

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2020



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Nationalism, 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' being misused, says Manmohan Singh



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Ryanair boss calls for extra checks on Muslim men at airports

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Is romance brewing between good friends Leander Paes and actor Kajal Aggarwal?



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Truce: Afghans rejoice on roads

Kabul: A week-long, partial truce came into effect across Afghanistan on Saturday, with jubilant civilians celebrating in the streets. The Taliban, US and Afghan forces have all agreed to a so-called "reduction in violence".

COUNTERPOINT



They were asked to wear masks for 30 days for their hate speech!

WEATHER

Max: 28°C, Min: 13°C, RH: 64%, Rainfall: 10%, Forecast: Partly Cloudy

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Uttarayana, Tithi: Magha Bahula Amavasya till 9.02 pm, Star: Dhanista till 1.43 pm, Varjyam: 9.42 pm to 11.29 pm, Durmuhurtam: 4.44 pm to 5.31 pm, Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm, SUNSET TODAY 6.05 PM, SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.04 AM, MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.13 AM, MOONSET TODAY 6.16 PM

SC judge hails PM as visionary, versatile genius

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

At the International Judicial Conference 2020 where Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his inaugural speech on Saturday spoke of gender justice, infrastructure development and environmental protection, Supreme Court Justice Arun Mishra described the PM as an "internationally acclaimed, visionary prime minister" and a "versatile genius" who "thinks globally and acts locally". "No country or society of the world can claim to achieve holistic development or claim to be a just society without gender justice," PM Modi said. "India has shown that infrastructure development can happen simultaneously with the protection of environment."



Arun Mishra

Member of the international community under the stewardship of internationally acclaimed, visionary Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We think globally and acts locally, Shri Narendra Modi for his inspiring thoughts which would act as a catalyst in initiating the deliberations, and setting the agenda for the conference.

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Mr Paswan was referring to differences within the Bihar NDA over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, that is likely to be followed by a countrywide NRC.

It might be recalled that the Union minister had recently said that if certain questions, including those pertaining to parents' birth dates, are asked in the National Population Register (NPR) or the National

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"Even I don't know the date of birth of my parents, forget about producing documents proving the dates," he had said.

However, he said, that the Prime Minister has clarified the position of the government on CAA-NRC and there should be no further doubts.

"You have to rely on the words of the Prime Minister," Mr Paswan told this newspaper.

Questioned on whether there were differences within the Bihar NDA over these issues, he said even if parties have

HOUSE HUNTERS

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Washington, Feb. 22: Democratic presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders has condemned Russia for its reported attempts to help his campaign, telling it to "stay out of American elections". Mr Sanders said on Friday that US officials had briefed him "about a month ago" on Russia's efforts to help his presidential campaign, as part of Moscow's attempts to interfere in the 2020 presidential election.

"It was not clear what role they were going to play," Mr Sanders said during a campaign stop

in California. "We were told that Russia, maybe other countries, are going to get involved in this campaign." The Vermont senator, 78, said he strongly opposed any attempts to do so and denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin, as an "autocratic thug" whose government has "used internet propaganda to sow division in our country."

"Let's be clear, the Russians want to undermine American democracy by dividing us up and, unlike the current presi-

Trump to flag CAA, religion

US administration reveals Indo-Pakistan dialogue also on US Prez agenda

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It added that President Trump "will also encourage bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan" on the Kashmir issue, adding that the US expects Pakistan to crack down on terror outfits operating there. The US said the "Make in India" campaign raised fears in the US of "protectionist" policies by New Delhi, while pointing to "the failure of the Indian government to provide equitable and reasonable access to its markets in numerous sectors".

Economic and energy ties as well as cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region will also be discussed, the US said.

In response to a question on the CAA, the US administration said, "President Trump will talk about our shared tradition of democracy and religious freedom both in his public remarks and then certainly in private. He will raise these issues, particularly the religious freedom issue, which is extremely important to this administration. And I think that the President will talk about these issues in his meetings with Mr Modi and note that the world is looking to India to continue to uphold its democratic traditions, respect for religious minorities."

When contacted, a US embassy spokesperson referred the query on the matter to the Delhi government. There was no immediate reaction from the Delhi government. The AAP said that Mr Kejriwal and Mr Sisodia were scheduled to welcome Ms Trump, but their names were dropped by the Centre. AAP leader Preeti Sharma Menon tweeted: "There is no match for the pettiness of Narendra Modi. You may not invite Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia but their work speaks for them."

■ Page 4: US: Modi spoke about being inclusive



Central Industrial Security Force personnel patrol the Taj Mahal in Agra on Saturday ahead of US President Donald Trump's maiden visit to India. Streets are being spruced up, walls beautified with thematic paintings and the lawns of the Taj Mahal are getting bedecked with flowers to welcome the United States President.

Kejri, Sisodia out of Melania 'class'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia are unlikely to be present when US First Lady Melania Trump visits a Delhi government-run school on February 25, according to sources. As per the original schedule, both Mr Kejriwal and Mr Sisodia were to accompany Ms Trump, people familiar with the matter said. They were also to brief the US First Lady about the "happiness curriculum" introduced by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

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Deputy commissioner of police (Southeast) R.P. Meena said: "Road number 9 in Shaheen Bagh was reopened by a group of protesters, but later it was closed by another group". However, locals later said the road was again reopened by protesters in the evening.

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China delaying Wuhan airlift: India

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New Delhi had earlier operated two evacuation flights to Wuhan. China swiftly denied that the delay was deliberate, claiming that the "current

situation in Hubei is complicated" and that "prevention and control of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) entered a critical stage".

Government sources pointed out that Beijing granted permission for Japan, Ukraine and France to evacuate their citizens on February 16, 19 and 20 respectively, while sitting on the Indian request.

New Delhi's request for the third flight was submitted on February 13, the flight plan on February 15, and the proposed flight date was February 20, constituting five days notice, adding that "the delay therefore appears deliberate". Government sources

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The Chinese Embassy in New Delhi stated: "There is no such thing as China deliberately delaying flight permission. Competent departments of the two countries are coordinating in this regard."

Rubbishing the Chinese claims, sources said, "Evacuation flights from other countries are still going on. Why are they creating roadblock in

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38-year old man now on life support. On Saturday, Italian news agency ANSA reported a second death from the virus in the Lombardy region. It came one day after the death of a 78-year-old retired bricklayer from the Padua area, who was the first local person in Europe to die. Over 50,000 people from about a dozen towns in the two northern regions were asked to stay at home by the local authorities.

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The reformists, the largest grouping in the Parliament, have been decisively beaten, with predictions showing them taking only 17 seats in the Parliament. The principalists — or conservatives — were on course to take around 200 seats, including all 30 seats in

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Election followed months of steeply escalating tensions between Iran and its decades-old arch foe the United States. Voters had been widely expected to shun the polls, disillusioned by unfulfilled promises and struggling to cope in a country whose economy has buckled under harsh US sanctions.

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Forecast: Partly Cloudy

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HAPPINESS CURRICULUM

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SHORT TAKES

MILLIONS WILL WITNESS ROADSHOW

Ahmedabad: "Millions" of citizens will witness "monumental" roadshow in Ahmedabad on February 24 when US President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will cover a distance of 22 kms from the airport to Motera stadium, as per a video tweeted by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday. Trump and PM Modi will address the "Namaste Trump" event at the cricket stadium after the roadshow. Notably, the US President recently said that PM Modi had told him that there will be 10 million people to greet him on his arrival for his maiden visit to India. "The world's oldest democracy meets the world's largest democracy, when US President Donald Trump will arrive at Ahmedabad in India on February 24, when 100s of artists will gather to greet him at the airport, when millions of citizens will witness a monumental roadshow, when thousands of artists will exhibit the essence of India, and when Modi and Trump will address the world from its largest cricket stadium," the video announced. The 55-second video, prepared by the state government with the voice-over in English, was the latest in the series of promo clips shared by the CM in the last few days. "This is when the whole world will witness the bond between two dynamic democracies. Let's welcome Donald Trump and Melania Trump, a momentous junction in the friendship of India and America," it said.

MODI UNLIKELY TO VISIT TAJ MAHAL

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is unlikely to accompany US President Donald Trump and his family members during their visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra on Monday, official sources said. After attending an event at Ahmedabad, the Trumps will travel to Agra on Monday afternoon to visit the Taj Mahal, before arriving at the national capital for the main leg of the visit. When asked about reports that Modi may accompany Trump to Agra, official sources said there was no such plan. They said the visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra by the US President and his family members will afford them the opportunity to view the historical monument suitably. Therefore, no official engagements or presence of senior dignitaries from the Indian side is envisaged there, the sources said.

'TRUMP PLATTER' AT BUKHARA

New Delhi: A 'Trump platter,' comprising signature dishes from ITC Maurya's restaurant Bukhara with a little customisation, is likely to be laid out for US President Donald Trump during his maiden visit to India, sources said. The Bukhara restaurant, which has hosted several heads of states, including former US presidents, and has not altered its menu for the last 41 years. Like his predecessors, Trump is likely to dine at the iconic restaurant where a 'Trump platter' is likely to be laid out for him. It will be customised according to his taste, the sources said. The hotel, however, has not revealed anything about the arrangements made for Trump, including the food. Barack Obama had visited India twice in 2010 and 2015 as the president and he was served the 'Obama platter.' Since then, the dish has become a part of the menu and is also very popular among the guests. The Obama platter consists of tandoori jhingna, machhli tikka, murg boti Bukhara and kebabs. When Bill Clinton had visited Bukhara as the president, the hotel had introduced "Clinton platter" and "Chelsea platter." Bukhara's dishes are mainly tandoor based and has an assortment of kebabs, the signature 'Dal Bukhara' and breads like 'Khasta Roti,' 'Bharwan Kulcha.' Trump is also likely to be gifted an apron with a painting of M.F. Husain.

₹100cr spent on Trump's India visit: Priyanka

Cong leader raises questions over funding of committee formed to oversee US President's Gujarat visit

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday raised questions over the funding of the committee formed to oversee various programmes during US President Donald Trump's Ahmedabad visit on February 24.

Tagging a media report on Twitter, she wondered what the government is "hiding under the guise" of the committee. "₹100 crore is being spent on the visit of President Trump. But this money is being spent through a committee. The members of the committee do not know that they are its members. Does the country not have the right to know which ministry gave how much money to the committee? What is the government hiding under the guise of the committee?" the Congress general secretary tweeted.

The Congress also took a swipe at the 'Donald Trump Nagrik Abhinandan Samiti' with a parody advertisement on its official Twitter handle.

The poster read 'hiring now' for job of "waving at US President Donald Trump." It also said that the vacancies were 69 lakh and remuneration would be "achhe din."

"69 lakh vacancies of the 2 crore promised by Modi ji have been announced. Apply now. Hurry!" the Congress said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, the committee headed by Ahmedabad mayor Bijal Patel held its first meeting at the Circuit House in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

The formation of the committee, first announced as Donald Trump Nagrik Abhinandan Samiti by Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson

● **PRIYANKA SAID** the money is being spent through a committee, but the members of the committee do not know that they are its members.

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● **CONG ALSO** took a swipe at the 'Donald Trump Nagrik Abhinandan Samiti' with a parody ad on its Twitter handle.

Raveesh Kumar, had drawn flak from the Congress.

Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala had asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to explain who all are in this Samiti.

"Dear PM, Intriguing news from @MEAIndia PI state — 1. Who is the President of Donald Trump Abhinandan Samiti? 2. When was the invitation extended to US President & accepted? 3. Why is President Trump then saying you have promised him a grand event with 7 million people?" Surjewala had tweeted.

"Why is Gujarat govt then spending ₹120 crore for a 3 hour event organised by an unknown Pvt entity? India values its visiting dignitaries but pls note — Diplomacy is serious govt business & not a series of photo-ops & event management tactics," he added.

The Congress had said the Trump visit should not become an extension of the US presidential election campaign but yield concrete results for India. — PTI



A birds eye view of the wall built reportedly to hide a stretch of slums during US President Donald Trump's maiden India visit, in Ahmedabad on Saturday. — PTI

Put aside political tiffs, think as a nation: BJP

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Taking on the Congress over its skepticism about US President Donald Trump's visit to India, the BJP on Saturday said this trip will be a landmark moment in Indo-US relations and the opposition party should take pride in the "nation's achievements." The BJP also said there are times when political parties

should keep aside their identities and "think as one nation."

This comes a day after the Congress said Trump's visit should not become an extension of the US presidential election campaign but yield concrete results for India.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party

spokesperson Sambit Patra asked the Congress why it was unhappy when the country's stature is being raised. "This is a meeting of the world's largest and oldest democracies and it should be celebrated," he said. "There are times when political parties should keep aside their identities and think as one nation," he said.

Taking a dig at the Congress, Patra asked if 10 Janpath (residence of party president Sonia Gandhi) had allowed former prime minister Manmohan Singh to develop Prime Minister Narendra Modi-like rapport with international leaders.

Responding to the Congress' questions about what the country will gain from

this visit, Patra said the latest defense equipment and the deals that the US was offering to India were never offered during the UPA regime.

Underlining that Trump himself has said multiple times that India is a hard bargainer, Patra said the Congress should not be worried about India's interests. — PTI

Modi-Trump 'fascist alliance' dangerous for world: Activists

Ahmedabad, Feb. 22: The "fascist alliance" between "forces attempting to erode democracy and curb freedom of speech and religion" is dangerous not just for India but the world as a whole, a group of over 160 academicians, activists and students from Gujarat said in an open letter against the "Namaste Trump" event.

US President Donald Trump will arrive in Ahmedabad on February 24 and will take part along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in an event, christened 'Namaste Trump, in the newly-constructed Motera stadium here.

"With a spectacular rise in global fascism today, this alignment between the largest democracy in the world and the most

● **'NAMASTE TRUMP'** They claimed India and USA had seen a rise of "authoritarian politics" in recent years, with PM Modi and Donald Trump at the helm

powerful one is dangerous not only for India, but for the world as a whole.

We cannot in good conscience support this alliance between forces that are attempting to erode democracy and curb freedom of speech and religion," the 168 signatories said in the letter.

"We cannot stand by as families are deprived of their homes in order to make room for those who wish to remove citizens from their countries. We unequivocally condemn this fascist alliance, and

urge the Indian State to prioritise the needs of its citizens over the greed of the global elite," the signatories said. They include activist and danseuse Mallika Sarabhai and academicians from institutes like Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad and CEPT University.

They claimed India and USA had seen a rise of "authoritarian politics" in recent years, with Mr Modi and Mr Trump at the helm. The letter claimed Trump was "unreservedly racist, Islamophobic, xenophobic, and anti-poor," while Modi had enacted the CAA that bars "Muslims from neighbouring Muslim-majority countries from receiving expedited citizenship offered to other minority groups". — PTI

Trip reminds community of Chattisinghpura massacre Don's visit sparks fear among J&K Sikhs

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, FEB. 22

The US President Donald Trump's upcoming visit of India has caused fear psychosis and panic among the Sikhs of Kashmir Valley as they are reminded of the 'horror' of the night of March 19, 2000 when as many as 35 members of the minority community were massacred by gunmen in Chattisinghpura village of southern Anantnag district during then President Bill Clinton's official visit of the country.

Stating this, Jagmohan Singh Raina, chairman of All Parties Sikh Coordination Committee (APSCC), an amalgam of J&K's Sikh organizations, said that the Sikhs of the Valley have to face such

fearful situation whenever a high profile foreign personality, especially, that from USA visits India.

"The whole India seems to be busy in making preparations for Mr Trump's visit, but for Sikhs of Kashmir, the visit has brought in fears that the members of community are yet again on the radar. The Sikhs are feeling insecure and they fear that something untoward might happen on the eve of Donald Trump's visit," Mr. Raina said in a statement here on Saturday.

In 2000, on the intervening night of March 19 and 20, when the then US President Mr. Clinton was in India, 35 Sikhs were shot dead by gunmen in Army uniforms after descending to Chattisinghpura. A local



Donald Trump

woman had also died of cardiac arrest on seeing piles of bullet-riddled corpses of the victims, raising the toll to 36. The authorities had blamed the gory incident on separatist militants. Five days after the massacre, Army and J&K police had claimed that five perpetrators were killed in an encounter in Anantnag's Pathribal area and all of them were foreign terrorists. But later, it turned out to be a fake

encounter and all the five slain men were unarmed civilians, who were picked up by the forces from different areas of the district earlier. Subsequently, at least, ten persons were also killed after security forces opened fire on the people protesting against the fake encounter in Anantnag's Brakapora area.

The CBI had in 2006 chargesheeted Brigadier Ajay Saxena, Lt. Col. Brajendra Pratap Singh, Major Sourabh Sharma, Major Amit Saxena and Subedar Idrees Khan for killing five civilians. However, in January 2014, the Army closed the Pathribal fake encounter case, asserting that the evidence recorded couldn't establish a prime-facie case against any of the accused.

Potus' visits mean zilch for this labourer

VIKRAM SHARMA HYDERABAD, FEB. 22

It was a 'Peepi Live' moment for a Dalit labourer, Ramdas Ahirwar, when the media flocked to him for interviews after he met the then US President Barack Obama and wife Michelle during their first visit to India in December, 2010.

The Obamas showered praises on the Ahirwars, feted them and left with an assurance to help Ahirwar set up a college in his native Katera village near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, which he had requested for.

The Obamas returned in January 2015, specifically had the Ahirwars invited and had a lengthy conversation with them. Ramdas Ahirwar once again sought Obama's intervention for setting up the college and even offered his seven-bhiga land for the purpose. Obama then gave his word that he would extend help in the form of a donation for the college.

While the Obamas failed to keep up their word, the Narendra Modi-led Central government — to whom Ahirwar made repeated requests — also ignored him. The then UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav, who too had showered

praises on the Ahirwars, failed to come to his rescue and the Dalit labourer's dream of having a college in his native, still remains a dream.

With 48 hours to go before Air Force One ferrying US President Donald Trump touches down in India, Ahirwar gets angry when asked what his expectations are from

Trump's maiden visit to the country, given the hype surrounding his visit and with the Centre's PR machinery in an overdrive claiming that Trump's visit is a big deal for Indians.

"Dono baar (in 2010 and 2015), US embassy ne lambi kaali gadi bheji thi hum ko ghar se pick up karne ke liye... Obamaji aur Michelle ji ne hamari khaob tareef ki aur donation dene ki baat kahi thi... lekin college ka kuch nahi hua. sab bhool gaye (The US embassy sent their car (limousine) to pick us up and showered praises on us but all of them forgot about the college)," he recalls while speaking to this newspaper over telephone from New Delhi.

With his financial worsening, Ahirwar, who is a stone-cutter, said he is now finding it difficult to make ends meet. Ahirwar has kept the



A file photo of Ramdas Ahirwar and his family with Barack Obama and Michelle. — ASIAN AGE

souvenirs he had received from Obama, which he once threatened to return, in his attempt to draw Obama's attention to the plight of poor parents who cannot afford primary education for their children.

"I wanted to return them as I was tired of writing to the Modi government seeking their intervention to construct the college in UP. In fact it was Obamaji who suggested back then

that I pursue the matter with the Centre. But Modiji too did not bother," Ahirwar said, while working on the construction of a 'nala' (drain) in a slum in Delhi.

