covid test and five tested positive. The matter was immediately brought to the notice of district collector Chevuru Harikiran. A Covid test was conducted on 60 employees on the collector's instructions.

As of Saturday morning, another 18 employees were

declared positive and sent to home isolation. All staff members were immediately given the work from home option while the entire office was sanitized. But this development has spread fears in the collector's office complex.

An officer told Deccan Chronicle that not all employees had shown Covid symptoms but were isolated as a precautionary measure.

Public negligence is presumed to be the main reason for the increase in Covid cases, which for the last two months was in single digits but was now increasing.

● **TWO DAYS** ago three family members of a forest officer in Siddavatam mandal were confirmed Covid positive.

● **HARIKIRAN AND SP Karur Karunapati Nagendra Kumar Anburajan** have decided to impose heavy fines on those who come out without a mask. Shops allowing customers without masks would be strictly dealt with.

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Shops allowing customers without masks would be strictly dealt with.

Anburajan told reporters that police teams would conduct inspections everywhere and warned that fines would be levied if anyone appeared on the roads without a face mask.

It was on March 31 last year that 15 cases were reported for the first time in Kadapa district. At one stage it had risen to almost 1,000 cases per day.

However, since December there has been a steady decline

and it fell sharply in January and February. There has been a resurgence from the third week of this month. A total of 40 cases were reported in Kadapa district on Saturday. In addition, a total of 55,861 positive cases were registered in the district. So far 55,187 people have fully recovered from the disease and 84 are in home isolation.

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**Jana Reddy dares KCR over Nagarjunasagar bypass**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Senior Congress leader Kunduru Jana Reddy challenged Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to sit at Pragathi Bhavan and he would stay in Gandhi Bhavan and let people decide their fate in the upcoming Nagarjunasagar bypass. He made this challenge while addressing a public meet in Halia in Nalgonda district.

Jana Reddy stated that the Congress not only fought for Indian independence but also helped realise the dream of Telangana being a separate statehood. "I'm a political warrior and pioneer of the mandal system. KCR is aware of the fact but he will not disclose it," Jana Reddy said.

"Voters should

decide now whether they want to be ruled by a feudal leader or use the vote to change the system. They should also decide whether they want to remain slaves, being sold for money. I urge the voters to vote for Congress and send the victory as a gift to Sonia Gandhi," Jana Reddy told the meeting.

The senior leader said that it was the Congress which had brought development to the constituency by the irrigation front or the implementation of welfare schemes.

He said as far as infrastructure was concerned, roads in the constituency were much better than those in Gajwel and Siddipet Assembly constituencies, represented by the Chief Minister and minister Harish Rao respectively.

TPCC chief addresses a public meeting at Halia in Nalgonda district on Saturday.

● **DEVOTEES CAN** avail these services at the Yadadri Laxminarasimha Swamy temple, Bhadrachalam Sri Rama temple, Basar Saraswati temple, Vemulawada Rajarajeswari temple, Kondagattu Anjaneya temple, Komuraveli Mallikarjunaswamy temple, Ujjaini Mahankali temple, Secunderabad Ganesh temple, Balkampet Yellamma Pochamma temple and the Karmanaghat Hanuman temple.

On April 7, 2020, the endowments department had launched the online puja facility in 12 temples for devotees who were not able to physically attend and offer puja as entry into temples was restricted due to the Coronavirus lockdown then in vogue since mid-March.

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**MIM to fight Assembly polls in Bengal alone, says Owaisi**

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI AND RAJIB CHOWDHURI I DC BERHAMPORE/KOLKATA, MARCH 27

with a promise to field more candidates in the next few days.

Asked about his previous pledge to support Siddiqui, the AIMIM chief later said, "No one is needed. We will fight the polls on our own strength." According to him, the 'Sangukta Morcha', the alliance of the Congress-Left-ISF, would fail as the Muslims were upset because of the Left. AIMIM sources indicated that Owaisi has plans to field candidates at 13 seats in Murshidabad and four in Malda district.

Kicking off his campaign at Sagardighi in Murshidabad, Owaisi announced the names of two candidates: Noore Mehboob Alam from Sagardighi and Asadul Sheikh from the Jangipur Assembly constituencies in the district.

of Murshidabad called Bangladeshis?"

He tore into Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, alleging, "She claims she worked for the Muslims but she has done nothing for them. The Muslims of Bengal are still lagging far behind in education, employment and health sectors. I found the people of Sagardighi facing scarcity of pure drinking water despite having a TMC MLA twice. Besides most bidi workers are not getting proper wages in Jangipur."

Calling Mamata Banerjee's opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act an "eye-wash", Owaisi slammed her for using the Muslims for her votebank politics and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of trying to divide the state between the Hindus and Muslims.

**Frequent disruption of legislatures irks Venkaiah**

Hyderabad, March 27: Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday expressed concern over the frequent disruption in legislatures and Parliament as well as the decline in the standard of debates.

Observing that "disruption means derailing debate and derailing democracy and the nation," he cautioned that people will get disillusioned if the trend continues.

Naidu, who was speaking at the centenary celebrations of former parliamentarian and educationist Nookala Narotham Reddy's time, Naidu suggested that representatives' actions in the legislatures should reflect people's aspirations and sought a more constructive and meaningful use of time in legislatures.

The Vice-President also expressed concern over the declining attendance of parliamentarians and legislators in respective Houses. He stressed the need for them to be regular and contribute meaningfully in the discussion.

He appealed to the people to elect representatives who possess the 4Cs — Calibre,

Conduct, Capacity and Character.

Emphasizing the role of education in inculcating moral values, patriotism and probity in public life, Naidu said education should produce "well-rounded holistic individuals."

Pointing to India's democratic dividend, he said no other country has this kind of advantage and stressed the need to fully leverage it for the nation's progress.

In this context, he called for upskilling the younger generation in tune with the 21st century needs.

The Vice-President also suggested that in the spirit of New Education Policy, institutes should restructure themselves and bring in a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to education.

—PTI

**Festive vibes**

People take part in Kama Dahanam on the eve of Holi festival at Bhagathnagar in Karimnagar on Saturday.

**TS reports fall in Covid cases**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

The state saw a slight fall in the number of Covid-19 cases on Friday, 495, when compared with 518 cases on Thursday. Two deaths were reported on Friday, taking the caseload to 3,05,804 and deaths to 1,685.

The number of active cases reached 4,241 on Friday, which means that the spread is fast and this will reduce the doubling time of the virus.

A total of 58,029 tests were conducted on Friday, 49,704 in the government sector and 8,325 in the private sector. The health department said 25,532 primary contacts and 6,963 secondary contacts were tested.

The GHMC area recorded 142 cases, Medchal Malkajgiri 45 and Ranga Reddy 35. In the districts, Nizamabad had 30 cases, Narayanpet 21, Sangareddy 20, Mahbubnagar 18 and Karimnagar 16 cases.

**40,323 TAKE COVID VACCINE IN TELANGANA**DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

In 722 Covid-19 vaccination centres across the state, 40,323 beneficiaries took the shot on Friday according to the state health department bulletin issued on Saturday. Of these, 37,115 took their first vaccine dose and 3,208 the second.

The second dose was given to 955 healthcare workers, and 2,253 front-line workers. The total number of vaccines spent was 11,25,414 and wastage stood at 0.74 per cent, the health department said.

● **THE TOTAL** number of vaccines spent was 11,25,414 and wastage stood at 0.74 per cent.

## OTHER STORIES

RAMAGUNDAM  
POLICE ARREST  
ATM FRAUDSTERDC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, MARCH 27

Police officials of Ramagundam police commissionerate on Saturday arrested a person who had since the past few months been cheating people of money at ATM centres on the pretext of helping them.

Srirampur circle inspector Billa Koteshwar identified the accused as P. K. Swamy, a native of Naspur village in Mancherial district.

Giving details, the CI said one Ramaswamy was finding it difficult to withdraw money from the ATM centre of State Bank of India in Srirampur. Swamy then helped him withdraw the money while exchanging Ramaswamy's card with a fake one. Swamy later used Ramaswamy's card to withdraw Rs. 58,000 from ATM centres in Mancherial and Lakshetripet.

When family members of Ramaswamy realised that he had been cheated, they lodged a complaint with Srirampur police station. After observing CCTV footage of various ATM centres, police identified P. K. Swamy.

On Saturday, assistant sub-inspector Mangilal and his team received information that Swamy was trying to cheat an elderly person at the Naspur ATM centre. They then arrested him and seized two ATM cards, apart from ₹58,000 in cash from him.

CI Koteshwar has appreciated ASI Mangilal and constables Jayachandra, Srinu and Ravi for tracking and nabbing the ATM fraud accused.



Teenmar Mallanna speaks to Sunil at the MGM Hospital in Warangal on Saturday.

OPPN BLAMES  
GOVT FOR SUNIL'S  
SUICIDE ATTEMPTDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MARCH 27

Until and unless K. Chandrasekhar Rao will lose his Chief Minister's post, if the unemployed youth will not get jobs, Teenmar Mallanna said on Saturday.

