

FROM PAGE ONE

Jaishankar

China, more so while speaking from foreign soil -- reflect Delhi's frustration over Beijing's behaviour ever since the start of the military standoff along the Ladakh frontier in May 2020.

India and China have had several rounds of meetings, but the standoff has still not been resolved. While the border situation has impacted the relationship, trade has increased, underlining the degree of dependence on China's manufacturing.

On the Quad and China's criticism of the grouping, Payne said: "We are not against anything. We are about building confidence and resilience, about promoting a region in which all countries are able to be and feel sovereign and secure without the threat of coercion or intimidation." This was an oblique reference to China's actions at the LAC, and in the Indo-Pacific region.

While Jaishankar and Payne agreed on the Chinese behaviour along the LAC, there were divergences in their public statements on the Russia-Ukraine situation.

Responding to questions on Russia's actions along the Ukrainian border, Jaishankar said "diplomacy is the only way out". He did not criticise the Russians for massing troops along the Ukrainian border, triggering fears of a conflict.

Payne, however, was critical of the Russian behaviour and voiced "concern" over the "extraordinary unilateral action" by Russia. She expressed "support" for "Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

The two Foreign Ministers held a meeting on cyber security as well.

A joint statement on the cyber security dialogue said the ministers reiterated their commitment to secure, resilient and trusted technology and agreed to work together to "address the significant threat of malicious cyber activity by state and non-state actors".

They acknowledged the importance of the security and resilience of telecommunications networks and the need to work closely with each other to protect next generation telecommunications networks, including 5G and 6G, it said.

This also assumes significance in the wake of Chinese players in the cyber space being shunned by many countries, including Australia and India, for strategic reasons. India's ban of Chinese mobile apps, including the popular Tik Tok app, was done with this rationale in mind.

Recognising the importance of working collaboratively with international partners, the statement said the ministers agreed to undertake joint engagement with Indo-Pacific partners to collaboratively improve the region's cyber capabilities.

Fearless voice

has a combined market capitalisation of over Rs 8.4 lakh crore.

After PV Narasimha Rao bit the political bullet in 1991 and scripted the first chapter of India's economic reforms, Bajaj, unlike several other big groups including the Modis, Mafatlals, Singhanias and the Thapars, stood ground. While Rahul Bajaj did spearhead the Bombay Club – a group of top industrialists then including HS Singhanias, Lala Bharat Ram and CK Birla – to demand protection for domestic industry, he did not stop modernising. "He never let those arguments get in the way of developing globally competitive products," points out Naushad Forbes, Co-Chairman of Pune-headquartered Forbes Marshall, and a director on the board of Bajaj Holdings.

Expressing condolences, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Shri Rahul Bajaj Ji will be remembered for his noteworthy contributions to the world of commerce and industry. Beyond business, he was passionate about community service and was a great conversationalist. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family and friends, Om Shanti."

"He was a very unique individual. He was both a competitor and a friend. He was also a friend of my father and he regarded him as his Guru. He had very clear values, a strong differentiation of right and wrong and was an institution builder. Not only did he build his company, but he was also a big leader for the industry," said Sunil Kant Munjal, Chairman, Hero Enterprise. "He had no hesitation in showing a mirror to anyone regardless of their position and was a straightforward and fearless individual," he said.

Months after the 2002 Gujarat riots, when the Confederation of Indian Industry was hosting then Chief Minister Modi in New Delhi, Rahul Bajaj pointedly asked him if Gujarat was safe for investors during the 'Question and Answer' session.

More recently, in his speech in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Railways and Commerce minister Piyush Goyal as audience in November 2019, he spoke his mind. At the gathering of top industrialists including Mukesh Ambani, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Sunil Bharti Mittal among others during an ET Awards event, Bajaj said, "Nobody from our industrialist friends will speak, I will say openly... An environment will have to be created... In UPA II, we could abuse anyone... You are doing good work but despite that we don't have the confidence that you will appreciate if we criticise openly."

Bajaj, who described himself as having been born "anti-establishment", spoke what other industrialists feared to say. Responding to his concerns, Shah said that there is no need for anybody to fear, however if you are saying that there is a certain kind of atmosphere, then "We will have to take effort to improve the atmosphere," Shah said.

Bajaj also flagged the issue of lynchings. "It creates a hawaa—intolerance ki hawaa hai—hum darte hain... kuch cheezon ko hum bolna nahi chahte hain par dekhte hain ki koi convict he nahi hua abhi tak (It creates an environment of intolerance and we are scared. We don't want to say certain things, but we see that till now no one has been convicted)," Bajaj had said.

Corporate leaders said the doyen of the Indian business world will be missed for his intellectual honesty and straightforwardness. As the President of CII for two terms – 1979-80 and 1999-2000 – he led the industry during two crucial periods.

"I have heard him speak many times in Indian industry and there were times when there could be no one more inspiring because he expressed confidence in India and its industries. He was someone who believed if something was right to say or do, one must say or do it because that is the right thing to do. I think we need more such people around," said Naushad Forbes.

According to TVS Motor Chairman Venu Srinivasan, he was among the few stars who created the Indian automotive industry. "He was a pioneer who established a culture of quality and technology. He stood for high integrity in business and stuck to his principles. Rahul played a key role in industry bodies around the world like World Economic Forum and CII and was very well respected. He will be sorely missed," said Srinivasan.

Many feel that Bajaj's contribution to India is unparalleled. His efforts to promote local manufacturing has helped build the foundation of Aatmanirbhar Bharat for decades. "This is a personal loss for me of a good friend whom I have known for nearly 50 years. He was one of the most dynamic and forthright businessmen of his time. He has created an empire and passed it on to the next generation to grow and nurture. I have always admired him for being a passionate and fearless voice of the industry and will miss his presence," said Hemendra Kothari, Chairman, DSP Investment Managers.

Aadhaar

the "security aspects of such a data transfer".

The NHA's initiative to map the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) database with Aadhaar and the public distribution system database aims to identify beneficiaries of health insurance programme Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY).

In a letter dated January 5, NHA CEO R S Sharma wrote to Department of Food and Public Distribution Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey: "...due to deficiencies in the SECC database, beneficiary identification (under AB PM-JAY) has become extremely difficult. In this regard, NHA has been trying different ways and means to enrich the SECC database, which can then be used to target beneficiaries. Possible mapping of SECC beneficiaries with Aadhaar and NFSA will help in the easy identification of beneficiaries."

He said without mapping Aadhaar with the SECC database, it will be "extremely unlikely" to achieve Ayushman card saturation.

Following Sharma's letter, the Department of Food and Public Distribution's Director (Public Distribution) Vivek Shukla is learnt to have written to states on January 6, requesting them for "necessary assistance and co-operation" in sharing beneficiary details.

An official at the NHA told The Sunday Express that states have flagged concerns about the "security aspects of such a data transfer" and the possibility of Centre "using it for political gains".

It is also learnt that at a January 4 meeting with officials of the food department, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and IT ministry, the NHA had raised the issue.

"Due to the lack of clarity on whether Aadhaar information can be freely shared between the ministries or not, there has been reluctance on the part of state governments owning the NFSA beneficiary information to share the Aadhaar details with NHA. This was raised by the NHA at the meeting," another government official said.

At the same meeting, it was discussed that existing UIDAI circulars allow ministries and departments to share Aadhaar and related data among themselves "for effective formulation of schemes and selection of beneficiaries".

In October last year, the UIDAI had allowed sharing of Aadhaar details between different government departments under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.

The PM-JAY scheme, launched in 2018, aims to provide a health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation to over 10.74 crore poor and vulnerable families. The beneficiaries are to be decided based on the deprivation and occupational criteria of SECC 2011 for rural and urban areas respectively. The NHA is tasked with implementation of the PM-JAY scheme.

An official said the onus of ensuring compliance of various provisions and regulations of data protection, data storage, data privacy and seeking consent from Aadhaar holders will lie with the user departments -- in this case the NHA.

"The NHA is planning to attain consent of beneficiaries through both online and offline modes, for example text messages or physical forms at ration shops," the official said.

The NHA CEO, Department of Food and Public Distribution and UIDAI did not respond to queries seeking comments.

In October last year, the Niti Aayog called for the PM-JAY scheme to be extended to cover a section of people without health insurance, highlighting that at least 30 per cent of the population, or 40 crore individuals, called the 'missing middle', are devoid of any financial protection for health.

Among three models suggested to achieve this, the Niti Aayog recommended expanding the government-subsidised health insurance through the PM-JAY scheme to a wider set of beneficiaries.

"This is the only model out of three proposed which has fiscal implications for the Government. Though this model assures coverage of the poorer segments on the missing middle population, premature expansion of PM-JAY can overburden the scheme," it noted in its report.

The report also suggested sharing of the government scheme data with private insurance companies. Government databases such as National Food Security Act (NFSA), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, or the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) for agricultural households can be shared with private insurers after taking consent from these households, the report said, suggesting an outreach strategy.

Modi's visit

Malhotra is finalising its report on January 5 security breach of PM when he was on his way to address a rally in Ferozepur but had to return after nearly a 20-minute halt at a flyover on the way.

"The CID [Crime Investigation Department] personnel should pay special attention to the pockets and hands of the people who look suspicious and are likely to pose a threat to the security of the VVIP (read PM Modi)," reads a correspondence on Friday from Punjab Additional Director General of Police (Intelligence) to

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Caste, campaigns, and mahaul: UP Election Special – Part 2

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In the second part of our election series, we discuss the role of caste identities, political campaigns, individual personalities and the mahaul they create

Steady uptick in Muslim girls going to schools, colleges

education rose from a low of 1.1 per cent in 2007-08 to as high as 15.8 per cent in 2017-18, data shows.

A review of school data also shows that more girls from the community are accessing education today than ever.

According to Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) data on elementary and secondary education, nationally, the share of Muslim enrolment to total enrolment of girls in upper primary (Class 5 to 8) has risen from 13.30 per cent in 2015-16 to 14.54. In Karnataka, it rose from 15.16 per cent to 15.81 per cent.

"This rise in enrolment of girls and women cuts across religious and social groups. We are seeing this across states," said a top expert with an education non-profit that works primarily in the area of school education. "Hindu or Muslim, Sikh or Christian, girls and young women are beating odds at many levels including in their families across the country. Many issues crop up, like the current one over what to wear, but

PERCENTAGE OF MUSLIM GIRLS' ENROLMENT TO TOTAL ENROLMENT OF GIRLS, 2019-20 (UDISE)			
	Upper primary	Secondary	Higher secondary
KARNATAKA			
2015-16	15.16	13.61	8.08
2019-20	15.81	15.47	8.69
ALL INDIA			
2015-16	13.30	11.23	8.77
2019-20	14.54	13.29	10.67

I am quite certain and hopeful that the surge will sustain because women are not going to look back."

For Afeeda KT, who teaches sociology at Mount Carmel College in Bengaluru, more Muslim girls in schools and colleges are "hard-earned gains that need to be sustained."

"The hijab row clearly extends the political targeting of the Muslim community by Hindutva forces," said Afeeda. "If we look at its impact on Muslim women's higher education, it's early to predict. But it will influence life choices, especially for

women who also have to tackle the embedded patriarchal system in this country."

More so, for Muslim girls and women. Khan, who has studied the GAR data, said that restricting young women from attending colleges based on their attire will push them back to the "same patriarchal trap which the Karnataka government thinks to remove".

"One may think that wearing a scarf is a patriarchal imposition of the dress over the body of a girl. In such circumstances also, the entry of Muslim women with scarf is the only way to ad-

Director Civil Military Affairs and Joint Operations in the office of Western Command GOC.

The minutes of meeting read that "overall responsibility for ensuring safety and security of Hon'ble Prime Minister during the visit to Punjab including function venues as well as on the route shall rest with DGO (HoPF -- read head of police force). All the security arrangements have to be ensured as per the blue book and other instructions/guidelines issued from time to time" by the Centre government in respect of the security of the PM.

"Further proper and effective liaison shall be maintained with SPG [Special Protection Group], IB [Intelligence Bureau] and other intelligence units".

The minutes of the meeting read that for three venues, three ADGP rank officers had been deputed as in-charges. "DGP informed that they will require some assistance from Army authorities particularly for Anti-drone mapping," read the minutes of the meeting.

"Deputy Commissioners, Jalandhar, Pathankot and Fazilka were asked to make all arrangements for the visit. They shall be overall in-charge for all arrangements (including vehicles/accommodation or any other logistics required for security of VVIP and act as nodal officers in their jurisdiction for all purposes."

Goa awaits

made a dash to the Chief Electoral Officer to file a complaint against an alleged 'sting operation' by a Hindi channel that claimed some of the party's candidates had accepted money to defect to the BJP after the election.

A week ago, 37 candidates of the Congress and three of its ally Goa Forward Party swore by the Constitution not to defect if elected. They even put it down in affidavits in the presence of Rahul Gandhi, so that he could deliver these to Sonia Gandhi.

And in the final countdown, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent the temperature soaring when he targeted the Congress and the Gandhi family, accusing Jawaharlal Nehru of delaying Goa's liberation by nearly 15 years in order to protect his global image of a peacenik.

On the ground, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who took over the top job after the death of Parrikar, has been leading the BJP charge. Contesting from his seat Sanquelim for the third time, the 48-year-old's leadership is also being put to test this election. Although he says he is sure to return as CM, this election is quite unlike the

last one for his party. It is contesting all the 40 seats for the first time.

Unlike 2017 when with the help of regional allies and independents, the BJP formed the government despite winning only 13 seats, the party has set its sight on winning a majority on its own with the slogan of "Baavisant Baavis plus (In 2022, 22 plus)".

The party lost four sitting MLAs including minister Michael Lobo to other parties ahead of the election and dropped four sitting MLAs who were among the 12 who defected to the BJP from Congress and MGP in 2019. However, the party also inducted "winnable" candidates from other parties and independent sitting MLAs to build its formation.

This is also the first election that the BJP is contesting after the death of Parrikar. While he has featured on the party's campaign flyers and every speech including that of Modi, his son Utpal, who was denied an election ticket, is now an independent candidate, determined to defeat the BJP in Panaji.

The AAP, meanwhile, is hoping to make a splash with a slew of promises, including a Chief Minister from the numerically strong Bhandari community. A state where election campaigns have steered clear of religious or caste planks, the AAP's strategy remains to be tested. Party chief Arvind Kejriwal has said the party is open to a post-poll alliance with non-BJP party should the need arise.

The Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress arrived in Goa with political strategist Prashant Kishor's I-PAC. While Banerjee made two trips to Goa, formalised an alliance with MGP, Goa's oldest regional force, interacted with people and political leaders in the state, she remained absent after the announcement of the election.

Both AAP and the TMC have had to battle the "outsider" perception that weighs heavily on the Goan voter.

Hansel Vaz, a businessman from Margao, said, "This time the election is the loudest we have seen, but the voters are silent. Every election in Goa attracts national attention since Goa is a harbinger state. Parrikar used to call it a lucky charm. It's a small state but it's the voice of the educated class."

Lawyer Shailendra Bhobe, who votes in the Taleigao constituency, said, "This time the election is too unpredictable. It is not an easy election to call. That is mainly because of the mix of people and also the rise

in the number of candidates contesting the election. There are 13 candidates in one constituency and for a small place like Goa that's a big number. Earlier, there would be Congress, BJP, MGP and most people knew who the contest was between. This is what is very different about this election."

CRPF officer

reinforcements were sent to the spot, and they are searching the area," he said.

According to sources, security forces had received intelligence inputs that Maoists had gathered near the area.

Police said the Maoists also looted Turkey's AK-47 rifle. His body was recovered from the forest and has been sent to Jagdalpur for post-mortem. Turkey was a resident of Ranchi district in Jharkhand.

Police said the injured CRPF constable, a resident of east Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh, was stable.

Expressing grief over the officer's death, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said in a statement: "Our jawans have been entering the den of Naxals and battling against them with valour and courage. They have pushed Maoists to a limited pocket (in Bastar). The martyrdom of our jawans will not go in vain."

Meanwhile, police are still tracking information on the abduction of a sub-engineer and a head mason, involved in bridge construction work in Bijapur district, by armed Maoists on Friday, over 80 km from the encounter spot.

On Saturday, Sonali Pawar, wife of the sub-engineer, requested Maoists to release him, in a video interview to local media. "We have two young daughters, he had come to Bijapur to earn for them. We will leave immediately go back to our homes. Please release my husband, I apologise for any of his mistakes," she said.

"A bridge is being constructed over the Indravati river to connect Bijapur and Narayanpur districts. It will connect Bedre to Abujhmad, which is a threat to Maoists," a senior police officer from Bastar had said on Friday. The bridge is being built by a private company.

"Maoists are fighting their last battle as our forces are entering their regions. This is a desperate attempt to ensure their reign of terror," said a senior police officer.

Chakuli

hospital, says Chakuli has taken to her new name. "When people look at her, they only notice her

dress this problem. If they are wearing a scarf under the pressure from their family and the society, they will remove it once they find themselves economically independent after getting higher education," said Khan.

Former Planning Commission Secretary N C Saxena said he is concerned over the hard lines in the current debate. "Equal bias does unequal harm. Muslim women have a moral and legal right to wear hijab but it's a bad strategy because it will lead to further polarisation and bias outside the community which will affect them in many ways. It will further widen the gap," Saxena said.

Going to schools or colleges is what will empower the girls, said Poonam Batra, a professor of Education at Delhi University. "It's education which can enable young women to understand how a hijab or a ghunghat are symbols of patriarchy. So what is regressive here, is to deny them an education in the name of adhering to rules of school uniform. The agenda is to invisibilise Muslims further," Batra said.

disabilities but she has a child-like innocence and a smile that can melt hearts. So we decided to name her 'Chakuli'. In Marathi, the name translates to 'cute baby girl'. Now every time she hears her name, she turns around and smiles," said Raje.

She said the hospital staff did a fair amount of brainstorming before arriving at the names. "Each of them has a unique personality – features that give out positive vibes. We have been trying to identify those traits to arrive at names," said Raje.

So there's 'Hashmukh', a 41-year-old man with schizophrenia who smiles a lot; 'Rajesh Khanna', who mimics the late Bollywood actor. Then there's 'Mummy'. "She would keep calling out for 'mummy' and wouldn't respond to any other name. So we started calling her that. Her Aadhaar application has been completed and we are waiting for her to get the card," said Raje.

Some of the patients were also given a set of names to choose from. "We would call them by three to four names and keep the one they react to the best," said Dr Purushottam Madavi, medical superintendent of the hospital.

As *The Indian Express* reported on February 1, between January 2016 and September 2021, 5,877 patients with mental ailments who had been abandoned by their relatives were admitted to the four regional mental hospitals in Maharashtra – Pune, Thane, Ratnagiri and Nagpur. Nagpur, with 3,829 patients, accounts for nearly 60 per cent of the patients, followed by Ratnagiri (1,674), Pune (361) and Thane (13).

"We get around 1,400 admissions annually, of which a third are usually abandoned patients – abandoned by their families or separated from them," said Dr Praveen Navkhare, a senior psychiatrist at the hospital.

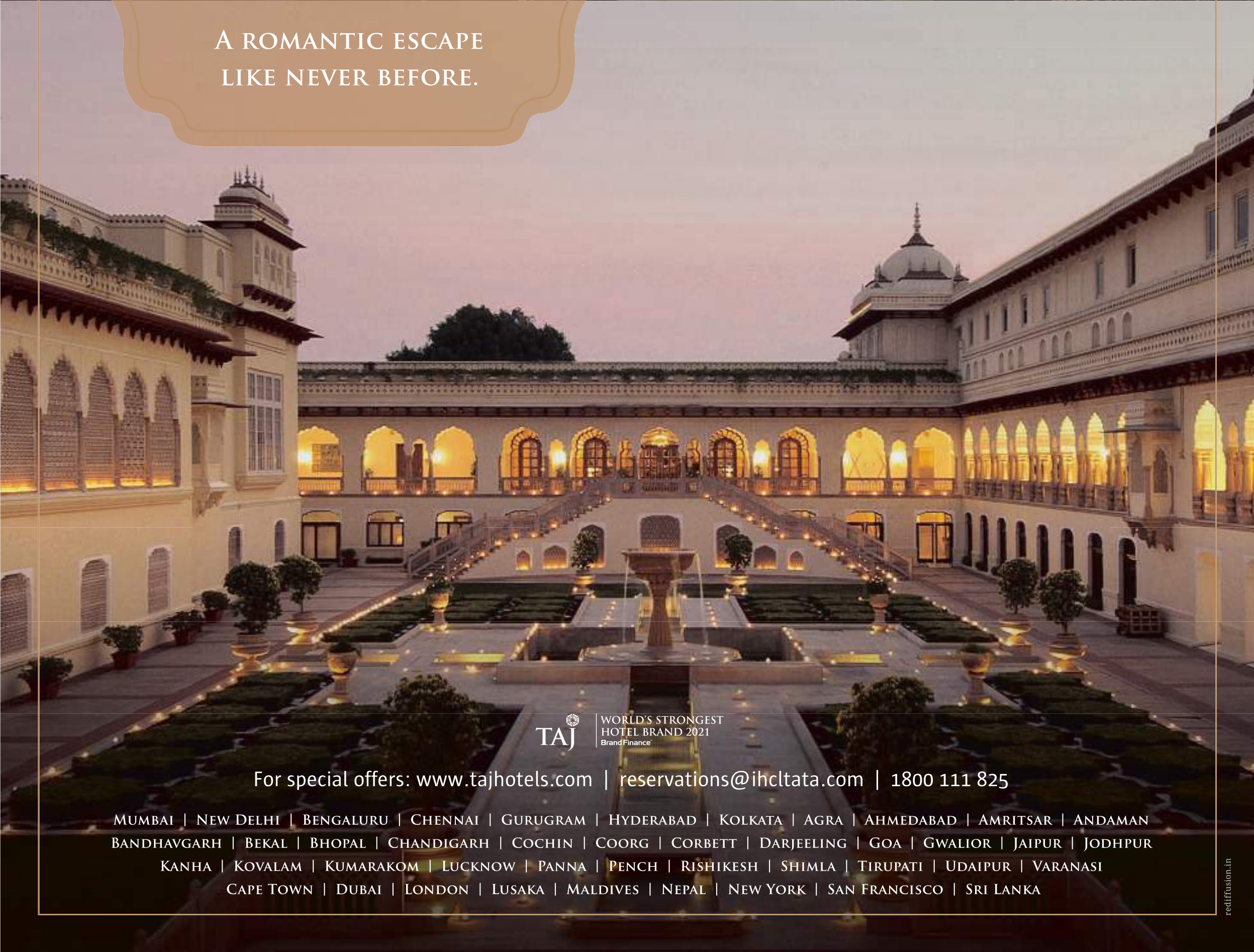
Owing to the logistical challenges involved in ferrying the patients to the Aadhaar enrollment center, officials of the UIDAI visited the hospital to enroll the patients. "Each enrollment usually takes about five minutes. But in the case of mental health patients, it takes over 20 minutes each. Our staff have to support them," said Dr Madavi.

Raje said an Aadhaar card would help patients claim several government benefits. "Patients who recover are usually rehabilitated elsewhere. In such situations, an Aadhaar card will help them get benefits such as health insurance schemes. Also, we will help them get ration cards in their names," she said.



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Table of expenditure in Derabassi, Kharar: SAD candidates lead

Congress candidate leads in Mohali constituency

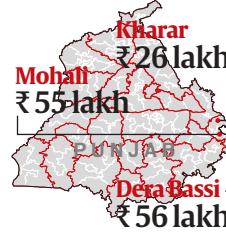
JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP
MOHALI, FEBRUARY 12

BASED ON the first inspection of the expenditure of parties, SAD's candidate is currently in the lead in all three constituencies of the district. Dera Bassi constituency has also seen the highest expenditure from all parties, collectively around Rs 56 lakh so far. Mohali is a close second with total spending of around Rs 55 lakh, followed by Kharar with total spending of around Rs 26 lakh.

The expenditure count is not final as two more inspections shall be conducted by the administration. According to the officials during the first inspection of expenditure in Derabassi, SAD's N K Sharma spent around Rs 17 lakh till February 7, followed by AAP's Kuljeet Singh Randhawa who spent around Rs 16 lakh. Congress's

EXPENDITURE IN CONSTITUENCIES

CONSTITUENCY EXPENDITURE (APPROX)



Deepinder Singh Dhillon has spent around Rs 9 lakh so far. In Mohali, Congress's Balbir Singh Sidhu leads in expenditure, with Rs 15 lakh spent by the candidate so far. SAD's Parvinder Singh

Sohana comes second with around Rs 9 lakh spent so far.

Choose tried and tested leader like Balbir Sidhu, says Manish Tewari

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, FEBRUARY 12

URGING MOHALI voters to again choose tried and tested leader like Balbir Singh Sidhu, the Congress MP from Anandpur Sahib, Manish Tewari, on Saturday said that Sidhu is a proven leader of Mohali who



MANISH TEWARI

with his sheer hard work and passion has put Mohali far ahead in terms of development.

Tewari said in Mohali, on the one hand, there is a leader like Sidhu who

has a long list of carrying out many development works and, on the other, are his rivals who switch sides whenever elections approach.

He said Sidhu has brought significant improvement in Mohali's education and health infrastructure besides bringing many other basic amenities-related projects.

AAP candidate not aam aadmi, moves in ₹4-cr car: Sohana

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, FEBRUARY 12

THE JOINT candidate of Akali Dal and Bahujan Samaj Party from Mohali, Parvinder Sohana, on Saturday termed the AAP party's candidate Kulwant Singh a businessman who moves in a car worth Rs 4 crore.

He said that Kulwant can never be the common man. Kulwant is a businessman in disguise of Aam Aadmi who has come to politics to grow his business manifold.

Sohana addressed poll campaign in different areas of Nanu Majra, Sambhalki, Raipur Kalan, Seneta, Dhirpur, Sukhgarh, Phase 11, Balomajra, Phase 9 and Phase 2 on Saturday. He said that Kulwant is the richest candidate of Punjab and his own staff does not get time to meet him.

Meanwhile, AAP accuses Sidhu of befooling people

Mohali: During his door-to-door campaigning, Mohali's AAP candidate, Kulwant Singh accused Congress' Balbir Singh Sidhu of befooling people with lies. He said that the Mohali MLA and former Health Minister could not give up his basic tendency of misleading the people of Mohali.

Kulwant Singh said that people of Congress and Sidhu would attempt to intimidate or lure, with unfair means, those who have declared their support for AAP. He said that anyone hoisting AAP's flag outside their homes or offices, or any social organisation or religious institution supporting the party would be targeted by Sidhu. **ENS**



ROCKING AGAIN

Chandigarh Rock Garden reopened to visitors after one month on Saturday. Kamleshwar Singh

Tricity reports 212 fresh Covid cases, three deaths

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, MOHALI, PANCHKULA, FEBRUARY 12

THE TRICITY reported 212 Covid cases and three deaths on Saturday.

UT: 87 NEW CASES, TWO NEW DEATHS

The city reported 87 new cases and two deaths on Saturday, taking the total tally in the UT to 91,296 and the toll to 1,151. Currently, there are 686 cases active here.

The positivity rate was 3.22 per cent. A total of 2,699 samples have been tested in the last 24 hours. As many as 127 people recovered from the infection while 2,516 were vaccinated for Covid-19.

COVID DEATHS

A 70-year-old Covid positive male resident of Manimajra expired at GMCH-32. He was a case of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He was not vaccinated for Covid.

A 28-year-old woman, resident of Hallomajra was brought dead at GMCH-32. She was tested and reported positive for Covid posthumously. She was vaccinated with the first dose of the Covid vaccine.

HOSPITALISATION

In PGI, 50 of 380 Covid beds with oxygen and 13 of 70 Covid ventilator beds are occupied. In GMCH-32, 25 of 165

Covid beds with oxygen and six of 63 Covid ventilator beds are occupied.

In GMSH-16, 19 of 230 Covid beds with oxygen are occupied, while all 20 Covid ventilator beds are vacant.

MOHALI: ONE DEATH, 80 NEW CASES

One more death was reported in the district due to Covid-19 Saturday, increasing the number of fatalities to 1,144. As many as 80 positive Covid-19 cases were also reported in the district, increasing the case count to 95,108. Currently, there are 684 active cases here.

A maximum of 38 cases were reported from Mohali, followed by 19 from Dhakoli, 11 from Kharar, six from Kurali, one each from Derabassi and Gharuan.

A total of 1,853 samples were collected in the district.

PANCHKULA: 45 NEW CASES, NO DEATH

As cases continue to drop, a total of 45 new Covid cases were reported in Panchkula on Saturday. No new Covid-related death was reported in the last 24 hours.

The recovery rate of the district, which had remained consistent at 98.75 per cent for six months after the second wave and fell to 93 per cent during the third wave, has now risen to 98.5 per cent.

Of the total 45 new cases re-

ported on Saturday, 33 were added to the district count while the rest were added to outside district tally.

A total of 57,720 cases have so far been reported from the district, of which 43,815 hail from Panchkula, while the rest have come from neighbouring districts. As many as 411 people have succumbed to the virus here. The positivity rate on Saturday was recorded at 3.2 per cent.

Despite the number of infections growing at a pace faster than that of the second wave, the number of people succumbing to the virus has remained low with 21 deaths witnessed in the past month of January.

The active case tally, which started rising in December and soared above the 500-mark on January 6, the 2,000-mark on January 12 and the 2,500-mark the following day, has witnessed a huge dip. On Sunday, there were 258 cases that were active in the district. Of these, a majority — 242 — remained in home isolation while 16 have required to be hospitalised.

The district has conducted 5,85,086 tests so far, with 1,017 samples being collected on Friday.

As many as 181 healthcare workers have tested positive in the third wave so far. A total of 496 healthcare workers have tested positive in Panchkula since the beginning of Covid in the district.

Estranged lover arrested for trespassing, creating a ruckus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

A 32-YEAR-old estranged lover was arrested Saturday for trespassing and creating a ruckus at the house of his woman acquaintance who was rescued from his possession following a habeas corpus plea of her mother.

The incident happened at Khuda Lahora village. The accused was identified as Rohit Kumar, a native of Uttar Pradesh. He was sent to judicial custody. Sources said Rohit developed close intimacy with a married woman whose maternal house is at Khuda Lahora village. Last month, the two eloped, went to UP and hid in Delhi. The woman's mother filed a habeas corpus in the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which directed the Chandigarh Police to trace the woman. A team of the Sarangpur SHO, Inspector Rohit Kumar, traced both the persons and brought them to Chandigarh. The woman was produced before a local judge who sent her to a woman shelter house. The man was detained under preventive sections. "Today Rohit was given bail. After obtaining bail, he went to the house of the woman's mother who had approached the high court. He forcibly entered the house and created a ruckus. We arrested him under various charges," a police officer said. A case was registered at Sarangpur police station.

47 pc animals brought to SPCA died during treatment: RTI reply

SAURABH PARASHAR
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

AT LEAST 47 per cent of the animals (6,383) brought to the shelter house, Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Sector 38 West, in distress and wounded condition died during the course of treatment in the last one-and-a-half-year (between January 1, 2019, and September 31, 2021). Around 73 per cent (4,665) of the dead animals out of a total of 6,383 were street dogs which died during the course of treatment.

The SPCA received a total 13,566 stray animals for treatment between January 2019 and September 2021. A total of 5,229 animals out of 13,566 were released after being cured. As many as 78 stray animals managed to run away from the shelter house during this period. The animals brought to the SPCA included stray dogs, cats, kittens, horses and bovines.

These details were shared in the reply to an RTI query filed by a Mohali resident, Shaurya Madaan, who is an animal lover. The reply was provided by the

CARING FOR THE UNCARED FOR			
Animal	Total brought	Died	Released
Stray dogs	9,232	4,665	4,789
Bovines	1,041	715	164
Cats/ kitten	710	264	267
Horses	40	25	09



SPCA building in Chandigarh

office of Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, UT Administration.

