

SEVEN DECADES, 25,000 SONGS, AN ENDURING LEGACY

Lata Lives



LATA MANGESHKAR • 1929-2022

President, PM join a nation to pay tribute to legend of music

YOGESH NAIK
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

LATA MANGESHKAR, the legendary singer beloved of countless Indians across four generations or more, was cremated at 7.14 pm with full state honours in the presence of her family, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and thousands of

Mumbai residents who thronged Shivaji Park to pay their last respects.

Mangeshkar, 92, died on Sunday morning at 8.12 am at Mumbai's Breach Candy hospital following post-Covid complications.

Dr Prateet Samdani, Internal Medicine specialist at Breach Candy, who had been treating Mangeshkar, said in a statement, "It is with profound

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE LATA LEGEND PAGES 6, 11 & 12

'INDEPENDENT INDIA'S ONE CONSTANT: LATA'

THE PHENOMENON, EXPLAINED



PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to Lata Mangeshkar at her funeral on Sunday. Deepak Joshi

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



OUR INNER VOICE
THE EDITORIAL PAGE, 8

She was voice of India's beating heart, young and old, broken and united

SUANSHU KHURANA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

LATA MANGESHKAR, one of the country's most towering cultural icons whose singing moved generations since Independence, was so impossibly prolific that she was able to do what artists rarely can.

From the hymn to the love song, an entire nation in prayer to an individual heart broken,

she was the voice of their music that struck chords, both perfect and popular: an astounding blend unmatched in Hindi film music to this day.

"Kambakht galati se bhi besura nahi gaati (She doesn't sing out of tune even by mistake)," Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan had famously said about her, in mock exasperation and genuine admiration. Lata Mangeshkar was a moniker for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Towards the end, video calls with doctor's 8-year-old

RUPSA CHAKRABORTY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

THEY WOULD speak about life, songs, studios, recordings, families — even her "payal (anklet) collection". Over the last two years, she grew so close to one of them that she would chat with his eight-year-old daughter on video call.

For doctors and nurses at Breach Candy, the passing away of Lata Mangeshkar in the hospital was personal. "Today, my little daughter is grieving," said Dr Pratit Samdani, internal medicine specialist and consultant at the hospital.

Samdani first met Mangeshkar in 2019 when she was rushed to the hospital after complaining of breathing difficulties and placed on life support for a while before being discharged.

"We developed an affectionate relationship. Due to Covid restrictions, she refrained from visiting hospitals and on a weekly basis would consult me on video call for over an hour or so. During these calls, she would often share memories of various incidents while recording songs in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



A Covid death, a family's trials: behind U-19 trophy

PRATYUSH RAJ & DEVENDRA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

INDIA'S DOMINANT run at the Under-19 World Cup culminated in a record-extending fifth title

on Sunday. The latest triumph, however, will stand apart due to the tenacity shown in the face of unprecedented challenges off the field. The pandemic rocked the run-up and threatened the campaign itself — at one point, the team was reduced to ten fit

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'Gareeb ka beta': Rahul names Channi as CM face

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL & MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
LUDHIANA, PHAGWARA, FEBRUARY 6

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi Sunday declared Charanjit Singh Channi as the party's Chief Ministerial face in Punjab, putting an end to speculation that has stretched for months and set off rumblings within.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
Eye on SC votes

CONGRESS IS facing the charge of non-performance in Punjab. It's hoping the move will give it an edge by consolidating Dalit votes in a state with the highest concentration of SCs in the country.

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3 UTTAR PRADESH

Hours after rape FIR, accused found dead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 6

A 20-year-old man was found hanging from a tree in a Kanpur district village on Saturday, hours after police registered an FIR accusing him of raping a four-year-old girl in his neighbourhood.

Police said the youth, who was also a distant relative of the child, died by suicide. Police have not recovered any suicide note. The body has been sent for autopsy and its report is yet to come.

On Saturday, the child's father, a police constable, lodged a complaint with the local police accusing the youth, who lived close to his house, of allegedly raping his four-year-old daughter.

The father alleged that his child was playing outside his house on Friday when the youth on the pretext of giving toffees took her to a cowshed in the backyard. According to him, at the time of the incident, his elder daughter (18) was in the house as he and his wife had gone to a relative's house.

The father said that on hearing the cries of the child, his elder daughter rushed to the cowshed where she spotted the accused youth, who ran away. The child was later admitted to a hospital.

In the evening, when the child's parents returned home, they came to know about the incident. The next day, the father filed a police complaint against the youth.

"The body of the accused was found hanging from a tree outside the village on Saturday. A police team rushed to the spot and brought down the body," said a police officer.

LIST OF 45: ALL VARANASI URBAN MLAs RENOMINATED

BJP fields Dayashankar from Ballia, drops 10 more MLAs

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 6

DAYS AFTER denying ticket to minister Swati Singh from Sarojini Nagar in Lucknow, the BJP on Sunday announced its decision to field her husband and state unit vice-president Dayashankar Singh from the Ballia Nagar seat in Ballia district for the coming Assembly polls.

Dayashankar, like his wife, was seeking a BJP ticket to contest from Sarojini Nagar and had already launched a door-to-door campaign in the constituency. However, the party decided to field him from Ballia, where he had come fifth in 2007 elections.

In the list of 45 candidates declared on Sunday, the party has denied tickets to at least 10 sitting MLAs. To accommodate Dayashankar, the sitting Ballia



Dayashankar Singh's wife Swati Singh has been dropped

Nagar MLA, Anand, has been shifted to Baira. Notably, the sitting Baira MLA Surendra Singh, who has been in news often for speaking against the Yogi Adityanath government, has been dropped.

In Amethi, the BJP has decided not to field incumbent MLA Garima Singh, and instead has given ticket to her husband Sanjay Singh, a former Congress MP who joined BJP in 2019. The rival Samajwadi Party, on the other hand, has given ticket to Maharaji Prajapati, the wife of

jailed party leader Gayatri Prasad Prajapati. "There is a general discussion here that only a maharaja can defeat Maharaji Prajapati. And Sanjay Singh is called Raja of Amethi and therefore BJP has fielded him," said a BJP leader from Amethi.

In the Phoolpur Pawai seat in Azamgarh, the BJP has denied ticket to its MLA Arun Kumar Yadav as his father Ramakant Yadav is the SP candidate there. The BJP has replaced Arun with Ramsurat Rajbhar, a non-Yadav OBC face. Of the 10 seats in Azamgarh, the BJP had won only Phoolpur Pawai in the 2017 polls.

In the Madhuban seat in Mau, the BJP has given ticket to Ram Vilas Chauhan, the son of Bihar Governor Phagu Chauhan. The sitting BJP MLA, Dara Singh Chauhan, had joined SP

last month.

In Padrauna, where the party's sitting MLA Swami Prasad Maurya joined the SP last month, the BJP has nominated Manish Jaiswal, a new face from its cadre.

Meanwhile, the BJP has denied tickets to its incumbent MLAs from Sultanpur, Lambhua, Tanda, Alapur (SC reserved), Rudhauri and Salempur.

Lambhua MLA Deomani Dwivedi has been replaced with Sitaram Verma, who is an MLA from Sultanpur Sadar. Sources said the leadership was upset with Dwivedi following his remarks against the government on the issue of Brahmins.

In Varanasi, the Lok Sabha constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the BJP has retained all its sitting MLAs in the urban constituencies of Varanasi North, Varanasi South, and Varanasi Cantonment.



DECISION 2022

Two held for 'gangrape' of Dalit minor, third accused on the run

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 6

GONDA POLICE have arrested two youths for alleged gangrape of a 17-year-old Dalit girl. A third accused in the case is absconding.

Police said the main accused — against whom a reward of Rs 25,000 was earlier announced — was arrested after a brief encounter. He suffered a gunshot wound in his leg, said police.

According to police, they recovered the body of a minor girl in a field on Thursday night. "There were injury marks on her face. During preliminary examination of the body, it was found

that the girl was sexually assaulted before she was killed," said a police officer. On the father's complaint, an FIR was lodged against unidentified persons on charges of gangrape and murder.

"With the help of surveillance, police came to know the involvement of the three men in the case. Later, in separate encounters, two accused were arrested," said a police officer, adding that so far the accused don't have any criminal history. "One of those arrested is the girl's neighbour, while another hails from a neighbouring village. One of the accused was known to the girl," added the police officer.

The autopsy revealed that she was strangled, said the police.



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EXAMINATION FOR RECOGNITION OF 'COMPETENT PERSON' UNDER SMPV (U) RULES, 2016 & PETROLEUM RULES, 2002

As per the SMPV(U) Rules, 2016 framed under Explosives Act, 1884 & Petroleum rules, 2002 framed under the Petroleum Act 1934, a provision has been made for conducting examination for "Recognition of Competent Person" by the Central Government. Government of India has authorized National Productivity Council (NPC) to conduct this examination;

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR COMPETENT PERSON UNDER PETROLEUM RULES, 2002:

Sl. No.	Rules under which Competency is Recognized	Qualification and other requirements	Experience for the purpose
1.	Rules 126 and 130	1. Degree in any branch of Engineering from a recognized university or equivalent professional qualifications. 2. Physically fit and mentally sound for carrying out tests and examinations.	Minimum experience of 10 years in testing, fabrication or installation of petroleum tanks and operation and maintenance of petroleum storage installations.
2.	Part B of Forms VII and VII	-do-	Minimum experience of 10 years in testing and fabrication or mounting of petroleum transaction tanks and operation and maintenance of petroleum tank vehicles.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR COMPETENT PERSON UNDER SMPV (U) RULES, 2016:

Sl. No.	Rules under which Competency is Recognized	Qualification and other requirements	Experience for the purpose
1.	Rules 6(1) and 13(2)	1. Degree in Chemical or Mechanical or Metallurgical or Marine Engineering from a recognized university or equivalent professional qualifications. 2. Physically fit and mentally sound for carrying out tests and examinations.	A minimum experience of 10 years in design, fabrication and stage-wise inspection during fabrication of pressure vessels and equipments operating under pressure.
2.	Rules 18, 19, 33 and 43	1. Degree in Chemical or Mechanical Engineering or Marine Engineering or Metallurgical Engineering or equivalent professional qualifications. 2. Physically fit and mentally sound for carrying out tests and examinations.	A minimum experience of 5 years in design and fabrication, erection, operation, maintenance and; testing examination and inspection of pressure vessels or equipment operating under pressure.

Note: (1) Applicants employed in Central Govt. /State Govt. /PSUs must inform their employer in writing before applying.
(2) Training period will not be considered as experience.
(3) Candidates fulfilling the eligibility criteria need only apply.

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BHU V-C visits Mirzapur campus

Lucknow: Banaras Hindu University (BHU) Vice-Chancellor Professor Sudhir K Jain on Sunday visited the south campus of the varsity in Mirzapur and took stock of developmental activities. This was his first visit to the South campus since taking charge on January

7. During an interaction with faculty and staff members, the VC said the BHU has to be proactive in its social work as people look up to the varsity. The V-C was told that the campus was self-reliant in meeting its water need through rain water harvesting. **ENS**

MAN HELD FOR NO ENTRY BOARD AGAINST BJP

Sambhal: A man was arrested for allegedly putting up a board for-bidding BJP leaders from entering Bichpuri Sailab village in Gunnaur. Police reached the village after BJP workers were not allowed to enter the village. **PTI**

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**Russia vs the
West on Ukraine:
What does it
Mean for the
World and India?**



Dr. C Raja Mohan
Visiting Research Professor,
National University of Singapore



Shubhajit Roy
Associate Editor
The Indian Express

In conversation
with

As Russia and the West led by the US up the rhetoric, a worried international community is watching the situation with concern. New Delhi is caught in between, as it has strategic stakes on both sides.

What are the risks involved, will it escalate, what are the windows of opportunity for de-escalation and what are its implications for India?



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5 DECISION 2022

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I HEREBY DECLARE

**SANGEET SINGH SOM**
BJP, Sardhana**TOTAL ASSETS:**
₹9.7 crore**MOVABLE ASSETS:**
Self: ₹1.9 crore

Wife: ₹1.5 crore

IMMOVABLE ASSETS:
Self: ₹2.7 crore**Wife: ₹3.5 crore**
LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: ₹72 lakh (self) ₹85 lakh (wife)**CRIMINAL CASE:** 7**SOURCES OF EARNING:**
Business and agriculture**EDUCATION:**
Intermediate (1997)**SAHENDER SINGH RAMALA**
BJP, Chhaprauli (Baghpat)**TOTAL ASSETS:**
₹84 crore**MOVABLE ASSETS:**
Self: ₹33 crore

Wife: ₹28 crore

IMMOVABLE ASSETS:**Self: ₹9.8 crore****Wife: ₹12.9 crore****LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS:** ₹5.6 crore (self) ₹5.4 crore (wife)**CRIMINAL CASE:** Nil**PROFESSION:**
Businessman**EDUCATION:**
High School (1980)

HASHTAG POLITICS



• Ka Ba 'battle' continues

As UP draw closer, yet another 'ka ba' song has been released by folk singer Neha Singh Rathore. The official Twitter handle of Samajwadi Party has shared a video clip of the song, which raises issues of mob lynching over beef, unemployment, inflation, among others. Before this, BJP MP Ravi Kishan had released a song titled *UP mein sab ba* (UP has everything), in response to which Rathore came out with *UP mein ka ba* (what does UP have), and the BJP hit back with *UP mein ee ba* (this is what UP has).

• Hera Pheri

After the Congress announced sitting CM Charanjit Singh Channi as its CM face for the Punjab polls, the AAP was quick to attack the choice. A tweet shared by the party's official Twitter handle has faces of Rahul, Channi and Sidhu superimposed on a still from the Hindi movie Hera Pheri, and Channi is shown telling Gandhi he will make them a lot of money in five years.

KEEPING FLOCK TOGETHER

Burnt in Goa, Manipur, Cong gets loyalty pledges from candidates

In Goa, Congress left with only one MLA of 17 who won in 2017; in Manipur, party that was single-largest in the last election with 28 seats now down to 13

MAYURA JANWALKAR & TORA AGARWALA
PANAJI, GUWAHATI, FEB 6

GOA TO Manipur, historical fort to signed affidavit, God to Rahul Gandhi. A beleaguered Congress is leaving nothing to chance to keep hold of its leaders in two states where power had been stolen right from under its nose last time as loyalties changed overnight.

On Friday, Gandhi was present in person in Panaji as 37 candidates of the Congress and three of its ally Goa Forward Party (GFP) swore by the Constitution, to a) not defect if elected till end of their term, b) be honest, and c) not resign or contest election from other parties. This affidavit was handed over to Gandhi, to be delivered to Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

On January 22, 36 Congress candidates had taken a similar oath before God, not once but thrice — at a temple, church and dargah. Party candidates have also signed letters of loyalty, just like the Aam Aadmi Party made its candidates do in Goa, pledging not to defect or to accept bribes.

Parties have a reason to be wary, especially in Goa, where as per the Association of Democratic Reforms, as many as 60% of the MLAs have jumped parties since 2017, from the ones on whose ticket they were



Courtesy: Twitter/ @INCGoa

Candidates hand over affidavits to Rahul Gandhi in Goa.

elected. The Congress, that with 17 MLAs had emerged as the single largest party, is left with only of those: former chief minister Digambar Kamat.

Kamat, who was among those who took the oath, said he was confident the pledge would work. "Candidates know they are answerable to the people of Goa, and hence no defection will take place."

Earlier, the party's Goa poll strategist P Chidambaram called the step "necessary and very important in the light of the past history of Goa".

Former Goa Advocate General Carlos Ferreira, the Congress candidate from Aldona, insisted taking the pledge was "not at all" uncomfortable, and that one should

look at "the larger picture".

Lavoo Mamedar, who has made his way to the Congress from the MGP, via the TMC where he spent two months, welcomed the move. "It is always better to take precautions." Asked if this meant all was well, Mamedar, the Congress candidate from Marcaim, said: "We can't say anything about the future, but as of today, everybody is trustworthy."

Goa Forward Party President Vijai Sardesai, among the three from his party who took the pledge, said: "We had to disabuse the criticism from quarters like the AAP and TMC that the Congress only produces MLAs and supplies them to the BJP. They (the Congress) have tried to create a bond which is social and

legal. Social, by taking them to a temple and church, and legal, with an affidavit... This is all that anyone can do."

It was the GFP's support incidentally that helped the BJP overtake the Congress to form the government in 2017. The BJP later dumped it after it got a full majority on its own thanks to defections from the Congress and the MGP in 2019.

In Manipur, Congress candidates visited, by turns, a church, temple, mosque and a traditional Meitei temple, to vow in "the house of God" that "they will not leave the party under any circumstance". Before that, they also dropped in at the historic Kangla Fort, a symbol of Manipuri pride.

Manipur Congress vice-president Kh Devabrata Singh said "the hope was to instill the same kind of allegiance and loyalty in party members", as exemplified by the fort. Besides, he argued, the visit to shrines "reflected Congress's commitment to secularism".

The Congress had "natural concerns", he added, "having been a victim of defection time and again". The BJP can "go to any lengths".

Manipur Congress election in-charge Bhakta Charan Das and former CM Okram Ibobi Singh were among those who took the pledge.

FULL REPORT ON
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2017 RESULTS

SAHARANPUR DEHAT

Winner: **Masood Akhtar**, (Congress), 87,689 votesRunner-up: **Jagpal Singh**, (BSP), 75,365 votesSaharanpur Dehat
Deoband
Saharanpur Nagar

DEOBAND

Winner: **Brijesh Singh** (BJP), 1,02,244 votesRunner-up: **Majid Ali** (BSP), 72,844 votes

Owaisi, Azad can wait, say those wary of splitting anti-BJP votes

ABHINAV RAJPUT
DEOBAND, SAHARANPUR, FEB 6

A NARROW road lined with eateries and shops, selling wares from perfume to hardware, on both sides lead up to Darul Milia Islamia, Usmani's father is a teacher in the Darul Uloom. "They want to crush us, sometimes they say our library is illegal, sometimes they want to change the name of the place. But we would not give in to this kind of hate politics," he says.

The local sitting BJP MLA Brijesh Singh has said that Deoband, a town in west UP's Saharanpur district, will be renamed "Dev Vrind" once the BJP returns to power.

Ahead of the coming Assembly polls, a local businessman Mohammad Yusuf said, "The Samajwadi Party (SP) looks like the challenger to the BJP... We do not want a repeat of the 2017 Assembly polls when the BJP won due to splitting of Muslim votes."

Muslims constitute a majority of voters in the Deoband constituency, numbering about 90,000. Rajputs are the second largest group with 57,000 voters, followed by Gurjars, Brahmins and Dalits. It is in view of these social equations that the SP has fielded a Rajput candidate and the BSP a Gurjar here.

While the BJP has again fielded Brijesh, the SP has given ticket to Kartikey Rana with the BSP and the Congress nominating Chaudhary Rajendra Singh and Rahat Khalil, respectively. The Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM has fielded Umair Masoodi, who belongs to Deoband's prominent Masoodi family.

There seems to be a sense of disappointment in a section of

Deoband's Muslim community that the SP and the BSP did not field Muslim candidates, but they also do not want AIMIM and Congress to split the Muslim votes and cause the BJP's victory.

However, Umair Masoodi said, "This is a false narrative created against us (AIMIM). We didn't fight in 2014 or 2017 but these parties couldn't stop the BJP."

Saharanpur Dehat

In Badheri Ghoghu village chowk, a Dalit vegetable vendor Jagpal Singh candidly asserts that "Everyone here supports Mayawati." Pointing to the poster of Chandrashekhar Azad-founded Azad Samaj Party's candidate Kurban Ahmed with his poll symbol "tea kettle", pasted nearby, Jagpal said, "Their tea will take some time to heat up."

Most of 6,000 inhabitants of Badheri Ghoghu village, which falls in Saharanpur Dehat seat, are Dalits. This seat is Azad's home turf. The SP has now fielded Ashu Malik, while the Congress has given ticket to Puran Pandey. The

BJP has fielded Jagpal Singh, while the BSP has nominated Dalit candidate Ajab Singh.

SEAT WATCH

Saharanpur Nagar

Barely anything looks unusual in Saharanpur town's Gurudwara Road area, which had witnessed deadly scenes on July 25, 2014, when riots had broken out between the Muslim and the Sikh communities. Three people were killed in those clashes.

After nearly eight years, the locals' memory of the riots has faded now, but its scars are yet to heal fully. Sonu Khalsa, an auto spare parts shop owner, said, "People who perpetrated it joined the SP camp. They should not open old wounds," he said.

Saharanpur Nagar has a sizeable population of both Muslims and Punjabis. The SP has fielded its sitting MLA Sanjay Garg, a Bania leader, with the BJP and the BSP giving tickets to Punjabi leaders, Rajeev Gumber and Manish Arora, respectively.

FULL REPORT ON
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Karhal far away, first phase will deal BJP a blow: Akhilesh

ASAD REHMAN
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 6

SAMAJWADI PARTY chief Akhilesh Yadav attacked the ruling BJP on Sunday, asserting the coming elections will be a rude shock to the government "which keeps its eyes and ears shut so far".

"I feel the kind of atmosphere and the wind that is blowing. In the first phase (itself), the government's ears and eyes will be left wide open... the government which had kept its ears and eyes shut so far," Akhilesh told party workers at Karhal in Mainpuri district, his first public address since filing his nomination for the seat.

Karhal, an SP stronghold, goes to polls in the third phase of the elections. Akhilesh, who is making his electoral debut, faces BJP leader and Union Minister of State, Satya Pal Singh Baghel.

Continuing his attack on the ruling party, Akhilesh alleged the state government had ruined the state's farming sector and had failed on its promise of doubling farmers' income. "They also stole fertiliser. Sometimes, I think where the BJP people learnt to steal," he said, adding the BJP's "transformer" will explode due to the anger of the people of Uttar Pradesh.

Accusing the BJP government



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Agra on Sunday. ANI

of neglecting the region, Akhilesh said when the SP was in power the government had worked without any bias. Talking about the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, he said, "We built it in record time, but did not put our name anywhere. You can check, Netaji's or my name is nowhere. But as soon as our government left, BJP people put their names where people urinate."

As he thanked the sitting SP MLA from Karhal, Sobaran Singh Yadav, for vacating the seat for him, Akhilesh said the coming election was "not just for me, but for the future of UP and to save democracy". "The connection of Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) has been for ages, since he did wrestling here," he said.

He also appealed to the students and staff of Jain Inter

College, where Mulayam studied and then taught, to ensure a win for the SP if they want to "convert the college into a university". "We will build a university here in Karhal," the SP chief said.

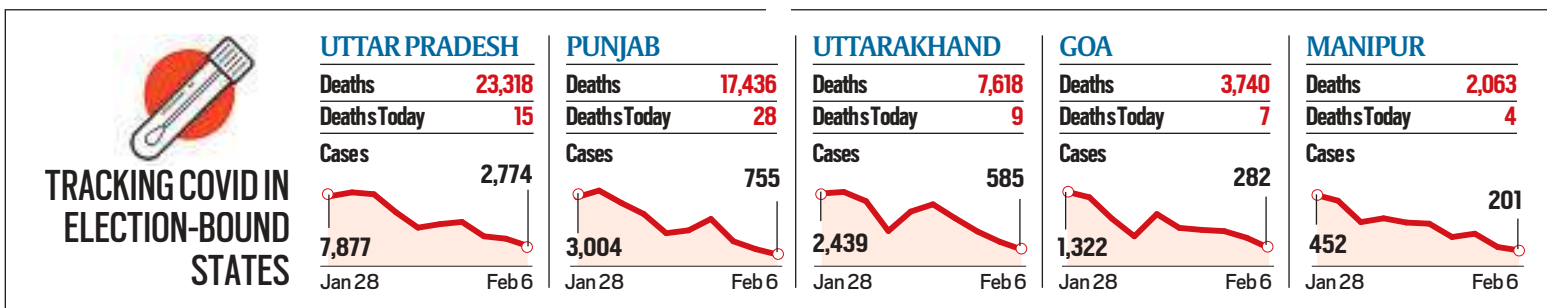
Akhilesh also promised to bring the old pension scheme back should his party wrest power from the BJP.

