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NEARBY



Now, BPF sends its candidates abroad

GUWAHATI

Two days after the AIUDF and the Congress packed at least 20 of their candidates off to a luxury hotel in Jaipur, the Bodoland People's Front sent 10 candidates overseas, apparently amid fears of horse-trading by the BJP prior to the declaration of Assam Assembly election results on May 2.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9



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EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 5

## Mamata provoked people, says Shah

The call by West Bengal CM to gherao Central forces led to attack, firing, says Union Home Minister

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said "provocation" by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, calling for a gherao of the Central forces, resulted in the death of four youth in firing by security forces at a polling station in Cooch Behar on Saturday.

"An unfortunate incident happened during the fourth phase of voting. Some youth fell for the provocation of *di-di* and attacked a polling booth and tried to snatch weapons from the CISF. The CISF had to fire and four youth died. It is matter of grief for us. But I want to ask why the youth dared to indulge in such an act," Mr. Shah said during an election

rally in Basirhat Dakshin. He alleged that Ms. Banerjee had publicly announced at the same Assembly seat that youth and women should come forward to gherao the Central Armed Police Forces and attack them. "Di-di, you left after making the announcement on a wheelchair. But because of you four youth lost their lives," Mr. Shah said.

Mr. Shah repeated the BJP's accusation of appeasement politics by the Trinamool Congress. He said while Ms. Banerjee was condoning the death of the four people killed in the firing, she did not condone the death of a BJP worker, Anand Barman, as he was from the Rajbongshi community.

Mr. Shah took part in a



Crucial test: Union Home Minister Amit Shah participating in a roadshow in Nadia on Sunday. ■ PTI

number of roadshows in Nadia district and addressed a public meeting in North 24 Parganas, which is going to the polls on April 17.

Responding to the Chief Minister's remarks, blaming him for the violence and demanding his resignation, Mr.

Shah said, "I will resign whenever the people want me to but you will have to tender resignation to the Governor on May 2."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also had on Saturday accused Mamata Banerjee of inciting people.

Bengal CM speaks to kin of victims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday spoke to the families of people killed in Cooch Behar over telephone.

She described the incident of firing by the security forces as a "genocide", and said no attempt was made to disperse people using non-lethal means.

Ms. Banerjee said the CISF personnel were not trained to disperse mob.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

agreed on the need to resolve the outstanding issues in an expeditious manner in accordance with the existing agreements and protocols".

Both sides also agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground and avoid any new incidents.

A spokesperson for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Western Theatre Command said in a statement later in the day that both sides "exchanged views on issues of mutual concern and agreed to maintain communications through military and diplomatic channels".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## India records 1.7 lakh new COVID-19 cases

Maharashtra adds 63,294 infections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

India reported 1,69,899 fresh cases of COVID-19 as of 11.30 p.m. on Sunday, marking the biggest single-day spike since the beginning of the pandemic last year. As many as 904 deaths were also recorded on the day. This is the second straight day the country reported more than 1.5 lakh new cases.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Ladakh. The data are sourced from covid19india.org, an independent aggregator of daily COVID-19 figures.

Maharashtra reported 63,294 infections, accounting for nearly 37% of the new cases, followed by Uttar Pradesh (15,276) and Delhi (10,774). Maharashtra also recorded 349 casualties, followed by Chhattisgarh (122), Uttar Pradesh (67) and Punjab (59).

The country has so far reported a total of 1,35,25,364 cases and 1,70,209

### Remdesivir export banned

The Centre has prohibited the export of Remdesivir injection and Remdesivir Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, stating that there was a spike in the demand for the drug. Seven Indian firms produce the injection under a licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences of the U.S. ▶ PAGE 10

deaths. As many as 75,288 recoveries were recorded on Sunday, taking the total to 1,21,53,621.

The number of vaccine doses administered in India has crossed 10 crore, with 10,43,65,035 shots recorded as of 8 p.m. on Sunday.

UDDHAV DEFERS LOCKDOWN  
PLAN ▶ PAGE 10  
COVID-19 TEST REPORT MUST TO ENTER HIMACHAL ▶ PAGE 10

## New peak, Delhi reports over 10K fresh infections

This fourth wave is very dangerous: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded 10,774 fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest single-day surge in the national capital since the pandemic began. According to health department data, 48 deaths were also reported in the last 24 hours – pushing the toll to 11,283.

A total of 1,14,288 tests were conducted with a positivity rate of 9.43% during the same period. The case tally stands at 72,519. There are 34,341 active cases in the city, out of which 17,093 are under home isolation.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "COVID-19 is rising rapidly in the country. In Delhi too, cases have increased significantly in the past 10-15 days. It is the fourth wave in Delhi... it is very dangerous and it is spreading very fast." Till mid-March, the number of daily cases was less than 200. But there has been a spike in infections over the past month, with the city reporting

around 7,500-8,500 cases daily over the past few days.