According to the reply, a total of 9,232 stray dogs were admitted. Out of them, 4,665 died and 4,789 were released. As many as 40 horses were brought for treat-

ment. While 25 died, nine were released. A total of 1,041 bovines were brought. Out of them 715 died and 164 were released after the treatment. While 710 cats and kittens were brought, 264 died during treatment and 267 were released.

Dr Kanwarjit Singh, joint director, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department, said, "Maximum animals brought to the SPCA were in critical and wounded condition. On average 300 animals are brought to SPCA every day. Either these animals are badly injured in road accidents, suffering from a permanent disability or an old injury which became incurable. The staff available at SPCA does its best to cure these animals. SPCA is one of the best facilities available for stray animals in the region in Chandigarh. Besides treating stray animals, we also give treatment to the rescued, injured wild animals. We have been improving this facility."

"I have been a volunteer and also worked with SPCA. Sometimes I observed that the mortality ratio of the animals lodged in SPCA had increased. I tried to obtain figures but I learnt that no record was maintained. I started filing RTI applications. I received replies, but many of my queries are still pending with the department concerned. There should be transparency," Madaan said.

On the occasion of 75th Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

Art and Cultural Affairs Department, Haryana in collaboration with Haryana Kala Parishad

Organizing in Ambala, Gurugram, Faridabad, Hisar, Rohtak, Karnal

Divisional Level Competitions

Subject : Performing arts (music, dance, theatre) and visual arts (painting, sculpture)

Scan QR Code for more Information

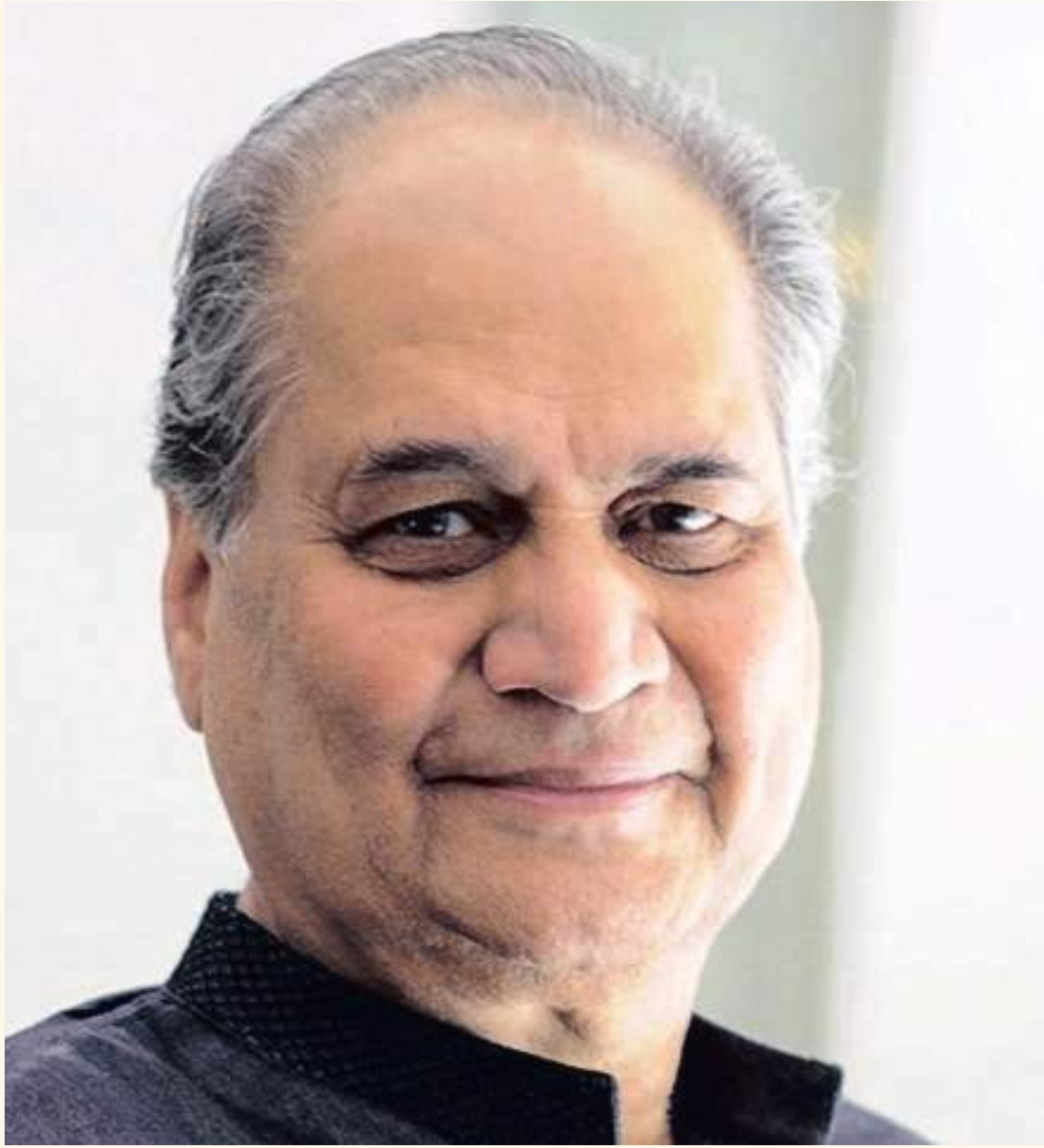
Last Date to apply 28.02.2022

Art and Cultural Affairs Department, Haryana
SCO : 29 1st Floor, Sector 7-C, Chandigarh
Phone No.: 0172-2793896, 2796897, 2796877 ; email-ID artandculturalaffairs@haryana.gov.in

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana
www.prharyana.gov.in | @DiprHaryana

Shri. Rahul Bajaj

Chairman Emeritus, Bajaj Group



An Extraordinary Life 1938 - 2022

Cremation: 13th February, 5:00 pm
Vaikunth Crematorium, Sadashiv Peth, Behind Alka Talkies, Pune

Prayer meeting will be held on
Wednesday, 16th February, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
at the Bajaj Auto colony, cricket ground, Akurdi, Pune
Live stream link will be shared on Bajaj Group websites & social handles

Late Smt. Rupa Bajaj

Rajiv & Deepa Bajaj, Sanjiv & Shefali Bajaj,
Sunaina & Manish Kejriwal,
Sanjali, Rishab & Siddhant Bajaj,
Aryaman & Nirvaan Kejriwal

Suman Jain & Naresh Chandra,
Shishir & Minakshi, Shekhar & Kiran,
Madhur & Kumud, Niraj & Minal,
Tarang & Rochna Jain, Anurang & Varsha Jain,
Kushagra & Vasavadatta, Apoorv & Meenakshi,
Late Anant & Pooja, Nirav & Sheetal,
Geetika, Neelima & Aditya Swamy,
Nimisha & Amit Jaipuria, Kriti & Ram Chandra

BAJAJ

Bajaj Parivar

BRIEFLY

Man killed,
daughter
injured

Chandigarh: A 45-year old Activa scooter rider was killed and his 19-year old pillion rider daughter was injured in a road accident at the Jhampur barrier near Maloya Saturday. They were hit by an unknown tractor-trolley. The injured were rushed to GMSH-16 where doctors declared the rider, Rajesh Kumar, as brought dead. The girl was identified as Naina, a resident of village Jhampur in Mohali. The incident took place around 12.45 pm. Police have registered a case against unknown drivers.

Cop injured in
road accident

Chandigarh: A Sub Inspector (SI) Lakha Singh of UT police was injured in a road accident at a naka at Centra Mall light point Saturday. The injured cop was rushed to the nearby hospital. His condition is stable. Police have registered a case.

Man arrested
for trespassing

Chandigarh: A 27-year old Deepinder Singh of Mani Majra was arrested for trespassing in the house of Additional Commissioner, MC, in Sector 7 Friday. Deepinder Singh was caught by Bhupinder Singh, the MC officer's driver. Police said the accused was sent to judicial custody. They added that the additional commissioner was at home when trespassing took place.

Fetus found

Chandigarh: Police found a fetus wrapped in a cloth from the roof of a house in Babu Dham Colony, Sector 26, Saturday. It is believed to be a few days old. The house belongs to a transporter and is used by many drivers as a resting point. A truck driver noticed it on the roof. A case was registered against unknown persons at PS 26. **ENS**

2 directors of Chandigarh-based firm
among 6 held in graft case of ₹ 1.80LEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

The CBI has arrested six people, including principal chief material manager (PCMM), Chitranjan Locomotive Works, Indian Railway, West Bengal, along with two directors of a Chandigarh-based company, M/s EC Blades and Tools Pvt Ltd, for giving and accepting a bribe of Rs 1.80 lakh for undue favours.

The CBI has recovered around Rs 1.22 crore, 500 gm

gold, documents from various residences of PCMM Ravi Shankar Sinha, a 1986 IRSS officer, in Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Hyderabad, Patna and Ranchi. Rs 32 lakh in cash and incriminating documents were recovered from the premises of the other accused.

The other accused were identified as Sonu Arora and Rajan Gupta, directors of M/s E C Blades and Tools Private Ltd, Chandigarh; Praveen Vyas, a representative of the two directors, Pawan Kumar Singh and Vinod Kumar, two employees of

accused Praveen Vyas.

A CBI officer said that searches were conducted at 17 different places in Delhi, Panchkula, Chandigarh, Varanasi and Chitranjan on the premises of the accused. The accused were remanded in three days of police custody Friday.

"A case was registered against principal chief material manager Ravi Shankar Sinha and five others, including directors of a private company based at Chandigarh. It was alleged that two directors who were approved vendors of

Chitranjan Locomotive Works were conspiring with different senior officers of Railways for obtaining undue favours from them in the award of contract, passing of bills by paying them illegal gratification," a CBI spokesperson said.

"The accused allegedly engaged a person of another company as a representative of their company to negotiate with the senior railway officers, including PCMM, for obtaining undue favour for their company. It was further alleged that the accused persuaded the PCMM for en-

hancing the order quantity of a contract (earlier awarded). It was also alleged that the public servant enhanced the order quantity in the supply order and demanded the bribe to be delivered to him through the said representative. It was alleged that the director of a private company handed over an amount to an employee of the said representative and gave directions to deliver Rs 1.80 lakh to the said public servant for showing favour to the company," the CBI spokesperson said.

All children up
to 5 years should
be given polio
drops: P'kula DCEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANCHKULA, FEBRUARY 12

WITH THE Pulse Polio National Immunisation Day (NID) scheduled to be held this month-end, Deputy Commissioner Mahavir Kaushik on Saturday directed that all children up to the age of five years in the district should be administered polio drops during the three-day drive.

For this, as many as 509 booths will be put up with 30 door-to-door teams made for 100 per cent achievement of pulse polio vaccine coverage in the district. The district has 70,603 children up to the age of five years, which includes 41,775 in rural areas and 28,828 in urban areas.

BDPOs of all four blocks have been directed to conduct meetings with eminent persons of the areas concerned to create awareness among the general public of every village regarding mobilising the children to give polio drops at the nearest booths. Anganwadi workers and helpers would create awareness among the parents visiting anganwadi centres regarding polio and ensure administration of hundred per cent polio drops to the 0-5 year beneficiaries.

The 509 fixed booths would be set up by the health department at different places in the district to administer polio drops to the children, which include 341 in rural areas and 168 in urban areas. Apart from this, 30 mobile teams would also be formed for door-to-door coverage.

The work for construction of Education City, lake near Chandimandir, Coffee House, and Rest House of the corporation, decided in a House meeting held in January, has already been started with its rough drawings being prepared.

Tenders will be floated soon for the renovation of community centre of Sector 19.

MC's proposal to shift milk dairies at Sukhdarshanpur village is pending with the Director Urban Local Bodies, Haryana.



A pot-holed road in Panchkula. Jaipal Singh

235.73 lakh. Those in sectors 7, 16, 17, 18 in ward no. III have been allotted a budget of Rs 246 lakh. A total amount of Rs 244 lakh will be spent on the roads of sectors 8, 9 and 10. Ward number V in Sector 15 will be re-carpeted at a cost of Rs 145 lakh.

Further, Rs 216 lakh would be spent in sectors 12 and 12A. Rs 245 lakh will be spent on construction of roads in sectors 4 and 11. Rs 230 lakh would be spent in Sector 2 and 1A of the city. Roads of Industrial area phase II will be reconstructed at a cost of Rs 195 lakh. Sector 14 as well as Industrial Area phase I would incur a cost of Rs 215 lakh in road recarpeting.

Tenders for sectors 20 and 21 roads are among the ones which have already been allotted and will begin work in the first phase.

At a meeting of the Finance and Contract Committee held on

Friday, further discussions were held on civic issues, including repair, renovation and maintenance of toilets. To make Panchkula city free from unclaimed animals and stray dogs, a tender was floated for the purchase of cattle catcher which will soon be procured. The MC will also start the process of tendering to get the e-rickshaw repaired.

Discussions also took place regarding re-construction and renovation and maintenance of all the community centres of Panchkula city, in which it was decided to purchase AC, geyser, wardrobe, fan, table tennis, chairs et al for a few community centres. These items will be purchased for the community centres of sectors 17, 21, 28 and Mansa Devi Complex in Sector 6. A sample room has also been prepared in Sector 21.

Regarding the installation of

LED street lights in the municipal area, officials said that a tender is being put up by the urban local body department, after which LED lights will be installed in Panchkula. The officials said that the work of installing 100 decorative lights near all the roundabouts is going on and this work will be completed soon.

Member of Sampat
Nehra gang arrested
for possessing pistol,
five live cartridgesEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

A 28-YEAR-OLD member of Sampat Nehra gang, Satbir Singh, alias Gujjar, was arrested for possessing a country-made pistol with five live cartridges near St Kabir light point, Sector 26, on Friday night.

Police said Satbir Singh, a resident of Bhainsa Tibba village in Mansa Devi Complex (MDC), Panchkula, has been sharing the numbers of prominent traders of Chandigarh settled in Grain Market, Sector 26, with Nehra who is lodged in Tihar Jail in Delhi.

Sources said Nehra further forwarded these numbers to one of his accomplices, Goldy Brar, who is believed to be in a foreign country, to make extortion and threatening calls to the traders.

Accused Satbir alias Gujjar has been involved in at least seven crimes, including some committed with notorious criminal Nehra in Haryana.

"Satbir Singh alias Gujjar was released on bail in many cases registered against him. We learnt that he was in contact with Sampat Nehra through WhatsApp calls. Nehra is lodged in Tihar Jail. On Friday night, one of my police teams apprehended him with an illegal weapon and



Satbir Singh

cartridges. He was travelling in a Bolero bearing Himachal registration number. We questioned him on various aspects. He was remanded in judicial custody today," said Inspector Amanjot Singh, incharge of operations cell.

Sources said the Haryana Police was informed about the arrest of Satbir Singh. A case was registered at Sector 26 police station.

Nehra is a notorious criminal facing criminal charges in at least two dozen cases, including murder, attempt to murder and extortion. Sources said that there are many people, especially youngsters linked with Nehra and his associates through many channels. These people used to collect information about businessmen, traders and further passed it to criminals lodged in many jails.

MURDER OF RETIRED HC EMPLOYEE

Police arrest one person,
say theft was the motiveEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MOHALI, FEBRUARY 12

KHARAR POLICE have arrested one person in connection with the murder of a retired superintendent of Punjab and Haryana High court on Saturday. The other accused person is on the run. The police have said that theft was the reason behind the murder.

Rangji Singh was found dead at his house in Bhagomajra village. Rangji's daughter found his body lying in the kitchen with a head injury following which a murder case was registered at Kharar (sadar) police station.

Kharar (I) DySP Bikram Brar said that during the investigation, it was found that two men identified as Monu and Itzaar

were involved in the crime. "Itzaar was arrested while the other accused shall soon be arrested. Our teams are working on it," DySP Brar added.

Stating further, DySP Brar said that the victim had hired the culprits to whitewash his home and that they murdered him and stole Rs 30,000 cash from the house.

Rangji's daughter who found his body, Swarnjeet Kaur, stated in the complaint that her two siblings are settled abroad.

"We hired two women to take care of my father; he was living alone at the house in our native village. I got to know that something had happened to my father and when I reached the house, I found him lying in the kitchen with a head injury," she had stated in the complaint.

NOTICE BOARD

CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY

APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS



APEEJAY COLLEGE (TRIBUTE)

Apeejay College of Fine Arts, Jalandhar pays tribute to Jagjit Singh on his Birth Anniversary. Department of Music of Apeejay College of Fine Arts organized a programme to pay Tribute to the Gazal Maestro Jagjit Singh on his Birth Anniversary on 8.2.22 by singing his gazals. Principal Dr. Neeraj Dhingra, on this occasion expressed her views saying though Jagjit Singh ji is not present physically yet his singing left a deep impression on the minds of his audiences. His gazals would ever remain memorable & Jagjit Singh would always be remembered for his contributions. On this occasion Dr. Vivek Verma sang many beautiful gazals of Jagjit Singh. Dr. Anupam Sood erected the stage and shared many incidents from the life of Jagjit Singh to the audience. Dr. Neeraj Dhingra congratulated Department.



HNV (DECLAMATION CONTEST)

'Planning Forum', PG department of Economics of Hans Rai Mahila Maha Vidyalaya Jalandhar organised a declamation contest under the able guidance of Principal Prof. Dr. (Mrs.) Ajay Sareen. The topics for the declamation contest were 'Crypto Currency' and 'Brain Drain'. In the judgement panel there were Mrs. Binoo Gupta, Dean Student Welfare, Mrs. Rama Sharma, PRO and Head PG Department of Mass Communication and Video Production and Dr. Shalilu Batra, Dean Discipline, Head PG Department of Economics. The students from various streams participated in declamation contest and expressed their views. Dr. Shalilu Batra addressed the students regarding importance of data base, case studies, practical and empirical evidences to support their views.



KMV (CANCER AWARENESS)

Kanya Maha Vidyalaya (Autonomous) organised a special program on cancer awareness. The program was organised by Red Ribbon Club under the aegis of Department of Student Welfare. Dr. Esha Charaya, Obstetrician, Gynaecologist and Oncologist, Patel Hospital Jalandhar attended the event as a resource person. Dr. Esha talked in detail about defining a dreadful disease like cancer as well as its types, symptoms, causes and timely treatment. Apart from this, she also provided information about the types of cancer being found in different age groups especially in women like Cervical Cancer, Chest Cancer & Oral Cancer etc. While talking about cervical cancer, she highlighted about its symptoms, causes, prevention and treatment.



PNB (DONATION)

PNB Divisional office Ludhiana donated Ceiling Fans, LED lights and Sanitizers. Punjab National Bank's Divisional Office, Ludhiana West, Under 'Vidyanjali', campaign launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India with the objective of empowering schools, donated Ceiling Fans, LED tube lights and Sanitizers to Government Primary School Sekheval and Government Primary School, Tharke under the leadership of Shri Praveen Kumar Gupta, Circle Head, Ludhiana West. On this occasion, Praveen Gupta said that Punjab National Bank is fulfilling its Corporate Social Responsibility. During this the school principal and teachers were also present and they appreciated the cooperation made by PNB.

BJS DENTAL COLLEGE (ANNUAL SPORTS MEET)

"Sardar Jawala Singh Memorial" Annual Sports Meet 2022 set off to a colourful and enthusiastic start today at Baba Jaswant Singh Dental College & Hospital. With their heads held high, spring in their walk, holding flags and placards, MDS and BDS students lead their respective classes in a very impressive march past to mark the commencement of games. College Chairman, Dr. Baba Anhad Raj Singh Ji in his address stressed that sports and extra-curricular activities formed an integral part of overall personality development of a student. Sports inculcated discipline, obedience and self-restraint.

RAYAT BAHRA UNIVERSITY (WORKSHOP)

The Department of Life Sciences of the Rayat Bahra University organised a three-day workshop on Life Science, Food Science and Environmental Technology to inculcate scientific and practical temperament among the faculty and the students. Gurvinder Singh Bahra, Chancellor of the Rayat Bahra University, lauded the initiative in organizing the event and conveyed his greetings to the eminent participants in the workshop.



MMDU (VISIT)

The Department of Law, MM (DU) Mullana in collaboration with District Legal Service Authority, Ambala organized a visit to Village Karasan, Tehsil Shehzadpur, District Ambala on 11th February 2022. The visit was organized under the guidance and support of Haryana Legal Services Authority, Panchkula. During this visit the students interacted with the villagers to figure out the problems pertaining to the village and made them aware of their legal rights. The Panchayat Secretary Mr. Gagan Chahal facilitated the visit. A total of 36 students participated in the survey.



PEC (96TH SENATE MEETING)

Punjab Engineering College (Deemed to be University), Chandigarh held its 96th Senate meeting on 11th February 2022 to discuss improvements and changes in policy to be made for the academic year 2021-2022. The Senate meeting was presided over by the Director Dr. Baldev Setia and was attended by Deans, Heads of Departments and other Institute Functionaries. The main discussion on the agenda was to formalise the institute's Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) policy and lay down a transparent administrative system.

CENT BANK HOME FINANCE (INAUGURATION)

The new Branch Office of Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd at Nicholson Road, Ambala Cantt was inaugurated by Shri Sachin Sudhakar, General Manager, Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd, Mumbai. Addressing all the staff members present on the occasion, he said that the Company decision to open new Branch Office at Ambala is based on after successfully running of Panchkula and Rohtak Branch in Haryana. A new dimension to the housing finance activities in Haryana region. It should be noted that now company having 3 branches in Haryana, General Manager also requested the staff members to pay special attention to on Pensioners and LIG group for housing finance and company is providing loan for purchase of house, construction, LAP and to purchase commercial property with tenure of 30yrs in all products which is USP of the company. On this occasion, Branch Manager, Panchkula Mr. Jaspreet Singh, Sr. Officer Mr. Ravi Kant were present.

PUNJAB & SIND BANK (FINANCIAL RESULTS Q3)

Today Mr. Satbir Singh (Zonal Manager) Punjab & Sind Bank Patiala Informed about Glorious Performance For Q3 of 2022 Financial Results for Q3 of FY2022. Today, Punjab & Sind Bank declared the reviewed financial results of the Bank for the quarter ended.



SJVN (GROWTH IN PROFIT)

Sh. Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director, SJVN, today informed that SJVN has recorded Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs 232.67 crores during third quarter of current financial year which is 19% more than the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal year. Sh. Sharma stated that during the third quarter, SJVN has earned Rs 550.92 crores Revenue from Operations. This is 11.29% more than the previous year. SJVN has also recorded other incomes amounting to Rs 56.95 crores which saw substantial increase of 55.94% as compared to same period of last FY. Sh. Sharma said that in Q3 of FY21-22, SJVN has recorded highest ever Power Generation of 1480 Million Units for the period surpassing 1280 MU generation in corresponding period of previous financial year.



THDCIL (SIGNED LOI)

THDC India Limited (THDCIL) signed the Letter of Intent (LOI) of 10,000 MW in Rajasthan with an estimated investment of Rs 40,000 crores for establishment of Renewable Energy Parks/Projects of 10,000MW in the august presence of Hon'ble Chief Minister, Rajasthan and Hon'ble Minister for Industry, Revenue and Energy, Govt. of Rajasthan. On behalf of THDCIL Sh. J. Behera, Director (Finance) signed the LOI and accepted by Additional Chief Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan and Dr. Subodh Agarwal, CMD RRECL in Jaipur. The land bank will be allocated by Govt. of Rajasthan through RRECL. The RE Parks will be implemented through SPV in the term of a JV company with RRECL in the ratio of 74:26. Sh. J. Behera, Director (Finance) & Sh. Rajeev Vishnoi, Chairman and Managing Director.

EVENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, LAUNCHES, CSR INITIATIVES, APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS



During a protest against hijab ban, in Ludhiana on Saturday. Gurmeet Singh

HARYANA WATERLOGGING WOES

Rs 7000/acre compensation to farmers for crop loss

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

THE HARYANA government will give financial assistance of Rs 7,000 per acre to farmers who are unable to sow crops due to water logging in their fields.

Deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala announced this while addressing a public meeting in Matloda village of Hisar district, Saturday.

“Earlier, Rs 3,000 per acre were given to the farmers by the state government as financial assistance. Now farmers will not have to spend the nights in mandis to sell their produce. Every grain of the crops of the farmers who have registered on the portal will be bought and the payment of the same would be made to them at the earliest. The

procurement process will be further expedited through the online system. New procurement centers are also being set up for the purchase of wheat and mustard so that farmers do not face any problem in selling their products,” Dushyant said.

“The work of remodeling of canals/rivals is in progress to provide adequate quantity of irrigated water to the farmers. An amount of Rs. 600 crore has been released by the government to renovate all the ponds in the state. All 14000 ponds of the state will be renewed in two phases through modern technology. Such a system would be made through which the old water would continue to be used in the agriculture field and the new water would keep coming into the pond,” Dushyant added.

“As soon as the work on the

runway of Maharaja Agrasen Airport is completed, the process of setting up industrial units will start here, which will create new employment opportunities for the youth of the area,” Dushyant said while addressing the gathering.

“While accepting most of the demands of the demand letter submitted by the villagers, the Deputy Chief Minister announced the establishment of an industrial training institute for the children in the village as well as a modern library, so that the students can prepare themselves for various types of competitive examinations. The Deputy Chief Minister said that Haryana Kaushal Vikas Nigam has been formed to provide employment to the youth. The process of registration will be started soon on the portal”, a government spokesperson said.

Haryana DGP to submit action taken reports for all cases forwarded to him: Vij

EXPRES NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

HARYANA HOME Minister, Anil Vij, on Saturday, said that the state police chief will now have to submit an action taken report on all such complaints that have been forwarded to him by the minister or his office officer.

Vij, while addressing the grievances of people at his residence in Ambala on Saturday, stated, “I have asked for ‘Action Taken Reports’ from the Director General of Police (DGP) of the state on complaints of people sent for action in the last 15 days”.

On Saturday, during the course of hearing people’s grievances, Vij also sought investigation status on various complaints from the district police chiefs and issued them necessary directions.

One of the many people who submitted a complaint before Vij on Saturday was Parwara Ram, an ex-serviceman and a resident of Sirsal village in Kaithal. Parwara

alleged that he had filed a complaint on charges of assault and intimidation in November last year, but the culprits were not arrested by the investigating officer and concrete action was not taken. Taking the complaint of the ex-serviceman seriously, Vij directed Superintendent of Police, Kaithal, to constitute a SIT in the matter and investigate the issue promptly. In another case, Urmila Devi, a resident of Yamunanagar, alleged in her complaint that she had filed a case of dowry harassment and assault, but Yamunanagar police did not take any concrete action. Vij then sought Yamunanagar SP’s explanation on the matter.

Jai Prakash, a resident of Charkhi Dadri, complained to the Home Minister regarding the kidnapping and killing of his daughter. He alleged that his daughter’s case was not handled properly by the district police force, on which Vij transferred the case’s investigation to state crime branch for prompt action.

Himachal CM says Congress encouraging illegal liquor trade

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 12

HIMACHAL PRADESH Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur, on Saturday, conducted a daylong visit to Una district, wherein he targeted the Congress. He stated that police had started cracking down and arresting those involved in the illegal liquor trade and it was unfortunate that most of them had links with the Congress party and its leaders.

Thakur added that the state will take action against those involved in drug trafficking and their properties will be confiscated.

The Chief Minister on Saturday inaugurated and laid foundation stones of developmental projects worth about Rs. 67 crore for Kutlehar and Haroli Vidhan Sabha areas of the district. The Leader of Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, Congress leader Mukesh Agnihotri, is from Haroli. Thakur, after inaugurating the

Kala Kendra Una at Samoor Kalan, which has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 16.78 crore, also announced the opening of HPSEB Division at Thanakalan.

He also said that commerce classes will soon start in Government Senior Secondary Schools Dhamandri and Rainsari and the process of setting up a science lab had commenced at the Senior Secondary School Samoor Kalan. He said that developmental works worth Rs 1600 crore have been earmarked or were being completed in different parts of the district. He said that the Kala Kendra dedicated by him will definitely prove a hub for cultural activities in the area.

Later, the Chief Minister visited the famous Baba Bal Ashram at Una, before going and inaugurating an Rs. 3.82 crore newly constructed administrative block of the Police Department and an RT-PCR Lab at Palkwah, in Jhalera’s Haroli, that has been constructed at a price of Rs. 3.95 crore.

2 held, Parwanoo double murder case cracked

Shimla: Solan police have arrested two men from Punjab’s Kharar and Ganguwal and have claimed to crack a sensational double murder case.

On February 2, two women were found dead by the roadside near Railway Tunnel-10 in Koti on Solan-Parwanoo highway. The bodies had been wrapped in bedsheets and abandoned.

Investigators said police had

arrested Jatinder Pal Singh alias Vicky of Kharar and Dinesh Kumar of Ganguwal (Anandpur Sahib) for the crime. The duo was produced before a court that sent them to seven days of police remand

Parwanoo DCP, Yogesh Rolta, said that the motive behind the murders is yet to be ascertained and further probe was on in the matter. **ENS**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY SIKKIM

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION

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Director

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Group	Name of the post	No. of posts	Pay Matrix Level as per 7th CPC
A	Research Assistant	01	Level 10 (Rs.56100-177500)
	Electronics Engineer	02	Level 10 (Rs.56100-177500)
	Producer	01	Level 10 (Rs.56100-177500)
	Senior Visualizer Grade -I	01	Level 10 (Rs.56100-177500)
C	Visualizer/Graphic Artist	01	Level 5 (Rs.29200-92300)

Web link for online registration, details of posts, qualification, experience, age, reservation, application fee and general instructions etc. are available on the Institute website www.nitttrcd.ac.in. The last date for online registration is **31.3.2022 till 5.00 P.M.**

Faculty Incharge, Administration

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Yelahanka, Bangalore-560 064.
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No. RWF/S/P/1018/2021-22 dt 11.02.22

On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Materials Manager invites electronic Tenders from Interested Vendors for supply of the following items on the Indian Railways E-Portal - www.irops.gov.in. The Tender documents and the Corrigenda to the Tenders, if any, will be available on the Portal only.

Tender No	Due Date	Short Description
P1221103	02-03-22	Steel Blooms 300 mm Sq for forging LHB/flat Bogie Axles as per RWF specification. Qty:- 13742 MT
P1211568B	28-03-22	Graphite Electrode with preset nipple as per RWF specification. Qty:- 412 MT
P1211544A	28-03-22	Graphite Powder as per RWF specification. Qty:- 955 MT

GLOBAL TENDERS:-

P3211041B	14-03-22	Graphite Mould Blanks as per RWF specification. [1] 1097 mm dia X 575 mm height – RWF Regt: 50 Nos, RWP/Bela Regt: 34 Nos. [2] 1224 mm dia X 575 mm height – RWF Regt: 585 Nos, RWP/Bela Regt: 116 Nos
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Principal Chief Materials Manager

उत्तर प्रदेश आर्युविज्ञान विश्वविद्यालय
सैफई, इटावा (उ.प्र.)
Uttar Pradesh University of Medical Sciences
Saifai, Etawah - 206 130 (U.P.)
Website: www.upums.ac.in

L. No. 6191/UPUMS/Recruitment Cell (55 (Part-II)/2021-22 Dated: 12 February, 2022

CORRIGENDUM

As per the Advt. No. UPUMS/ACAD/18/2021-22 dated **03-01-2022** published, the deadline for the submission of the applications for all positions is being extended till **28.02.2022 till 05:00 PM**.

For details kindly visit the University website :- www.upums.ac.in.

Registrar

STATE BANK OF INDIA
RACC, 1st Floor, Main Branch, Bathinda Road, Fazilka
E-Mail sbi.63457@sbi.co.in

[Rule-8(1)] Possession Notice (For Immovable Property)

Whereas the undersigned, being the Authorised officer of the State Bank of India, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (No. 3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice to borrower(s) / guarantor(s), on the date mentioned hereunder, calling upon the borrower(s) / guarantor(s), to repay the amount mentioned in the respective demand notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower(s) / guarantor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) / guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned against below accounts:

The borrower(s) / guarantor(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **State Bank of India**, for the amount specified against each as per details below less amount of recovery if any plus future interest, expenses, costs, thereon.