Meanwhile, on his decision to contest from Karhal, Akhilesh said while it may have disappointed the people of Azamgarh but he will continue to work for development in both areas. "I assure them that the way I have made Karhal and Saifai my home, I will never be able to keep a distance from people of Azamgarh. The way I treat Saifai, I will treat Karhal and Azamgarh the same way, and work for development," he added.



COUNTING ON BLESSINGS

RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary with Bharatiya Kisan Union president Naresh Tikait at the Amar Kisan Jyoti in Sisauli on Sunday. Chaudhary, who tweeted the photograph, said that he "received blessings from Baba [Naresh]". PTI/Twitter



SAME PITCH

Moosewala and Sidhana: Split by parties, linked by anti-Kejriwal cause

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 6

THE ISSUE of air, water and soil pollution has found two unlikely champions in Punjab's electoral battlefield. One is an internationally popular Punjabi singer known for his gangsta rap and a history of run-ins with Punjab Police. The other is an ex-gangster-turned-social activist facing about 40 cases, the latest being over the Red Fort violence during farmers' protest on Republic Day last year.

While singer Sidhu Moosewala is the Congress candidate from Mansa, activist Lakha Sidhana is the fledgling Samyukta Samaj Morcha (SSM)'s nominee

from the neighbouring Maur constituency for the 20 February state Assembly elections. They have often been at loggerheads with each other. But, in their poll campaign, they seem to be united by their advocacy for the cause of environment and their pitch against AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

As he goes canvassing from village to village in Mansa, Moosewala has one key message: "We need to clean up air we breathe, water we drink, food we eat, and our political system." On why he joined politics, he told a gathering at Khawa Khurd village, "When I was 23 I chose a profession (music) to transform the life of my parents. At 27, I have fame and money to give my parents,

but can't buy air... rich or poor, we breathe the same air."

Barely half-an-hour drive away, Sidhana tells people the human civilisation will perish if we continue to harm the environment. "Our underground water is drying up, there are so many toxins in our environment that are known to be linked to cancer. We need to act fast," he says.

As the clamour for change grows louder in the Malwa region and the AAP posters get more visible across villages, especially in Mansa, the two are equally scathing in their criticism of Kejriwal and his "Delhi model".

"Have you heard of the girl who was raped and paraded recently (in Delhi)... Is that the Delhi model? The 'mahaul' in



Both banking on the growing clamour for change in Malwa.

Punjab is a lot better, we respect women... we don't have communal riots like Delhi," Moosewala tells a gathering.

Sidhana's attack is more pointed as he lists Kejriwal's backing for the SYL canal as well as the abrogation of Article 370 besides his government's alleged "imple-



mentation" of the now-repealed farm laws. "We need a model tailor-made for our state, not the Delhi model," he thunders.

Both assure their audiences that they will stand by them. "I am not running away anywhere, I intend to live here. And if you give me your vote, I will have

your back," Moosewala tells them. Sidhana makes the same promise to a group of traders at Maur Mandi, saying "You can call me at midnight and I will come."

Both showcase their "probity". Moosewala tells a gathering he may not be able to change the system, but he will never take a penny. "People tell me I have to loosen my purse strings to win, I tell them I helped my mother Charan Kaur win the Sarpanch election by just distributing peanuts."

With their opponents — Moosewala faces Dr Vijay Singh (AAP) and Prem Arora (SAD), while Sidhana is pitted against veteran leader Jagmeet Brar (SAD), Manoj Bala (Cong) and Sukhbir S Myserkhana (AAP) — targeting

their controversial past, the two have firmed up their defences.

At every meeting, Sidhana says "I have a past and I have never hidden it."

On his part, Moosewala, when asked by reporters about his cases — he had been booked for allegedly promoting violence and gun culture in his songs besides using an AK-47 at a police range — says he was "misguided". "At times the very people (police) who asked me to do something, booked me for it later... Punjab Police first commissioned a song amid corona and then booked me for it," he claimed.

Despite their huge popularity on social media, the two face a stiff challenge at the hustings.

While Moosewala's songs have ranked high on global music charts, in Mansa, as he speaks inside a community centre, some people tell you that their votes are going to "Jharoo" (AAP's poll symbol). He hushes up young fans playing his songs and admits, "These polls have been a revelation. I really don't know what people want. I am just sticking to what I think is right for them."

Sidhana also faces an uphill task. A local journalist Sukh Jagraon says Sidhana's winning margin may be slim. "Sidhana is very strong on his seat but we can't discount the other parties. Also, lack of a party symbol could pose a problem for him," he says.

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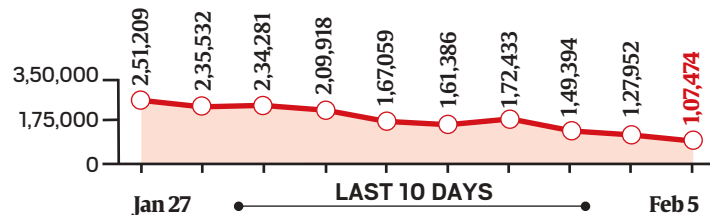
If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

DASHBOARD, AS ON FEB 5

706
DAYS SINCE
PANDEMIC
BEGANNew cases
1,07,474Active cases
12,25,011Deaths
865Weekly CFR: **0.37%** | Overall CFR: **1.28%** | Total deaths: **5,01,979**

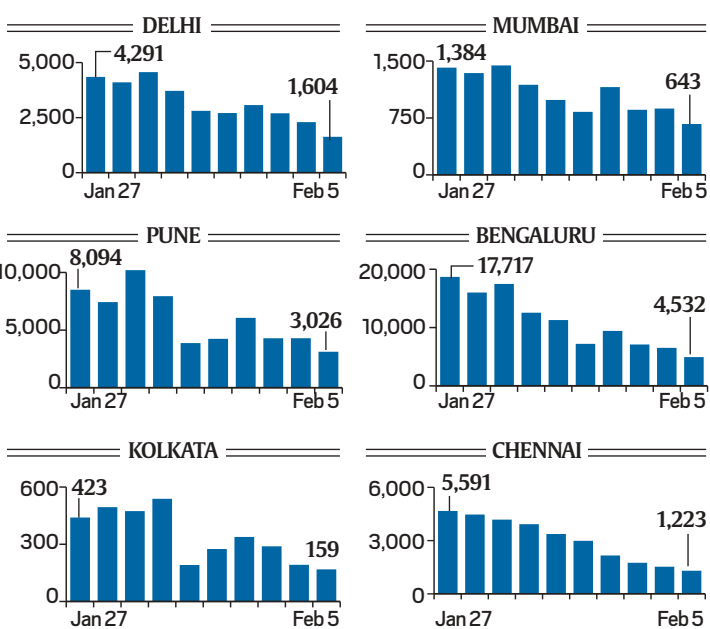
NEW CASES, DAILY



SURGE IN THE STATES

State	ON FEBRUARY 2			Weekly positivity
	New cases	Active cases	Deaths	
Kerala	33538	3,53,152	444	39.77%
Karnataka	12009	1,09,236	50	13.09%
Maharashtra	11394	1,33,655	73	10.27%
Tamil Nadu	7524	1,38,878	37	11.05%
Rajasthan	5602	51143	19	14.53%

CASES IN THE CITIES, LAST 10 DAYS



TOTAL TESTS

74,01,87,141

TESTS ON FEB 5

22,54,908

WEEKLY POSITIVITY

8.56%

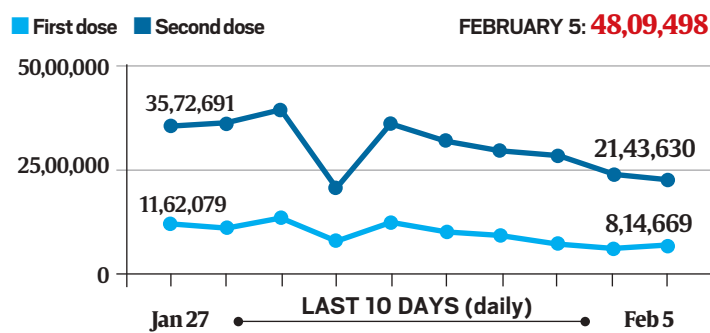
OVERALL POSITIVITY

5.70%

INDIA TOTAL DOSES

169,46,26,697

(Adults 1st dose: **89,97,98,864**; 2nd: **72,51,53,271**; 15-18 age group 1st dose: **4,92,84,464**; 2nd: **56,62,424**; precautionary: **1,47,27,674**)



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EXPLAINED CULTURE

The Lata phenomenon

What made Lata Mangeshkar, who died on Sunday, the soundtrack for generations in the subcontinent? Exploring the musician through her songs, her commitment to perfection, and the women she gave voice to



Then PM Jawaharlal Nehru with Lata Mangeshkar in Mumbai in May 1960. *Express Archive*

SUANSHU KHURANA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

WHEN A newly-independent India, still coming to terms with the bloodbath of the Partition, heard Lata Mangeshkar sing *Yun hi muskuraye ja, aansu piye ja... uthaye ja unke sitam* from the Nargis Dutt-Raj Kapoor-Dilip Kumar-starrer *Andaz* (1949), it seemed like a salve for broken hearts. When the song reached the other side of the border, the Naushad composition had the same effect — after all, the separation pangs were the same on either side. The song turned a 20-year-old Mangeshkar, a newcomer from Kolhapur, into a superstar and the gold standard of genius.

Undisputed queen

"Kambakhat, galti se bhi besuri nahi hoti," Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali had once said of her. Indeed, so pervasive was Mangeshkar's influence that generations have grown up listening to her, singing her songs, and, in the case of women musicians, aspiring to be like her.

If Hindi films have been the life of India's masses, the soundtrack to their lives has been its music. The audience formed an emotional connection with the singers: you were either a Rafi believer or a Kishore Kumar acolyte. But when it came to Mangeshkar, she was the undisputed queen, who could sing everything from bhajans such as *Allah tero naam* (*Hum Dono*, 1961, composed by Jaidev and penned by Sahir Ludhianvi) to love songs such as *Ye zindagi usi ki hai* (*Anarkali*, 1953) or nostalgic numbers such as *Mere saaya saath hoga* (*Mera Saaya*, 1966).

Through several decades, Lata Mangeshkar sang for the righteous and chaste Indian woman on-screen, while her sister Asha Bhosle sang numbers that called for sensuality. Mangeshkar had such charisma that filmmakers and composers realised very early on that having her in a project signalled credibility and impeccable standards. Much before a film was shot, the composer, lyricist and singers were signed on for the project. This meant that several films that did badly at the box office had outstanding music helmed by Mangeshkar, that reached listeners through radio, a ubiquitous mode of entertainment in those early days after Independence. In fact, it was radio that took her voice to different parts of the country and made her synonymous with Hindi playback singing.



Singing for various heroines

Mangeshkar never took talent for granted. She would spend time on her rehearsals, practise her diction and ensure immaculate renditions. Once, when superstar Dilip Kumar told her to improve her diction, she asked a family friend, an imam, to come and teach her to read and write Urdu. She sang in a range of Indian languages — from Bengali to Marathi — her mother tongue — to Punjabi. If those in Punjab sang alongside her rendition of Baba Bulleh Shah's *Heer*, those in Maharashtra swayed to the tune of her *Saawre rang rachi* and her *Najeyo na* was a staple at every Durga Puja function in West Bengal. She was a unifying factor, who brought the nation together as a repository of its culture, entertainment and, of course, music.

As films moved to less formulaic tropes, Bollywood, too, underwent changes. Directors moved towards authenticity in representation, and, here Mangeshkar was a huge success, setting standards in playback singing. She sang the way her heroines spoke, moving away from the thick, nasal *gayaki* popularised by Noor Jehan or Shamshad Begum, that had, till then been the standard. She could sing for an entire range of characters — from a poetry-loving village girl in a prison (*Mora gora ang layi le*, *Bandini*, 1963), to a witty and defiant courtesan in Akbar's Sheesh Mahal (*Pyaar kiya toh darna kya*, *Mughal-e-Azam*, 1960), to a

woman savouring the rains as she shares an umbrella with the man she loves (*Pyaar huya iqar huya*, *Shri 420*, 1955) to an emotional mother trying to fend for her children by ploughing the field (*Duniya mein hum aaye hain toh*, *Mother India*, 1957), to a young woman who has just broken away from the shackles of a claustrophobic relationship (*Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai*, *Guide*, 1965) to a young singer who's lost her unborn child (*Tere mere milan ki*, *Abhimaan*, 1973). And who can forget Kavi Pradeep's seminal *Aye mere watan ke logo*, in the wake of the Sino-Indian war of 1962, that reduced then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru to tears and has been a fixture at every patriotic function for nearly five decades?

One of the lesser-known facts about Mangeshkar is that she transformed the way Indian music concerts were perceived in the West. Her first performance outside of India was at London's prestigious Royal Albert Hall in 1974. Until then, film music concerts were song-and-dance affairs held in community halls and colleges and rarely taken seriously. Mangeshkar made a demand that was inconceivable back then — she asked to sing in mainstream halls only. This was an honour that until then bestowed upon classical musicians as a result of Pandit Ravi Shankar's collaborations and performances in the West. But it was an honour afforded to her.

Committed to perfection

Even when technology brought in changes, demanding less and less finesse on part of playback singers, fixing flaws in pitch and sur on the console instead, Mangeshkar remained steadfast in her commitment to perfection. Until the 1990s, when Mangeshkar sang more regularly, performances resembled live-stage performances, preceded by extensive rehearsals. They were communal affairs, with 100-piece orchestras divided into string, wind and rhythm sections, coming together in mammoth studios to record one song. If one didn't nail it the first time, the process had to be repeated all over again. But the arrival of auto-tuners changed the game and that used to rankle with her.

If she taught the musicians how to approach music with clarity and focus, for listeners, she was an institution in herself. In her death, India has lost one of her most revered musicians, but she has left behind an immaculate oeuvre that will continue to give listeners joy, comfort and courage for times to come.

SHE LENT HER VOICE TO...



DUNIYA MEIN HUM AAYE HAIN

Mother India (1957): As Nargis is shown ploughing the field to support her family, one hears the struggle in Mangeshkar's voice

AJ PHIR JEENE KI TAMANNA HAI

Guide (1965): Mangeshkar sang for Waheeda Rehman who played Rosie, a woman who finds freedom from a loveless marriage

PYAAR KIYA TOH DARNA KYA



Mughal-e-Azam (1960): Mangeshkar sang this defiant number for Madhubala who played a feisty courtesan dancing in Akbar's court

CHALTE CHALTE

Pakeezah (1972): Picturised on Meena Kumari, who plays the courtesan waiting for the man who fell in love with her ghungroo-laden feet

RAINA BEETI JAAYE



Amar Prem (1972): Sharmila Tagore plays a simple woman who becomes a sex worker to support herself, but what she has is purity in her music

YAARA SEELI SEELI

Lekin (1990): Mangeshkar sang this for Dimple Kapadia, who plays a restless ghost in search for salvation. The octave shifts by Mangeshkar made it into one of her finest hours.

MAAYE NI MAAYE



Hum Aapke Hain Koun...! (1994): Mangeshkar sang this for Madhuri Dixit. The voice that had been singing for half a century hadn't aged a bit.

The ecological cost of creating artificial snow for Winter Olympics

SHASHANK NAIR

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE COST of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing has been a snow-making operation by China that has highlighted the poor ecological conditions of the area, and massive amounts of water that have gone into the effort. A report released by Sport Ecology Group at Loughborough University and Save Our Winters has looked into the dangers of artificial snow on athletes' bodies and the amount of water used up to produce the snow.

How is artificial snow created?

Snow injected with water to harden it, and then treated with chemicals to keep it in place, is a form of artificial snow recommended for winter competitions. High volumes of water and energy are required to create slopes of artificial snow that are competition-ready.

For the Beijing Games, machines from an Italian company, TechnoAlpin, have been creating artificial snow since November 2021. These pump out ice particles and a thin mist

of water vapour, which are launched up to 60 m in the air where they combine to become snow and fall to the ground. TechnoAlpin has been using 290 snow cannons in Beijing, according to *The Sunday Times*.

Is this the way in all Winter Games?

For the 2014 Sochi Olympics, Russia used 80% artificial snow. That rose to 90% for the Pyongchang Games. The 2010 Vancouver Games had to use helicopters to fly in snow. The Beijing region is known to be low on water and thin on ice, thanks to an over-reliance on groundwater coupled with the melting of glaciers since the 1950s. According to a Greenpeace study in 2018, China's glaciers had melted by 82% and one-fifth of the ice cover had been lost since the 1950s.

These Games are estimated to require around 49 million gallons of water to be converted into snow. For perspective, that much water would fill 74 Olympic-sized pools.

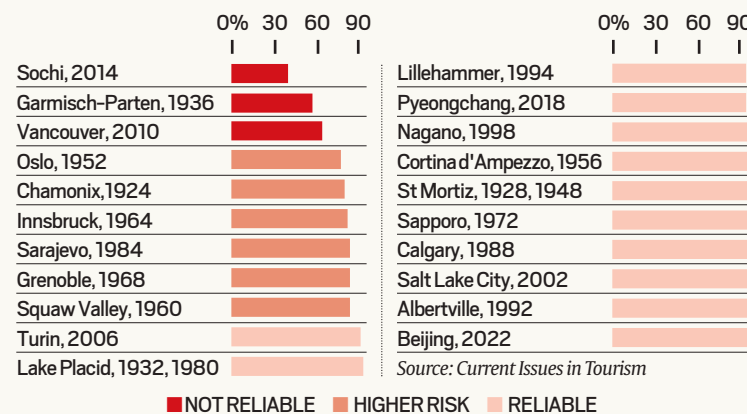
Where does so much water come from?

According to a *New York Times* report, Beijing diverted water from Baihebao reser-

WARMING GAMES VENUES

By midcentury, many prior Winter Games locations may be too warm to ever host the Olympics again.

CHANCES THAT DAILY MIN TEMP IN FEB IS 0°C OR BELOW, 2041-70



Note: Charts represent a high emissions future (RCP 8.5)

Graphic: The New York Times

voir to the Guishui river, which is usually dry during the winters. Earlier, water from Baihebao would be directed to households in Beijing. Even before the Games' preparations began, Beijing was facing a water crisis and had to connect a series of waterways that transported trillions of gallons of water from the south of the country to the north.

Officials in Zhangjiakou have turned off tens of thousands of acres worth of irrigation water to create artificial snow. Farmers have been resettled in high-rise apartments.

What is the environmental cost?

Another major problem in the region is that its average precipitation over the last four decades periodically is below 8 mm. That combined with dry weather means water gets lost to evaporation and winds during the ice-making process. Therefore, water is being pumped into the soil, which will harden and create a surface where artificial snow will not melt. An experiment by researchers in Switzerland found that at least 35% of the water used to make artificial snow was lost.

The Chinese have said that they would

limit the impact of snow-making by reusing this snow to boost groundwater reserves. "We've collected surface water for snow-making, and we don't need to tap any underground water. It has no impact on the environment," Li Zhenlong, facility manager at the national cross-country skiing centre in Zhangjiakou, told *The Sunday Times*.

An International Olympic Committee evaluation report said mountains in Beijing had "minimal annual snowfall" and the country's hosting was completely dependent on the production of artificial snow.

What is the future of such attempts?

The Loughborough University report states that by 2050, only 10 of the 20 venues that have hosted the Winter Olympics since 1924 will be able to produce an amount of snow that is capable of holding an international-level competition like the Winter Olympics. The survival of the Winter Games is based on the production of artificial snow.

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7

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI, CHIEF MINISTER, UTTARAKHAND

“People say I didn’t get enough time... I’m the last driver who has to take the vehicle to the station”

Pushkar Singh Dhami discusses the BJP’s chances in the coming Assembly elections, divisions in the party, the *dharm sansad* in Haridwar and dealing with challenges unique to a hill state. This session was moderated by Harikishan Sharma, Assistant Editor, *The Indian Express*

Harikishan Sharma: Uttarakhand has elected four Vidhan Sabhas from 2000 and, in every election, it has changed the government in power. How will you buck this trend?

Earlier there was another trend too — ever since the state was formed, whoever formed the government in the state, didn’t win in Parliament elections and vice-versa. Whether it was in 2004 or 2009, this was the trend but it changed once Narendra Modi became Prime Minister of the country. There was a Congress government in Uttarakhand in 2014 and all the five Lok Sabha seats were won by the BJP. In 2019, it won the five seats again. Since Modiji became the PM, the entire country’s trend changed too. If you see, earlier, we never used to form the government in Assam, but now we have formed it twice. We never used to form a government in Haryana, we have done it twice. In UP, we could not form a government since 1991 but we did that in 2017 and will be doing it again in 2022, according to all opinion polls. We are confident we will form a government in Uttarakhand and that too with a huge majority.

Liz Mathew: Uttarakhand’s BJP unit is famous or infamous for internal divisions. How do you see this and how will you overcome it? What are you doing to keep the party together?

Our party is united and there are no differences. Maybe there are some small differences but we are united and fighting the elections together. We have announced our candidates, the tickets have been given, our booth-level (candidates) and *panna pramukh* have been announced. Our work has started. We have always given due respect to everyone. We are all working together. Our party will form a government and with a huge margin.

Liz Mathew: The older, senior leaders in the party are unhappy that they are not getting due respect. How will you handle this in ticket distribution and campaigning?

There’s nothing like that, we have given respect to all senior leaders. Did someone tell you that they haven’t been given respect? Give me one name and I will tell you how much the party has paid respect to them.

Liz Mathew: You and the previous CM Trivendra Singh Rawat had to repeal the Char Dham Devasthanam Board due to the VHP’s demand. You have to deal with more hardliners in your support base in Uttarakhand, when compared to other states. Ahead of the elections, have you had any discussions with the VHP?

That issue was not related to politics. The opposition to the Char Dham Devasthanam Board was not from one section of the society; there was opposition from *teerth purohits*, people from the *panda samaj*, Rawals, priests from that area. We had formed a committee under the chairmanship of our senior leader Manohar Kant Dhyani that had worked for three months. The committee submitted its report and then we created a sub-committee of the *mantri mandal*, which also gave its report. Then we took a decision to repeal the board. There’s no question of politics there. Other people work for votes, we didn’t work for votes. We respected everyone’s sentiments and based our decision on the committee report.

Liz Mathew: What do you have to say on statements by hardliners such as Yati Narsinghanand?

He talked about me, too, but I had no role in it. The law will take its course, no one can interfere with the law.

Liz Mathew: Former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat is siding with the dissenters and even withdrew his nomination. What do you have to say on it?

There’s no issue of unhappiness. He was the CM for four years and is a senior leader. There’s no question of unhappiness.