Mallanna met Boda Sunil who attempted suicide on Friday defected over not getting a job. The video clip that he posted on social media before his suicide attempt went viral. Sunil, a native of Tejawat Ramsingh Thanda under Guduru mandal in Mahabubabad district, has been preparing for competitive exams in Hanamkonda.

Speaking to media at the MGM hospital, Teenmar Mallanna demanded the government shift Sunil to a corporate hospital for better treatment. He blamed the Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Minister K.T. Rama Rao for destroying the lives of the unemployed youth. "KTR should be hanged at Hanamkonda chowrasta," he said.

Telangana Jana Samithi founder Prof. Kodandaram also visited MGM Hospital and consoled Sunil and his family members. He held the KCR Government responsible for the distress of the unemployed youth.

"Vexed with the government's approach, Sunil attempted suicide. Youth must not resort to suicides as it is not the solution to this problem. Youth needs to stand stubborn and fight with the government to fulfil their job aspirations," Prof. Kodandaram said.

YS Sharmila's followers also met Sunil and told him to be bold. Representatives of several students' organisations and social forums also met Sunil.

**YOUTH SHOULD** not resort to suicides as it is not the solution for the problem. Youth needs to stand stubborn and fight with the government to fulfil their job aspirations," prof. Kodandaram said.

## Raising temperatures



Women cover their head to escape heat due to high temperature in afternoons in Karimnagar on Saturday.

## Wear a mask, play dry Holi: Fest amid Covid

NAVEEN KUMAR I DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

As people gear up to celebrate Holi on March 28 amid the renewed Covid-19 surge, health experts and doctors have recommended that the festivities be muted. They warn that the festival could become a super-spreader event if people flout rules and go wild with celebrations.

Dr Nitika Keshri, a city doctor, said people should opt for a dry Holi, that too with a small number of people.

"You can play Holi in smaller groups by following safety guidelines. Dry Holi is better, as with use of water one might fall sick and confuse common cold symptoms with Covid. The vaccinated lot should be particularly careful as their immunity is yet to get a boost with the dose."

She recommended that masks are a must even while playing Holi. A medical expert from Gandhi Hospital said: "We should avoid all sorts of social gatherings, especially around Holi, as social distancing norms are usually not followed during it. Let us not forget, that Coronavirus is not over as yet."

**A MEDICAL EXPERT** from Gandhi Hospital said: "We should avoid all sorts of social gatherings, especially around Holi, as social distancing norms are usually not followed during it."

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MARCH 27

Terracotta tiles found at the Kothakonda gutta

in historical places like Lothal, Kali Bangan, Rakhhigar and Banavali where the Indus Valley Civilization flourished," he said.

Noting the places where these terracotta cakes were known to be found currently, Ratnakar Reddy said they could also be seen in the Mughal monuments in Delhi but are a bit larger called lacquer bricks.

Also observing that they were used inside the Gun Foundry Heritage Building in Hyderabad. There are houses with ceilings made of terracotta cakes in Nellore and Madras. The locals call these 'palashree' tiles and are square in shape.

"There is a massive Stone Age dolmen type tomb on Kothakonda hilltop. Rare historical relics and structures dating back to the ancient time can be found here," Reddy said.

Ratnakar also suggested that valuable historical evidence is likely to be available if the Archaeological department examines the area.

## Ancient terracotta cakes found in Wgl

According to researcher, some of them may be from Indus Valley civilization

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, MARCH 27

Retired director in Archaeology department of Telangana, History and archaeology researcher Reddy Ratnakar Reddy has revealed that the very rare terracotta cakes have been found on Kothakonda hill in Bheemadevarapalli mandal of Warangal Urban district.

Three types of baked clay tiles were found on the Kothakonda hilltop and in the cotton fields below it. According to him, some of them are from the Indus Valley Civilization.

"These terracotta tiles are shaped like a tablet piece cut in half. Others are rectangular and the edges are sharp. The remaining are bent in the shape of the English letter L. They are about three and a half inches long and three inches wide with half an inch thickness," Ratnakar said.

Adding, "Terracotta cakes glued to lime mor-

tar were also found here on the edge of the hilltop. Archaeological evidence suggests that they were used in pyro technology operations."

Ramakrishna opined that the terracotta tiles appeared in the chalcolithic era, the earliest historical era. "A variety of terracotta cakes along with triangular terracotta cakes have been found

in historical places like Lothal, Kali Bangan, Rakhhigar and Banavali where the Indus Valley Civilization flourished," he said.

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## Doctors advise caution on Holi due to Covid-19

KANIZA GARARI I DC  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

As people gear up to celebrate Holi on March 28 amid the renewed Covid-19 surge, health experts and doctors have recommended that the festivities be muted. They warn that the festival could become a super-spreader event if people flout rules and go wild with celebrations.

Dr Nitika Keshri, a city doctor, said people should opt for a dry Holi, that too with a small number of people.

"You can play Holi in smaller groups by following safety guidelines. Dry Holi is better, as with use of water one might fall sick and confuse common cold symptoms with Covid. The vaccinated lot should be particularly careful as their immunity is yet to get a boost with the dose."

She recommended that masks are a must even while playing Holi. A medical expert from Gandhi Hospital said: "We should avoid all sorts of social gatherings, especially around Holi, as social distancing norms are usually not followed during it."

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## DECCAN Chronicle

28 MARCH 2021



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

## Defend our freedoms, just connect the 'dots'

**A**round the world in March, millions died from Coronavirus, cancer, and the many maladies we don't seem able to prevent or cure. And with our new irrational rejection of vaccines, including the ones that have conclusively, over centuries, helped eradicate disease, millions more will perish. But, after rampaging diseases, our single biggest problem is male violence, surely, whether it manifests itself in full-scale warfare, environmental degradation, or the brutalisation of the vulnerable, including women?

This month (and every other in my long career as a woman), I have despaired over the widespread murder of women. As I lament the loss of London's Sarah Everard, the six Asian women gunned down in Atlanta, and the rising tide of femicide of the past weeks in India, I am gripped by a terrible *déjà vu*. We've all been here before; reassured by our leaders that they'll take firm steps to protect women, we watch history repeating as they blithely fail. And like a cracked record I find myself railing against our mistreatment again; fitfully hopeful that speaking up might make a tiny difference. Didn't the Suffragettes' dissent eventually garner votes for British women? Didn't the recent Indian Farmers' Protest, especially the tenacity of its women, focus the world's attention on their predicament? Yet, over time, so little has changed for the better in man's treatment of man, and indeed, WOMAN, that my faith in our voices being heard has been shaken.

What would our sagacious leaders suggest we do instead?

Talk less, say Japanese Olympics chiefs Mori and Sasaki. If women stopped airing their concerns, according to them, 'women's problems' would simply evaporate (so negligible are they). And isn't it a fact, such men point out, the moment women stop 'haggling', nobody hears about these issues again? Proving they never actually existed. All it requires them to solve 'women's problems', is for women, or nags, hags, and "Olympics", as Sasaki would have it, to keep quiet.

Be seen less, spouts the Uttarkhand CM, in charge of an Indian state of around 5 million women. Bare female knees, sayeth he, will be the undoing of society. Leading to the collapse of morals, sense, and civilisation, ultimately. Haven't we heard that (and similar) from the patriarchy, times without number? Nor can it be wrong, surely, if so many men agree? Women revealing anything at all, including their capabilities, are immoral, dangerous and destructive. The only women worth respecting are the ones you can't see. Or hear. Because quiet, retiring women, whether locked in their homes, muzzled, or DEAD, can't upset our perfectly inequitable planet.

Walk less too, we're told often. Women shouldn't go anywhere on their own, except in a straight line between work and home. Not that every place of work is acceptable! If you work in a spa for example, you might get bumped off by frustrated men, and the fat-cat-owned media will slaver over it, but have no sympathy to spare. And even less action will be taken. Taking the path that suits you – literally and figuratively as well – is not for women, you expect Dark Age patriarchs to proclaim. But no, this is the message from our modern judiciary and police: guardians of our wellbeing. In Britain this month, not only was it revealed that a policeman had murdered homeward-bound-after-sundown Sarah Everard, they then stymied multiple vigils to mourn her in the name of Lockdown. Like all stalwarts of the status quo, I suspect they'd suggest a woman's place is at home if they could. The necessary Lockdown mantra of 'stay home, stay safe' has never been just a pandemic-protection slogan when it comes to women, but imposed rules to live by through history. It kept us so safe sometimes, we never felt pain again: as the reality of 137 women killed around the world DAILY by men intimately known to them attests.

But if staying home, staying covered, staying silent, hasn't spelt safety for us, what will? Unlike the prized collection of exotic birds we're sometimes perceived to be, safety is only a small part of our needs. We must continue to educate. Teaching women early to be free, to aspire to every wonderful opportunity this world has to offer, and young men to respect these same freedoms and aspirations in women is key. But as the mother of both a son and a daughter, I've discovered that this is harder to achieve than I'd imagined. We encourage, support, and role-model the right behaviours for both, yet find that the occasional stereotype, or mild sexism trope, still wends its way home. Through conversations with our children, their friends and teachers, it's become obvious that this is the influence of playground chatter, media and the Internet; as much of which we vet as possible, like all concerned parents. Yet, the trickle that filters into their lives is proof of the pervasive nature of prejudice, and how impossible that is to eliminate entirely. And is shielding from reality the right approach anyway? So, we discuss inequities with them instead, explain why they're wrong, where they come from, and how best to address them. Thus teaching them both NOT to 'know their place'.