The Borrower(s) / Guarantors' attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Branch Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount Outstanding as per Demand Notice
ABOCHAR Sh. Pipal Singh S/o Sh. Kartar Singh R/o Street No. 2, Basant Nagar, Abochar, Distt. Fazilka (Borrower)	All that part and parcel of Property measuring 4 Marla being 9/513 share out of total land measuring 20 Kanal 8 Marla comprised in Kharsa: No 1562 (20 - 8), K h e w a t N o. 3877, Khatoni No. 5644 as per Jamabandi for the year 1995-96 situated at Basant Nagar, Abohar II, Distt. Fazilka in the name of Sh. Pipal Singh S/o Sh. Kartar Singh vide Waska No. 3971 dated 26.11.2001, bounded as under, East: Land of Sh. Sher Singh and Sh. Babou Singh West: Street North: Land of Sh. Iqbal Singh, South: Land of Sh. Sonu Kumar	25.02.2021	11.02.2022	Rs. 7,87,280/- due as on 24.08.2021 plus further intt., other charges and exp. thereon w.e.f. 25.08.2021
ABOCHAR Sh. Sarban Ram S/o Sh. Khyari Ram, R/o Near Gurdwara Ajamgarh Road Abohar, Distt. Fazilka (Borrower), Sh. Subhash Chander S/o Sh. Udai Ram (Guarantor)	All that part and parcel of Property bearing MC No. B-IV-1934/1 measuring 3 Marla situated at Village Azimgarh, Tehsil Abohar, Distt. Fazilka in the name of Sh. Sarban Ram S/o Sh. Khyari Ram vide Sale Deed No. 2523 Dated 11.11.1991, bounded as under; East: Land of Sh. Balia Ram, West: Land of Sh. Gurdial Singh, North: Land of Sh. Naninder Pal Singh, South: Street	03.08.2021	11.02.2022	Rs. 5,08,641/- due as on 02.08.2021 plus further intt., other charges and exp. thereon w.e.f. 03.08.2021

DATE: 13.02.2022 PLACE: ABOCHAR AUTHORISED OFFICER

Hijab row: March in Ludhiana in solidarity with Karnataka students

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 12

HUNDREDS OF women, and some men, got together in Ludhiana’s Field Ganj on Saturday to take part in a hijab march and express solidarity with Karnataka students where controversy has erupted wearing of the attire.

On Saturday, the women, dressed in their hijabs, marched from CMC chowk towards Civil Hospital and Field Ganj area, holding placards that said ‘hijab is my crown, and pehle

On Saturday, the women, dressed in hijabs, marched from CMC chowk towards Civil Hospital and Field Ganj area, holding placards with slogans written on them

hijab fir kitab, among other things. A number of young women speakers later took to the dais over this issue.

One of the protesters, Pagambari Khatoon, a nursing student of CMC Nursing College, said, “Girls are given chunris in Navratri pooja. Then why do they want us to take off our hijabs. We are comfortable in it. Hence we strongly condemn whatever happened in Karnataka where a girl student was targeted by a group of boys just because she was adamant about wearing a hijab.”

Ayesha Khatoon, another college-going student, said, “In our country, everyone has the freedom to eat what they want, and wear what they want. So why are we be-

ing targeted.”

Another protester, Shehnaz Sheikh, added, “No one should target us for our appearance. This is a moment of expressing unity and hence I have come in this march.”

Maulana Usman Ludhianvi, shahi imam of Jama Masjid, Ludhiana said, “It is a religious matter and hence we have all gathered here. The women-led the march and we followed them. This shouldn’t be linked to politics, though many communal forces are trying to do exactly that and giving us lessons on dress codes.”

DIRECTORATE OF PUNJAB STATE LOTTERIES
DRAW DATE: 12/02/2022
RESULT OF PUNJAB STATE DEAR 500 MONTHLY

Price Rs. 500/- Per Ticket

1st Prize (1) Rs. 2.0000000 Crores/- (On 6 digits With Serise) (Seller ₹ 5 Lakhs + Sub Agent ₹ 5 Lakh Total Prize Amount ₹ 2,10 Crores)

B 890310

0199	0899	3155	4101	4505	5019	5127	6415	8075	9678
0217	1427	2398	3802	3854	4500	4810	6432	7452	8649
0379	1014	1287	1978	2372	3458	3513	4407	4873	4896
4956	4974	6161	6409	6968	7794	8028	8086	8153	9528
1393	1596	1767	1821	2872	2974	3023	3294	3352	3966
4323	5211	5804	6854	7109	7307	7792	8463	8543	8852
0148	0282	0286	0339	0405	0430	0439	0453	0474	0475
0594	0607	0641	0780	0815	0863	0868	0901	0957	0984
1016	1203	1209	1212	1271	1334	1377	1385	1392	1411
1462	1465	1471	1540	1566	1724	1796	1819	1849	1880
1907	1942	2036	2098	2212	2262	2280	2329	2352	2359
2417	2452	2502	2712	2782	2878	2903	2912	2938	3057
3168	3202	3324	3331	3405	3411	3417	3445	3562	3611
3673	3679	3701	3740	3744	3869	3962	3987	3999	4061
4115	4166	4232	4285	4345	4435	4441	4463	4472	4495
4502	4507	4546	4641	4643	4646	4673	4684	4686	4695
4721	4732	4761	4799	5001	5078	5082	5170	5221	5237
5273	5311	5321	5326	5341	5449	5454	5582	5622	5626
5643	5823	5928	6013	6103	6160	6179	6247	6277	6335
6356	6363	6372	6382	6457	6518	6563	6627	6674	6720
6800	6803	6830	6862	6911	6951	6958	7027	7210	7269
7295	7318	7329	7512	7567	7587	7657	7730	7813	7850
7934	7939	7990	8018	8112	8142	8239	8326	8348	8398
8459	8475	8487	8618	8679	8760	8769	8785	8808	8830
8865	8902	8947	8952	8971	8983	8996	9071	9225	9238
9321	9373	9420	9424	9554	9651	9790	9929	9962	9989

* Amount of Sub Agent & Seller Prizes will be paid as approved in the scheme.
* PRIZE WINNING TICKETS MUST BE CLAIMED WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF RESULT
Issued by Directorate of PUNJAB STATE LOTTERIES
Check the final result with Gazette Notification

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
REGIONAL OFFICE - JALANDHAR

POSSESSION NOTICE { RULE 8 (1) (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES) }

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the **Union Bank of India**, under the securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with the Rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice as briefed under, calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and interest thereon, within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices. The borrower (s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken physical possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13 (4) of the said act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, as detailed below

The borrower in particular, and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the mentioned property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **Union Bank of India**, for an amount as briefed under and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub Section (8) of the section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Name of the Branch, Borrowers/Guarantors/ Partners/Mortgagor	Description of the Immovable Properties	Date of Demand Notice	Amount Out Standing
1.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrowers: Mr. Gurdev Singh S/o Jasbir Singh Moh-Gobind Nagar, H.No. 71 ward no 16 Hoshiarpur Punjab. Guarantor: Mr. Mangat Rai S/o Sh.Sarwan Singh B-12 MCH-500/1 Jagatpura Hoshiarpur Punjab. Co-Obligant: Mrs. Harpreet Kaur W/o Sh. Jasbir Singh Moh-Gobind Nagar, H.No. 71 ward no 16 Hoshiarpur Punjab.	Applicant/title holder is owner of shop measuring: 1M 3 Sq.ft. K h e w a t N o. 829/1030, Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Eighty 830/1031 K h a s r a N o. 16/1600 (1-16), 5274/1600 (0-3); 6043/5276 (1-2), 6042/5276 (0-9) situated at Suthen, Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring: North: Road (10), South: Parminder Singh (10), East: Sarabjit Singh (21), West: Sukhwinder Singh (21)	03.06.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 4,74,086.43 (Rupees Four Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Eighty Six and forty Three Paise) and interest + other expenses thereon.
2.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrowers: Mr. Krishan Kumar S/O Sh. Total Ram Village and Post Office Nara Post Dist. Hoshiarpur Punjab-146001 Guarantor: Mr. Joginder Pal S/o Sh. Bani Ram Nara Post Office Nara Hoshiarpur Punjab.	Residential property belongs to Mr. Krishan Kumar measuring 8M K h e w a t N o. 109/172, 110/123, 219/241, 220/242, 221/243, 223/245, 360/399, 367/406, 368/407 Kharsa No 6/22 (2-13), 3/21 (4-15), 4/2 (0-13), 533 (0-4), 1139 (4-6), 1140 (2-17), 39 (3-2), 3/24/1 (0-18), 8/11 (4-18), 2/5 (2-), 10/1 (5-18) 22/11 (2-7), 6/5/2 (3-9), 12/2 (1-5), 3/16 (2-16) 17 (5-1), 23/22/2 (0-2), 25/11 (4-5), 4/12/1 (5-2) 22 (4-4) 5/1 (7-11) 28 (9-2) 1141 (12-5) 3/23/21 (1-16), 6/16 (2-6) situated at Village Nara Tehsil and Distt Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring: North-Street, (53') South- Harmeet Singh (31'-3"), East-Street, (53') West- Bani Ram (53')	20.05.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 7, 46, 375.99 (Rupees Seven Lakh Forty Six Thousand Three Hundred Seventy Five and Ninety Nine Paise) and interest + other expenses thereon.
3.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrowers: M/S Kuldeep Wood Works & Electronics House Aslamabad, Chandigarh Road, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001 Proprietor: Kuldeep Singh S/O Ram Kishan, B-23, House no 484/1 Near Joginder Saw mill Aslamabad, Hoshiarpur Punjab. Co-Obligant: Mrs. Rajinder Kaur W/o Kuldeep Singh, B-23/484/1 Aslamabad, Ram Colony Camp Hoshiarpur Punjab	Property measuring 10 M situated at Ravi Dass Nagar, Hoshiarpur, Punjab bounded as and measuring : North- Daljit Singh (10 Karam), South- Kehar Singh (10 Karam), East - Ram Asra and Jagtar Singh (9 Karam), West - Rasta (9 Karam)	20.05.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 19,54,741. (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Fifty Four Thousand and Twenty Three Paise) and interest + other expenses thereon.
4.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrowers: Mr Kuldeep Singh S/O Ram Kishan B-23 House no 484/1, near Joginder Saw Mill, Aslamabad, Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Co-Borrower: Mrs Rajinder Kaur W/o Kuldeep Singh B-23 House no 484/1, Aslamabad Ram Colony Camp Hoshiarpur Punjab.	Property measuring 10M Old Khawat No 142/177, 144/179 and New K h e w a t N o. 154/148/169, 156/150/171 Kharsa No 85/19/4 (1-9) 85/12/1 (7-9) situated at Bajwara, Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring: North- Majhel Singh (6'+72"), South- Vipran Kumar (78"), East-Rasta and Majel Singh (33'-3'+20"), West- Onkar Singh and Rajinder kaur (53'-9")	20.05.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 18,71,666.00 (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Seventy One Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Six Only) and interest + other expenses thereon.
5.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrower(s) : M/S Queens Land Red Road, Hoshiarpur, Punjab -146001 Proprietor: Harpreet Singh Heera S/O Harmindar Singh House no 12/15 ward no 10, Hargobind Nagar, Hariana Road, Hoshiarpur Punjab. Guarantor: Mr Harmindar Singh S/O Beant Singh House no 12/15 ward no 10, Hargobind Nagar , Hariana Road, Hoshiarpur Punjab.	Property belongs to Mr. Harmindar Singh measuring: 6M 168 sq.ft. Old Khawat No 92/107 and New Khawat no 101/115 Kharsa no 44/10/2 (0-4), 11/2 (3-14), 5/6/2 (5-2), (3-4), 8 (0-8), 12/2 (3-18), 13 (7-14), 14 (8-0), 15/1 (6-18), 16/4 (0-3), 17/1 (1-16), 18 (8-0), 19 (8-0), 21/2 (6-0), 22 (8-0) 23 (8-0), 11/5/2 (5-12), 6/1 (7-10), 26 (0-6), 12/1 (8-0), 2 (7-14), 3 (8-0), 10 (8-0), 26 (0-7) situated at Village Naloiyan Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring : North – Other Owner (30'), South - Rasta (30'), East – Purchaser (60"), West – Other Owner (60")	20.05.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 13,53,972.64 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Two and Sixty Four Paise) and interest + other expenses thereon.
6.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrower(s) : Mr Rizwan S/o Mohammad Ahmed House Number-217 Gali No. 8, Krishana Nagar Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001 Co-Borrower: Mrs. Soniya W/o Mr. Rizwan H.No.217, Gali No.8, Krishana Nagar, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001 Guarantor(s) : Mr Mohammad Akram S/o Mohammad Aslam Near Preet Nagar, Ravidass Nagar Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001	Residential property belongs to Mr. Rizwan measuring 5M 18.3 Sq.ft. K h e w a t N o 1029/148/169, 156/150/171 1364Min(4-10), 1364Min(5-0) situated at Fremgarh Road Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring: North- Other Owner (39'-10"), South- Karnail Singh (41'-2"), East- Rasta (30'-1"), West- Resham Singh (30')	20.05.2021 08.02.2022	Rs. 27,62,561.49 (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakh Sixty Two Thousand Five Hundred Sixty One and Forty Nine Paise Only) and interest + other expenses thereon.
7.	HOSHIARPUR (eAB) BRANCH Borrower(s): Mr Sandeep Sharma S/o Sh. Pran Nath Sharma, Near Mount Carmel School, Village Kakon, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001 Guarantor(s) : Mr Kartik Nakra S/o Sh. Sandeep Nakra House no 384 Anand Gali, Red road, Hoshiarpur, Punjab-146001	Property belongs to Mr. Sandeep Sharma measuring 7M K h e w a t N o 96/110 Kharsa No 42/12/1 (5-7) situated at Village Kakkon Tehsil and Distt Hoshiarpur, it is bounded as and measuring : North- Rasta (32') South: Vendor (32') East : Vendor (32') West : Rasta (32')	20.05.2021 08.0	

8 DECISION 2022



POLL KHOL

The ‘rular’ life in Punjab

IT SEEMS that word rural is a tongue twister for many Malwa politicians, for whenever they address a gathering, they talk about all things ‘rular’. But there are no secret sniggers in the audience, for in many rural areas of Punjab, everyone is used to living in ‘rular’ conditions. It’s also ditto for Lucknow which many people in Punjab call ‘Nuckdow’. Shakespeare definitely had Punjab in mind when he wrote, ‘What is in a name...’

Bhua and phuphads of Moosewala

TRYING TO connect with people in Mansa villages, singer Sidhu Moosewala often runs into men whose spouses are from his village. He says he finds this out only when he addresses them as Bapu and gets corrected. “They tell me they are my phuphad.” Moosewala jokes that after meeting many phuphads, he finally met some bhuas the other day. The youngster who’s fighting a tough poll battle then softens them up by touching their feet. Needless to say all these bhuas and phuphads will make for a close fight at Mansa.

Bhagwant chacha

AAP CHIEF Arvind Kejriwal’s daughter Harshita, an engineer from IIT Delhi, won many hearts at Dhuri the other day as she told the gathered women how their enthusiasm had rubbed off on her. As they clapped in appreciation, she soon clarified the purpose of her visit: to seek votes for her Bhagwant chacha. Now that’s one very dutiful niece.

Smit Singh, the farm expert

THERE IS another chacha who is working hard for his nephew. And he is none other than Sidhu chacha. The other day PPCC chief Navjot Sidhu was all praise as he campaigned for Congress’s Amargarh candidate Smit Singh Mann, and told everyone how the youngster had scripted the chapter on agrarian reforms in the Punjab model. From a shooter to a farm expert? That’s quite a journey.

BALLOTIN

Days before polls, Punjab Kisan Union pulls out of SSM

Ludhiana: A week before elections, Punjab Kisan Union (PKU), Saturday decided to pull out of Sanyukt Samaj Morcha (SSM) and one of their union member Gurnam Singh Bhikhi who was contesting from Mansa has announced to stop his campaign in the midway. PKU is a prominent farmer union in Malwa and having its strength in Mansa. Ruldu Singh Mansa is the president of this union. On Friday PKU office bearers had asked their president to clear his stand over contesting elections or being a pressure group due to which on Saturday Bhikhi announced that he will not contest election from Mansa.. however technically he is the candidate now as he didn’t withdraw papers till the last date of withdrawal. However Bhikhi will no longer campaign now. This action has acted as a jolt to newly formed SSM.

FIR against AAP’s Sardulgarh candidate for holding roadshow

Ludhiana: The Returning Officer-cum-Sub Divisional Magistrate of Sardulgarh, Manisha Rana, on Saturday said that an FIR under sections 188, 171 (H) of the IPC has been registered against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) candidate from the area for violating the Model Code of Conduct. The case against Gurpreet Singh Bannawali, the AAP candidate from Sardulgarh in Mansa district, has been filed at Jhunjir police station, Rana said. Rana said that as per the directions of the Election Commission of India, roadshows have been banned for the upcoming Assembly polls. Recently, the Flying Squad Team (FST) stopped volunteers of the AAP who were on motorcycles in huge numbers and were holding a roadshow at Fatta Malkaa village near Jhunjir. The gathering later was joined by AAP candidate from Sardulgarh, Bannawali, following which an FIR was registered.

EC transfers Malerkotla DSP

Chandigarh: Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Punjab, S Karuna Raju on Saturday said that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has transferred Deputy Superintendent of Police, Malerkotla, Pawanjit. He said that the Commission has appointed Mandeep Singh as new DSP, Malerkotla, in place of DSP Pawanjit.

—ENS

‘AAP not ‘B’ team of BJP or Cong, but ‘A’ team of Punjab’

IF THERE is one person transformed by the Punjab polls, it is **RAGHAV CHADHA**, the suave state in charge for Aam Aadmi Party with a degree from London School of Economics. After weeks of campaigning and months of press conferences, he can not only hurl barbs at his opponents in choicest Punjabi but also break into a jig at will, much to the glee of his audience as he crisscrosses the state. With elections just a week away, **MAN-RAJ GREWAL SHARMA** asked him about the challenges before the party that faces a number of charges, including that of diluting its ‘aam aadmi’ identity by fielding turncoats

In these elections, AAP represents change, BJP is the Centre, Akalis are the ‘panth, what does Congress represent for you?

This is an election for change, people are yearning for it. In the last five decades, they have seen 26 years of Congress rule and 24 years of Akali dispensation. In these 50 years, while these leaders have amassed massive wealth, the health of Punjab, be it economic, social or cultural, has gone from bad to worse. They see us as hope, ad their only hope. This time they have pledged to vote for us. Even our detractors are saying they will vote for us to give us a chance.

But wasn’t there a bigger wave for AAP in 2017 but you could manage only 20 seats.

The difference between 2017 and 2022 is that in the last assembly elections, people had not experienced the development in Delhi. We had been in the saddle for only two years. Now people

have seen the governance in Delhi, and they want a similar system here. 2017 was our first outing, and the Akali-BJP- Cong combine may have managed to outsmart us. A senior Akali Dal leader has gone on record to say that votes were transferred from BJP-Akali account to Congress because they were in a position to challenge us.

Even today, your opponents say you can’t match them in terms of party organisation at the level of polling booths.

Today the organisation of AAP in Punjab is on a par or even better than Akali cadres. We have been working very hard on the ground in all the three regions of the state. We have committees in every village, there is a robust organisation in place now. Also, it’s wise to remember that people don’t vote in the basis of what the booth in charge says or wears, this time people will come out on their own without being asked and press the jharoo button.

Former PPCC chief Sunil Jakhar has alleged that you (AAP) are in cahoots with the BJP.

Cong says we are the B team of BJP, while the BJP says we are B team of Congress. We are neither of the two. We are the A team of the people. Also, it is appalling that poor Sunil Jakhar has been compelled to retire from electoral politics only because he is from the Hindu community. In their myopic way of looking at the state through the prism of religion and caste, Congress party doesn’t perhaps understand Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiyyat.



THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW

WITH RAGHAV CHADHA
AAP CO-INCHARGE OF PUNJAB

There’s an apprehension that if AAP comes to power, the government here will be remote controlled by Delhi.

This is a nonsensical argument which doesn’t even merit a response. People love Kejriwal, they desperately want to experience his model of governance. Only those parties that are issues are making such ridiculous and malicious comments

Has Cong decision to make Channi a CM face made your task more challenging?

Cong perhaps doesn’t understand how close-knit and secular Punjab is. Punjab has steadfastly refused to get divided on the lines of caste and religion. As for the Dalit vote-bank politics, BSP is a political party born in the state, but in order to practice its Dalit centric politics, it had to

shut its shop here and move to UP. Mayawati lost LS polls in Punjab but won in UP. Any attempt to divide the people on caste lines will backfire. This is the land of the gurus who preached ‘sarbat da bhalla’. No one can divide this land.

Women didn’t vote for you in large numbers. Any reasons?

We got 20 out of 117 seats, so yes lots of people didn’t vote for us. This time, people will cut across the lines of gender, caste, community, religion, age and socio-economic status to vote for us. All the traditional polling concepts will be demolished

Also, please note that our success rate in Majha is going to be on a par with Malwa if not better. I worked extensively in Majha in the runup to the civic polls and though we didn’t get good results then, we managed to build a robust organisational structure there.

What is your model of development for Punjab?

The Kejriwal model of governance will be implemented in the state based on its needs, characteristics and condition. The pillars of this model are social security, basic amenities, law and order and prosperity.

The two issues that are paramount in Punjab are drugs and unemployment.

Both are very challenging. Jobs are a mega issue. We have a blueprint to revive the industry and make job creators. It’s unfortunate that people have left the state in huge numbers for work and are compelled to do jobs that don’t offer life or workplace dignity.

Is it true that Kejriwal will build the SYL?

SYL is all a propaganda of the opposition, I don’t want to respond to it.

What about charges that there was some exchange for seats?

Woh rakam abhi tak bani nahin aur woh shakhs abhi tak paida nahin hua jo Kejriwal ko, yaan Raghav Chadha ko kharid sake.

Your party has also fielded many turncoats.

AAP is a party that welcomes any leader who wants to work for the prosperity of Punjab. There are good people in other parties too and AAP is happy to welcome them. This issue is being created by other parties who have no answer to issues such as lack of good schools power etc.

Has the announcement of Bhagwant Mann as the CM face helped the party?

Yes, it’s given us a big boost. Using a classic instrument of direct democracy, we asked the people to choose him and they overwhelmingly voted for him. He is the undisputed leader.

Who is Raghav Chadha?

(Laughs) I am Punjab, I live in Punjab, Punjab lives in me. My mom is a sardarni, my father is a Punjabi Hindu, I am a perfect testament of Punjab’s secularism. I have been doing my political work in the state for close to 14 months now, it’s been a fantastic learning experience. Politics here is very heavy, very volatile, it changes on an hourly basis.

‘No one in Congress asked me to withdraw my son’s candidature’

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
KAPURTHALA, FEBRUARY 12

PUNJAB CABINET minister Rana Gurjeet Singh spends more time campaigning for his son, Rana Inder Pratap Singh, in the neighbouring Sultanpur Lodhi constituency than his own. After being denied Congress ticket, Inder Pratap is contesting as an independent and Rana Gurjeet says that no one in the Congress leadership asked him to withdraw his son from the contest.

“No one asked me to withdraw him,” he said, when asked about pitting his son against the sitting Congress MLA, Navtej Singh Cheema. Stepping out to campaign for his son for the major part of the day, devoting time to his own constituency of Kapurthala, Rana Gurjeet does not mince any words while attacking the incumbent MLA.

“You should not believe me. Just go around the constituency

and speak to the people about the excesses they have faced due to fake FIRs being filed against them. In some cases you will be moved to tears at the injustice done to the people just by one police inspector who was the blue eyed boy of Cheema,” said Rana Gurjeet. Cheema has denied the allegations and attributed Inder Pratap’s candidature in Sultanpur Lodhi to the unbridled ambition of Rana family.

In his public meetings in Sultanpur Lodhi, Rana Gurjeet does not fail to raise the issue of police excesses faced by the people and promises them better days ahead. “When you go to the market and buy some item you often get one free with it. Here if you vote for my son, you get the father free,” he says at one gathering. “I have good reputation in not only my constituency but several other constituencies around too. Just a couple of days back I had gone to campaign for Ramandeep Sikki in Khadoor

Sahib and then attended the Chief Minister, Charanjit Singh Channi’s programme in Shahkot assembly for the sitting MLA, Hardev Singh Laddi, there,” he said.

Rana Gurjeet had to resign as the Power and Irrigation Minister in 2018 after he came under a cloud over the sand mine auction in which it was alleged that he tried to bid under the names of his employees, one of them his cook, and in front companies. It was also found out that he had taken a loan of several crores from a man who was himself under investigation for a scam.

“He was not my cook,” says Rana dismissively when asked about his whereabouts. “He is my manager and his family is associated with us for 90 years. Jealous people like Sukhpal Khaira have been spreading canards about me but look at Khaira’s own fate. He faces a stiff jail term for all the frauds he did and for involvement in the drugs case,” he said.

BJP candidate says Majithia’s ‘goons’ attacked him, his daughter

Amritsar: BJP’s Amritsar-East candidate Jagmohan Singh Raju has claimed that the supporters of SAD candidate Bikram Singh Majithia have attacked his daughter. Following the alleged attack, Raju also staged a protest at Hall Gate along with other party workers, Saturday. However, Majithia has denied the allegations.

Raju said, “Around 11.15 am, I was attacked at the Airport road when I was travelling in my car. Three to four people ambushed my car. They put their hands inside the car from the windows and tried to pull my scarf. I told my driver to not stop the vehicle. Then again around 4 pm, three to four goons teased my daughter and daughter-in-law in Mohkamura area where we were campaigning.” He added that Majithia is behind these attacks and he has informed the election commission and Amritsar police commissioner.

Majithia said, “We are busy in our campaign. The government is of the Congress and be those were Congress supporters.” **ENS**

GROUND ZERO

In poll season, a potluck and a lesson in Punjabiyyat

DIVYA GOYAL GOPAL
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 12

IN THE Punjab poll season when every effort is being made by the political parties to polarize the votes on the grounds of religion and caste, on ground zero, the scenario is different.

A unique gathering in Ludhiana’s Rose Garden Saturday, brought smiles on the faces and warmth in the hearts as people from different communities participated in an ‘inter-faith langar’ and sat together to eat food. People from different communities- Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs- brought cooked delicacies from their cultures and together they ate, sitting on the ground. According to the organizers, it wasn’t just a ‘meal’ but a firm answer to the political parties who are trying to divide the voters on the basis of religion ahead of polls slated for February 20.



The gathering was hosted in Ludhiana’s Rose Garden on Saturday. Gurmeet Singh

Zarda (sweet rice) and vegetable pulao from the kitchens of Muslim community, suji halwa from the Hindus and soft parshadas (rotis) and dal from the Sikhs- and the air was filled with the fragrance of sumptuous food and crackling laughs- as people from all faiths served each other and engaged in conversations, breaking many barriers in the hearts.

The initiative was a part of the activities being undertaken across the world to observe World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), recognized by the United Nations, and locally two NGOs- Interfaith Global Summit and Team 1699- collaborated with the British High Commission to organize this unique interfaith langar, which not only aimed at bringing people together but also to tell politicians that Punjab’s social fabric of communal harmony cannot be disturbed due to elections

and politicking.

“Aao vand ke khaaiye, nafrat diyan kandhan dhaaiye, roti di saanjh paaiye, manukhta da geet gaaiye’ (Come let’s share and eat, demolish the walls of hatred, share our rotis and sing songs of humanity),’ read the message of the event.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Gursahib Singh, a volunteer cum organizer of the event, said that though langar always means people from all communities sitting together and eating, this event was different in a way that people from all communities pitched in and got the traditional delicacies from their cultures. “We wanted to give a message to the politicians who are trying to polarize the voters in Punjab that nothing can disturb the communal harmony of Punjab. If people are united, it is not possible to divide them on the basis of religion. Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians

and others have always lived in peace here since always and it will continue this way,” he said.

Sumit Ravi Shankar, a priest who attended the event said: “This langar was our answer to the politicians of all parties that people of Punjab have always been united. On the ground, people of Punjab are united though politicians can claim anything in their speeches. We believe in humanity.”

Abdul Sattar from Muslim community and Balwinder Singh from Sikh community said that when they got to know about such langar being organized, they came to participate with their families.

“It has been decades that we have been living in Punjab and we never felt the difference between Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. It is politicians who are trying to create these differences for their benefit. The country belongs to all of us,” they said.

9 DECISION 2022



THREE YEARS OF PULWAMA

Dots that join family of killed jawans: unkept promises, a hope for change

NAVJEEVANGOPAL
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

ONE OF the daily rituals for Darshan Singh (60) and wife Amarjit Kaur (55) is offering food to a portrait of their son Kulwinder Singh. With winter being harsh, they have wrapped the portrait with a blanket to provide it warmth. The couple, at Ropar district's Rauli village, around 80 km from Chandigarh, also recharge the mobile phone of their son with an annual pack.

The son will never use the recharge. Neither will he taste the food cooked by his mother ever again. The last time the couple saw their son was on February 10, 2019, when he left the village for his posting in Jammu.

Four days later, Kulwinder (26) was killed, along with 39 others from the CRPF, in a terror attack when an explosive-laden SUV rammed into the bus they were travelling in and exploded. The Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) had claimed responsibility for the attack. Of the 40 victims, four were from Punjab.

For the elderly couple, however, Kulwinder lives on in their memories and in a room dedicated to his belongings. On Thursday, a teary eyed Darshan and Amarjit sitting on a cot, were making plans to observe the third death anniversary of Kulwinder, who was scheduled to get married later in 2019.

Darshan, who worked as a truck driver from 1978 to 2019 before calling it a day, had been active in agitation against the now repealed three laws and is now keenly hoping for a change in the February 20 elections. Flags of Jhaarahoo (broom), the poll symbol of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), dotting the roof of the house, Darshan Singh minces no words to express dismay over the ambush – and the doubts in his mind over it.

He is very straightforward in saying that Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), Congress and Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) were “hand in glove (aapas vich ralle hoye ne)”, were linked as relatives (aapas vich rishtedaariyan ne), and were “colluding with each other to stop third party from coming to power (teeji party nu aun nahi dena chahunde)”, and were “colluding with each other to stop third party from coming to power (teeji party nu aun nahi dena chahunde)”, and were “colluding with each other to stop third party from coming to power (teeji party nu aun nahi dena chahunde)”.

Darshan Singh laments that a two-km stretch of road in memory of his son was still a work in progress, and that it took a lot of efforts to get the village school named after his son. “It was promised, but no gate on village entry point has been constructed in the memory of my son” 2570 jawans were traveling in the convoy. There was no arrangement for their security,” says Darshan, suspecting that the Pulwama incident was linked to “vote bank politics” ahead of May 2019 parliamentary polls and that government “did not make adequate security arrangements despite prior alert on probability of such attack”.

“Modi ne saada ghar khaali kar ditta (PM Narendra) Modi has made our house empty). On one hand, there was no security arrangements for the convoy, on the other Modi makes a big issue when he goes back after 20 minutes’ halt in Punjab amid tight security cover and says he managed to return safely,” says Darshan, as he takes this correspondent to a room dedicated to his son. In the room, the photo of Kulwinder, who Darshan used to call by nickname Beera, lies wrapped in a blanket on the bed. Darshan tells, “For us he is still alive. It is winter, so we have wrapped his photo in blanket. In summers, we turn on cooler or fan in the room. Whenever, we eat, we first offer the food to him. Before drinking tea or eating food, we put it on the table in his room and ask Beera to have it. We offer bhog to him. After sometime we consume that. We get an annual pack recharged for his mobile phone, which is kept at his bed. He had purchased a Bullet [Enfield] motorcycle. It stands parked outside his room.”

In the room, which is full of memories and photographs of Kulwinder, Darshan points to a wedding card lying on the bed



and says every invite that we get for any function is kept at Beera's room.