"No doubt the situation is worrisome. However, your government is keeping an eye on the situation. I am personally monitoring it. We are doing whatever needs to be done," said Mr. Kejriwal.

Out of the total 11,675 hospital beds reserved for COVID-19 patients, 5,459 are vacant, according to the Delhi government's COVID-19 patient management system.

The rest of the patients are either at dedicated COVID Care Centres, which have a total of 5,525 beds, or dedicated COVID Health Centres that have a total of 82 beds.

A total of 1,04,862 people got the jab in the last 24 hours, out of which 91,099 received the first dose. Over 20 lakh Delhites have received the vaccine so far.

The previous highest single-day spike in Delhi was 8,593 cases, reported on November 11 last year.

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 3

Project execution rate highest since March 2016: report

VIKAS DHOOT  
NEW DELHI

Fresh investments rebounded strongly in the last quarter of 2020-21, with both private sector and government-backed capital spending taking off sharply for the first time in the pandemic-hit year, even as the project execution ratio, which denotes actual ground-level action, hit a five-year high.

The Q4 surge drove up the overall fresh investments in 2020-21 to ₹10.72 lakh crore, just 1.2% below the 2019-20 levels, although investments had plummeted sharply that

### Signs of recovery

Capital spending takes off sharply. Some features

■ 33.4% jump in investments from January to March over previous quarter  
■ 4Q rebound takes 2020-21 fresh investments to ₹10.72 lakh crore, just 1.2% lower than 2019-20  
■ Private sector projects dominate, but govt. capex also rebounds after a dip in Q3

year from ₹16.87 lakh crore in 2018-19.

New project investments in the January to March 2021 quarter hit almost ₹4 lakh crore, nearly ₹1 lakh crore or 33.4% higher than the previous quarter, according to the latest Projects Invest-

ment Survey by Projects Today.

The government's push for capital expansion finally translated into new projects getting off the ground rising 21.8% during the quarter, after an 11.3% dip in the Centre and States' investment an-

OUNCEMENTS IN THE THIRD QUARTER. OVER 1,700 NEW GOVERNMENT PROJECTS WERE ANNOUNCED IN Q4, WITH THE CENTRE ACCOUNTING FOR PROJECTS WORTH ₹76,185 CRORE AND STATE AGENCIES PUSHING PROJECTS WORTH ₹91,067 CRORE.

"THE CENTRE'S INVESTMENT STIMULUS SINCE MARCH 2020 AND THE RBI'S LIBERAL MONETARY POLICY HAVE HELPED HASTEN RECOVERY IN PROJECTS INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES," SAID SHASHIKANT HEGDE, DIRECTOR AND CEO OF PROJECTS TODAY.

"WHILE WE ARE STILL FAR FROM THE HIGH GROWTH IN PROJECTS INVESTMENT IN 2018-19, THE LAST TWO QUARTERS' TRENDS INDICATE THE JOURNEY TO NORMALISATION HAS BEGUN," HE SAID.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## MAIDAAN NAYA HAI, KHEL WAHI



### SUCCESS IN SPORTS NEEDS

Skill  
Talent  
Practice

### SUCCESS IN ESPORTS ALSO NEEDS

Skill  
Talent  
Practice

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## WHEY too much?

Do you really need whey protein to build muscles? With food delivery platforms now offering private label health supplements in India, we take a deeper look at this nutraceutical

SUNALINI MATHEW

Abbas Ali, a fitness trainer who has trained Shilpa Shetty, Sonakshi Sinha, and Shahid Kapoor in the past, remembers the whey supplements of the early 2000s. "Strawberry was the tastiest flavour; chocolate was the worst, but on the whole, they all tasted bad," he says, of the days when a box of 42 sachets would cost ₹7,000 to ₹12,000.

"If you were having two or three a day, you were really wealthy." Those were the nascent days of gym training, when fitness instructors, most often high school graduates, advised their clients on supplements. Their inspiration: beefed up Bollywood men.

Then, between 2008 and 2014, people began Googling for information, travelling, and questioning trainers. Supplement companies set up in India, dieticians started to sell their skills, and while glossies continued to feature muscle men, women's fitness picked up.

A couple of years ago, our approach to fitness changed once again. Home-cooked, timely food, with ingredients sourced locally, sleep, yoga, movement began to be seen as just as important as cardio bursts and HIIT. Now, fitness itself is being seen as subset of health, not as separate from it. Whey protein no longer considered an essential gym accessory, whether for endurance athletes, hobbyists, or even professional sportspeople.