That isn't a complete solution either, is it? Just like protecting ourselves isn't enough, nor protesting. What's required, of course, is a major overhaul; systemic change that runs deep and wide through society, and belongs to us all. The answer then, though neither original nor revolutionary, lies in connecting the dots – literally! Because 'dots', funny enough, is what middle-class India calls its daughters. Our political leaders and corporations don't want upheavals, and activist organisations sometimes grow too big to make a deep-rooted difference. But if we can join, in small but ever-widening circles, our young women (and many peaceable men) – the dots – to work towards change, whilst providing support and the benefit of our experience, there's hope yet. The possibility even of societal transformation. Then, no matter what our sex, sexuality, class, caste, colour, age or creed, we might finally walk, in darkness and in light, bare-kneed or bare anything-at-all, any which way we please.

**Shreya Sen-Handley** is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhan.*



Hundreds gather in London for the Sarah Everard vigil despite ban. — AFP

I could not help wondering every time the above proposition was articulated that the next inevitable and portentous consequence would be that it no longer would remain the business of government to be in government. By the time the grand garage sale of India's public assets would be over economic and, by extension, political power would have become so intensely concentrated in the hands of chaebols and oligarchs that they would be the real overlords of India giving even the American gilded age a run for its money.

No government would in future either be able to challenge them meaningfully or deliver public goods and services for the teaming millions who make up the bulk of our populace and require them most.

The Gilded Age, 1870-1899, was a period in American history when a few people through gross chicanery and outright sophistry became vulgarly wealthy in a very short span of time.

The eminent grise of the gilded age were the quick-rich moguls namely John D. Rockefeller, Andrew W. Mellon, Andrew Carnegie, Henry Flagler, Henry H. Rogers, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt and John Jacob Astor. However in the popular imagination of American people they are still the robber barons who had become affluent through illegitimate means.

The later iterations of the

gilded age have been periods in the history of nations when public assets created out of public money have been privatised on a mega scale.

The person who really put wheels under this large-scale privatisation of public assets in the penultimate decade of the twentieth century was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

On becoming the Premier in May 1979, she sold off steelmakers, carmakers, aerospace firms, oil and gas giants, airlines and the telecoms' monopoly in the face of robust protests by well meaning and sober public intellectuals, and even the directly impacted workers of these former state-owned enterprises. Even public housing was pawned of the tenants who lived in it.

However, in the ultimate analysis, this privatisation turned out to be more of a societal shock, rather than therapy for an ailing economy. It was a violent act of economic engineering enforced by resorting to the coercive powers of the state. Its social implications were colossal. Short sighted un-egalitarian, and antithetical to the notion of public investment, it did not lay the underpinnings for either sustainable or pervasive prosperity. It was a chimera.

In fact, a 2005 study by economists Blanden, Gregg and Machin found that:

"The rapid increase in UK income inequality that began in 1979 is sometimes justified by the argument that society is now more meritocratic so that it is easier for the poor to become richer if they are willing and able to work hard. In fact, our research shows that the opposite has occurred – there has actually been a fall in the degree of social mobility over recent decades. Children born to poor families are now less likely to break free of their background and fulfil their

potential than they were in the past. Thus the only enduring legacy of the Thatcher years was that while the rich became richer the poor became poorer."

Post the collapse of the Soviet Union in the mid and late 1990s, Russian President Boris Yeltsin launched a ruthless privatisation programme of the Soviet created and commanded economic model incubated public sector. In what became the hugest disposal ever of state-owned property, history enterprises were sold at a rate of over eight hundred per month. By the time the process ended 77 per cent of Russia's large and mid-size organizations and 82 per cent of the small ones were transferred to private owners. These 15,000 privatised assets accounted for two-thirds of industrial output and over 60 per cent of the industrial work force of Russia, the official successor state of the Soviet Union.

The auctions conducted to privatise these assets were completely rigged. The most lucrative enterprises did not even come up at these public sales. These were either simply farmed out to favoured businesspersons or were disposed of through opaque processes.

Productive establishments and other precious assets were simply pawned off at a fraction of their worth. A tiny clique of oligarchs and carpetbaggers simply took over much of Russia's economy and became filthy rich. They snapped up valuable state assets at rock bottom prices. More often than not oligarchs just stripped their acquirers of all value simply leaving a shell of a company behind.

They acquired natural resources and then resold them at hefty premiums and parked the money abroad. Another favoured modus operandi was the

acquisition of majority shareholding in valuable state properties. Having achieved that goal the minority shareholders that more often than not was the Russian State or provincial governments became putty in their hands. The bottomline was not wealth generation but wealth extraction.

As a consequence, billions of dollars of public money found its way into private hands as unearned income. The result was that there was hyper-inflation, the bottom dropped out of the Russian currency and ordinary people were forced into the most extreme form of destitution. It was a plight far worse than even the years of Communism.

Similarly in India today there are capitalists who are benefiting from a very similar modus operandi. They are "growing fatter" by the hour cornering public assets at basement prices aided and abetted actively by a collusive state. Airports, airlines, public sector units, power utilities are all being put on the chopping block under a fallacious construct that it is not the business of government to be in business. The consequences of such a ill-conceived strategy in the name of privatisation and disinvestment would haunt India for decades to come.

A country that lifted 271 million people out of poverty between 2004 and 2014 is today staring at the spectre of a growing income and wealth inequality.

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The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishetewari

the US embassy in Tehran lasted 444 days, an embarrassment on a scale the Americans had never experienced.

1979 also happened to be the year in which Saddam Hussein consolidated himself in Baghdad. Neither the Ayatollahs nor Saddam were buddies of the US, but each could easily be tempted to seek US help against the other. This suited US officials like Martin Indyk, former Ambassador to Israel, who devised dual-containment – supply arms to both and make them fight. The monkey-between-two-cats policy lasted eight long years.

More to the point for the Pope would have been the after-effects of the post 9/11 wars thrust on Iraq, Syria, Libya, leading to the trek of millions looking for havens in Europe which, in this instance, was fighting xenophobia at home, a creeping aversion to the outsider, resulting in avowedly illiberal politics. True they are religious leaders whose mission was not to discuss politics, but rampaging identity politics are nothing but putrefied religious ideas.

Islamic terror, for instance, is cited as a cause for increasing Islamophobia by politicians like, say, Marine Le Pen in France. Such examples are strewn across Europe and other parts of the world. What was at fault was a one-sided media focus on Islamic terror,

fuelling a Muslim sense of helplessness and anger, there being no outlet for his point of view.

Some of this Sistani must have addressed during their conversation. I hope he reminded the Pope that the first act of occupying forces was to vandalise the National Museum, the great storehouse of artefacts, books, scrolls representing one of the world's great river civilisations.

It might be something of a hyperbole that his meeting with Sistani, laden with peaceful intent, reversed the Jihad or crusade launched in 1095 by one of his earlier predecessors Pope Urban II. The eleventh century Pope Urban was rattled by the Muslim occupation of the holy lands. Also, within a hundred years of Prophet Muhammad's death, the Muslims had established their rule over Spain and beyond. The pace of Muslim spread was unnerving. Pope Francis' expedition, on the other hand, provides a soothing touch to a people battered and bruised, having been on the declining side of the civilisational giant wheel for too long, a far cry from the days of Pope Urban.

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1979 also happened to be the year in which Saddam Hussein consolidated himself in Baghdad. Neither the Ayatollahs nor Saddam were buddies of the US, but each could easily be tempted to seek US help against the other. This suited US officials like Martin Indyk, former Ambassador to Israel, who devised dual-containment – supply arms to both and make them fight. The monkey-between-two-cats policy lasted eight long years.

More to the point for the Pope would have been the after-effects of the post 9/11 wars thrust on Iraq, Syria, Libya, leading to the trek of millions looking for havens in Europe which, in this instance, was fighting xenophobia at home, a creeping aversion to the outsider, resulting in avowedly illiberal politics. True they are religious leaders whose mission was not to discuss politics, but rampaging identity politics are nothing but putrefied religious ideas.

Islamic terror, for instance, is cited as a cause for increasing Islamophobia by politicians like, say, Marine Le Pen in France. Such examples are strewn across Europe and other parts of the world. What was at fault was a one-sided media focus on Islamic terror,

fuelling a Muslim sense of helplessness and anger, there being no outlet for his point of view.

Some of this Sistani must have addressed during their conversation. I hope he reminded the Pope that the first act of occupying forces was to vandalise the National Museum, the great storehouse of artefacts, books, scrolls representing one of the world's great river civilisations.