Rauli village falls in Ropar assembly constituency. Dinesh Chadha, an advocate by profession and a local, is AAP nominee from the constituency in his first ever plunge in Vidhan Sabha elections. Congress has fielded Punjab Youth Congress chief Brinder Singh Dhillon, Akali Dal its spokesperson Daljit Singh Cheema and BJP has fielded former IPS officer Iqbal Singh Lalpura, who was appointed as Chairman of National Commission for Minorities in September last year.

In Gandiwind village in Tarn Taran district, located about 240 km from Chandigarh, the sentiment in favour of AAP reverberates equally if not more in the family of another Pulwama martyr Sukhjinder Singh, as his brother Gurjant Singh declares with conviction, “Is vaar Jhaarahoo di sarkaar aaugi (This time AAP will form the government).” Pointing out that drug problem was a major issue, particularly in border belt, Gurjant says, “People have seen both the Akali Dal and the Congress. The successive governments failed to address the problem of drugs. AAP deserves a chance this time. The people are so angry due over continuing problem of drugs that women from families who had been earlier supporting Akali Dal and Congress would also vote for AAP.” Gurjant is all praise for AAP's CM designate Bhagwant Mann who he said had visited the family to mourn the death of Sukhjinder, “spent around an hour and half with the family and remained in touch afterwards also”.

Gurjant has a long list of complaints, among them an “incomplete” sports stadium in the village announced in the memory of his brother and “job of peon” in a government school given to Sukhjinder's wife. “Does it look good that a shaheed's (martyr's) wife serves tea as a peon. She is 10+2. At least she should have been given a job of laboratory assistant which we



were demanding. Moreover, the government should not see her qualification, but should look at the sacrifice made by her husband,” rues Gurjant.

AAP nominee from Patti is first timer Laljit Singh Bhullar who is pitted against SAD's Adaisah Partap Singh Kairon, the son-in-law of Akali Dal patron Parkash Singh Badal, and Harminder Singh Gill of Congress.

Nearly 250 km from Chandigarh, in Dinanagar 74-year-old Satpal Attari, father of another Pulwama martyr Maninder Singh, too indicates that AAP is a very formidable player in these elections as he points out that the fight in Dinanagar was amongst AAP, Congress and BJP. Attari tells The Indian Express that AAP nominee was a retired government official and was a strong competitor in the constituency, even as he expresses gratitude to Congress nominee and sitting minister Aruna Chaudhary for helping out his younger son get job in Punjab police.

In 2017, AAP which had emerged as main opposition party in 117-members Punjab Vidhan Sabha with 20 seats could not win even a single seat of total 25 in Majha region of Punjab. Both Patti and Dinanagar constituencies are located in Majha and this time, there appears a considerable groundswell in the region for AAP as several voters The Indian Express talked to across the constituencies spelling out a common pol pitch – AAP deserves at least one chance this time. Shamsheer Singh is AAP nom-



(Clockwise from top) Darshan Singh with wife Amarjit, Maninder Singh, Jaimal Singh with wife and son, Gurjant Singh with Sukhjinder's wife Sarabjit Kaur

inee from Dinanagar, the constituency that falls in Gurdaspur district. BJP has fielded Renu Kashyap and SAD's ally BSP has fielded Kamaljeet Chawla.

Attari (74) said Maninder was an IT graduate, and did not initially reveal that he had joined CRPF thinking that I may object since he was highly qualified. “I learnt about his recruitment in CRPF only when he showed up in uniform after joining the duty. My younger son also joined CRPF at around same time and I knew about that.”

Attari said after Maninder's death, he wanted younger son Lakvish to be by his side. Lakvish resigned from CRPF and is now a constable in Punjab police. He wanted DSP post for him as he had requisite qualification for that.”

Attari gets emotional as he recounts the last words of his son. “I had made tea for him early in the morning as he was about to leave for Jammu that day. His last words to me were that “tuhaade hathan di last chah pi chalya haan” (I am going after drinking tea made from you for the last time). I asked him what are you saying? He then said he will come back in April. Those words still echo in my mind,” says Attari who retired as traffic manager in Punjab Roadways in December 2005. “Before leaving, he had recently renovated the room where he was born on June 21, 1988, at fifteen past five in the morning. He dedicated the room to me saying it will serve as ‘VIP’ room for me. He put nameplate outside house mentioning my wife's name and below my name.”

Jaimal Singh of Kot Ise Khan village in Moga district, located around 180 km from Chandigarh, was the fourth casualty from Punjab in Pulwama attack. He was driving the ill fated bus which was hit by explosives laden vehicle. Jaimal Singh's wife Sukhjiti Kaur is settled in Panchkula. Born after 16-years of marriage, Sukhjiti tells, their son was five and half year old when Jaimal was killed. She is staying in Panchkula for the education of son in a local school where is studying in class III. Sukhjiti said she and Jaimal had decided to move to Panchkula for the education of their son. “I decided to get the compassionate grounds job offer reserved for my son. He will get the job when he grows up and becomes eligible,” said Sukhjiti, adding that she was being paid the salary which her husband used to get. Jaimal's brother Nasib Singh, who works in Malaysia, was critical of politicians across party lines. “Everyone from Sukhbir Badal to Bhagwant Mann to Navjot Sidhu came. But, so a gate on the entry point in the village has not been constructed in the memory of my brother. Though, the school has been named after him, but there was a promise to construct gate also. Bhagwant Mann had assured, but subsequently he stopped answering the phone calls. Now, I am thinking to spend from my own pocket to get the gate constructed when I come back next time.”

Kot Ise Khan falls in Dharamkot constituency where AAP has fielded Devinderjeet Singh Laddi, Congress candidate is Sukhjiti Singh Kaka Lohgarh and Tota Singh is Akali Dal nominee.

Darshan Singh of Rauli, meanwhile, says that it was height of indifference that earlier February 14 was declared as polling date in Punjab. It was changed to February 20 due to Guru Ravidass Jayanti. “Had it not been changed, we were planning a protest against polling date of February 14 which coincided with Pulwama attack.”

BJP cancels Khattar visit, farmers claim it's due to their call for protest

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 12

THE BJP has cancelled all the three rallies of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar scheduled for Saturday stating that he was busy somewhere else. However, 23 farmer unions of Punjab claimed that it was because of their proposed protest at all the rally sites because of which the rallies were cancelled.

To celebrate the cancellation of rallies, the BKK Dakaunda even took out a victory rally at the grain market of Jagraon on Saturday morning. Khattar had to address rallies in Gill and Jagraon constituencies of Ludhiana district while the third one was in Kapurthala. “In Jagraon, a rally was proposed at a marriage palace adjacent to the grain market of Hathur village in support of BJP candidate Kanwar Narinder Singh. Farmer unions got to know about it on Friday as preparations were in full swing. We gave a message via village gurdwaras in nearby villages that we had to gather at the helipad site and at rally site. The message spread like wildfire. BJP was aware of our plans so they cancelled the rally Friday night itself,” said Manjeet

AFTER TECHNICAL SNAG, KHATTAR'S COPTER MAKES UNSCHEDULED LANDING IN AMBALA

Chandigarh: Haryana hief minister Manohar Lal Khattar's helicopter made an unscheduled landing in the police lines ground in Ambala city, Saturday. Khattar was on his way from Chandigarh to Gurgaon. According to state government officials, the helicopter had developed a technical snag in the air-conditioning fan due to which the pilot had to land it. “All necessary protocols were followed immediately. The helicopter's AC fan had developed a snag that was fixed by the pilot in about 25-30 minutes. The chief minister resumed his flight in the same helicopter from Ambala to Gurgaon after the pilot rectified the snag, conducted the necessary checks and landed safely in Gurgaon”, a senior Haryana government officer said.

Singh Dhaner, senior vice-president of BKK Dakaunda. “Till Friday evening, preparations were on. Arrangements were being made to construct a helipad at grain market and security was busy in the area to do barricading. Administration was in touch with us till late into the night on Friday. We are adamant on lodging our protest against BJP leaders and don't want to allow them to enter villages. They may have said that CM was busy but our protest call was also on,” Dhaner said.

Kanwaljeet Singh Khanna, BKK Dakaunda leader from Jagraon,

said, “Our members from Moga and Barnala would have come had there been a rally at the site. But as it got cancelled, gathering of farmers of about four villages was held in the area.” When contacted, Anil Sarin, chief spokesperson of BJP Punjab, said, “Haryana CM's programmes had been cancelled on Friday night itself because of his other engagements and it had nothing to do with any protest by farmers.” The farmers were to protest against non-implementation of demands agreed upon by NDA government before they lifted dharmas from the Delhi borders.



CHANDIGARH ■ SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2022

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AIMING TO SEND MESSAGE OF UNITY WITHIN PARTY

Mamata forms new national working committee of TMC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 12

TRINAMOOL CONGRESS (TMC) chairperson and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday formed a fresh national working committee of her party in a move aimed at sending a message of unity within the party.

She made the announcement in the presence of party MP Abhishek Banerjee and other senior leaders. All present national-level portfolios in the TMC, including Abhishek Banerjee's portfolio of National General Secretary, have been dissolved.

After Saturday's meeting, Chatterjee said, "A 20-member committee has been formed. Excluding Mamata Banerjee, nobody was given any portfolio. These will be decided by the chairperson and will be announced later."

Banerjee held an hour-long meeting with acting core committee members of the party at her residence in Kalighat on Saturday at 5 pm in the wake of recent reports of differences between a section of senior leaders and Abhishek Banerjee.

Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim and many other leaders who are handling key ministries in the



Mamata Banerjee held an hour-long meeting with party leaders on Saturday. File

state have been included in the working committee. Excluding Mamata and Abhishek, those part of the committee are Amit Mitra, Subrata Bakshi, Partha Chatterjee, Sudip Banerjee, Yashwant Sinha, Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas, Chandrima Bhattacharya, Kakali Ghosh Dastidar, Sukhendu Shekhar Roy, Rajesh Tripathi, Jyotipriya Mullick, Asima Patra, Malay Ghatak, Anubrata Mondol, Buluchik Baraik, Goutam Dev and Shovandeve Chattopadhyay. This was announced by Partha Chatterjee during a press conference.

On Feb 3, Mamata Banerjee was unanimously re-elected as TMC chairperson. The same day, TMC leader Partha Chatterjee announced that Banerjee would announce the new working committee of the party.

A senior leader of TMC said,

"Senior leaders of the West Bengal TMC unit expressed reservations about the party's association with professional agencies as political strategists. The final call will be taken by our chairperson."

According to TMC sources, three prominent leaders have not been included in the TMC's newly formed working committee. These three leaders are Derek O'Brien, Sougata Roy and Dulal Murmu. O'Brien and Roy are considered close to Abhishek Banerjee.

A senior leader who attended the meeting said, "Over the past few days, there has been speculation about growing differences between senior leaders in the party and Abhishek Banerjee. But Didi has sent a clear message that she is the last word in the party."

He added, "Sushmita Dev, who is considered close to Abhishek Banerjee, was not included in the national working committee whereas Anubrata Mondol, who is the Birbhum district chief of the party, has been included in the committee."

The latest tussle between Abhishek and senior TMC leaders came to the fore after two candidate lists were released by the TMC for the civic polls, with the party later clarifying about a "final list".

Bengal Governor prorogues House on government's recommendation

Kolkata: On the recommendation of the state government, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday prorogued the state Legislative Assembly with effect from February 12.

"In exercise of the powers conferred upon me by sub-clause (a) of clause (2) of article 174 of the Constitution, I, Jagdeep Dhankhar, Governor of the State of West Bengal, hereby prorogue the West Bengal Legislative Assembly with effect from 12 February, 2022," the Governor tweeted. Prorogation is discontinuing a session of an assembly without dissolving it.

The Governor clarified that his decision comes on the recommendation of the state government. "In view of inappropriate reporting in a section of media, it is indicated that taking note of govt recommendation seeking proroguing of Assembly, Guv in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by article 174(2)(a) the Constitution has prorogued WBLA w.e.f. Feb 12, 2022," Dhankhar said in another tweet.

Karnataka hijab row: PU colleges to remain shut till Wednesday

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 12

THE KARNATAKA government on Saturday extended holidays for all pre-university (PU) colleges amid the ongoing row over students wearing hijab not having been allowed to enter classes in some colleges in the state. The state government, in an order, announced that PU colleges will remain shut on Monday and Tuesday.

The Karnataka High Court is scheduled to hear the case on Monday. In an interim order, the court had restrained students from wearing any religious attire in classrooms of colleges where such attire is prohibited, until a final order is given in the case.

Colleges have remained shut since last Wednesday (February 9) amid tension in campuses over the hijab issue.

The state's Higher Education Minister C N Ashwathnarayan had on Friday announced that all degree, post-graduate and technical colleges would remain shut until the coming Wednesday (February 16).

Students of PU colleges are scheduled to have their final exams from April 16.

Police, meanwhile, have held flag marches in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts as part of preventive measures in communally sensitive areas.

There were, however, some incidents that led to the flaring up of tensions.

In one such incident, a video was being shared since Friday of students performing namaz inside a school in Dakshina Kannada.

The video was purportedly from a government school in Dakshina Kannada's Ankathadka. According to a source, the video was of students performing namaz on February 4, but it began to spread on Friday (February 11).

Education department officials visited the school on Friday and have sought a report. Teachers have directed students not to engage in any religious activity inside classrooms.

In another incident, in Bengaluru, people gathered in front of Vidyasagar English Public school on Saturday morning amid tensions over the alleged use of derogatory words by a teacher to a section of students regarding the hijab row.

Shahabuddin, a parent, told reporters that there had been no previous instances of Hindu-Muslim divide in the school. The alleged use of derogatory terms by a teacher prompted him and other parents to come to the school, Shahabuddin said. He added that the school assured him that action would be taken, and that the issue had been resolved.

Retired Army subedar held for rape of teen

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE DELHI Police has arrested a 38-year-old retired Army subedar for allegedly posing as a policeman and raping a 19-year-old woman at a park in Dwarka last month.

The investigating team found that the accused, who contractually works with the Haryana government's sports department as a wrestling coach, would frequent public parks in South Delhi and Rohini in the evening. It is suspected that he has targeted other couples there to extort money.

On January 28, the woman and her friend were sitting inside a DDA park when the accused approached them wearing a khaki uniform and threatened to charge them, saying they were indulging in obscenity. The incident took place at around 7.30 pm.

The woman alleged in her complaint that the man then assaulted her friend and demanded Rs 11,000 as a "fine". He allegedly sent the woman's friend to get the cash and molested her. When her friend came back, the accused collected the money and assaulted him again. He forced the friend to leave and then allegedly raped the woman. The woman said she managed to escape eventually.

Police said she told her mother about the incident a day later, and an FIR was registered on February 4.

Police identified the accused as Rajesh Kumar, a retired subedar who joined the Army in 2002 under the sports quota and left in 2019. Since then, he has been a wrestling coach in Gurgaon on a contractual basis. He lives in Gurgaon with his wife and two children and was arrested from his home, police said.

In the days following the incident, police had few leads. A team was sent to collect CCTV footage from cameras near the spot, and they spotted the accused in an Ergta car. But the quality of the footage wasn't good enough to read the registration number. Footage from

other CCTVs on the route was either overwritten or lost, an officer said.

The team then called informers and personnel to share details of "suspicious" persons in the area. A police constable from Dwarka shared photos of a man, his driver's licence and other details, saying he was found walking near a park, had a Swift Dzire car, and that his activities were "suspicious". The inputs from the constable were corroborated by a street vendor, also a police informer, who told officers that he had spotted a suspicious looking man in a Swift Dzire roaming near parks.

Police said they reached the address mentioned in the licence, but couldn't find anyone.

Shankar Choudhary, DCP (Dwarka), said, "More than 20 teams were working on the case. We had scanned CCTVs, spoke to informers, and simultaneously analysed beat books and other diaries to identify the accused. We went to the car showroom to get details about the owner. We found that the accused had sold the car and bought a new Ergta. We found a mobile number and analysed call detail records. The suspect was in touch with a friend. We went to his friend's place and got his address. A team was sent and they found the Ergta parked outside the house. Kumar was arrested."

According to police, during interrogation, Kumar confessed to raping the woman. He told police he planned to extort money from couples at the park, but raped the woman after her friend left and she was alone.

"He also made a call from her phone to his to get her name. We matched the call records from his phone. We have also recovered the khaki pants he wore. More than 20 teams worked on the case. We found that the accused would wear khaki pants to scare and mislead couples. He would often go to parks in other areas too," added the DCP.

Sources said they checked his call detail records and found that he has been spotted roaming near parks in South Delhi and Rohini. Police suspect he has blackmailed and extorted money from others too.

Nearly all Covid curbs lifted in TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 12

NEARLY TWO years after they were closed due as Covid-19 began its spread, the Tamil Nadu government on Saturday announced the reopening of play schools and nursery schools with Lower KG and Upper KG sections from Wednesday.

The latest announcement involves withdrawing almost all significant restrictions that were in

place due to the pandemic. Relaxations were increased on the number of people who can attend public events — up from 100 to 200 at wedding functions and 100 at funerals. All this will come into effect from Wednesday, even as the government urged people to retain precautions.

In a statement, CMM K Stalin said relaxations were meant to help people's livelihoods. "I request everyone to wear masks, maintain social distancing, and to take vaccination," Stalin stated.

Farmer unions threaten to hold protests again against PM Modi's Punjab visit

RAAKHI JAGGA
LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 12

AROUND 23 farmer unions of Punjab, under the banner of Sanyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), on Saturday said that they will once again protest against the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to address multiple rallies in the state on February 14, 16 and 17. The Assembly polls in Punjab are

scheduled to take place on February 20.

The 23 unions that have given the protest call against Modi are the ones that have chosen to stay out from contesting the upcoming polls. "We will be burning effigies of PM Narendra Modi at the village level on February 14 — the day he is scheduled to come to Punjab for his first poll rally. Hundreds of villages will be observing protests against his visit on the

day of the rally. In addition to this, on February 16 protests will be held at the tehsil level across the state," said Dr Darshan Pal, the coordination committee member of SKM.

"The PM is scheduled to come to Jalandhar on February 14, in Pathankot on February 16, and in Abohar on February 17. We will hold protests on all the roads leading to rally sites in all these districts and show his cavalcade black flags," said Sukhdev

Singh Kokrikalan, general secretary of BKU-Ugrahan.

BJP TAKES EXCEPTION

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Saturday took strong exception to the threats by farmers of disrupting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rallies in Punjab. BJP leaders alleged that the farmers were being egged on by the Congress and said that they will raise the matter with the Election Commission of India.

‘With Ukraine, Putin has forced a debate on Russia’s acceptability as a European power’

In this explained. Live session, Dr C Raja Mohan, Visiting Research Professor, National University of Singapore, dissects the many dimensions of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, its impact on India and the way nations look at spheres of influence



On where the Russian-Ukraine conflict stands in geopolitical history

This is a multi-dimensional crisis. The first is a deeply historical and political question about Russia's position in Europe. If you look at the last four centuries, Russia was very much part of the European order with Prussia, Britain, France, the Austria-Hungarian and the Ottoman empires. But the Bolshevik Revolution fundamentally put it at odds with the rest of Europe. Russia supported revolutions in other European countries and the power struggle acquired a deeply ideological character in 1917. But during the second World War, the West needed Russia to fight Germany. This alliance broke down subsequently and led to a deep enmity between Russia and other states of the Soviet Union and then the West. At the end of the Cold War in 1991, Russia thought it could become a part of Europe. But after the breakup of the Soviet Union, it was neglected and its interest in securing its rightful place in Europe was ignored. Therefore, Russia has mobilised troops to assert its role and primacy in the regional security order.

The second issue concerns security. While the Warsaw Pact between Russia and its East European satellite states collapsed, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) persisted and kept expanding, closing in on Russia. So Russian President Vladimir Putin now wants to draw a line and wants bonafide security guarantees to stop NATO expansion and inclusion of new members in the bloc as well as reverse some of the old decisions on military and weapons deployment. The threat of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a strategic counterweight. The third aspect of the crisis is Putin's idea of stitching back the old Soviet Union in a different form based on common political and military interests. They already have the Eurasian economic union and a central security organisation with a lot of the former members of the Soviet Union. You are not actually integrating them but creating institutions and structures for putting together Humpty Dumpty, or the Soviet Union, into a reasonable shape. Remember Putin recently ac-



AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

On whether US and Russia can sort this mess

Russians have been in statecraft for the last 1,000 years, much longer than independent India, and have had deals with Americans before. They are not innocent, being pushed into this conflict by wretched Americans. Russia has genuine grievances on NATO expansion and US weapons sitting in Ukraine. We understand both positions. If they cut a deal, good for us. If they can't, we have to respond to that situation.

On whether India should have a regional security architecture like Europe

Europe's peace has rested on US ascen-

dancy and Russia's decline. So Europeans are delusional if they think they have discovered the perpetual peace of Immanuel Kant and Asia is still in the Hobbesian world of ruthless war with each other. Putin has already got a victory. He has forced a debate, and if he doesn't overplay his hand, he can walk out of this with some gains. Today French President Emmanuel Macron says Russian trauma must be addressed, that Russia is a part of Europe and must have a common security. At least the crisis has forced the West to stop saying that Russia is a regional power. It has enough military power to play hell, which is what Putin is demonstrating.

knowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest tragedy of the 20th century. He wants to undo that past as his legacy. The West, on the other hand, doesn't want Russia to sanitise or gain a kind of veto over its neighbourhood. Besides, former Soviet Republics like the Baltic nations of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia deny Russia's paternalistic interest in them and do not want to go back to a structure they willingly broke out of.

The US is following its old protectionist Monroe Doctrine that once warned European nations against further colonisation or puppet monarchs. In South Asia, India has sensitivities about Chinese proximity to Nepal and Sri Lanka. All large countries tend to seek a sanitised zone around them. In

that sense, Russia is trying to do the same just as China is trying to build its favourable sphere of influence in Asia. The story of international relations is always about deferring to the interests of the great powers as opposed to protecting the interests of the smaller countries.

The fourth dimension is Ukraine's international relations in the face of Russia's "No Ukraine in NATO" demand. NATO had promised Ukraine to induct it in 2008 and though US President Joe Biden says this cannot happen immediately, Russia wants a legal guarantee against a new inclusion. But what about Ukraine's own interests and choices? If NATO comes into Ukraine, instead of Ukraine going into NATO, that's also not accept-



In conversation with Shubhajit Roy, Deputy Chief of National Bureau. Express

able. Can India make similar demands in its neighbourhood? No. Finally, there's Ukraine's domestic structure. There are large Russian-speaking populations, Russia has already taken Crimea and backed independent entities in eastern Ukraine. It wants deep devolution and federalism.

On Putin raising the pitch now

He is seeking legacy. In power for 20 years, he has revived the Russian economy and wants to correct the injustice of 1991. He probably thought that with the West too divided and the US focussing on consolidating its position in the Indo-Pacific to tame China, the time is right to negotiate bargaining strengths. Remember, Biden reached out to Putin to settle matters in Europe. So, the latter has raised the stakes.

On the Ukraine crisis being similar to India-Pakistan

This question will linger when there are many commonalities between nations like India and Pakistan. A lot of nations want to take back ter-

ritories based on historicity. Pakistan thinks it can take Kashmir by force, China wants overlordship of the South China Sea, Arunachal Pradesh and even Vladivostok in far-eastern Russia while Turkey wants to recreate a neo-Ottoman civilisation. Just because you had a shared past, doesn't mean you'll have a shared future. Besides, Ukrainians are also being neo-nationalists, changing their script from Cyrillic to Latin. Ethnic nationalism creates a logic of its own and going back to the past becomes difficult. Even Stalin made sure that Ukraine along with Belarus had a vote in the UN General Assembly in 1945. Yes, it helped Russia get two more votes but there was a nationalist sentiment in both back then too. No wonder Ukraine

is seeking protection from other big powers to stand up to Russia's bullying tactics. If Sri Lanka gives a base to the Chinese tomorrow, India cannot afford to be threatening. Big countries have to win over the small ones and the smaller ones should be careful not to provoke bigger neighbours because that's how Crimea happened and Ukraine lost territory. This is where the prudence and balance of trying to respond to a new historical circumstance is a big challenge but it's hard for the nationalist mood to agree to a mutual understanding.

On whether India should be worried

It's difficult to manage foreign policy when major powers start fighting. If there are serious sanctions against Russia and the US blocks waivers, they will impact our S-400 deal. We have to evacuate a large number of Indians. Oil prices will shoot up if there is a war and worsen inflation. But the biggest problem will be if Russia seeks a referendum saying it has taken Crimea on the basis of a vote where 90 per cent of the population wanted to join it. A referendum allows you to take somebody else's territory in the name of ethnic and religious solidarity. Tomorrow, Pakistan might do the same in PoK. Remember when a referendum took place in Crimea, the Hurriyat issued a statement saying it was a great idea. We don't want to talk about it because of our friendship with Russia.

But if there's a referendum in eastern Ukraine, I doubt India will support that kind of action.

On India's diplomatic position

We will face dual pressure, from the Russians as our traditional ally and from the US with whom we have partnered for Quad. Our interests with the West are far deeper, our economic interests are largely with the US and Europe. And though Putin met Chinese President Xi Jinping, China will be guarded and not go the whole hog. Everybody has to judge their own interests instead of going by sentiment. India is not a small nation, it's becoming the third-largest country. We can navigate this with finesse, take strong positions on principle and make sure that our interests are met. The US-Russia-China relationship has changed so much over the last 70 years. China today is 10 times bigger than Russia though in the 50s, it was the junior partner. A Russia fighting with the US and Europe would have little value for China. The moot point is that our problem with China is real, deep and unlikely to change. We have to go in the direction that helps us neutralise it.



SCAN THE CODE TO WATCH VIDEO

11 DECISION 2022

UTTAR PRADESH • UTTARAKHAND • PUNJAB • GOA • MANIPUR

I HEREBY DECLARE



RKIMO SINGH
BJP,
Sagolband,
Manipur

TOTAL ASSETS: ₹5.1 crore
MOVABLE ASSETS:
Total: ₹1.1 crore
(includes a shotgun and a .38 pistol)
Cash: ₹2.1 lakh
Bank deposits: ₹37 lakh (in 7 accounts)
Vehicles: Maruti Gypsy

(₹ 6.5 lakh), Mahindra Scorpio (₹ 16.6 lakh), Harley Davidson bike (₹18 lakh)
IMMOVABLE ASSETS: Total: ₹3.9 crore
Self-acquired property: ₹15 lakh
Inherited assets: ₹1 crore
Building: ₹2.4 crore
BANK LOANS AND LIABILITIES: ₹44 lakh
CRIMINAL CASES: Nil
SOURCES OF EARNING: MLA salary, interest on fixed deposits



KRISHNA PATEL
Apna Dal (Kamerawadi), Pratapgarh

TOTAL ASSETS: ₹6.87 crore
MOVABLE ASSETS: ₹4.87 crore

IMMOVABLE ASSETS: ₹2 crore
LOANS FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS OR INDIVIDUALS: ₹2 crore
CRIMINAL CASES: Nil
SOURCES OF EARNING: Krishna Patel Students' Hostel and Neeraj Investments



RAMSHARAN NAUTIAL
BJP, Chakrata Dehradun

TOTAL ASSETS: ₹19 crore
MOVABLE ASSETS: Self: ₹1.89 crore
(includes a rifle, a pistol and a revolver)
Wife: ₹3 crore

(includes a revolver)
IMMOVABLE ASSETS: Self: ₹5 crore
Wife: ₹9 crore
LOANS FROM BANKS OR OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS: Self: ₹30 lakh
Wife: ₹78.78 lakh
CRIMINAL CASES: Nil
SOURCES OF EARNING: Agriculture and business
EDUCATION: MA in Sociology (1978-79)

BALLOTIN

Rebel BJP legislator booked for violating model code of conduct

Ballia (UP): Baiirya's BJP MLA Surendra Singh, contesting the UP assembly election as a Vikasheel Insaan Party ticket after quitting his earlier party, has been booked for allegedly violating the model code of conduct. Singh had held a meeting in the Haldi police station area on Friday in violation of the model code of conduct, they said. Meanwhile, targeting the BJP leadership, MLA Singh has termed its leadership as "feudal lords of democracy". Addressing his supporters, he said, "The BJP has got a disease in its mind that it can even make a donkey an MLA. They probably do not know that the people of rebel Ballia land had slapped the British rule away," Singh added. **PTI**

AAP complains against BJP leader

Chandigarh: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday said it has lodged a complaint with the poll panel and the police against Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa for allegedly spreading false information. "Sirsa shared a news story on his Twitter handle that claims Kejriwal has said that in Punjab 10-year-old vehicles won't be allowed (to ply) under an AAP government, which is fabricated information and is shared to promote ill-will and feeling of hostility against the Aam Aadmi Party," the Punjab unit of the party said in a statement. **PTI**

BATTLE IN THE HILLS

As Uttarakhand prepares to vote, Kumaon gets a big push

Smaller of the two regions, both Dhimi, Rawat are fighting from this region



Harish Rawat campaigns in Lalkuan; and (right) CM Pushkar Singh Dhimi in Khatima. *Express*



AVANEESH MISHRA

DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 12

AS THE election campaign in Uttarakhand drew to a close on Saturday, with both the BJP and the Congress coming out with all their big guns blazing, the focus now shifts to election day on February 14, when the state and its two broad regions — Kumaon and Garhwal — go to the polls.

While both the regions are key to the election result, this time, the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress have focused their energies on Kumaon, the smaller of the two regions.

Of the state's 13 districts, Kumaon, which has Nainital as zonal headquarters, has six. Garhwal, with Pauri Garhwal as headquarters, has seven districts. Garhwal, of which capital Dehradun is a part, has 41 constituencies and is much larger than Kumaon, which has 29.

One of the reasons Kumaon has been more in focus this election is because both Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhimi and senior Congress leader and chief ministerial aspirant Harish Rawat are contesting from Kumaon. While Kumaon is traditionally considered a Congress stronghold, in

Garhwal, the odds are more even.

In 2017, riding the Narendra Modi wave, the BJP managed to win in 57 of the total 70 Assembly seats while the Congress was limited to 11 seats. Two of the remaining seats were won by independent candidates who are now with the ruling party.

That election, it was the Garhwal region that powered the BJP to a big win, mainly because several powerful Congress leaders from the region, including Satpal Maharaj, Harak Singh Rawat and Vijay Bahuguna, had joined the BJP ahead of the elections. The party won 34 out of 41 seats in Garhwal and 23 out of 29 seats in the Kumaon region. The Congress won six in Garhwal and five in Kumaon.

But now, with Harak Singh Rawat back in the Congress and Vijay Bahuguna and Satpal Maharaj seen as sidelined in the party, and with the anti-incumbency against the BJP likely to be a factor, both sides seem evenly matched in this region.

That leaves Kumaon wide open for both the parties — a fact that's evident given the attention lavished on the region by both

the Congress and the BJP.

Earlier, in an interview with *The Indian Express*, Harish Rawat had said that he decided to contest from Lalkuan seat in Nainital because "the seat is the heart of Kumaon", from where the party needs to get as many seats as possible.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier accused the Opposition of creating a wedge between Garhwal and Kumaon.

Sources in the BJP suggested the party's desire to do well in Kumaon was one of the factors it considered when it brought in the relatively inexperienced Pushkar Singh Dhimi, a two-MLA from the region, as Chief Minister to replace Tirath Singh Rawat. It was a move to counter Harish Rawat, they said.

Both Tirath Singh and his predecessor Trivendra Singh Rawat were from Garhwal.

Of the state's 10 CMs so far, six were from Garhwal and the remaining four from Kumaon. Yet, it is Kumaoni leaders who have mostly dominated politics here, even before Uttarakhand became a state.