"Though the former United States President may not have helped him setting up the college and he does not expect any help either from the Trumps, Ahirwar said he has a "direct connection" with the White House.

"I had gifted Obamaji a photo of Mahakal in Ujjain during my last interaction with him, which lasted 23 minutes. The US authorities informed me that the photo adorns the walls of the White House."

Interestingly, Ahirwar's son Vishal met Obama during his visit to India in 2017, when he was no longer the President, and requested him for a job here. He is still unemployed.

No gold deposits found in UP's Sonbhadra: GSI

Kolkata/Sonbhadra, Feb. 22:

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) on Saturday said there has been no discovery of gold deposits estimated to be around 3,000 tonnes in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh, as claimed by a district mining official.

"Such data was not given by anybody from GSI... GSI has not estimated such kind of vast resource of gold deposits in Sonbhadra district," GSI director general (DG) M. Sridhar told PTI in Kolkata this evening.

"We share our findings regarding any resources of ore after conducting survey with the state units... We (GSI, Northern Region) had carried out work in that region in 1998-99 and 1999-2000. The report was shared with UP DGM for information and further necessary action," he said.

The exploration works of the GSI for gold was not satisfactory and the results were not encouraging to come up with major resources for gold in Sonbhadra district, he added.

Sonbhadra district mining officer K.K. Rai had said on Friday that the gold deposits were found in Son Pahadi and Hardi areas of the district.

The deposits in Son Pahadi are estimated to be around 2,943.26 tonnes, while that at Hardi block are around 646.16 kilogram, the official said.

Rejecting the claim, Sridhar said that in its report after exploration in the district "the GSI has estimated a probable category resource of 52,806.25 tonnes of ore with 3.03 grams per tonne gold (average grade) for a strike length of 170m in Sub-Block-H, Son Pahadi of Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh."

"The mineralised zone having an average grade of 3.03 grams per tonne of gold is tentative in nature and the total gold which can be extracted from the total resource of 52,806.25 tonnes of ore is approximately 160 kg and not 3,350 tonnes as mentioned in the media," the DG clarified.

The GSI is headquartered in Kolkata. — PTI

IN BRIEF

2 Lashkar men shot dead in Anantnag

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, FEB. 22

Security forces on Saturday shot dead two alleged Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants during a cordon-and-search operation in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Anantnag district. The official said that the duo identified as Naveed Ahmed Bhat and Aaqib Ahmed Bhat, both residents of neighbouring Kulgam district, were killed in the security forces' return fire during the search operation in Anantnag's Sangam, Bijbehara area. Giving the details of the incident, a police spokesperson said that the security forces including J&K police's counter-insurgency Special Operations Group, the Army's Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF laid siege to Sangam's Gund Baba Khali village "on a credible input" about the presence of militants. "During the search operation, the terrorists hiding in the village opened fire on the security forces, which was retaliated and led to an encounter," the spokesman said. The police said that Naveed was active in south Kashmir since 2018 and was involved in "planning and executing several terror attacks." It added, "Similarly, Aaqib was involved in several terror crime cases including attacks on security establishments and civilian atrocities". Meanwhile, the police has claimed arresting an active member of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in north-western Baramulla district. "According to police records, he was operating in Baramulla and Sopore areas," the statement said

Manipur university V-C dismissed

New Delhi: Manipur University Vice Chancellor Adya Prasad Pandey was dismissed by the government following complaints of financial and administrative irregularities, according to an HRD Ministry order. The HRD ministry on Friday dismissed Pandey after an inquiry. In an inquiry report, he was found indulging in "financial and administrative irregularities, including misconduct, dereliction of duties, abuse of power and lack of commitment, causing great harm to the academic environment and bringing the varsity into disrepute," the order stated. Pandey was placed under suspension in 2018 after violent protests erupted on the varsity's campus which led to prolonged shutdown of the institute. "The President of India, on consideration of facts and materials available on record and reply submitted by Adya Prasad Pandey... in exercise of the power conferred upon him in terms of sections 13 of Manipur University Act, 2005, has been pleased to dismiss him from his post with immediate effect," the order stated. Pandey was not available for comments on the issue.

Mumbai airport starts screening passengers

Mumbai: The Mumbai airport on Saturday said it has started screening passengers arriving from Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal for coronavirus in compliance with the central government's directives. The Mumbai International Airport Ltd, which is the joint venture company managing and operating the city airport, said it is already screening passengers from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and South Korea. Abiding by the recent directive issued by the central government, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport has started screening passengers flying from Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal to Mumbai as well for the coronavirus infection, the airport said in a statement. The ministry of health has tightened screenings and has issued an advisory requiring all passengers arriving from these countries to undergo screening for the infection, it said. Health counters have been set up and thermal scanners installed at the pre-immigration area for the arriving passengers by the Airport Health Organisation, the MIAL said.

Maha BJP MLA reminds Pathan of Guj violence

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, FEB. 22

A fresh controversy erupted over the statement made by former AIMIM MLA Waris Pathan that "15 crore Muslims are heavy on 100 crore." Hitting out at the MLA, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLC Girish Vyas on Saturday said Pathan should remember what happened in Gujarat. "We are tolerant and patient, but this not does mean that we cannot deal with them. Remember Gujarat and the incidents that happened in Kalapur. If they take that into account...I feel the Muslims there today do not dare to rise again," he said. Vyas was apparently referring to the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat, which killed over 1,000 people, mostly from the minority community. Minister Uddhav Thackeray to take action against Pathan for sedition and said that the Indian government should send him to Pakistan. "We are tolerant and patient, but this not does mean that we cannot deal with them. Remember Gujarat and the incidents that happened in Kalapur. If they take that into account...I feel the Muslims there today do not dare to rise again," he said. Vyas was apparently referring to the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat, which killed over 1,000 people, mostly from the minority community. The BJP leader also dared Pathan to come to his city. "We will make proper arrangements for you. Do you think we are wearing bangles? We are ready to deal with you. But we feel that there should not be any disharmony in the society," he said. Meanwhile, Pathan has said that his statement was not anti-Hindu. "My statement has been distorted and is being used to malign me and my party. I had said that 15 crore Muslims are against 100 people, who belong to the RSS and BJP."

● Vyas was apparently referring to the 2002 post-Godhra riots in Gujarat, which killed over 1,000 people, mostly from the minority community.

Shaheen dharna a plot by Muslim nations: BJP MLA

Ballia (UP), Feb. 22: BJP's outspoken Bairia MLA Surendra Singh has described the ongoing Anti-CAA protest at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi as a global conspiracy by Muslim countries to "divide the country". The Shaheen Bagh protest against the CAA and proposed NRC is a conspiracy sponsored by Muslim countries at the global level, Mr Singh said on Friday night. "This dharna is being staged to divide the country," he added. Prone to making controversial statements, he also attacked AIMIM chief Asaddudin Owaisi and described him as an "enemy of the country". "The internal feelings of Owaisi are against India. In reality, Owaisi is the enemy of the country. Though he resides here, his feelings and beliefs are pro-Pakistan," said Mr Singh. "If his DNA test is conducted, it will be proved that like Jinnah, he wants to make India a Muslim country," said Singh. The BJP legislator added that senior SP leader Azam Khan had termed Bharat Mata a "dayan", but he was set right by CM Yogi Adityanath and the country's Constitution. — PTI

Ram Sena man announces ₹10L bounty for killing Amulya Leona

Bengaluru: An activist of the right wing group Sri Ram Sena has announced a bounty of Rs 10 lakh for killing Amulya Leona who shouted pro-Pakistan slogans at an anti-CAA event here recently. In a video footage, the activist Sanjeev Maradi is heard asking the government not to release the woman or else he will kill her. "Maradi is heard saying 'The state and the central government should not release her under any circumstances. If she is released, we will kill her in an encounter.' Maradi is heard saying at a protest rally organised by the outfit in Ballari against Amulya Leona on Saturday. "We on behalf of Sri Ram Sena will give a bounty of ₹10 lakh to the person who kills her," he added. Ballari superintendent of police C.K. Baba said he has not seen the video or heard about any such "announcements". "Let me go through it. I haven't seen what he has said. I will have a look..." the official added. — PTI

Poll pitch



Rashtriya Janata Dal workers release Lalu Chalisa for upcoming Bihar Assembly elections-2020 at Rajendra Institute of Medical Science, where the party supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav is taking treatments, in Ranchi on Saturday.

Govt asks citizens to avoid non-essential S'pore trips

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

As part of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus in India, the government on Saturday advised Indian nationals "to avoid all non-essential travel to Singapore". It may be recalled that Singapore had seen a significant number of coronavirus cases. The government also announced it would put in place uni-

versal screening at airports for flights from the Kathmandu, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting chaired by the Cabinet secretary. In a statement, the government said, "After a detailed review, in addition to the universal screening as per earlier advisories, universal screening at airports is now being planned for

● The government also announced it would put in place universal screening at airports for flights from the Kathmandu, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting chaired by the Cabinet secretary.

flights from Kathmandu, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia. Also, in fur-

therance to the travel advisory issued earlier, citizens are advised to avoid all non-essential travel to Singapore." It added, "Cabinet secretary chaired a high-level meeting to review the status, actions taken and preparedness of states/UTs regarding management of novel coronavirus, secretaries of health and family welfare, civil aviation, defence, information & broadcasting, DG AFMS and representatives from external affairs, home affairs, bureau of immigration, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and Army were also present. ... As on date, 21,805 passengers have been brought under community surveillance. In addition, 3,97,152 flight passengers and 9,695 travellers at seaports have been screened."

Five others, who had also been named in an FIR lodged on Wednesday, were also absolved of rape charges by the district police, they said. The FIR was lodged against Tripathi and his kin on a complaint by a 40-year-old woman who had alleged that they had raped her in 2017. "During investigation, no evidence was found against the Bhadohi MLA and five others. They have been given a clean chit," superintendent of police (SP) Ram Badan Singh told newspapers here. "Tripathi's nephew Sandeep Tiwari has been arrested on charge of rape," he said. Another member of the family, Neetesh, who had been named in the FIR, has been booked for manhandling and abusing the woman, he added. The officer said that after the woman's statement was recorded before a magistrate, the probe was handed

'Bharat Mata Ki Jai being misused'

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Nationalism and the slogan of Bharat Mata Ki Jai are being misused to construct a "militant and purely emotional" idea of India that excludes millions of residents and citizens, former prime minister Manmohan Singh said on Saturday, in an apparent attack on the BJP. Addressing a gathering at the launch of a book on Jawaharlal Nehru's works and speeches, Dr Singh said that if India is recognised in the comity of nations as a vibrant democracy and, if it is considered as one of the important world powers,

it was the first Prime Minister, who should be recognised as its main architect. Nehru had led this country in its volatile and formative days when it adopted a democratic way of life, accommodating divergent social and political views, Singh said. India's first prime minister, who was very proud of Indian heritage, assimilated it, and harmonised them into the needs of a new modern India, he said. "With an inimitable style, and a multi-linguist, Nehru laid the foundation of the universities, academies and cultural institutions of



Manmohan Singh

Modern India. But for Nehru's leadership, independent India would not have become what it is today," Singh said. "But unfortunately, a section of people who either do not have the patience to read history or would like to be deliberately guided by their

prejudices, try their best to picture Nehru in a false light. But I am sure, history has a capacity to reject fake and false insinuations and put everything in proper perspective," he said. The book Who is Bharat Mata by Purushottam Agrawal and Radha Krishna, contains selections from Nehru's classic books Autobiography, Glimpses of World History and the Discovery of India; his speeches, essays and letters from pre and post Independence years; and some of his most revealing interviews. It was first brought out in English and now its

Kannada translation has been released. The book also comprises reminiscences and assessments of Nehru by some of his contemporaries such as Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, among others. "It is a book of particular relevance at a time when Nationalism and the slogan of Bharat Mata Ki Jai are being misused to construct a militant and purely emotional idea of India that excludes millions of residents and citizens," he said. — PTI

Over 1K profiles on social media under lens in Valley

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, FEB. 22

The Jammu and Kashmir police have launched a tough campaign against those using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) to access social media platforms "for spreading rumours, glorifying terrorists and their activities and try to create law and order problems" in the Union Territory (UT) and beyond. During the past few days, the police detained over a dozen persons for questioning after they allegedly "misused" social media. At least, two persons identified as Waseem Majeed Dar and

Imtiyaz Ahmed Kawa, who are residents of frontier district Kupwara area, have been formally arrested on charges of spreading "fake news" and uploading such material on social media which could "disturb peace". The police sources said that more than one thousand social media profiles are under scanner for "spreading false information and propagating violence." Tahir Ashraf, who heads the cyber police station and the anti-militancy unit, said that the processing of identifying such social media profiles is a continued process and over one thou-

sand profiles were found violating various provisions of the law. The official also said that the real persons of these profiles could be Kashmiri-based or may be operating from outside the Valley. Earlier this month, the cyber cell of the J&K police had registered an FIR under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against "propagation of false information". On Thursday, DGP Dilbag Singh issued a stern warning against those people using VPNs to access social media platforms "to spread rumours and try to create law and order problems."

Boy attacks classmates with acid in HP, 4 hurt

Hamirpur (HP), Feb. 22: A class 10 student allegedly threw acid on his four schoolmates, three of them girls, leaving them injured in Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur district on Saturday, police said.

The incident took place in the evening at a school in Utpur, they said. Three class 10 girl students and a boy of class 9 suffered minor burns, police said, adding the attacker fled the spot after the incident. The school was open in the evening as annual practical examinations were being held. According to the class 9 student who was injured, his senior came out of the science lab just before the school was about to be closed and threw acid on him from a beaker. He said he was sitting with three girls outside the class room at the time of the incident and some acid also fell on the faces of the girls who soon complained of a burning sensation. Hamirpur SP Arijit Sen Thakur said a police party was rushed to the spot to investigate the incident. No formal complaint has been lodged with the police so far but they are acting on the basis of reports circulating on the social media, he added. Four students suffered minor burns and were given treatment at a local clinic and then sent back to their homes, the SP said. — PTI

In TN, Veerappan's daughter joins BJP

SANJEEVI ANANDAN KRISHNAGIRI, FEB. 22



Veerappan

In a significant acknowledgement of the role forest-dwellers and tribals play in building the economy, BJP is now strongly wooing them in Tamil Nadu. The first signals of that trend came alive in Krishnagiri district. Nearly 15 years after "Sandalwood" Veerappan was killed by the special task force in neighbouring Dharmapuri district, the forest brigand is back again under media glare, but this time for better reasons, as his elder daughter Vidya Rani has joined the BJP. The girl who, like her mother braved many police harassments, joined the BJP on Saturday in the presence of party's national general secretary Muralidhar Rao and former BJP minister Pon Radhakrishnan. The joining function of inducting the slain brigand's daughter and others into the BJP-fold was held at a private marriage hall here in Krishnagiri. Vidya Rani avoided talking to reporters when they approached her at the venue to know why she liked to join the saffron party, when her mother Muthulakshmi was running her own outfit after Veerappan's death. Earlier, Vidya Rani was in the news because of her love marriage with Mariya Deepak, a Christian.

Their marriage took place in 2011 against the wishes of the brigand's widow and the girl's mother Muthulakshmi. Earlier at Hosur, Ponnar, speaking to journalists, accused that the women who chanted 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan in Bengaluru during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protest rally led by MIM leader Owaisi there, under the alleged guidance of DMK leader M.K. Stalin. He welcomed the Tamil Nadu government's Bill declaring key Cauvery delta districts as protected agricultural zone. Shri. Ponnar was also hopeful that the party high command in Delhi would soon appoint the state BJP president.

UP MLA gets clean chit in gangrape case

Bhadohi (UP), Feb. 22: The police on Saturday gave a clean chit to local BJP MLA Ravindra Nath Tripathi in a gangrape case as "no evidence" was found against him and arrested his nephew, officials said. Five others, who had also been named in an FIR lodged on Wednesday, were also absolved of rape charges by the district police, they said. The FIR was lodged against Tripathi and his kin on a complaint by a 40-year-old woman who had alleged that they had raped her in 2017. "During investigation, no evidence was found against the Bhadohi MLA and five others. They have been given a clean chit," superintendent of police (SP) Ram Badan Singh told newspapers here. "Tripathi's nephew Sandeep Tiwari has been arrested on charge of rape," he said. Another member of the family, Neetesh, who had been named in the FIR, has been booked for manhandling and abusing the woman, he added. The officer said that after the woman's statement was recorded before a magistrate, the probe was handed

over to a two-member team, including the Gulafsha women's police station incharge. The team failed to find any evidence to corroborate her charges, Singh said. The woman also refused to undergo medical examination, he added. The complainant, a widow, had alleged that she was first raped by Tiwari in 2016. She said she did not lodge a complaint back then as Tiwari had promised to marry her, Singh had said on Wednesday. She alleged that in the run-up to the 2017 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, she was kept at a hotel for a month by Tiwari. All the seven accused would visit the hotel and repeatedly rape her, he had said. She also claimed that when she got pregnant, she was forced to undergo abortion, the officer had said. — PTI

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ECHS CELL, STATION HQ BARAMULLA
EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)

1. Application are invited to engage one Office-in-Charge (salary Rs 75,000/= per month) on contractual basis at ECHS Polyclinic, Baramulla.
2. For QR, Terms & Conditions, Application form and Remuneration kindly visit our website www.echs.gov.in.
3. For details please approach or contact ECHS Cell, Station Headquarter Baramulla at **Tele No 01952234220**. Last date of receipt of application will be 1500 hours on 09 March 2020.
4. Interview date and time will be intimated later.
5. Candidate will bring original certificate/ degree, photocopy of testimonials/experience as applicable and two passport size photographs at the time of interview.

SHORT TAKES

Mirchi baba to hit streets against Nath

Bhopal: "Mirchi Baba," whose 'havan' with chilli could not ensure victory of veteran Congress leader Digvijay Singh in Bhopal seat in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, on Saturday announced to hit the streets along with an army of 20,000 seers to protest against Madhya Pradesh chief minister's failure to fulfil the manifesto promises. The saffron-clad seer, known as "Swami Sri Sri 1008 Bairagyanand Giri Purb (Ex) Mahamandaleswar Niranjan Akhra," told reporters that he would demonstrate his solidarity with AICC general secretary Jyotiraditya Scindia, who has raised the issue, by taking to streets along with his army of seers to mount pressure on the Kamal Nath government to fulfil the promises made by the party before the 2018 assembly elections.

AIIMS accused of 'imposing' Hindi

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal and opposition Congress have accused the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Bhubaneswar of "imposing" Hindi language on the people of the state. Both the parties claimed that the effort of the AIIMS authorities was an "insult" of Odia language. In an office order signed by AIIMS, Bhubaneswar Deputy Director P.K. Ray had on Thursday asked officials in the administration, academic section, finance and accounts and the heads of departments to carry out their works in Hindi under the provisions of the Official Language Rules, 1976. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik said, "It is an assault of the Odia language. We will not tolerate such imposition by the Centre."