It might be something of a hyperbole that his meeting with Sistani, laden with peaceful intent, reversed the Jihad or crusade launched in 1095 by one of his earlier predecessors Pope Urban II. The eleventh century Pope Urban was rattled by the Muslim occupation of the holy lands. Also, within a hundred years of Prophet Muhammad's death, the Muslims had established their rule over Spain and beyond. The pace of Muslim spread was unnerving. Pope Francis' expedition, on the other hand, provides a soothing touch to a people battered and bruised, having been on the declining side of the civilisational giant wheel for too long, a far cry from the days of Pope Urban.

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**IN BRIEF**

**PATOLE: CONG WILL RECONSIDER SUPPORT TO MVA**

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC  
MUMBAI, MARCH 27

The row over the Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut's statement that NCP chief Sharad Pawar should lead the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) has not died down as the Maharashtra Congress has once again issued a threat to Shiv Sena saying the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state is in power because of its support.

State Congress chief Nana Patole said that if Raut does not stop criticising Congress leadership, they will have to think over their decision of supporting the government.

"The MVA government exists due to Congress' support. A time has come to make them understand that they (Sena and NCP) are not the government. If Sanjay Raut continues to speak against the Congress, we will have to take our own decision," said Mr Patole in Bhiwandi on Saturday. Mr Raut had said in New Delhi that the UPA is 'paralysed' now and hence a non-Congress leader like Mr Pawar should lead it at the national level. His statement has invoked an angry reaction from the Congress leaders, which asked whether the Sena leader was a spokesperson of Mr Pawar.

Reiterating his support the NCP chief, Mr Raut said that "some people in Delhi" are preparing to form UPA-II, which is why the existing UPA needs to be strengthened if the opposition is to fight the BJP.

The Congress leader also hit out at Mr Raut saying he should stop advocating Mr Pawar for the post of UPA head. Those who are not a part of the UPA should not talk about its leadership, he said.

• The Congress leader also hit out at Mr Raut saying he should stop advocating Mr Pawar for the post of UPA head.

**SONOWAL CONFIDENT OF GETTING 100 SEATS**

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, MARCH 27

Over 74 per cent voters exercised their franchise on Saturday in the first phase of the Assam Assembly polls which were held amid heavy security in 47 constituencies of the state.

Except some Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) glitches no major incidents reported so far from any of the poll bound Assembly segments.

After casting his vote at Sahitya Sabha Bhawan in Dibrugarh, Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, who is contesting from Majuli, told reporters that that BJP would get over 100 seats.

Besides Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, the first of three phases of the Assembly election has also decided the fate of other prominent faces in the fray like state Assembly speaker Hitendra Nath Goswami (Jorhat), state Congress chief Ripun Bora (Gohpur), Asom Gana Parishad chief Atul Bora (Bokakhat), Congress Legislative Party leader Debabrata Saikia (Nazira), jailed Rajior Dal president Akhil Gogoi (Sivasagar) and Assam Jatiya Parishad president Lurinjyoti Gogoi (Dulaijan).

This election has been pitched as a battle between the BJP's '10 promises' and the Congress' '5 guarantees'. • Except some EVM glitches no major incidents reported so far from any of the poll bound Assembly segments.

# Sporadic violence marks first phase in West Bengal

Didi's purported audio clip seeking help from BJP leader to win surfaces



Women show their identity cards as they wait to cast votes at a polling station, during the first phase of Assembly polls in Midnapore on Saturday.

- PTI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, MARCH 27

Intermittent violence marked the first of the eight-phase Assembly Elections in West Bengal on Saturday with the 30 constituencies spread across five key districts in the state's western belt, which went to the polls, witnessing a record number in the voters' turnout of almost 80 per cent.

Till the reports last came in the evening, the voters' turnout stood at 79.79 per cent out of over 73 lakh voters who got the option to decide the fate of 191 candidates.

Though the polling recorded a high figure, attacks and counter attacks between the ruling Trinamool Congress and BJP became evident throughout the day despite the presence of a massive central paramilitary forces' deployment.

At Kanthi South in East Midnapore, Soumendra Adhikari, who is the brother of Nandigram BJP candidate Shuvendu Adhikari, had a narrow escape when his car was vandalized by a group of armed TMC workers in the broad daylight near a polling booth at Sabajput.

His driver Ramgovind Singh, however, suffered injuries.

Soumendra, who recently joined the saffron party, claimed that he reached the booth after getting complaints of rigging by the TMC there. At Salboni in West Midnapore, Sangiukta Morcher candidate of the CPI(M) Sushanta Ghosh, who is also a former minister, was heckled by a group of angry TMC activists. He

was rescued by the police from the spot. Four persons were held by the police later.

At Bhagabganpur seat in East Midnapore, officer-in-charge of Patashpur police station Deepak Kumar Chakraborty and a central force jawan were injured when they led the troops to stop a clash between the TMC and BJP cadres who hurled bombs on each other. The injured duo was admitted to hospital.

At Dantan in West Midnapore, Sangiukta Morcher candidate of the CPI(M) Sushanta Ghosh, who is also a former minister, was heckled by a group of angry TMC activists. He

villagers of Dadra at Keshiary in the district blocked the road by putting wood logs. They accused the central forces of beating them after they protested against their alleged order to cast votes in favour of a political party.

Later, a TMC delegation led by MP Sudip Bandopadhyay lodged a complaint with Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal Arif Aftab claiming that the central forces' jawans tried to influence the voters in 15 constituencies.

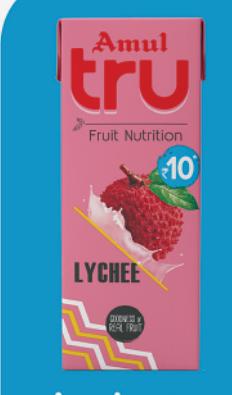
In Purulia, TMC candidate Sujoy Banerjee was seen allegedly threatening to "shoot" some BJP workers in presence of

the police near a polling booth during a heated altercation. The Election Commission has sought a report on the incident.

Meanwhile, two-time West Bengal chief minister and Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, who is contesting from Nandigram, landed in a tight spot on Saturday after an audio clip in which she is allegedly heard asking a local BJP leader, who was earlier in her party, to work for her victory in the hot seat against her nemesis Shuvendu Adhikari surfaced.

While Ms Banerjee remained silent, her party strongly supported her over the audio clip of two minutes and 52 seconds which appears to be a phone conversation she recently had with Proloy Pal, BJP district vice-president of East Midnapore.

In the evening, Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kunal Ghosh, in a bid to counter the BJP's attack on the CM over her plea, claimed having an audio tape which allegedly has the conversation of two saffron party leaders — Mukul Roy and Sisir Bajaria — about creating pressure on the Election Commission in tweaking the rules for fielding party agents at polling booths which require them to be voters in the particular constituencies first.



## CLASSIFIEDS

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**MACHINERY SALE:** 1 Ton Open Hammer, Massey Make, Bombay Leathe-2.5 meters, Between Center 5Nos. Electrical Furness-2Nos. Mail: info@kondapallyforgings.com. Ph:9885579129. (HYCL/2021/C03463)

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## SHORT TAKES

## LANKA RELEASES ALL 54 INDIAN FISHERMEN HELD

**Colombo:** Sri Lanka has released all 54 Indian fishermen arrested this week for allegedly poaching in the country's territorial waters, Indian officials confirmed on Saturday.

The Indian official sources here said that 40 of them were released on Friday and the remaining 14 have been released this morning.

The 54 Indian fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on March 24 at two different locations in the north and northeastern seas. The Navy also seized their five trawlers. Upon their arrest, the Indian High Commission here said that they were providing consular assistance to the arrested fishermen. It said the fishermen's issue needed to be treated in a humanitarian manner.

The Indian High Commission in a statement said the bilateral mechanisms were being utilised to see an expeditious settlement of the issue.

## FOX NEWS SUED OVER FALSE POLL CLAIMS AGAIN

**New York:** Vote machine maker Dominion is seeking over \$1 billion in a lawsuit lodged on Friday against Fox News, alleging the network broadcast false claims that its machines were used to rig the 2020 election that Donald Trump lost.

This is the second defamation complaint against the conservative news channel, which was already sued in February for similar reasons by another voting machine company, Smartmatic.

Dominion alleges that Fox began endorsing Trump's false claims the election was rigged in favor of Joe Biden because the channel was losing its audience, which includes many of the ex-president's supporters.

"So Fox set out to lure viewers back — including president Trump himself — by intentionally and falsely blaming Dominion for president Trump's loss by rigging the election," the suit argues.

## IRAN, CHINA INK 25-YEAR ALLIANCE

**Tehran:** Iran and China signed a 25-year "strategic cooperation pact" on Saturday in the latest expansion of Beijing's flagship trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative as the US rivals build closer ties.

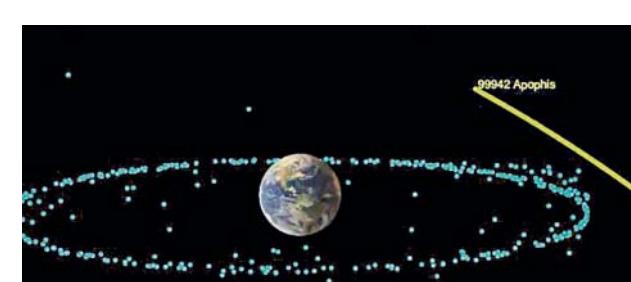
Negotiations for the deal, launched five years ago, sparked controversy in Iran last year and virtually no details of its contents have been released.