Uttar Pradesh's first chief min-

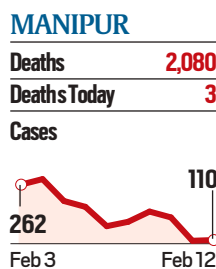
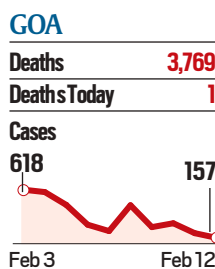
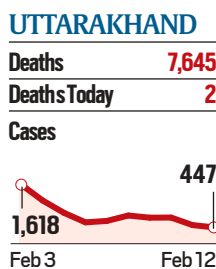
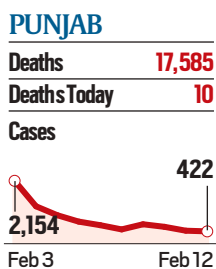
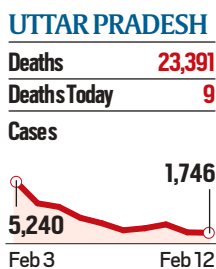
ister, Govind Ballabh Pant, was from Kumaon. Later, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, also from Kumaon, became UP CM on three occasions, before becoming Uttarakhand's first CM and the only one to have completed his five-year tenure. The state's first elected Assembly had, besides CM Tiwari, Harish Rawat (then the Congress state chief), and Speaker Yashpal Arya as among the top leaders from Kumaon.

In 2012, the Congress won 32 seats in the 70-seat legislature, one more than the BJP's 31, and formed the government with help from the BSP, Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (P) and Independents. That election, the Congress won 19 seats in Garhwal and 13 in Kumaon, while the BJP won 16 and 15 seats in Garhwal and Kumaon respectively.

In 2007, before the delimitation of Assembly seats, the BJP emerged as the single largest party with 34 seats, followed by the Congress's 21. The BJP then took the support of two Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD) MLAs and three Independents to form the government. In the first Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly election, in 2002, the Congress emerged as the largest party with 36 seats. The BJP won 19.

VOTING TOMORROW

TRACKING COVID IN ELECTION-BOUND STATES



SEAT WATCH

Once a Left bastion, Najibabad constituency in no mood to rule out the surprise element

AMIL BHATNAGAR

BIJNOR, FEBRUARY 12

AMONG THE 55 UP Assembly constituencies heading for polls on February 14 is the Najibabad seat in Bijnor district, which has a remarkable electoral history. It was once a Left bastion represented by one of its most popular leaders, the late Ram Swaroop Singh, a Communist Party of India (Marxist) member. Situated on the UP-Uttarakhand border, Najibabad has always challenged all political parties, never allowing any of them to take it for granted. The ruling BJP has been able to win this constituency only once since 1993. In the upcoming election too, Najibabad is going to put all the contenders on test, even as the contest will be essentially a triangular affair involving the BJP, the SP-RLD and the BSP.

Najibabad has a near-equal mix of Hindu and Muslim populations with Jats and Dalits also inhabiting the constituency in sizeable numbers. A number of its local residents maintain that the area has largely been ignored and kept off the development map.

"There are a lot of problems in Najibabad, including lack of development of roads and pathways in the interior of villages. It

PAST RESULTS

2012
Tasleem, BSP
62,713 votes
Rajeev Kumar Agarwal, BJP
51,130 votes

2017
Tasleem, SP
81,082 votes
Rajeev Kumar Agarwal, BJP
79,080 votes

has perhaps to do with the fact that the wave of a ruling party usually doesn't reach here as people from different parties keep getting elected. People only need progress and want their local issues to be resolved. The SP-RLD alliance does hold promise for many," said Mohd Ali, a local resident in Shamipur.

Locals fondly recall a warm, soft-spoken Ram Swaroop Singh, who represented Najibabad in the UP Assembly for three consecutive terms between 1993 and 2006. Hailing from Uttarakhand, Ram Swaroop was known for properly utilising public funds for local development works. From setting up roads to streetlights to hand pumps, he offered solutions to the

Najibabad people's various problems, which contributed to his popularity among them.

After Ram Swaroop's death in 2006, his son Raju, a teacher, contested the election on the CPI(M) ticket in 2007, but lost. The Left's footprint in Najibabad shrunk after Ram Swaroop's demise and regional parties began to make inroads into the belt.

The key issues dominating the election discourse among the locals this time include development, communal politics and jobs. In Muslim-majority areas, the BJP's aggressive, high-pitched campaign has had an impact on people. "There has been a bombardment of statements that only talk about Hindu-Muslim issues," Zeeshan, a law student said. "As a



Besides jobs, the discourse is mainly on communal politics

student, I only want to think about a secure future. We have not seen a drastic increase in employment for the last few years. And the SP has talked about jobs extensively."

The BJP has given its ticket in Najibabad to its known Jat face, Kunwar Bhartendra Singh. He was the MP from Bijnor in 2014 and had served as a cabinet minister during the BJP-BSP coalition government in 2002. One of the accused in the Muzaffarnagar riots, Bhartendra had made a pitch for a hostel in the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) to be named after a Jat King. By putting him in the fray, the BJP aims to split the SP-RLD's Jat support base in the area.

Keeping in view social equations and the polarisation factor,

both the SP-RLD and BSP have fielded Muslim candidates, with the alliance repeating the sitting SP MLA Tasleem Ahmad, a businessman-turned-politician and two-term legislator. The BSP has fielded a local leader Shah Nawaz Alam. Even the Congress has nominated a Muslim candidate, Salim Ansari.

While talking about the mood of the constituency voters, locals are not ready to rule out an element of surprise. "This is a place where the father does not know whom his son is voting for, and vice versa. People here are very opinionated and you cannot predict a trend. The public knows what they want and will make each vote count," said a smiling Mohd Arif in Mandawali.

MLA Sangeet Som booked for slapping polling official

AMIT SHARMA

MEERUT, FEBRUARY 12

THE UTTAR Pradesh police have booked Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Sardhana, Sangeet Som, for allegedly thrashing the presiding officer at a polling booth as voting was underway during the first phase of the Assembly polls on Thursday.

Police said Som and his supporters stormed into Booth 131 at Salawa village in Meerut district around 3 PM on February 10 as he was upset over a long queue of voters outside. Inside the booth, they said, Som had a heated argument with the presiding officer over the alleged slow pace of voting before slapping him. The MLA's supporters also took away the CCTV cameras installed inside the booth, the police added.

"We waited for the presiding officer, Ashwini Sharma, to file a complaint for nearly ten hours on Thursday, but he did not turn up, following which the FIR was registered against the legislator by the incharge of the Sardhana police station, Lakshman Verma. We are investigating the case and action will be taken after completion of our inquiry," Meerut Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prabhakar Chaudhary said



The Sardhana MLA had alleged a slow pace of voting

on Saturday.

"We sent the copy of the FIR to the Election Commission the same day," the SSP said, adding the police have still asked the presiding officer to record his statement "to bolster our case".

Som, the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate from Sardhana, is seeking a third successive term as the legislator from the constituency.

The fresh FIR has taken the number of cases against Sangeet Som to eight, although he has yet to be convicted in any of them.

Som was also accused in the Muzaffarnagar riots case of 2013 but was given a clean chit by a local court last year.

The Sardhana legislator was not available for comments.

NDA promises 75% govt jobs for locals, 50% quota in pvt sector

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA

JALANDHAR, FEBRUARY 12

STATING THAT it will infuse a massive infrastructure development push to revive Punjab's economy with a fund of Rs 1 lakh crore to be spent over the next five years, the BJP-led NDA on Saturday released its election manifesto that promises 75 per cent reservation for Punjabis in government jobs, and 50 per cent in private sector jobs.

The manifesto also promises 35 per cent reservation for women in government jobs, and Rs 4,000 as unemployment allowance for all graduates for a period of two years if the alliance forms the next government in the state. In a manifesto for "Punjab, Punjabis and Punjabiat", the party promised "zero tolerance" for sacrilege and to set up fast-track courts to decide such cases in a time bound manner. The manifesto was released here by Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri, PL C leader Raninder Singh, BJP leaders Dushyant Gautam, Tarun Chugh and Subash Sharma.

Earlier, NDA had released a "rural manifesto" in Chandigarh, which, among others, promised a complete loan waiver for farmers who hold less than 5 acres of land.

The manifesto, Puri said on Saturday, spells out the roadmap for revival and development of Punjab's economy, and addresses the issues of drugs and law and order. To address grievance of families affected by terrorism in Punjab, who the manifesto said have been ignored by successive governments over the last three decades, a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" will be constituted. Compensation of Rs 5 lakh will be given to each family, and a memorial for the "Lost but not forgotten" will be set up in memory of terror victims in the state, the manifesto stated. The NDA also promised free electricity up to 300 units to each household, and tariff at Rs 3 per unit over that.

To improve the law and order situation, the alliance promises to recruit domain experts in law, forensics, digital forensics and information technology at all police stations. A cyber defence headquarters will be set up for prevention of cybercrimes, and 24-hour surveillance of cities through CCTV cameras will be started, it says.

To improve policing, the party has promised to ensure fixed duty hours for all Punjab Police personnel. To ensure police personnel can perform their duties efficiently, additional recruitment will be done and political influence in police operations will be prohibited, it stated. To check cross-border infiltration and smuggling of weapons

and drugs, the NDA promised surveillance through drones and CCTV cameras as well as construction of electric fences and outposts.

To tackle the problem of drug smuggling and trafficking along the international and inter-state borders, a cross-state strategy involving J&K, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan will be formulated, it said. Government rehabilitation centres across the state will be upgraded with modern facilities such as fitness centres and a comfortable living environment, it mentioned.

The manifesto promised strict laws to break the drug supply chain in the state and set up a special Drug Prevention Task Force in each district. Fast-track courts will be set up to expedite investigation of drugs-related offences and dope test will be mandatory before filling up nomination form for elections, it said. On the economic front, the NDA has promised special incentives for revival of medium and small industry sector, which includes electricity at Rs 4 per unit to MSMEs and Rs 5 per unit to all other industries. The pending assessments of VAT will be settled through a dealer-friendly One-Time Settlement (OTS) Scheme.

Tax-exempted industrial clusters will be formed to attract investment in Punjab, and a new industrial township will be created in Kandhi belt and Mohali will be developed as a world-class IT hub, the NDA promises. Three new dry ports in Jalandhar, Amritsar and Bathinda and capacity of the Sahnewal dry port will be increased, the manifesto has stated.

The NDA has also promised Rs 1 lakh crore for infrastructure development across the state, which will be spent over next five years.

The BJP-led alliance promised to increase honorarium for anganwadi workers to Rs 10,000 per month, and Rs 6,000 per month for ASHA workers. Retirement benefits of up to Rs 1.5 lakh will be provided to these workers, the manifesto mentioned.

To preserve and promote the state's culture, the 'Punjabi Virse di Sambhal' project will be launched to promote Punjabi art and culture worldwide. The manifesto promises to waive all outstanding loans up to Rs 50,000 of people from SC, BC and EVWS categories.

Free hostel facilities will be provided to students from SC category undergoing graduation and post-graduation courses, and funds will be allocated in state budget for payment of post matric scholarship dues to these students, the NDA promised. A scholarship of Rs 2,000 per month will be given to all meritorious students.

FULL INTERVIEW ON
www.indianexpress.com

Campaigning curbs relaxed further; 4 more hours in a day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE ELECTION Commission on Saturday further relaxed restrictions on physical campaigning for Assembly elections in five states. Campaigning is now allowed between 6 am and 10 pm, instead of the earlier 8 am and 8 pm.

"Political parties/candidates may campaign with a maximum of 50% of the capacity of the designated open spaces or the limit prescribed by SDMA (state disaster management authorities), whichever is less, Pad Yatra with limited number of persons as per limitations of SDMA allowed," the EC said in a statement.

On Saturday, the EC took a periodic review of the status of Covid-19 in the country, and specially in poll-bound states. As per information received from the Union health secretary, the ground situation of Covid-19 has significantly improved, and cases are fast receding in the country, it said.

The EC noted that poll-bound states were contributing only a very small proportion of the total reported cases in the country.

Last week, the EC had reiterated that the ban on physical rallies and roadshows will continue to remain in effect in poll-bound states, but granted more relaxation for physical public meetings.



Jithendra M

Udupi, Class of 2022

The walk to the canteen, after-class hangouts, shared benches — simple campus joys have been disrupted as students face off in Udupi over wearing the hijab to class. UMA VISHNU travels to the coastal Karnataka town to explore what lies beneath the anxieties that run deep

THAT DAY at the gate, something about a friendship changed. As Mehek stood outside Udupi's Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) College, clutching the bars of the iron gate that had been shut on her and her friends as they turned up for their laboratory classes, the jeering crowd behind her got "unbearable". She swerved to face them and her eyes caught his — her "close friend" in college, almost unrecognisable in his saffron shawl and turban. "I was shocked. He was someone I would hang out with. Though we are in different sections and joined the college only this academic session, we would meet for lunch or walk up to the canteen where we usually had 'Maa' juice or even catch up after class. He was very friendly. I don't know what happened to him. I didn't know he was so filled with hate. That day, he reacted angrily to everything I said. He said if you go in with the hijab, I will wear my *kesari* shawl. They were all shouting, chanting Jai Shri Ram," says Mehek, a First PUC (Class 11) student at MGM, one of the premier colleges in Udupi that has over 2,500 students across its pre-university (Class 11 and 12), under-graduation and post-graduation classes. Mehek (who seeks to be identified only by her second name) got over the shock to shout back at her "friend" and the others in his group. "I said, there are so many of you to take on one girl. If you have the courage, why don't one of you step forward," she screamed, her eyes brimming with angry tears.

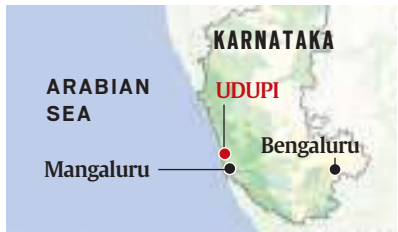
It was a moment the cameras captured, launching Mehek alongside Muskaan — the girl from Mandya's PES College who assuredly walked past a rowdy crowd that chased her waving saffron shawls — as the young faces determined to push back in the face of the latest communal flashpoint to have enveloped Udupi, the coastal Karnataka district that's almost split down the middle over the right of young women to wear their hijab or head scarves to classrooms.

What started in the Government Pre-University College for Girls in Udupi town on December 27, when around six girls who insisted on wearing the hijab to their classrooms were thrown out, has since then spread to other colleges in the district and the state, where, waving a government circular, colleges such as MGM, which have for decades allowed students to wear the hijab to classrooms, suddenly shut the gates on them.

Most Muslim students in these parts come to colleges in their burqas, which they remove in the "ladies room" before proceeding to class. The hijab is usually the scarf or dupatta that's wound around their heads. The policy on the hijab, thus far, had been left to individual colleges.

While the question of whether the Udupi girls college — where the matter first came up — ever allowed hijabs in its classrooms continues to be in a grey zone, with both the protesting students and the management submitting photographs and other evidence to support their respective claims, the matter turned political as the Campus Front of India, the student wing of the Muslim radical outfit, the Popular Front of India, moved in to back the girls. Pro-Hindutva groups, too, jumped in the fray, turning up outside colleges in saffron shawls and asking to be allowed inside, making this almost a point of no-return.

With colleges shut until temporarily, Udupi nervously awaits a final word from the Karnataka High Court. On Friday, the court



released an interim order for colleges to reopen and for students to refrain from wearing clothes that are not prescribed under colleges' uniform norms.

The principal of a government-aided college, which was among those that witnessed tension over hijabs last week, said on condition of anonymity, "I have been in this field for 30-35 years. Never have I seen anything like this. Never have Muslim girls insisted on wearing the hijab like this... Some girls used to come in shawls, not the hijab... The hijab has become a communal word. There are miscreants at work behind this."

On men in saffron shawls turning up at his college gate, he said, "That was a reaction to what happened in Udupi (where the issue first took place)."

In Udupi, a temple town by the Arabian Sea that has lent its name to one of the most popular vegetarian cuisines, those who wistfully talk about the communal harmony the town once witnessed cite the story of Haji Abdullah — an early 20th Century philanthropist and businessman who founded Corporation Bank — and how he is said to have donated land for the town's Krishna temple and even oil to light its lamps. Besides the several banks that came up here — Corporation, Syndicate, Vijaya and Canara banks, each catering to different castes and communities — the area also has a rich educational legacy of schools set up during the British era.

Now, in the midst of one of the most divisive issues to have rocked Udupi, there is little trace of that storied past, with the "us" and "them" binary finding its way into everyday conversations. As he drives around Udupi town, Ramesh Naik, 64, a taxi driver, says, "The government should be strict. How can they come to school in their hijab when there is a uniform? So they'll do whatever they want to do in Hindustan and we stand by and watch? Are the children coming to school for education or to do religion? My daughter (a second-year student of Artificial Intelligence in a Mangalore college) sometimes says she won't wear the bindi. Will I make her sit at home?"

While neighbouring Dakshina Kannada district, which has Mangalore as its headquarters, has been a known communal hotbed, the embers mostly spared Udupi, which has a smaller Muslim community — 8.22% of the population, as compared to Dakshina Kannada, where Muslims make up 24% of the popula-



Uma Vishnu

(Top) At Udupi's MGM College, one of the flashpoints: "I wear the hijab even at home. How can I just take it off?" says Sana, a student here.

tion, according to the 2011 Census.

Many trace the Hindu-Muslim schism in this region to the days after the Babri Masjid demolition and the ghettoisation of Muslims that followed. "Muslims in coastal Karnataka speak a language called Beary while Hindus mostly speak Tulu, besides Konkani. Those growing up in the pre-Babri demolition days, including me, grew up speaking Beary and Tulu. But the ghettoisation of the 1990s meant that a large number of Muslims and Hindus had no reason to interact with each other. So now, they don't speak each other's languages and stay out of each other's lives. Their worlds meet for the first time in these PU colleges that are grounds for organisations like the ABVP on one side and the Campus Front of India on the other," says Muneer Katipalla, 46, who grew in these parts and is state president of the Left-affiliated Democratic Youth Federation of India. In the 2018 Assembly elections, the BJP won 17 seats out of 19 in coastal Karnataka, with the Congress ending up with a mere two seats. In a sign of evident polarisation, in the December urban local polls, the SDPI, for the first time, won five seats in Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts.

Sana, 21, has been feeling this creeping sense of hostility for a while — mostly in the class WhatsApp groups or her classmates' Instagram posts on the CAA and NRC and ca-

sually cruel remarks strewn with the "go to Pakistan" line.

"Until now at least, my Hindu classmates were fine in person, but online is where they become different people. It hurts to read these messages, but I can't leave the WhatsApp group either because there are college-related announcements there. So I simply put them on mute," says Sana, a Master's student at MGM. Sana, whose second name is being withheld for reasons of privacy, started wearing the hijab in Class 8, when she joined a school run by a Muslim trust. "Now I wear it even at home. My mother tells me it's not good for my hair to be wearing it all the time, but now the hijab is a part of me. How can I take it off just because someone else doesn't like it?" says Sana, the eldest of three siblings. Her younger sister, who is in Class 9, also wears the hijab.

At their home, metres from the MGM campus, Sana's mother, who is without a hijab at home today, says she makes it a point to wear one when she steps out, along with her burqa. "While we were in school and college, we never wore the hijab or the burqa. We just wore a dupatta like the other girls. *Tab itna knowledge nahin tha religion ke baare mein*. We didn't know what was right and wrong," says the 45-year-old homemaker. With the politics over the hijab forcing 16- to 20-year-olds to take grown-up positions on friendships and fraternity, the "right and the wrong", the middle ground, like the pathway leading up to the MGM College that Tuesday

afternoon, is increasingly getting crowded out. Yet, for a 16-year-old, Alman speaks with rare clarity on what is at stake.

"It's just somebody's political agenda. So some people tell me the hijab affects them. I want to ask them, why doesn't the Sikh turban affect you? Why doesn't the *kada* that some wear on their wrists affect you? Just as nobody has the right to tell them to remove this because they are uncomfortable, it's not right to ask these girls to remove their hijab," says the 1st PUC student at MGM.

"For instance, in all the schools we attended, we had Sarswati puja. We never had a problem attending the puja because we respected it... not tolerated. That's a wrong word," he adds, standing outside the gate with a few other boys in solidarity with the Muslim girls in hijab.

As the boys tuck their I-cards in their shirt pockets to protect their identities, one of them looks at the crowd in saffron turbans on the other side of the pathway and says, "Some of them told me, 'you are Hindu and you support these girls?'. I have never looked at religion while making friends, so why I should do that now?"

"Hey, you wore a hijab while in school, didn't you?" asks Amrith Shenoy, 45, of his long-lost classmate whom he recently tracked down to the flat opposite his in an upscale residential area in Udupi. "No, I never did," responds the friend (she didn't want to be named for this story). "Of course you did!"... "Would I know better or you?"

The banter, shorn of the anxieties that has gripped most of the town, is a keepsake of more innocent times.

Shenoy, a businessman and a Congress leader who is Udupi president of Sahababale or 'Peaceful Co-existence', a grouping of anti-BJP, anti-government parties and bodies in Udupi, says that for most people of his generation and older, personal and religious choices never came in the way of friendships.

"I grew up in my maternal home, a strict Brahmin household where even onion or beet-root didn't enter the kitchen. But my friends Akram and Altaf would come home to watch cricket matches and I would go to their homes and sit with them while they ate biryani. I went to a government school where there daily shlokas and Ganesh pujas. Things were very peaceful. We never saw our classmates through the prism of religion. There was orthodoxy those days, but no hatred."

But sometime in the early 2000s, things began changing in Udupi. "Hindu *samajotsavas* began to be organised, where Pravin Togadia and others would make speeches, and young people attended these. Gradually, your name alone wasn't enough to deal with you. There were other considerations — your religion, caste, what you wore," he says.

His friend and classmate, now a homemaker and mother of two, says, "The hijab is an unnecessary controversy. We wear it for our own protection. It's like the mask you wear now. That's for your protection. Will you take it off because somebody else has a problem with it? And anyway, why should my hijab threaten you or make you uncomfortable? If anyone has to feel uncomfortable, it's me, I am the one wearing it." She is a mother of two, including a 10-year-old who prefers fancier hijabs to her cotton ones.

Her neighbour Sabina Begum, 36, also a homemaker, is bewildered that something as

personal as what she wears is now the subject of a communal standoff.

"It's my right to wear the hijab. No one can take that away from me. No one has asked me to wear it; there is no fatwa, no order. The Quran says women must wear it for their protection and we follow that," says Begum, adding that her eight-year-old daughter "loves wearing the hijab". For now, though, she only wears it to her Arabic classes. "She will wear it too, when she grows up."

Manipal is barely five kilometres away from Udupi, yet there couldn't be a world more distant. An elite, cosmopolitan university town whose life revolves around the campus and its food joints, there are few jagged edges of identity or politics to poke its happy bubble.

As she leaves the food court of the Kasturba Medical College, adjusting the scarf around her head, Fatima, a BSc Biotech student at the university who preferred to identify herself by a single name, sits down to chat. "I have heard about it, not very clued in, though," she says of the row that has gripped Udupi. "Anyway, no one here cares about what you wear or what you do. My parents ask me to be careful and I tell them, 'Oh, but that's happening in Udupi.' And then I realise, Udupi is right here," she adds.

The hijab, she is clear, falls in a very personal space. "No one has forced me to wear it. I grew up in the Gulf, which is probably when I started wearing it. Today, if I want to, I can take it off now and no one will know or ask. But I wear it because we have been taught God wants us to wear it. It's my individual choice."

Back at her home, waiting for the court verdict, Mehek says she is not scared. "None of us are scared. In fact, my mother is proud of me," she says. "After what happened at the gate, when I got home, she was crying. My cousin had told her about the incident, and told her to keep me home for a while, that it's not safe. But when my mother saw me, she asked me to take the scooter and pick my sister from school," says Mehek, the eldest of four siblings.

If someone is a "little scared", it's Mehek's father, who works at the Malpe dock in Udupi. "He is like, what if something happens to you," she says.

"*Hum ne galat thodi kiya hai. Dar kis liye* (We haven't done anything wrong, why should we be scared?)," says Mehek's 36-year-old mother. "I have worn the hijab since I was three. We are all used to wearing it. It's now a part of us, our bodies. My two elder daughters wear it; once the younger ones (a five-year-old and a two-year-old) come of age, they will wear it too. It's for their protection. Why should others have a problem?"

Her second daughter, now in Class 10, hopes to join the same college as Mehek. "I am nervous. I hope they let us in with the hijab next year," says the 15-year-old.

Is Mehek worried about an adverse court verdict? "No," she smiles. "Even then I'll go and stand at the gate in my hijab. I am not protesting. I am just asking them to let me in... People call me brave. But anyone in that situation would have done that. *Humare peeche aur bhi log khade hain*. If we don't speak up, how will they have the courage?"

On that frayed friendship, though, she is willing to concede a bit. "I won't approach him. But if he does, *ek minute bhi bina soche* I'll talk to him," she smiles.

13 ECONOMY

FOR WEEK ENDED FEBRUARY 4

Over \$2-billion rise in currency assets pushes forex reserves to \$631.9 bn

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE NATION'S foreign exchange, or forex, reserves gained a healthy \$2.198 billion to reach \$631.953 billion during the week ended February 4, according to weekly RBI data.

During the previous week ended January 28, the forex kitty had recorded a decline of \$4.531 billion to reach \$629.755 billion. The reserves had touched a lifetime high of \$642.453 billion in the week ended September 3 last year.

According to the data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released on Friday, during the re-

porting week, the surge in the forex reserves was on account of a rise in the FCA.

A major component of the overall reserves, the foreign currency assets (FCA) posted an increase of \$2.251 billion to reach \$568.329 billion in the week ended February 4.

Expressed in dollar terms, the FCA include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Meanwhile, gold reserves moderated by \$210 million to \$39.283 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International

AFTER \$4.5-BILLION FALL LAST WEEK

■ During the previous week ended January 28, the foreign exchange, or forex, reserves had recorded a decline of \$4.531 billion to reach \$629.755 billion, according to RBI data

Monetary Fund (IMF) saw a rise of \$98 million to \$19.108 billion, as per the RBI.

India's reserve position with the IMF rose by \$59 million to

\$5.233 billion in the reporting week, as per the data.

Higher forex reserves are a big cushion in the event of any crisis on the economic front and enough to cover the import bill of the country for a year. It also helps the rupee strengthen against the US dollar.

A rise in reserves will provide a level of confidence to markets that a country can meet its external obligations, demonstrate the backing of domestic currency by external assets, assist the government in meeting its foreign exchange needs and external debt obligations, and maintain a reserve for national disasters or emergencies.

A fall in forex reserves, how-

ever, may cause issues for the government and the RBI in managing the nation's external and internal financial issues.

The Reserve Bank functions as the custodian and manager of forex reserves, and operates within the overall policy framework agreed upon with the government. It allocates the dollars for specific purposes.

For example, under the Liberalised Remittances Scheme, individuals are allowed to remit up to \$250,000 every year.

The central bank uses its forex kitty for the orderly movement of the rupee. It sells the dollar when the rupee weakens and buys the dollar when the rupee strengthens. **WITHPTI**

'RBI believes differing policy strategy, policy stance can coexist'

In its latest monetary policy meet, the central bank has set a clear distinction between policy strategy and policy stance and that these can coexist, said an SBI Research report



FY23 could usher in a new era of separate strategy and separate stance, an unconventional monetary policy setting in the true sense Source: SBI Research/PTI

RBI SURPRISED everyone with its status quo on rates and accommodative stance for the 10th time in a row and a lower forecast for inflation and growth for FY23, at 4.5% and 7.8%, respectively

BOND YIELDS shed 7 basis points (bps) to 6.73% last Thursday, after touching 6.88% on Budget day when the Centre said it would borrow a record Rs 14.3 lakh crore to fund its capex plans of Rs 7.5 lakh crore

LOWER INFLATION forecast took the market by surprise and the 10-year yields fell 7 bps to close at 6.73% after falling 10 bps after the policy was announced

High global oil prices fuel near 7-fold rise in ONGC Q3 net

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

OIL AND Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on Saturday posted a near seven-fold growth in net profit for the quarter ended December 2021, as higher oil and gas prices offset a drop in output.

Net profit of Rs 8,764 crore in October-December 2021 rose 596.7 per cent over Rs 1,258 crore net profit in the same period a year back, the state-owned company said. ONGC got \$75.73 for every barrel of crude oil it produced and sold in the third quarter of the ongoing financial year, as against \$43.20 a barrel realisation in the same period of 2020-21.

Gas price rose to \$2.90 per million British thermal unit in October-December 2021 as against \$1.79 a year back. This spurt in prices more than made up for the fall in production. Oil production fell 3.2 per cent to 5.45 million tonne while gas output was 4.2 per cent lower at 5.5 billion cubic meters.

Revenue in Q3FY22 was up 67.3 per cent to Rs 28,474 crore. The board of the firm approved a second interim dividend of 35 per cent (Rs 1.75 per share). "The total payout on this account will be Rs 2,201.55 crore." **WITHPTI**

42 mines auctioned till date for commercial mining: Coal Ministry

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

A TOTAL of 42 coal blocks have been auctioned till date for commercial mining, the Coal Ministry said in a statement on Saturday. Of the said blocks, 10 coal mines were auctioned the past week under the third tranche, it added.

"Under the commercial coal mining auction process, a total of 42 coal mines, including... mines auctioned in tranche-3, have been successfully auctioned till date with a total cumulative PRC (peak rate capacity) of 86.404 million tonnes per annum (MTPA)," the statement said.

The ministry said that the 10 blocks sold last week are projected to generate an annual revenue of Rs 2,858.20 crore, adding that the "annual revenue projected (is) based on the PRC (peak rate capacity) of mine."

On the first day of the auction, five blocks were sold, with Dalmia Cement Bharat Ltd emerging as the highest bidder for two coal blocks in Jharkhand.

While Mahanadi Mines and Minerals was the highest bidder for a coal block in Odisha, Yazdani Steel and Power was the highest bidder for another mine in the

Sufficient stock to hike supply to non-power: CIL

New Delhi: Coal India (CIL) said it is currently supplying around 3.4 lakh tonnes of coal per day to non-power sector, and stressed that it has sufficient buffer stock to increase the supply of the dry fuel to this sector. **PTI**

eastern state, the Ministry had said in a statement on Tuesday. Assam Mineral Development Corp Ltd was the highest bidder for a mine in Assam.

On the second and the third days of auction, Jindal Steel and Power bagged Utkal-C coal mine in Odisha while Hindalco Industries made the highest bid for Meenakshi mine in the eastern state.

BS Ispat Ltd emerged as the highest bidder for Majra mine in Maharashtra, and Assam Mineral Development Corporation bagged Garampani coal block in Assam.

Platinum Alloys Pvt Ltd bagged Namchik Namphuk mine in Arunachal Pradesh. **WITHPTI**

CRUDE WATCH

OIL SOARS TO FRESH 7-YR HIGH

New York: Oil prices rose to fresh seven-year highs on Friday, as fears of an invasion of Ukraine by Russia added to worries over tight global crude supplies. Both benchmarks saw an eighth week of gains, with Brent up at \$94.44 and US WTI at \$93.10. **REUTERS**

'STAR OF INDIAN AUTO INDUSTRY': A LOOK AT RAHUL BAJAJ'S LIFE

JUNE 10, 1938: Born in Calcutta; grandfather Jamnalal Bajaj founded Bajaj Group in 1926

1968: Became CEO of Bajaj Group, after having started off as deputy general manager as part of his father Kamalnayan Bajaj's team

1976-77: Elected president of SIAM



"He was among the few stars who created the Indian automotive industry. He was a pioneer who established a culture of quality and technology"

VENU SRINIVASAN,
CHAIRMAN, TVS MOTOR

1979/80: First term as president of industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

1989: Iconic 'Hamara Bajaj' jingle used to advertise Bajaj two-wheelers, especially Bajaj Chetak scooter

1999/2000: Elected CII president for second term

2005: Passed baton of



"Under his stewardship, the first codification of corporate governance norms in the country happened way back in 1998"

TV NARENDHAN,
PRESIDENT, CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRY

company to son Rajiv Bajaj, who became Bajaj Auto MD

JUNE 2006: Elected to Rajya Sabha, member till 2010

2008: Split Bajaj Auto into three units -- Bajaj Auto, Bajaj Finserv and a holding company

FEBRUARY 12, 2022: Passes away due to age-related illness



"I am devastated - he was a dear friend and will miss him dearly. The country has lost a great son & nation builder"

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW,
EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON, BIOCON

SECTOR WATCH AVIATION

Interline pact: How it will work for domestic flyers of Air India, AirAsia

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

TATA GROUP airlines Air India and AirAsia India signed an agreement on interline considerations on irregular operations (IROPs) that will allow the two airlines to transfer passengers to one another in case of disrupted operations.