Road mishap kills nine, injures five

Jammu: Nine people, including three women and as many children, were killed and five others injured on Saturday when a passenger vehicle skidded off the road and fell into a deep gorge in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, officials said. The accident took place around 5.30 pm in remote Mallar village when the driver of a Tata Sumo lost control over the vehicle which rolled down into the 300 feet deep gorge, the officials said. The vehicle was on way to Nailo village, they said, adding the villagers launched a rescue operation. Police parties rushed to the spot after being informed about the incident and joined the locals in carrying out the operation. The rescuers pulled out nine bodies from the vehicle and sent five critically injured people to a local hospital, the officials said.

SPEAK IN NATIVE LANGUAGE OFTEN: SHAH TO YOUTH

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday appealed to the youths of the country to speak in their own language while communicating with friends and family and said a country's culture is safe only when its languages are safe. Mr Shah also said India is only country in the world which is united by its culture. He said the country has many languages and dialects, 7-8 languages in just one state, around 150 dialects in the Northeast, and "these languages and dialects are the identity of our country." "Whenever you talk with your friends, family or parents, talk in your own language. Because it is very important to keep alive your own language," he said, addressing an event on "Nationalism In Times of Strife" at the Zee Aarth Festival here. The home minister said it is very necessary to save the languages because "if a language is saved, its music is saved and its history is saved." "If a language is saved, its culture is saved, its way of life is saved," he said. Shah said he met many foreigners during his long political career who had no knowledge what was their original language. "After 50 years we should not face a similar kind of situation," he said.

Assam schools to drop word 'Maktab'

'Move to convert Madrasas, Sanskrit Tols to govt schools will begin soon'

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, FEB. 22

In a significant move, Assam education minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said that his government has directed to drop the 'Maktab' word from the names of 63 schools in Assam. Asserting that the government is determined to close all aided institutes imparting religious education, Mr Sarma said, "Since there is no Maktabi education system now, the word 'Maktab' will be dropped from the names of the schools. Students of these schools have to face problems due to the notion that religious education is imparted there." The move assumes significance as Maktabas are traditional institutions of the Muslim community. Children from the Muslim community attend Maktabas as a religious

binding. To bring out-of-school Muslim children, especially girls, within the fold of primary education, in 1995-96, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) Assam had converted 60 Maktabas into alternative schools in three DPEP districts of Assam, particularly in Darrang, Dhubri and Morigaon. The minister also announced that work to convert Madrasas and Sanskrit Tols to government schools will begin after the state budget is tabled. Asserting that 80 per cent of Sanskrit tols have become meaningless, the minister claimed that they have turned into mere factories to clear Class X board exams. "Many tols could not even send students for the Class X exam this year as there are no candidates. We cannot allow such mis-

THE ASSAM GOVT move assumes significance as Maktabas are traditional institutions of the Muslim community

ASSAM EDUCATION minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also announced that work to convert Madrasas and Sanskrit Tols to government schools will begin after the state budget is tabled.

announcement drew criticism from various quarters. The critics included Mr Sarma's mother Mrinalini Devi, who was recently elected as the vice-president of Assam Sahitya Sabha, which is the state's highest literary body. Ms Devi, who will take charge in April, had insisted that the government should continue to work for the promotion of Sanskrit as "Sanskrit is the root of the Assamese". Opposition Congress and some other organisations were also critical of the government's decision. Assam has 614 government-run madrasas. Of the over 900 Sanskrit tols, only 97 are government-aided. Assam government has taken a policy decision to close down government-aided madrasas and Sanskrit tols.

Swamy says income tax system must be abolished

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 22

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Dr Subramanian Swamy on Saturday advocated for the abolition of the income tax as an immediate stimulus to revive the Indian economy and provide relief to consumers.

Speaking at a debate organised by a local television channel, Dr Swamy said, "Today's economy is characterised by a few factors like slowing down in demands for goods and people's inability to invest money." Dr Swamy was highly critical over what he said 'mishandling' of the economy by the Narendra Modi government. He warned the BJP-led NDA government that the worst of economic slide down is yet to manifest. "The economy is in a tailspin. A heavy dose of stimulus is what needed," said Swami. Modi's government's ambitious 5 trillion dollar economy target by the year 2024 also came in for sharp criticism by Dr Swamy. He said, "In order to achieve the target by 2024, the country has to grow by 14.5 per cent per annum. In contrast, the GDP growth rate in 2019-20 is projected to grow at a mere 5 per cent."



A view of giant size cake, showcasing the image of the late President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, as part of an attempt to create Guinness record in Chennai on Saturday. — PTI

Indira Gandhi affectionately called her cyclewali bai MP's 1st woman traffic constable dies

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, FEB. 22

The first female traffic warden of Madhya Pradesh, Nirmala Pathak, given the title of 'Cyclewali Bai' by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, passed away after a prolonged illness at her Indore residence on Saturday. She was 94 and is survived by her son. Pathak was paralysed and bedridden for one-and-a-half years after she fell in the bathroom of her house in November 2018. An iconic figure of Indore, Pathak chose traffic regulation as a career and even volunteered to serve as a traffic warden at different intersections

in Indore, decades after her retirement from police service nearly 34 years ago. "Soaring summer heat, heavy monsoon downpours and even chilly winters could not deter her from standing guard at the intersections in Indore to regulate traffic," Usha Bai, her younger sister told this newspaper. She had many encounters with 'Who's Who' of India beginning from Tata Group founder J.R.D. Tata to Indira Gandhi when she was regulating traffic, first in Mumbai for some years, and later in Indore. "Once, didi had stopped the car carrying Mr Tata at traffic square in Mumbai sometime in the 1950s without knowing



Nirmala Pathak

who he was. Tataji had then promptly disembarked from his vehicle and approached her to appreciate her commitment towards her job. He then invited her to his office to honour her," Usha, who was then working in Taj hotel Mumbai, recounted. "Once she dared to stop the vehicle in which late Mrs Gandhi was travel-

ling. The late PM had then affectionately called her 'Cyclewali Bai' for her habit of riding the bicycle to reach her place of deployment then," she recounted. She also recalled how her sister was honoured by Bollywood star Sharukh Khan at an episode of Kaun Banega Crorepati, the film star was anchoring then, by giving her the identity as "Indore ki Dadi". Later, the film star had personally dropped her in her house after the show in Mumbai. Chief minister Kamal Nath who had donated ₹1 lakh for her treatment after she suffered from paralysis consoled her death.

3-time MP, TMC leader Krishna Bose dies at 89

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, FEB. 22



Krishna Bose

Former Trinamul Congress MP Krishna Bose died at a private hospital due to age-related ailments on Saturday morning. She was 89. Bose was the wife of Sisir Kumar Bose, nephew of freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. She is survived by her two sons — Sugata Bose, also a former Trinamul MP and Sumantra Bose — and a daughter Sharmila Bose. Bose was a three-time MP of Jadavpur. In 1996, she won as a Congress candidate and then as a Trinamul candidate in 1998 and 1999. She was also the chairperson of the Netaji Research Bureau.

On February 16, Bose was admitted to the private hospital off EM Bypass with irregular heartbeats. Later her condition worsened. At around 10.20 am on Saturday Bose breathed her last. The body was brought to Netaji Bhavan on Elgin Road from the hospital later. Trinamul supreme and chief minister Mamata Banerjee mourned her death. Ms Banerjee tweeted, "I lost someone respected, loved & admired by me. Saddened & shocked to

hear about the demise of Krishna Bose, ex-TMC MP & wife of freedom fighter Dr Sisir Bose." She added, "Being a part of Netaji's family, she was a revered social reformer, renowned poet & a courageous educationalist. Krishna di was a mother to her son's Sumantra & Sugata, daughter Sharmila as well as the whole Trinamul family. Her immense contribution to Indian society & Bengali culture will be revered for times to come." Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar visited Netaji Bhavan and paid floral tributes to Bose. "She was a renowned parliamentarian, a noble soul. Her three terms in Lok Sabha were significant. Her role as Chairman of the External Affairs Committee in Parliament was greatly appreciated. Her passing is a huge loss to society. She was a great source of inspiration to all of us. May her soul rest in peace," he said.

Nadda meets Nitish, Bihar BJP workers

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, FEB. 22



J.P. Nadda

BJP chief J.P. Nadda Saturday met Bihar CM Nitish Kumar in Patna where he discussed issues related to the Assembly elections slated to be held later this year.

Although the BJP state unit termed it as a "courtesy meeting," the Opposition RJD created a flutter in the NDA by raising questions on the timing of Mr Nadda's Bihar visit and his meeting with Bihar CM Nitish Kumar. While terming both parties as "lame", RJD state president Jagdanand Singh told reporters, "Bihar will not benefit even if they join their legs." Mr Nadda's meeting with Mr Kumar is being seen as crucial ahead of the Assembly elections slated to be held in November this year. During his day-long visit to Patna, Mr Nadda inaugurated 11 district offices across the state in order to

connect with voters. BJP insiders said that the party's state unit has also been asked to monitor the functioning of committees at the booth level and interact with voters. Sources said that the strategy will be to win over a maximum of rural voters who are presently under the hold of either the RJD or Congress. Speaking at the function, Mr Nadda urged party workers to spread the message that "BJP is synonymous with development" and also asked them to work towards ensuring the NDA's return to power in the Assembly elections.

3 women dead as fire engulfs Chandigarh PG

CHANDIGARH, FEB. 22

Three young women lost their lives when a fire broke out on Saturday at a house in Chandigarh where they were staying as paying guests, police said. As many as five girls were on the first floor of the residential accommodation at Sector 32 when the fire broke out, police said. Station fire officer Lal Bahadur said they received a call around 4 pm and four fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze. It took around 10-15 minutes to put out the fire, the officer said, adding that one of the women saved her life by jumping from the first floor. "There was very low visibility because of smoke and fire," Bahadur said. "Two women were found unconscious in a room and another with burn injuries was found in another room." With the blaze engulfing the first floor of the house, it was a difficult task for the fire fighters to take out the women out of the room. Three women, aged 19-22, died in the incident.

Two were admitted to a hospital and they are out of danger, Chandigarh Superintendent of Police Vineet Kumar said. The deceased have been identified as Prakshi (from Kotkapura, Punjab), Riya (Kapurthala, Punjab) and Muskan (Hisar, Haryana), the police said. According to neighbours, around 25-30 women were putting up at the guest house. At time of fire incident, most of them were out of the PG, the police said, adding that a case would be registering against the building owner. The cause of the fire was yet to be ascertained. Several items, including fan, fridge, beds, on the first floor were charred, the police said. The fire incident was a grim reminder of the vulnerability of students coming from several states, including Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, who put up at the "unsafe" paying guests in Chandigarh, which is a hub of educational institutions and that has led to a flourishing business of paying guests. —PTI

CMP, not ideology..

Continued from Page 1 divergent views, these can be kept aside for the sake of running a government. "Scenarios have changed in all states. There should be flexibility on ideological positions and the aims and objectives of the parties should remain the same while working in the government". He added that like in Maharashtra, governments should run on a Common Minimum Programme, including in Bihar post polls. When pointed out that there was no CMP in Bihar right now, he said one has to understand that the Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) joined the government later and was part of the Grand Alliance in 2015 while

fighting the Assembly polls. Mr Paswan maintained that as stated by home minister Amit Shah, Mr Kumar would remain the chief ministerial face of the NDA in Bihar, however, as his own party, the LJP, is looking to better its seats tally, his son and LJP chief Chirag Paswan has already hit the road. "Chirag has already said it is Bihar first and will soon spell out a five-year roadmap for the state," he said adding that his party has also launched a membership drive. On March 14, a massive rally is scheduled to be held at Patna's Gandhi Maidan where the party will officially launch its campaign.

China delaying Wuhan airlift

Continued from Page 1 evacuating Indians?"

"Our request for third flight was submitted on February 13. The flight plan was submitted on February 15. The date of flight proposed originally was February 20. That is five days notice. The delay therefore appears deliberate. In between the following flights have taken off from Wuhan. Japan on February 16, Ukraine on February 19, and France on February 20." Asking some hard questions, sources said, "If the work was not critical enough to stop or delay these flights, how did it suddenly become critical for the Indian flight? There are relief and evacuation flights from other countries which are still going on, including by France. Why is the Chinese government

delaying clearance for the relief flight? Are they not interested in Indian aid provided as our token of support? Why are they creating roadblock in evacuating our nationals from Wuhan and putting them under hardship and mental agony? "Indian nationals in Wuhan continue their long wait for the flight which will evacuate them to India. The delay is causing them and their family members in India tremendous mental anguish. ...Indian nationals are waiting to be brought back from Wuhan. The uncertainty is causing anxiety and mental stress. China should grant clearance to the relief flight which can bring the Indian nationals back." Indian government sources added, "It may be recalled that Prime

Minister (Narendra Modi) wrote to Chinese President Xi Jinping conveying solidarity of India with China in meeting the challenge of coronavirus outbreak and had offered to provide whatever assistance we could to China. The Government of India then put together relief supplies in pursuance of this commitment as a token of our solidarity, particularly in this 70th year of anniversary of diplomatic relations. These supplies have been offered even as India faces tremendous shortage itself, given our ethos of helping others, especially neighbours in their hour of need. Items being supplied are gloves, surgical masks feeding and infusion pumps and defibrillators based on the requirements as indicated by the Chinese side."

US: World looks to India to maintain religious liberty

Continued from Page 1 The US administration added, "Prime Minister Modi, in his first speech after winning the election last year, talked about how he would prioritise being inclusive of India's religious minorities. And, certainly, the world looks to India to maintain religious liberty and equal treatment for all under the rule of law. ... Of course, it's in the Indian constitu-

tion — religious freedom, respect for religious minorities, and equal treatment of all religions in India. We have great respect for India's democratic traditions and institutions, and we will continue to encourage India to uphold those traditions. ... India is a country rich in religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity. In fact, it's the birthplace of four major world reli-

gions." On Kashmir and Pakistan, the US said, "What you'll hear from the President is very much encouraging a reduction in tensions between India and Pakistan, encouraging the two countries to engage in bilateral dialogue with each other to resolve their differences. We continue to believe a core foundation of any successful dialogue

between the two is based on continued momentum in Pakistan's efforts to crack down on terrorists and extremists on its territory. So we continue to look for that. But I think the President will urge both countries to seek to maintain peace and stability along the line of control and refrain from actions or statements that could increase tensions in the region."

On whether India's "participation" in the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) — that had earlier given India many concessions — could be "restored," the US said, "The concerns that led to the revocation, suspension of India's GSP access remains a concern for us. We continue to talk to our Indian colleagues about addressing these market access barriers."

A soldier's 'eve-olution'

The Supreme Court just levelled the playing field for Indian servicewomen by introducing permanent commission and non-combat command postings for them. Though some sticking points need to be addressed, a roadmap has been prepared and change is very much in the air.



The Indian Army Corps of Signals contingent led by Captain Tanya Shergil marches during the 71st Republic Day Parade at Rajpath in New Delhi

PAWAN BALI

The Supreme Court's judgment making women officers from the short service commission (SSC) eligible for permanent commission (PC) and holding of command in non-combat heralds a new era in gender equality in the male-dominated Indian Army.

Women officers form just four per cent of the total commissioned officers in the Indian Army despite being inducted since 1992. There are only 1,653 women officers close to 39,000 male officers.

After the Supreme Court order, the number of women officers in the Indian Army is expected to rise.

In 2008, women officers were given permanent commission in only two non-combat streams — the Judge Advocate General (JAG) and the Army Education Corps. In March last year, the defence ministry said that PC will be allowed in eight non-combat branches (signals, engineers, army aviation, army air defence, electronics and mechanical engineers, army service corps, army ordnance corps and intelligence) where women are inducted for SSC, taking the number of branches where women could get PC to 10.

But the defence ministry order restricted women to just staff positions and they were not allowed command position.

Now, the Supreme Court has struck down this provision, making them eligible for command positions. Moreover, the Court said that even women officers currently serving in these 10 branches will be eligible for PC and it must not

be restricted to those who were recruited after the defence ministry's order was issued.

In a hard-hitting order, the Supreme Court said the "time has come for a realisation that women officers in the Army are not adjuncts to a male dominated establishment whose presence must be tolerated within narrow confines".

Women officers could now get command position in various non-combat postings like NCC battalions, record officers, training regiments and commandants of Sainik and military schools.

However, the road ahead is still full of challenges.

The men who join the Army as SSC officers can opt for PC after 10 years of service if they want to continue in the Army.

The Supreme Court order has said that some 255 women officers who are in service for 14-20 years and some 77 women officers who have above 20 years of service would be given the option of PC within three months.

Then there are women officers (600, by some estimates) who have completed 10 years of a total of 14 years of SSC. Indian Army chief Gen. M.M. Naravane has said that the Army will be sending letters to all eligible officers asking if they want PC.

But some officers said that there are difficulties for women officers to clear boards if judged on the same yardsticks as men because they were never "groomed" for PC.

They explain that the board gives points to a candidate on various parameters, such as if they have done high-altitude postings. As per the number of vacancies for PC, only those who secure top marks get qualified.

"But since women officers were not to get PC, their commanding

The board gives points to a candidate on various parameters, such as if they have done high-altitude postings. As per the number of vacancies for PC, only those who secure top marks get qualified. But since women officers were not to get PC, their commanding officers usually did not give them postings where they could get more marks,' said an officer.

officers usually did not give them postings where they could get more marks. These postings usually went to male officers and COs would also give more marks to male officers compared to women officers thinking that men will need them during their boards," said an officer. He said that many women officers also did not go for junior commands that their male counterparts go for after 6-7 years of service and which is important to get promotions.

"So the thing is that within the current parameters how will these women will pass the boards to get PC? The only option will be to dilute these parameters and judge men and women officers differently," said the official.

The court order says that those officers who have more than 14 years of service will continue to be in the Army till they complete 20 years of service in order to be eligible for pension even if they didn't opt for PC or did not qualify for PC. The SC order said women offi-

cers with over 20 years of service who are not granted PC will retire and avail pension.

"It is the women officers with service between 10 years and 14 years who will bear the brunt of the changed circumstances," said another officer. He said that since they were not eligible for PC they never cared about their annual confidential reports that carry the most marks in boards. "There is a possibility that these officers may go to the Supreme Court," said the official.

Gen. Naravane has said that the Army has prepared a roadmap for granting PC to its women officers.

THE ROAD AHEAD

For the new women officers, physical training, posting and service courses will be changed and will be similar to those taken by male officers.

Women officers will be eligible for various courses just like their male counterparts in junior command that will allow them to progress in the service. They will be eligible for competitive exams for Staff College — which is for Major rank officers. "The women officers will now have to go to difficult postings if they want to opt for PC," said a senior officer. He said that some postings that are considered as peace postings for male officers have currently been nominated as field postings for women officers. This will also change in the future.

Meanwhile, there are some apprehensions among male officers that the Supreme Court order may impact their peace postings. After being in difficult postings like Kashmir, forward areas and Siachen, male officers are usually put in peace postings where they can be with their families. "It should not be that women will

keep getting peace postings by giving various excuses like they have small children and only male officers suffer, landing up in tough postings," said an officer.

However, defence sources point out that women have proved their mettle and under tough conditions. There are many women who are posted in Kashmir, including female doctors risking their lives, said another senior official.

Last year, Indian Air Force Squadron Leader Minty Agarwal was awarded the Yudd Seva medal for distinguished service in wartime. She was one of the fighter controllers when Pakistan Air Force fighter aircraft entered Indian air space on February 27 post the Balakot air strikes. She had kept her cool in a trying situation and played a crucial role in repulsing the attack.