Abbas still has protein powders, but only when he feels his nutrition for the day has been compromised, because of frequent travel and a hectic lifestyle. "The pack that used to last me a month now lasts for three months," he says.

### Food group isolation

Other than casein, whey is one of the two major proteins in milk, though it may comprise only about one-third of the total protein content. It is a by-pro-

duct of the cheese-making process, and typically comes in powder form. There are four types of products that are available today, with prices going as high as ₹4,000 per kilogram.

Lovneet Batra, a sports nutritionist who has worked with the Sports Authority of India, does not prescribe whey protein, whether for athletes or those who practise recreational sport. "We need 0.8 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight (for regular people; up to 2 grams for professionals), and the sources need to be diverse," she says. This diversity occurs in Nature.

If it's just whey with a bunch of chemicals, the body is subject to 'a hit of acid'. Also, she feels natural food helps the body eat intuitively.

The problem with these packaged foods is that they come with a lot of additives, such as bisphenol-A (BPAs - found in plastics), heavy metals, and sugar." Last year a report released by Clean Label Project, a not-for-profit, brought attention to the toxins in protein powders.

The concentrated levels of protein (a scoop contains 20-25 grams of protein), along with the additives leave behind a residue called acidic ash. This lowers the pH of the blood, and in the body's fight to make itself alkaline, it leeches calcium from the bones.

Adding to this, Chennai-based sports physician Dr Kannan Pugazhendi talks about the importance of gut flora not just as a result of what we eat, but also in a particular environment (the soil, the weather). "The bacteria literally seems to choose the food, recognise it, digest it, and aid in assimilation," he says. So the microbiome (the vast colonies of bacteria, viruses, and other microorganisms within the gut) may not actually recog-

nise whey protein. He's bringing its bioavailability into question – how much of the whey protein is actually absorbed by the body.

When we get protein through food, the body metabolises it naturally, unlike when it's an isolated nutrient.

The kidneys may also be overloaded, causing damage. Protein cannot be stored in the body; the excess has to be excreted on a daily basis. This is especially because the nitrogen in protein is poisonous. This nitrogen is converted to urea and moved out of the body through the urine.

"The body will have to produce extra urea if we're eating extra," says Dr Pugazhendi. "If the person is dehydrated, very likely after a sporting activity, the excess will cause damage to the kidney over a period of time, since the urine will be concentrated." UTIs may be common.

Both he and Lovneet are of the opinion that whey proteins are a result of food becoming an industry.

### Supplement not replacement

Whey protein is a nutraceutical, not a food replacement, something many gym newbies aren't told. Krushmi Chheda, a Mumbai-based sports nutritionist and former international level tennis player, says whey protein must be consumed if a person has a higher training load and protein needs.

It's not necessary for someone doing an hour-long low- to medium intensity workout or even a longer low-intensity workout, such as brisk walking.

"It's best to consume whey protein for a limited duration when you are increasing training load to get the maximum benefit.

Once you train for eight-ten weeks, muscle adapts to the load and your body does not need additional protein," says Krushmi. Food products containing added whey protein, such as energy bars or protein bars can be used while travelling provided you have an active lifestyle, she feels.

She's wary about making it a regular part of life because a number of brands are not certified by any agency or can be contaminated.

"It's not like a drug that undergoes a lot of protocols and is regulated."

A few months ago, counterfeit protein powders under a US brand name were caught in UP's Muzaffarnagar. In another incident last year, the Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra, found steroids in protein powders.

### The propagators

All whey is not created equal though, says Dhruv Bhushan, founder and CEO of Habit, a brand launched in February this year with a focus on protein. "Most whey in India is acquired through distributors who either hawk low grade and almost-expired products," he says.

He adds that the West gets the freshest, best quality, from pasture-bred, grass fed cattle. "The whey is freeze dried, not spray dried that denatures it (modifies the molecular structure)."

Habit is trying to go the fill-the-nutrition-gap way, unlike say Divine Nutrition that has products called Hunk Gainer with lines like "Bigger the nutrition, bigger the flex".

It's best to avoid whey protein if you cannot digest milk products easily or have hormonal problems like PCOS. Whey also interacts negatively with drugs like Albendazole, Alendronate, and certain antibiotics, says the Mayo Clinic website.

For any supplement, do check with your doctor. For whey, also ask a sports nutritionist before you buy in.



### HOW TO...

## DO PUSH UPS

SUSAN JOE PHILIP

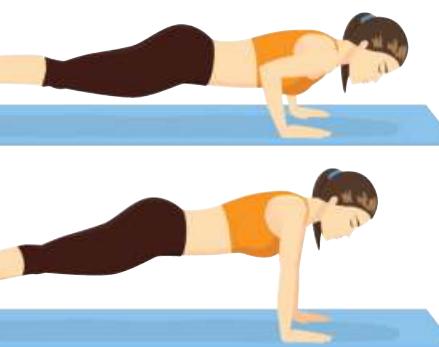
about shoulder-level height and shoulder-width apart. The fingers must point toward the ceiling. Bend your elbows and lean your body toward the wall till your face almost touches it. Push back to the starting position; repeat.