Liz Mathew: But why did he withdraw his nomination?

He himself said that he will work and campaign to help the party win the state. He will go to every area. Our party is big and there’s no unhappiness.

Avaneesh Mishra: There’s an accusation that the delay in taking action in the *dharm sansad* issue in



WHY
PUSHKAR SINGH
DHAMI

As Uttarakhand goes to the polls on February 14, Pushkar Singh Dhami, who took over as chief minister just seven months ago, has his task cut out. The state’s youngest CM takes on the Congress led by veteran Harish Rawat. Will he be able to lead the BJP to victory in a state known to vote the incumbent out?

Haridwar and then the taking of action were both done after considering political gains and losses.

The law is equal for everyone and everything followed the course of law. There’s no controversy.

Avaneesh Mishra: Will you accept that there was delay in taking action?

As and when we received information, the administration did its work.

Devyani Onial: Employment is a big issue for the entire country but specially in Uttarakhand where traditionally people have migrated in search of work, leaving behind ‘ghost’ villages. What measures are you taking to generate employment?

First, we are working to encourage self-help groups so that along with themselves, they can provide employment to others as well. We are also thinking of simplifying and expanding the ongoing Homestay *yojana*. We are encouraging tourism, we have started bringing down prices of heliservices; we have lowered the VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel from 20 per cent to two per cent. We are also talking of opening wellness centres in Kumaon *mandal*, Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam, and such places. To curb migration and provide work to people where they live, we started an idea series called Bodhisattva, where we invited people from NITI Aayog, scientists, advisors to the Government of India, educationists from the state, environmentalists and sociologists. We are creating a road map for the next 10 years.

Harikishan Sharma: According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, the

unemployment rate of Uttarakhand is higher than the national average. In the last year, we saw that even when the average national unemployment rate dropped a little, it increased in Uttarakhand. It seems that the work the government is doing is not percolating down to the grassroots.

We had started the work but then there was a lockdown. Therefore, a lot of work that was supposed to happen didn’t happen. But the work will definitely be done and we have a long-term vision.

Vandita Mishra: On the *dharm sansad* issue, you talked about the law taking its own course. But there’s also the question of moral and political responsibility. You are the CM of the state, don’t you think you should have said something on such talk that vitiates the atmosphere and makes it difficult for people to live together?

It was not an official event nor had they asked us anything. Neither did we sponsor the event nor did we invite them. When action was taken, they thought it was taken by the government and when action was not taken, people thought the government had not done anything. There was no role of the government. When the matter came before the law, the law followed its course.

Vandita Mishra: You didn’t think there was a need to make a political statement?

It’s not an issue related to us, so why would we give a statement?

Aakash Joshi: Since the formation of Uttarakhand, there has been an accusation that there’s more focus on the Terai region, the plain regions, while the state was created for the hills. If you win, will Gairsain be made the capital?

We have already made Gairsain the summer capital and it is our priority. Gairsain is the centre of our sentiment. It’s at the heart of the state and the Uttarakhand movement. The people have connections to Gairsain. We will develop

it in the form of a capital.

Aakash Joshi: Your popularity has been quite high in the opinion polls. But there’s a complaint from the ground level that you have not been given enough time. Do you have any regrets that you didn’t get enough time before the elections?

People are saying I got less time and even I say that. The people of Uttarakhand know that I used my strength and energy (to work for the state). Keeping that in mind, the people will give us the next five years.

Aakash Joshi: The way Hinduism was practised in Uttarakhand is different from other states. There is a complaint that since animal slaughter was made illegal in temples, there are a few people who are doing it clandestinely and people in local politics are taking advantage of that. Do you think it was right to pass legislation on an issue which is connected to people’s faith? Do you think these older traditions (of animal slaughter) were wrong and the law had to interfere in them?

Some things don’t change because of a law — people have to understand. People are slowly incorporating good practices and older traditions are slowly ending. People are moving forward from the practices of those times.

Harikishan Sharma: You said you have been given less time; you have completed only 208 days since your term began in July. There seems to be a trend that the sitting CMs lose their seats — your two predecessors, Congress’s Harish Rawat and BJP’s BC

Khanduri lost theirs. In 2012, you won Khatima with a margin of more than 5,000 votes, but in 2017, the vote margin reduced to around 2,700. Will your constituency be a challenge for you this time?

There’s no challenge. Every election is different. They were difficult elections for me but the people helped me win and blessed me. This time, the people have asked me to tour the state and have said they will take care of the poll in my constituency. Hence, I am not even thinking about my constituency. It was only on their advice that I filed my nomination from there.

Harikishan Sharma: Do you think the protests over farm laws will affect the polls in your constituency, which has many farmers and Sikhs?

I am a farmer myself. All the people of Udham Singh Nagar are happy that I became the CM. All of them will work to form a government because they feel their brother or son has reached this place.

Avaneesh Mishra: Elections in Uttarakhand have always focused on the Army, Congress, AAP and your party are all making a lot of promises but Congress has given tickets to only

three former Army men and your party has given a ticket to only one — Ganesh Joshi.

I am the son of a soldier. There are also other people, including Ganesh Joshi, who are from Army families. I am proud that I am a soldier’s son and my party has given me the opportunity to work in the role of a CM. Our party always respects soldiers, while other parties just pretend to do so. A Congress leader used to say that (recently deceased Chief of Defence staff) General (Bipin) Rawat is a *galli ka gunda* (street gangster). When it comes to votes, they are posting big photographs of him now. Another party used to ask soldiers for accounts of the surgical strike and incite riots. The people of Uttarakhand are well aware, very nationalistic and proud. They know what people have done.

Avaneesh Mishra: Be it BC Khanduri or TPS Rawat, whenever ex-servicemen have entered politics, they have made a mark. Don’t you think if more servicemen get tickets, it would send a positive message among the public?

In our party, we chose candidates from the names that emerged from the workers. We definitely chose those people on a priority basis.

Avaneesh Mishra: Congress and AAP are promising several things in their campaigns but the BJP’s campaign is centred around what it has done, rather than saying what it will do in the future.

The people of Uttarakhand know that it’s only the BJP that has done work and will continue to do so. The other parties

are not able to fulfill their promises in other states, how will they fulfill them in Uttarakhand? They raise issues of price rise and unemployment but in states where they are in government — Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan — they have not been able to solve these issues. Then how will they be able to solve them in Uttarakhand? They were here for 10 years — did they end unemployment?

We have already made Gairsain the summer capital. It is our priority. Gairsain is at the centre of our sentiment. It’s at the heart of the state and of the Uttarakhand movement

Avaneesh Mishra: But I think BJP’s electoral promises are fewer this time...

We don’t want to give any false promises. The people of Uttarakhand believe in us and Modiji and we only talk about the things that we can deliver. People have seen Modi’s performance in the last five years.

Avaneesh Mishra: Many people who wanted to contest on a BJP ticket are planning to fight independently. Do you see that as your loss?

When you are in line to become a candidate and then you don’t get a ticket, you feel a little bad. But we have spoken to all of them. They are our old workers, they won’t go anywhere and will stay with the party.

Liz Mathew: Usually, the contest in Uttarakhand has been between Congress and the BJP. This time there’s a lot of buzz around AAP. In how many constituencies do you think there will be a fight between BJP and AAP? How do you look at the emergence of AAP?

We won’t have a fight with anyone, the election will be one-sided. Our slogan this time is “*Ab ki baar, 60 paar.*” Now your survey is showing 45-50, but till the election day we will reach 60. The blessings of the people of Uttarakhand are with us and with Modiji.

Harikishan Sharma: Going into the elections, what do you think will work in your favour and what will go against you?

We have people’s blessings and they know we have fulfilled our promises. These are the factors that will favour us. The six months or so that the people of Uttarakhand, my leadership, PM Modi, the party’s national chairman and the high command gave me, I have tried to give my 100 per cent. I have devoted every moment to it. There are no factors against us. Everyone is saying that I got less time, so I am requesting for more time so that I can work more.

Shubhajit Roy: It seems that you are projecting the work that you have done in the last six-seven months while you’ve not highlighted the work of the previous two chief ministers from your party.

I talk about the six months because I was working more and taking more decisions. People before me have also done good work. The vehicle has started moving, only the driver has changed. I am the last driver who has to take it to the station and, hence, I can talk more about the time I have driven the vehicle.

Shubhajit Roy: There’s a lot of support among people for you. Who do you give this credit to? To the three previous CMs, Modi, Amit Shah or to Yati Narsinghanand?

Definitely, it is Modiji. Any poll that happens today cannot happen without him because of the work he has done for the poor, the common man and people at the lowest rung of society. The work Modiji has done for aviation, rail, road, giving free COVID-19 vaccines, or bringing in Ayushman Bharat Yojana, Swachh Bharat, Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, and several other schemes, no one else has. That’s why I want to give credit only to Modiji.

Devyani Onial: Do you think so many big infrastructure projects — widening of highways, the Char Dham corridor — in an ecologically fragile state such as Uttarakhand may have short-term benefits but can do harm in the long run?

Roads are necessary to travel from one part of the hills to another. How will development take place or tourists come to the state if there are no roads? How will pilgrims come? Our state is centred around tourism, pilgrimage and power. But going forward, we will take care of our ecology and our economy. We also have to move towards *atma nirbharata* (self-reliance). We have done a lot of homework on this.

Illustration: Suvajit Dey



I WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE SINGING
TILL MY VOICE GIVES UP ON ME. SINGING IS
ALL THAT I KNOW. — LATA MANGESHKAR

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

INDIA’S SONG

Lata Mangeshkar gave the nation a song for every mood, moment, journey. The stillness after her will be broken by her songs

THE VERY HEART of India throbs in your voice,” music composer Naushad once wrote to Lata Mangeshkar. Much of India’s population has not lived in a world that did not have her in it. The artist whose voice has been the sound of a nation ever since it gained independence, especially of its women, who expressed themselves in her voice even when they could not find their own, breathed her last in Mumbai on Sunday. With Mangeshkar’s passing, India is struck silent, so essential has she been to how it imagines itself through music and song. If there is succour in this moment, it is to be derived from the formidable and multi-hued oeuvre that she leaves behind. It isn’t often that musical virtuosity falls in place with lyricism, spirituality, integrity, expression — and soars.

Be it the defiant “*Pyaar kiya toh darna kya*” in *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960) or the watershed moment of her career, “*Aayega aanevala*”, so hauntingly pictured on Madhubala, or Waheeda Rehman dancing to “*Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai*” in *Guide*, the anthem and freedom song for a whole generation of Indian women, or the voice of the lovelorn courtesan in *Pakeezah* who sang “*Yoon hi koi mil gaya tha/sare raah chalte chalte*”, to one of the most secular and uplifting bhajans from the Indian film industry, “*Allah tero naam*” (*Hum Dono*) — Mangeshkar defined the gold standard of playback singing. Female vocalists in the country aspired to sing like her. In recent times, there was “*Dil hoom hoom kare*” from Kalpana Lajmi’s *Rudaali* (1993), in which Mangeshkar sang of unbearable pain, and upbeat numbers that lifted newer films such as *Hum Aapke Hain Koun* (1994) and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) off the ground. Through a universe of film songs in a number of languages and a large and varied repertoire of non-film pieces, Mangeshkar gave India not just a song for every mood, moment and journey, she also gave its people a feeling of shared cultural pride they had not known in quite the same way before. India had the Taj Mahal and Lata Mangeshkar, these were the wonders, and only one of them could sing. It isn’t often that India and Pakistan, the two peoples and governments, are completely agreed on anything, but there has never been any difference or doubt on Mangeshkar. The tributes that are flowing in from across the borders — from Pakistan and Bangladesh — are emotional and exquisite.

At a 1974 concert held at Royal Albert Hall in London, the late actor Nargis Dutt was asked to invite Lata Mangeshkar to the stage. “*Yun samajhiye, jaise kisi dargah ya mandir mein jaayen, toh wahaam pahunch kar sar-i-baadat ke liye khud-bakhud jhuk jaata hai, aur aankhon se be-saakhta aansoo behate hain* (As if one goes to a shrine or a temple, where the head bows in reverence and tears roll down from the eyes, of their own accord)”. That was Lata Mangeshkar. It is why the stillness that she leaves behind will be broken by her songs that live on.

THE MISSING GREEN

Failures to honour environment commitments point to institutional deficits. Government must apply correctives

FOR DECADES, ENVIRONMENTALISTS in the country have been alleging that a large number of infrastructure projects are implemented without mandatory due diligence and green clearance procedures are often riddled with irregularities. Their criticisms have sharpened in the past 15 years because successive governments have diluted ecological safeguards — the public hearing requirement in the Environmental Impact Assessment notification, for instance — under the ruse of streamlining the clearance procedures. Two years ago, an Environmental Performance Index of Yale University ranked India 168 amongst 220 countries. Now an investigation by this newspaper has revealed that six mega initiatives cleared between 2004 and 2020 — the Mopa International Airport in Goa, the Dibang Hydel project in Arunachal, Kulda Coal Mine in Odisha and Tamnar Thermal Project in Chhattisgarh, the Subansiri Hydel Project on the Assam-Arunachal border — have failed to fulfil their green commitments. The omissions are particularly glaring because experts had questioned the environmental sustainability of these projects since their inception.

At the heart of what has gone wrong is the absence of an effective mechanism to ensure environmental compliance. As the newspaper’s investigation revealed, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has less than 80 officials to conduct field visits. The state pollution control boards and environmental tribunals are almost always short-staffed. Instead of strengthening the monitoring mechanism, governments at the Centre and states have been relying on procedures such as post-facto clearances and trying to goad project developers into compliance by giving them incentives — subsidies, for instance — despite Supreme Court strictures. In 2020, for instance, a two-judge bench of the Court called out the practice of allowing project developers to report a violation retrospectively as “a derogation of the fundamental principle of environmental jurisprudence”. “Allowing for an ex-post facto clearance would essentially condone the operation of industrial activities without the grant of an environmental clearance (EC). In the absence of an EC, there would be no conditions to safeguard the environment,” the court pointed out.

As India strives to grow into a \$5-trillion economy — the budget presented by the finance minister last week, for instance, talks of rapid infrastructural development — its policymakers will need to ensure that such prosperity doesn’t come at the cost of the environment. This is especially imperative because sites of developmental projects are often located in ecologically fragile zones. Corridors between coal mines and thermal plants — such as the one between Kulda and Tamnar — are known to be rife with pollutants that harm people’s health, contaminate water bodies, and impair farm productivity. Obviating such hazards requires strong checks and balances. But environmental experts have often complained that short-shift is given to the autonomy of institutions mandated to protect the environment in the country. The government must summon the will to apply correctives.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

IT IS A measure of Lata Mangeshkar’s achievement that all tributes and any adjectives seem like a gross understatement. It is hard to imagine any comparable artiste, in the annals of any country, who so saturated the cultural, emotional and affective life of their nation. This is not just a statistical achievement. The tens of thousands of songs recorded in 18 languages, the total domination of playback singing for a half century, the ability to define a whole genre of music, the innovations of tonality, pitch and modulation, would alone be formidable. But her impact cannot be measured in technical terms. A great artiste might give pitch perfect expression to a variety of emotions. Lata Mangeshkar went further: Her songs became the totality of our emotions to the point where it was impossible to think of an affective life outside of her songs.

Lata Mangeshkar was coming of age when a new nation was coming into being. But a new nation needed a new grammar across the whole gamut of our lives. It needed new cultural forms that could unite rather than divide a country just emerging from Partition. It is often said that Hindi cinema was that cultural form. But in retrospect that seems to be a bit of mischaracterisation. If Hindi cinema acquired a distinct identity as a genre it was largely because of playback singing. In retrospect, it is remarkable how much of that cinema is utterly forgettable. What is not forgettable is the music. The music became our public poetry and our public melody, it became our private therapy and consolation; it seemed to offer an utterance for every emotion and occasion: From loyalty to betrayal, from joy to sadness, from heightened spirits to the depths of despair. One can get too sophisticated about this. But it is hard to imagine an Indian, above a certain age, whose articulation of their inner life is not in the words of a Bollywood lyric. And the voice will invariably be Lata Mangeshkar’s.

It is in this context that Lata Mangeshkar’s playback singing achieved its unique status. Much can be written about the tone and pitch

Lata Mangeshkar represented us collectively. She also represented each one of us in our singularity

It is difficult to gauge how significant she will be for future generations. It has to be said that there is no dearth of extraordinary musical talent, but the historical conditions that produce the need for a Lata Mangeshkar will probably never come again. The lyrics she sang will probably bear a greater burden of their gendered values, than, say, the ones that Rafi or Kishore got. For someone who sang in any every emotional register, it is hard to imagine a single song as a send-off: But try ‘*Phaili hui hain sapanon ki bahein*’ from *House No 44*. It will be hard to come by a better combination of lilting innocence, and soaring dreams. The incomparable gift she gave us.

of her voice over the years. But what is indisputable is the fact that only she could give expression to literally every situation or emotional register. It is not just the melody, but that precision about words and emotions in her singing, that made her an ideal carrier of the totality of our lives. Someone once said, in a profound remark, that the greatness of playback singing in Bollywood’s halcyon days, was that no actor really needed to act. The entire affective burden of movies was carried by the songs: In fact the songs were the script, if there was such a thing.

But the success of this genre required three things. It required great poetry and musical compositions. It required a genre of singing that exuded a sincerity with poetry that Lata Mangeshkar had in full measure. The singing would not overwhelm the meaning of the lyric, it would give it perfect expression. But most of all what it required was the creation of singers who could become everyone. The singer had to be a neutral enough medium so that they could appear to be every actor’s voice. But in a much more difficult act, the singer had to exude a kind of trust that they also became every listener’s voice and the grammar of their emotion. It is, I think, for this reason, more than anything else, that Bollywood playback singing was dominated by a few singers. For every time you heard a voice you also wanted it to be familiar so that you could think of it as your own.

Much has been said about how Lata Mangeshkar managed to define the pitch and tonality of what the Indian female singing voice should be like, often to the exclusion of many other registers. But this worry misses the point: Could such a playback role have been performed by any other voice, one in which everyone, as an individual, could find themselves?

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sang will probably bear a greater burden of their gendered values, than, say, the ones that Rafi or Kishore got. (Just listen to that trance-like duet with Hemant Kumar, “*Chupa lo yun dil mein pyaar mera*”; the line “*Tumhare charamon ka phool hum main*” will now make you wince). For someone who sang in any every emotional register, it is hard to imagine a single song as a send-off: But try “*Phaili hui hain sapanon ki bahein*” from *House No 44*. It will be hard to come by a better combination of lilting innocence, and soaring dreams. The incomparable gift she gave us.

If Lata Mangeshkar became representative of India, it was because the lyrics she sang, and the forms in which she expressed them, contained all of India in them: All of its languages, cultural registers, even its conflicts. It was not benchmarking India to a single measure; it was rather connecting its superabundance. She could give voice to collective emotions and mark the turning points in its collective life, as in “*Aye mere watan ke logo*”, the song that made Nehru and a whole nation break down. But what made her the ideal representative of the new nation was not that she represented us collectively, but that she could represent each one of us in our singularity: In every role we can imagine.

Much has been made of the fact that her image was in part propelled by the ideal of the ascetic performer. She made the world of art acceptable to a conservative India, by projecting an ascetic femininity onto it, taking Bollywood out of a courtly grammar of self-presentation. But at the end of the day the focus on her persona, her personal asceticism, humility are beside the point. For it is the mark of her greatness that her music transcended every division and identity that was imposed on it. The most dedicated group of fans she has is in Pakistan, where identification with her is more vivid than in India. She had no equal and will never have one.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

WHEN SHE SPEAKS UP

There’s a link between assertiveness of minority women and attacks like Bulli Bai



SHILPA PHADKE

JANUARY 2022: BULLI Bai deals, where Muslim women, particularly those who have been visible and articulate, were being auctioned, appeared on GitHub. A similar tool called Sulli Deals had appeared on GitHub in July 2021.

January 2021: While hearing petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the farm laws, the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court suggested that women and children should not participate in protests.

January 2020: Women, particularly Muslim women, were on the frontlines of the anti-CAA protests.

One might see women’s leadership in the anti-CAA protests as the culmination of the claims that they have been making to public space. Campaigns like those led by Blank Noise, the Why Loiter movement, Pinjra Tod, to name only some, have pushed back against restrictions on women’s mobility. The book *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets* that I co-wrote with Sameera Khan and Shilpa Ranade suggested loitering as a way for women to gain unconditional access to public space as citizens. Once a niche, even radical idea, loitering has now entered the feminist vocabulary of access to public space.

In the anti-CAA protests, women occupied public space as citizens defending citizenship rights. The country saw many leaderless, peaceful protests, like the one at Shaheen Bagh, several helmed by Muslim women. Eighty-two-year-old Bilkis Bano became an icon of the movement. At Jamia Millia Islamia in December 2019, two stu-

While almost every woman has a story of street sexual harassment, many also have stories of online harassment, stalking, and, in the case of the more visible and articulate ones, rape and death threats. In the Bulli Bai case too most of those targeted have been articulate and visible on social media. At the same time, there has been growing violence against Muslims and in December 2021, at a religious conclave, there were repeated calls to kill Indian Muslims.

dents, Ayesha Renna and Ladeeda Farzana, stood between the cops and one of their male friends who was being assaulted. The image of Renna’s raised index finger became symbolic of the resistance.

Only months before passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019, the government had passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, which criminalises instant triple talaq, setting up Muslim women as victims of Muslim men and reminding one of postcolonial scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s comment in regard to White men saving Brown women from Brown men. In August 2019, the government abrogated Article 370, revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. Several ministers were reported as commenting on the possibility of buying land in Kashmir and marrying fair Kashmiri women. Muslim women are simultaneously clients of state largesse and the exoticised other to be claimed.

While a part of the anti-CAA protests was already taking place online, the pandemic virtually took away access to the streets for these protests. Relevantly, just as streets are seen as dangerous to women in the mainstream narrative, so also women are asked to be careful online. While almost every woman has a story of street sexual harassment, many also have stories of online harassment, stalking, and, in the case of the more visible and articulate ones, rape and death threats. In the Bulli Bai case, too, most of those targeted have been articulate and visible on social media. At the same time,

there has been growing violence against Muslims and in December 2021, at a religious conclave, there were repeated calls to kill Indian Muslims.

All women are targeted online and Muslims have become increasingly unsafe in the country. Muslim women are marginalised and discriminated against both as Muslims and as women. They are seen as victims of their religion, community and men; as clients under the dubious protection of the state, but also simultaneously as pawns in the demonstration of Hindutva power and masculinity, who might be assaulted in order to show Muslim men their place, as seen, for instance, in the sexual violence against Muslim women in 2002 in Gujarat.

The visibility of Muslim women in public as articulate, fierce and brave, fundamentally shifts something about how they must be perceived. If they can be out on the streets, sleeping under the open sky for three months, then clearly they cannot be only the relentlessly oppressed and silenced victims. It is this claim to citizenship, to free speech, that has created no little discomfort.

Bulli Bai and Sulli Deals must be located within these larger events of the growing visibility of Muslim women and a growing atmosphere of intolerance to diversity and tolerance of hate speech and acts towards Muslims. They are a way of silencing both women and Muslims, demonstrating that neither is safe in contemporary India.