The Supreme Court, in its order, said "the engagement of women officers in the Army has been an evolutionary process". Women officers were initially inducted in 1992 for just five years, which was extended for another five years. On incorporation of the provision for SSCs for women officers, they were allowed to become SSC officers and their tenure extended to 14 years. The SC order on PC and command is another milestone. Since last year, the Army has, for the first time, started recruiting women in military police.

The all-boys Sainik Schools in the country will start offering admission to girl students from the 2021-22 academic session. This will help in the creation of future women officers. The next crucial move will entail the storming of another male bastion — allowing girls to take admission in the prestigious National Defence Academy.

Won't be talking point a few years down the line



Major Navdeep Singh

The decision of the Supreme Court of India granting women the same career progression as men in the Indian Army has generated quite a debate. The Court has upheld the judgement of the Delhi High Court which had asked the ministry of defence to consider women for grant of permanent commission (PC) at par with male officers. Till that point of time, women officers were only allowed Short Service Commission (SSC) under the "Women Special Entry Scheme" upto a maximum of 14 years, while male SSC officers were eligible to be considered for PC. The minimum service required to earn a pension in the defence services being 20 years, women officers were mandatorily released from service at crossroads in their mid-30s, without a permanent career, financial backup or social security and at an age when family and other commitments are at a peak.

The conversation on the subject, however, seems to have veered off the mark. Many commentators, including some military veterans, have questioned the physical ability of women to command troops in frontline combat, while others have raised doubts about a situation in which a woman officer is taken prisoner of war by the enemy. Some have even spoken on how women would give 100 per cent to their jobs considering there might be maternity breaks in-between.

Much of these discussions are otiose.

First, the issue before the SC was not frontline combat but simply grant of PC and "command appointments" instead of "staff appointments" and that too in earmarked posts. While the litigation was pending, the government had issued a policy allowing women to be considered for PC with a caveat that they will not hold "command" positions at par with men and would only hold specified posts. The policy also unreasonably required women to provide the option for PC within three to four years of service while there was no such condition imposed on men. It was the contention of the litigants that they could not be slotted in specific posts when there were no such fetters on their male counterparts. It may be noted again that the issue was not "command" in combat arms on the battlefield but regular appointments involving command of troops in branches in which women were already serving as SSC officers. In any case, such a policy was absurd on the face of it since it allowed them to hold myriad appointments while they were SSC officers but restricted their employability as soon as they became permanent. In certain quarters there was a fear that women would usurp "soft" appointments leading to additional pressure on males who would remain deployed in tougher areas. However, their employability on varied (rather than restricted) appointments should now rather terminate this fear since it is known to all that it would be a level field hereafter, without any favour based on sex.

Second, when there is no deployment of women on frontline combat, there is no question of them being taken PoW. And even if hypothetically they were so deployed, they are soldiers first and then women, and our concern should be regarding an Indian soldier taken PoW, and not a woman. In any case, to raise an issue which is an impossibility just to create some kind of an emotionally chilling effect does not seem judicious.

Third, the bogey of maternity leave is quite lame. It is well-known that this is likely to emanate during the younger years and not during the later years when such officers are granted PC. When this has not posed a problem during SSC, why would it interfere during PC when the incidence of pregnancy, on the contrary, is likely to be very low? Members of other uniformed organisations, such as the police and the Central Armed Police Forces, have accepted them with open arms and it is painful to hear such regressive comments from members of the military community. Needless to state, some of these organisations deploy women in much tougher roles and in lower ranks.

I have always maintained that women in defence services are not meant for parades and showcasing in events only. Women must be placed in responsible positions in multiple roles to the greatest extent possible. The switchover would result in some churning and may require some finetuning but a few years from now, this will not even remain a talking point with women and men well-assimilated in a system ruled only by merit and competence. The positive and very mature statements of the defence minister and the Army chief only point towards an egalitarian and progressive time ahead for the military, aided with some practical and well-chiselled policy interventions in the near future.

The author is a lawyer in the Punjab & Haryana High Court and member of the International Society of Military Law and the Law of War

The mindset game: An officer isn't always a gentleman

SUPARNA SHARMA

On Wednesday, February 19, two days after the Supreme Court ordered the Indian Army to uphold the Constitution's guarantee of right to equal opportunity follow the order issued to them by the Delhi high court 10 years ago and grant permanent commission (PC) to its women officers, senior advocate Aishwarya Bhati, representing the 322 affected women, said she was "thrilled... extremely happy" because "what the Supreme Court has demolished is the mindset".

In its 54-page judgment, the Supreme Court mentions "mindset" four times, and "stereotypes/stereotypical" five times. It then issues directions to the Bharatiya Thal Sena and sets a three-month deadline.

"I love that line where the Supreme Court says that the kind of arguments that are raised to deny women command positions... that 'cast aspersion on their abilities on the ground of gender are an affront not only to their dignity as women but to the dignity of the members of the Indian Army — men and women — who serve as equal citizens in a common mission'."

their policy decisions.

The Supreme Court did not stay the high court order, and yet the government didn't implement it for nine years. On February 25 last year, the Army issued a circular announcing that they have decided to grant women officers PC in eight arms/services, in addition to the existing streams of JAG and AEC.

And about a year later, in January 2020, during arguments against giving women officers the training and option of promotions and command positions, it submitted a note that, Bhati says, "became the turning point of the case".

The note which, among other things, had a list of 11 excuses for not granting women equal training and opportunity for a shot at promotions above the rank of lieutenant colonel, mentioned reasons of national security, said that senior women are untrainable, that women have domestic and matrimonial duties, and have lower physical standards.

It also said that in "the unique all male environment of a unit" the presence of WOs (women officers) requires men to moderate their behaviour, "leading to peculiar dynamics". The government's 11th excuse was titled, "Equal Opportunity is for Equals".

In response the Supreme Court's order listed 11 examples of exemplary women who have been awarded by the Army itself. Bhati and her team also told the court that in the 30 years since women had been serving in the Army, there had not been even "one instance of insubordination".

The Supreme Court heard the Union of India and dismissed both, their argument and mindset. "Women officers



Senior advocate Aishwarya Bhati

have served the organisation for almost 25 years and the battle is against mindsets," it said and ordered that all serving women officers on short service commission have to be given the option of PC, and those who do become permanent, will be entitled to all consequential benefits, including promotions.

Or, dear Indian Army, let us change your make-up, while you figure how to change your mindset.

Despite this, says Bhati, the women officers are "very very sceptical" because "even my experience in this case has been that the devil is in the details." She and the women officers will remain vigilant and see what kind of notification the Army comes up with.

On February 20, the Army Chief General M.M. Naravane announced that letters are being sent to women officers asking whether they will want to opt for PC.

A serving officer, female, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said, "Army has never championed gender equality, especially male officers. Army has vehemently opposed the cases filed by women officers for gender parity I can't believe... How can the chief lie so blatantly?"

The way women and men enter the Army is different. When the Indian Army's matter was in Delhi high court, the Air Force and Navy changed their policy. They kept two routes for entry for both men and women, and did away with the option of changing midstream.

A Lt. Col., who has completed 15 years of service through extension of 5+5+4 years and is waiting for the option of PC, is not yet celebrating the court's order. "I want to wait and watch what interpretation the Army comes out with. The only silver lining at the moment is the pension, which they will have to give. But whether they will do something about career progression or not, I am not sure," she says.

To be eligible to command a company of around 100 people, officers need to complete what's called the Junior Command Course. It's usually done between five-eight years of service, at the level of Major. "Male officers do it, but for the past six-seven years women officers are not being called on this course... I have not done it myself. A lot

of my women course mates have not done this course." And then, she says, is the Defence Services Staff College, the most prestigious exam and course of the Indian Army that prepares you for senior command positions (commanding about 450-500 people). It is also usually done at the rank of major.

The competitive exam for which about 3,000 apply but only 250 get selected is followed by a 1-year course in Wellington, Tamil Nadu, and the chances of whoever does it are "90-95 per cent brighter" than others in getting through the selection board to become a full colonel. Men get three chances to sit for this exam. Women, none.

The Lt. Col. says her male batchmates have taken these exams and some, who have cleared it, are now here seniors. "At a personal level I can always call him by his name, but in front of people I have to salute him, because he is my senior, because he got the chances which I did not get".

Talking of mindset, the Lt. Col. says, "I'm at a high-altitude area, commanding a small platoon. I am part of a brigade, and there are 5,000 troops and 100 officers and I am the only woman here. All of them, they do listen to me, they do whatever I tell them to... they see your rank. They see how you conduct yourself. They see that you are an officer; they listen to you."

"This is all a mindset — it's not the men, it's male officers. If you talk to them, 90 per cent will say, these women are useless, they should not be given anything at all. I am telling you, if women get a chance to go for JC, or DSSC, they will just slay it."

The Army's two main combatants units (infantry and armoured corps) are out of bounds for women officers for now and yet, talk to any senior officer, male, about women in the Army and there is a conjuring of scenarios in precisely these two streams.

Lt. Gen. Kamal Davar, who served as the first director general of the Defence Intelligence Agency, and is now retired, says, "Pehle bechariyon ko 14 saal mein hum Jai Hind kar dete the. Now they will get pension and have also been granted permanent commission." And then adds, "We in the Army have a different sense of honour, different from that of civilians," and talks of the confined space in a tank. "It's a very confined space, and you are physically on top of each other... rubbing shoulder with two-three crew members. Why embarrass a lady officer?" And adds something about "a pretty commander and a gunner". When I asked him how much time had he actually spent in tanks, rubbing shoulders with men, or on top of other men, he said, "Some time in my initial years".

At the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun, which men have the option of attending by clearing just one extra paper than women — of mathematics — rests a black granite slab with "Antim Pag" inscribed on it, in Hindi. Gentleman cadets do not become officers until they ceremoniously cross the "Antim Pag" plaque.

How the Indian Army takes its "antim pag" on the Supreme Court's order will show whether they are both, officers and gentlemen, in body and in mind.

THE ASIAN AGE

23 FEBRUARY 2020



Karen Ribeiro

Off the beaten track

Stop complaining, exit a bad marriage

I had an arranged marriage in 2016 after which I became pregnant and I was told to pay for everything on my own. I was good to my husband and my in-laws in every way possible. Rather than receive love and affection, I was tortured by my husband and in-laws for many months which resulted in me becoming a patient of high blood pressure. I used to pay for all my expenses and I used to give a huge amount of money to my husband and in-laws. My mother-in-law — a woman herself — used to say that women are not nice, they are egotists and proud. So I must deliver a son or else.

After my son was born in 2017, I knew that I had to fight the demons because if I didn't, I would be overpowered. I got out of my marital home and after a lot of fights, my husband and I started to live in a rented house where I had to continue paying for all the expenses and the torture didn't stop. Rather, it increased, in the form of abuses. One day my husband walked away and never tried to contact me, or meet our son or myself.

In 2018, I went to the Women's Cell to file a complaint against the people who exploited me for two years. I met women coming from different backgrounds and different kinds of marriages — coming after three months of marriage, a second marriage that had also ended in abuse. Yet, still they talked about "koi toh hona chahiye companionship ke liye". I used to tell them that it's better to work for yourself and do something good, rather than waiting for someone to feed you while you just sit and grumble "ki bahut bura ho raha hai mere saath". Then I realised that women are not taught to, neither do they want to, live alone.

Am I the only responsible one — bearing the burden of my marriage — while the other person can sit, relax and just assume that he is a child of his mother and now the responsibility has to be taken care of by me? Do these men take permission before going out with their friends before they get married? Why do they become so obedient after marriage? Self-pity is the worst thing you can do to yourself. Women must get out of the self-pitying mode and change their weaknesses into their strengths. They must not boast about having the fortitude to be a part of a bad marriage because it becomes a bad example for coming generations.



Women always say that they stay in a bad marriage for the sake of their children. But they forget that the children need to live in a positive environment to grow and to become healthy, secure people.

Right now, I'm talking to women like me who are going through rough times. I keep telling them to concentrate on themselves, leave their oppressors and move on.

Don't think about "society" because society won't come to feed you and pay your bills. Society can only be pacified to an extent but that extent will never be enough.

But often women are lazy. They are ready to sit and eat in a house where they are being tortured, ill-treated and exploited and say "koi baat nahi, auraton ko adjust karna padta hai". I don't agree to this attitude at all. If I'm not exploiting someone, then I definitely won't accept it for myself. Does adjustment mean suffering?

I have often wondered why women accept their lot, live in situations of oppression and tolerate good-for-nothing men who do not earn, do not support them and abuse them. Not only do they tolerate them, but they also seem to believe they cannot live without these men. This is how we are socialised. I, too, dreamed of a white wedding, a loving husband and a lovely child. And I had it for a bit. Or so I thought.

Women need to realise that the dreams they have been fed are poisonous lies. That the realities of living with a man, dealing with his family, giving birth to and bringing up a child are difficult and constitute a daily grind. The sooner they unlearn these fantasies the better. I had the strength to get out. A college classmate of mine killed herself in a bad marriage. She haunts me every day.

Women need to realise that you only have yourself at the end of the day and you need to live with and for yourself. Women are taught to be relational, to always put somebody else before themselves — be it the father, the brother, the husband, or the children. But sometimes you have to put yourself first. Sometimes it is a matter of life or death. Women need to choose life.

Karen Ribeiro is a single mother of a beautiful boy and works in a private school. She is still going through the process of divorcing her husband.

Restless Congress

The Congress is witnessing near-anarchy. Rahul Gandhi is once again travelling abroad while a senior party functionary has been admitted to a private nursing home in New Delhi following an income tax notice asking the grand old party to explain ₹400 crores that allegedly contravenes the legal and transparent method of funding. The biannual Rajya Sabha polls are around the corner and everyone is getting restless, using Twitter to air grievances. AICC's interim chief Sonia Gandhi has the option of reducing the number of Upper House aspirants by debaring those who lost the 2019 Lok Sabha poll, but such a measure also discourages those who braved adversity to fight the poll. Chao reigns.

Puri's optimism

In the BJP too, the ignominy of the Delhi defeat has still not gone away. During a private conversation, Union

How to manage a Rajya Sabha election

urban development and civil aviation minister Hardeep Puri was overheard saying that the move to legalise jhuggi-jhupri (JJJ) colonies helped the BJP salvage some votes and resulted in victory in eight Assembly seats. Fellow BJPwallahs from Delhi — Vijay Goyal, Dr Harsh Vardhan and Manoj Tiwari — are stunned by Puri's sunny analysis, wondering if winning eight of 70 seats could in any circumstance be called "face-saving". They wondered that if Puri's elucidation convinced the BJP leadership, he should be asked to head the Delhi BJP instead of continuing as a central minister looking after two portfolios.

Wedding bells

It's turning out to be shehnaai season for BJP leaders. Party president

J.P. Nadda's son is getting married in early March. Earlier this week Delhi and Indore saw the wedding receptions of Arun Jaitley's son Rohan and Kailash Vijayvargiya's son Kalpesh. Sudhanshu Mittal's son Devansh is also getting married. Almost each and every guest at Jaitley's son's reception got a tad emotional remembering the former minister.

Five states

Party leaders say Nadda will face a problem managing the guest list for his son's wedding. Nadda hails from Himachal Pradesh while his wife is from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. His in-laws are Bengalis while his eldest son is married into a family in Rajasthan. Nadda did his

schooling in Bihar, giving him many friends in the poll-bound state.

A PM too many?

Prasar Bharti chief A. Surya Prakash is busy criss-crossing

the country these days. However, it has little to do with work of the information and broadcasting ministry. Surya, a former journalist and currently vice-chairman of the executive council (EC) of the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (NMML), is collecting letters, personal effects, artifacts, etc. relating to 13 former Prime Ministers. As Teen Murti Bhawan in New Delhi is set to have a museum in memory of Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, H.D. Deve Gowda, I.K. Gujral and Dr Manmohan Singh, NMML has the task of collecting material on all PMs other than Nehru. NMML already has lot of ref-

erence material on Nehru. NMML sources are tight-lipped if the museum on PMs will feature incumbent Narendra Modi.

Wayward PR

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath is battling a mini-crisis of sorts and it is not the rebellion of Jyotiraditya Scindia. Nath's public relations team is causing him embarrassment. A media advisor to the CM said to have put in their papers on account of financial irregularities. A woman leader and spokesperson of the Madhya Pradesh Congress is also under a cloud. A government magazine reportedly published an article in praise of Nathuram Godse. The otherwise efficient and go-getter Nath is said to be deeply unhappy with these officials.

The writer is a keen observer of the goings-on in backrooms of power



Delhi polls a defeat for BJP's polarisation



Pavan K. Varma
Chanakya's View

Now that the dust and din of the recent Delhi Assembly elections has settled, there is scope for a considered analysis of the result, and its larger impact on national politics. This is needed because politics is a dynamic process, and even though at the micro level it may appear an inchoate mosaic with no larger inferences, a pattern does begin to emerge every time the people of the world's largest democracy exercise their mandate. To put it bluntly, I disagree with the thesis that state and national elections are a binary, and that one has nothing to do with the other. It is true that people have voted differently in state and national elections. Delhi itself proves this point. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, the same people of Delhi voted emphatically for Narendra Modi and the BJP, and AAP came not only second but third in their preferences. This voting pattern can also be seen in other states, such as, most recently, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. But, absolute compartmentalisation is a myth. Local factors may dominate choices in

elections at the state level, but voting preferences are not immune to the state of affairs at the national level. For instance, in Delhi, AAP's verifiable governance achievements was a key factor in voter choices; but the abysmal state of the national economy, where growth is low, jobs are scarce, business is down, the unorganised sector is in shambles and inflation is at a new high, were also a factor. Besides, elections in Delhi are not like any other state election. Delhi is the capital of the Republic. People from all parts of India live in the capital, and the echo chamber of what happens here is thus much bigger. Media attention is also commensurately higher, and amplifies, at a national level, the impact of the electoral battle. Therefore, even if Delhi is not even a full-fledged state, the question of who rules the city is a matter of pan-Indian interest. It must also be borne in mind that the BJP did not fight this election as though it was a routine state election. In the absence of a BJP face for chief minister, Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, the all-powerful duo, directly pitted themselves against Arvind Kejriwal. Almost the entire Central Cabinet was involved, in some way or the

Divide and rule is the only electoral card the BJP seems to have been left with. It is not as though this tactic does not pay dividends. In the Delhi elections, the BJP increased its vote share marginally, only due to the flagrant use of this plank.