**Move on to high bench push-up.** This can be done with the help of a kitchen counter top, or your dining table. Stand facing the counter-top. Place hands wider than shoulder-width on its surface. Move the feet back till the arms are perpendicular to the body. Lower chest by bending the arms and push the body up until arms are extended; repeat.

**Bring the height down in lower bench push-up.** Use an exercise bench or the stairs in your home to do this exercise. Stand facing the stairs and place your hands on the second step. Move your feet back till your body makes a straight line. Lower your body by bending your elbow and push back to original position; repeat.

**Improve strength with negative push-ups.** Lie down with your face down. Keep your hands wider than shoulder width and raise your body. Slowly descend by bending your elbow. Drop to your knees and push your torso up. Once there, straighten your leg and repeat.

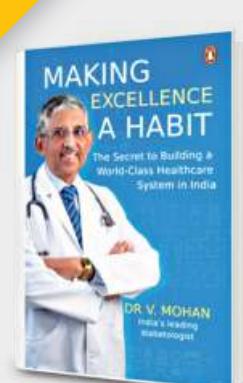
**Progress to knees push-up.** Lie down on the floor face down, with hands slightly wider than shoulder-width. Bend your knees and raise your body by extending your arms. Use a pillow to reduce the pressure on your knees. Lower body to the floor by bending your arm and pushing it back up by extending the arm. Try this with one leg extended and once comfortable, move on to stretch both the legs keeping the forefeet on the floor to make a standard push up.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

# WORDS OF WISDOM

Experiential self-help guides by professionals, for you to lead healthy and better lives

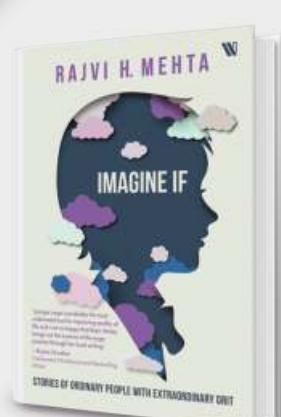


### MAKING EXCELLENCE A HABIT

By Dr V Mohan, Penguin Random House

One of India's leading diabetologists, Dr V Mohan writes in his memoir, the fundamentals that he believes make a person achieve meaningful success and conquer their fear of failure. He lists hard work, passion for what you do, and focus, as a winner's secrets.

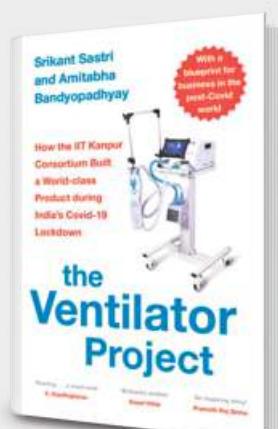
The book is a guide to success based on his personal anecdotes. While he has contributed to research, education and charity, he also stresses on empathy and spirituality.



### IMAGINE IF

By Rajvi H Mehta, Westland

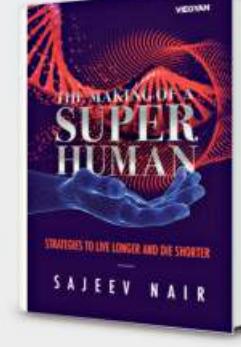
The author captures the essence of her guru, B K S Iyengar's teachings, based on the philosophy that by practising yoga, we can endure what cannot be cured and cure what need not be endured. The book contains inspirational stories of people with amputated limbs, cancer, emotional trauma and other ailments, who found relief in Iyengar yoga. Rajvi believes in yoga's transformative power. The book reminds us that our well-being is the collective connection amongst body, mind, emotions, intellect, consciousness, morality, sociality and conscience.



### THE VENTILATOR PROJECT

By Srikant Sastri and Amitabha Bandyopadhyay, MacMillan India

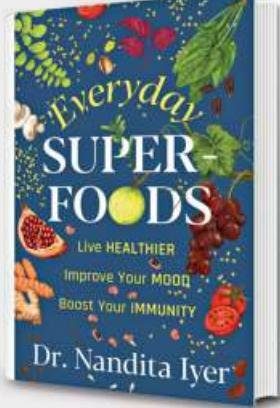
In response to the pandemic, Amitabha Bandyopadhyay and Srikant Sastri formed the IIT Kanpur Ventilator Consortium as a task force to assist a young startup, Nocca Robotics, in building affordable high-quality ventilators for India's cash-strapped hospitals. In the book is the story of the conception, creation, and success of the life-saving device, the Nocca V310 that was put together in a record 90 days during the lockdown, by 20 professionals with disparate skills and expertise, residing in India and overseas.