Phadke is the co-author of *Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets*

FEBRUARY 7, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

PM’S CONCERN

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi expressed serious concern over the country’s prospects of foreign economic aid and said: “We are going to face increasing difficulties.” Mrs Gandhi, who was addressing a press conference in Ahmedabad at the end of her two-day visit to Gujarat, made this remark when she was asked about the World Bank decision to cut aid to this country. Asked if she saw in the World Bank decision an indication of the US economic offensive against this country, she said: “It is for you to judge.” The prime minister is understood to have taken a grim view of the economic situation facing the country.

ANTULAY TRUST

THE INDIRA PRATIBHA Pratishthan would continue to function as before, the chairman of the trust A R Antulay said in Bombay on Saturday. The former Maharashtra chief minister told newsmen after a four-hour meeting of the trustees that reports saying some of the trustees had resigned were baseless. Antulay, who presided over the meeting held amid speculation about its future, denied that he had ever offered to quit the trust as its chairman.

UNGA ON ISRAEL

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY adopted a resolu-

tion on Friday calling on all UN members to stop aid, trade and diplomatic ties with Israel to punish it for annexing the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. The vote was 86-21, with 34 abstentions. The resolution climaxed a six-day emergency special session on the December 14 Israeli annexation. The Security Council called the session after the United States vetoed a council resolution to penalise Israel for its action. A council resolution would have been binding on all 157 UN members. The Assembly resolution amounted to no more than a recommendation. Israel condemned the resolution and said it was part of a UN attempt “to undermine the very existence of Israel.”

9 THE IDEAS PAGE

Lata ji

She became the female voice of a newly independent country. Through it all, and till the end, she also remained her own person



MRINAL PANDE

"Like art, revolutions come from combining what exists into what has never existed before"

Gloria Steinem

LATA WAS ONE of the three daughters born to a well-known performer in Marathi theatre, Dinanath Mangeskar. Her father recognised her talent early on, and began training her when she was only five. Her younger and very talented sister Asha Bhosle told the Dogri poet Padma Sachdev later how their lives changed when their father passed away suddenly. The eldest, Lata *didi*, was only 13. The family first went to stay with their mother's family in Thalner village in Dhule, then moved to Mumbai to a small house in Nana Chowk. Lataji's initial years in the Mumbai film industry of the early '40s were full of struggle. Music directors used to the loud and somewhat shrill and nasal voices of singing stars from courtisan families, were reluctant to give the frail teenager a chance for playback singing. They found her voice "too thin".

A person less in need of money may have argued and told them that screen voices needed to be more natural and fluid in the age of the new recording technology. But Lata's overwhelming need was to earn enough for her family of three siblings and a widowed mother. So she played Eliza Doolittle to their Professor Higgins for a while. Flexibility is something young fatherless children learn early on in life. Lata did too. But like a true singer, even as she adapted to the composers' demands, she kept alive her classically trained real voice and soon rose to be the patron saint of the "new" female voice of independent India. With her first hit song "*Aayega aaneewala*", from *Mahal*, she was no longer the awkward in-between singer. Even the great Bade Ghulam Ali Khan sahib is reported to have said of her that ever since he heard her sing in Raga Yaman, he forgot his own rendering, and that the girl just never goes off-key ("*Jab se iss ladki ka Yaman kaan mein pada, main apna wala Yaman bhool gaya! Kambakht kabhi besuri hi nahin hoti!*"). Another great composer of film music, Naushad, wrote about her: Watch her voice leap up like a ball of fire ("*Shola sa lapak jaaye hai, awaaz tau dekho!*").

In the '50s, Lata Mangeskar was an undisputed star singing for all renowned composers: Shankar-Jaikishan, Naushad, SD Burman, Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Hemant Kumar and Madan Mohan. She sang some of the biggest hits for Madhubala in *Mughal-e-Azam*, including the timeless, "*Mohey panghat pe Nandlal...*". Her long and distinguished career is not a tragic tale of continuing to shoulder the burden of someone else's idea of how a woman should sing. She was a genuinely many-voiced singer who considered it an asset to be able to sing for a Madhubala, a Jaya Bachchan and even a Preity Zinta. Hers was a voice of a simple but grand inheritance from Marathi theatre,



CR Sasikumar

also a realisation of the paternal dreams and aspirations she had imbibed as a young girl. She was a rock to her family till the end.

Still it would be wrong to pin her down to a single identity, of a grand dowager queen of music, all white sarees, and an isolation of fervent religiosity and meditational silences. True, as an individual, Lata ji remained fiercely protective of her private life. But she was very much her own person. She did not follow the usual pattern of marriage, children and the possibility of a life long contention with a male who felt his masculinity threatened by an eminent wife. She chose, instead, to sing as and when and how she wished, and maintain her personal relationships with various men and women she cared for. She had little interest in theatrics. Her love for all things, from diamond jewellery to devotional music, was not a put-on act. Those aesthetics came naturally to her like to so many of our great musicians. But one admires her for, even as she pursued her music, rightly demanding that musicians be paid royalties, not be sent off with a one-time payment. If this created some disaffection between her and a few big ticket male singers, so be it. Her innate understanding of her self worth remained subtle and capacious till the very end.

Another loveable part of Lata Mangeskar's life was her deep and genuine love for cricket. In the cricket establishment she found the action-man dimension perhaps of a father she had lost early in her life. Stories about her romantic dedication to one such legend were also rife

Her long and distinguished career is not a tragic tale of continuing to shoulder the burden of someone else's idea of how a woman should sing. She was a genuinely many-voiced singer who considered it an asset to be able to sing for a Madhubala, a Jaya Bachchan and even a Preity Zinta. Hers was a voice of a simple but grand inheritance from Marathi theatre, also a realisation of the paternal dreams and aspirations she had imbibed as a young girl. She was a rock to her family till the end.

over the years. But she chose not to marry for reasons we will never know. The truth or otherwise remained between them. She never cared to discuss it publicly and none of the columnists and society reporters dared ask her about it. She did make clear that she did not wish to be reborn. Ever. And that her favourite poet was Meera Bai who sang "*Mai mai, kaise jiyun ree* (Oh my mother how can I survive)". "One should gracefully accept sorrow like happiness", she said in one of her last interviews to a Mumbai daily.

Of late, one sees a sudden swell in those who claim to have known her over the years and emphasise how she sang because Veer Savarkar urged her to sing or that singing a song like, "*Ai mere watan ke logo...*" was an ideal public display of true *rashtra bhakti*. From what one gathers about this unusually gifted singer, she abhorred histrionics or public displays of love or hate. She was among those like George Bernard Shaw who believed that patriotism is basically a conviction that the best country is the one that one is born in.

Professionally and personally, the marvelous weight of the pleasure her singing gives embarrasses hyperbolic tributes. Certainly, obituaries will call her "the last of a kind", the "Sur Saraswati" in Hindi film music or "the greatest female singer in the Bollywood firmament". For once, they will not be soppy clichés, for once they will ring true.

The writer is former chairperson, Prasara Bharati

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Patent waivers — backed by the US, but still opposed by the UK and EU — and technology transfer should begin now. Poorer countries can wait no longer." — THE GUARDIAN

Plugging power reforms

Central, state governments need to be flexible to ensure success of the revamped power distribution scheme



ANN JOSEY AND SREEKUMAR NHALUR

LAUNCHED IN JULY 2021, the Revamped Distribution Sector Reform Scheme (RDSS) is the latest of many central government grant-based programmes towards electricity distribution network investments. Others include urban loss reduction schemes such as the Accelerated Power Development Programme and rural connections and network expansion focussed schemes such as SAUBHAGYA. These have played a significant role in increasing access and improving performance.

RDSS's outlay of Rs 3 lakh crore for five years can enable financially-strained electricity distribution companies to get similar support. Half of the outlay is for better feeder and transformer metering and pre-paid smart consumer metering. The remaining half, 60 per cent of which will be funded by central government grants, will be spent on power loss reduction and strengthening networks.

But RDSS has inherited several design issues from its predecessors. These include complex processes and conditions for fund disbursement. Only 60 per cent of the total Rs 2.5 lakh crore grants allocated in past schemes were disbursed. Lack of public review and regulatory oversight in states is another issue. The prescriptive approach of the scheme design impedes effective implementation. For example, RDSS emphasises loss reduction investments over system strengthening. However, high losses are typically connected to sustained poor quality service which, in turn, is affected by inadequate investment in system strengthening. RDSS stipulates universal pre-paid metering but post-paid options may be suitable in many contexts. Similarly suggested measures in RDSS such as privatisation and franchisee adoption should be critically examined.

As required, states are submitting action plans detailing their contexts, commitments and interests. Despite the challenges, there are opportunities for discoms under RDSS.

It is important to strengthen rural networks to meet growing demand. In the past decade, 4.9 crore poor households have been electrified and more than Rs 50,000 crore has been invested in rural networks. However, actual investments have been much less than planned. Moreover, connections given to rural homes were for 250 or 500 watts, assuming few lights, fan and TV. This does not account for use of appliances such as refrigerators and mixers. Transformer and sub-station capacities were designed to meet this minimal demand. Increased supply hours, appliance usage and the needs of rural enterprises will need more network investment. Without this, the risk of power outages is high. The RDSS system's strengthening plans can focus on this challenge.

About 25 per cent of electricity sales is to highly subsidised, agricultural consumers who also receive erratic, poor quality supply. Under the national KUSUM scheme, day-time, low-cost supply can be provided to a large number of farmers by installing megawatt scale solar plants, which supply eight hours of quality power directly to dedicated agricultural feeders. This would address farmers' demand for reliable supply and almost halve the discom's cost and subsidy requirements. For this to work, separate feeders for agricultural consumers are needed. RDSS prioritises investments and grants towards dedicated agricultural feeders to accelerate feeder solarisation. States must leverage this grant support to provide reliable supply and reduce subsidy requirements.

Third is the need for "automatic" metering of distribution feeders. Despite efforts, unmetered consumers and non-functional meters at the consumer and feeder level persist. Without functioning meters, accurate energy accounting and loss monitoring is a challenge. Often, discoms under-estimate losses by over-estimating unmetered consumption in a bid to demonstrate loss reduction. For greater veracity, all feeders must be equipped with meters capable of communicating readings without manual intervention. States should leverage RDSS's emphasis on automatic meter reading for this.

So far, the experience with smart metering and pre-paid metering has been limited. RDSS prescribes a phase-wise roll-out of consumer smart meters, starting with commercial and industrial consumers and urban areas. Such an approach provides states with an opportunity to understand implementation issues, adopt suitable strategies for metering and evolve frameworks for assessing benefits vis-a-vis the costs. This is possible if discoms, the state regulator and consumers play an active role in designing the roll-out to suit state realities, address implementation issues and assess benefits. In their action plans, states should emphasise the need for this flexibility and allow the discoms to make an informed choice between pre-paid and post-paid metering. To realise benefits, the state regulator must stipulate a framework to evaluate cost reduction and performance improvement due to smart meters and protect consumers from undue tariff impacts due to such investments.

Next, the network can be prepared for charging electric vehicles. Discoms can avail 60 per cent of grants under RDSS for network investments required to address the demand of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. This can accelerate a shift away from petrol and diesel fuels.

To leverage various opportunities, states must emphasise the need for flexibility in prioritising investments in their action plans. This should be accompanied by state-level commitments towards accelerated but deliberate implementation. Central government agencies should also be flexible in the monitoring, tracking and fund disbursement mechanisms. Without these efforts, despite its potential, RDSS will likely be important but limited in its impact, like its predecessors.

The writers are with Prayas (Energy Group)



VAMSEE JULURI

"WE ARE SURE even Ramanujacharya will be horrified," began a post on a small western working-class Hindu human rights group's social media feed. It is one thing to build a beautiful statue to honour a revered Guru. It may even be acceptable in a culture that values richness in worship to put a lot of gold into it. But does it make sense to call it a "Statue of Equality"?

This is a question that might well have occurred to people as they watched Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate a giant statue of Ramanujacharya in Hyderabad on February 5. On the one hand, it seems compassionate that the visionary driving the project, the respected Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji, has chosen to celebrate Ramanuja's chief contribution as advocacy for equality. But at the same time, as we read in the website for the statue about how Ramanujacharya heralded social equality because "males did not learn in front of the females so as to keep the knowledge secret" and how the "church controlled monarchs" and how "tongues were cut" and "ears were filled with molten lead," we are left wondering what exactly Hindu religious leaders are hoping to achieve with their spectacular social change simulation daydreams.

Now, politicians can be given to hyperbole, and gurus to tales of magic and miracles to inspire love and faith. But what seems to be happening with modern Hindu religious organisations is a more fundamental confusion of purpose. And like all confusions, it stems from a disconnect with social and economic realities

Branding faith

Statue of Equality discourse points to perils of making spirituality fashionable

of class, and protestations notwithstanding, perhaps, caste privilege too. A giant gold statue can be declared as the solution to global income inequality. A gallery featuring Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, and Abraham Lincoln besides Ramanujacharya can be set up to hail them all as great "reformers". Why not Martin Luther, then? Or other "reformers" closer home?

Reality seems to be in as short a supply as platitudinous secular ideals are in a glut.

There seem to be two different threads in the experience of what is called Hinduism today. One is the practice of traditional rituals such as *yajnas*, *pujas*, *veda paarayanas*, and so on, passed on from one generation to another. The other is the discourse around the meaning of Hinduism, a communicative, modern predilection, that manifests in forms as diverse as best-selling mythology books and the culture of volunteerism among new-age Hindu spiritual movements.

The politics of what is often called "Hindu nationalism," is yet another dimension, which intersects with each of these in different ways. There are traditionalists who support the notion of sacred lands and oppose their transformation into mass tourism sites by the government, as well as more reformist or civic nationalists who are represented in the prime minister's "toilets not temples" slogan, perhaps.

Arguably, all of this is Hinduism as it is today, at the crossroads not only of various political forces but also of intergenerational changes and choices.

It is in this context that the NGO-ification of Hinduism becomes an interesting problem. In the past few years, I have seen brochures and websites from organisations ranging from traditional Hindu lineages to the modern, more international ones increasingly erasing any discussion of the guru's teachings, philosophy, or "inner" world of Hinduism in any form, for the outward demonstration of NGO-type service.

One spiritual tradition, despite the highly sophisticated philosophical depths of its founder, represents itself now with glossy photos of schools, toilets, computers, medical camps and so on. I did not find even a token quote from the guru in their recent publication.

Now, there is clearly nothing to criticise in the performance of service as a spiritually fulfilling activity. But where the issue becomes more complicated is when it comes to the question of what, finally, is the purpose of whatever is called Hinduism. If everybody's "religion" (for lack of a better word) ends up looking like United Nations slogans about empowerment and social justice, what remains of the vast ocean of experience, creativity, art and thought that are not the business of NGOs or UN type organisations to support?

Why blame others for the vanishing of these rich traditions if these are not recognised and nurtured by Hindus who otherwise seem capable of building very large organisations (and statues)?

There is, I think, also an issue of class privilege playing out in these two dimensions of

Hinduism, with the "multiplex" or "OTT" Hindus (to borrow some phrases from recent debates on cinema) talking to the performance of service (coupled with some private meditation and stress-busting perhaps) with little interest in the old-fashioned rituals and miracles of the common people, and the latter thronging the ancient temples with complete devotion to the deity and the specific traditions and customs followed in his or her (the deity's) sacred dwelling.

For the people, the "statue" is of a divinity. For the colonised urban upper classes, the statue represents, perhaps a concept, a modern ideal, a figure enshrined as "real" in "history". One group will seek miracles, and the other will seek (what it thinks) are facts. Will these two streams accommodate each other? Or will one, by sheer force of privilege, negate the experiences of the masses, seeking to constantly "reform" them?

The discourse around the "Statue of Equality" offers a poignant case study. Two different worlds are being sought to be recast as the same, when both could stay in their place for the good of all. A guru or *sampradaya's* message should not be so flippantly changed from what it was to whatever the miseducated elites think the secular cosmopolis deems fashionable. We should listen to the people, and their *bhakti*. They obey the gods, not the desires of social status and recognition.

The writer is professor of media studies, University of San Francisco

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DIGITAL ISSUES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, "The digital rupee" (IE, February 4). FM's Budget statement that RBI will issue digital rupees confirms the suggestion by Gol's high-level inter-ministerial committee. In 2017, it advised the RBI to introduce its own central bank digital currency (CBDC). A CBDC is not just another digital payment option. Its effects for the banking system are not clear. If there is a partial shift away from bank deposits to CBDCs, what are the implications for the role of banks in credit creation? What will be the implication for monetary policy? Such questions must be answered.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

THE REAL DRAG

THIS REFERS TO the article, "The inequality drag" (IE, Feb 4). For two successive years, the Centre provided almost 70 per cent of the population free grains to tide over hunger and distress. The insistence to put money in the pockets of the poor to generate demand to invigorate the economy or to strengthen schemes like MGNREGA is a throwback to the political economy of socialism that has failed everywhere. China became rich only after embracing market economy. The drag to our economy is ideological.

H N Bhagwat, Chiplun

CLIMATE AND INDIA

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The Climate Cost of AI', (IE, February 3). The examples of Amazon, Microsoft,

Alphabet announcing "net-zero policies" are less suited for the Indian scenario where the main factors of climate degradation are poverty, population, urbanisation, rising use of power, intensification of agriculture etc. India has been an early initiator of change in market regulations when SEBI, in 2012, adopted sustainability reporting and the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) related disclosures as part of the Business Responsibility Report (BRR) for the top 100 listed entities became mandatory. In 2021, the BRR was substituted by Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR) enabling market participants to identify and assess sustainability-related risks and opportunities. BRSR will soon become mandatory for top 1,000 listed entities. India also has the National Action Plan on Climate Change.

Aerika Singh, Chandigarh

THE RIGHT MASK

THIS REFERS TO the article, "Why I wear a mask" (IE, February 3). The writer's arguments are based on a strong belief that masks are highly effective in preventing Covid-19. While it is true that several public health officials recommend masking, a Randomised Controlled Trial study conducted in Denmark had found no significant reduction in Covid-19 transmission due to masking. Many experts have also warned that cloth masks have no impact on viral spread.

Varun Das via e-mail

Express Network

EYEING CIVIC POLLS

Hindutva fringe outfit seeks to make inroads into TN politics

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 6

HINDU MUNNANI, a Hindutva fringe organisation known for ranking up various communal issues in Tamil Nadu for about a decade, has now issued a statement, calling for unity among Hindu voters and asking them to collectively decide to support candidates, irrespective of political parties, in the February 19 state urban local body polls, who would uphold "Indian values and culture".

A resolution was adopted in this regard by the Hindu Munnani executive committee during its meeting at Trichy on February 5. Hindu Munnani would not define Indian culture and tradition that it demands poll candidates to uphold, but it has clearly sought to make it a key aspect of its agenda to mobilise supporters of Hindu identity politics in a bid to make inroads into the state politics.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Hindu Munnani president Kadeswara Subramaniam claimed his outfit was not part of electoral politics. "But look at a *jamaat* (Muslim congregations), it has a larger say in the decisions of the Muslim community in polls. Christians may have divisions

within, but they often take a collective decision to support someone when it comes to elections. They discuss and take a decision. Hindu Munnani is not a political party, but we also aim to have such a collective and united Hindu front when we, as a community, face troubles. That is the main purpose of this move," he said.

Subramaniam made it clear that one of their main issues is the demand for an anti-conversion legislation in Tamil Nadu. "We have been demanding it for so many years. So the political parties who support this cause also gets our support," he said.

Hindu Munnani has all along backed the BJP in various polls. It has however claimed now that a candidate need not be a Hindutva supporter or from the BJP to get its backing. "Take the case of late DMK leader K Anbazhagan. He used to be a leader who would come and attend our functions on Vinayaka Chaturti and other such events. Even within the DMK, there are leaders with Hindu sentiments, even though they wouldn't be showing it in public. We support anyone who shares Hindu sentiments," Subramaniam said.

In view of the Hindutva fringe group's track record mired in controversies arising from its bids to

take up communal issues, from beef ban to cow protection, and indulge in self-styled vigilantism on various local matters, senior leaders of the ruling AIADMK and the principal Opposition AIADMK refused to comment on Subramaniam's statements. "Why should I comment on a group which exists only on its letterhead. I don't even want to comment on them," said a former AIADMK minister.

The Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department Minister, PK Sekar Babu, on being asked about Hindu Munnani's latest move, said such a political plan will not work in Tamil Nadu.

"Let it be a church or a *jamaat* or a temple, there may be someone from there who would suggest to people to vote for a party. But people will be voting for a better leader. Why? Because we are a secular country, we live together," said Babu, who never flaunts an atheist identity in his public life despite being a DMK leader.

The Dalit party VCK's MP D Ravikumar said, "In 2017, the Supreme Court Constitution Bench had issued an order categorically stating that the government in India is secular and that the election is a secular process."

DELIMITATION PANEL SECOND DRAFT

10 J&K Assembly seats with fewer than one lakh people each

Three in Kashmir: Gurez (Bandipore), Karnah (Kupwara) & Kunzer (Baramulla)

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 6

AT LEAST 10 Assembly seats across Jammu and Kashmir with a population of less than a lakh have been proposed in the second draft of the working paper prepared by the Delimitation Commission.

While these calculations of constituency size are based on the 2011 census, the majority of the 10 seats with a population of less than one lakh persons are in the Jammu province.

Kashmir has three such seats -- Gurez in Bandipore district, Karnah in Kupwara and the newly carved Kunzer in Baramulla. The delimitation draft notes a population of 37,992 for Gurez, just above 87,000 for Karnah and over 99,000 in Kunzer.

In Jammu, there are seven

such seats -- Bani in Kathua district, Mughalmaidan in Kishtwar, Padder (Kishtwar), newly created Shri Mata Vaishno Devi in Reasi, Kishtwar, Bashedi in Kathua and Ramgarh in Samba. The populations in these segments range between 74,000 and 94,000.

Meanwhile, at least 19 constituencies that currently exist are being merged with other constituencies or being renamed or split to form 28 new Assembly segments, across J&K.

The mainstream political parties in J&K, including the National Conference, have rejected these proposed changes in the delimitation draft. The party's three sitting MPs serve as associate members to the delimitation commission.

The NC General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar on Sunday denounced the delimitation commission's second draft proposal, saying the party will not

accept attempts to "divide" the people of J&K. The report, he said, is a "sheer mockery of universally accepted and constitutionally established norms of representation."

Meanwhile, CPIM leader MY Tarigami said that the commission has proposed "an arbitrary overhaul in the existing territorial constituencies with no regard for even the terrain, let alone the population that tends to be a basic parameter for redrawing the boundaries of assembly and parliamentary segments."

People's Conference chairman Sajad Lone termed the whole process, "an exercise in disruption."

The newly-carved constituencies include, South Srinagar, Larnoo, Anantnag East and West, Chhnanapora, Rohama-Rafiabad, Kathua North and South, Jammu South, Udhampur East and West among others.

Constituencies that are likely to be omitted from the list of Assembly segments include Shangus, Harzatbal, Wachi, Batamalo, Gulabgarh, Gool Arnas among others.

As per the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, seven new constituencies were to be added to the J&K Assembly. Once these proposed additions are made, the total number of Assembly constituencies in J&K will rise to 90 -- in Jammu, the number of seats will go up to 43 from 37, and in Kashmir, by one seat to 47.