What are IROPs?

Airlines typically enter into such interline agreements with other carriers, especially on routes where they operate limited number of flights, to prevent inconvenience to passengers in case of disruptions. These disruptions could occur as a result of extenuating circumstances such as delays, cancellations, diversion of flights, etc.

What does this mean?

As a consequence of this agreement, in case of disruptions witnessed by either of the airlines on one of the routes where the other airline is operational, passengers will be transferred to the alternative available flight.

How does this work?

Through the agreement, which is valid only for domestic routes till February 9, 2024, the transfer of passengers shall be done only on "as available" basis as determined by the airport manager of the accepting airline. For example, on a sector like Siliguri-Delhi, where both airlines operate, in case Air India's flight is cancelled for some reason, passengers on

'AS AVAILABLE' BASIS



File

■ With this pact, valid till February 9, 2024, only for domestic routes, transfer of passengers shall be done only on "as available" basis as determined by the airport manager of the accepting airline

EXPLAINED

the cancelled flight will be transferred to the AirAsia India flight basis the available seats on the aircraft. This will be in addition to the other refund or free date change options that the airlines offer.

What about the various services available through one airline?

With respect to baggage allowance, in case a passenger booked on AirAsia India is being transferred to an Air India flight, the original AirAsia India allowance of 15 kg will be applicable. However, if a passenger originally booked to fly on Air India is being transferred to an AirAsia India flight, the free baggage allowance will be as per Air India's ticket. Air India typically has 25 kg of free baggage allowance on domestic routes in economy class.

BRIEFLY ESIC scheme

New Delhi: Union Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav on Saturday announced the expansion of the pilot scheme of annual preventive health check-up programme for ESIC members aged above 40 years to 15 cities from the existing five.

India, US trade

New Delhi: Bilateral trade between India and the US rose by 45% to \$113 billion in 2021, against \$78 billion in 2020, Commerce Ministry Piyush Goyal tweeted. **PTI**

SMEL Q3

New Delhi: Shyam Metals and Energy Ltd (SMEL) posted a 95% on-year rise in profit after tax for Q3FY22 at ₹423 crore. **ENS**

Hope for combustion engine future beyond 2030: Lamborghini

REUTERS
FRANKFURT, FEBRUARY 12

VOLKSWAGEN'S SUPERCAR brand Lamborghini is looking to keep combustion engine vehicles alive beyond the end of the decade, the unit's CEO Stephan Winkelmann said.

"After hybridisation, we will wait to see whether it will be possible to offer vehicles with an internal combustion engine beyond 2030," he told German weekly newspaper *Welt am Sonntag*. "One possibility would be to keep combustion engine vehicles alive via synthetic fuels." Winkelmann last month said Lamborghini planned to roll out its first fully electric model at the end of this decade,



The carmaker planned to roll out its first full electric model at end of the decade. *Reuters file*

after comments last year that a release was planned for second half of the decade.

Lamborghini, and some of its key rivals, are wrestling with how to shift their ranges to battery power without losing the high performance that supports their premium pricing.

Factory output at 10-mth low: Capital goods, manufacturing activity still weak

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT slumped to a 10-month low of 0.4 per cent in December 2021, according to data released Friday by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The factory output — measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) — had registered a growth of 1.3 per cent a month ago and 2.2 per cent in December 2020.

Reasons for output fall

The December IIP was pulled down by manufacturing, capital goods (tools and physical assets used by manufacturers in the production process) and consumer durables output, along with an unfavourable base. In absolute terms, the general index level was



A worker at a furniture factory. *File*

higher than pre-Covid levels seen in December 2019, but experts cautioned that the full impact of the restrictions in view of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 may get reflected in the industrial output data next month.

The biggest drag for industrial output in December came from the 0.1 per cent contraction in manufacturing output, which ac-

counts for 77.6 per cent of the weight of the IIP. Manufacturing output had grown 0.8 per cent in November 2021 and 2.7 per cent in December 2020.

'Need policymakers' attention'

"The short-lived Omicron wave and mobility restrictions could impair industrial output further in January. However, rapid

control of new infections, and the removal of activity curbs means the economic recovery could resume from February onward," Rahul Bajoria, chief india economist, Barclays said.

Successive monthly data of industrial output is making it abundantly clear that consumption demand will need policy makers' attention much more than hitherto being given if recovery is to become a sustainable one, India Ratings & Research (Ind-Ra) said. "Also the continued weakness in capital goods does not augur well. Although there are indications that finally private corporate investment is picking up but the same has yet to find a reflection in the IIP data," Sunil Kumar Sinha, principal economist, Ind-Ra.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

RIL plans to become largest blue hydrogen producer

New Delhi: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) aims to become one of the largest producers of blue hydrogen globally, with a target of producing the zero-emission fuel at costs that will be half the global average.

In a presentation detailing the separation plan, RIL — the operator of the world's largest oil refining complex — said it will repurpose a Rs 30,000 crore plant that currently converts petroleum coke into synthesis gas to produce blue hydrogen for \$12-15 a kg.

Hydrogen is the cleanest form of known fuel. Depending on production methods, hydrogen can be grey, blue or green. Grey hydrogen is the most common form and is generated from natural gas, or methane, through a process called 'steam reforming'. **ENS, WITHPTI**

Across
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in
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There are good reasons why the private sector is shying away from investment. The foremost reason is lack of demand. The capacity utilisation in many industries is around 50 per cent. Why would any one invest more when there is idle capacity? Besides, the business environment has become more difficult, not easier, and is filled with cronyism, suspicion and fear

THERE WAS a time when Mr Narendra Modi — and on cue his Finance Minister — swore by the private sector. Like Agriculture and most of the Services, in industry too, Mr Modi's preferred model was private sector-led growth. The State will step back and be content to be the regulator where regulation was necessary. At some point of time, after demonetisation, Mr Modi appears to have changed his philosophy. As his faith in the private sector waned, he became a votary of the government-led model. With Budget 2022-23, the change is complete. This is a Budget driven by one engine: government capital expenditure. The rub, however, lies in the numbers.

SHIFTING GEARS

The Finance Minister claimed that in 2021-22 the government had exceeded budgeted capital expenditure. As against a BE of Rs 5,54,236 crore, the RE number was Rs 6,02,711 crore. The surprise turned out to be unpleasant after one read the fine print. The latter amount included a sum of Rs 51,971 crore that was infused into Air India to repay past loans and liabilities before privatization! I did not know that *repaying a loan* would qualify as *capital expenditure*! Deducting this amount, the capital expenditure in 2021-22 was only Rs 5,50,840 crore — lower than the BE! That is not surprising. The government's capacity to spend money on the

capital account is constrained by many factors: multiple levels of decision-making, huge paperwork, diffused accountability, and so on. These constraints will not go away because Mr Modi shifted gears. There are more unpleasant surprises in the numbers. The Finance Minister generously announced that she will allow the states to borrow an additional sum of Rs 1,00,000 crore, interest free, if it was tied to capital expenditure. Soon it became clear that the states would borrow directly from the market and the Central government would bear only the interest. The nasty surprise was that the Finance Minister quietly tucked this sum into the 2022-23 BE of the Central government's capital expenditure that printed at Rs 7,50,246 crore, and claimed that the Central government had enhanced its capital expenditure by 35 per cent over the previous year! By no stretch of argument would the additional borrowing by the state governments for their capital expenditure qualify to be *Central government capital expenditure*. This was deception of the worst kind. Deducting this amount, the Central government's capital expenditure in 2022-23 BE would be only Rs 6,50,246 crore — a modest increase of Rs 1,00,000 crore over the true number of 2021-22 RE.

LOSING FAITH

The Modi government's rhetoric of government capital expenditure-led

growth is hyperbole. Further, the government does not have faith in the appetite of the private sector to invest more. The latter was exposed when the ambitious scheme to privatize public sector assets collapsed. Two years ago, the government decided to privatize BPCL, CCL and SCI. Last year, the government decided to privatize two public sector banks and one public sector insurance company. Also, last year, the Finance Minister announced a Grand Bargain Sale of monetizing public sector assets valued at Rs 6,00,000 crore. Not one of the proposals has seen the light of the day! The Railways invited bids to privatize 151 passenger trains on 109 routes — and got no bids! It was no surprise that against a disinvestment revenue target of Rs 1,75,000 crore in 2021-22 BE, the government hopes to achieve Rs 78,000 crore — that is if the LIC IPO goes through before March 2022!

There are good reasons why the private sector is shying away from investment. The foremost reason is lack of demand. The capacity utilisation in many industries is around 50 per cent. Why would any one invest more when there is idle capacity? Besides, the business environment has become more difficult, not easier, and is filled with cronyism, suspicion and fear.

IGNORING ADVICE

Many economists have advised the

following approach to pull the economy out of the current state of jobless and sluggish growth:

- Stimulate demand by putting more money in the hands of the poor and the middle class — transfer cash, cut indirect taxes;
- Revive the MSMEs that have shut down or have scaled down their business. Such revival will also bring back millions of jobs that were lost;
- Spend more on welfare. The excuse that “we don't have enough money” will not wash because the top 10 per cent of the population has garnered 57 per cent of the national income and holds 77 per cent of the nation's wealth. They must come forward and say, like the American billionaires, “tax us more”;
- Review the licence *raj* that has found its way back through multiple regulations and directions by the RBI, SEBI, the Income-Tax department, etc;
- Rein in the CBI, ED, SFIO and IT so far as businesses and banks are concerned.

I have no expectations that the government will listen to well-meaning advice. Leaving that aside, will the Finance Minister solve a puzzle that is troubling many economists. In 2022-23, will the nominal GDP grow by 11.1 per cent (as projected in the Budget papers) **and** the real GDP grow by 8 per cent (as predicted by the new CEO)? That would be heaven with inflation at only about 3 per cent!

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

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Look
behind
the hijab

LAST WEEK I found myself embroiled unwittingly in the hijab saga. I did not mean to get caught up in it but when I saw well-meaning women, most prominently Priyanka Gandhi, proclaim that to wear or not wear a hijab was a matter of choice, I felt it was necessary to point out that this is rubbish. Women brought up in conservative Muslim homes are taught from the time they are small girls that veiling themselves is an act of piety and they should accept this unquestioningly. When this idea is taken to its logical conclusion, we get Afghanistan, Iran, and the awful ISIS caliphate. When the caliphate was at the height of its power and glory, women could be shot in the street for showing their faces in public.

When the Prophet of Islam urged women to dress modestly, he may not have realised that what modesty meant exactly would be determined by men. This is what has happened, and there is no point in pretending that wearing a hijab is a matter of choice. It is not. This is why the sight of young women demanding the ‘right’ to wear a hijab is distressing and to see liberal ladies with powerful voices back them up even more so. Islam has given the world some fine ideas about equality and brotherhood, but the treatment of women is not one of them. Since India is not an Islamic country, Muslim women should be encouraged to rid themselves of their robes and headgear instead of being encouraged to fight for their ‘right’ to wear a hijab.

Once embroiled in the controversy, I began to examine more closely what was happening in Karnataka, and the closer I looked, the more worried I became. What worried me most was that the students who were part of the original protest were being supported by the Campus Front of India (CFI), which is the student wing of the Popular Front of India (PFI). This is a violent, jihadist organisation. It has an army of jihadists who often participate in military drills. The next one is planned in Murshidabad next week on February 17 with the stated aim of taking on ‘Hindu, fascist forces’.

My own interest in the PFI began in 2010 when it ordered an attack on a teacher in Kerala, Professor T J Joseph, and in this attack his hand was chopped off by PFI fanatics. He was punished because in the eyes of the PFI he had insulted the Prophet Mohammad. The PFI embodies the kind of radical Islam that has been directly responsible for most attacks of jihad terrorism in the world and that has given birth to the Taliban government that now rules Afghanistan. Indian Muslims who have been feeling increasingly alienated in Narendra Modi's ‘new India’ are particularly vulnerable to the ideas of political Islam being spread by organisations like the PFI. So, it should surprise nobody if, when a proper investigation into the hijab protest is conducted, it turns out that the PFI sponsored it. Without powerful backing it is hard to imagine how it has been possible for a small group of Muslim students to have taken their hijab demand right up to the Supreme Court.

It is just as hard to understand how a protest that began in one government college in Udipi should have so quickly and easily garnered the support of veiled Muslim women in cities across India. Veiled protesters in different cities carried the same placards that said, ‘Hijab is my Right’. This protest is no longer about Muslim girls being denied access to education but Muslim girls becoming unwitting pawns of political forces whose ideology and ideas are the opposite of the ideas that define India in our Constitution. What is more worrying is that the men who control the PFI have convinced these young girls that it is the Constitution of India that gives them the right to freedom of religion and worship. It does give them this right. What it does not give is the right for forces like the PFI to spread their violent, ugly ideology unchecked.

At a personal level, I first noticed the spread of radical Islam in our southern states more than 20 years ago. I was in Coimbatore to investigate the serial bombs that went off on February 14, 1998, in which 58 people were killed and more than 200 injured. I remember going to a Muslim locality around a large mosque and discovering that Tamil Muslim girls who once dressed in saris like their Hindu sisters were now wearing *salwar-kurtas* and wandering around in elaborate hijabs. When I tried to engage them in conversation, they said they were not allowed to speak to strangers unless they got permission from the local *maulvi*. So off I went to the mosque in search of him, but as I remember it, either permission to speak was not given to the girls or the *maulvi* remained elusive.

After the 9/11 attacks, radical Islam spread exponentially among our Muslim communities. Before Narendra Modi became Prime Minister, they said it was a response to Islamophobia and the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Today they say it is a response to what PFI videos call ‘Hindu, fascist forces’. What is clear is that these developments are dangerous for national security and need to be investigated and stopped urgently and firmly.

inside
TRACK

COOMI KAPOOR



SHAH TAKES CHARGE

AMIT SHAH realised early on that the real hurdle for the BJP in the Uttar Pradesh polls was not so much the farmer vote in western UP but that Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav would mobilise his campaign on a backward vs forward projector. He knew that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Thakur caste was a disadvantage with some sections. It was Narendra Modi, not Shah, who decided that Adityanath be declared the BJP's CM candidate. By early January, after the exit of Swami Prasad Maurya and a few other OBC MLAs dealt a blow, Shah stepped in to take complete charge of the UP campaign. Outside of Adityanath's home territory, Gorakhpur, it was Shah who had his way in the selection of candidates. Shah ensured that OBCs were given large representation and OBC leaders like Keshav Prasad Maurya and Anupriya Patel were projected in the campaign. Shah also began a blitzkreig tour of the state.

KISHOR'S WATERLOO?

Will Goa turn out to be campaign whiz Prashant Kishor's Waterloo? Kishor's outfit I-PAC is in total charge of the TMC campaign. TMC Goa in-charge Mohua Moitra's responsibilities are largely confined to interacting with the media. The list of Goan politicians who joined the TMC but quit after getting a negative feedback from their constituencies is growing. Former Congress MLA Aleixo Reginaldo Lourenco is now fighting as an Independent. Former MGP MLA Lavoo Mamledar is standing on a Congress ticket. A founding member of the Goa TMC, Yatish Naik, resigned after not getting a ticket. Other prominent TMC supporters who appear disillusioned include literary personality Damodar Ghanekar, footballer Denzil Franco and tennis player Leander Paes. Former CM Luizinho Faleiro, who was the TMC's first recruit, backed out of contesting from Fatorda, after a Rajya Sabha seat from the party. Less-known names grumble that they were wooed initially simply so that I-PAC could get access to their contact numbers. The TMC has invested heavily in Goa. Its giant hoardings far outnumber those of all other parties. But the hoardings simply carry a picture of Mamata Banerjee, not even the candidates' photos.

she
SAID

MANJULA LAL

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“ME? YOU'RE accusing me of chauvinism?” This is what the spouse said a few weeks into marriage, when I thought it wise to complain about the burden of running the kitchen. Not wanting to be accused of militant feminism, often linked to short hair like mine, I surrendered even before the battle had begun. Who wants acrimony in the honeymoon period? Feminism and chauvinism are not epithets much bandied about now, as they were three decades ago. In fact, very few young women now declare themselves to be feminist, though some men do, earning brownie points. In an arranged marriage, the prospective groom is not asked if he can cook and

DIVIDED HOUSE

More than the ineffectual Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, BJP organising secretary Satish Dhond is being blamed for the mis-guided election strategy of the party in Goa. Dhond, an RSS pracharak, was transferred to Maharashtra when Manohar Parrikar was around. He returned to Goa while Parrikar was ailing and was given a free rein because of a lack of alternatives. In selecting candidates, factors such as party loyalty, *parivar* links and a clean record were given short shrift. The cadre-based party has allotted 25 per cent of its tickets to Congress defectors. Dhond's critics say he has failed to gauge the public disenchantment with defectors. For old-timers the cynical decision to allot the Panjim ticket to the controversial Atanasio Monserrate rather than Utpal Parrikar, the son of Parrikar, was the last straw. Subhash Velingkar, former Goa RSS chief, has endorsed Utpal's candidature, as have many others with the Sangh Parivar.

ART OF NETWORKING

There are many fascinating facets to Captain Krishnan Nair's life story besides founding the Leela Group of Hotels. He was a pioneer in the handloom textile industry, setting up Leela Laces and promoting bleeding Madras shirts to the West. Bachi Karkaria's soon-to-be-released biography *Capture the Dream* recalls Nair's ability to get the right doors opened. From Morarji Desai and Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia to Vasantdada Patil, Nair cultivated many. His major mentor was VP Menon, to whom he managed an introduction through the Malayali network. Nair's mother requested Menon's wife to carry a bottle of her pickle to her son in Delhi. Menon eventually introduced the boy from Kannur, Kerala, to his many contacts. For instance, when Nair needed an introduction to a snooty Nottingham lace machine manufacturer, he could ask Lord Mountbatten to vouch for him.

DECEPTIVE LOOKS

The body language of the candidates in the Punjab campaign can be deceptive. Sukhbir Singh Badal exudes supreme confidence and humour, even if the Akali Dal is down in the dumps. Captain Amarinder Singh maintains his unflappable, regal demeanour, though he is aware he might be fighting a losing battle. Conversely, the two frontrunners seem rather down in the mouth. AAP's Bhagwat Singh Maan is anxious to present a sober image as he fears any show of exuberance will be misunderstood. The Congress's Charanjit Singh Channi looks depressed and tearful at times, perhaps nervous about the unpredictable Navjot Singh Sidhu.

history
HEADLINE

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THE WEST BENGAL BJP's Scheduled Caste Morcha-led agitation in January to commemorate the Marichjhapi massacre of 1979 has thrown light on a dark incident in the state's contemporary history which remains conveniently forgotten. It involved violence and forceful action by the Left Front government between January and May 1979 against refugee settlers on the small Sundarbans island of Marichjhapi.

Having come to power after overthrowing the Left, the Trinamool Congress government had also initiated the process of acknowledging the incidents, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announcing in 2018 that a memorial to honour the Marichjhapi victims would be set up.

However, such political stands from time to time apart, the events of Marichjhapi remain largely forgotten in mainstream Bengali conscience. Not among the victims though. As Annu Jalais wrote in an article in the *Economic and Political Weekly* in 2005, the memories are evident in the lingering resentment among the present generation of local settlers regarding the unequal distribution of resources between them and the Royal Bengal Tigers of the Sundarbans.

In order to understand the Marichjhapi tragedy, one needs to step back in time, to Bengali Hindu migration into West Bengal from East Pakistan and, subsequently, independent Bangladesh. The backward sections of the Bengali Hindu community (particularly the Namashudras) had forged a formidable alliance with the Muslim League and the Krishak Praja Party during the last decades of British rule to keep out the upper caste-dominated Congress from power in Bengal. The clout of the Namashudras was, however, lost with Partition and Independence. Recurrent riots and atrocities forced many of them to migrate into India along with upper caste Hindu Bengalis.

The second phase of the exodus involving more of these marginalised people occurred after the creation of independent Bangladesh, when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's assassination in 1975 and a vigorous turn towards a more Islamic identity for Bangladesh, witnessed a rise in communal riots.

As large groups of refugees began to arrive, the government of West Bengal negotiated with the Centre along with other states to settle some of the refugee groups outside, like on the Andaman Islands, and more particularly in the arid and forested

Why and how Bengal
forgot Marichjhapi



Holding a tiger replica at a village in the Sundarbans. The events of 1979 linger on in the resentment many feel towards resources for the tiger reserve. Partha Paul

Dandakaranya, lying partly in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh then and now mostly in Chhattisgarh.

Such actions by the Congress government were opposed by the Left. So the Left coming to power for the first time, in 1977, saw many refugee families trying to come back and settle down in parts of West Bengal. The islands of Sundarbans were a favoured area, as earlier groups of refugees from East Pakistan had settled largely here and it provided opportunities in fishing and agriculture. Marichjhapi was particularly important as the refugees had cleared the island and even set up a school and health centre on their own initiative.

The Left Front government under Jyoti Basu, however, opposed such settlements as illegal encroachment in areas allocated for tiger projects. The local press reported about police atrocities on the settlers. There was hardly any possibility of the refugees getting any support from the other end of the political spectrum as the Congress was a weak force after its defeat in 1977. The coalition government at the Centre under Morarji Desai was dependent on Left support. The All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation (BAMCEF) led by Kanshi Ram also not yet powerful.

From January 1979, the state government initiated more punitive action. On 27th, it prohibited all movement from and to Marichjhapi. This was challenged by the refugees in the Calcutta High Court and a stay was obtained. The Left government reportedly did not follow the order

and used police along with vigilante groups (mainly local goons) to evict the refugees. Between May 14 and 16, 1979, severe atrocities were reported, including police firing on unarmed people, dumping of bodies in the river, raping of women and burning down of huts and boats.

The incidents, though reported in some local papers, did not evoke any protests. Opposition activities remained limited to raising the issue. Strict press censorship limited the activities of reporters. Even today the exact number of people killed or displaced can only be estimated approximately. There was no large-scale inquiry and no government or police official was charged.

One analyst, Ross Mallick, had noted that, “the subsequent silence in the Bengali intelligence community about what so many knew happened at Marichjhapi is indicative of the intellectual dominance of certain perspectives and the acquiescence of this intellectual elite in the abuses”. This matches the views expressed by the families of survivors that the mainstream elite culture could ignore the pain and sufferings of the largely subaltern groups, who were perhaps not considered important enough to weave a narrative of pathos capable of touching the heart chords of more cosmopolitan and intellectual urban elite, who still preferred to view the Leftist agenda and philosophy with rose-tinted glasses.

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Feminism, that dare not speak its name

clean. But when love reigns supreme, it should be part of the pre-nuptial agreement. Otherwise forget your high-sounding principles. When prolonged lockdowns forced many husbands, young and old, to cook and clean, it was a triumph for feminism, but nobody phrased it in these terms. Feminism has never been easy to understand, for the missing undergarment is not as obvious as headgear — red caps, headscarves or colourful turbans. I remember two occasions when the word was bandied about in a puzzling way. A scintillating danseuse being interviewed backstage minutes before her performance said, “If I didn't have a daughter, what use my feminism?” There was no time for a clarification. It stuck in my head until I figured out that passing on her ideology was

important for her. But why not to a son? Another conversation in a college canteen a few years ago was equally puzzling. A young colleague had just discovered that she was pregnant and seemed quite perturbed about it. “How can I have a baby, what about my feminism?” She seemed to presume that since we both studied at JNU, decades apart, I would know what she meant. I didn't. I asked how it impinged on motherhood, but she wasn't paying attention, for I was just a sounding board. She did have the baby, a girl, and hopefully still carries the feminist flag high. One thing expected of feminists is that they will teach their boys to treat girls as equals. All illusions I might have had on this front crumbled when my son said soon after his marriage, blatantly, “Cooking is the

girl's job.” His wife succumbed, just as I had done, for perhaps the same reasons. It's difficult to stand on principle when marital bliss is at stake. Friends to whom this family secret is revealed are right to ask, “Didn't you teach your son anything?” In fact, my own test of feminism came during the preparations for his wedding. As the boy's side, we were determined not to assert our traditional ‘superior’ status by letting the girl's side take on the heavy burden of expenditure. Most of us believe that the girl's side should not be asked to spend so lavishly, as that's the reason why girls are unwanted in our society. But we also couldn't offer to go halves with the girl's parents since we aren't that loaded. We found ourselves yielding so much ground that relatives started asking, “Why you are being such pushovers?” Hello, it's because we

didn't want to be seen as dictating terms. (Or a dry, tight-fisted bunch, unable to cope up with a big fat wedding.) Early in life, I heard a woman say matter-of-factly that she had not gone home even once in 14 years, to a village just a hop and a skip away. Poverty and heavy household duties are often cited as the reason but this is also a social evil. The in-laws usually come up with that old trope, ‘This is now your home’, which endorses the theory of *paraya dhan* (someone else's wealth). Clearly, for feminism to win behind closed doors, it has to be part of the school curriculum. Harried housewives and working women cannot set a feminist agenda when the foundation is chauvinistic.

Manjula Lal is the author of That's News to Me and In Search of Ram Rajya

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



INSIDE

Bound for Glory

Lata Mangeshkar, the singer, was that rare thing — a perfect mix of genius, endeavour and nuance, writes classical musician Shubha Mudgal



POINT OF VIEW

Moving Pictures

In his new book, Raghu Rai brings to life intimate portraits of auteur Satyajit Ray

eye

SONGS FOR ALL SEASONS

Lata Mangeshkar had a protean voice that drew her listeners into a world of emotional and meditative depth. In this issue, we celebrate the genius of the musician whom we lost a week ago. First up, a veteran actor on the versatility of a musician who defied the law of diminishing returns and set a gold standard for generations to come



BY SHARMILA TAGORE

*"Rahen na rahen hum, meheka karenge,
Ban ke kali, ban ke saba, baag-e-wafa mein
Rahen na rahen hum..."*

THESE LYRICS from Asit Sen's film, *Mamta* (1966), starring Ashok Kumar, Suchitra Sen and Dharmendra, is so apt for Lataji's life, who remains immortal despite her passing on February 6 in Mumbai.

As I was leaving for our ancestral home in Pataudi on Sunday, the news of Lataji's passing flashed on my phone. Before I could process the news and grasp the magnitude of this loss, I was confronted with a deluge of media interactions to discuss Lataji's life and memory. There was so much to say yet nothing could do justice to her grand life. I had been in touch with her niece Rachna since her hospitalisation after COVID-19 and was convinced that Lataji would be home soon, that I would get an opportunity to meet her in Mumbai to receive the very prestigious Deenanath Smriti Prathishthan Award which she had been keen to bestow upon me since 2020. Unfortunately, the pandemic made it prohibitive for me to receive the award in 2020 and 2021. I hoped to receive this great honour from her, in person, sometime this year. But it was not to be and I am overcome with deep regret and sadness.

Lataji has been a part of my life since I was just a year old. My mother would sing her songs to me and her voice gradually became a looming presence in our house. As an adolescent, I found myself humming her songs; *Aayega, aayega aanevala* (*Mahal*, 1949) was an absolute favourite of mine. Little did I know then that a few years later, Lataji would be my voice in several films and I would actually have the privilege of knowing her, albeit from a revered distance. My husband Tiger (cricketer Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi) was a devoted admirer of Lataji's. When I met him, he was absolutely unfamiliar with my work and his only gateway to the Hindi film industry was through (actors) Yusuf *sahab* (Dilip Kumar), Vyjayanthimalaji, and Lataji. Not one given to public displays of emotions, Tiger could be found gushing at the very mention of Lataji. Once, when he found out that Lataji was recording at Famous Studio, Tardeo, and there could be a possibility to meet her, he immediately seized the moment and rushed to meet his favourite icon.

When Lata Mangeshkar was born in Indore in 1929, no one could have known that she would, perhaps, become one of the most recognisable voices in the world. But the prediction came at an early age from none other than Madam Noor Jehan, who was so impressed by the young singer's rendition of *rag Jaijaiwanti* and RC Boral's *Jeevan hai bekaar tumhare* from the film *Wapas* (1969), she instantly proclaimed that the little girl will be a successful singer one day and advised her to continue with her *riyaaz*. Several years later, in 1961, Lataji left Madam Noor Jehan spell-bound as she performed *Allah tero naam* (*Hum*

Dono, 1961) in front of her idol at Shanmukhananda Hall in Bombay.

In 1942, when she was 13 years old, Lataji started her career with the Marathi film *Kiti Hasaal* after her father's early demise. But it was't until 1948 that she got her first major playback opportunity from Ghulam Haider for the film *Majboor*. The song *Dil mera toda*

o mujhe kahin ka na chhoda became an instant hit. Thereafter, Lataji's rise was swift. She became a powerful presence. Music composers were in awe of her control and infallible intonation and queued up to offer her their best compositions.

In the 1950s and '60s, Lataji was singing a range of wonderful songs. She eluded banal-

ities with her buoyancy and interpolations. She sang many raga-based songs with Naushad *sahab*, sentimental hits of Salil Chowdhury, and the versatile songs for the commanding duo Shankar-Jaikishanji, some of which were even inspired by jazz, Western classical music and pop hits of The Beatles. Lataji's eerie and haunting rendition of *Gumnaam hai koi* (*Gumnaam*,

1965) was influenced by *Somewhere my love* from *Dr Zhivago* (1965) and the Hawaiian-themed number *Ajeeb dastan hai yeh* (*Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai*, 1960) was inspired by Jim Reeve's *My lips are sealed*. Shankar-Jaikishan got out the best in Manna De. Lataji proved to be a formidable match with him. Some of Lataji's best music is with De — *Pyaar hua ikraar*

hua (*Shree 420*, 1955), *Chadh gaya paapi bich-hua* (*Madhumati*, 1958) and *Dil ki girah khol do* (*Raat Aur Din*, 1967) are just some of the many gems they gifted us. During this period, Lataji's rebellious *Pyaar kiya toh dama kiya* from *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960) also achieved cult status.

Lataji was a protean voice. She set a gold standard for music against which singers continue to be measured. Lataji used her radiant, warm voice like an instrument emphasising virtuosity rather than arrogant conviction. Her singing was characterised by purity, an impeccable sense of rhythm, clarity, perfect diction, melody and an expansive vocal range. She had the uncanny ability to place the song just where it should be. She made the lyrics matter by lending them the right emotional depth. There was joy, serenity and absolute security in the music of Lata Mangeshkar.

On January 26, 1963 legends from the film industry like Yusuf *sahab*, Raj Kapoor *sahab*, Shankar-Jaikishanji, Madan Mohanji and Hemant Kumarji, to name a few, flew down to Delhi to see Lataji perform the music miracle *Ae mere watan ke logo* at the Ramila Maidan. Lataji was initially hesitant to sing the song as she had very little time for preparation but conceded defeat to a very determined Kavi Pradeep, the lyricist of the song. Lataji was given time only on the flight to Delhi and the night before to memorise the song and render it before a packed audience at 3.30 pm the next day. We are well aware about the magic that followed. A misty-eyed Jawaharlal Nehru invited Lataji for tea to his official residence where she met Indira Gandhi, who without wasting a moment, introduced Lataji to her two "admirers" — sons Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi. Since that day, *Ae mere watan ke logo* is regarded as an essential in the canon of Indian patriotic songs and Lataji became a beacon of hope, a symbol of national integration. She wore this badge of honour, conferred on her by millions of India, with utmost grace, humility and responsibility.

Once accompanied Shaktiji (Samanta) to Bombay's Film Centre where Lataji was recording. She came dressed very modestly, greeted the members of the orchestra with a soft "*namaskar*", stood in front of the microphone and matter-of-factly performed the song with great precision. Once the music started, Lataji tested the song's resilience with startling verbal dexterity. She had the unique gift of trimming her powerful voice to suit everything from a soft and sibilant *Kuch dil ne kaha* from *Anupama* (1966) or a gentle ballad like *Lag ja gale* (*Woh Kaun Thi?*, 1964) to the lively abundance of *Guide's Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai* (1965).