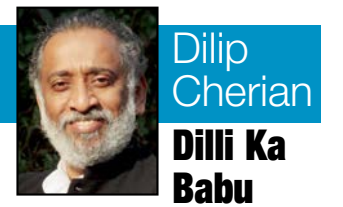
other, in the BJP's electoral onslaught. Over 200 MPs of the ruling party were harnessed into door-to-door campaigning. Reportedly, vast amounts of money and resources were at hand for the BJP's election managers. The Delhi hustings thus became an arena where the BJP mustered its ammunition as though a national outcome was at stake. If, therefore, there was a national profile to the Delhi state elections, certain inferences, which are pan-Indian in their import, must be considered. As against the BJP strategy of vitriol, abuse, vilification and open incitement to violence for the sole purpose of polarising the electorate on religious grounds, the people of Delhi overwhelmingly preferred what the AAP had to offer. Broadly, AAP's message had three basic elements, and these reflect what the people of India may also be looking for at the national level. Firstly, people want political parties to be governance-centric. They are indicating that beyond the rhetoric and slogans, concrete deliverables, which impact the quality of lives of ordinary voters,

are of pivotal importance. Secondly, people seem to want more centrist parties, which shun extreme ideologies, both of the left and the right. Such an expectation resonates with the basic ethos of our civilisational and democratic evolution, and the psyche of the voter. And, thirdly, people want a more inclusive government that abjures the endemic instability, disharmony, strife and acrimony which is an inevitable accessory to sharply polarised politics. They want to get on with their lives within the larger rubric of harmonious co-existence, so as to be better able to enjoy the dividends of the secular mainstream in peace and security. These three messages have gone out to the entire nation. We may thus be witnessing

the beginning of a national challenge to the hegemonic BJP narrative of attempting to win elections largely — if not solely — on the basis of religious polarisation, hatred and divisiveness. The BJP won the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections on the promise of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas*. The *Sabka Saath* was thrown out of the window long ago, and its epithet was written in bold letters during the Delhi elections. Now, with the economy in a serious tailspin, there is little to show for *Vikas* too. Divide and rule is thus the only electoral card the BJP seems to have been left with. It is not as though this condemnable tactic does not pay any dividends. In the Delhi elections too, the BJP increased its vote share marginally, only due to the fla-

grant use of this plank. The important point, however, is that it was not enough for the BJP to win the election. On the contrary, it was decisively trounced. The Delhi elections are important then for the twin messages, that, firstly, the BJP as an electoral machine is not invincible, and, in fact, may be increasingly vulnerable; and that the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah model of governance, where perennial instability overtakes good governance, can face a serious challenge, even at the national level. What the Opposition now needs is a credible and popular face to match the personal popularity of Mr Modi. That is still work in progress.

The writer is an author, diplomat and is in politics



Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu

'COLLECTOR' TO BE HISTORY?

Historically, since Warren Hastings introduced collectors for revenue collection in the 18th century, the term "collector" has denoted the state's power in the hinterlands. Since Independence, the role of the district collector has grown even more significant with multiple powers conferred upon the official under numerous Central and state laws on a wide range of subjects. But the term "collector" may be on its way out in Madhya Pradesh. The Kamal Nath government has constituted a high-level committee to suggest an alternative for the designation of "collector". It believes that due to the multidimensional regulatory and developmental role of the collector as the administrative and executive head of the district, a new term is needed for the position. Sources say that I.C.P. Keshari, additional chief secretary of the commerce tax department, heads the three-member committee also comprising Malay Kumar Srivastava, Manish Rastogi and Vishesh Garhpale. Preeti Maithil, the district collector of Sagar, is the member secretary of the committee. The panel has been tasked with giving recommendations after consulting all stakeholders, including members of the public. It will also explore the contours of the jurisdiction of the executive head of the district. The new term will be incorporated in the land revenue code and developmental schemes which state the collector as the district head. However, the police manual, CrPC and Arms Act remain unchanged which "district magistrate" as the district head and not "collector".

Modi stands to gain if Trump returns to power



Aakar Patel

America's President will be in Ahmedabad, Agra and New Delhi on Monday and Tuesday. He is not particularly keen to travel, and this appears to be common to most Americans. At the age of 16, I spent a year in an American village. One afternoon, there was a desk in the school that offered an exchange programme under which Americans could travel for a period abroad just as I had. If I remember it right, nobody signed up. Donald Trump since becoming President has visited 20 countries of which the majority are in Europe. He has been to France four times. He dislikes the developing world and doesn't want immigrants from what he calls "s**t-hole country", in which list he presumably includes India. He has been to Afghanistan, but only to an American military base there. India will be the first poor nation that he has visited as President and probably the first poor nation he will ever see. It will be interesting to see what his observations are, especially because he is not shy in saying impolite things. Mr Trump will be by my count the sixth President to formally visit India.

The first was Dwight D. Eisenhower, a famous World War general who became President and invented the phrase "military-industrial complex". The BBC reported that "nearly every US President on a state visit to India has emulated his itinerary: he laid flowers at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial, took in the splendour of the Taj Mahal, addressed Parliament and spoke at New Delhi's iconic Ramliya grounds, which, according to one news report, attracted 10 lakh people". An equally warm visit was the one by President Bill Clinton, who came 20 years ago. I remember that visit well, and it was amazing to see the scenes inside Parliament, where he spoke. One MP, I think it was Ramdas Athavale, currently a minister in the Narendra Modi Cabinet, was leaping over the tables to run to Mr Clinton and meet him after the speech was over. Mr Clinton had some harsh words for India at the time, related to our nuclear adventurism and tensions with Pakistan. But overall, despite the fact that it was also a Hindutva government (under Atal Behari Vajpayee) and Mr Clinton was a liberal, the visit went off well. Mr Clinton also briefly visited Pakistan as was the custom at the time, so that they would not feel bad. The reverse happened in terms of ideology when George W. Bush, from a conservative party, visited when liberal Manmohan Singh was Prime Minister. That was also a warm visit but because Mr Bush did not have the charisma of Mr Clinton (very few leaders did and do). It was not as spectacular though in terms of results.

It was seen by analysts as good for India, producing the nuclear deal. Barack Obama has come to India twice, once when Mr Manmohan Singh was PM, and then, of course, when he was served tea by Mr Modi wearing that suit with his name embroidered on it. Mr Obama is a very middle class man and wears shoes that are frequently resoled. I wonder what he thought of Mr Modi and Indians when the Indian Prime Minister appeared before him wearing that suit. Mr Obama is an intellectual and called Mr Manmohan Singh his guru. Mr Trump and Mr Modi are similar in that sense. Both are men of the people who like addressing rallies, are active on the social media, are egotistical (Mr Modi refers to himself in the third person frequently, while Mr Trump can honestly be described as a proper egomaniac). Both have been aggressively anti-immigrant. Mr Trump had a ban on Muslims travelling to the US from certain nations and Mr Modi has excluded them from his Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Unlike the Clinton visit and the Bush visit, there is no specific reason for Mr Trump to come. He was not even here for Republic Day, which is the classic invitation ruse. He will speak at a rally with Mr Modi in Ahmedabad, visit the Taj, and then fly off. There is no trade deal that will be signed. Mr Trump wants India to open up its market to American farmers, which will be difficult for Mr Modi to do. And Mr Modi has made India progressively more protectionist with import duties which makes American goods coming

in through a trade deal more complicated. India would love to get preferential access to US markets for things like garments exports, but that is not going to happen. In fact, in recent weeks, America has removed India from the list of nations that get some differential treatment. Our desire to be seen as a global power, which we are not, has certain consequences. Indian companies in Bengaluru want a more relaxed visa regime, but that is also not going to be possible given Mr Trump's anti-immigration and especially anti-brown and black skin values. So what will be the end result of the Trump visit? It will be entertainment for many (though of course not those who have been evicted from their homes in Ahmedabad) but it will not be historically significant. Mr Trump has no real affection for India or indeed any knowledge of it. The last thing is that Mr Trump may or may not be President at this time next year. The US elections are in November, and it is possible that we may have a Democrat in the White House. If that is the case, then not only will we have to write off all the personalised investment in the Trump-Modi chemistry. A Democrat in the White House will mean greater scrutiny of our actions in Kashmir and over the CAA and NRC controversy. The best thing that Mr Modi can hope for in this visit is that he is able to mobilise Indians in America to vote Republican and try and help Mr Trump return to power.

A Democrat in the White House will mean more scrutiny of our actions in Kashmir and over the CAA. The best thing that Modi can hope for in this visit is that he is able to mobilise Indians in America to vote Republican.

Aakar Patel is a writer and columnist

AN ACCIDENT, THEN A SUSPENSION

Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has overruled a recommendation of his chief secretary Tom Jose and extended the suspension of IAS officer Sriram Venkitaraman by another three months. The IAS officer was on suspension as he is accused of hitting and killing Kerala journalist K.M. Basheer in a road accident in August last year while driving his car in an inebriated state. The panel headed by Mr Jose had recommended the chief minister to not extend the suspension period further citing that the police had not filed the chargesheet even six months after the accident. Apparently, it was conveyed to the chief minister that the IAS officer could not be kept on suspension beyond six months on the basis of an FIR. But, sources say, the chief minister has decided to ignore the recommendation in view of the widely held public view that there was a concerted effort on the part of senior bureaucrats in the state administration to rescue the errant officer.

AIR INDIA'S NEW CAPTAIN

After the end of Ashwini Lohani's tenure as chairman and managing director (CMD) of Air India, the appointment of Rajiv Bansal as his successor is being viewed as a renewed divestment push of the airline by the government. This would be Mr Bansal's second stint at Air India, having served as interim CMD for three months in 2017. Then also, he had replaced Mr Lohani, who had been appointed chairman of the railway board. Mr Bansal, a 1988-batch IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre, is currently additional secretary in the ministry of petroleum and natural gas. Mr Bansal takes charge at a time when the financially strapped national carrier is looking to get new wings for the future. According to sources, Mr Bansal has a reputation for being focused and decisive. During his earlier stint at Air India, the airline's on-time performance was 95 per cent, and he drew up a phased plan to get aircraft grounded due to lack of spare parts back in the air. These talents will be much needed during the critical divestment period as the airline looks for new suitors.

By arrangement with Dawn



A.G. Noorani

A ruling that allows protest, teaches the BJP a lesson

The agitations which have swept India against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act have created precedents none imagined earlier. Women predominate, some with babies in arms. So do students. The "right to assemble peaceably and without arms" is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution of India. What is equally accepted is that it is directly related to the fundamental right to freedom of speech. What is, however, an issue is their right to assemble to express their dissent to official policies or the ideology of the party in power. Minorities, especially Muslims, have faced grave handicaps. If they assemble to support the government's line, especially on Kashmir, they are hailed as "nationalists". But, if they assemble to voice their dissent or seek redress for their grievances, they are dubbed "communalists". In their agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Muslims won the support and sympathies of many cutting across religious and political lines. Silent are the usual Uncle Toms among Muslims, some of whom vociferously support the BJP and denounce Muslims. Some have even been rewarded for this. On February 13, 2020, the Bombay High Court delivered a landmark

judgement, striking down as invalid an order by a police inspector refusing permission for an agitation. It was based on an order by an additional district magistrate. The ruling will encourage all protesters across the country and teach a lesson to the BJP government. The court said that it had to "keep in mind" that when people believe that a "particular Act is an attack on their rights ... they are bound to defend that right". It underlined that it is not for the court "to ascertain whether the exercise of such right will create a law and order problem ... This court is expected to consider the right of such persons to start agitation in a peaceful way. This court wants to express that such persons cannot be called traitors or anti-nationals only because they want to oppose one law. It will be an act of protest and only against the government for the reasons of CAA". The court noted that one of the clauses of the order prevented raising slogans, singing and beating drums. "It can be said that though the order ... appears to be against everybody, in reality the order is against persons who want to agitate, to protest against the CAA. At present, such agitations are going on everywhere and there was no whisper of agitations of other nature in this region. Thus, it can be said that there was no fairness

and the order was not made honestly." "When we are considering a proceeding like the present one, we must keep in mind that we are a democratic republic, and our Constitution has given us the rule of law and not the rule of a majority. When such an act is made, some people, maybe of a particular religion like Muslims, may feel that it is against their interest and such act needs to be opposed. It is a matter of their perception and belief, and the court cannot go into the merits of that perception or belief." The court had to examine whether such persons had the right to agitate and oppose a law. "If the court finds that it is part of their fundamental right, it is not open to the court to ascertain whether the exercise of such a right will create a law-and-order problem. That is the problem of a political government. In such cases, it is the duty of the government to approach such persons, have talks with them and try to convince them." The authorities cannot be of the view that only one particular community or religion had an interest in opposing the law. "Many persons of all the communities may feel that it is against the interest of mankind, humanity or basic human values." The US Supreme Court had ruled

on these very lines as far back as in 1937. Dirk De Jonge was convicted under a statute, which made it a criminal offence to advocate "crime, physical violence, sabotage or any unlawful acts or methods as a means of accomplishing industrial change or political revolution". The charge against him was that he had participated in a meeting of the Communist Party, of which he was an admitted member. It had been held to protest against brutality and unlawful activity by the police and conditions of the jail. Speaking for a unanimous court, Chief Justice Hughes said that "peaceable assembly for lawful discussion, however unpopular the sponsorship, cannot be made a crime ... the holding of meetings for peaceable political action cannot be proscribed". Further, the right of peaceable assembly "is a right cognate to those of free speech and free press and is equally fundamental". The US Supreme Court thus linked the right to assemble peaceably without arms to the right to freedom of speech and expression. Processions are described as an assembly in motion. They can make history. Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi has become the name for similar mass meetings in protests all over India.

IN BRIEF



Switching heart's fuel source helps cells regenerate

Washington: As revealed by a new study, switching from fats to glucose as a fuel source for the heart muscles could help the organ regenerate when its cells that are responsible for contraction die out as a result of heart failure caused by viruses, toxins, high blood pressure, or heart attacks. The study led by UT Southwestern researchers, published in *Nature Metabolism*, could open whole new avenues for treating a variety of heart conditions arising out of cardiac cell damage. Current pharmaceutical treatments for heart failure — including ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers — centre on trying to stop a vicious cycle of heart muscle loss as strain further damages remaining heart muscle, causing more cells to die, explains UT Southwestern physician-researcher Hesham A. Sadek, M.D., Ph.D., the J. Fred Schoellkopf, Jr. Chair in Cardiology. There are no existing treatments for rebuilding heart muscle. Nine years ago, Sadek and his colleagues discovered that mammalian hearts can regenerate if they're damaged in the first few days of life, spurred by the division of cardiomyocytes, the cells responsible for a heart's contractile force. However, this capacity is completely lost by 7 days old. Subsequent research has shown that this change in regenerative capacity appears to stem from damaging free radicals generated by organelles known as mitochondria, which power cells. These free radicals damage cells' DNA, a phenomenon called DNA damage, which prompts them to stop dividing. The shift in free radical production appears to be spurred by a change in what mitochondria in the cardiomyocytes consume for energy. — ANI



Natural sugars in breast milk linked to height, weight

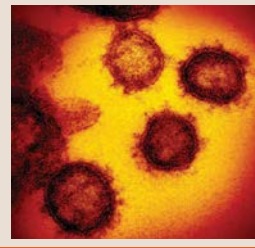
Washington: According to a recent study, researchers found that human milk oligosaccharides (HMOs), a component found in breast milk may influence a child's growth from infancy through early childhood. The study also suggested that maternal obesity may affect HMO composition in breast milk. The study was supported by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The study was led by Lars Bode, Ph.D., at the University of California, San Diego. It appears in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. HMOs are complex sugars found in breastmilk, but infants do not digest them directly. Instead, HMOs serve as prebiotics by influencing the composition of the gut microbiome. Previous studies have found that HMOs may also protect infants from disease-causing microbes. Approximately 150 types of HMOs are known, and mothers have unique combinations and concentrations of them in their breastmilk, influenced in part by genetics and the types of HMO-processing enzymes they have. Researchers evaluated approximately 800 pairs of mothers and children in a Finnish study of child development. The researchers analyzed the content of HMOs in breastmilk samples, among them two HMOs that are now added to some commercial infant formulas: 2'-fucosyllactose (2'FL) and Lacto-N-neo-LnNT. — ANI

Window of opportunity to stem virus 'narrowing' after cases in Iran, Lebanon World must act fast to check nCoV: WHO

Geneva/London, Feb. 22: The window of opportunity to contain wider international spread of the epidemic of the new coronavirus disease is closing, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned, after cases were reported in Iran and Lebanon. Adhanom Tedros, WHO director-general, asked whether the outbreak is at a "tipping point" after new cases and deaths in Iran from COVID-19, and cases in Lebanon and Canada, said that he still believed the virus spread could be stopped. "Although the window of opportunity is narrowing to contain the outbreak, we still have a chance to contain it," he said. "If we don't, if we squander the opportunity, then there will be a serious problem on our hands," he said. China has reported more

More than 200 cases in Shandong

- ▶ The WHO director-general voiced concern about a rise in infections in the northern province of Shandong — where more than 200 cases were announced earlier in prisons
- ▶ Lebanon confirmed its first coronavirus case and said it was monitoring two other potential cases after a 45-year-old woman arriving from the holy city of Qom in Iran tested positive



than 75,500 cases and 2,239 deaths, Mr Tedros said. He voiced concern about an increase in infections in the northern province of Shandong — where more than 200 cases were announced earlier in prisons — and said it was seeking more information. Twenty-six other countries have reported 1,151 cases and eight deaths. "Although the total number of cases outside China remains relatively small,

we are concerned about the number of cases with no clear epidemiological link, such as travel history to China or contact with a confirmed case," he said. He said it was "very concerning" that Iran had reported 18 cases and four deaths in just the past two days, adding that the WHO was supplying testing kits to Tehran. Mr Tedros, asked whether sanctions imposed on Iran for its

nuclear program might hamper delivery of medical aid, said: "Emergency situations are excluded." Lebanon confirmed its first coronavirus case on Friday and said it was monitoring two other potential cases after a 45-year-old woman arriving from the holy city of Qom in Iran on Thursday tested positive, health minister Hamad Hassan said. Dr Sylvie Briand, director of WHO global infectious hazard prepared-

ness, referring to Iran, said: "The concern is more about the fact that we seen an increase in cases, a very rapid increase in a matter of a few days...What is the extent of this outbreak and the transmission in Iran?" "Also because we have seen other cases picked up in Lebanon and Canada, so we are just wondering also about the potential of more exported cases in the coming days." There are different patterns of transmission in different places, Dr Briand added: "We have lots of diversity showing different phases." Mr Tedros said that a WHO-led team of international experts and their Chinese counterparts would visit Wuhan. The full team, which arrived in China last weekend, includes experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). — Reuters

Light dinner and heavy breakfast can lead to slim body

Washington, Feb. 22: A recent study revealed that eating a light dinner and a heavy breakfast is a way for a healthy and fit body, as the regime may prevent obesity and high blood sugar by burning more calories. The human body expends energy when we digest food for the absorption, digestion, transport and storage of nutrients. This process, known as diet-induced thermogenesis (DIT), is a measure of how well human metabolism is working and can differ depending on mealtime. "Our results show that a meal is eaten for breakfast, regardless of the number of calories it contains, creates twice as high diet-induced thermogenesis as the same meal consumed for dinner," said the lead researcher Juliane Richter.