Of the seven additional Assembly constituencies in the Union Territory, one each was proposed in the districts of Kathua, Samba, Rajouri, Reasi, Doda and Kishtwar in Jammu division, and Kupwara in the Kashmir Valley. An additional 24 seats are proposed to be reserved for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Poll panel: Ban on roadshows to remain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE ELECTION Commission on Sunday said the ban on roadshows and vehicle rallies in election-bound states will continue to remain in effect, but added that restrictions on indoor and outdoor public meetings will be further relaxed.

"Restrictions regarding outdoor meeting/indoor meetings/rallies will be further relaxed subject to condition that the number of persons attending the indoor/outdoor meetings/rallies will be limited to maximum of 50 per cent of the capacity of indoor halls and 30 per cent of the open ground capacity or as fixed by DEO (District Election Officer) as per requirement of social distancing norms and whichever is less," the EC said in a statement.

On January 31, the EC had extended the ban on physical rallies and roadshows until February 11. On Saturday, the commission held a meeting with the Union Health Ministry to assess the Covid-19 situation.

Rajasthan: BJP says stones pelted at state chief's car

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 6

RAJASTHAN BJP president Satish Poonia was allegedly targeted during a protest against him while he was travelling in Bundi district of the state on Sunday.

The Opposition BJP pointed the blame at Congress for allegedly pelting stones at Poonia's car. The ruling party denied the allegations. Later in the day, the police filed an FIR but no arrests had been made yet.

Videos circulated by the BJP on social media show a crowd gathered around Poonia's car, shouting slogans and displaying black flags. An unidentified person says stones are being pelted at the vehicle.

"I had gone to Kota today for a condolence meeting of a member of the erstwhile Kota royal family.



Satish Poonia has blamed the Congress

I normally keep only 1-2 cars and use cavalcades only during events. Suddenly, without any reason, 200-300 people surrounded us. They tried to drag me out of the car and also roughed up my gunman. Even when the gunman threatened that he would open fire, they didn't back down. I have never seen anything like this in my thirty years in politics," Poonia told *The Indian Express* on Sunday.

Poonia alleged that those present in the protest were close to urban development and housing minister Shanti Dhariwal and named another Congress leader Rajendra Sankhla.

'Relieved': worker stranded in Mali says on return home

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 6

WEEKS AFTER their distress calls, the first batch of seven Indian workers out of the 33 who were stranded in Mali without their earnings and their passports returned to the country on Saturday.

After landing at the Ranchi airport, they kissed the ground in relief. Their ordeal was over.

The issue first came to the Jharkhand government's attention in January as the workers appealed Indian authorities for help on social media. They said it was their last hope as their employer did not pay them for months and their contractor, who recruited them for the job in the west African nation, allegedly vanished with their passports.

State labour minister Satyanand Bhokta found out about their case last month and alerted Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who directed the state's migrant cell to confirm their identities. Three weeks later, with the help of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the diplomatic outreach, seven of the workers returned to their homes in Hazaribagh and Giridih districts. Officials said the others will return in a phased manner.

Santosh Mahato, 26, is one of them. He told *The Indian Express* he went to Mali in January 2021 to work as a "fitter" (technician) with a power transmission company. "We had gone last January through a local contractor, and we were promised around Rs 27,000 per month but we were not paid the same amount. Some were not paid for six months and some were paid Rs 27,000 for three months of work... We wanted our money, but the contractor vanished with our passports. We did not know what to do. On social media, we cried for help and we are so relieved to get back home," Mahato said from his home in Hazaribagh.

The Migrant Control Room's head Johnson Topno said that they started the process of verification and contacted the family members of the workers. "Everyone was in panic and we calmed them down, got all the details of the workers," he said.

Once the details were verified, Jharkhand labour commissioner A Muthukumar wrote to the Indian Embassy in Mali on January 17. Two days later, Mali government officials and the Indian Embassy held a meeting along with the company employees and an agreement was signed.

EC reschedules biennial polls for UP council local authorities' seats

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE ELECTION Commission on Sunday announced the biennial elections to 36 legislative council seats spread across 35 local authorities' constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, which were earlier to be held on two different dates, will now be conducted on April 9.

"The said elections were to be conducted in two phases with scheduled poll dates of March 3 for 29 constituencies and March 7 for six constituencies, keeping in view the schedule of the ongoing general elections to legislative assembly in the state, which are being conducted in seven phases," the polling body said.

The EC received requests from parties seeking to reschedule the UP MLC elections and hold them after completion of the assembly polls. "The parties have, inter-alia, mentioned about difficulties in simultaneously carrying out their election management matters..." the Election Commission said.



NADDA CAMPAIGNS IN DEHRADUN

BJP national president J P Nadda campaigns door-to-door for his party's candidate Sahdev Pundir, in Dehradun on Sunday. *PTI*

OPPOSITION PROTESTS ACTION AGAINST MEDIA ONE

Go to Shah, I&B Minister told Kerala MPs

MPs say they met Anurag Thakur, submitted memorandum to his office and to Home Ministry

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

TEN LOK Sabha MPs from Kerala met Union I&B Minister Anurag Thakur a day after the ministry revoked the broadcasting licence for Media One, a Malayalam channel promoted by prominent Jamaat-e-Islami members.

Thakur advised the MPs to approach the Union Home Minister, since it was his ministry that had denied security clearance to the channel. The MPs included Kodikunnil Suresh and K Sudhakaran from Congress, and N K Premachandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party.

MPs cutting across party lines -- Supriya Sule of the NCP, Mahua Moitra of Trinamool Congress, ET Mohammed Bashir of IUML, and Digvijaya Singh of Congress -- have extended their support to Media One.

Kunwar Danish Ali of BSP tweeted that the government "should not bring back the

Emergency with new forms of attack on media freedom". On Sunday, DMK's Kanimozhi tweeted, "The voices of the people, media, and civil society are to be heard in a democracy. Silencing dissent, debate and dialogue is very unhealthy for a democracy."

Thakur did not respond to the criticism.

The MPs from Kerala submitted memorandums to Thakur and to the office of Home Minister Amit Shah against the "shocking and unfortunate incident of revocation of Uplinking and Downlinking licence to Media One News". The "government has not been forthcoming as to what those concerns are" because of which security clearance was denied, the MPs said.

Basheer, Hibi Eden, Abdussamad Samadani, N Prathapan, Adoor Prakash, Dean Kuriakose, and Rajmohan Unnithan were also part of the delegation.

Suresh, who led the delegation, told *The Indian Express* "seven to



Anurag Thakur

eight" Lok Sabha MPs had met Thakur on the issue after Budget presentation on February 1.

"First we met him inside the House. After that outside, in the lobby, we had a detailed discussion with him. He told us that accusation was not taken by the I&B Ministry. We (I&B) are not responsible for the cancellation of the licence of the Media One channel. At the same time, he said, Ministry of Home Affairs asked I&B not to renew the channel's licence because of security reasons."

The MHA, Suresh said, has "not clearly indicated the reason; they have only said due to security reasons." " (Thakur) told us, I am not able to do anything, because it is not an I&B decision, it

was taken by MHA, so you have to meet the Home Minister, and they will take a decision. If they ask us to withdraw the cancellation, then immediately we will withdraw. I&B Ministry has no problem," Suresh said.

He said the delegation had tried to meet the Home Minister in his chamber in Parliament House, but were informed that he was busy. They had handed over the memorandum to the minister's staff, but "so far the Home Minister's Office has not informed us about an appointment to discuss the matter," Suresh said.

Premchandran of the RSP said Thakur had told them "he is helpless", and "we (I&B) have nothing to do with this, only the Home Ministry can do."

There was "no justification" for the ban, Premachandran said. "The Home Ministry has to either seek an explanation from them, or they have to give a charge -- that you have not complied with this, or the content is anti-national. But such a notice has never been issued."

Thakur did not respond to requests seeking comments about his meeting with the Kerala MPs.

In their memorandum to Thakur, the delegation said: "As per our understanding, the channel was in the process of renewing the licence with the Ministry and all required documentations were done properly and on time... This is a unilateral move from the Ministry to silence a media house which is on air since 2013. The basic principle of natural justice to hear the accused before punishment is blatantly denied here."

Earlier, on January 31, when the order was issued, John Brittas of CPM, who heads Kairali TV, and Hibi Eden of Congress had also written to Thakur expressing concern.

On Sunday, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wrote to Thakur saying "curbing the freedom of press in the garb of vague charges like security reasons would degenerate our State into a totalitarian regime", and asked him to immediately lift the licence ban.

Assam carries out eviction drive in Barpeta

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 6

AT LEAST 37 families have been evicted from Assam's Barpeta district as part of a government drive to clear land belonging to the Barpeta Sattrā -- a 16th century Vaishnavite monastery -- from alleged "encroachers", authorities said on Sunday. The drive came days after controversy erupted over Congress legislator Sherman Ali Ahmed's alleged "instigating" comments during a visit to the area, which falls under his constituency Baghor.

Following the eviction on Saturday, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that his government was committed to freeing up encroached Sattrā lands across



The eviction drive being conducted on Saturday. *Express*

Assam. "Despite provocative and highly communal statements by an MLA, we managed to evict 37 families & cleared 40 bighas of land belonging to the revered Barpeta Sattrā from Mandia mouza under Baghor Police Stn. We are committed to clearing any encroached Sattrā lands elsewhere in Assam," he tweeted.

It was alleged that almost 40 bighas belonging to Barpeta Sattrā was encroached by Bengali Muslims. "The area, which is about 6-7 km from the Sattrā, historically belonged to it. The Sattrādhikar (head) has highlighted the issue and also written an application to the government for the land to be cleared," said Kusum Mahanta, secretary of Assam Sattrā Mahasabha.

On Saturday, the district administration, aided by the police, conducted the eviction drive in Bardalani village, under Mandia revenue circle. "The drive was peaceful and the land under encroachment was cleared, without any resistance from the people," said Barpeta SP Amitabh Sinha.

Barpeta DC Tej Pratap Bhushal said the cleared land was handed

over to the Sattrā's managing committee. "All Barpeta Sattrā land has been more or less cleared now," he said.

The evicted families have been in the area for more than ten years, said Rejaul Karim Sarkar, president of All Assam Minority Students' Union (AAMSU). "They are from the Baghor area and were compelled to move here after being displaced by floods and erosion," he said, adding that some of the families had moved in 2020 itself, after getting a notice from the government. "The others could not move because they simply had no choice. They are extremely poor farmers."

Sarkar said those who were evicted have now taken refuge under tin sheet roofs in a government Khas land nearby.

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1.	Transmission system for evacuation of power from REZ in Rajasthan (20 GW) under phase III-Part A1	28.02.2022	18.04.2022 up to 15:00 hrs (IST)	18.04.2022 15:30 hrs (IST)
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THE LATA LEGEND 1929-2022

BIDDING FAREWELL



(From left) Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray; NCP leader Sharad Pawar; actor Shah Rukh Khan; and cricketer Sachin Tendulkar at the funeral of Lata Mangeshkar, in Mumbai on Sunday. Pradip Das

‘She was our country’s pride and glory’

Fans gather at Shivaji Park for a last glimpse of legendary singer – and a part of their childhood

ALAKA SAHANI
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

AS A group of Lata Mangeshkar fans eagerly wait for police to let them enter Dadar’s Shivaji Park, they offer a befitting tribute to the legend. They start singing ‘Tera jaana, dil ke aramaanon ka loot jaana...’ from *Anari* (1959), their eyes fixed on their smartphone screens for the lyrics.

Strangers till some minutes ago, they met on Sunday afternoon as they queued up for the last glimpse of the singer. Preetu Rani Singh and Abhishek Bhardwaj, who are part of a music band, led the chorus while the others who sang along were just music lovers.

For Singh, catching a glimpse of her idol was not the only reason why she came rushing there with Bhardwaj as soon as they got to know of the venue. She said she wanted to express her gratitude to Mangeshkar.

Fifteen years ago, when Singh moved to Mumbai from Bokaro, she earned her living by performing popular songs of the legendary singer at a hotel and bar in Chembur.

“In Mumbai, I met Abhishek, who is like a guide and big brother. He formed an orchestra group and that is how I have been making my living. We perform regularly at shows in different places. I have even got a house of my own in Mumbai now. My group and I will continue to sing her songs,” said Singh. Her keyboardist husband could not come as he is taking care of their daughter, she said.

She picks ‘*Lag jaa gale*’ from *Woh Kaun Thi* (1964) and ‘*Naam gum jayega*’ from *Kinara* (1977) as two of her favourites.

As the news that Mangeshkar’s last rites would be held at Shivaji Park spread, people from far and wide trooped in through the day, hoping to get a glimpse of the cultural icon.

Some from outside planned a trip in advance to the city when they got to know that the singer was once again put on ventilator support. One of them was Lata Vijay Londhe, 36, from Karnataka who was at the park with her mother-in-law and two aunts-in-law.

Londhe works as a domestic help while her husband is a housekeeper. After very proudly emphasising that her name too is ‘Lata’, she said, “*Didi bahut bhaari thi. Woh hamare desh ke aan baan aur shaan thi* (Didi was remarkable. She was our country’s pride and glory).”

Her favourite songs, she said, was the one that was playing at the cremation area — *Lag Jaa Gale* — and *Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon*, which Mangeshkar performed at the Republic Day celebrations in Delhi in 1963.

Visually challenged Audambar Tushiram Banker, 40, left Pune for Mumbai in the morning after coming to know of the death. Banker, who performs for an orchestra in Pune, said he once met his favourite singer and her younger sister Usha Mangeshkar at an event. He was at Shivaji Park with fellow admirer of Mangeshkar, Sunandha Mokashe, 70. “I wanted to express my love and respect for Lata Didi one last time,” said Banker.



People line up to pay their last respects to Lata Mangeshkar at Shivaji Park in Mumbai on Sunday. Deepak Joshi

Outside home: Fans, police band, memories

YOGESH NAIK
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

A MASSIVE crowd of fans, well-wishers, former associates and employees of Lata Mangeshkar turned up at her home Prabhu Kunj on Peddar Road after news of her passing away on Sunday morning.

Raghunath Patil, one of those who arrived outside her residence, worked as a driver at Yashraj Films and had come from Badlapur with a garland. “Many years back, I used to drive her to many places. I am waiting to see her and pay respects,” Patil said.

The singer’s body was brought to her home from the Breach Candy Hospital at around 1 pm.

Her house help, Bimal Sonawane (79), said, “I worked with Didi for 42 years. We used to give her medicines, clean her room, accompany her on tours to Pune and Kolhapur. During the Ganesh festival, my friends used to come for her Ganpati celebrations. I have brought laddoos for her earlier and she used to eat them. I had never travelled in a plane till I joined her services. Only because of her, I used to travel in planes.” However, police stopped Bimal from entering the building her requests to go inside.

A person, who had come from Vasai, said, “I was disappointed at the way police organised the funeral. Common people were barely allowed to get darshan. I grew up hearing her songs and can’t imagine music without Lata Mangeshkar.”

The Mumbai police band also played many of her songs outside her building.



Asha Bhosle at the Prabhu Kunj home on Mumbai’s Peddar Road. Yogesh Naik

Meanwhile, several celebrities and politicians, including Actor Amitabh Bachchan, MNS chief Raj Thackeray and singer Suresh Wadkar met the Mangeshkar family at their home. A lot of singers and people who came from the film industry were stopped by the police and political activists and were pleading to be allowed to go and pay respects.

Fans had also come outside her home and traffic at Pedder Road was moving at a slow pace. Many sobbed as her body was brought to the ground floor and as the

cortege left home. As her body was brought down, officers from three armed services draped it and on her. Some of the family members were allowed climbed atop the truck carrying her body. The traffic was halted for nearly 30 minutes as the cortege left home.

At Prabhu Kunj, contingents from the Mumbai Police, the Dogra Regiment of Indian Army, Navy and Air Force came to pay their respects. A contingent of Army and police officials accompanied the body to Shivaji Park.

Shivaji Park gets temporary status as cremation ground

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

THE BRIHANMUMBAI Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday decided to give special clearance to Shivaji Park, allowing it the status of a cremation ground, to make way for funeral of singer Lata Mangeshkar in the open ground of the premises in Dadar. The last time a cremation was held at Shivaji Park was in November 2012, when Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray was cremated on the ground.

Municipal Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal used powers vested in BMC through section 440 (2) of Mumbai Municipal Corporation (MMC) Act, 1888 that allowed public cremation at Shivaji Park, which is designated as open space in the Development Plan of Mumbai.

Chahal, while speaking to a TV channel, said that the arrangements were made for Mangeshkar’s last rites at Shivaji Park following the directions from the state government. The BMC has allowed the use of a 2000-sq foot portion of the park for funeral arrangements. The site where the 92-year-old singer’s funeral was performed is about 100-metres away from Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray’s memorial, on the west side of the Park.

Officials said the decision to allow the cremation to be carried out in the open was taken as huge crowds, including dignitaries, were expected to arrive for the funeral.



Posted on President Kovind’s Twitter handle. @rashtrapatibhvn

LEADERS PAY TRIBUTE

“The kind and caring Lata Didi has left us. She leaves a void in our nation that cannot be filled. The coming generations will remember her as a stalwart of Indian culture, whose melodious voice had an unparalleled ability to mesmerise people.”

NARENDRA MODI
PRIME MINISTER

“Lataji’s demise is heart-breaking for me, as it is for millions the world over. In her vast range of songs, rendering the essence and beauty of India, generations found expression of their inner-most emotions.”

RAM NATH KOVIND
PRESIDENT

“A completer of notes and music, Lata Didi, through her melodious and spellbinding voice, imbued generations of India and the world with the sweetness of Indian music. Her contribution to the world of music cannot be expressed in words. Her demise is a personal loss for me.”

AMIT SHAH
UNION HOME MINISTER

“She remained the most beloved voice of India for many decades. Her golden voice is immortal and will continue to echo in the hearts of her fans.”

RAHUL GANDHI
CONGRESS LEADER

“...India has lost a great daughter. She was the Nightingale of India and through her songs made an immense contribution to the country’s cultural integration.”

MANMOHAN SINGH, EX-PM

“Her songs will continue to inspire us... The world of music has suffered a huge loss.”

YOGI ADITYANATH, CM, UP

Mourning Across the Country

GOA

STATE MOURNING was declared in Goa from February 6-8. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant flew to Mumbai on Sunday to attend Lata Mangeshkar’s last rites. “Anguished by the demise of the nightingale of India, Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar ji...,” he said in a tweet.

MADHYA PRADESH

TWO DAYS of state mourning, from February 6-7, announced in Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in a statement: “The nightingale is no more. The great era of Indian music has come to an end. Lata didi, without you this country is deserted, the songs and music of this country are lost. Every house is empty, the heart is empty. No one can ever fill your gap. People will continue to worship you as the goddess of music. Humble salutations at the feet of Lata didi.”

KARNATAKA

TWO DAYS of mourning declared in Karnataka, during which no official pub-



Tricolour at half-mast on Rashtrapati Bhavan. Praveen Khanna

lic events will be held. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai expressed his condolences, saying, “She will remain an eternally shining star in the world of music. Her songs are in the air every second in some or the other part of the country. Lata will remain in our hearts every moment.”

KERALA

NO OFFICIAL function will be held in Kerala on February 6 and February 7. The national

flag will be flown at half-mast. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan paid tribute to Lata Mangeshkar, saying she was a “matchless singer who conquered the hearts of the world with her mellifluous voice”.

ASSAM

CHIEF MINISTER Himanta Biswa Sarma, along with other state ministers, observed a minute of silence during a BJP function on Sunday. “Lataji was very close to our heart and she shared a very special bond with the people of Assam...,” Sarma tweeted.

JHARKHAND

THE JHARKHAND government announced two days of mourning, during which flags will fly at half-mast and there will be no government functions.

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

THE UNION Territory of Jammu and Kashmir notified that the national flag would fly at half-mast in the UT from February 6-7, and that there would be no official entertainment during this period.

Public holiday in Maharashtra today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

IN A rare instance, the Maharashtra government on Sunday declared a public holiday on Monday across the state to mourn the death of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. Sources in the government said that this is a rare instance in the recent past of the state government announcing a public holiday as a mark of respect.

The state government notification said: “Bharat Ratna Lata Mangeshkar passed away on Sunday, February 6, 2022. Her death has caused an immense loss to the music, art world and it’s the great loss of the nation. To pay tribute to this legendary singer, a public holiday is being declared in the state on Monday 7th February 2022.” The notification added that the state is exercising the powers vested in it under Section 25 of the Negotiable Instrument Act, 1881.

A senior bureaucrat said that though it is a rare instance in the recent past to announce a public holiday, there has been a precedent for



At the funeral procession. Ganesh Shirsekhar

announcing such holidays in history. “The state wants to show its affection for the legendary singer through this,” said the bureaucrat.

Notably, no public holiday was announced in the state after the death of Bharat Ratna Pandit Bhimsen Gururaj Joshi who passed away in 2011. No state holiday was announced on the death of Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray, who was also cremated at the Shivaji Park in 2012.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has ex-

pressed grief at the demise of Mangeshkar. “The death of Lata Mangeshkar was the end of a glorious era. Her melodious voice was immortal and she will continue to live among us,” said Thackeray.

“She was a symbol of a motherly blessing. Her voice has brought alive all situations in everyone’s lives. Her voice broke all the barriers of language, region, caste, creed and religion,” he added.

Thackeray also said that Lata Mangeshkar shared warm relations with his family. “She was an avid photographer and had knowledge about good cameras and different lenses. We often discussed photography and she was present at my photo exhibitions to bless me. Recently, when I was hospitalised, she enquired about my health,” said the CM.

Following the state government order, University of Mumbai will remain closed on Monday, February 7 to mourn the demise of Mangeshkar. In view of this, the online exams of MA and MCom by Institute of Distance & Open Learning, which were scheduled to be held on Feb 7, have been postponed. A revised examination schedule will be announced soon.

12 THE LATA LEGEND 1929-2022

‘Lata Mangeshkar was a legend but dedicated herself to the song like a newcomer’

One of India’s biggest cultural icons, Lata Mangeshkar leaves behind a legacy of unparalleled excellence



BY PRASEEN JOSHI

ARTISTES, BY nature, shape-shift. The calling, intensity, purpose and expression change as they make and unmake themselves and, in turn, their craft in the journey of life.

The work of true artistes has the power to inspire, tear apart, hurt and heal. Living at the crossroads of potential and manifestation, very few transcend to immortalise their craft. Lata Mangeshkar was this artiste and more.

They say she was 92. The lilt in her intonation, the twinkle in her eyes and the agility of her wit belied a young girl at heart. The voice of Lata Mangeshkar — the nightingale of India, Bharat Ratna, *swar kokila*, queen of melody — has journeyed through generations of Indians, in fact, generations of people across the Indian subcontinent. Her voice and songs crossed geographical and generational boundaries. Independent India’s last seven-and-a-half decades and living memories have one constant — Lata Mangeshkar. Today, for many who have never met her but have just heard her voice, it seems that they are in mourning for the death of a family member. And indeed so, for her voice has been a companion, through the flush of young love and romance — *Chalo sajna jahan tak ghata chale* (*Mere Hamdam Mere Dost*, 1968), *Ehsaan tera hoga mujh par* (*Jungle*, 1961), *Lag ja gale* (*Woh Kaun Thi?*, 1964) — to poignant moments — *Bekas pe karam* (*Mughal-E-Azam*, 1960), *Jo humne dastan apni sunayi* (*Woh Kaun Thi?*), from sheer devotion — *Ae malik tere bande* (*Do Aankhen Barah Haath*, 1957), *Jyoti kalash chhalke* (*Bhabhi Ki Chudiyen*, 1961), *Vaishnav jan to*, to empowerment — *Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai* (*Guide*, 1965), and from loss — *Luka chuppi* (*Rang De Basanti*, 2006), *Dil hoom hoom kare* (*Rudaali*, 1993) to collective pain — *Ae mere watan ke logon...*, the list is rich.