China is Iran's leading trade partner and was one of the biggest buyers of Iranian oil before then US president Donald Trump reimposed sweeping unilateral sanctions in 2018 after abandoning a multilateral nuclear agreement with Tehran.

The China-Iran pact, which Tehran said included "political, strategic and economic" components, was signed by the two countries' foreign ministers, Wang Yi and Mohammad Javad Zarif, reported.

"We believe this document can be very effective in deepening Iran-China relations, Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said.

## Apophis to not pose threat to earth: Nasa



This animation depicts the orbital trajectory of asteroid 99942 Apophis as it zooms safely past Earth. — NASA

It was supposed to come frighteningly close in 2029 and again in 2036. Nasa ruled out any chance of a strike during those two close approaches a while ago, but a potential 2068 collision still loomed.

But new telescope observations mean that collision has

been ruled out and Apophis has been officially taken off the US space agency's asteroid "risk list".

David Farnocchia of Nasa's center for near-Earth object studies, said in a statement: "A 2068 impact is not in the realm of possibility any more, and our calculations

don't show any impact risk for at least the next 100 years."

Scientists were able to refine Apophis' orbit around the sun thanks to radar observations earlier this month, when the asteroid passed within 17m km (10.6 miles). — AP/ Agencies

## Myanmar junta kills over 90 protesters on 'day of shame'

## Lethal crackdown across country on Armed Forces Day

**Yangon, March 27:** Security forces killed more than 90 people, including some children, across Myanmar on Saturday in one of the bloodiest days of protests since a military coup last month, news reports and witnesses said.

The lethal crackdown, which took place on Armed Forces Day, drew strong renewed criticism from Western countries. British Ambassador Dan Chugg said the security forces had "disgraced themselves" and the U.S. envoy called the violence horrifying.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the junta leader, said during a parade to mark Armed Forces Day that the military would protect the people and strive for democracy.

State television had said on Friday that protesters risked being shot "in the head and back". Despite this, demonstrators came out on the streets of Yangon, Mandalay and other towns, as they have done almost daily since the Feb. 1 coup that ousted elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The *Myanmar Now* news portal said 91 people were killed across the country by security forces.

At least 29 people, including a 13-year-old girl, were killed in Mandalay, and at least 24 people were killed in Yangon, Myanmar Now said. A boy as young as five was earlier reported among the dead in Mandalay but there were conflicting reports later that he may have survived. Another 13-year-old was among the dead in the central Sagaing region.

"Today is a day of shame for the armed forces," Dr. Sasa, a spokesman for CRPH, an anti-junta group set up by deposed lawmakers, told an online forum.

— Reuters



Protesters taking part in a demonstration against the military coup in Yangon's Hlaing township on Saturday. — AFP

## US, UK embassies blast junta

**Yangon March 27:** The US embassy in Myanmar and the United Kingdom condemned the junta for "murdering" civilians on Saturday as the military celebrates its Armed Forces Day.

"Security forces are murdering unarmed civilians, including children, the very people they swore to protect," said a statement released on the embassy's Facebook page.

"These are not the actions of a professional military or police force."

● **THE EUROPEAN** Union and the United Kingdom said on Saturday that actions by Myanmar's junta are "indefensible" after scores of anti-coup protesters were reportedly killed as the country marked Armed Forces Day.

The European Union and the United Kingdom said on Saturday that actions by Myanmar's junta are "indefensible" after scores of anti-coup protesters

were reportedly killed as the country marked Armed Forces Day.

In a statement released on Facebook, the EU embassy in Myanmar said, "This 76th Myanmar Armed Forces Day will forever stay engraved as a day of terror and dishonor. The killing of unarmed civilians, including children, are indefensible acts."

"The European Union stands more than ever by the courageous people of

Myanmar and calls for an immediate and unconditional end of all forms of violence and the restoration of democracy," the statement also read.

The British ambassador wrote in a statement released on Twitter that "the security forces have disgraced themselves by shooting unarmed civilians."

"Dozens of innocent people have reportedly been killed, including children," he added.

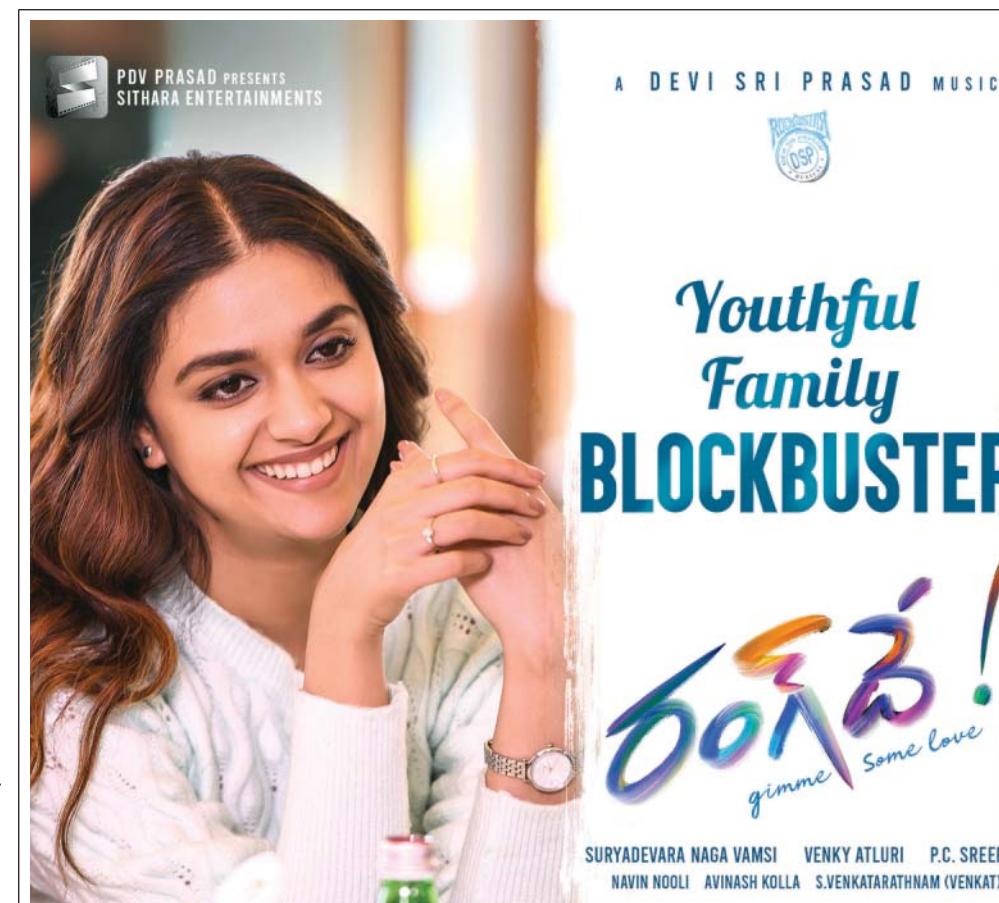
— AFP/Agencies

## Biden attacks new Georgia's vote law

**Washington, March 27:** Georgia's sweeping new voting restrictions came under attack on Friday, with civil rights groups challenging them in court and President Joe Biden saying the U.S. Justice Department was examining what he called an "atrocity" of a law.

Among other limits, the Republican-backed law enacted on Thursday imposes stricter identification requirements, limits drop boxes, gives lawmakers the power to take over local elections and shortens the early voting period for all runoff elections. It also makes it a misdemeanor for people to offer food and water to voters here in line, in a state where people sometimes wait for hours in the heat to vote.

The legislation has alarmed Democrats, who just months ago celebrated historic wins in the presidential election and



## Biden offers help to reopen Suez Canal

**Cairo, March 27:** Dredging and tugging aimed at freeing a mega vessel stuck in the Suez Canal failed on Friday to end a blockage that has lifted shipping rates for fuel tankers and scrambled global supply chains for everything from grains to baby clothes.

Shipping rates for oil product tankers nearly doubled after the ship became stranded, and efforts to free the giant vessel may take weeks and be complicated by unstable weather, threatening costly delays for companies already dealing with Covid-19 restrictions.

All its 25 crew members, who have remained on board, were safe, in good health and spirits, Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM), the Ever Given's technical manager said.

A U.S. official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the Navy was prepared to send a team of dredging experts to the canal, but was awaiting approval from local authorities.

The latest effort to dis-

lodge the ship with tug boats was suspended late on Friday, and attempts resumed on Saturday, three sources at the canal said. The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) could not immediately be reached for comment.

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A Dutch rescue team had confirmed two additional tugs would arrive on March 28 to help dislodge the ship, BSM said.

— Reuters

## China wine duty: Aus to tap WTO

**Sydney, March 27:** Australia's trade minister threatened to take China to the World Trade Organisation on Saturday over its "unjustifiable" decision to hike duties on Australian wine imports for up to five years.