▶ **This finding is significant for all people as it underlines the value of eating enough at breakfast, according to the lead researcher**

"This finding is significant for all people as it underlines the value of eating enough at breakfast," added Richter. The researchers conducted a three-day laboratory study of 16 men who consumed a low-calorie breakfast and high-calorie dinner, and vice versa in a second round. — ANI

Scientists: Cancer scanner can diagnose dementia

London, Feb. 22: A cancer scanner could be used to identify some of the earliest and most difficult to diagnose forms of dementia, scientists have said. Doctors at University Hospital of Wales (UHW) in Cardiff said its PET scanner could show signs of the condition in people who are not showing symptoms. About 47% of people in Wales living with dementia do not have a diagnosis. The Welsh government said it is investing £10m a year in its dementia action plan. Positron emission tomography (PET) scans — using a radioactive tracer drug — reveal how your tissues and organs are functioning. A pilot has been taking place across the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) over the past few months for patients who are suspect-

ed of having dementia. Prof Chris Marshall, director of Wales Research and Diagnostic PET Imaging Centre said he hopes the scanner could "give a diagnosis much earlier than the disease's progression". Dr Chinese Ivenso, chair of the old age faculty at the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Wales, said the country was the only part of the UK which does not test in this way. "When it comes to diagnosing dementia, Wales has been lagging behind for some time," she said. "A PET scanner offers

patients the opportunity to have an earlier diagnosis, and in certain cases it offers a more accurate diagnosis. In doing that we can offer patients an opportunity to have psychological support and lifestyle interventions earlier in the course of their illness." In Wales 47% of people living with dementia are undiagnosed, compared to 34% in the rest of the UK. Dr Ivenso said the machine was also capable of spotting signs of dementia in people who hadn't yet experienced symptoms, although dementia screening was not currently recommended by NICE. Having dementia means that you have plaques in your brain that shouldn't be there. Sometimes early on, if these plaques start developing in the brain than the PET scanner can pick that up. — Agencies

Action plan
▶ About 47% of people in Wales living with dementia do not have a diagnosis. The Welsh govt is investing a big sum in its action plan.

'A week of binging on junk food enough to damage brain'

Canberra, Feb. 22: Eating a diet of junk food for just one week was enough to damage part of the brain that stops us eating more when we are already full, research suggests. Study participants who ate an abundance of fast food and high-fat milkshakes had increased cravings for more after seven days. They performed worse on cognitive tests, with results suggesting an area of the brain called the hippocampus was impaired. The hippocampus normally stops us from gorging on more food when we are full by suppressing memories of how tasty it is. When it's not working properly, the memories are more powerful and we are left unable to resist more cake, chocolates and

crisps in front of us, the researchers believe. The discovery sheds light on why people reach for the biscuit tin out of habit — rather than due to being hungry — and why it's so hard to get out a cycle of bad eating. Experiments on animals have shown poor diets rapidly mar the hippocampus — an area of grey matter that regulates memory and appetite. Now the phenomenon

has been demonstrated for the first time in humans. Lead author Prof Richard Stevenson, of Macquarie University in Australia, said: "When we see cake, chocolate or crisps, for example, we remember how nice they are to eat. "When we are full the hippocampus normally suppresses these memories, reducing our desire to eat. "We found lean healthy young people exposed to one week of a junk food diet developed impaired hippocampal function and relatively greater desire to eat junk food when full." The author explained: "Junk food may then act to undermine self-control by increasing desire." — Agencies

One drink a day makes you live longer: Scientists

Amsterdam, Feb. 22: Enjoying your favourite tittle every day could boost your chances of living to 90, scientists have discovered. They found men and women who enjoyed a daily drink were up to 40 per cent more likely to make it to their 90th birthday than those who were teetotal, or rarely touched booze. The age-extending effects were confined to those who stuck to one drink a day — binge drinkers died earlier. According to experts, a nightly glass of wine comes with a range of health benefits, including boosting your antioxidant count and helping with stroke prevention. And while women seem to live longer when they drink wine, for men the greatest benefit is from spirits like whisky, brandy or gin.



The study, by a team of researchers at Maastricht University Medical Centre in The Netherlands, suggests enjoying alcohol in moderation may be better for a long life than not drinking at all. Some previous studies have found similar advantages but others have ruled out any impact on longevity. The Dutch team tracked more than 5,000 men and women, most of whom were born during World War 1 of 1914-18.

When they were in their sixties and seventies, the volunteers were quizzed on their drinking habits before researchers then monitored them to see how many made it to 90. The results, published in the *Journal Age and Ageing*, showed 34 per cent of the women and 16 per cent of the men survived to that age. But when they compared daily drinkers with abstainers, they found men and women downing five to 10g of alcohol a day

were 40 per cent more likely to become a nonagenarian. Ten grammes of alcohol is roughly equivalent to a small glass of wine, a pub measure of a spirit or half a pint of beer. Drinking up to 15g a day improved volunteers' chances of reaching 90 by a slightly smaller amount. Any more than 15g and the benefits disappeared as larger daily intakes of alcohol led to premature death. UK government guidelines recommend men and women drink no more than 14 units of alcohol a week — equivalent to a daily tittle of two small brandies, a pint of medium strength lager or one 175ml glass of average strength wine of around 12 per cent. "ut if you don't drink at the moment, this isn't a reason to start," scientists warn. — Agencies

Physical exercise can lead to better mental health

Washington, Feb. 22: A new study suggested that not the money or wealth but doing physical exercises makes a person happier, which eventually leads to better mental health. The study conducted by researchers from the Oxford and Yale universities published in *The Hill* suggests that people who engage in daily physical exercises are happier than those who do not irrespective of the wealth that they possess. The researchers conducted the research through a survey of 1.2 million people and the study has been published in the medical journal — *Lancet*. The study reports that people who are active have reported about 35 days of poor mental health in a given year

while the ones who are more sedentary have reported an additional 18 days of poor mental health. Another striking finding of the study is that income and wealth seem to have a lesser impact on the happiness of the individuals contrary to popular opinion. According to the study, a sedentary person has to earn an additional USD 25,000 on average to be as happy as a person who exercises. The study published in the reputed medical journal *Lancet* has also suggested that exercising three times a week for about 30 to 60 minutes affects the happiness of individuals. The study suggests that people who engage in daily physical exercises are a happy lot. — ANI

Facial expressions not a real predictor of emotions

Washington, Feb. 22: Drawing cues from someone's facial expression might be a wrong approach to conclude about people's feelings as new research suggests that facial expressions might not be reliable indicators of emotion. The study also puts emphasis on not to trust a person's face. Aleix Martinez, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at The Ohio State University, focused on the question of "Can we truly detect emotion from facial articulations?" The answer to the question majorly came as "no, you can't". Martinez and his colleagues' work has focused on building com-

puter algorithms that analyze facial expressions. The researchers analysed the kinetics of muscle movement in the human face and compared those muscle movements with a person's emotions. They found that attempts to detect or define emotions based on a person's facial expressions were almost always wrong. "Everyone makes different facial expressions based on context and cultural background," Martinez said. And it's important to realise that not everyone who smiles is happy. Not everyone who is happy smiles. I would even go to

the extreme of saying most people who do not smile are not necessarily unhappy. And if you are happy for a whole day, you don't go walking down the street with a smile on your face. "Everyone makes different facial expressions based on context and cultural background," Martinez said. And it's important to realise that not everyone who smiles is happy. Not everyone who is happy smiles. I would even go to

lies in the possibility of missing the real emotion or intent in another person, and then making decisions about that person's future or abilities. After analyzing data about facial expressions and emotion, the research team — which included scientists from Northeastern University, the California Institute of Technology and the University of Wisconsin — concluded that it takes more than expressions to correctly detect emotion. If not facial expression, facial colour, for example, can help provide clues. "The human body offers other hints, too, he said: body posture, for example. — ANI



Losing strength, balance? Consult geriatric therapist

Geriatric therapist is a trained physiotherapist who deals with the physical issues related to the ageing process in the elderly. They are experienced in diagnosing physical abnormalities, restoring and maintaining physical function and mobility, thereby promoting physical activity and proper function in old people. Old age is broken into three stages: Young old (55-65 years), middle old (66-85 years), and old old (85 years and older). On consultation with a geriatric therapist, a patient can expect to: Undergo a physical examination and evaluation, including a health history and certain testing procedures, including evaluation of posture, movement and flexibility, and of muscle and joint motion and performance, balance and coordination. Receive a clinical diagnosis, prognosis, plan of care and short and long-term goals. Receive physical therapy treatment and intervention based on the therapist's evaluation and diagnosis. Receive self-management recommendations. As people age, they tend to lose flexibility, strength, balance, coordination and proprioception (joint position sense) so maintaining the desired level of fitness becomes challenging. Loss of these functions could lead to a fall that could cause serious injury and increase their level of dependence. The main goal of geriatric therapist is to help restore and improve functionality, reduce pain and increase mobility for better strength and balance. Geriatric therapist helps in the following ways: Reduce or eliminate joint aches and pains; restore or increase strength of muscles; improve sensation after sensory loss; improve joint proprioception. A geriatric therapist can also help in conditions like: ARTHRITIS: Strength training and exercise prescribed by the therapist can help alleviate the symptoms of arthritis. OSTEOPOROSIS: A progressive bone disease characterized by a decrease in bone mass and density, it can lead to an increased risk of fractures. Physical therapy and a regular exercise program help control the effects of this condition. PARKINSON'S DISEASE: It is a chronic disease of the nervous system. Early physical interventions can always prevent the severe symptoms of stage 4. CANCER: Proper rehabilitation techniques done by a physical therapist can help alleviate some of the pain associated with cancer.



Rimpay Maini
Fitness level

▶ As people age, they tend to lose flexibility, strength, balance and coordination, maintaining the desired level of fitness is a challenge. Loss of these functions may lead to a fall that could cause serious injury.

The writer is a physiotherapist AktivHealth

The Sheena Bora murder mystery: Subterfuge or sabotage?

Rakesh Maria
extract

Who was the murdered girl? The ill-fated girl whose family had not missed her for three years? Who was responsible for her disappearance? Why was she eliminated? The answers to these questions were shocking and ghastly.

The victim was a young girl called Sheena Bora and the killer was Indrani Mukerjea, her own flesh and blood! Indrani's driver, Shyamwar Pintu Rai, in custody of the Khar police, had spilled the beans. Indrani was a high profile headhunter who had turned a TV channel promoter and executive after her marriage with media baron, Peter Mukerjea.

The three-year-old can had crossed its expiry date. As the lid lifted, the worms began to wriggle out. They would soon surprise and delight softly-lit drawing rooms, plush boardrooms and hungry newsmen. They would reach television studios, media houses, cocktail and dinner circuits. They would slither into the homes of millions of ordinary viewers through their TV screens, tickle or revolt them into taking note, and succeed in getting them hooked like addicts to their daily fix — a concoction of a soap-cum-reality show, and add spice to their quotidian fare of entertainment...

With some of their own ilk in the dock, the media was bound to have a field day...

On the evening of 7 September 2015, I questioned Peter Mukerjea and straightaway confronted him on his inaction after his son Rahul had informed him about the sudden disappearance of Sheena.

"What is your educational qualification?" I asked Peter.

"I am from the Doon School and I have done my University education from London," he answered.

"I don't believe it! *Tu bahot bada gadha hai!* (You are a big donkey!)" I said to him, slipping into my Hindi. I was disgusted.

'Your son comes and tells you that his fiancée — your stepdaughter or sister-in-law or whatever you call her — is missing. And you do nothing about it?' I asked him.

'No, sir. Not that I did nothing,' said Peter. 'What did you do?' I asked. 'Sir, I had told Deven!'

"Why, sir?" Peter managed to ask me after a long silence. He was obviously shocked. No one must have ever addressed him the way I had.

"Your son comes and tells you that his fiancée — your stepdaughter or sister-in-law or daughter-in-law or whatever you call her — is missing. And you do nothing about it?" I asked him.

"No, sir. Not that I did nothing," said Peter.

"What did you do?" I asked him.

"Sir, I had told Deven!" Peter answered looking at Deven Bharti, Joint CP (Law and Order). I thought he had not understood my question and so I repeated it. "You did what?" Peter answered that he and Indrani had told Deven Bharti about Sheena's disappearance after Rahul had expressed his grievance. Now there was a deafening silence in the room. The proverbial pin-dropping type. I looked at Deven with a quizzical look on my face, but he was poker-faced. And silent. I looked around the room and sensed that even the others were taken aback at Peter's disclosure. They all tried to look as if nothing of consequence had happened.

Deven Bharti was in charge of the functioning of all the police stations in Mumbai city and I thought it would be inappropriate to question him in front of all his subordinate officers. However, why had he not divulged this vital information to me, and this despite he and I meeting on a daily basis and even travelling together to the Khar police station! He had never told me

that he knew Peter and Indrani! Even when I was protesting that I did not know them and the media was unnecessarily pointing accusatory fingers at me! How do I end this embarrassing situation without giving Peter an advantage, I kept thinking. In a stern voice, I told Peter, 'I do not believe you. You are telling lies. I am giving you time until tomorrow afternoon to come clean. Otherwise, the law will fall heavily on you.' He was then ushered out of the room.

Much as I wanted to ask Deven Bharti's explanation, I could not get the opportunity at the police station. When I emerged out of the police station, the media was there to seek details from me as usual. I informed them that we were probing the financial angle in the case with the assistance of forensic auditors, tax consultants and officers who had EOW working experience and that we had also requested the central agencies to assist us in the matter. In fact, it was under my directions that the investigating team sent a letter to the Enforcement Directorate, asking them to probe into Peter Mukerjea's financial transactions.

That night I couldn't sleep a wink. The thought uppermost on my mind was to find out the exact meaning of what Peter had told me in the evening. It meant that Peter Mukerjea knew Deven Bharti on first name terms! And I had not known this all these days! Moreover, Deven Bharti had not thought it fit to tell me even once that the Mukerjeas were close to him. On the contrary, whenever I would discuss with him the mystery of the non-registration of the missing complaint or the accidental death report, he would keep his silence. And this from my Joint CP (L&O)? At the time of Sheena's disappearance, Deven Bharti was the Additional CP in the Crime Branch! He could have done so much then itself to look for Rahul's girlfriend! It was imperative that I get to the bottom of it all, without upsetting the investigating team that was doing a good job. I needed

to do some homework and then confront Deven the very next day, as soon as I had finished the urgent matters on the agenda...

The morning began with these very disturbing thoughts clamouring in my head. And just as I was gearing up for the day, and contemplating how I should get to the bottom of the three long years when Sheena Bora was not missed, I was no longer the Commissioner of Police of Mumbai! The responsibility of ensuring justice to Sheena Bora, and many more like her, was no longer mine...

Why had the Mumbai police not arrested Peter Mukerjea? Need they have asked this question in the first place? They could have done some basic arithmetic. After accepting the investigation, the CBI had taken fifty-two days to come to a point when they could arrest Peter. Fair enough. But then why the insistence that I should have made my team arrest Peter in the first fourteen days? And why this insinuation that I had given him a clean chit merely because the arrest was not effected in the first fourteen days? Did they ask the CBI why it had taken them so long to arrest Peter?

They should have done some more counting. When I was kicked upstairs, we had completed just fourteen days of investigation but still covered substantial ground. All the three accused who were directly involved in the offence were in our custody. Almost all the crucial witnesses were traced and were being questioned. The financial angle was being investigated. Peter who was abroad on the day of the murder, was being called to the police station every day and confronted with what the others had to say. And no one had given him a clean chit!

Excerpted from *Let Me Say It Now* with permission from the publisher, Westland

When Annapurna's dearest shishya was left bereft of breath



Shailaja Khanna
review

This is the third authorised biography on Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, a much-loved musician who has taken the simple "bansuri" to hitherto unknown heights. The book is an interesting pageturner written for the lay reader, without aspiring to be an exhaustive documentation on all aspects of Pandit Chaurasia's life. The picture etched by Saran is that of a remarkable man; simple, extremely hard working and driven, with wonderful values. His genius as a performer is skimmed over; more attention is paid to his persona as a guru.

Impressively, the book includes a foreword by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, and a prelude by Ustad Zakir Hussain — "I am glad that we the fans, admirers and worshippers of this genius spirit have a chance to know him better through this book." It is appropriate that two of the best loved classical instrumentalists of our times were chosen for this.

The book starts captivatingly, describing a memorial concert to his great guru, Annapurna Devi, in 2018, after her death, when her most celebrated disciple, Hariprasad himself, is unable to play his flute with his usual felicity. "Such a thing had never happened to him before, and yet today, his flute would not sing". The mystery is explained a few lines later; he had a heart problem and needed surgery.

The book then moves more or less sequentially, tracing Hariprasad's early life in Allahabad, moving onto his career with All India Radio in Cuttack, and finally his move to Mumbai. However, some significant phases in his life, like his first marriage and his training under Guru Annapurna, are dealt with in subsequent sections.

Sathya Saran's book focuses more on the flautist's career in film music, down to a detailed analysis on how several hit songs were constructed, the visuals accompanying the song and the background to their creation. Barely 13 pages in the book are devoted to his training with Annapurna Devi, perhaps the most significant aspect of his life as a musician. Perhaps Saran felt the earlier books on her subject by Uma Vasudev and Surjit Singh had covered this period.

Yet, the description of his years with his guru, starting in 1966, makes for fascinating reading. By this time, the maestro was a well-known flautist, playing the flute in films as well as being a solo classical musician. The book traces how he spent three years trying to connect with Guru Ma, going to meet her two or three times a month, and how she kept refusing to teach him. When she asked him to play for her, after hearing him, she said, "You are already an *ustad*. Why do you want to learn from me?" He replied he wanted to delve deep into classical music, learn from the very beginning. He even offered to give up films only to learn from her, but she replied it was wrong to turn "Lakshmi" away. Eventually, he started learning from her at 1am, through the night, as he was working all day. The book recounts how he picked up the much longer three-foot long flute which had a lower sound — "the smaller flutes are high pitched, even shrill at times. Listening to that for an hour will drive people mad", laughed the maestro.

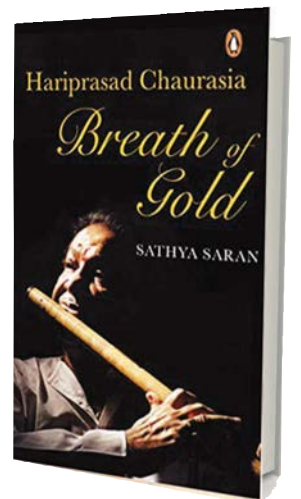
There are a couple of easily avoidable mistakes — in the early part of the book (page 24), Saran writes of the young 15-year-old Hariprasad playing in Rashtrapati Bhawan as an accompanist, when "performers of the ilk of the Dagar brothers and Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan sang the same evening." (Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan was one of the finest exponents of the sarod; he did not sing). In another instance, she quotes Ustad Zakir Hussain in the documentary film, *Bansuri Guru*, as saying "it took the work of generations of players to achieve acceptance for newer instruments like the sarod and sitar as classical instruments on par with the been and the veena... Hariprasad has in a single lifetime lifted a folk instrument to the status of a premier classical instrument" (page 138). The been and the veena are the same instrument (been is a colloquial form for veena).

The book includes some interesting photographs, including one of Hariprasad as a boy with several dignitaries including George Harrison, Ratan Tata and other artists. An inclusion, which alludes to the loyal man Hariprasad is, is of the maestro with the director of All India Radio P.V. Krishnamurthy, who was so kind to him and gave him a wide arena to grow in.