Can a single voice have the mastery, the power to reach out to the soul, skim myriad sentiments and deep dive into an ocean of emotions? What made Lata Mangeshkar so valuable as an artiste? Her formidable talent, her rooted classical music training, her love for the language or the single-minded devotion to her chosen path? Perhaps, all of these and, maybe, none of these. For, I believe that a true artiste is always seeking — to fill a gap, to surpass herself, to find the sublime. It’s this search that defines an artiste’s journey. Lataji sang for not a classical but a popular art form, the world of cinema, demonstrating once again that there is no — nor ought to be — high-brow or low-brow art form; that what shines through the field of art is the sheer calibre of the artiste.

For me, Lataji signified a blessing. As a young 20-something, I was fortunate to have had the legendary Lata Mangeshkar sing my first Hindi film song for *Lajja* (2001), directed by Rajkumar Santoshi. The illustrious Ilaiyaraajaji was the composer. It was a dream debut for someone like me, unconnected to the film industry. I recall I was in the midst of an ad film shoot on the outskirts of Mumbai when I got a call informing me that Lataji would be going to the studio in Mahalaxmi that evening to record the song and wanted the team to be

present. Racing against time, I wrapped up my shoot and got into the car. A few kilometres down, amid the sea of vehicles in the infamous Mumbai traffic, I realised there was little chance of me reaching the studios on time. Thoughts raced in my head; how could I, as a professional, not be present for my work and more critically, how could I ever lose the opportunity to witness Lataji — the great Lata Mangeshkar — render voice to my words? I got off the car and ran to the local train station only to confront the swarming sea of humanity that Mumbai is during peak hours. Jostling my way through, I daresay without a ticket, for there was simply not a nanosecond to spare, I somehow made it to the studios a second before Lataji entered. Collecting myself under her penetrating gaze, I read aloud the lyrics. She had studied them already and launched into a discussion on the use of the word “*pawan*” (wind), about its grammar, whether in Hindi it is masculine or feminine. After a discussion where I convinced her about its usage in my lines, she smiled and said, “*Aap apna kaam jaante hain, aapko aata hai* (you know your work)”. Coming from Lataji, who had worked with great poets and lyricists, I was simply thrilled. It was a blessing to have begun my journey with greats like Ilaiyaraaja and Lataji.

Some years later, we met again at AR Rahman’s studios in Chennai to record *Rang De Basanti*’s *Luka chuppi*, a poignant song made immortal in her voice. This was the last song written in the film, an afterthought that struck us after watching the initial rushes. Rahman got cracking, and came up with the opening bars of the *mukhda* (refrain). The scene was of the state funeral of a young Indian Air Force officer who had sacrificed his life. However, rather than a predictable *deshbhakti* (patriotic) song for this scene, the thought which struck me was that of a mother’s loss of her only child and her memories of his childhood, of the game of hide-and-seek between a mother and her little son. The only difference here is that the son is now hidden forever. Lataji caught onto the heartbreaking loss and emotion of this song. It was an experience seeing her immerse herself. She was a legend but dedicated herself to the song like a newcomer. She refused to take her art or her stature for granted. She took two to three days, memorised the entire piece, and rehearsed it. Only then did she record the song. I think the recording went on for seven-eight hours, and she stood all through despite her advancing age. *Luka chuppi* has her immortal touch — a song which, even now, moistens the eyes and moves many a heart.

Lataji was blessed. Perhaps, the inexplicable is expressed through true artistes, for they are not just talents but an energy field, a manifestation of a divine boon. A gifted artiste should not be dissected, for they are layered, and what should truly matter is how deeply one was moved by the sheer force of her talent.

For those who decried her for expressing staunch support to her beliefs, the governance and love for the nation, the shallowness of that judgement and the magnitude of her genius will, perhaps, be felt more today. For what better tribute can there be than to have us sing in unison — in honour of a voice that melted mountains.

Death is not always a matter of sadness; it also connotes a completion. Lataji has completed her journey with aplomb. She leaves behind a lilt legacy which will hum and sing to our soul.

Praseen Joshi is a poet, lyricist and chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification



Photos: Express Archive

‘Every song from her is a teaching school’

A lyricist and playback singer shares how Mangeshkar influenced generations



BY SWANAND KIRKIRE

IF YOU consider a note to be a circle, then Lata Mangeshkar would hit the *shruti* (micronote) at the centre of it — every note came with so much perfection. In my conversations with Hindustani classical legend Kumar Gandharva, he would say, “*Gaane sunne hain toh Lata ke suno, aur wahan se seekho.*”

She was someone who reached the art form’s pinnacle, showcasing the greatness it was capable of. She made the complex process seem so effortless that music reached every household in



Mangeshkar with Jaikishan and Rafi

the subcontinent.

She started under the influence of icons such as Noor Jehan and Shamshad Begum, with songs in *Mahal* (1949) and *Andaz* (1949), which is why one hears her singing in a nasal tone, but slowly as she found her own voice, different facets started to unfold. The musical octave where she would take the heroine’s voice in the most ordinary

manner, was exemplary. Otherwise, the way the actors spoke and the way they sang sounded different. Lataji’s voice matched that speaking voice and that’s something that influenced generations at large. People have always said that Asha (Bhosle) was the vamp’s voice but Lata, too, came with those variations. She also sang in so many languages.

She was criticised for asking for the singer’s share of royalty and had a tiff with (Mohammed) Rafi *sahab* over the same but she was ruling the industry at the time and knew her rights.

There are so many songs, such a massive oeuvre that she leaves us with, but one that I’ll always remember is *Allah tero naam, ishqwar tero naam*. It’s not just a *bhajan*, it’s a lesson for life. There is no other way that it could have been sung. Every song from her is a teaching school. If you can replicate even one song with as much purity, you would have learned a lot of music.

(AS TOLD TO SUANSHU KHURANA)



The house in Pune where Lata Mangeshkar lived with her father, Deenanath Mangeshkar, between 1940 and 1942. Pavan Khengre

‘She was a voice from my childhood’



BY KS CHITHRA

LIKE MANY families, everyone at my home in Kerala was fond of Hindi songs. So, Lataji was a familiar voice for me from my childhood, even if I didn’t know who she was. We used to have a collection of albums and records, including Lataji’s famous ones that had some of her well-known recordings from London.

My first meeting with Lataji was in 1989, when she was felicitated at the Madras Telugu Academy after winning the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. I wasn’t invited, but I had a recording with SPB sir (SP Balasubrahmanyam) that day. He told me that he wanted to finish early and leave for the event. I begged him to take me along and he agreed. After the event, he introduced me to her. She said, “I have heard you singing.” That was a trophy for me, the most significant recognition.

Later, there was a concert in Mumbai to celebrate her 75th birthday in 2004. On the day of the concert, I was very tense but I managed to go to her and introduce myself. That day, I sang *Rasik balma* (*Chori Chori*, 1956), one of her favourites, and *Rulake gaya sapna* (*Jewel Thief*, 1967).

On her 80th birthday, I recorded an album titled *Nightingale*, and my husband sent that to Lataji. After a few days, she called me. I was surprised to hear her voice. She told me that she had heard all the songs and she loved them.

After the demise of my daughter, I was closeted at home. That is when I was selected for an award in the name of Lataji in 2012. When the organisers called me, I told them that I could not attend the event. That same evening, Lataji called me. She consoled me and insisted that I should not be withdrawing from the world. She told me that I had to attend the event and receive the award. I was promised that she would also come, but she failed to make it due to personal reasons. That was my last call with Lataji.

KS Chithra is a playback singer and Carnatic musician
(AS TOLD TO ARUN JANARDHANAN)

SUANSHU KHURANA

FROM SINGING in stuffy studios, once upon a time, to standing for eight hours for *Luka chuppi*, here are 25 iconic songs by Lata Mangeshkar that defined Hindi film music in the 20th and 21st century: **AAYEGA AANEWALA (MAHAL, 1949):** With this haunting Khemchand Prakash composition, Lata Mangeshkar sealed her unrivalled supremacy in the Indian film industry. The song broke all records at Radio Ceylon and people flooded their office with letters asking for the singer’s name (the gramophone company only carried the character’s name, Kamini). Lata Mangeshkar had arrived. **UTHAYE JA UNKE SITAM (ANDAZ, 1949):** Picturised on Nargis, written by Rajendra Krishan and composed by C Ramchandra, this wistful number catapulted Mangeshkar into success. The nasal timbre of her voice in this was the result of Mangeshkar’s admiration for Noor Jehan. **YEH ZINDAGI USI KI HAI (ANARKALI, 1953):** In this top-grossing film, in which Mangeshkar sang eight songs, this song in the sombre raga Bhimpalasi became the defining sound of heartbreak. **AAJA RE PARDESI (MADHUMATI, 1958):** This haunting number, from the Bimal Roy masterpiece, set to tune by Salil Chowdhury, impressed lyricist Shailendra to gift flowers to Mangeshkar. **PYAAR KIYA TOH DARNA KYA (MUGHAL-E-AZAM, 1960):** Shakeel Badayuni’s fearless lyrics, Naushad’s

brilliant composition, Mangeshkar’s voice and Madhubala as Anarkali immortalised the song which would become a lover’s rallying call.

O SAJNA BARKHA BAHAAAR (PARAKH, 1960): This raga Khamaj-based rain song by Salil Chowdhury was a high point for Mangeshkar and a most delightful moment in the Bimal Roy film.

ALLAH TERO NAAM, ISHWAR TERO NAAM (HUM DONO, 1961): This evocative *bhajan* by Jaidev had Sahir merge “Allah” and “Ishwar” in a single sentence to give India a message of unity. Mangeshkar’s concert-regular soon became a popular school prayer.

AYE MERE WATAN KE LOGON (1963): Composer C Ramchandra and Mangeshkar were not speaking for five years, over an argument about a recordist she didn’t like, when Kavi Pradeep wrote this piece in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian War. But Mangeshkar was the sole choice for this patriotic piece, which has different chord progression in each stanza.

LAG JAA GALE (WOH KAUN THI?, 1964): A fine composition by Madan Mohan, Mangeshkar’s hauntingly beautiful voice soars through the top notes and descends with equal ease.

AAJ PHIR JEENE KI TAMANNA HAI (GUIDE, 1965): Among SD Burman’s



Lata Mangeshkar sang for popular films such as *Pakeezah*, *Silsila* and *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (left to right)



greatest compositions, if *Tere mere sapne* was the most intense piece of writing by Shailendra, *Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai* became an expression of feminine liberation.

KUCHH DIL NE KAHA (ANUPAMA, 1966): This is, perhaps, the most underestimated of her songs. Hemant Kumar composed Kaifi Azmi’s verses delicately and Mangeshkar rendered them an ethereal quality.

CHALTE CHALTE (PAKEEZAH, 1972): This seminal piece by composer Ghulam Mohammed and poet Kaifi Azmi, set

along a looped tabla groove in Keherwa (eight-beat) *taal*, is the contemplation of a courtesan, Sahibjaan (Meena Kumari). **RAINA BEETI JAYE (AMAR PREM, 1972):** For someone who almost always worked with Asha Bhosle, RD Burman approached his wife’s elder sister, Mangeshkar, for this prayer of a song, composed in raga Lalit. Bhosle would pick a fight with him that he’d give all the good songs to “*didi*”.

EK PYAR KA NAGMA HAI (SHOR, 1972): This meditative Laxmikant-Pyarelal song, also one of their finest, had

Mangeshkar singing about life and death. Written by Santosh Anand, it had Pyarelal playing the violin.

NAAM GOOM JAYEGA (KINARA, 1977): RD Burman’s uniform composition elevated Gulzar’s austere lyrics: the phrase *Meri awaaz hi pehchaan hai/gar yaad rahe* will eerily ring true now that its female voice has fallen silent.

YEH KAHAN AA GAYE HUM (SILSILA, 1981): Composed by Hindustani classical maestros Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma (santoor) and Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), and interwoven with Amitabh Bachchan reciting poetry, the song remains ever-charming.

AYE DIL-E-NADAAN (RAZIA SULTAN, 1983): In this ambitious venture by Kamal Amrohi, composer Khayyam created one of his career-best melodies with immortal lyrics by Jan Nisar Akhtar.

MANN KYUN BEHKA (UTSAV, 1984): One of the few Lata Mangeshkar-Asha Bhosle duets, the tender number was a breath of fresh air in the disco-ruled ’80s. The story goes that Bhosle would sing her lines and look at her elder sister and only Mangeshkar’s nod would bring her relief.

YAARA SEELI SEELI (LEKIN, 1991): Mangeshkar, whose achingly beautiful notes soared to thrilling registers with *yeh bhi koi jeena hai, yeh bhi koi marna*, won the National Award for her brother

Hridaynath Mangeshkar’s composition. **SUNIYO JI ARAJ MHARI (LEKIN..., 1991):** The long *alap* will go down in history as one of the finest beginnings to a piece. The *bandish* was composed in raga Vihangani, a raga created by Pt Mani Prasad of Kirana *gharana*.

DIL HOOM HOOM KARE (RUDAALI, 1993): The use of the word *hoom hoom* by Gulzar, an onomatopoeia for heart-beat, was a masterstroke in this song from the Kalpana Lajmi film based on Mahasweta Devi’s short story of the same name.

MAAYE NI MAAYE (HUM AAPKE HAIN KOUN..!, 1994): A play on Shiv Kumar Batalvi’s poem of the same name, Mangeshkar was 65 when she sang this for Madhuri Dixit. Her voice had started showing signs of age, but the notes were perfect in this popular song from the ’90s, along with *Didi tera dewar deevana*.

MERE KHWABON MEIN JO AAYE (DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE, 1995): Mangeshkar struke a chord with the youth with this Jatin-Lalit composition that had Kajol dancing in a towel.

JIYA JALE JAAN JALE (DIL SE, 1998): AR Rahman convinced Mangeshkar to sing the gentle, romantic song. It was the late ’90s and she’d become extremely picky, but she sang and the number was a huge hit.

LUKA CHUPPI (RANG DE BASANTI, 2006): Mangeshkar stood bare feet, recording this heartrending Rahman-composed piece written by Praseen Joshi, for eight hours. It will remain a reminder of her undying brilliance.

13 ECONOMY

COMBINED SHARE AT 14.79% IN LISTED COS

Retail investors, MFs cushion FPI exit impact, raise holdings to record high

GEORGE MATHEW & SANDEEP SINGH
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

RETAIL INVESTORS and domestic mutual funds are increasing their presence in companies listed on the NSE, even as foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) are exiting from Indian stocks. Despite a decline in key indices, the share of retail investors — individuals with up to Rs 2 lakh shareholding — in companies listed on the NSE reached an all-time high of 7.32 per cent as on December 31, 2021 as against 7.13 as on September 30, 2021.

As a result, the value of retail holding in listed companies touched an all-time high of Rs 18.98 lakh crore from Rs 18.16 lakh crore in September 2021, an increase of 4.54 per cent. This was despite the fact that Sensex and Nifty declined by 1.48 and 1.50 per cent, respectively, during this period.

The share of high net-worth individuals (HNIs) — individuals with more than Rs 2 lakh share-

holding — in NSE-listed companies also reached an all-time high of 2.26 per cent as on December 31, 2021 from 2.12 per cent on September 30, 2021, thus taking the combined retail and HNI share to also an all-time high of 9.58 per cent, according to Primeinfo-base.com, an initiative of PRIME Database group.

Simultaneously, the share of FPIs in listed companies is on the decline amid indications that US Federal Reserve is likely to tighten the monetary policy and hike interest rates. According to Pranav Haldea, MD, PRIME Database Group, net outflows from FPIs of Rs 38,521 crore during the quarter resulted in FPIs' share declining to a 9-year low of 20.74 per cent as of December 2021, from 21.46 per cent as on September 30, 2021.

FPIs pulled out Rs 44,820 crore from financial services and software sector during the quarter while investing Rs 20,334 crore in retail. Holding of FPIs (in Rs value terms) in companies listed on NSE stood at Rs 53.78 lakh crore on December 31, 2021, a decrease of

EXPLAINED
E Eyes on US Fed

SHARE OF foreign portfolio investors in listed companies is on the decline amid indications that US Federal Reserve is likely to tighten the monetary policy and hike interest rates.

1.67 per cent from Rs 54.69 lakh crore as on September 30, 2021.

With investors channelising funds through SIP (systematic investment plan) schemes of MFs, the share of domestic mutual funds in companies listed on the NSE continued to rise and reached 7.47 per cent as of December 2021, up from 7.36 per cent in September 2021. This was after five quarters of consecutive decline from March 31, 2020 (7.96 per cent) to June 30, 2021 (7.25 per cent). The share has increased on the back of net inflows by domes-

tic mutual funds of a huge Rs 51,909 crore during the quarter, Haldea said.

In value terms too, the holding of domestic mutual funds went up by 3.26 per cent to an all-time high of Rs 19.36 lakh crore as of December 2021 from Rs 18.75 lakh crore in September 2021. Retail investors have been pumping money into equity schemes of mutual funds in the last several months. Retail investors and MFs' share is at 14.79 per cent.

The share of LIC, the largest investor in Indian stocks, across 278 companies — where its holding is more than 1 per cent — declined marginally to an all-time low of 3.67 per cent as on December 31, 2021 from 3.69 per cent as on September 30, 2021 and from all-time high of 5 per cent as on June 30, 2012. However, in value terms, it reached an all-time high of Rs 9.53 lakh crore in the quarter ended December 2021, an increase of 1.46 per cent over previous quarter. LIC also continues to command a lion's share of investments in equities by insurance

companies (77 per cent share).

Share of insurance firms as a whole declined to a 6-year low of 4.79 per cent as on December 31, 2021 down from 4.81 per cent as on September 30, 2021. In Rs value terms though, it went up 1.3 per cent from the previous quarter to an all-time high of Rs 12.42 lakh crore as on December 31, 2021.

Share of domestic institutional investors (DIIs), which includes domestic mutual funds, insurance companies, banks, financial institutions, pension funds etc., as a whole, increased to 13.22 per cent as on December 31, 2021 from 13.12 per cent as on September 30, 2021, on the back of net inflows from DIIs of a huge Rs 66,262 crore during the quarter. In value terms, DIH holding too went up to an all-time high of Rs 34.27 lakh crore as on December 31, 2021, an increase of 2.48 per cent over the last quarter. The total institutional share — FPIs and DIIs — also declined to a 3-year low of 33.95 per cent in quarter ended December 2021, down from 34.59 in quarter ended September 2021.

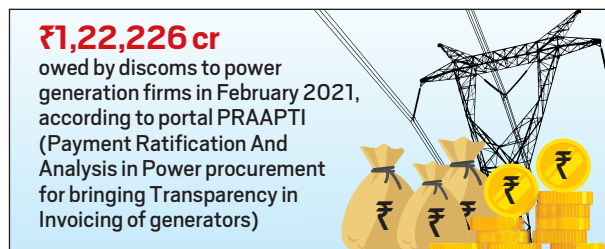
On a sequential basis also, total dues in February 2022 declined from Rs 1,16,834 crore in January 2022

PRAAPTI portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and discoms

In February, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 45 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,03,014 crore as against Rs 99,394 crore in the same month a year ago

Discoms' outstanding dues to gencos dip 5% in Feb

Total outstanding dues owed by electricity distribution companies (discoms) to power producers dipped 5.1 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,15,972 crore in February 2022, according to the latest PRAAPTI data



Power producers give 45 days to discoms to pay bills for electricity supply. After that, outstanding dues become overdue and generators charge penal interest on that in most cases

Source: PRAAPTI/PTI

FM: Prepared to deal with US Fed move on monetary easing

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE GOVERNMENT is prepared to deal with all kinds of risks that may arise out of global developments, including those that may crop up due to the US Federal Reserve's decision to roll back monetary easing, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

In a post-Budget interaction with senior executives from Indian industry, Sitharaman said that the government would do everything to deal with these situations to ensure that the domestic economy does not suffer. She was speaking at an event organised by industry body Ficci.

"What I would seek from India Inc is its time now for us, as Team India, to rise. We are such a juncture where revival of the economy is very clear. All of us say it, see it,



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a Ficci session. via @ficci_indiaTwitter

and also feel it. It may not be equal across the board, yet it is observable. This recovery is going to place India as the fastest growing economy among the larger economies and that would continue even the next fiscal," she said.

To ensure that the economy continued to grow, the Indian industry must ensure that the coun-

try does not miss the growth bus this time, Sitharaman said, adding that the country had missed an opportunity post the global financial crisis of 2008.

In another post-budget interaction with industry body Assocham, Sitharaman said that the Central government would bring up the issue of including aviation turbine fuel at the next meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) meeting.

Responding to questions and suggestions put forth by Spicejet founder Ajay Singh, the Finance Minister said rising global oil prices were not a concern just for the aviation industry but for the entire economy.

On Singh's request that the industry be given the status of priority lending like the infrastructure sector, Sitharaman said that she would have a word with the banks.

MARKET WATCH

FPIs NET SELLERS IN FEB SO FAR

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors pulled out Rs 6,834 crore from markets in the first four trading sessions of February. As per depositories data, FPIs took out Rs 3,627 crore from equities, Rs 3,173 crore from debt segment and Rs 34 crore from hybrid instruments. **PTI**

INTERVIEW WITH SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

'Infra push has larger, lasting multiplier effect, will create demand, jobs'

DEPARTMENT OF Economic Affairs Secretary AJAY SETH said the capex push in next fiscal year's Budget should lead to job creation at three different levels, leading to a "much larger and much lasting multiplier effect". In an interview with SUNNY VERMA, he said the balanced policy approach of the government has served the country well. Edited excerpts:



Ajay Seth

Express file

There is a view that fiscal consolidation has been on the lower side and gross market borrowing is higher than expected. Could it crowd out private investment?

You have made three points. One, fiscal consolidation is not good enough, we should have done more. The Finance Minister last year gave a commitment to meet 4.5 per cent by 2025-26. We should appreciate this aspect that in a pandemic year, expenditure, including support to the needy and other expenditure on health, has been increased significantly, which led to deficit rising sharply. From there to suddenly go in (for 4.5 per cent), it's like moving at a high speed and suddenly putting a break, it would have created a huge problem for the economy and this strong revival would have been extremely difficult or delayed. So, it is necessary to adopt a glide path. And the glide path means that gradually we land up by 2025-26. There will be another commitment that how we go beyond four-and-a-half per cent. But that's really not the goal now. It has been brought down to 6.9 per cent already, and 6.4 per cent is the target for next year.

The second wave, which was very intense, and then we have a third wave, these also led to a lot more expenditure, but still the government managed the fiscal deficit to be 6.9 per cent. And, that is inclusive of whatever monies have been given to settle Air India (liabilities). So, whatever was committed in the glide path, this half a percentage point in one year in a fiscal consolidation is not less. Several economists and informed analysts had advised that don't go for a sharp correction, go for a gradual correction.