Lataji crossed all barriers and borders of music and sang everything there was to sing with equal perfection. In a demanding and precarious profession like ours, Lataji successfully defied the law of diminishing returns. I feel that besides her extraordinary talent, her personality and her quiet abstemious life contributed to her longevity — her career spanned almost eight decades. Lataji never behaved like a star. She was shy, retiring and underplayed her tremendous success. During concerts, she conversed with her audience in a way that suggested a delightful humility.

Lataji was unique, unparalleled. She allowed us to escape from our moments of despair to experience something meditative, something almost other-worldly. She will continue to live in each one of us and will always command a special place.

The writer is an actor and former chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification



PHOTOS: EXPRESS ARCHIVE

THE FIRST LADY OF MUSIC

Lata Mangeshkar

‘She was a soulful artiste who loved me a lot’

An actor on her personal and professional bond with the singer



BY HEMA MALINI

THE FIRST time I met her was before my first Hindi film, *Sapno ka Saudagar* (1968).

Although I was a newcomer, she met me very warmly. From then till the Lohri song in (film-maker) Yash (Chopra)ji's *Veer-Zaara* (2004), I had a long innings with Lata Mangeshkar.

If in *Sholay* (1975), where the world remembers Basanti as a young, feisty village woman, she portrayed my character beautifully in the two songs *Holi ke din* and *Jab tak hai jaan*, in *Sapno ka Saudagar*, *Raja Jani* (1972) and *Sharafat* (1970), where I played a gypsy girl, a street dancer and a courtesan respectively, it took a Lata Mangeshkar to imbue



PERFECT NOTES

(Left) Hema Malini with Lata Mangeshkar at the *mahurat* of *Meera*; from *Kinara*

those characters with her voice to make it easy for the artiste to perform the songs on screen. She would mould her voice to fit not only the character but also the actress' voice.

From my many songs by her, some of them definitive in my career, my personal favourite is Gulzar's *Naam gum jaye* for his film *Kinara* (1977). I also love the way she sang *Tune o rangeele* (*Kudrat*, 1981). *O babul pyare* (*Johnny Mera Naam*, 1970) became an anthem for young brides, or *Najaane kya hua* (*Dard*, 1981). Also from *Johnny Mera Naam*, the emotive *Chhup chhup Meera* roye remains a favourite.

With our respective careers in full swing, we did not get to meet much except at public functions. After 2018, when she discovered

WhatsApp, she'd often send me my pictures from public appearances and say, "You are looking beautiful." She would also send pictures of me with Dharamji (actor Dharmendra) and express her fondness for us. At times, she'd even edit them and add elements to make the photographs more beautiful. She would also send pictures of flowers that she had clicked.

People talk about her as a feminist icon, about her personal life, but I only view her as a soulful artiste who loved me a lot. And I respect her a lot for all that she is...was.

The writer is an actor and a member of the Lok Sabha

(AS TOLD TO DIVYA A)

Chandigarh

‘Let’s do the song again’

When a veteran film music director-arranger would ferry Lata Mangeshkar to the recording studio



BY UTTAM SINGH

WHEN RAJSHRI Productions was making a comeback with *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) after a string of flop films, music director Raam Laxman tasked me to persuade Lata *didi* to sing for the film. Since I began as a solo violinist in the Bombay film industry, in 1962, and later grew as an arranger, I’d built a rapport with Didi. At her home, when she said to me, “*Main gaati nahin hoon* (I don’t sing anymore),” I requested her to do it for me because I’d be arranging the music. After two minutes of silence, she agreed on one condition: “*tum mujhe lena aage* (you will come to pick me up)”. From there began our new chapter. I’d drive from my Andheri home to her Prabhu Kunj residence on Peddar Road. She’d sit in the front seat, with two constables with guns at the back. Whether I was the composer or arranger, ferrying Didi became my duty. She’d never eat food from outside, her tea also arrived from home, but after the recordings, she’d demand a chilled soft drink, with extra ice cubes. Saraswati *didi*, as I’d call her — the only two people I’ve heard call her Lata were sound recordist BN Sharma and filmmaker V Shantaram — *ne kisi ka likha kabhi nahin padha*. She’d come into the studio with her music book, write down the song, and make corrections while you were speaking, storing away everything in her memory, and that very moment the song became hers. Only when she was convinced, after rehearsals, would she step into the recording room. It’s a practice that had stuck from when Naushad *sahab* made her rehearse 40 times for a song, to my time, when after five-seven rehearsals the song was done in a single take. For her song with Mahendra Kapoor in *Painter Babu* (1983), our first Hindi film as music directors Uttam-Jagdish (music-arranger duo Singh and Jagdish Khanna), we were recording live in the studio from 9 am-4 pm, with 120 musicians and 40 chorus; the first take only happened at 2 pm. Then she sang for us in *Ricky* (1986), *Waaris* (1988), *Clerk* (1989), *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997), *Dushman* (1998), and *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999), among others. Lata *didi* remembered that we (Uttam-Jagdish) wanted to cut a private album with her. It kept getting pushed. Jagdish died in 1992, and I was busy arranging for Raam Laxman on *Hum Aapke Hain Koun..!* (1994). Eventually, a 12-song devotional album was cut for Tips record label, *Om Sai Ram* (1996), with two songs by her. After a sitar section in a piece that I made her



EXPRESS ARCHIVE

STRIKING THE RIGHT CHORD

(From left) Filmmaker Manmohan Desai, Lata Mangeshkar, music director Raam Laxman, music arranger Uttam Singh and director Ketan Desai on the sets of *Anmol* (1993)

listen to, she held my hand. She’d held my hand many times earlier, but in that moment, it felt like a blessing from goddess Saraswati. The affable Swar Kokila was large-hearted, too. She’d forgo her fee when a composer couldn’t afford to pay. For us, after her *bhajan* in *Ricky*, she’d said, “*bhakti-bhaav se gaya* (sang it out of devotion), won’t accept fee”. There was a time in the industry, in the ‘60s-’80s, when not just music directors and composers, but every single department wanted to have Lata *didi* sing in their film. At Mehboob Studio, I’ve myself overheard a group of lightmen wishing Lata *di* would sing. Now there can’t be two departments far removed from each other than set lighting and playback singing, and yet, everybody wanted Lata *di*, *unka* aura, *unki shakhsiyat ka darza hi alog thha* (her personality was on a different plane). Directors and producers would wait for a whole year after their films were ready to have Lata *di* sing for them. I, too, waited for five-six months for her to sing *Udja Kale kawan* in *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001), but she was abroad, so I signed on Alka Yagnik. In *Dil to pagal hai*, it had to be Didi. In *Arre re arre*, when I asked her for another take of the second *antara* (verse), she said, “why, let’s do the whole song again”, and recorded, barefoot, for two-and-a-half hours. She sang for great composers and while the compositions, like *Lag jaa gale*, were magical, she’d lift the songs further, with her enunciations, and also with her pauses and silences, she’d evoke myriad emotions in a single line. If a composer gave her 20 per cent of a song, or thought his composition was brilliant, Lata *di* would return it 100 per cent with *heere*, *pukhraj* (jewels) embedded in it. Among my compositions for her, a favourite is *Mere pyar ki umar* (Waaris). *Main nahin manta ki agar unse koi better singer hota... jo baat unme thhi, woh kisi mein nahin, woh khudaai, ruhaani awaaz* (I don’t believe there could have been a better singer, the divinity in her voice wasn’t to be found anywhere). When she called me after my son’s death in 2014, her voice sounded just the same that I’d been hearing for 40 years. What she’s done musically hasn’t happened in the 1900s, isn’t happening now, and won’t happen even a 100 years later. She was God’s gift to us.

Uttam Singh, now 74, was given the Maharashtra government’s ‘Lata Mangeshkar Award for Lifetime Achievement’ in 2016

AS TOLD TO TANUSHREE GHOSH

BOUND FOR GLORY

Lata Mangeshkar, the singer, was that rare thing — a perfect mix of genius, endeavour and nuance. Little wonder then that there cannot be another like her



BY SHUBHA MUDGAL

DEATH COMES with a terrifying finality. It silences forever the voices of the lives it snuffs out. But some exceptional voices refuse to be silenced even by death. This most certainly holds true for Lata Mangeshkar. Not only will we continue to hear the thousands of exquisite songs that immortalised her voice, but even the silences and pauses she inserted with such mastery in some of her renditions will continue to speak to us (remember that wistful *haye* and the pause thereafter before she begins *Kaise din beete* in *Anuradha*, 1960). Stories of the lives of prodigies usually begin with the discovery of their remarkable genius that later burgeons over the years; or in some cases, witnesses a meteoric rise and fall. In Lataji’s childhood, there could have been little or no time to celebrate the discovery of her extraordinary gift. At an age when most little girls play with dolls and are pampered for cutely lisping out a rhyme or *bandish*, she was on stage delivering songs with the commitment and skill of a professional, because she had to fend for her mother and siblings. Lataji was catapulted into a professional career as an actor-singer without any period of apprenticeship, and it would not be inaccurate to assume that she was able to do so on the strength of her prodigious talent alone. While she was born and reared in a family that earned its livelihood through music and the arts, and was, therefore, in an environment where children learn music even without formal training, inheriting as it were the musical *sanskars* so integral to the making of an accomplished musician, her formal training with her father was probably irregular and dependent on the time he may have been able to set aside from his professional commitments. Even those opportunities were cut short by his early death at the age of 41. Flung into the position of becoming the provider for her family, there would have been very little time to spare for *riyaz*. Though Lataji respectfully acknowledged her *taaleem* with the great Aman Ali Khan *sahab* of the Bendi Bazaar *gharana* — between 1945, when she is said to have moved to Mumbai, and 1953, when Khan *sahab* passed away — it was just a span of eight years. This must also have been a period of immense upheaval for her caused by the grief of losing a beloved parent, the terrifying prospect of failing to make ends meet, the disruption of being uprooted from Pune and Kolhapur and moving to Mumbai, and of establishing herself in a male-dominated industry. By 1948, she had recorded the hugely successful *Aayega aanevala* for *Mahal* under the direction of Khemchand Prakash, and in the ‘50s, she was recording prolifically for leading music directors in the industry. Perhaps, it was her untiring pursuit of perfection and phenomenal au-



EXPRESS ARCHIVE

ral observation that helped her learn in whatever time was available to her for *taaleem*. What else can explain the crystal-clear agility of her *taans* in some songs (for instance, at 0.44 seconds in the Meerabai *pada*, *Ramaiyaa bin neend na aave*, composed by her brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar), the perfect enunciation of raga-specific phrases in others (*Eri jaane na doongi* for the film *Chitralekha*, 1964), the impeccable *lehjaa* (utterance) that she brought to each of the forms she rendered and to the dozens of languages in which she recorded songs. This gave her the ability to sing any form — a classical *bandish*, a folk song from any part of the country, a *thumri*, a *ghazal*, a *kirtan* or a *bhajan* — without actually being trained as a specialist in any one of these. Apart from being a one-of-a-kind singer, surely she must have been a listener like no

ONCE UPON A SONG

Lata Mangeshkar had the ability to sing any form — a classical *bandish*, a folk song from any part of the country, a *thumri*, a *ghazal*, a *kirtan* or a *bhajan* — without actually being trained as a specialist in any one of these

other too! That ability to listen, observe and store away the memory of sounds, music, pronunciations, exclamations used in diverse song forms, languages and dialects probably equipped her with a reference library that she must have drawn upon when required. This should ideally be one of the many lessons we can take from her life and work. Her unmatched ability to emoté is amply illustrated in her songs. But I once had the privilege of hearing a rare recording of an extract from the *Sundarkand* in *Tulsi Ramayan*, sung by Lataji and composed by Pt Raghunath Seth, possibly for the Films Division of India, if my memory serves me correctly. My father, the late Skand Gupta, who learnt the flute from Seth *sahab* in Allahabad, was an ardent admirer of his work as a composer. I remember Seth *sahab* bringing over a copy of the record-



ON THE SAME PAGE

(From left) Liora Itzhak (Israel); Annette Philip (the US); Pauline Laravoire and Meghdut Roy Chowdhury (France-India); Sohana Ahmed (Bangladesh); Sara Azad Khan (Pakistan)

Here We Come As One

Followers from around the world remember Lata Mangeshkar as their life’s soundtrack and cassette *guru*

ANNETTE PHILIP

BOSTON, USA As the founder-artistic director of Berklee Indian Ensemble, Annette Philip doesn’t carry the weight of expectation lightly. She has contemporised Mangeshkar’s renditions for a global audience. With her students, she is currently researching Mangeshkar’s repertoire and creating playlists for each decade. That might be followed by select reinterpretations of the originals. One such reinterpretation, *Jiya jale*, performed in 2014, is till date the most visited video with over seventy million views. This encouraged Philip to attempt a second reinterpretation of another gem, *Aapki nazron ne samjha* in 2017, with Shreya Ghoshal. The video got them over seven million views. Philip finds in Mangeshkar a master storyteller. “Every time she performed, it was as if she was asking herself, ‘who am I as a narrator? Her collaboration with AR Rahman is the biggest example of her ever-evolving self. She is not just the definitive voice of India, she is the soundtrack of our lives.”

PAULINE LARAVOIRE

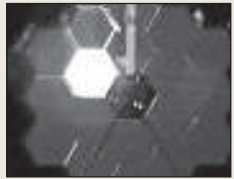
PARIS-KOLKATA, FRANCE-INDIA Before 2018, Parisienne Pauline Laravoire had no idea of who Mangeshkar was. That changed when the 28-year-old met her now husband, Meghdut Roy Chowdhury, and moved to Kolkata in 2020. The lockdown allowed the newlywed couple to practise music, and soon she took to Lataji’s Bengali numbers. They would rehearse a song and put the final cut on Instagram. That’s how Indo-French Singing Sundays came about. She sang two numbers, *Aaj mon cheyeche ami haariye*, *jaabo* and *Ajeb dastaan haiyeh*, which gathered more than nine lakh views. “But what mattered was the incredible lightness of being I felt and its uplifting melody. My Parisian friends, too, want more Lata numbers now. We need to internationalise her.”

SOHANA AHMED

DHAKA, BANGLADESH Growing up on Mangeshkar’s Bangla hits, Sohana Ahmed was inspired enough to sign

up for the PhD course in Hindustani classical music at the University of Delhi and specialise in the Indore *gharana*. “I never feel that Lataji was a non-Bengali artiste, so effortless was she. You could hear her *Nijhumo sondhyaye pantho pakhira* in the remotest tea shop in villages here.” Something Ahmed, 53, takes away from the legend is the ability to treat both classical and popular genres as worthy of *sadhana* and every rehearsal as *riyaz*. “I know how difficult it is to recreate the complex layers that sound mellifluous. She never missed the slightest note and was so confident,” she says. SARA AZAD KHAN LAHORE, PAKISTAN She listens to Mangeshkar’s songs once every eight hours in between her *riyaz*. Singing from the age of four, but with no formal *taaleem*, the sari-clad Mangeshkar became Sara Azad Khan’s inspiration. Her first favourite was *Didi tera dewar deewana*, a song that catapulted Khan to the finals of the music talent show *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Challenge* in 2009. However, the 27-year-old’s crowning glory came when she was allowed to sing *Rang dil ki dhadkan bhi laati* on Pakistan national television despite an official ban on Indian content. “Today, half of my seven million fans on YouTube are Indian. How do you explain this borderless space? It is only because of Lataji’s purity and rootedness.”

TOPOF THE WORLD



This image shows a 'selfie' taken by telescope. AP

USA NASA's new space telescope sees 1st starlight

Cape Canaveral: NASA's new space telescope has captured its first starlight and even taken a selfie of its giant, gold mirror. All 18 segments of the primary mirror on the James Webb Space Telescope seem to be working properly 1 1/2 months into the mission, officials said on Friday. The telescope's first target was a bright star 258 light-years away in the constellation Ursa Major. "That was just a real wow moment," said Marshall Perrin of the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore. Over the next few months, the hexagonal mirror segments will be aligned and focused as one, allowing science observations to begin by the end of June. AP

UAE Afghan refugees in protest for third day

Dubai: Afghan refugees held in the United Arab Emirates for months since fleeing Afghanistan last year protested for a third day on Friday, calling for resettlement in the US. The demonstrations by hundreds of Afghans began on Wednesday at the centre where they are being housed. A US State Department spokesperson confirmed several Afghans had taken part in peaceful demonstrations and that US government officials had met with Afghans this week to discuss their concerns with the resettlement process. REUTERS

SYRIA Artillery fire kills six, including two children

Beirut: Six people from the same family, including two children, were killed in a Syrian military artillery strike on a rebel-held village in northwest Syria on Saturday, opposition activists said. Residents said the family was outside their house enjoying sunny weather and drinking tea when the shell struck. Low-flying reconnaissance aircraft circled the area, Maarat al-Naasan village in Idlib province, after the strike. The opposition's Syrian Civil Defence group, also known as the White Helmets, said the two children were aged three and seven. AP

INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY REPORT

US: India faces very significant challenges, mainly from China

LALIT K JHA WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 12

INDIA FACES "very significant challenges", in particular from China and its behaviour in the Line of Actual Control, the White House has said, as it unveiled the Biden administration's first region-specific report on the strategic Indo-Pacific. The report on US's Indo-Pacific Strategy, released on Friday, outlines President Joe Biden's vision to firmly anchor the country's position in the Indo-Pacific, strengthen the region and support India's rise and regional leadership.

"We will continue to build a strategic partnership in which the US and India work together and through regional groupings to promote stability in South Asia; collaborate in new domains such as health, space, and cyberspace; and contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific," the White House said.

"We recognise that India is a like-minded partner and leader in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, active in and connected to Southeast Asia, a driving force of the Quad and other regional fora, and an engine for regional growth and development," the White House statement added.

At a White House background briefing, a senior administration official pointed out that India was facing "significant challenges". "China's behaviour on the Line of Actual Control has

EXPLAINED Key elements of report

FIRST, THE goal is to strengthen the US role in the region, which it considers very important. Second, the US seek to build the collective capacity to rise to 21st century challenges and seize opportunities, whether that has to do with climate, with PRC behaviour, or preparing for the next pandemic and recovering from the current one.

had a galvanising impact on India. From our standpoint, we see tremendous opportunities in working with another democracy to advance critical issues in the region," the official said.

China, the report said, is combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological might as it pursues a sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific.

"There is tremendous appreciation of the importance and the challenges of strengthening the engagement with India and a recognition that India is a critical strategic partner, and a desire to continue building on the very good work of previous administrations to significantly broaden and deepen that relationship," the official said. PTI



VOLCANIC STORM

A volcanic thunderstorm over Mt. Etna in Sicily, Italy, generates volcanic lightning during an eruption on Friday. A volcano expert said such volcanic storms are rare but can happen in particularly violent eruptions or with volcanoes located near the sea. AP

Lanka resumes on-arrival visa for tourists, not from Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO, FEBRUARY 12

SRI LANKA has announced resumption of visa on-arrival facility for international tourists, except travellers from 10 countries including Pakistan and Nepal. The on arrival visa facility for

foreign tourists was on hold since the pandemic broke out in the country in 2020.

The move is expected to give a much-needed boost to the island nation's tourism industry, a major forex earner, which has been badly hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Issuance of on arrival electronic travel authorisation (ETA) for tourists at the port of entry to Sri Lanka has been activated from 8 February 2022. This is to facilitate the tourists who experience difficulties when obtaining the online ETA due to the time constraints of arranging their journey to Sri Lanka, according to a recent government statement.

Biden warns Putin of 'severe' costs if Russia invades Ukraine

US state department orders many of its diplomats to leave Kyiv

THE NEW YORK TIMES FEBRUARY 12

PRESIDENT BIDEN warned President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia in a one-hour phone call Saturday that invading Ukraine would lead to "swift and severe" costs.

The call came amid heightened tensions, and just hours after the State Department ordered all but a "core team" of its diplomats and employees to leave the American Embassy in Kyiv over fears that Moscow would soon mount a major assault.

According to a White House statement, Biden was clear in the phone call that while the United States remained prepared to engage in diplomacy, in coordination with allies, it was also prepared for other scenarios.

The Russian government was expected to present its take on the call soon.

Reflecting the urgent concern in Washington over Russia's growing military buildup surrounding its smaller neighbor, the Pentagon said it would temporarily pull 160 American military trainers out of the country, where they had been working with Ukrainian troops near the Polish border.

Even as Biden and Putin spoke by telephone — and after calls earlier Saturday between the top US and Russian diplomats and between the countries' defense secretaries — the path to a diplomatic resolution to the standoff appeared to be narrowing, with growing numbers of Russian and Russian-backed forces massing around Ukraine on three sides.



Several thousand Ukrainians rallied in Kyiv on Saturday to show unity amid fears of a Russian invasion. Reuters

US intelligence officials had thought Putin was prepared to wait until the end of the Winter Olympics in Beijing before possibly ordering an offensive, to avoid antagonizing President Xi Jinping of China, a critical ally. But in recent days, they say, the timeline began moving up, an acceleration that Biden administration officials began publicly acknowledging on Friday.

"We continue to see signs of Russian escalation, including new forces arriving at the Ukrainian border," Jake Sullivan, the president's national security adviser, told reporters on Friday, adding that an invasion could begin "during the Olympics," which are scheduled to end on Feb. 20.

US officials do not know whether Putin has decided to invade, Sullivan insisted. "We are ready either way," he said. "Whatever happens next, the West is more united than it has been in years."

The US has picked up intelligence that Russia is discussing next Wednesday as the target date for the start of military action, officials said, acknowledging the possibility that mentioning a particular date could be part of a Russian disinformation effort.

The Ukrainian government urged calm, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying that he had not seen intelligence indicating an imminent Russian attack, and that "too much information" about a possible offensive

was sowing unnecessary fear.

The United States and countries including Britain, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Latvia and the Netherlands have issued increasingly urgent calls for their citizens to leave Ukraine. On Saturday, KLM, the main Dutch airline, announced that it will stop flying to Ukraine, citing the security situation.

Russia has accused Western countries of spreading misinformation about its intentions. On Saturday, its Foreign Ministry said it was pulling some of its diplomatic personnel out of Ukraine because it was "drawing the conclusion that our American and British colleagues seem to know about certain military actions."

UPROAR IN AFGHANISTAN

Protests against US order to give \$3.5 bn from frozen Afghan assets to 9/11 victims

KATHY GANNON KABUL, FEBRUARY 12

DEMONSTRATORS IN Afghanistan's capital Saturday condemned President Joe Biden's order freeing up \$3.5 billion in Afghan assets held in the US for families of America's 9/11 victims — saying the money belongs to Afghans.

Protesters who gathered outside Kabul's grand Eid Gah mosque asked America for financial compensation for the tens of thousands of Afghans killed during the last 20 years of war in Afghanistan.

Torek Farhadi, a financial adviser to Afghanistan's former US-backed government, questioned the UN managing Afghan Central Bank reserves. He said those funds are not meant for humanitarian aid but "to back up the country's currency, help in monetary policy and manage the country's balance of payment." He also questioned the legality of Biden's order.

Afghanistan has about \$9 billion in assets overseas, including the \$7 billion in the United States. The rest is mostly in Germany, the United Arab Emirates and Switzerland. AP

Boris Johnson contacted by police over Covid parties

ASSOCIATED PRESS' LONDON, FEBRUARY 12

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson has received a questionnaire from London's Metropolitan Police as part of the investigation into parties in Downing Street during Covid lockdowns, his office said Saturday.

If he is found to have broken his government's own Covid rules, the embattled prime minister could be fined and will face even more pressure to stand down from fellow lawmakers already furious at his proximity to the "partygate" affair.

A growing number of lawmakers from his own party are calling for his ouster, and even former leaders have lined up to warn him against attempting to cling to power if he is found to have broken rules.

Former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith said it would be "very tough" to hang on if the police find that Johnson broke the law, while former Prime Minister John Major accused Johnson and his government of treating the truth as optional and "shredding" the U.K.'s global reputation.

The prime minister's office confirmed in a statement that he had been contacted by police. It comes with tensions boiling in Ukraine, and U.K. nationals warned to evacuate the country over the possibility of a Russian invasion.

Johnson has denied any wrongdoing, but he is alleged to have been at up to six of the 12 events in his 10 Downing St. office and other government buildings that are being investigated by the police.

Taliban free detained UNHCR staff, 2 journalists

Kabul: The Taliban released two foreign journalists working with the UN refugee agency and several of the aid organisation's Afghan staff on Friday, UNHCR said, hours after news broke about their detentions in Kabul.

The announcement followed a tweet by the Taliban-appointed deputy minister of culture and information, Zabiullah Mujahid, who said they were detained because they didn't have documents that properly identified them as UNHCR. Mujahid said they were freed after their identities were confirmed.

"We are relieved to confirm the release in Kabul of the two journalists on assignment with UNHCR, and the Afghan nationals working with them," the Geneva-based organization said in a brief two-sentence statement. "We are grateful to all who expressed concern and offered help. We remain committed to the people of Afghanistan." AP

A LETTER CHARLES DICKENS WROTE IN HIS MYSTIFYING STYLE OF SHORTHAND HAD GONE UNREAD FOR OVER A CENTURY, COMPUTER DECODES IT

Decoding Dickens's secret notes to himself, one symbol at a time

JENNY GROSS LONDON, FEBRUARY 12

FOR MORE than a century, Charles Dickens scholars have tried, without much success, to decipher a one-page letter written by the author in symbols, dots and scribbles.

The letter sat for decades, unread, in a vault in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York, until recent months, when two Americans with backgrounds in computer science were able to make substantial headway in decoding the letter. They were motivated by a challenge from the University of Leicester, which posted a copy of it online and

promised 300 British pounds, or \$406, to the person who could make the most sense of it.

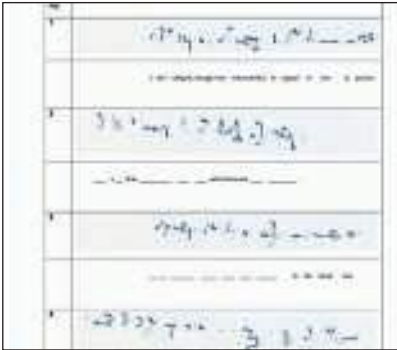
The winner of the competition, Shane Baggs, a computer technical support specialist from San Jose, California, had never read a Dickens novel before. He transcribed more symbols than any other of the 1,000 people who entered — helping to crack a 163-year-old mystery about one of the world's most celebrated authors.

"After getting mostly C grades in literature, I never dreamed anything I'd ever do would be of interest to Dickens scholars!" Baggs said. Ken Cox, a 20-year-old cognitive science student at the University of

Virginia, came in second place.

Baggs, who spent about six months working on the text, said he first heard about the competition through a group on Reddit dedicated to cracking codes and finding hidden messages. The Dickens competition caught his eye because the puzzles involving shorthand had stayed unsolved the longest, he said.

Baggs participated in three free "deciphering" workshops on Zoom, hosted by Claire Wood, a lecturer of Victorian literature at the University of Leicester, and Hugo Bowles, who teaches forensic linguistics at the University of Foggia in Italy. The sessions focused on the obsolete form of



shorthand that Dickens learned when he was 16 from a manual called "Brachygraphy," written by an 18th-century shorthand writer, Thomas Gurney.

Early in his career, Dickens was a court reporter and a parliamentary reporter, where having a system for quick note-taking came in handy. Over time, the symbols and

abbreviations he used evolved so that his personal shorthand became unintelligible to outsiders. (Dickens himself referred to it as "that savage stenographic mystery" in his most autobiographical novel, "David Copperfield.")

Dickens' letter, written in 1859, has been held at the Morgan Library since at least 1913. It was likely a copy that Dickens made for himself based on the full-length version written to John Thaddeus Delane, then the editor of *The Times of London*. The full-length version is lost, said Bowles, one of the organizers of the competition and the author of "Dickens and the Stenographic Mind."

He said that he had tried to

decipher the texts for years, but made "very little progress." "I could be sure of maybe about 10 of the symbols in the letter," he said. Wood said previous generations didn't have access to the type of teamwork that crowd-sourcing technology enabled.

She said that about two-thirds of the people who attended the Zoom study sessions were Dickens fans, and one-third were computer experts. The combination of people coming from literary backgrounds and computer science backgrounds helped break new ground.

"Some stuff that is really obvious to the Dickensians isn't obvious to the cryptographers and maybe

vice versa," Wood said. The Dickens fans recognized letters like "H.W.," which stood for "Household Words," the name of a popular periodical that Dickens owned and edited. In another instance, Baggs figured out that a character that looked like the "@" symbol, which many decoders had thought meant "at," actually referred to Dickens' journal "All the Year Round."

The work of Baggs, Cox and other transcribers helped experts decipher 70% of the meaning of Dickens's text, Bowles said. Over the next year, organizers will solicit help from members of the public with decoding the rest of the letter and other Dickens texts, he said. NYT

BRIEFLY

Kiwis crush India W by 62 runs

Queenstown: Skipper Mithali Raj's half-century went in vain as Indian batting flopped once again with the visitors losing the first WODI against New Zealand by 62 runs here on Saturday. Opting to bowl, New Zealand rode on Suzie Bates century (106 off 111 balls) to score 275 and India were all-out in the last over for 213 in 49.4 overs and never for once looked like being in the chase. The 39-year-old Mithali, playing her 221st ODI, continued her dream form in the format — seven fifties in the last 11 innings in ODIs — to keep India in the hunt with a 73-ball 59 (6x4). Mithali also joined Charlotte Edwards in making 1,000 runs against four different teams — Australia, England, Sri Lanka and New Zealand — in ODI cricket. **PTI**

BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand 275 (Bates 106, Satterthwaite 63) beat India 213 (Raj 59, Bhatia 41, Jess Kerr 4-35) by 62 runs

Russian skater's dope case ruling on Monday

Beijing: The Russian coach of the 15-year-old figure skater embroiled in an Olympic doping scandal broke her silence to defend Kamila Valieva on Saturday, while the sport's highest court said it would hold a hearing on Valieva's Winter Games future on Sunday. Coach Eteri Tutberidze said she was certain Valieva was "clean and innocent" in an interview with Russian state television after hugging her figure-skating prodigy, who trained again at the rink next to the Capital Indoor Stadium on Saturday. Valieva's future at the Winter Games will be decided by Monday afternoon Beijing time, after a hearing by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Sunday. CAS said in a statement on Saturday.

Saketh, Ramkumar win doubles title

Bengaluru: India's Saketh Myneni and Ramkumar Ramanathan won the doubles title of the Bengaluru Open ATP Challenger after dominating their French rivals Hugo Grenier and Alexandre Muller in the final here on Saturday. Banking on the support of the local crowd, the Indian pair won 6-3 6-2 at the KSLTA Stadium. This was Saketh's ninth doubles title at Challengers while Ramkumar registered his third victory in as many weeks. **PTI**

Cindrella story at footwear shop

Once hampered by financial constraints in the family, Abhinav Manohar's big hitting lands him a Gujarat Titans deal worth Rs 2.6 cr

PRATYUSHRAJ
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

November 16, 2021 turned out to be a turning point in Abhinav Manohar Sadarangani's career. Making his debut for Karnataka, the right-hand batsman smoked a 49-ball 70 - including two fours and six sixes - against Saurashtra in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament.

Abhinav's childhood coach Irfan Sait feels that knock changed the youngster's life. "I started receiving endless calls from several IPL teams, enquiring about him, asking for his batting videos. There were questions such as how he is built and how big a six he can hit. Is he a middle-order batsman or a top-order one," recalls Irfan. Karnataka lost the Syed Mushtaq Ali final, courtesy a last-ball six by Tamil Nadu's Shahrukh Khan, who was picked by Punjab Kings for a whopping Rs 9 crore in Saturday's auction. Manohar left his mark on the tournament with 162 runs in four innings at a strike rate of 150. His performance was rewarded when he was called for selection trials of at least half a dozen franchises.