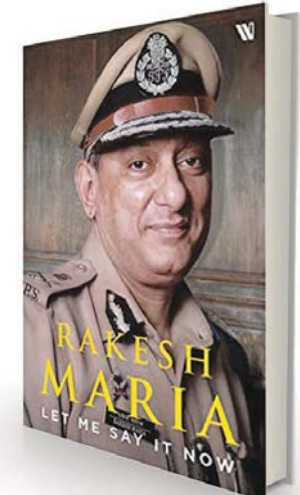
There are several fascinating insights; how every year Hariprasad dedicates the whole night prior to Lord Krishna's birth (Janamashtami) offering musical homage to the Lord; how he himself lives in the gurukul he established in Mumbai to teach worthy students free of cost, his relationship with his best friend and musical collaborator Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma and much else.

Written with a certain perspicacity and a style easy to grasp, the book is a must-read for any admirer of Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia.

Shailaja Khanna writes on music, musicians and matters of music



HARIPRASAD CHAURASIA: BREATH OF GOLD by Sathya Saran Penguin, ₹599



LET ME SAY IT NOW By Rakesh Maria Westland, ₹899

'Being human is being flawed to different degrees'

Filmmaker **PIYUSH JHA** plays a double role as storyteller — he writes crime noir. Breathlessly paced, Jha's latest book, *Girls of Mumbaistan*, touches a chord with the reader for its compassionate portrayal of everyday characters as well as its rich detailing, humour and nerve. Jha shared with **SUCHETA DASGUPTA** what makes him tick and how he gets the ideas for his stories.



Web/OTT show. Prateik Babbar is playing Inspector Virkar.

What was your first story?

The first story I wrote was called "Lukkhas Anonymous". The word, *lukkha*, in Hindi, is slang for wastrel and the story was about three college-goers who nurture the American dream while ignoring all that their own country has to offer them. It was never published, but it turned into the screenplay of my first film as a director/writer, *Chalo America*. In the first book that I published, *Mumbaistan*, the first novella I wrote was, "Bomb Day". "Bomb Day" is all about the imagined scenario — what if there were more attackers who came in during 26/11? What if they were to resurface in Mumbai to create havoc again?

What is special about Mumbai? What is your favourite place in the city?

Any place where you spend your childhood occupies a special, emotional space in your heart. I grew up in Bombay (Colaba) in the 1980s and it truly was a fascinating city, any which way you looked at it.



Glamorous, dangerous, generous, romantic — Bombay had it all. As the city metamorphosed into Mumbai, my love grew stronger. The desire to preserve the city in a sense grew stronger. My favourite place in the city would have to be the back streets of Colaba and the Fort Area.

Who is your favourite crime writer?

Recently, I have been fascinated with the writing of Gillian Flynn (of *Gone Girl* fame). Perhaps it is her subliminal influence that led me to venture into the genre known as domestic noir with my new book, *Girls of Mumbaistan*.

Do you write every day? Describe your favourite writing space.

I try and get about 500 to 1,000 words on the page in a day. I don't work on my books or stories every day, although I certainly aim to. But what I do is a lot of reading on the subject — social crimes, in particular, and social mores. That's where my characters come from — reality. Nothing fires my imagination as much as the bizarre crime stories one comes across in newspapers and the hidden stories of real-life people.

Who is a better muse — the cop or the anti-social?

Both. Being human is being flawed to different degrees. And it is in the circumstances created by flaws and virtues that most of our lives get defined and so it is with cops and villains of my books. Sub-Inspector Rani Kumar, a character I've created in my latest book, *Girls of Mumbaistan*, for instance, is a well-meaning cop but because she is a transgender from the Hijra community, her behaviour will be guided equally by her intentions as they will be by circumstances. Sometimes, even the good person can land himself in a spot if circumstances are adverse.

A harried office-going housewife, a Bangladeshi domestic, a transwoman inspector — your choice of protagonists is pretty diverse in your new book, even though they all tend to belong to the feminine gender. Any particular reason you chose to write about the "girls" of Mumbaistan?

In the past, women had featured in my novels as pivotal characters but not necessarily as the protagonist but now, given the changes around us, seemed to be a good time to explore intrepid women full of chutzpah, female characters who take charge of their destiny; the true "girls of Mumbaistan" in my eyes.

Any ideas for a prospective detective story series based on any one of those characters?

Yes. I'm developing Sub-Inspector Rani Kumar, Mumbai's first transgender cop, into a full-blown novel and web-series, and maybe even a film. Hopefully, you'll see her onscreen soon.

Your stories are also packed with a lot of action and suspense. How do you differentiate between filming action and writing it?

In novels, the description goes beyond the external — it goes into the mind of the person more deeply than film writing allows you to. You can describe the character's thoughts and feelings. When you are writing for films, you describe the externals in greater detail. You can't take a camera into the character's head. The character's feelings and thoughts are understood through his actions and facial expressions. So, you have to provide cues to the actors and create pegs on which the construction of the character for the visual world can be done.

As a writer, how do you recharge your batteries?

I dabble in designing upcycled furniture and also I collect vintage vinyl records and vintage audio equipment like turntables, gramophones, and spool-decks and so on.

What makes a good noir story?

Intrigue, intrigue, and intrigue.

IN BRIEF

Dozens detained as Kazakhs protest

Almaty: The police in Kazakhstan detained dozens of activists on Saturday after two opposition groups announced plans to hold anti-government protests in the oil-rich Central Asian country. A journalist saw police detain at least ten activists from the unregistered Democratic Party, who were attempting to hold a protest in the largest city Almaty. Eyewitnesses said that police had detained up to 70 people, who were en route to the site where the group said it would hold a protest. Authoritarian Kazakhstan has long faced criticism from local and international rights groups for its restrictive laws regulating demonstrations. Zhanbolat Mamay, a filmmaker and prominent figure in the Democratic Party was arrested and sentenced to three days in administrative detention on Friday. Mamay said 10 members of his group had received sentences of up to five days in detention earlier this week.

South Sudan's rivals form govt

Juba: South Sudan opened a new chapter in its fragile emergence from civil war on Saturday as rival leaders formed a coalition government that many observers prayed would last this time around. A day after President Salva Kiir dissolved the previous government, opposition leader Riek Machar was sworn in as his deputy, an arrangement that twice collapsed in fighting during the conflict that killed nearly 400,000 people. Kiir declared "the official end of the war, and we can now proclaim a new dawn". Peace is "never to be shaken ever again", the president said, adding that he had forgiven Machar and asking for Machar's forgiveness, to applause. He called on their respective Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups to do the same.

Thousands hit streets in Algiers

Algiers: Several thousand people gathered in the Algerian capital on Saturday on the first anniversary of a protest movement that seeks an overhaul of the political system and forced the former president to resign. Protesters shouted "the people want the fall of the regime" and "we have come to get rid of you", referring to the country's rulers. "No to military power, civil not military state" was written on one banner, referring to the authority exercised by the high military command since the country's independence from France in 1962. Mass protests first erupted on February 22 last year, in response to president Abdelaziz Bouteflika announcing he intended a run for a fifth term — despite being debilitated by a 2013 stroke. Less than six weeks later, he stepped down.

RYANAIR CEO SPARKS ROW OVER MUSLIMS

London: Muslim men should be profiled at airports as terrorists will "generally be of a Muslim persuasion", Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary said in an interview published Saturday, sparking accusations of racism. "Who are the bombers?" the budget airline's controversial chief executive said while discussing airport security in the interview with the *Times* newspaper. "They are going to be single males travelling on their own... If you are travelling with a family of kids, on you go; the chances you are going to blow them all up is zero." "You can't say stuff, because it's racism, but it will generally be males of a Muslim persuasion. Thirty years ago it was the Irish." A spokesman from the Muslim council of Britain accused O'Leary of "Islamophobia". O'Leary was "encouraging racism", Labour MP Khalid Mahmood told the newspaper. "In Germany this week a white person killed nine people. Should we profile white people to see if they're being fascists?" The Ryanair CEO is known for his controversial views and has floated proposals to charge fliers to use the toilet during Ryanair flights. — Agencies



Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders meets supporters at Santa Ana, California, on Friday. — AP

Stay out of poll: Sanders to Putin

2016 again? Russia stirring chaos in election, helping Trump and Bernie: US Intel

Washington, Feb. 22: Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders warned Russia on Friday to stay out of the 2020 White House election after US officials had told him Moscow was trying to aid his campaign. "The intelligence community is telling us they are interfering in this campaign, right now, in 2020. And what I say to Mr Putin, if elected president, trust me you are not going to be interfering in American elections," Sanders told reporters in Bakersfield, California. However, the Kremlin denied Russia was interfering in the US presidential campaign to boost Trump's re-election chances. Sanders' response was a sharp contrast from that of President Donald Trump, who has pushed back at the assessment of US intelligence agencies that Russia has interfered in elections on his behalf. Trump told supporters in Las Vegas that he heard Democrats were trying to "start a rumour ... that Putin wants to make sure I get elected." "Listen to this, so doesn't he want to see who the Democrat is going to be? Wouldn't he rather have, let's say Bernie?" Trump asked. Sanders and his wife,

MIKE BLOOMBERG said on Friday he'd free three women from confidentiality agreements that bar them from speaking publicly about sexual harassment or discrimination suits filed against him over the last three decades. His remarks come amid pressure from rival Elizabeth Warren to allow the women to share their claims publicly.

Jane, in 1988 spent their honeymoon in the Soviet Union, Trump noted. In a statement issued by the Sanders campaign, the

leading Democratic presidential contender condemned Trump's approach to continued reports of foreign interference in US elections. "Unlike Donald Trump, I do not consider Vladimir Putin a good friend. He is an autocratic thug who is attempting to destroy democracy and crush dissent in Russia," Sanders said. "Let's be clear, the Russians want to undermine American democracy by dividing us up and, unlike the current president, I stand firmly against their efforts, and any other foreign power that wants to interfere in our election." — AP

US Prez wants to block Bolton's book

Washington, Feb. 22: President Donald Trump has told his staff that he will look to block the release of John Bolton's upcoming book over claims that their discussions were classified, adding that his former national security adviser is a "traitor". *The Washington Post* reported. Trump has specifically insisted to aides that Bolton's book, *The Room Where It Happened: A*

UN CHIEF: SYRIA NIGHTMARE MUST END

United Nations, Feb. 22: The "man-made humanitarian nightmare" in Syria's Idlib province must end now, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said on Friday, but did not offer any specific plan for curbing the bloodshed in the final rebel holdout. Russian air strikes are bolstering a Syrian government offensive that has forced nearly one million civilians to flee — the biggest wave of displacement of the nine-year conflict. "This man-made humanitarian nightmare for the long-suffering people of Syria must stop. It must stop now," Guterres said. "The message is clear: There is no military solution for the Syrian crisis. The only possible solution remains political." He recalled that he had repeatedly called for an "immediate ceasefire" in Idlib, and urged all parties to avoid any escalation in the fighting. "It is crucial to break the vicious circle of violence and suffering," he said. Since December, about 900,000 people have been displaced by the fighting, including more than 500,000 children. "An estimated 2.8 million people in northwest Syria require humanitarian assistance," Guterres said, launching an appeal for an additional \$500 million in donations to help the displaced. Meanwhile, Russian daily newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reported that Turkey has prevented four Russian military aircraft, including two bombers, from crossing its airspace into Syria. — Agencies

UK PASSPORTS BACK TO BLUE FROM MARCH

London, Feb. 22: Britain will start re-introducing traditional blue passports next month, the interior ministry said on Saturday, replacing the burgundy European Union documents that have been in use since 1988. Reverting to the dark blue of pre-EU days has been a point of pride for many Britons who voted to leave the bloc in a 2016 referendum — even though the new passport will be made by a Franco-Dutch firm. "By returning to the iconic blue and gold design, the British passport will once again be entwined with our national identity and I cannot wait to travel on one," home secretary (interior minister) Priti Patel said in a statement. Britain formally left the EU at the end of January and introduction of the new passport will be phased in from early March. From mid-2020, all new passports will be blue. The blue cover is a return to the original appearance of the British passport, with the colour first used in 1921. — Reuters



An Iranian walks past a mosaic mural, as another drives his motorcycle, in Tehran on Saturday. — AFP

Iran hardliners take early lead

Tehran, Feb. 22: Iranian state TV on Saturday announced the first partial results from the country's parliamentary elections, indicating a strong showing by hardliners in the capital Tehran, although authorities have not released full results or the all-important turnout figure. Friday's election came after months of steeply escalating tensions between Iran and its decades-old arch foe the United States. Voters had been widely expected to stay away in droves, disillusioned over unfulfilled promises and struggling to cope in a country whose economy has buckled under harsh US sanctions. By mid-morning on Saturday, 1,063,860 votes had been counted in 41 constituencies across Iran, according to figures released by the National Elections Committee and reported by semi-official news agency ISNA. There were still 167 other constituencies to tally, said a spokesman for the committee, including bigger provinces such as Tehran and Fars. "We will try to publish the final figures on Saturday night, and if that task takes too long, on Sunday," spokesman Esmail Mousavi told state

US: 110 TROOPS WERE HURT IN IRAN ATTACK

Washington: The number of US troops who sustained traumatic brain injury when Iran launched missiles at their base in Iraq last month has risen to 110, the Pentagon said on Friday. The figure is one higher than the last toll, which was announced on February 10. All of the wounded were diagnosed with mild traumatic brain injury, the Pentagon said in a statement, adding that 77 had already returned to duty. Meanwhile 35 were taken to Germany for further evaluation, of whom 25 have been sent to the US.

MEGXIT | SHOCKS

Couple confirms surrender of the 'Sussex Royal' brand

Harry, Meghan to drop 'royal'

London, Feb. 22: Britain's Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have agreed to drop the use of the word "royal" from their future branding as a financially independent couple. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex were in talks with Buckingham Palace over complications around the use of 'Sussex Royal' as the phrase to be associated with their charitable work and other causes going forward. "While the Duke and Duchess are focused on plans to establish a new non-profit organisation, given the specific UK government rules surrounding use of the word 'royal', it has been therefore agreed that their non-profit organisation, when it is announced this spring,

will not be named Sussex Royal Foundation," a spokesperson for the couple said in a statement, issued to address the ongoing media speculation over the issue. "The Duke and Duchess of Sussex do not intend to use 'Sussex Royal' in any territory post spring 2020. Therefore, the trademark applications that were filed as protective measures, acting on advice from and following the same model for The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (William and Kate), have been removed," the spokesperson said. The spring 2020 deadline refers to March 31, unveiled earlier this week as the formal date from



File photo of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. — PTI

Archie. Harry remains sixth in line to the British throne and will retain his military ranks of Major, Lieutenant Commander and Squadron Leader, but will not use his honorary military positions or perform any official duties associated with these roles. The positions will remain unfilled during an agreed 12-month trial period for the transition, leaving an option open for him to resume those roles. Similarly, the couple will retain their His and Her Royal Highness (HRH) titles but have agreed not to use them in their new independent roles. The couple had registered the website sussexroyal.com in March last year, where they laid out details of their future

plans ahead of formal discussions with the 93-year-old monarch, Harry's grandmother. A detailed statement on the website notes that Harry and his former American actress wife will refresh their digital channels for the "next exciting phase" in their lives. "While there is not any jurisdiction by the Monarchy or Cabinet Office over the use of the word 'Royal' overseas, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex do not intend to use 'Sussex Royal' or any iteration of the word 'Royal' in any territory (either within the UK or otherwise) when the transition occurs Spring 2020," a further detailed statement on their website notes. — PTI

IN BRIEF

L'Arche founder abused 6 women

Paris: A respected Catholic figure who helped improve conditions for the developmentally disabled in multiple countries over half a century sexually abused at least six women, a report produced for his French-based charity has found. According to the report released by L'Arche International Saturday, the women's descriptions provide evidence enough to show that Jean Vanier engaged in "manipulative sexual relationships" from 1970 to 2005, usually with a "psychological hold" over the alleged victims. Vanier, a Canadian, died last year at age 90. "The alleged victims felt deprived of their free will and so the sexual activity took place under coercive conditions," it said. None of them was disabled, a significant point given the Vatican has long sought to portray any sexual relationship between religious leaders and other adults as consensual unless there was clear evidence of disability.

Frozen bird is horned lark

London: Scientists have recovered genetic material from the well-preserved remains of the bird horned lark, trapped in frozen Siberian soil, and found that the bird is 46,000-year-old, a finding that can help understand how the region transformed at the end of the last ice age.

The study, published in Communications Biology, noted that this region, the mammoth steppe, spread out over northern Europe and Asia during the last ice age, was home to now extinct species like the woolly mammoth and the woolly rhinoceros. According to researchers, including those from Stockholm University, this ecosystem was a mosaic of habitats such as steppe grasslands, tundra, and coniferous forest. They said at the end of the last ice age, the mammoth steppe was divided into habitats we know today — tundra in the north, taiga in the middle, and steppe in the south.

Indonesia scouts' flood toll rises to 8

Yogyakarta (Indonesia), Feb. 22: The toll from a flash flood which hit a large group of students trekking along a river in Indonesia rose to eight Saturday, officials said as rescuers searched for two still missing. Two dozen students from the group of 249 scouts were injured and taken to hospital after being hit by the flood while trekking along the Sempor river near Indonesia's cultural capital Yogyakarta on Friday. Rescuers found six bodies on Friday afternoon. "Today's search will take place until 17:30, but it all depends on the weather conditions," Yogyakarta search and rescue agency spokesman Pipit Eriyanto told AFP on Saturday. The students were from local school scout clubs. The dead were all female students aged between 12 and 15. River trekking is banned for children and teenagers during the rainy season, National Disaster Agency spokesman Agus Wibowo said. The police have launched an investigation for possible negligence in the deadly incident. At least six teachers were questioned on Saturday. Indonesia is regularly hit by floods during the rainy season, which started in late November.

2 succumb in Italy, 10 towns locked down

Iran reports fifth casualty; spurt of cases in S Korea; 2,345 deaths in China as new cases fall

Codogno (Italy), Feb. 22: Streets were deserted and residents warned to keep out of an emergency room on Saturday in an Italian town placed under lockdown as a second death from coronavirus sparked fears throughout the region. "No entry" read the sign on the emergency room in the small town of Codogno with a population of 15,000 where three people have already tested positive for the virus, including one 38-year old man now on life support. On Saturday, Italian news agency ANSA reported a second death from the virus in the Lombardy region. It came one day after the death of a 78-year-old retired bricklayer from the Padua area, who was the first local person in Europe to die.

Fifth death in Iran Tehran, Feb. 22: Iranian health authorities on Saturday reported a fifth death from the new virus, and said the fatality was from among 10 new confirmed cases in Iran. So far, 28 cases have been confirmed in Iran, including the five who died. People are being treated for the virus in at least four different cities, including Tehran.

8-fold rise in S Korea Seoul, Feb. 22: South Korea on Saturday reported an eight-fold jump in viral infections in four days to 433, most of them linked to a church and a hospital in and around the country's fourth-largest city, where health workers scrambled to screen more than 9,000 worshippers. There's concern that the toll, currently at two, could grow.