### THE MAKING OF A SUPERHUMAN

By Sanjeev Nair, Amazon Kindle

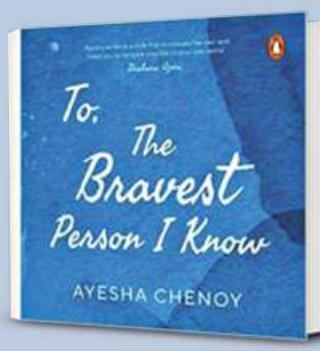
In this self-help book, Sanjeev Nair weaves modern medical research and ancient textual wisdom from Ayurveda and yoga to build on personalised preventive medicine. He talks of Epigenetic Lifestyle Modifications (EPLIMO), biohacks that everyone can do, to take charge of their health, longevity, and productivity.



### EVERYDAY SUPERFOODS

By Nandita Iyer, Bloomsbury

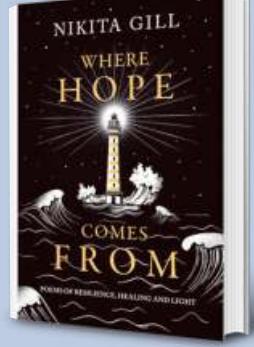
Nutritionist Nandita Iyer describes her book as a dependable partner in healthy lifestyles and shows how to use easily available local superfoods from amaranth to wheatgrass in the daily diet. Using an arsenal of 39 superfoods, the author provides 60 simple recipes to enrich the relationship with food, eating habits, mood and immunity. She highlights the benefits of each ingredient, with practical tips.



### TO THE BRAVEST PERSON I KNOW

By Ayesha Chenoy, Penguin India

From growing up in dysfunctional families to coming of age, from dealing with heartbreak, pain and grief to learning to accept and forgive, this book of poems and a personal letter to the reader, is like a guide through life's difficult situations. Ayesha Chenoy describes her book as modern therapy. She writes about fear and depression being as normal as feeling insecure. Through her work, she hopes readers understand that they are not alone.