In the latest salvo between Beijing and Canberra, China's commerce ministry said it was imposing the duties after an investigation found "dumping and subsidies on imported wines" from Australia impacted the Chinese market.

Trade Minister Dan Tehan said the tariffs meant it was "basically impossible" for Australian wine to be competitive in the Chinese market.

"This decision which has been taken by the

Chinese government is extremely disappointing and completely unjustifiable," Tehan told reporters in Melbourne.

"We will be looking at next steps, and those next steps will include looking at taking this matter to the World Trade Organisation."

On Friday, the Chinese commerce ministry said it was imposing the duties after an investigation found "dumping and subsidies on imported wines" from Australia impacted the Chinese market.

Wine exports to China hit a record A\$1.3 billion (\$900 million) in 2019, according to Australian government data, making it the biggest market by value for the product.

— AFP

# A well-researched but uncritical portrait of Bollywood's 'first lady'



Partha Chatterjee

review

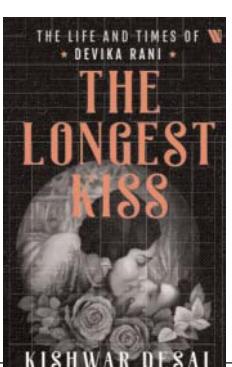
**K**ishwar Desai's biography of Devika Rani, often called the First Lady of Indian cinema, is interestingly titled, *The Longest Kiss*. The reimagined illustration on the cover replicating a publicity still from her first film, *Karma* (1933), directed by J.L. Freer Hunt, with Himanshu Rai, her husband, and of her kissing him most freely sets the tone for the book. It is a thoroughly researched, conscientiously written biography. It is clear from the start that Desai is batting most vigorously for Devika Rani.

Himanshu Rai in Hindi films, like the prince from Gouripore, Assam, P.C. Barua did in Bengali productions, attempted to wed social issues with his own understanding of film craft that could sometime lead to art. Both were from the Indian elite and got interested in cinema when abroad. It was in England that he met Devika. She was educated there because her father Manmathanath Chaudhuri, a Bengali aristocrat by birth and a doctor by profession, had the vision to have his three children Nikhil, Devika and Mahim educated abroad, meaning England. Devika's mother came from the Tagore clan, highly educated Bengali landowners

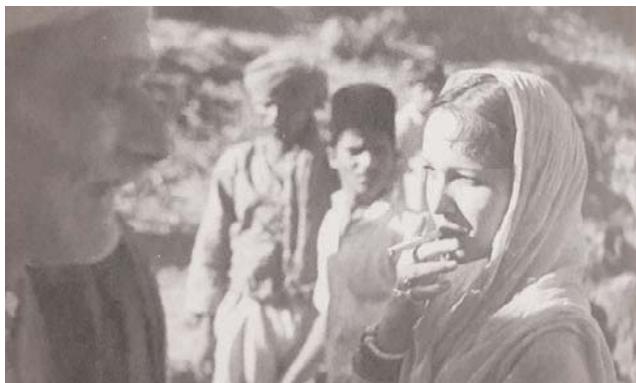
who reached their zenith through Rabindranath, great litterateur, artist and social thinker and founder of Santiniketan, a seemingly Utopian rural university.

Desai's meticulous research into Devika Rani's life from her birth to death is commendable. Her reading of DR's personality on the whole is accurate despite the scarcely concealed admiration of a gushing fan but the uncritical appreciation of the films made at Bombay Talkies owned by Himanshu Rai, produced by him and starring his wife in the lead until 1943, today seems lazy, though in their time almost every film produced by Bombay Talkies was critically hailed and financially successful. The greatest box-office success attained by a Bombay Talkie film was *Kismet* directed by Gyan Mukherjee which held the record for being the biggest hit in the annals of Hindi cinema until Ramesh Sippy's *Sholay* came along in the mid-1970s.

The book deals quite openly with her fraught relationship with her husband. Himanshu Rai in the eyes of the world was Svengali to her Trilby, albeit a spoilt and beautiful one. It was believed, that like in the legend, Trilby loses her soul-stirring singing voice when Svengali goes away, Devika too would lose



THE LONGEST KISS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DEVIKA RANI  
By KISHWAR DESAI  
Westland, ₹599



Devika Rani smoking off camera

her husband, to behave disingenuously. But her ingrained honesty invariably made her respond to the call of her own morality and the longings of her heart eventually. Himanshu Rai, it appears to the lay reader, was terrified of his much younger wife's beauty, sophisticated sexual allure and innate talent. Despite making her work relentlessly in running Bombay Talkies, act in its major productions and take an active interest in almost all aspects of production, he became deeply distressed at all the public attention his wife was getting. He would often beat and berate her. The net result was his constant need for what passed for psychiatric care in those days. Devika Rani, made of sterner stuff, not only survived his sudden death, but came out a much stronger person.

Devika found emotional, and dare one suggest, sexual, satisfaction when she met Svetoslav Roerich, the very talented painter son of the Russian master Nicholas Roerich, who painted the

Himalayas with sublime grace. Devika was threatened with dire consequences by the hypocritical male population, presumably mainly from Bombay. Somebody went to the extent of calling Svetoslav, the great love of her life and her soon-to-be husband a 'Russian Roast'. She survived all the calamity to find happiness for a long time with Svetoslav; for a while in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, and then for a long time, perhaps much too long a time, in Bangalore. She received the Padma Shri and the Dada Saheb Phalke Award for her contribution to Indian cinema and Svetoslav the Padma Bhushan. In old age, having lost the strength in their legs and become immobile, they were held to ransom by the very people who were supposedly taking care of them. It was a sad, futile ending to a rich, eventful life.

Partha Chatterjee writes on cinema, music, literature and related cultural matters. He is also a filmmaker.

## Chronicled, the incredible journey of India's shy, wry jazz king

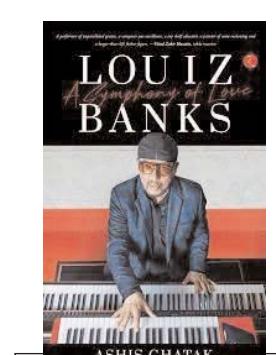


Shailaja Khanna

review

**L**ouiz Banks occupies a unique place as an Indian musician – equally celebrated as an innovative jazz artiste, playback musician for Hindi movies and composer. His journey, beginning in Calcutta, is a fascinating one. Ashis Ghatak's book is a labour of love, tracing his life meticulously, with reverence and thoroughness; his ability to accurately portray the unique musical ambience of Darjeeling, Calcutta and Bombay during the periods he covers is delightful.

Born in 1941 in war-torn Calcutta, Dambar Bahadur Budapriti was renamed "Louiz" to fit into the anglicised world of nightclubs for which his father trained him. His early years in Darjeeling where he was trained in Western classical music appear to have left a strong impression on the shy introverted boy Louiz



A SYMPHONY OF LOVE – LOUIZ BANKS  
By ASHIS GHATAK  
Rupa, ₹350

was; the book traces his journey from Darjeeling to Kathmandu until the greener pastures of Calcutta beckoned. Playing at the Golden Peacock, in the newly opened Hotel Hindustan International, Louiz came to be an integral part of the cosmopolitan nightlife of Calcutta. The uncertainty of the profession resulted in Louiz moving to Bombay to try his hand in the thriving world of film music.

Holding his own musically amongst Indian classical musicians too, Louiz Banks was an integral part of the world of playback film music. He worked mainly for R.D. Burman (Banks terms him the "Mozart of India"), Laxmikant Pyarelal, then Bappi Lahiri, till around the early 1990s. He also composed music for films, and later for theatre productions. In the same period, his love for jazz remained; he

formed a jazz fusion band entitled Jazz Yatra Sestet. Quoting Louiz, "the new band gave me international exposure". This group was later renamed Sangam. Though the band only lasted a few years, they toured Europe with about 60 concerts; a later, 1990s avatar was the band Silk (named after Shankar, Sivamani, Sridhar, India, Louiz and Karl Peters). In the 2000s, Banks joined the band Cross

Currents; his has an admirable ability to remain relevant musically amongst a younger generation. But perhaps the biggest success financially for Louiz Banks was in the world of advertisements, including the immortal "Mile sur mera tumhara". Banks' unique ability in this arena is verbalised thus: "Unlike many Indian classical maestros Louiz could project his music... he could mould his music into a variety of forms. He understood where the music was coming from, what he needed to change and what after effects it was going to have in terms of musical communication." He was also prolific; sometimes making five jingles a day, yet never being repetitive. On this, Louiz says "I learnt the ability to erase everything that I did and get on to the next project."

The book is written in an anecdotal breezy style; music aficionados will enjoy the trivia on RD Burman's love for chillies and chess, and Banks jamming with the great Dizzy Gillespie in Washington. Banks is portrayed as a simple, self-effacing man with a wry sense of

humour, with his feet firmly on the ground. His struggle is awe inspiring "I had to carry the piano and climb up and down three storeys in the morning and evening." Acclaimed by such diverse musicians as Ustad Zakir Hussain (incidentally, he has written a heartfelt foreword to the book) Shankar Mahadevan, and Braz Gonsalves, Louiz Banks straddled and ruled several different worlds with ease.