So that is one, second, borrowings are more than expected. Now, there I will say that perhaps that entire information has not been appreciated by the people who are making that comment. Of course, this absolute borrowing has to be seen in relative proportion of GDP, not a number per se, absolute amount per se. But even in absolute basis... is not a significant increase. But coming back to this that how it is going to be financed. There are several sources out there, including small savings, drawdown from cash balances. And small savings in current year are going to be close to about Rs 6 lakh crore this year. Next year, our estimate is that small savings collections may go down to about Rs 4.25 lakh crore as people may find more attractive avenues than putting money in a small saving.

On the other hand, if the small saving collections were to be as high as current year, obviously borrowings will go down. The market borrowings will go down compared to what has been projected. Now, third one is whether it will

crowd out (private investment). Now, that happens when the private sector is investing and consumption is at higher level, where people are competing with the money available in the economy. But, we have a situation where the credit off-take, non-food credit is very moderate. So, here is a classic case of crowding in private investment. When the economy is running at full potential, then government increasing its borrowing will crowd out, but not at this stage.

While the government has this idea that capex will create jobs and incomes, but there is also a view not much has been done for the troubled segments of the economy and society.

The balanced approach which the government has adopted in the past two years has served the economy extremely well - direct support to those on the demand side, who needed the direct support in a targeted manner, and taking care of a whole lot of supply side issues, that led to a sharp recovery into the economy. And I'll also draw your attention to some of the analysis, which has come out that the countries that adopted direct support, without looking at the supply-side issues, have run into high inflation, which we did not do. The government has done very prudent management of the pandemic ... The government adopted something which was suitable for Indian conditions and that has served us well. Now, moving to this aspect that how do we propose to support further the sectors which may require support?

It is through the enterprises that lead to large-scale employment. For example, MSMEs. It's well accepted that they are very large employers. Our sense is that they require hand holding for another year. So, instead of saying that this guarantee cover for additional working capital is no longer available, it has been extended by 1 year, up to March 2023. Plus, hospitality-related sectors like tourism, etc., are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels. So, for them this specific window has been created of Rs 50,000 crore. And, remember, ECLGS is one option that is not with the bank. It is for the units to say they want additional working capital and that is provided, so that support has been provided.

Second, what we should also look at is that this is not a question of this year capex being increased, last year also was a 34.5 per cent rise. Those investments and what has been announced this year, first of all, it straight away leads to increasing demand for goods and services which flows into the infrastructure - steel, cement, con-

struction industry, transport sector; that generates demand as well as jobs. Plus it generates the secondary level jobs. And, the third level of job creation comes soon, when these projects get completed and the productive capacity of the economy itself increases. So, it's well-calibrated that taking the route of investment in infrastructure, which has a much larger and much lasting multiplier effect.

Between April-November, capex spend has been less than 50 per cent of Budget Estimates. Will the Budgeted money be spent the money this year? And will capex plan get fully executed next year?

Certainly, as far as current year capex is concerned, we should keep in mind that in the first quarter supply chains were operational despite the second wave unlike the first wave. Supply chains were fully operational, but it did impact adversely the pace of expenditure on infrastructure needs and implementation. So, what we see, the performance is not eight or nine months, you are talking about November figure, but somewhere around five to six months' kind of expenditure and we have been watching it every month. So, first quarter was a low figure and then it started picking up from there. So I'm confident that Rs 5.51 lakh crore - we will almost reach there. Moving to the next year, increase is basically about Rs 2 lakh crore, of which Rs 1 lakh crore has been earmarked for the states. So instead of just confining it to the Central ministries it has been given, and they have a huge capacity and their projects are just beyond national highway and the railways. Good projects that can lead to job creation. At the same time, about Central ministries, extensive discussions have been held with Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Railways, they are the two major agencies which have a ready shelf of projects or ongoing projects, where they can step up investment provided money is given. So now the money has been provided, we see full possibility of utilising the allocation that has been done.

On digital rupee, have you identified which denomination currency will be launched first and will it be part of the money supply?

Certainly it will be part of the money supply. It's like any other fiat currency, not any other, it is the currency, the rupee. We have coins or we have using printing technology, paper notes. This will be Digital rupee, it's rupee by another technology. Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

SECTOR WATCH GREEN ENERGY

RE push: Rules to be brought in for pooling solar tariffs

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE CENTRE is set to come up with rules to pool solar tariffs and is also aiming to increase bundling of renewable energy (RE) in existing thermal Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to boost the procurement of green energy, Power Secretary Alok Kumar told *The Indian Express*. The government is aiming to boost installed RE capacity to 500 GW by 2030.

"The intention is to have a pool, in which various procurements that are done over a year, two or three years, their tariffs are pooled so that there is no problem that (some tariffs are) 5 paise lower or 5 paise higher," Kumar said on the issue of discoms (power distribution companies) waiting for solar tariffs to fall further before entering procurement agreements. He added the Power Ministry was working with the MNRE and would release rules to address the issue.

Solar tariffs have fallen consistently over the past decade to a low of under Rs 2 per unit (1 unit = 1 kWh) in December 2020 due to the falling price of solar panels and lower financing cost. The trend of lower solar tariffs has led to many players waiting on tariffs to fall further instead of entering into long-term PPAs.

"Solar tariffs have fallen to as low as 3 cents or less than Rs 2.5 per kWh (kilowatt-hour) because solar panel prices have

The trend of lower solar tariffs has led to many players waiting on tariffs to fall further instead of entering into long-term PPAs

been falling for a very long time," said Debasish Mishra, partner and leader at Deloitte India, adding solar tariffs had recently begun to stagnate or fluctuate. Mishra said SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd) was "often finding it difficult to find buyers at discovered prices because discoms expect the tariffs will continue to fall even further and many of them have already met renewable purchase obligations."

Mishra said a move to pool tariffs could help speed up procurement of solar power by addressing concerns, among discoms, of losing out on lower solar tariffs in the future.

Kumar noted that the government intended that about 10,000 MW of RE-based power be bundled with fossil fuel-based power over the next 4-5 years, and this would help lower total cost of power procurement for certain discoms. Mishra said a move to bundle cheaper renewable energy under these deals would help discoms lower their average cost of power procurement.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Forex, money markets closed

Mumbai: With February 7 being declared a public holiday by the Maharashtra government as a mark of respect to Lata Mangeshkar, money, government securities and forex markets will remain closed, as per an RBI statement. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet has also been rescheduled to February 8-10. **ENS**

2021: ADB lends \$4.6 bn

New Delhi: The Asian Development Bank has said it provided a record \$4.6 billion loans to India in 2021, including \$1.8 billion towards Covid response. **PTI**

INTERVIEW WITH FORMER TWITTER INDIA HEAD AND METAVERSITY CO-FOUNDER

'Metaversity joining VR, identity, assets for holistic education'

THERE NEEDS to be a fundamental change in the way education is thought of and that should not be limited to uploading videos of educational and professional courses online, former Twitter India head and Metaversity co-founder MANISH MAHESHWARI believes. In an exclusive interview with AASHISH ARYAN, he says higher education should not be limited to only those who can afford to go to such campuses. Edited excerpts:

What is the idea behind launching Metaversity as a platform?

In the last two years, education has gone online, not by choice but by compulsion. Before Covid, it was unfathomable that classes would be online, people would get degrees online. As a result, a lot of quick fixes appeared. Software

meant for office communication was being used for classroom teaching.

What we are now building is a combination of virtual experience, identity and assets and bringing together all these so that we can holistically solve for students - from the beginning. Instead of watching a class happening, you would actually be sitting, experiencing the class. A simple VR (virtual reality) device will help you do that. The hardware cost is going down. Our view is that in the next few quarters, this would probably be about \$100, which is Rs 7,000-Rs 10,000. The bandwidth is also almost free. So why should you then not experience the feeling of being in a classroom?

The most amount of learning for me in college came from before and after the class when I hung out



Manish Maheshwari
Credit: company

with my friends in libraries, cafeteria and auditoriums. There was so much networking. That is all

missing in online learning today. The completing rate is less than 10 per cent in online learning.

Through a Metaversity, we are going to bring social and community back to learning. I come from Twitter, so I know the power of building social, of community. During Covid times, I saw how people connected online and built community. I want to bring the same to learning.

Are you a pioneer in the meta space or you are too early with a platform for an ecosystem which is still in early stages?

Our view is that the world is ready now. The number one reason is Covid. People have accepted that things can be done virtually and that is here to stay. Even if Covid goes away, everyone might not go to the campus all days a

week. They might go one or two days a week. The world is also ready for a metaverse. People like more immersive experience, and in education, there has not been any fundamental innovation so far. People are also just hanging out in virtual spaces. Our view is that this space is innovating very fast.

How do you plan to compete with other bigger companies in the metaverse who will come at you with much deeper pockets?

Zoom was nowhere two years ago and look at where it is now. How did it become so big now? Everyone will try to get into this space. But we are single-mindedly focusing on education. We are not going to build a layer which is for everything. We will remain student focused. Yes, everyone will try to do it, but that is the beauty of it.

The market is huge. There will be different variations of solving one problem and a small nimble team is much more likely to pivot and find the answer than a larger team at a larger company.

Metaverse is a very different layer from internet. My view would be that it resets the playing field and creates a new way of doing things. Different players will come and occupy different verticals. Our desire is to occupy the educational part of metaverse.

I think existing companies have a huge legacy baggage that they have to unload and things cannot move as fast. They may not see a new trend on the horizon.

How big is your company? Where do you plan to expand it?

We are a global, US-based company with a team of about

50 people now. We have a tech team in Bengaluru. What we are building has global applicability. We are expanding as a lot of people want to work on the cutting edge of both education and metaverse. Our plan is to run two courses in India first and then one in the US, and then invite schools and colleges to re-create their campuses online. Many colleges want to do that because they realise that the real estate that they have had, for the past two-three years, is lying waste.

Students can be anywhere and it is brutal to expect them to travel to a town, leave their home and attend some course. We are getting good traction from students as well. Our first course starts in May in the Metaversity campus. We are adding and hiring more.

Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

14 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



President Pedro Castillo said on Friday he would reshuffle the Cabinet. Reuters

PERU

After four days on job, Peru PM resigns

Lima: Peruvian Prime Minister Hector Valer confirmed on Saturday that he is departing just four days after being named to the post, following allegations that he beat his daughter and late wife, creating a new leadership vacuum in the Andean nation. President Pedro Castillo said on Friday he would reshuffle the Cabinet in light of the allegations, but did not address whether Valer would leave. Castillo must now name his fourth cabinet in just six months, which he said will incorporate representatives of a range of political groups. It is unclear when an announcement will take place. **AP**

UNITED KINGDOM

Giuffre case: Prince Andrew to give proof next month

London: Britain's Prince Andrew will give evidence next month in the sex abuse lawsuit brought by Virginia Giuffre, a source close to the Prince said on Saturday. The Duke of York, who denies accusations that he sexually abused Giuffre two decades ago when she was 17, will speak under oath in London, the Daily Telegraph reported. "We agreed to voluntarily produce the Duke for a deposition on March 10. Despite repeated requests, Giuffre still hasn't committed to a date or location for her deposition," the source said. **REUTERS**

MOROCCO

5-year-old boy trapped in well dies before rescue

Rabat: A five-year-old boy trapped in a well in northern Morocco for five days died before rescuers were able to reach him late on Saturday and retrieve his body, government officials said. Footage posted on social media showed the scene after his body was recovered, with hundreds of distraught rescue workers and onlookers gathered at the site. Rayan Awram fell into the well at his village of Ighran on Tuesday, triggering a huge rescue effort that engrossed the country. **REUTERS**

Rishi Sunak admits to attending Downing Street lockdown party

HSRAO

LONDON, FEBRUARY 6

UK'S INDIAN-ORIGIN Chancellor Rishi Sunak has admitted to attending Prime Minister Boris Johnson's lockdown birthday party in 2020 but refused to say what happened when he entered the room and claimed that he was there for a meeting to discuss the Covid-19 situation.

His comments came after Johnson's five aides, including longstanding policy chief Munira Mirza, chief of staff Dan Rosenfield, principal private secretary Martin Reynolds and communications director Jack Doyle, resigned on Thursday.

Sunak, who lives next door to the PM in Downing Street, is also reported to have attended a surprise birthday party for Johnson in No. 10's Cabinet Room in June 2020.

He acknowledged that the scandal surrounding parties during lockdown at Downing Street has damaged the public's trust in the government, the BBC reported. I can appreciate people's frustration. And I think it's now the job of all of us in government, all politicians, to restore people's trust."

The Chancellor, however,

EXPLAINED

Who is Rishi Sunak?

RISHI SUNAK, who has had a high profile role in publicising the government's support for the economy during the pandemic, is one of the names doing rounds to replace PM along with foreign minister Liz Truss, who is popular among grassroots party members. However, Sunak has quelled such talk and said the Prime Minister has his full support.

said that he believed his plans to deal with the cost of living crisis would help restore it.

Sunak, 41, insisted that Johnson, who is facing growing calls for his resignation, has his "full support." Dismissing talk of him replacing Johnson, the Chancellor said the Prime Minister had always told the truth about the parties. Some Tory MPs believe that Sunak, as one of the most powerful figures in the government, is the frontrunner to replace Johnson. **PTI**

Tories not near point of deposing Johnson: Minister

KATE HOLTON

LONDON, FEBRUARY 6

SENIOR MEMBERS of Boris Johnson's Conservative Party urged challengers to the Prime Minister to rein in their ambitions and focus instead on steering Britain through the biggest plunge in living standards in a generation.

Johnson is battling for his political career amid a crisis which has gripped his government over three months, with a growing number of lawmakers calling publicly for a change at the top to rebuild trust with voters.

Johnson has apologised after he and staff held parties during strict coronavirus lockdowns, at a time when many people could not say farewell in person to dying relatives, events that are being investigated by the police.

He further angered colleagues last week when he falsely accused the leader of the opposition Labour party of failing to prosecute a child sex abuser when he was in charge of public prosecu-



Boris Johnson

tions. That, critics said, shows Johnson is incapable of changing, or showing true remorse.

Iain Duncan Smith, a former Conservative Party leader, told BBC TV that the time was not right for a challenge but said such events had been hugely damaging and Johnson needed to show contrition so he "never ever gets to this point ever again".

Many people were struggling with soaring energy costs and food inflation, which were "the number one priority", he added.

Kwasi Kwarteng, Britain's business minister, said he did not think the party was near the point of deposing Johnson, adding "I don't see what he's seeing" when asked about a formerly loyal lawmaker's assertion that it was inevitable the leader would go. **REUTERS**



US troops arrive in Poland to reinforce Eastern Europe allies on Sunday. Reuters

Top Biden aide says Ukraine invasion could come 'any day'

US warns of grim toll, says could kill as many as 50k civilians

THE NEW YORK TIMES & AP

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 6

WHITE HOUSE national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Sunday that Russia could invade Ukraine "any day," launching a conflict that would come at an enormous human cost. "If war breaks out, it will come at an enormous human cost to Ukraine, but we believe that based on our preparations and our response, it will come at a strategic cost to Russia as well," Sullivan said.

Senior Biden administration officials told lawmakers this past week that they believed the Russian military had assembled 70 per cent of the forces it would need to mount a full invasion of Ukraine, painting the most ominous picture yet of the options that Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, has created for himself in recent weeks.

During six hours of closed meetings with House and Senate lawmakers on Thursday, the officials warned that if Putin chose the most aggressive of his options, he could quickly surround or capture Kyiv, the capital, and remove the country's democratically elected president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. They also warned that the invasion could prompt an enormous refugee crisis on the European continent, sending millions fleeing.

The officials stressed that US intelligence analysts still did not

GERMAN LEADER TO VISIT U.S. THIS WEEK

Berlin: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is flying to Washington this week on a mission to reassure Americans that his country stands alongside the United States and other NATO partners in opposing any Russian aggression against Ukraine. Scholz has said that Moscow would pay a "high price" in the event of an attack, but his government's refusal to supply lethal weapons to Ukraine, bolster its troop presence in eastern Europe or spell out which sanctions it would support against Russia has drawn criticism abroad and at home. **AP**

assess that Putin had made a final decision to invade. But satellite imagery, communications among Russian forces and images of Russian equipment on the move show that he has assembled everything he would need to undertake what the officials said would constitute the largest military operation on land in Europe since 1945.

They also warned of enormous possible human costs if Putin went ahead with a full invasion, including the potential

deaths of 25,000 to 50,000 civilians, 5,000 to 25,000 members of the Ukrainian military and 3,000 to 10,000 members of the Russian military. The invasion, they said, could also result in one million to five million refugees, with many of them pouring into Poland.

Should Putin decide to invade, American officials believe he is not likely to move until the second half of February. By that point, more ground will have frozen, making it easier to move heavy vehicles and equipment, and the Winter Olympics in Beijing will have ended or be winding down, which could help Putin avoid antagonising President Xi Jinping of China, a critical ally for the Russian president.

Late Saturday, after the briefings became public, Russia's deputy ambassador to the UN, Dmitry Polyanskiy, denounced the assessment. "Madness and scaremongering continues," Polyanskiy wrote on Twitter. "What if we would say that US could seize London in a week and cause 300K civilian deaths? All this based on our intelligence sources that we won't disclose. Would it feel right for Americans and Brits? It's as wrong for Russians and Ukrainians."

Whether Putin decides to go through with a maximalist approach or a more scaled-down version is the question with which American, European and Ukrainian officials are all grappling.

UNREST IN OTTAWA ENTERS 10TH DAY

Protesters camped out in the Canadian capital outnumber the police and control the situation, the city's mayor said on Sunday, as a demonstration against vaccine mandates clogged parts of the city for a 10th day. The 'Freedom Convoy' began as a movement against a Canadian vaccine requirement for cross-border trucks but has turned into a rallying point against public health measures and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government. **Reuters**

Xi and Imran vow to promote CPEC projects in Pakistan

K J M VARMA

BEIJING, FEBRUARY 6

CHINA ON Sunday pledged closer cooperation with Pakistan under the \$60 billion CPEC investment programme and called for resolving the Kashmir issue properly and peacefully, while opposing any "unilateral actions" that could complicate the situation as Prime Minister Imran Khan held talks with the top Chinese leadership, including President Xi Jinping.

Khan called on President Xi on the last day of his four-day visit to China to discuss a host of issues, in-

cluding the slow pace of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and increasing concerns of Beijing over recurring attacks on Chinese personnel working in its various projects in Pakistan.

In his meeting with Khan, Xi said China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty, dignity and fighting terrorism, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

He said China is willing to join hands with Pakistan to push forward the in-depth development of the CPEC and ensure the implementation of key projects. "Both sides reiterated that a

peaceful and prosperous South Asia is in the common interest of all parties," said a joint statement issued at the end of Khan's visit to China.

"They emphasised the importance of pursuit of dialogue and resolution of all outstanding disputes to promote regional cooperation and advance the goals of lasting peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region," it said. The China-Pakistan joint statement also said that China recognised Pakistan's sacrifices and efforts in the fight against terrorism adding that both sides reaffirmed their commitment to fighting terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. **PTI**

THREATENS TERMINATION OF PACT

Donor sets Feb-end deadline for Nepal to ratify \$500 million deal

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 6

AS NEPAL'S key political parties in the ruling coalition appear taking conflicting stance on Parliamentary ratification of the \$500 million US grant, donor Million Challenge Corporation (MCC) has set February 28 as the deadline to take a final call. It has also warned that the failure to arrive at a decision may lead to termination of the deal, which was signed in 2017.

In a letter addressed jointly to

Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and Maoist chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal dated February 3, MCC Acting CEO Mahomoud Bah has asked them to have the deal ratified "as promised".

"Without action on your part by February 28, the MCC board will discuss next steps at its March meeting, including whether to continue with the deal. In case of absent ratification, it is within the board's authority to discontinue Nepal's eligibility to receive \$500 million grant from the US. Such a decision will end MCC's partner-

ship with Nepal," he added.

Bah's letter is in response to a "confidential" joint letter from Deuba and Dahal written on September 29 in which both had sought additional time to get members to agree to ratify the grant in Parliament.

Dahal and his party have taken a rigid stance against the MCC deal, saying, if adopted with the current provisions, the deal would undermine Nepal's sovereignty and have implications on "non-aligned foreign policy".

'Allow credible visit by rights envoy to China'

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told Chinese leaders on Saturday that he expected authorities to allow UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet to make a "credible visit" to the country, including Xinjiang, the UN said.

Guterres met with China's President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the Winter Olympics, according to a UN readout of the meetings. "The Secretary-General expressed his expectation that the contacts between the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Chinese authorities will allow for a credible visit of the High Commissioner to China, including Xinjiang," said the UN readout of Guterres' meetings. **REUTERS**

STEPHEN MCGRATH

BUCHAREST, FEBRUARY 6

MAKSIM GOLDENSHTEYN recounts a story his late grandmother once told him about how, as a 4-year-old child, she snuck out of a Jewish ghetto during World War II to retrieve her favourite dolls that had been left behind the day her family was forcibly evicted from their home in occupied Soviet Ukraine.

"She knew even at that age that because she had lighter hair and blue eyes, she could pass for a local Ukrainian girl," said Goldenshteyn. "She put on a kerchief and slipped out of the ghetto."

It is one of the stories that Seattle native Goldenshteyn tells in his book, "So They Remember," which recounts — with a blend of intimate family memoir and vigorous historical research — the Holocaust in Transnistria, a territory in occupied southern Ukraine that was controlled by Romania, a close ally to Nazi Germany for most of the war.

In that territory, where around 150 camps and ghettos operated, there played out a lesser-known but equally sinister chapter of the Holocaust, where hundreds of thousands of Jews were brutalised, exploited, and murdered.

Goldenshteyn, 33, whose family moved to the US as refugees



Author Maksim Goldenshteyn poses with his book 'So They Remember' in Seattle. AP

from the former Soviet Union in 1992, says he heard fragments of his family's past while growing up, but he never linked it to one of hu-

manity's darkest chapters.

"They didn't really align with the image of the Holocaust that I thought was representative," he

said. Then, 10 years ago, his mother told him the story. "I was shocked at first," he said.

Moved by what he'd learned, Goldenshteyn embarked on a decade-long journey researching a part of the Holocaust he feels is largely overlooked.

Awareness of Romania's role in the Holocaust, at home and abroad, is far less than that of the Nazis' role. But in Romanian-controlled territories under the military dictatorship of Ion Antonescu, between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews, plus some 12,000 Roma, were killed during the war. The decades of communism that followed, much like in the Soviet Union, all but erased

memories of the Holocaust.

In a push for wider public awareness, Romanian lawmakers passed a bill last fall to add Holocaust education to the national school curriculum, a move that was applauded by many. But it was met with controversy in January when the far-right Alliance for Romanian Unity, which holds seats in parliament, called it a "minor topic" and an "ideological experiment".

Goldenshteyn believes that Romanian authorities have made progress in recent years in acknowledging the country's role in the Holocaust, and said he was troubled by the party's comments but also encouraged by the reaction of the diplomatic community. **AP**

One inmate said she was "overwhelmed with fear, anxiety, and anger, and cried uncontrollably" after enduring abuse and retaliation at Dublin. Another said she contemplated suicide when her cries for help went unheeded and now suffers from severe anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. **AP**

Bopanna-Ramkumar pair lifts Tata Open trophy



The title is Bopanna-Ramkumar's second in as many months. PTI

Pune: India's Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan won their second ATP World Tour title together after pipping the top seeded Australian pair of Luke Saville and John-Patrick Smith in the final of the Tata Open Maharashtra, here on Sunday.