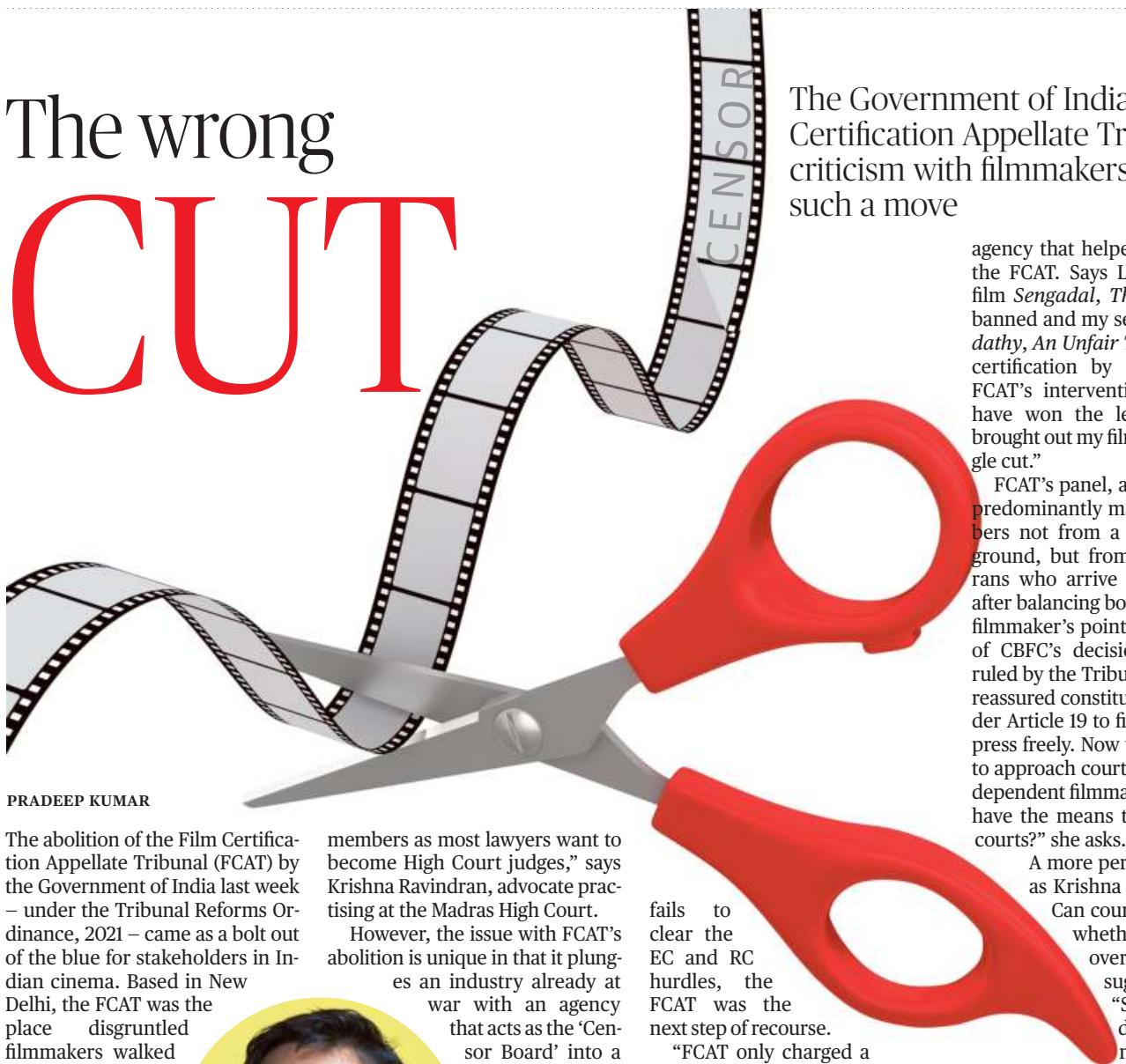


### WHERE HOPE COMES FROM

By Nikita Gill, Hachette India

Instagram influencer Nikita Gill weaves words to explore the collective trauma of people in the backdrop of the current global crisis. She takes readers back on the journey of hope by writing about the five stages of grief to the five stages of hope. The collection features her popular poems Love in the Time of Coronavirus and How to be Strong, along with new poems and water colour illustrations. For those mourning the loss of a loved one or a way of life, Nikita's book helps heal.

# The wrong CUT



PRADEEP KUMAR

The abolition of the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal (FCAT) by the Government of India last week – under the Tribunal Reforms Ordinance, 2021 – came as a bolt out of the blue for stakeholders in Indian cinema. Based in New Delhi, the FCAT was the place disgruntled filmmakers walked into as a penultimate resort to challenge edits suggested to their films by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

National Award-winning filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj set in motion the outpouring of grief with this tweet on April 6, the day the news of FCAT's abolition crept out: "Such a sad day for cinema."

**Plunging into crisis**

FCAT is only one of many tribunals in the country that were either abolished or amalgamated under the Ordinance. Legal experts observe that "tribunals hadn't been functioning well" since their administration was dependent on a nodal agency – a Ministry under the Government. "Most tribunals don't fill up vacancies... not only of the judicial and technical members, but also the staff. They also have a problem of finding good people to take up posts as tribunal

members as most lawyers want to become High Court judges," says Krishna Ravindran, advocate practising at the Madras High Court.

However, the issue with FCAT's abolition is unique in that it plunges an industry already at war with an agency that acts as the 'Censor Board' into a deeper crisis; it especially stands to affect the smaller filmmakers.

Take for instance, C Ilamaran – more popular to YouTube viewers as 'Blue Sattai' Maran. His debut film, *Anti Indian*, was recently refused certification by the Examining Committee (EC) of the CBFC; he has now forwarded his case to the CBFC's Revising Committee (RC). Earlier, if a filmmaker

**BELLING THE FCAT**  
The Film Certification Appellate Tribunal was a statutory body established in 1983 under the Cinematograph Act, 1952 by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

FCAT heard appeals filed under Section 5C of the Cinematograph Act by those aggrieved by the decision of the CBFC.

fails to clear the EC and RC hurdles, the FCAT was the next step of recourse.

"FCAT only charged a nominal fee to hold the screening for its members, and it would pass its judgement immediately. Now if I have to go to the High Court, I need to spend lakhs of rupees to get a good lawyer and several hearings have to happen to present arguments, before a judgement comes through. I will never know when my film will release in this scenario," says Maran.

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta too shared this thought in a tweet last week. He wrote: "Do the high courts have a lot of time to address film certification grievances? The FCAT discontinuation feels arbitrary and is definitely restrictive."

**Fighting the system**  
Indie filmmakers like Leela Manimekalai had to fight a restrictive atmosphere at the CBFC to get their content out in public, and the

The Government of India's decision to abolish the Film Certification Appellate Tribunal has triggered a wave of criticism with filmmakers questioning the necessity of such a move

agency that helped her then was the FCAT. Says Leena, "My first film *Sengadal*, *The Deadsea* was banned and my second film *Maadathy, An Unfair Tale* was refused certification by CBFC. Without FCAT's intervention, I wouldn't have won the legal battle and brought out my films without a single cut."