The book's ponderous attention to detail, and unusual use of words detract from the overall pleasure one derives from it. Referring to Zakir Hussain as Pandit not Ustad; mistakenly calling the band Shakti's violinist L. Srinivas instead of L. Shankar should have been avoided. But overall; these are tiny irritants; the book is a must read for anyone interested in India's non classical musical history from about the 1960s to date; the book is not confined to Louiz Banks' journey.

Shailaja Khanna writes on music, musicians and matters of music

## Cleverly imagined and deftly told, Sylvia wears pain lightly



Aditi Sriram

review

**M**aithreyi Karnoor is unafraid of tragedy. From the opening pages of her debut novel *Sylvia: Distant Avuncular Ends*, the reader is confronted with accidents, deaths, estrangement and amputations. Yet, Karnoor's style is light. Life is tough, she seems to be saying underneath a parade of plotlines, but don't try to make sense of it all; that would only produce a fantastical, cyclical, run-on story.

*Sylvia* is Karnoor's illustration of this philosophy. Divided into two parts, the novel introduces several characters, all uniquely damaged, trying to make their way through the world. Together, they take on the shape of a strange, multi-headed beast.

Part I is a novella about a man who moves to Goa after having grown up in Tanzania and the UK. Ethnically Goan, he has returned to his ancestral soil as a foreigner. It is only when he finds a baobab tree

looking. The final scene is wrenching, but sweet, too. In this way, the sixty-odd pages fly by.

Part II is double the length of Part I, but sliced into



SYLVIA: DISTANT AVUNCULAR ENDS  
By MAITHREYI KARNOOR  
Westland, ₹499

shorter chapters. Tragedy persists like a sunrise: routine, but vivid enough to make you stop and stare. A mother commits suicide after having her baby; a hapless girl is possessed by a mutton-devouring spirit; another is assaulted by a truck driver; another writes apologetic poetry about her abusive husband. One of these is Sylvia, but Karnoor does not make it obvious. Unlike Part I, Sylvia's life advances haphazardly in this section, always amidst a crowd of characters who are tangentially connected to her. In fact, readers meet Bhaubaab only fleetingly in Part II, and Lakshmi never again.

The result is a mosaic, colourful but cluttered. While the shorter chapters delve into a range of character psyches, it's not clear why Part II has been arranged this way. Reading these stories feels like viewing a series of unrelated Polaroid photos: just as one visual starts to come into focus, the next photograph is presented, still not fully developed. The brief references to Sylvia make the reader feel like we should be keeping track of all the connections that Karnoor is setting up, which becomes distracting. Will they help us understand the novel better? Is there a twist lying in wait, like the snake in Bhaubaab's shed? Karnoor doesn't provide any answers directly, but all of her characters allude to a life that is unfortunate and unknown. In the words of one character, trying to describe his wife's state of mind "is just a way of putting labels on things that cannot be known – as paying obeisance to the end of

human knowledge: defining from the outside the dark, mysterious spaces of human minds that cannot be breached" (161).

But *Sylvia* is entrenched in a physical world, and not just a psychic one. The Goan settler subculture she describes is real and authentic; her WhatsApp group scenes are witty; and her urban-turned-farmer characters are appropriately fly-and-sweat-ridged. These vignettes almost compensate for *Sylvia* lurking in the shadows of the second half of the book. Almost, because Karnoor has the talent to have retained her onstage to narrate this fantastical, cyclical, run-on

Aditi Sriram teaches writing at Ashoka University and has authored Beyond the Boulevard: A Short Biography of Pondicherry

The beauty of the ampersand & other keyboard symbols



Tom Hodgkinson  
review

This is such a great idea: a book with one short essay per punctuation mark or typographical symbol. Of course, our commas, ampersands and exclamation marks all come from somewhere; all were invented at some point or another and their stories are ever-changing. Computer coders, for example, have recently moved previously unsung but elegant marks such as the hashtag and the 'at' sign back to centre stage.

Claire Cock-Starkey is a confident and likeable host and makes a witty crack about her own surname in her essay on the hyphen. She somehow elevates what could have been a nerdy primer into something grander, and at various moments the book becomes meditative, poetic, philosophical and funny, as well as scholarly.

There is much to enjoy. The strangely named and beautifully shaped ampersand, we're told, evolved from the Latin 'et'. It is strictly called a 'glyph', and Cock-Starkey reveals that in the 18th century it was honoured with the 27th place in the alphabet. As for its weird name, it derives from the phrase 'and per se', used by poor 18th-century children when reciting the alphabet, *per se* meaning 'standing on its own'. It became an official word in 1837.

Many punctuation marks were invented by the ancient Greeks, evolved by the medevials and fixed by the early printers. The colon, for example, which means 'limb', was invented by Aristophanes of Byzantium — not the playwright, but a librarian. It originally looked like a full stop and was intended to mark a breathing space between sections of text for the purposes of reading out loud. The great seventh-century linguist Isidore of Seville then decided on a three dot system for different lengths of pause: low dot for short pause, middle dot for medium pause, high dot for long pause. A variety of competing ideas were used by different orders of monks in the Middle Ages and Cock-Starkey says it was Caxton who ended the chaos by coming up with the slash, colon and full stop.

The semi-colon is a funny fellow. It was invented by a Venetian printer called Aldus Manutius in 1494 for editions of Dante and Erasmus. He adapted it from a bit of musical notation called the *punctus versus*, and it was Ben Jonson who really made sure it stuck by including it in his 1640 style guide, *The English Grammar*. In the 18th and 19th centuries writers went mad for it and in 1837 two rival French legal experts fought a duel over its use: one favoured the semicolon to end a certain passage, the other a colon. The semicolon supporter was wounded in the arm by the apologist for the colon. Today I still find it an impressive piece of punctuation and young people would be well advised to use it in emails in order to impress their bosses.

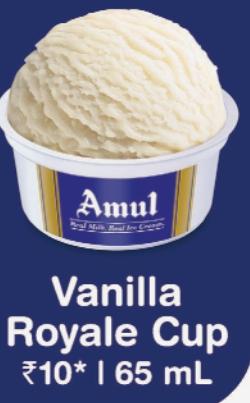
The author has made great efforts to bring things up to date and has unearthed fascinating stories about the guy at Twitter who brought back the hashtag, and the inner workings of the committees which set emojis. However, she occasionally falls into the trap of writing about contemporary fads in order to appear with-it, and thus dignifies a mere craze. For example, the use of multiple brackets as hugs or the triple bracket as a sign of anti-anti-Semites are surely already dead.

Some sections are sad. Take, for example, the sorry tale of the interrobang. This mark is actually quite a good idea. It's a cross between an exclamation mark and a question mark and was invented in 1962 by an ad man called Martin K. Speckter. It was doing well and in 1968 even made it on to some Remington typewriters, a true sign of success. But in the 1970s it faded away, and though we've told it's still used in computer programming, it looks likely that the 'plethora of emojis at our fingertips', as the author puts it, will consign this potentially useful glyph to obscurity.

For a book about keyboard symbols, it's a real shame that the marks themselves are horribly reproduced in a washed-out grey colour. But it's a lovely read, full of fun and fascinating facts; a book to be kept by the bedside and consulted on a regular basis.

By arrangement with the Spectator

Amul



Vanilla Royale Cup

₹10\* | 65 mL



Probiotic Choco Pop

₹5\* | 18 mL



Cookie Sub

₹20\* | 80 mL



Duetz Mango

₹15\* | 60 mL



Tricone Belgian Chocolate

₹40\* | 120 mL



Epic

Strawberry Twist

₹45\* | 80 mL



Sundae

Strawberry Magic

₹160\* | 1 L



Pan Nawabi

Tub

₹185\* | 1 L

1556347

**SHORT TAKES**  
**Maiden I-League title for Kerala**

Kolkat: Gokulam Kerala FC on Saturday clinched their maiden I-League title in spectacular fashion as they came back from a goal down to beat TRAU 4-1 in the final match of the season here.

Bidyashagar Singh's 23rd minute strike did little to stop the Gokulam juggernaut as goals by Sharif Mohamed (69th), Emill Benny (74th), Dennis Antwi (77th) and Mohammad Rashid (90+6) handed them the trophy.

With Churchill Brothers winning 3-2 against Punjab FC in the day's other match held simultaneously at another venue here,

Gokulam shared points (29) with the Goan side but were crowned champions on head-to-head record. — PTI

**Verstappen takes Bahrain GP pole**

Sakhir: Red Bull's Max Verstappen took a superb pole position for the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix on Saturday and will start the race immediately ahead of Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton.

Verstappen earned his fourth career pole to deny Hamilton his 99th, edging out the world champion by .39 seconds on his final attempt.

Hamilton's teammate Valtteri Bottas was .59 behind Verstappen in third, while Charles Leclerc qualified in an encouraging fourth for Ferrari.

Verstappen clinched the season-ending Abu Dhabi last December from pole and now goes for the 11th win of his career. Hamilton sees a record-extending 96th win.