The second-seeded Indians erased the first set deficit to win 6-7 (10), 6-3, 10-6 in one hour and 44 minutes. Bopanna and Ramkumar had combined as a team on the ATP Tour for the first time at the Adelaide event last month in the run-up to the Australian Open and won the trophy. For Bopanna, it was his 21st ATP doubles title while for Ramkumar it is his second trophy at this level and it will push him inside doubles top-100 for the first time in his career.

China win Women's Asian Cup

Navi Mumbai: China came back from two goals down to defeat Korea 3-2 in a dramatic final and clinch their record-extending ninth title of the AFC Women's Asian Cup here on Sunday. Korea looked to be cruising to their maiden crown after taking a 2-0 lead at half-time but China fought back after the goals from Tang Jiali, Zhang Linyan and Xiao Yuyi, who netted the winner deep into added time to seal her side the title at the DY Patil Stadium. China entered the final chasing a record-extending ninth AFC Women's Asian Cup title against a Korea side who had never laid their hands on the coveted trophy. China, unbeaten in seven meetings with Korea, started the game brightly but conceded in the 27th minute, with Lee Geum-min breaking into the box before sending a cross to Choe Yu-Ri to score the 100th goal of the tournament. Ji So-yun converted a penalty to make it 2-0, before Tang Jiali scored from the spot in the 68th minute for China. Zhang Linyan and Xiao Yuyi then made it 3-2.

PTI

Mumbai City end winless run

Margao: Defending champions Mumbai City FC ended their seven-game winless run in the Indian Super League (ISL) with a 1-0 victory over Chennaiyin FC here on Sunday. The match was decided by a late goal from Vikram Partap Singh (85th minute) whose strike was enough to elevate Mumbai to fifth place, level on points with fourth-placed Jamshedpur FC. Des Buckingham's men were dominant in possession during the first few minutes and created more scoring chances than their opponents. Igor Angulo tested the goalkeeper with a meek left-footed shot in the 18th minute which was saved easily. The game headed into the last ten minutes without a goal on the board. However, the breakthrough finally came from Vikram Pratap Singh. The winger was fed by Bradden Inman on the far post, found himself unmarked and placed the ball in the back of the net from close-range. The five minutes for stoppages were not enough for Chennaiyin to find an equaliser as the Islanders took all three points.

PTI

Rohit wins toss, match, top scores

Sharma impresses in first assignment as full-time captain as India outclass West Indies in 1000th ODI

TUSHAR BHADURI
FEBRUARY 6

WITH THE next 50-over World Cup more than 18 months away, every One-Day International is an attempt by two teams to get missing pieces of the jigsaw in place.

Sunday in Ahmedabad saw a contest between a team that had lost its last four matches across formats and another coming off a bilateral series defeat to Ireland. There were a lot of questions about the sides' approach and efficiency in ODIs. It would be premature to suggest that India has found any answers, but their superior bench strength and the ineptitude of the West Indian batting resulted in a six-wicket win for the hosts with 22 overs to spare.

The likes of Shimron Hetmyer and Evin Lewis are not part of the ODI series, but still the display put up by their batsmen was shoddy, to put it mildly. That their best batsman was an all-rounder coming in when half the side was back in the pavilion with just 71 on the board puts the performance of the top order in perspective. Jason Holder was the only reason that West Indies avoided the ignominy of a double-digit score. As it turned out, a total of 176 with more than six overs left unused was never going to challenge India in its 1,000th ODI, Rohit Sharma's first as full-time skipper in white-ball cricket.

When India replied, it made the difference in class obvious. Sharma was making a comeback after missing the South Africa tour due to a hamstring injury, but seemed to toy with the Caribbean attack. Gone are the days when West Indian speedsters put fear into the hearts of batsmen. Kemar Roach has had a long career, but was shown scant respect by the Indian captain. He would step out to lift him over mid-off and chip him over mid-wicket nonchalantly. And when Roach or Alzarri Joseph went shorter in length, they didn't have the pace or bounce to trouble Sharma or his new opening partner Ishan Kishan.

The left-hander was pitchforked into the opening slot after Shikhar Dhawan tested Covid positive and Mayank Agarwal, added to the squad at the 11th hour, had to undergo quarantine. But Kishan slipped effortlessly in the slipstream as Sharma (60 off 51 balls) made a mockery of the asking rate.

Virat Kohli had a rare brief stint at the crease, caught in the deep on the hook, but even though India lost four wickets for 32 runs, an asking rate of less than two allowed Suryakumar Yadav and debutant Deepak Hooda to play without pressure and take the team home.

For the West Indies, Joseph got Sharma



Yuzvendra Chahal (4/49) dismissed West Indies captain Kieron Pollard for a first-ball duck with a googly. PTI

and Kohli in the same over, while left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein showed some promise.

Damage already done

But the outcome was decided in the first innings.

It is hard to judge what type of bowling is tougher for the current generation of batsmen coming out of the Caribbean. Seemingly seduced by the 20-over format, they hardly show the prowess needed to build an innings in longer format. Shai Hope is their big batting hope, but was castled by Mohammed Siraj while trying to drive away from the body.

Darren Bravo is a veteran, but was rushed by rookie Prasidh Krishna's bouncer, not a badge of honour for a No.3 batsman. Brandon King, Shamari Brooks and Nicholas Pooran were done in spin. Captain Kieron Pollard should know better than to go for an expansive drive off his first ball when his team was already four-down. It turned out to be Yuzvendra Chahal's googly which went through the wide-open gate to hit off-stump.

India didn't have Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami on the park, but the bowling attack at Sharma's disposal was more than enough for the outclassed West Indies.

The pitch was offering purchase for spin-

ners, and Chahal (4/49) put it to good use, though he was not challenged too much by the West Indian batsman, apart from Holder, who seemed worthy of a promotion in the batting order.

Washington Sundar (3/30) is not an off-spinner known for getting a lot of turn, but he too was finding deviation off the Motera pitch. His two wickets in one over put the skids under the West Indies and they never recovered. Holder and Fabian Allen (29) added 78 for the eighth wicket from 79/7, but it was only an effort in avoiding complete embarrassment and an even earlier finish.

Another interesting facet of the game was Sharma's prowess with the Decision Review System. Mahendra Singh Dhoni was considered astute about when to use the challenges, and on Sunday, Sharma got all three reviews right as fielding captain – two on LBW decisions and one on a caught-behind appeal.

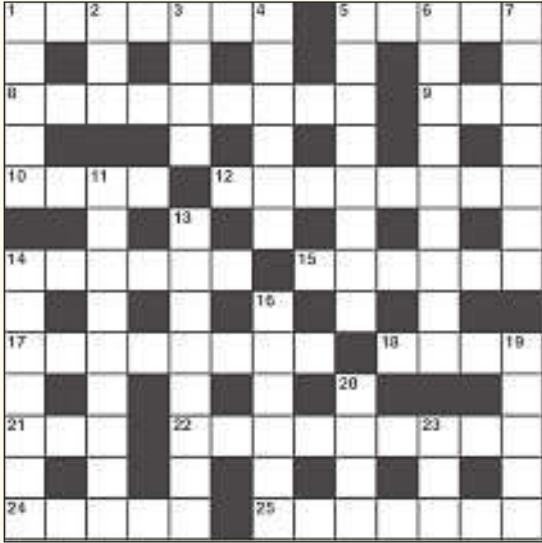
Ironically, Sharma himself failed to get a reprieve after being adjudged LBW, even if only on 'umpire's call.'

Looking ahead to the rest of the series, there seems to be a gulf between the teams. India would like to seal the series on Wednesday, but will nevertheless have one eye on trying to find the right men for the right jobs going into the 50-over showpiece next year – especially the middle order and the composition of their bowling attack.

SCOREBOARD	
West Indies	176 (43.5 overs)
S Hope b Siraj	8 (10b, 2x4)
B King c Yadav b Sundar	13 (26b, 2x4)
D Bravo lbw b Sundar	18 (34b, 3x4)
S Brooks c Pant b Chahal	12 (26b)
N Pooran lbw b Chahal	18 (25b, 3x4)
K Pollard b Chahal	0 (1b)
J Holder c Pant b Krishna	57 (71b, 4x4)
A Hosein c Pant b Krishna	0 (3b)
F Allen c & b Sundar	29 (43b, 2x4)
A Joseph c Yadav b Chahal	13 (16b, 1x4, 1x6)
K Roach not out	0 (8b)
Extras (lb 4, w 4)	8
FOW: 1-13, 2-44, 3-45, 4-71, 5-71, 6-78, 7-79, 8-157, 9-167, 10-176	
Bowling: Siraj 8-2-26-1, Krishna 10-0-29-2, Sundar 9-1-30-3, Thakur 7-0-38-0, Chahal 9.5-0-49-4	
India	178/4 (28 overs)
R Sharma lbw b Joseph	60 (51b, 10x4, 1x6)
I Kishan c Allen b Hosein	28 (36b, 2x4, 1x6)
V Kohli c Roach b Joseph	8 (4b, 2x4)
R Pant run out	11 (9b, 2x4)
S Yadav not out	34 (36b, 5x4)
D Hooda not out	26 (32b, 2x4)
Extras (b 1, lb 2, w 8)	11
FOW: 1-84, 2-93, 3-115, 4-116	
Bowling: Roach 5-0-41-0, Holder 5-0-29-0, Joseph 7-0-45-2, Hosein 9-0-46-1, Allen 2-0-14-0	

India win by six wickets

CROSSWORD 4657



- ACROSS**

 - 1 Reads about Perseus (7)
 - 5 A boring tool for a carpenter to use (5)
 - 8 Wake up to a neighbourly invitation (4,5)
 - 9 A point-to-point animal (3)
 - 10 An aspect of spin? (4)
 - 12 Wool gatherer? (8)
 - 14 Visit but speak without entering? (4,2)
 - 15 A vote to the other side? (6)
 - 17 Moneylender's overtures? (8)
 - 18 Appear to make a sound joint (4)
 - 21 Black salt (3)
 - 22 No longer in the cast but in touch (3,2,4)
 - 24 Acted as a beginner (5)
 - 25 Emergency rations for fighting? (7)
- DOWN**

 - 1 Steps - quiet ones (5)
 - 2 Spirited trumpet piece (3)
 - 3 A certain agreement (4)
 - 4 A variety we hear still to be discovered (6)
 - 5 Interview everybody in the theatre (8)
 - 6 Imposing design - or a disaster (9)
 - 7 Makes someone take notice? (7)
 - 11 Set free and handed over (9)
 - 13 Standing directive for road users (8)
 - 14 Quite out of order (7)
 - 16 Worst cry of pain to give (6)
 - 19 A month to live perhaps (5)
 - 20 A return of service that's way off (4)
 - 23 Part of the arable acreage (3)

Solutions Crossword 4656: Across: 1 Hastings, 5 Skis, 9 Rimed, 10 Exhibit, 11 And fast rules, 13 Larger, 14 Spread, 17 Horse soldier, 20 Bifocal, 21 Scorn, 22 Toes, 23 Prospect, Down: 1 Hard, 2 Seminar, 3 Indifference, 4 Grease, 6 Kabul, 7 Set aside, 8 Chiropodists, 12 Alphabet, 15 Eysore, 16 Bowler, 18 Rifle, 19 Unit.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

___ is never without ___, but seldom with a good One - Benjamin Franklin (5,6)

HVAEE

ADARR

ANOINT

STOGIE

SOLUTION: HEAVE, RADAR, NATION, ECOIST - Benjamin Franklin
Answer: Hunter is never without Reason, but seldom with a good One

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



Difficulty Level 3s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 4738



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4737



DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Please don't wait for others to give you the green light. The Sun is now mixing with a sector of your horoscope responsible for thought and communication, so it's time to get going. Prevaricate no longer, for if you blow this week's opportunity, you might have a long wait until the chance comes around again.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
There are significant lunar alignments coming up in a few days' time, an indication that the right moves this week could lead to a very profitable business association in the near future. Expect heartening news by the end of the week, and set your sights on your highest goals.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
The Moon is now playing a deeply sociable role. If you need friends, allies and supporters later in the week, now is the time to do the spadework, convincing other people and partners that you are the face of the future. Just one problem though, the facts may be anything but clear.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
Let's look at the long-term for a change: special planets together are urging you to make a renewed bid for freedom, re-establishing your personal independence in all the areas that count. Sheer enthusiasm takes you part of the way, but you'll have to put in the extra hours as well.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Professional schemes should now be under way. You still have a few weeks to discuss plans, cross the t's and dot the i's, but the foundations should now be laid. From this vantage point you should broaden your horizons and contemplate a more fulfilling existence.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Because this week's lunar patterns stimulate lively regions of your chart, your priority will be to be noticed. This is no time to hide behind a poor self-image or a mistaken notion that certain goals are beyond you. The future will be here sooner than you think.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
Stick to the rules and conventional methods and you won't go far wrong. You see, whatever your feelings today, the week's planetary configurations run solidly in your favour, and there is little that can go wrong. The Moon, by the way, could help you clear up a mystery.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
Certain things need to be said and a few home truths delivered, especially now that Mercury is edging towards its confrontational relationship with Pluto. Clear the air now and you'll avert traumas in weeks to come. Not only that, but partners will thank you for it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
Don't expect instant results or demand that partners fit in with your plans. Imminent lunar patterns are bound to adjust your ideas, so whatever is decided now will be changed by the end of the week. That's why you'll do best to keep your options open and your diary free.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Maximise the feel-good factor. It is clear from this week's stars that the potential is present for a radical boost in your physical well-being. Now is the time to take whatever appropriate action is called for. Rest and relaxation are required.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
Powerful lunar movements overshadow your emotions this week. Therefore, don't just sit around day-dreaming about exotic places, do something about it. If family members are waiting to hear from you, don't delay. Get out there and let them know you care.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You have an unfortunate habit of being too self-critical. You may therefore imagine that you have offended people or embarrassed yourself when in fact your behaviour has either gone unnoticed, or, in some cases, it's actually been highly appreciated.

The BCCI has announced cash rewards of Rs 40 lakhs each to the members of the Indian under-19 team while support staff will be honored with rupees 25 lakh each. The board is planning to felicitate India under-19 team in Ahmedabad on February 11. Left-arm pacer Ravi Kumar could soon find a place in the Ranji Trophy squad of Bengal while few Haryana players like Nishant Sindhu and Dinesh Bana might also see their names in Ranji Trophy squad.

ENS

‘WE DIDN’T FEEL ANY PRESSURE, BECAUSE WE WERE PREPARED FOR EVERYTHING.’

YASH DHULL

India’s got talent

Raj Bawa snags five wickets in the final, takes Indian colts to fifth U-19 World Cup title with win over England



Indian players celebrate after the winning runs were scored. This was the fifth U-19 World Cup won by the country. BCCI/Twitter

Baby pacers scorch Windies shores

SRIRAM VEERA & DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

WHEN IT was young pacer Ravi Kumar’s turn to ask the guest motivator Virat Kohli a question ahead of India’s U-19 World Cup final, he dug one nicely short. “I asked him what is his weakness. And he replied, ‘kyun abhi se out karne ki training kar raha hai kya’ (laughs)?” Who better than Kohli to know all about the menace Indian new-age quicks are capable of causing to hopping batters. England were about to find out.

Raj Angad Bawa’s grandfather scored a hockey goal against England in India’s first Olympics after independence. The grandson of the 1948 hero cleaned up England’s top order in the final with a five-for. Ravi Kumar’s father serves in law enforcement back in India, while the son rocked England in the U-19 final with a four-for. Together the teenagers unleashed ferocious bouncers, leg cutters, balls that leapt off a length, deliveries that curved in the air and it was apt that all this happened in the Caribbean, the spiritual home of fast bowlers, the land of Andy Roberts, Malcolm Marshall, Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose.

By the time the duo was done with their opening spells, England were at 61 for 6 and if not for a 95 from James Lew, whose first professional scalp as a county player was a lighting-quick stumping to remove Cheteshwar Pujara, it would have been all over rather too quickly. Such was the craft from Bawa and Kumar after England had chosen to bat.

We might be in 2022 and the Indian senior team’s pace battery is the envy of the world but there is still something about watching a young Indian knock out a batsman with a bouncer. Bawa blasted out the middle-order batsman George Bell with a snorter that is destined to become one of most watched videos over the next couple of days.

Running in with his hands whirling over each other as if he were concocting a magic potion, he harassed England with a spell that had the entire range. Seam, swing, and disconcerting bounce. Bawa’s father Sukhwinder is a cricket coach who honed the skills of Yuvraj Singh and VRR Singh and would have been proud to see his son stun, shock and awe

Together the teenagers unleashed ferocious bouncers, leg cutters, balls that leapt off a length, deliveries that curved in the air and it was apt that all this happened in the Caribbean, the spiritual home of fast bowlers.

England. An allrounder, he already has the highest individual score in the tournament and has dazzled with his bowling as well.

Couple of years back, George Bell’s father had said that it would be a touch “frightening” if his son came up against pacers like Jofra Archer. He must have got a glimpse of that world when Bawa kicked up a ‘perfume ball’ as the West Indian pacers used to call their bouncers. It flew up at the throat of Bell who put up his bat as a shield; the face was saved, wicket wasn’t as the ball skimmed the outside edge.

It was the left-handed Ravi Kumar who had the first stab at the English with a lovely swinging delivery that curled past the left-handed opener Jacob Bethell to rap him plumb lbw on the back foot. He then had England’s captain Tom Prest chop on an attempted pull on to his stumps to leave England wobbling at 18 for 2 in the fourth over. Bawa then snared four in quick succession to leave England gasping. He had the aggressive George Thomas miscue to covers, William Luxton caught behind before he produced the ball of the final over to take out Bell. The way his team-mates swooped to mob him told a story.

He then produced a peach, kicking up from short of length, to produce a hurried jab from Rehan Ahmed which was snapped up in the slips. If it wasn’t for the left-handed James Rew, a wicket-keeper batsman for Somerset but playing just as a batsman here. In his first professional game for his county, with his parents and family in the audience, he got out playing a reverse sweep for 20. ‘That’s a shot I play and will continue to play,’ he had said then and it hasn’t been a surprise to see him unfurl many a reverse sweep in this tournament. He has a plucky all-round game, alternating between Neil Fairbrother to Eoin Morgan,

and with a combination of doggedness and innovation, he pulled England out of trouble.

Kumar would return to take two more wickets, including Rew, caught at the boundary just 8 short of a hundred, and Bawa grasped the chance to complete a five-for by taking out the last English wicket. Earlier he had quizzed Kohli about nerves in finals. “He told us there is nothing like finals, each game just give your best shot. Express yourself in the ground and just enjoy the game.”

All this was achieved with the poise of experience pros. “The best part was we were not thinking about the future, we were all in the present. We spoke to Virat Kohli bhai and everyone asked him a few questions. Few asked him about handling pressure and performance in big games. Then after that we all saw the 1983 film together; it was a kind of motivation for us to win the finals. We saw how Kapil (Sir) team went to lift title, it was great motivational thing for us,” Ravi said.

Two kids from varying backgrounds, Bawa with hockey and cricket in his blood, and Kumar, with a para-military parent’s background, pushed India to another World Cup triumph.

Watching from the commentary box was the son of someone who set the Caribbean shores alight way back in 1970s. Rohan Gavaskar, there as commentator, though, wasn’t terribly surprised it was the Indian pacers rather than opening bats like Sunil Gavaskar, making heads turn in West Indies. “I think Indian pacers have been best in the world for the last few years. We have been producing some very good fast bowlers lately so I wasn’t that surprised to see another crop of good pacers,” he said.

Unlike storied times when only Indian spin quartets were feared, Gavaskar reckoned it was the pacers who were at the vanguard of action. “I thought one of the strengths of this team was their bowling unit. Everyone knew their role and performed it beautifully. The pacers provided early breakthroughs and the spinners then capitalised on it and made inroads with the middle order. This is why they were able to bowl out teams in the World Cup. Credit to the coaching staff of Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Sairaj Bahutule and VVS,” he said.



BOYS SHOW THE WAY

Unlike Indian senior teams at ICC events, the colts showed big match temperament.

WEATHERING EARLY STORM

In the semis against Australia, India were 37 for 2. Openers Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Harnoor Singh, who had been prolific earlier in the tournament, were dismissed. But Yash Dhull and Shaik Rasheed had a big partnership and took India to safety.

In last year’s T20 World Cup against Pakistan, the Indian Senior side lost Rohit Sharma for a duck and never recovered.

PACERS SET THE TONE Ravi Kumar and Raj Bawa were not overwhelmed by the occasion in the final. They stuck to their plan and bowled in the right areas. Bawa and Kumar took nine wickets between them.

In the 2003 World Cup final against Australia, Indian bowlers Zaheer Khan, Javagal Srinath and Ashish Nehra famously lost the plot.

USEFUL LOWER ORDER In the final, India were 97/4 needing 92 more runs. Nishant Sindhu and Raj Bawa didn’t lose their nerve. They showed a calm head and game sense in a big match.

In the 2019 World Cup semifinal against New Zealand, the Indian team lost early wickets and couldn’t recover despite MS Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja scoring half-centuries.

INTERVIEW: S SHARATH

“Challenge now is to sail in the ocean, from the lake”

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 6

THE BCCI junior selection committee chairman **S Sharath** is delighted after India under-19 clinched the colts World Cup in West Indies. In a chat with *The Indian Express*, the former Tamil Nadu player spoke about the challenges of picking a team in times of pandemic. Excerpts:

It’s only been a few months since you took over as chairman of selectors, can you tell us how you decided to go about the process?

When Rahul was coach at the NCA, we decided a roadmap. We decided to have a pool of players. After the Vinoo Mankad tournament, we picked 90 players, we divided them into six teams and had matches thereafter.

What were the challenges as a selector especially in the time of Covid?

In the first place credit should go to the BCCI for conducting a tournament. In the last two years there was no cricket due to the pandemic, I spoke to the players and they told us how frustrating it was to sit at home. It was mentally taxing for everyone and all felt refreshed when the boys came and played cricket. We saw new talent and some we saw were ready, ready for first class cricket. We still have good players, who are not in the squad because there was so much talent available.

Is there any reason you picked Yash Dhull as the captain instead of Sandhu, whose team won the Vinoo Mankad Trophy?

We wanted someone who can look after a team. Can communicate with everyone. Nishant is a good player but what we felt is that the all-rounder’s plate is already full and sometimes, they couldn’t think on a macro level. As Dhull is a batsman, a Delhi boy and a street-smart cricketer, we felt he is our best bet.

The best part of this under-19 team is it



had a good bowling unit and more all-rounders?

Yes, we wanted to give options to the captain and team management. Like Bawa is a bit deceptive, Rajvardhan Hangargekar bowls quick and he hits the deck hard. Same with spinners, all are different. The West Indies is near the Ocean, so breeze plays a vital part, two new balls will be used, so swing will come into play. We tried to cover each area. We wanted multi-dimensional players, players who can bat till number 10. We couldn’t find a decent leg-spinner, so we picked a left-arm spinner to cover up.

What piece of advice will you offer to these players?

The bigger challenge starts now for these boys. They will now get picked ahead in senior or Indian teams because of their domestic performance and not because of India under-19 performance. These boys will sail in the ocean from the lake. Ranji Trophy can be ruthless. Be ready to grind. All those who played for India after under-19 success they all grind hard in domestic cricket. At this age it’s very easy to get excited about things. They will walk with sun-glasses now, IPL will come, they will change as a person. However, ultimately they will be judged only by their first class cricket.