FCAT's panel, as Leena adds, is predominantly made up of members not from a judiciary background, but from industry veterans who arrive at a judgement after balancing both CBFC and the filmmaker's points of view. "Most of CBFC's decisions were overruled by the Tribunal and that has reassured constitutional rights under Article 19 to filmmakers to express freely. Now we are expected to approach courts. How many independent filmmakers like me will have the means to approach the courts?" she asks.

A more pertinent question, as Krishna asks, would be: Can courts take a call on whether or not to overturn the CBFC's suggestions?

"Some judges don't even watch movies. A judge will only look at the issue from a legal perspective, not whether a particular edit will constrict the flow of the movie," he says.

**Re-classifying certification**

It is to avoid such issues that the Government constituted The Shyam Benegal Committee in January 2016. The committee recommended regulations for film certification – a move away from the current practice adopted by CBFC, and submitted its report in April 2016; but the file is now gathering dust.

"Classification of films is all that the Government should do [and not censoring]," says Krishna, adding, "If somebody is aggrieved, then let that individual report a complaint to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Otherwise, let there be freedom of



Leela Manimekalai

expression; artistic freedom is a must for us to evolve as a society."

Filmmaker Raju Murugan laments that this evolution, unfortunately, isn't allowed to happen. "Gagging happens via CBFC and indirectly too. If you take your content to OTT platforms, well... these are corporate firms and they need to keep businesses afloat, so there is arm twisting there as well. There is now a situation where expressing ideologies on screen is not permitted. You can talk about general issues – like save farming, save the environment, or even corruption in regional politics, but stepping into ideology is a no-no," he says.

His Tamil film *Gypsy* starring Jeeva ran into trouble with CBFC, and after the RC's recommendations, it was released with several cuts.

"I opted not to go to the Tribunal because I was hard pressed for time. That is the thing when you make films on contemporary subjects... it has to come out at the appropriate time. I am a firm believer of our judicial system, but without FCAT, when filmmakers go to courts... it may take six months to a year or more before a film is allowed to release," adds Raju Murugan.

According to many, a revamp of the certification system that doesn't require censoring or cuts is the need of the hour. "If the CBFC's mandate was well defined, then you probably won't need another body like the FCAT on top of it to address disputes. Things would be a lot simpler," says film producer Sameer Bharat Ram.

Following the news of FCAT's abolition, Varun Grover, the lyricist and standup comedian, sarcastically tweeted: "Absolutely delighted to know about the scrapping of FCAT. Next logical step, scrap CBFC."

## With love, from Mongolia

An IT professional spots a bar headed goose at Hadinaru with a Mongolian 'address' around its neck. Connecting with Mongolian conservation scientists, he deciphers the story of the collared bird



**Birdspotting** A collared Bar Headed Goose spotted at Hadinaru lake ■ MS DARSHAN

## PRINCE FREDERICK

A banded migratory bird in its non-breeding ground comes with the easy traceability of a postal-letter with a 'from' address scribbled on the back flap. Deciphering the band, the whereabouts of where the bird 'builds' its 'home' can be established with a degree of accuracy. Unless the bird had been banded at what constitutes just a pit stop on its migratory journey.

April marks the return of migratory bird species visiting India, back to their breeding grounds. The bar headed goose (*Anser Indicus*) winters at Hadinaru lake (which takes its name after a village near Mysuru) usually in numbers so significant that their chorus of clucks can reduce the world's most loquacious classroom to a barely-audible whisper. After a migratory season marked by greater gregariousness, bar headed geese are checking out of Hadinaru, Karnataka.

An IT professional from Chennai, MS Darshan is working remotely from his hometown Mysuru due to the pandemic. Now, Darshan can predict where a good number of these bar headed geese are headed. At the least, where one bird is likely to spend the next four to five months.

On February 27, he photographed a bar headed goose with a colour-coded neck collar at Hadinaru. His efforts to decrypt the band by connecting with Mongolian conservation scientists bore fruit this month, as he heard from Tseveenmyadag N. of Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia.

In the communication to Darshan, Tseveenmyadag wrote: "This green color band F88 bird was captured and marked Wildlife Conservation and Science Center in Mongolia on 13 July 2019 at the Salt lake near Tsakhir soum in province Arkhangai of the Central Mongolia. Capture location is N48.126314, E99.143451. This bird was identified as an adult male, weighed 2815 g. Also marked aluminum band X000542 in tarsus and Track tag KE1916."

The bar-headed goose's breeding grounds include Central Mongolia and Tibet. There is even documentation of the species breeding in Ladakh, India.

From a citizen-science point of view, interest in banded migratory birds, accompanied by an equal keenness to learn what the bands reveal and share the findings, can turn birding into an activity that shores up conservation efforts.