— AP

**Medvedev, Osaka through in Miami**

Miami: Daniil Medvedev celebrated his rise to second in the world with a seamless entry into the Miami Open on Friday, trouncing Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun in less than an hour. Russia's Medvedev needed just 56 minutes to subdue Lu 6-2, 6-2, firing nine aces with just one double fault as he advanced to a third-round meeting with Australian Alexei Popyrin, a 6-4, 6-2, winner over 30th-seeded American Reilly Opelka.

Women's world No. 2 Naomi Osaka had a tougher time, but conquered her nerves in her first match since winning the Australian Open to beat Aussie Ajla Tomljanovic 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.

Men's third seed Alexander Zverev became the biggest upset victim, falling 1-6, 6-3, 6-1 to 83rd-ranked Finn Emil Ruusuvuori. — AFP

**Hyd vs RR in hockey final**

Hyderabad: Hyderabad set up the final against Ranga Reddy in the 5th Senior Inter-District Women's Hockey Tournament being played at the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad. In the first semifinal, Hyderabad defeated Medchal 5-0 via goals scored by T. Anjali (2), Meenakshi (2) and Sneha (1). In the other semi, Ranga Reddy beat Nizamabad by a solitary goal scored by R. Srilatha.

**Another one-run win for Yadadri**

Hyderabad: Yadadri and Vikarabad emerged victorious in the Telangana Cricket Association's U-19 Inter Districts West-Central Zone tournament at IOC Grounds in Gajwel.

Yadadri eked out yet another one-run win as they contained Medchal to 134 thanks to top score from Kranti (4/25) while Yuvaraj (4/30) bowled out Vikarabad to a 10-run victory against Siddipet.

**Brief scores**

■ Yadadri 135/9 in 20 overs (Kranti 40, Venu 32, Gowtham Kumar 4/22) bt Medchal 134/9 in 20 overs (Manne Sourav 55, Kranti 4/25).

■ Vikarabad 160 in 25 overs (Kalyan Pavar 42, Amaan 31, Ashraf 2/14, K. Mohan Sai 2/17) bt Siddipet 150 in 24.5 overs (K. Mohan Sai 56, Md Nazimuddin 24, Yuvaraj 4/30).

**Live on TV**

**CRICKET**

India vs England: Third ODI from 1.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

**FOOTBALL**

European Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup: Kazakhstan vs France from 6.30 pm on Sony Ten 2

**FORMULA ONE**

Bahrain Grand Prix: Race from 8.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

# DECODING DECIDER

India, England look to end series on high in winner-takes-all game

Pune, March 27: Indian cricket team may like to revisit its 50-over template while picking up pieces from the Friday carnage with an aim to complete a hat-trick of series wins against England in the third and final ODI here on Sunday.

On batting belts that's been on offer at the Gahunge Stadium, England hit an astounding 20 sixes in a 337-run chase which became a cakewalk, thanks to impetuous bowling from spinners Kuldeep Yadav and Krunal Pandya.

Never before has captain Virat Kohli missed Ravindra Jadeja as much as he would have on Friday when Jonny Bairstow and Ben Stokes took the mickey out of India's left-arm wrist and orthodox spinners.

In the bowling department, Kuldeep scripted an unwanted record when he conceded 8 sixes, most by an Indian bowler. He leaked 84 runs in the second game after giving 64 runs in the first. And, so did Krunal Pandya, who gave 72 runs in six overs with an embarrassing average of 12 per over.

So, in all probability, the duo could be replaced by leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal and Washington Sundar, who can also chip in with the bat, if needed.

From team's perspective, it would be impossible to ignore Yuzvendra Chahal's inclusion in the playing XI even though the Haryana leg-spinners hasn't been in the best of forms.

Pandya senior would still make it to the team because of his batting skills but the apology of left-arm spin has certainly ensured that he won't be considered as a long term option.

In terms of batting, a total of 337 is certainly not bad by any standards but perhaps India can now look to have strategic shift in terms of innings building process.

The Men In Blue are the only team that always believes in accelerating in the last 15 overs, a template that was set by their illustrious former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

It has worked on most occasions but of late, England with a world title has shown the world that attacking up front on batting tracks is the way forward.

— PTI



India captain Virat Kohli (left) congratulates England's Jonny Bairstow after the second ODI at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune on Friday.

## TEJASWANI, SIDHU SHOOT MIXED GOLD

New Delhi, March 27: India's Vijayveer Sidhu and Tejaswani claimed the gold medal in the 25m rapid fire pistol mixed team event to extend the country's dominant run in the ISSF World Cup here on Saturday.

In an all-Indian gold medal match, Sidhu and Tejaswani comfortably beat the duo of Gurpreet Singh and Ashok Abhidnya Patil 9-1 at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

In the Qualification 2, Gurpreet and Patil finished at the top with a total score of 370 while the team of 16-year-old Tejaswani and 18-year-old Sidhu aggregated 368.

On Friday, Sidhu won the individual silver medal in the 25 rapid fire pistol event ahead of Anish Bhanwala and Gurpreet.

However, the Indian pair of Kynan Chenai and Shreyasi Singh missed out on a podium finish as they settled for the fourth place in the trap mixed team final.

The home team lost to Turkey's Safiye Sariturk and Yavuz Ilman 33-38.

Kynan, who finished fourth in the individual men's trap on Friday, began badly but improved as the mixed final progressed, even as Shreyasi too missed a few shots while finding the target on other occasions.

— PTI



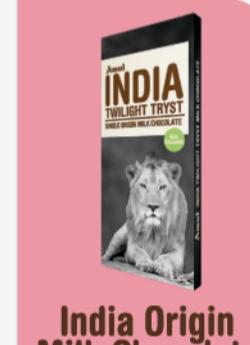
Milk Chocolate  
150 g | ₹ 100\*



55% Dark Chocolate  
150 g | ₹ 100\*



Fruit 'N' Nut  
55% Dark Chocolate  
150 g | ₹ 100\*



Gade Ishanth Reddy

## PRAKASH, GOPI, REUBEN AND ISHANTH SHINE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, MARCH 27

Gnana Prakash, Navdeep, Reuben Paul, Gopi Krishna Reddy and Gade Ishanth Reddy led the performers in Saturday's action at the Hyderabad Cricket Association's one-day league matches.

In a two-day league match, Nizam College overhauled a lowly target of 109 set by Hyderabad Public School, Begumpet, and cantered to a seven-wicket victory.

In one-day league matches, M. L. Jaisimha rode on a scintillating century from Prakash (112) and Gopi (105) and cruised to a 41-run win against Royal CC.

Meanwhile, Victory CC's trios of Navdeep (110), Reuben (108) and Ishanth (5/16) ran riot to guide their side to a one-wicket victory against Roshanara.

**Brief scores:**

### TWO-DAY LEAGUE

■ HPS B 108 in 49.5 overs (K. Anirudh 3/31) lost to Nizam College 113/3 in 26.1 overs (K. Akhil Kumar 36, Roshan Reddy 48). Points: Nizam College 5, HPS 0.

■ M. L. Jaisimha CC 311/6 in 45 overs (Gopi Krishna Reddy 105, Gnana Prakash 112, C. Rohit Reddy 54, Kiran 3/47) bt Royal CC 270/9 in 44.3 overs (Vineeth 76, Srinivas Karthik 34, Gopi Krishna Reddy 4/24).

■ Roshanara CC 235 in 42.1 overs (Om Prakash 68, Pavan Kumar 66, Prateesh Rawani 39, Gade Ishanth Reddy 5/16) lost to Victory CC 237/0 (Reuben Paul 108 n.o., Navdeep 110 n.o.)

■ Akshit CC 119 in 33 overs (Aman 4/24) lost to Picket CC 121/3 in 29.2 overs (Vivek 43 n.o.).

— PTI



Peru Origin  
55% Dark Chocolate  
125 g | ₹ 150\*



Chocolate Syrup  
650 g | ₹ 140\*



Energy Bar  
40 g | ₹ 25\*



Choco Zoo  
250 g | ₹ 120\*

## Squash Challenger delayed after two Indians test +ve

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, MARCH 27

The opening leg of the HCL SRFI Indian squash Tour has been postponed after two players tested positive for Covid-19. The event, the first international challenger tournament since the onset of the pandemic, was scheduled to start at the Indian Squash Academy here on Saturday afternoon.

The two Indian players who tested positive — Abhishek Pradhan and Abhishek Agarwal — have been withdrawn from the draw and the start of the tournament has been delayed until Monday.

Monday. There will be another round of RT-PCR testing on Monday morning.

If the next round of testing finds no positive Covid-19 tests, then the tournament will take place from March 29 to April 1, with both the second round and quarter-finals taking place on Tuesday, March 30," a

statement from the organisers said.

All players are in a bio-bubble at a city hotel and they have been told not to step out of the room until they receive a negative test result.

The tournament has participants from Egypt, Russia, France, Canada and the USA. If it starts, the tournament will now be held behind closed doors.

The Professional Squash Association which is in close contact with the Squash Rackets Federation of India has given players an option to withdraw from the tournament and also reimburse the cost for the extended stay.

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