The right-hand batsman was bought by Gujarat Titans for a 'mic-drop' deal of Rs 2.6 crore, 13 times more than his base price. Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals started the bidding. The contest became fiercer, with Gujarat Titans entering the fray when it crossed Rs 1 crore mark. Delhi Capitals eventually opted out, and Gujarat piped Kolkata to sign the rookie.

Irfan is not surprised that his ward has got such an eye-catching deal. "Those who follow the Karnataka Premier League will tell you how good a batsman and fielder he is. This is a new franchise, and I hope he gets a handful of matches to showcase his six-hitting ability."

Irfan vividly remembers a six-year-old kid Manohar coming to his academy 20 years ago. The kid who was initially scared to face the ball is now known as a hard-hitting batsman.

"He was never into cricket. He was scared of facing the bowlers when he first came to my academy. His father (Manohar Sadarangani) and I are very good friends. They used to have a footwear shop, and I was running a clothing shop on Commercial Street in Bengaluru. His father asked me once to enrol him in my academy. I was a bit reluctant because he was never interested in cricket. I said I will give it a shot," says Irfan.

Manohar and his first cousin Sharanya Sadarangani started playing cricket at the academy. Slowly, Abhinav started to take in-



Abhinav Manohar with Manish Pandey before his debut game for Karnataka.

He was never into cricket. He was scared of facing the bowlers when he first came to my academy. His father and I are very good friends. They used to have a footwear shop.

-IRFAN SAIT
MANOHAR'S CHILDHOOD COACH

terest, but the passion was lacking. "It became a routine for him. After school, his father would drop him off, and then pick him up in the evening. There was nothing special back then," says the 60-year-old coach.

It all changed in 2006. "Our academy played a practice match against the Hyderabad state U-14 team. A ball hit him (Manohar) in the forehead (the scar is still there), he was bleeding. We took him to the hospital; he got a couple of stitches. Deep down in my heart, I was sure he was never coming back. The next day, he was there, and scored a brilliant century. If you ask me, that was the turning point in his cricketing career," says Irfan.

Manohar's sister Sharanya went to England after playing age-group cricket for Karnataka and currently turns out for the German national women's cricket team. However, Abhinav decided to stay; he has

been a consistent performer through the age groups. He faced financial duress when his father had to close his footwear shop, and then a couple of more businesses due to financial loss.

"They went through really tough times. For a teenager, it wasn't easy to endure. However, all of his aggression was reflected in his batting. He started training three times a day. Suddenly a kid, for whom cricket was just a hobby, took it as a passion," narrates Irfan.

Manohar, a consistent performer at the junior level, had failed to make it to Karnataka's side, which has the likes of KL Rahul, Mayank Agarwal, Karun Nair and Manish Pandey.

"He has scored runs in U-14, U-16, U-19 and U-23 levels, but was never able to break into Karnataka senior team. It was not his fault; you look at Karnataka's batting lineup, it is stacked. But I am glad that when he got the opportunity, he grabbed it with both hands," says the coach.

"He was among the top five run-getters in the state league. Within a month, he had made his Karnataka senior team debut, and now this IPL contract. What else can a coach ask for!" he says.

"Today was an off day in our academy; we were glued to the TV for the auction. The day was not wasted at all."

Other windfall stories

BABY AB

South Africa's U-19 World Cup star DEWALD BREVIS, known as 'Baby AB' for his batting style's resemblance to AB de Villiers', was bought by Mumbai Indians for Rs 3 crore.

There is an uncanny similarity in their shot-making. Just like his childhood hero, Brevis can play the lap shot, scoop, switch hit, ramp and reverse sweep. He was the leading run-scorer in the recent U-19 World Cup with 506 runs (a tournament record) & hit 18 sixes (another record).

With de Villiers as his hero Brevis was eager to join RCB in the auction, but will be playing for Mumbai Indians.

"I support RCB because AB and Virat play there," Brevis had told the paper. "In our household, IPL is a huge thing; we hardly miss any games. The biggest conflict is between my brother and me; he is a huge MS Dhoni fan and a CSK supporter through and through," said Brevis.



Cup in 2018 and was impressive with his all-round performance at the 2018 U-19 World Cup. His first Indian Premier League stint was with Delhi Capitals who picked him up for Rs 55 lakh for the 2018 edition. Abhishek would then be traded to Sunrisers Hyderabad and has played in the lower-batting order for the team apart from donning the left-arm spinner's role. After former skipper David Warner was dropped last season, he got the opportunity to open the batting and also claimed two wickets in an over against Punjab Kings. Abhishek will also lead the Punjab Ranji team this season.



STEADY PROGRESS

HARPREET BRAR, the son of former Punjab Police head constable Mohinder Singh, was bought by Punjab Kings for Rs 3.80 crore after a bidding war with Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Last season, he was a consistent performer for the Punjab franchise and the team managed to get the left-arm spinner back at Saturday's auction. He gave trials for then Kings XI Punjab three times before getting picked up by the franchise for 2019 for Rs 20 lakh. Brar played two matches in 2019 and only one in 2020.

In 2021, Brar managed the scalps of Virat Kohli, Glen Maxwell and AB de Villiers, and has been with the Indian team as a net bowler for the ongoing West Indies series.

PRATYUSHRAJ AND NITIN SHARMA

BRIDGE

Dealer: South Vulnerable East/West

NORTH		SOUTH	
♠ Q84		♠ K103	
♥ 109652		♥ QJ87	
♦ K32		♦ A8	
♣ A7		♣ KJ42	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1S♠	dbl	pass	1C♣
pass	3H♥	pass	2H♥
pass	pass	pass	4H♥

South gets to 4H after a 1S overall by West and a Negative Double by North. It's hands like this one that make you realize that the opponents' bidding isn't always a pain. On this hand their bidding gives you a big clue about the winning line. West leads the queen of diamonds. South wins and leads the queen of hearts, won by West with the ace. West continues with the ten of diamonds and you win in dummy. Another heart lead goes to East's king, West following. East leads a diamond and South ruffs. One possible line is to play a club to the ace and finesse the jack. This would give you a place to get rid of a spade. Do you see anything better?

The West Hand: S-AJ765H-A4D-QJ104C-109
The East Hand: S-92H-K3D-9765C-Q8653

One thing is reasonably clear. You are not sure where the queen of clubs is. While not 100% sure about the jack of spades, you have a really strong insight that it's with West. Normal play in spades is to lead to the queen and then finesse the ten. You know this is not a good idea given the bidding. On the assumption that West has the jack of spades, is there a way to get two spade tricks for sure?

There is a line that will take advantage of what you learned in the bidding. Play the ace and king of clubs and ruff a club in dummy. Perhaps the queen will come down. It doesn't, but this line does eliminate all of West's clubs and it puts you in the dummy. Lead dummy's little spade to your king, giving up, momentarily, on the spade finesse. You will get that option back in just a second.

West takes the ace of spades and returns a spade. If you still think West has the jack of spades you will finesse this lead to your ten, and that works. Making 4H because of a good line, but more so by being informed about the spade suit by West's bidding.

Dealer: South Vulnerable North/South

NORTH		WEST	
♠ AQJ10		♠ 652	
♥ 5		♥ AKJ763	
♦ KJ875		♦ 109	
♣ K1043		♣ 72	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	4S♠	pass	2S♠
pass			pass

West led the king of hearts and East played the two, South the four. What now?

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.

Although prepared for _____, I preferred that it be postponed - Churchill (9)

FIARR

EGITDM

MPSOT

ELLSMY

SOLUTION: FIARR STOMP, MIPCECT, SMILETY, LONDON. Although prepared for **LONDON**, I preferred that it be postponed - Churchill (9)

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2360

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Heeded, lent an ear? (8)
- Grew less or diminished? (6)
- Carbonaceous material (8)
- Take on (6)
- Actress Merman (5)
- Elongates, extends or draws out (9)
- State of equilibrium (6)
- Pillage or loot (7)
- Marauders (7)
- Imprison (4,2)
- Addition (9)
- Gangsters (s.l.) (5)
- Young cow (6)
- That man from capital of France? (8)
- Predatory fishes (6)
- Affect with paralysis (8)

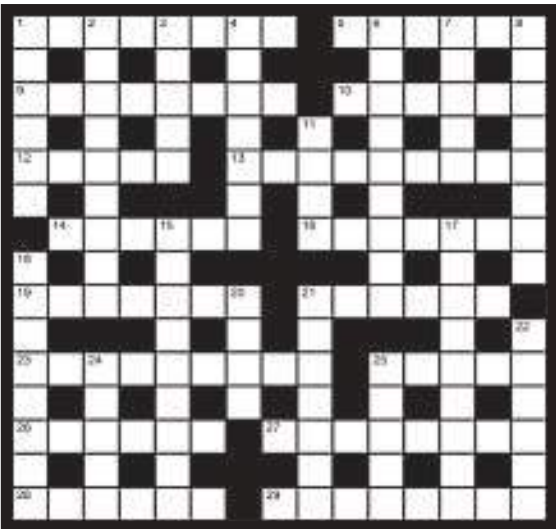
DOWN

- ___ up: Imprisoned (6)
- Pasta dish (9)
- Do outstandingly (5)
- Makes possible or easy (7)
- Indecision (9)
- Intense (5)
- Memento (8)
- Growl (4)
- "Tortilla Flat" author (9)
- Hostility (9)
- Knee-length trousers (8)
- Do not sink? (4)
- Language of Karnataka (7)
- Benefits derived from wealth (6)
- Coniferous evergreen forest (5)
- Seaport in NW Israel (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Talk of getting hit back with a weapon (8)
- Jack gets in cars - they're found on the Norwegian coast (6)
- Give the wrong form to emphasis (8)
- Soon my return will be known by another name (6)
- Made an animal noise - part of a violinello wedding march! (5)
- Can one kill fish only in this? (4,5)
- 100 left replenished and fuelled the fire? (6)
- One with three lines of equipment to fit into vehicle (7)
- Half the city raves after them, think the despots! (7)
- Two consecutive wins and no opponent either to say "cheerio" (3,3)
- Average quantity is most important



- Japanese Commander had no love in the morning to get stuck into things (2,3)
- One "B. Wells" is a member of the Iroquois confederacy (6)
- Get ruffled as daughter is very taken by scoundrel (8)
- The girl comes at last with the milky drink (6)
- Moved quickly, not being suited (8)

DOWN

- Small point of personal imperfection (6)
- Got up to do the flowers with scented stuff (4-5)
- Sucker for publicity surrounding hip establishment (5)
- Garment paid for on receipt in Massachusetts (4,3)
- Nude jiber arranged participant for nuptials (4,5)
- Donor translated musical piece (5)
- Does mime flop in aspe? (8)
- Strip final item from list of candidates (4)
- Gold sovereign? (4,5)
- Jerky barge a Viking split in Iceland (9)
- How to tell the rooster to shut up and shut off (8)
- Old King, cunning, endlessly

- hoarding gold (4)
- Live Dumbo acquires porno rating in the middle (7)
- Wandered but didn't start, having moved at an easy pace (6)
- Choler he detected in Nelson's blood (5)
- It's funny, you being empty inside (5)

SOLUTIONS TO 2359

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Rule of thumb, 7 Sea, 9 Lists, 10 Aggregate, 11 Tortochille, 12 Zebra, 13 On paper, 15 Tuba, 18 Oid, 20 Babbage, 23 Water, 24 Petruccio, 26 Irritated, 27 Castle, 28 Guy, 29 Industrious. **Down:** 1 Relation, 2 Last hope, 3 Onset, 4 Teacher, 5 Unguent, 6 Beelzebub, 7 Shabby, 8 Operas, 14 Pavarotti, 16 Machismo, 17 Remodels, 19 Deputed, 20 Bettides, 21 Owning, 22 Sturdy, 25 Ulcer. **CRYPTIC CLUES Across:** 1 Filing clerk, 7 Sals, 9 Taser, 10 Shiftless, 11 Think tank, 12 Moves, 13 Trussed, 15 Yank, 18 Puma, 20 Plumber, 23 Trash, 24 King Midas, 26 Wahroonga, 27 Claud, 28 Dim, 29 Electronics. **Down:** 1 Fitt state, 2 Luscious, 3 Norsk, 4 Custard, 5 Eriskey, 6 Kathmandu, 7 Steeve, 8 Basset, 14 South pole, 16 Abu Dhabi, 17 Presides, 19 Askance, 20 Pendant, 21 Stowed, 22 Sachem, 25 Macho.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday February 13

The coming year is one of raised emotional hopes, and personal opportunity. The main word of advice is not to make demands on partners that they can never fulfil.

Monday February 14

You'll be juggling commitments and you may be a little more emotional than usual. You'll also be putting your ideas forward with confidence.

Tuesday February 15

You'll probably be planning decorations or repairs at home, or at least a family party. Yet, before you can enjoy yourself, you must clear the air and resolve a lingering disagreement.

Wednesday February 16

You have one last chance to have a final attempt at moving one step closer to achieving a life-long goal. Don't waste it.

Thursday February 17

You'll be impatient to make the most of your skills and to complete overdue projects. However, you can't complain if partners misunderstand you.

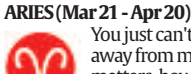
Friday February 18

There could be a lot of goodwill coming your way from people who have strong, romantic feelings. Keep your feet firmly on the ground and generate as much sweetness and light as you can.

Saturday February 19

You may be a little sensitive early on, but you'll be in an ideal position to offer loved ones the support they now require. A rival at work may soon concede defeat.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD



ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You just can't get away from monetary matters, however hard you try. Cost still seems to be the determining factor, and this is maybe why you are so aware of the need to increase your income. Those of you in the housing market, or making major domestic purchases, are on strong ground.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Please make a quick start at work, getting in there before colleagues and rivals can make their move. However, it may be that the best planetary aspects will assist partners, and that you will therefore have to link up with others in order for your interests to be protected.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You certainly have a great deal on your mind. In fact, the liveliest part of the day may take place when you're asleep. If you have any strange, uncomfortable feelings, it could be because your dream life is particularly active at the moment. You'll be happier once a family mystery is resolved.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Friendly stars are coming your way, and this is a useful moment to team up with other people in a new venture. It is also a perfect period for giving yourself over to social pleasure and putting aside the stresses of the 'real' world. Hopefully you'll find someone who shares your fantasy.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

A sensational alignment between the Sun and Mercury will endow you with sheer brilliance, so don't be slow to bring your ideas forward. However, partners will be ready with their awkward questions. The golden rule is therefore not to talk about things you don't know anything about.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Legal matters seem to be looming and, if at all possible, you should attempt to find a quick solution. Also, if you still have travel plans to arrange, do so as soon as you can. And, if there's a mystery to solve, go back as far into the past as you can to find the answer.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Curiously enough, if you wish to make the right financial decisions, the answer may lie in a dream, perhaps in a waking day-dream. If an emotional tie is becoming too intense, try to keep your feet on the ground. Also, if a partner is unable to give you the support you require, you may need to rely on yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

It's a positive week, so partnership questions need to be pursued as a matter of urgency, especially if there has been any bad feeling lately. It is domestic and family ties which are most important, although you may be perplexed by a colleague's changing ideas.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

The most important part of your life is work, which means that even relationships actually need to be worked at. Domestic chores should also be tackled, and if you get ahead of yourself now, you'll have more spare time later. Extravagant stars are lingering in the background.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Personal and professional planets are finely balanced, which is undoubtedly good news. Within your family, children and younger relations should be given first place. You should also try to be more youthful and young at heart. If artistic ventures are on the go, you should do well.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There have been one or two threats to your stability recently, but these seem to be more imaginary than real. The way to find your feet is to seek support from those who know you best, the people you grew up with. Make sure that you offer partners support when they need it.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

It is unlikely that you'll be happy staying in one place, and there is much to be said for taking a few short trips. Emotional relationships require extra attention, and partners shouldn't be taken for granted, otherwise you may find that you lose out.

₹51.75 cr were expended on just six capped wicket-keepers, that is an average of Rs 8.625 crore per player. The highest earner of the day too was a wicket-keeper batsman, Ishan Kishan, while even the lowest earner among them, Dinesh Karthik, fetched Rs 5.5 crore

₹82.3 cr shelled out for 15 Indian seamers, both capped and uncapped. Deepak Chahar bagged the maximum (₹14 cr) while four others too joined him in the ₹10 crore-plus bracket

₹11.05 cr were spent on overseas spinners, as only two of them were purchased—Sri Lanka's Wanindu Hasaranga and Afghanistan's Noor Ahmed. A slew of them such as Adam Zampa, Imran Tahir, Adil Rashid, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Mohammad Nabi, Sandeep Lamichhane went unsold

Virat Kohli needs confidence? What are you saying? Not hitting hundreds is different but in South Africa, he just made two fifties in three matches. I don't see anything wrong with his game. The team management is not at all worried."

ROHIT SHARMA, INDIA CAPTAIN, ON QUESTIONS OVER KOHLI'S FORM

Multi-tasking multi-millionaires

Young utility cricketers in demand with teams keen on steady nucleus at reset IPL auction

SANDIP G
FEBRUARY 12

IN THE middle of an intense bidding tussle for leg-spinning all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga, Indian Premier League auctioneer Hugh Edmeades collapsed onto the floor, leaving the audience in chilly silence. Shortly, after news arrived that Edmeades was safe and had just suffered a bout of low blood pressure, the franchise representatives parted for lunch. After the short break, Royal Challengers Bangalore got the Lankan, who was their mid-season replacement last year, for Rs 10.75 crore.

The debilitating moment of the day would be the fall of Edmeades, while the most surprising of purchases would be that of Hasaranga. The amount he elicited was unprecedented, though he's a perfect purchase from the perspective of franchises.

The two most sought-after entities in IPL auctions are big hitters and leg-spinners. Hasaranga is both — has a strike rate of 136 with the bat and an economy rate of 6.44 and average of 15 with the ball. He is touted as an all-format player, though he has been at his most lethal in the shorter versions. He could be to RCB what Sunil Narine has been to KKR — a wily bowler and strong hitter, with a lethal googly

Men of his ilk are IPL gold. It explains why more proven, even India spinners, were purchased for lower amounts. Yuzvendra Chahal, for instance, was gobbled up for Rs 6.5 crore; Rahul Chahar fetched Rs 5.25 crore; Ravichandran Ashwin Rs 5 crore; Kuldeep Yadav Rs 2 crore.

Adil Rashid, Imran Tahir and Adam Zampa, far more experienced than Hasaranga, went unsold. It's another evolutionary leap in the IPL — multi-utility cricketers, even if they be bits-and-pieces ones, are more valued than those with singular, specialised skills. Steve Smith, for example, didn't interest any buyer.

Least surprisingly, most of the top earners, those that crossed Rs 10 crore, are multi-taskers. Ishan Kishan, who became the fourth-most expensive player in the history of the league when Mumbai Indians went full-throttle to grab him, not only keeps wicket but could be an opener too. He is, literally, an all-rounder. Deepak Chahar was another big earner, not only because he's a competent bowler, but also because he could merrily swing his bat (he has a strike rate of 129). His timely 38 against the West Indies on Friday also benefitted him. He might not be as devastating a bowler as Kagiso Rabada (Rs 9.25 crore) or Trent Boult (Rs 8 crore), but all those little bits and pieces add up to a hefty sum.

Shardul Thakur, too, didn't go cheap, as Delhi Capitals coughed up Rs 10.75 crore. These players garnered attention that even some of the most promising young Indian batsmen didn't. Devdutt Padikkal, considering his rampaging potential, settled for Rs 7.75 crore.

Doing their homework

Franchises, thus, have become smarter and sharper. They have also, astutely, waged the fiercest battles for youngsters with proven track records. Mumbai Indians' aggressive pursuit of Kishan exemplifies it. Kishan, apart from his big-hitting expertise and wicket-keeping skills, is only 23 but with abundance of experience and still miles ahead of his cricketing peak.

Shreyas Iyer is another example, as he is 27, and his career is just about blossoming. Both are touted as future captains too. It's not a surprise then that only three of the 14 who earned more than Rs 8.50 crore are 30 or more. Of them, New Zealand seamer Lockie Ferguson and West Indies all-rounder Jason Holder are 30 while previous edition's highest wicket-taker Harshal Patel is 31. Both



Shah Rukh Khan's children Aryan and Suhana filled in for Kolkata Knight Riders' owner at the auction; five-time champions Mumbai Indians forked out Rs 15.25 crore for Ishan Kishan. *IPLT20.com*

Franchises, thus, have become smarter and sharper. They have also, astutely, waged the fiercest battles for youngsters with proven track records. Mumbai Indians' aggressive pursuit of Kishan exemplifies it

Patel and Ferguson are exemplary death-over bowlers while Holder is among the finest all-rounders in the world.

So, evidently, franchises picked up players with an eye on the future rather than settling for short-term gains. The reasons are clear. A) Teams want a steady nucleus, and not one that's in perennial flux. B) The next big auction could take several years, and they would have to make do with what they already have.

Not that some of the older players didn't invoke interest, but bidding for them was less frantic. This rang especially true for batsmen. None of the 30-plus batsmen set the stage on fire. For instance, David Warner, the most successful overseas batsman in the league, managed only Rs 6.25 crore; Faf du Plessis received Rs 7 crore; Manish Pandey Rs 4.60 crore. Past-the-prime cricketers like Suresh Raina and David Miller too went unsold. It was bleedingly obvious that the owners were not keen on keeping too many ageing players on their decks, for in five years' time, they could be over the hill in a format that's getting increasingly athletic. They were cut-throat too — CSK didn't push for Raina at Rs 2 crore, a fixture with them since the first season. No one wanted Amit Mishra (Rs 1.5 crore). Some of them could find a team in Sunday's auction, but their signatures are no longer as coveted as they once were. Only Shikhar Dhawan bucked the trend.

Franchises fought passionately to swoop young, uncapped talents as the day rolled on. Punjab Kings forked out Rs 9 crore for uncapped all-rounder Shahrux Khan; Shivam Mavi managed Rs 7.25 crore and Abhishek Sharma was sold for Rs 6.50 crore. It was good to be young at the IPL auction on Saturday.

How did Chahar become more expensive than Dhoni?

In 2018, CSK had bought the seam-bowling allrounder for Rs 80 lakh. An almost 18 times salary hike over four years not only proved that the IPL is recession-proof even in a pandemic-hit world, but it also showed how a franchise could go the extra mile for a specific target.

Chahar had been part of the CSK set-up, a Powerplay specialist. He swings the balls, which not many Indian pacers do in modern-day cricket. His batting pyrotechnics lower down the order adds value to his game. As for CSK, their bowling attack has been based on a swing bowler upfront followed by spin-choke and Dwayne Bravo taking pace off the ball. From that perspective, they needed Chahar, someone the team management knows and trusts. Breaking the bank for him was a result of that thought process, notwithstanding that Chahar would be earning more than his captain.

Team India watches money grow

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 12

AT AROUND 5pm, Ishan Kishan posted a 'velfie' from a balcony from a room at the Team India hotel in Ahmedabad after he was picked by Mumbai Indians for a whopping Rs 15.25 crores. "Thank you owners and management for having faith in me," he says in the clip. Kishan was with the main man from the management during the auction; he was in Rohit Sharma's room, along with Suryakumar Yadav, who had already been retained by MI. Also in the room were other members of the India T20 squad—Shreyas Iyer, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shardul Thakur, and Rishabh Pant.

Sharma had shared a picture on *Instagram* of the players sitting around in a large sofa, glued to the proceedings. Titled "Some tensed and some happy faces".

The group caught the live telecast of two big paycheques - Kishan and Shreyas Iyer, who was first to go past Rs 10 crores when Rajasthan Royals got him for Rs 12.5 crores. Pant's team Delhi Capitals was one of the bidders for Iyer but they wouldn't eventually get him. Inside, Sharma's room, hugs and high-fives were exchanged for the two big crorepatris before the fall of the auctioneer Hugh Edmeades led to a break and change of plans for the players.



They had a flight to catch in Kolkata where India will take on West Indies in three T20s. The players wondered whether the auction would be postponed. Texts and calls were made to check for updates before it became clear that the auction would resume after a break. The party split up and they got ready to leave for the airport. Inside the bus there was happiness as many had hit jackpots at the auction. Those whose turn was about to come at the auction were glued to their phones; *Hotstar* was on.

Interestingly, players worry the possibility of their names appearing just after someone else has picked up a hefty price tag. The concern is their perception about past trends where the next player doesn't get sold for as much.

"There is a general trend that the next player in the queue doesn't get a good price if someone ahead of him has been sold at a higher price. There was certainly a fear that what if the franchise ran out of the money much early. Look at the way spinners got good money, some were very good," a player told this newspaper.

At the airport lounge, the team was informed that their flight was delayed due to a technical issue. Eyeballs returned to the phones, some still awaiting their names to be called out by the new auctioneer Charu Sharma. For many Ahmedabad to Kolkata flight must have been certainly long.

CSK, MI auction mantra: Love is letting them go, and buying them back

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
FEBRUARY 12

THE MAXIM 'if you love someone let them go, if they come back, they are yours' — erroneously attributed to Richard Bach, the writer of cosmic mush, but whose origin is unknown — was the mantra on Saturday. Only with a twist: If they are yours, you buy them back.

It was set by the tournament's two most successful franchises, Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians. Kolkata Knight Riders and Royal Challengers Bangalore, too, were on the same cosmic page.

Five-time champions MI forked out Rs 15.25 crore for Ishan Kishan, making him the second most expensive Indian in the history of IPL auction. The dashing wicketkeeper-batsman would earn a higher salary than Jasprit Bumrah, retained for Rs 12 crore. Four-time champions CSK spent Rs 14 crore for Deepak Chahar, making him more expensive than their talisman MS Dhoni, retained for Rs 12 crore.

CSK picked six players at the auction on Day One, five of them the franchise's old hand, including KM Asif for Rs 20 lakh. MI picked four players today, mainly stressing upon breaking the bank and bringing back Kishan, a franchise thoroughbred. They came into the auction with a purse of Rs 48 crore and spent almost one-third of that on the southpaw, a player the team mother-henned. A determined piece of bidding clearly suggested that they didn't want Kishan doing his future development elsewhere. Also, after releasing both Quinton de Kock and Kishan, they needed to bring one of them back; a 'keeper-batsman who could open and make an impact.

CSK usually don't breach the Rs 10-crore mark. Today, they did it for a proven performer, a pace-bowling all-rounder and a Powerplay specialist. Chahar has been in cracking form in white-ball cricket for India of late. Only on Friday, he had scored run-a-ball 38 and took two wickets in the third ODI against West Indies. For CSK, however, it was about sticking to their plan and bringing back a player whom they know and trust.

CSK focused on retaining their core. They also welcomed back their old hands — Ambati Rayudu for Rs 6.75 crore, Dwayne Bravo for Rs 4.4 crore and Robin Uthappa for Rs 2 crore. They were in bidding wars for Faf du Plessis and Josh Hazlewood as well, before losing both of them to Royal Challengers Bangalore for Rs 7 crore and 7.75 crore respectively.

CSK retained Dhoni, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Moeen Ali, and their auction pick ensured that the core of their old squad was once again in place. MI, too, will thrive on their old core, through the retention of Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav and Kieron Pollard, and the re-signing of Kishan.

The KKR's picks had only one 'outsider', Shreyas Iyer at Rs 12.25 crore. The four other auction buys — Pat Cummins (Rs 7.25 crore), Nitish Rana (Rs 8 crore), Shivam Mavi (Rs 7.25 crore) and Sheldon Jackson (60 lakh) — had been part of their set-up. Two years ago, the Kolkata-based franchise had bought Cummins for Rs 15.50 crore. This time, they got him for much less. Along with Iyer, Cummins would be a captaincy option. More importantly, alongside the retained players — Andre Russell, Varun Chakravarthy and Venkatesh Iyer — the auction buy-backs would form the backbone of the two-time IPL champions.

RCB brought back Harshal Patel for Rs 10.75, last year's Purple Cap holder with 32 wickets. The franchise spent Rs 10.75 crore for Sri Lankan leggie Wanindu Hasaranga and Rs 2.4 crore for all-rounder Shahbaz Ahmed, both part of the team's set-up last season. Ahead of the auction, RCB's director of cricket operations

ments. A 35-year-old middle-order batsman wasn't in demand and it would have been different if he were an opener. Raina and Smith aren't big-hitters and the franchises rather went for impact players. It is learnt that some franchises are looking at them as bargain buys, after checking the purse available, when the players will return for another round.

Why did Dhawan get big money?

Once again, on the face of it, Rs 8.25 crore that Punjab Kings spent for Shikhar Dhawan defied logic. Dhawan has been left out of the Indian T20 set-up, but after losing KL Rahul to Lucknow Super Giants, Punjab needed an opener to partner Mayank Agarwal and maybe a short-term captaincy option also.

'Auctionomics' worked for 37-year-old Faf du Plessis as well, for RCB, too, needed an opener and a captaincy candidate after Virat Kohli's decision to step down. Du Plessis is out of Cricket South Africa's scheme of things, but RCB bought him for Rs 7 crore.

Why did Raina and Smith go unsold?

Suresh Raina has 5528 runs in 205 IPL games. But at the first round of auction, franchises considered him surplus to require-

FRANCHISE-WISE BIGGEST BUYS

MUMBAI INDIANS

Ishan Kishan (Rs 15.25 crore)
Kishan fits into the role of an aggressive opener and a wicketkeeper.

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Deepak Chahar (Rs 14 crore)
A Powerplay specialist and a very good lower-order batsman, Chahar has been the franchise's top pace-bowling preference

DELHI CAPITALS

Shardul Thakur (Rs 10.75 crore)
Shardul has been a revelation of late, as a partnership-breaker and a game-changer as a batsman lower down the order

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shreyas Iyer (Rs 12.25 crore)
DC released their former captain and KKR pounced, to add serious quality in their middle-order apart from giving the team management a captaincy option.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Washington Sundar (Rs 8.75 crore)
An off-spinner who can bowl in the Powerplays and a very capable batsman down the order

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

Harshal Patel, Wanindu Hasaranga (Rs 10.75 crore)
Patel is a death-bowling option, while Hasaranga is a middle-overs wicket-taking option

PUNJAB KINGS

Kagiso Rabada (Rs 9.25 crore), Shahrux Khan (Rs 9 crore)
Rabada is a fast-bowling royalty, while Khan has enhanced his reputation as a finisher.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Prasidh Krishna (Rs 10 crore)
The India vs West Indies ODI series enhanced his stock as a fast bowler

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

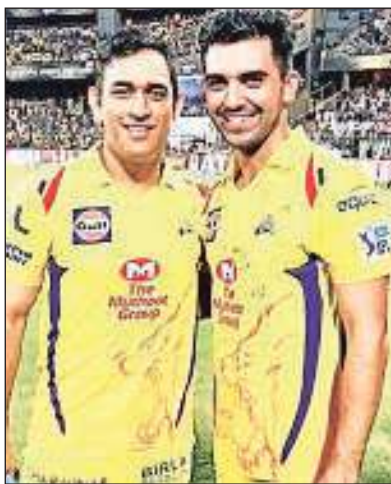
Avesh Khan (Rs 10 crore)
A wicket-taker, the last year IPL was his coming-of-age season

GUJARAT TITANS

Lockie Ferguson (Rs 10 crore)
An impact bowler, he would be available for the entire duration of the tournament

Mike Hesson had spoken about bringing back some of their old players to continue with their development. They walked the talk.

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and T Natarajan returned to Sunrisers Hyderabad for Rs 4.2 crore and Rs 4 crore respectively. Out of the two new franchises, Lucknow Super Giants did some smart buying, Gautam Gambhir doing the mentoring for the team. De Kock for Rs 6.75 crore was a steal, given the versatility and impact the South African 'keeper-batsman offers. They also bought Manish Pandey (Rs. 4.6 crore), Jason Holder (Rs 8.75 crore), Deepak Hooda, (Rs 5.75 crore), Krunal Pandya (Rs 8.25 crore), Mark Wood (Rs 7.50 crore) and Avesh Khan (Rs 10 crore).



After retaining MS Dhoni for Rs 12 cr, Chennai Super Kings bought seamer Deepak Chahar for Rs 14 cr. *Twitter*