Darshan points out he made 14 visits to Hadinaru lake during this migratory season, with the last one on 27 March, 2021. "This year, the highest I counted is 980," discloses Darshan, adding that the high number was sustained till it was time for the birds to start their return migration.

"There is a specific reason for that. This year water was released to the canals by the first week of March. So, farmers started preparing their paddy fields. The paddy shoots attracted them in more numbers. Usually, we do not see them on ground near Hadinaru. They just come to roost, but because of the paddy, their number also increased and they even started to feed here," explains Darshan.

"Despite this, the villagers do not disturb the bar headed geese. They are aware the species comes from another country. They are even aware that it makes the return journey after the first rain of summer. They know it is now time for the species' return journey, so not much damage to the crops is possible."

## Matters of power

SUSAN JOE PHILIP

Farha Khatun was only 10 when she first heard of triple talaq; it was a summer morning and one of her aunts was home to visit.

"She was very disturbed and broke down in front of the family. She had got into a fight with her husband, and in a fit of rage, he said talaq twice. Before he could pronounce it the third time, she covered his mouth and thus their marriage was saved. That incident was very traumatising and the memory always stayed with me," she recollects.

Now 32, Farha has won the Na-

Filmmaker Farha Khatun on her Urdu documentary film *Holy Rights*, which discusses the topic of triple talaq and woman quasis

tional Award this year for her Urdu language documentary *Holy Rights*, which discusses the issue of triple talaq. The award is in the non-feature category for the best film on social issues.

"For me, *Holy Rights* is about women's rights and of them taking control of the spaces which



**Life through the lens** The poster of Farha Khatun's *Holy Rights*

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

*Holy Rights* took her six years to make. It revolves around Safia Akhtar, a 58-year-old Muslim woman from Bhopal, who joins a programme organised by the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan to be a quasi. "Safia is very articulate and also recites poetry. I felt that her poems would help lighten the serious mood of the documentary," says Farha. The film also follows tales of women who raised their voices against triple talaq.

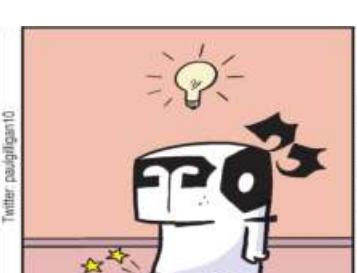
*Holy Rights* is Farha's third documentary, and was first screened at the IAWRT Asian Women's Film Festival, Delhi. It has travelled to the 15th Jogja Netpac Asian Film

Festival, Indonesia; the 51st IFFI, Goa; the Dharamshala International Film Festival 2020, and many more in India and abroad.

"At these festivals, many women came to me and told me how their perception of Muslim women changed after watching the film," she says.

Farha's first film was *I am Bonnie*, which also won the National Award for best film on social issues in 2018. "It is on the life of a transgender footballer from West Bengal. It was a very challenging project which required extensive research and travel." Her second was *The Jungle Man Loyya* – on a man named Loyya who created a forest in his village. Farha is now working on a documentary film on the water carriers of Kolkata.

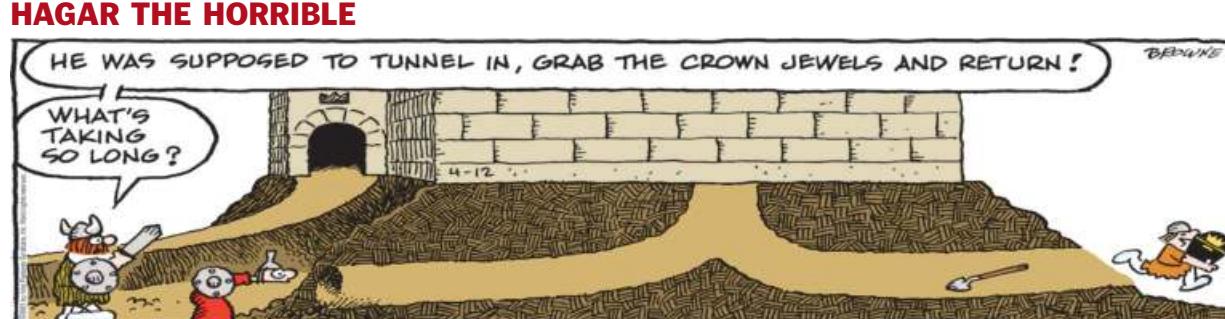
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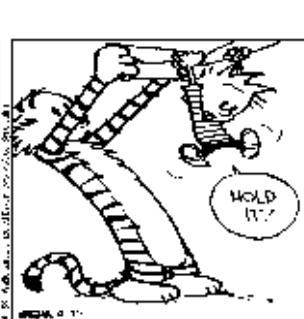
## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE