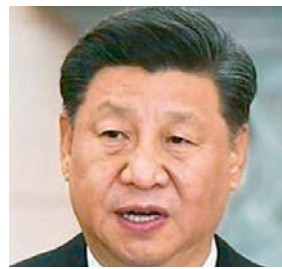
109 more die in China Beijing, Feb. 22: The death toll in China's novel coronavirus climbed to 2,345 with 109 more deaths reported, while the confirmed cases rose to 76,288. A total of 397 new confirmed cases of Covid-19 were reported on Friday, while 109 deaths were reported from 31 provincial-level regions. Among the deaths, 106 were from the Hubei Province, one each from Hebei province, Shanghai and Xinjiang. Hubei Province reported 366 new confirmed cases on Friday, the provincial health commission said Saturday. The latest report brought the total confirmed cases in the hard-hit province to 63,454, it said. All over China, 20,659 patients infected with the virus have been discharged from hospital after recovery by the end of Friday, NHC said. — Agencies



A pharmacist wearing a protective respiratory mask tends to a customer in Codogno, southeast of Milan, on Saturday. — AFP

Appreciate generosity: Xi to Gates for \$100m aid

Beijing, Feb. 22: Chinese President Xi Jinping has written a letter expressing thanks to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the organisation's "generosity" and support tackling a deadly epidemic, state media said Saturday. Earlier this month, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation committed up to \$100 million for the global response to the outbreak. "I deeply appreciate the act of generosity of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and your letter of solidarity to the Chinese people at such an important moment," Xi wrote in the letter, according to official news agency Xinhua. China is at a "critical moment" in the fight against the virus, he said. Millions remain under lockdown in central Hubei province, where the virus emerged in December, although new hotspots were found in several prisons and hospitals on Friday. Nearly 400 new cases were reported nationwide in China on Saturday — less than half the number of new cases the previous day. "We have rallied the whole nation and adopted a string of unprecedented measures to contain and mitigate the epidemic and treat the sick," Xi wrote. "These extraordinary measures are delivering substantial results," he said. The Gates Foundati-



Xi Jinping

I DEEPLY appreciate the act of generosity of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and your letter of solidarity to the Chinese people at such an important moment.

XI JINPING, Chinese President

on said the funding will be used to strengthen detection, isolation and treatment efforts, including protecting at-risk populations and developing vaccines and diagnostics. The foundation said it would direct \$20 million to organisations like the World Health Organisation, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Health Commission of China and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. — AFP

WOMAN WITH NO VIRUS SYMPTOMS INFECTS 5 OF KIN

Wuhan, Feb. 22: A 20-year-old Chinese woman from Wuhan, the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, travelled 675 km north to Anyang where she infected five relatives, without ever showing signs of infection, Chinese scientists reported on Friday, offering new evidence that the virus can be spread asymptomatically. The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, offered clues about how the coronavirus is spreading, and suggested why it may be difficult to stop. "Scientists have been asking if you can have this infection and not be ill? The answer is apparently, yes," said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. What's different in this study is that it offers a lab experiment of sorts, Schaffner said. — Agencies

Lack of preparedness in Africa alarms WHO

Addis Ababa, Feb. 22: The World Health Organisation warned Saturday that African health systems would be ill-equipped to respond to the deadly coronavirus outbreak should cases start to proliferate on the continent. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on African Union member states "to come together to be more aggressive in attacking" the virus, known as Covid-19. "Our biggest concern continues to be the potential for Covid-19 to spread in countries with weaker health systems," Tedros, speaking by video link from Geneva, said at a

meeting of African health ministers at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The outbreak which began in December has already killed more than 2,200 people and infected more than 75,500 in China. More than 1,150 people have also been infected outside China, although Egypt is the only African country to have recorded a confirmed case. There have been more than 200 suspected cases in the WHO's AFRO region, which includes most African countries, though nearly all have been confirmed negative, regional director Matshidiso Rebe-

ipment such as respiratory support machines that are, as you know, in short supply in many African countries and that's a cause for concern," he said. AU Commission chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat told officials to take "drastic preventive and control measures". "Our dear continent, Africa, is particularly at risk, given its relatively fragile health systems," he said. African countries have been scrambling to develop the capacity to test for Covid-19. In three weeks, the number of African countries capable of conducting their own tests

has jumped from two to 26, Moeti said. Several African airlines, including Kenya Airways, have suspended flights to China, although the continent's biggest carrier Ethiopian Airlines has kept its China routes open. Liu Yuxi, China's ambassador to the AU, on Saturday urged officials to ease travel restrictions. "I hope that everyone will stay calm and objective. Excessive panic could actually increase the disease," he said. "It is in adversity and really difficult times that you really get to know your friends." — AFP

SU DO KU

			2			
4		8	7	9		2
	3	1		4	9	
6	9	2			7	8
7		9			4	
	6	5	2	3		
8		9	3	1		6
			8			

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WHAT TO DO
Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Every puzzle has only one correct solution.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

9	5	1	4	7	3	2	8	6
2	6	3	9	8	5	4	1	7
7	8	4	6	2	1	5	3	9
6	1	8	7	5	4	9	2	3
5	9	2	8	3	6	7	4	1
3	4	7	2	1	9	6	5	8
8	7	9	3	4	2	1	6	5
4	3	5	1	6	7	8	9	2
1	2	6	5	9	8	3	7	4

SU DO KU 2

8	9	4	5	7	1	2
5			1			8
	3			7		
	6	7	1	3	8	9
	8			2		
4			7			9
3	5	8	9	2	6	7

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Did you think the SU DO KU on the left was easy? Try this. Check the solution tomorrow. Tips available at www.sudoku-kis.com DC-AGE SU DO KU FORUM: Discuss the SU DO KU puzzles printed and contribute mind teasers of your own at www.sudexel.com/forum

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

6	9	7	3	1	4	5	2	8
5	8	1	2	7	9	4	3	6
4	3	2	5	6	8	1	9	7
9	7	4	1	8	2	6	5	3
2	6	8	9	3	5	7	1	4
3	1	5	6	4	7	9	8	2
8	5	9	4	2	6	3	7	1
1	2	6	7	9	3	8	4	5
7	4	3	8	5	1	2	6	9

CLIMATE | PROTEST

Swedish activist says decision-makers still behaving as if everything is fine

Greta assails politicians for stealing future of kids

Hamburg, Feb. 22: Greta Thunberg gave a rousing speech to several thousand people as part of a climate protest in Hamburg on Friday. Thunberg said that she did not understand how politicians could look their children in the eyes as they were stealing their future. "The decision-makers are still behaving as though everything were fine and science is still being ignored," the Swedish activist told 20,000 protesters, according to police estimates. Organisers estimated 60,000 people. "This is 2020, and we need to see real action now." "If enough people get involved in making change happen, change can happen," the 17-year-old added. The event

took place on the eve of a regional election and was attended by politicians, thousands of schoolchildren, students and activists in the St. Pauli district of Hamburg. It began with a minute's silence for the victims of the shooting spree in the city of Hanau earlier this week. "We are sad, we are angry," said Yavuz Peroglu of the Kurdish umbrella organisation Nav-Dem. A performance from German hip hop group Fettes Brot preceded the Swede's speech. The participants, who demanded better climate policies, displayed posters and banners with messages such as "We will strike until you take action" and "The earth is on fire." — AFP

WHERE ARE YOU U.S.A, IS CLIMATE ACTIVISTS' QUERY

New York, Feb. 22: US-based youth climate activists on Friday drew attention to the climate protest in Hamburg, Germany, where organisers said roughly 60,000 people took part, and hoped that Americans took inspiration from their European counterparts. Fridays for Future organiser Alexandria Villaseñor of New York City shared Thunberg's tweet showing the massive crowd and asked, "Where are you USA?" — Agencies



Greta Thunberg (centre) with a placard reading 'School strike for the climate', during the 'Fridays for future' protest in St. Pauli, Hamburg. — AFP

TENDER NOTICE

ADHOC HIRING OF CIVIL VEHICLES AT VARIOUS STATIONS IN THE AOR OF CIF (V) (01 APR 2020 TO 30 SEP 2020)

HQ Victor Force intends to hire various types of vehicles i.e. Toyota Innova/Tata Safari Decor/Mahindra XUV/Tavera/ Mahendra Scorpio & any other vehicle of the same class/ boot (Non AC), Tata Sumo VICTA/Mahindra Bolero & any other vehicle of the same class/boot space (Non AC), Water Bowser, JCB, Truck 9 Ton, Tipper and Load Carrier on Adhoc Basis for the period from 01 Apr 2020 to 30 Sep 2020 at various stations in the AOR of CIF (V). Rates for the same will be fixed by a Board of Officers detailed by HQ CIF (V). Sealed quotations are required to be deposited in Tender Box on 28 Feb 2020 before 1200 hrs at 19 Rashtriya Rifles (SIKH LI), Larikpora. The format of the quotation and terms and conditions can be obtained from 19 Rashtriya Rifles Bantalaion (SIKH LI), Larikpora on any working day from 24 Feb 20 to 25 Feb 2020. Clarification, if any, can be obtained from 19 Rashtriya Rifles Battalion (SIKH LI), Larikpora on Mobile No 6005668389.

IN BRIEF

Kristofer Hivju joins *The Witcher* season 2

Los Angeles: Norwegian actor Kristofer Hivju, best known for playing Tormund Giantsbane in HBO's *Game of Thrones*, has joined the cast of the season two of Henry Cavill-fronted series *The Witcher*. According to Entertainment Weekly, Hivju will play Nivellen, who in the *Witcher* books is a man cursed to take on the appearance of a monster. Also joining the second season of the Netflix series are actors Yassen Atour as Coen, Agnes Bjorn as Vereena, Paul Bullion as Lambert, Thue Ersted Rasmussen as Eskel, Aisha Fabienne Ross as Lydia and Mecia Simson as Francesca. "The reaction to season one of *The Witcher* set a high bar for adding new talent for the second season. "Sophie Holland and her casting team have once again found the very best people to embody these characters, we're excited to see these new stories. —PTI

New 'Star Wars' movie in the works

Los Angeles: A new film in the "Star Wars" franchise is in the works with "Sleight" writer-director J.D. Dillard and "Luke Cage" scribe Matt Owens on board the project. No further details are out yet. According to Variety, it is still unclear if the project would premiere in theatres or on streaming service Disney Plus. Disney has been working on various "Star Wars" projects including the one Marvel Studios head Kevin Feige is developing. Screenwriter Laeta Kalogridis is also reportedly writing a feature for Lucas-film based on the popular video game series "Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic." On the Disney Plus side, "The Mandalorian" is already a success and will be coming up with a second season in October. —PTI



Johnny Depp plays a troubled genius

Berlin: A broken, washed-up genius is roused from drink-sodden seclusion for one last flaring of creative brilliance: actor Johnny Depp hinted that at some level he was able to identify with legendary photographer W. Eugene Smith, whom he plays in his latest film. Speaking before Friday's premiere of "Minamata", Depp, who has talked frankly of his own struggles with drink and drugs through successive marriages, described his admiration for a man who had to conquer his own demons in order to create his art. Smith, who made his name as a World War Two photographer for "Life" magazine, was in decline and on the brink of suicide when activists enticed him to go to southern Japan to document the sufferings of the people of Minamata. —PTI

BILLIE EILISH LANDS NO.1 WITH BOND THEME

No Time To Die by Billie Eilish has become only the second-ever James Bond theme song to reach the top of the UK singles chart. Sam Smith had the only other 007 chart success, when Writing's On The Wall from Spectre went top in 2015. Eilish, who turned 18 in December, is the youngest artist ever to record a track for the Bond franchise. The star performed No Time to Die live for the first time this week, at the Brit Awards in London. She also picked up the prize for best international female at the ceremony. No Time To Die racked up 90,000 equivalent chart sales in its first week; including 10.6 million streams. That makes it the biggest track of the year so far and also the Bond song with the biggest opening week sales. Smith's theme shifted 70,000 copies in its first week, while Adele's Skyfall sold 84,000. However, Adele's track was released on a Wednesday, meaning it was only on sale for two days before the chart figures were compiled. —Agencies



Billie Eilish

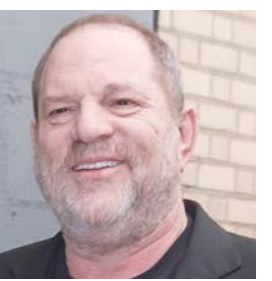
Spokesman from Muslim Council of Britain accused O'Leary of 'Islamophobia' 'Terrorists are generally Muslims'

London: Muslim men should be profiled at airports as terrorists will "generally be of a Muslim persuasion," Ryanair chief executive officer (CEO) Michael O'Leary said in an interview published on Saturday, sparking accusations of racism. "Who are the bombers?" the budget airline's controversial chief executive said while discussing airport security in the interview with the Times newspaper. "They are going to be single males travelling on their own... If you are travelling with a family of kids, on you go; the chances you are going to blow them all up is zero." "You can't say stuff, because it's racism, but it will generally be males of Muslim persuasion. Thirty years ago it was the Irish. If that is where the threat is coming from, deal with the threat," he said. Later, a spokesperson from Ryanair said, "Michael was only calling for more effective airport security checks which would do away with much of the unnecessary queues at airport security today for all passengers." On the introduction of its new Boeing 737 Max planes, O'Leary suggested Ryanair may offer discounts to entice passengers to fly on the crisis-hit aeroplane when it eventually re-enters service. Civil liberty groups have argued profiling, including based on race, religion or gender, violates people's rights. Airlines in the United Kingdom have previously said airport security checks should be reduced to improve the experience for passengers. A spokesman from the



Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) accused O'Leary of "Islamophobia". O'Leary was "encouraging racism", Labour MP Khalid Mahmood told the

spokesman. "In Germany this week a white person killed eight people. Should we profile white people to see if they're being fascists?" "Institutional discrimination against Muslims has well established, whether it is the ability to get a job, buy a flat or even getting car insurance. The challenges of Muslim are well documented across the globe," an MCB spokesperson said. Airlines in the United Kingdom have previously said airport security checks should be reduced to improve the experience for passengers. The Ryanair chief executive officer is known for his controversial views and has floated proposals to charge fliers to use the toilet during Ryanair flights and a "fat tax" on obese passengers. O'Leary has a history of provocative remarks that keep Ryanair's name in the headlines. In a wide-ranging interview with the Times, O'Leary branded most airport security "utterly useless," complained that airlines unfairly got the blame for climate change, and said requirements that Ryanair's Dublin offices have disabled access to all floors were "nonsense." —Agencies



Harvey Weinstein

Deadlocked on most serious charges: Weinstein jury

New York: The jury deliberating in Harvey Weinstein's rape trial indicated Friday that it is deadlocked on the most serious charges. In a note sent to the judge during their lunch break, jurors posed a question asking if it were permissible for them to be hung on two counts of predatory sexual assault while reaching a unanimous verdict on other charges. After consulting with prosecutors and Weinstein's lawyers, Judge James Burke told the jury of seven men and five women to keep working toward a unanimous verdict on all charges and sent them back to continue deliberating. Weinstein's lawyers said they would accept a partial verdict, but prosecutors said no and Burke refused to do so. The jury, in its fourth day of deliberations, has been particularly focused on the key aspect of both predatory sexual assault counts, "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra's allegations that Weinstein raped and forcibly performed oral sex on her in the mid-1990s. Jurors started the day Friday by listening to a reading of Sciorra's cross-examination and follow-up questioning by prosecutors. About 90 minutes into the reading, the jurors notified the judge they had "heard enough" and resumed their deliberations. Sciorra testified nearly a month ago. She was the first accuser to testify in the closely watched #MeToo trial. The jury has already focused on emails that Weinstein sent regarding Sciorra, including ones to the private Israeli spy agency he allegedly enlisted to dig up dirt on would-be accusers as reporters were working on stories about allegations against him in 2017. Sciorra, now 59, was the first accuser to testify and took the witness stand nearly a month ago, telling jurors how the once-powerful movie mogul showed up unexpectedly at the door of her Manhattan apartment. —AP

Don Jr get permit to hunt grizzly bear

Washington: Donald Trump Jr has been granted the right to hunt a grizzly bear in north-western Alaska near the town of Nome, a state official said. The son of US President Donald Trump was one of three people who applied for 27 spots for non-resident hunters targeting grizzlies in a designated region of north-western Alaska's Seward Peninsula, said Eddie Grasser, the wildlife conservation director for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The state conducts periodic drawings for permits to hunt bears, caribou, moose and other animals in various regions. Winners are chosen by a lottery, and there are typically many more applications than hunting tags awarded. "We get thousands of applications," Grasser



Donald Trump Jr

said on Friday. Whether anyone won came down to "pure chance, luck of the draw".

But in the case of the bear-hunt permit the president's son won, there was little competition. Twenty-four tags for hunting bears in that region went unclaimed, Grasser said. To follow through with the Nome-area bear hunt, Trump had to pay a \$1,000 non-resident tag fee and buy a \$160 non-resident hunting license, Grasser said. —Agencies

Google making pvt WhatsApp group messages discoverable

According to a new report from Vice, private WhatsApp group invites might not actually be so private. Through some pretty basic Google searching, it's relatively easy to gain access to private chat groups. Normally, private WhatsApp group chats are only accessible via an invite code that gets handed out by the moderators of the chat. These invite codes, though, are simply URLs with specific strings of text. It appears that Google is indexing at least some of these invites which enables pretty much anyone with Google access to find them. Now, before you get out the pitchforks and start storming Google's gate, from the outset this appears to be a WhatsApp problem (or, more specifically, a Facebook problem, as it owns WhatsApp). —Agencies



Callie Hernandez poses during a photocall for the film One of these days at the Berlinale film festival on Friday. —AFP



Jeannie Mai attends the 51st NAACP Image Awards in Hollywood, California, on Friday. —AFP



Bella Hadid and Kaia Gerber walk the ramp during the Fall/Winter collection in Milan, Italy, on Friday. —AP



A reveller of the Imperio de Casa Verde samba school performs during the night of carnival in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Saturday. —AFP

'Friends' cast to reunite for HBO Max special

Los Angeles, Feb. 22: "Friends" reunion is officially happening in the form of an exclusive "untitled unscripted special" on HBO Max. According to The Hollywood Reporter, all six original cast members of the popular sitcom — Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, Matthew Perry and David Schwimmer — will come together for the reunion episode scheduled to debut in May, WarnerMedia announced on Friday. "Guess you could call this the one where they all got back together — we are reuniting with David, Jennifer, Courteney, Matt, Lisa and Matthew for an HBO Max special that will be programmed alongside the entire Friends library," Kevin Reilly, chief content officer at HBO Max and president, TBS, TNT and truTV, said in a statement. "I became aware of 'Friends' when it was in the very early stages of development and then had the opportunity to work on the series many years later and have delighted in seeing it catch on with viewers' generation after generation. It taps into an era when friends — and audiences — gathered together in real time and we think this reunion special will capture that spirit, uniting original and new fans," he added. The special will be shot on Stage 24 of the Warner Bros. Studio lot in Burbank. Ben Winston will direct and executive produce alongside "Friends" creators David Crane and Marta Kauffman and Kevin Bright. The episode will debut on HBO Max, along with all 236 episodes of the series. —PTI

Dalai Lama marks 80 yrs as spiritual leader of Tibet

New Delhi: The Dalai Lama on Saturday marked the 80th anniversary of his enthronement as the spiritual leader of Tibet, a position held almost entirely in exile and as a target of constant vilification by the Chinese state. Hundreds of miles from Lhasa's imposing 1,000-room Potala Palace, the sandal-wearing monk now ministers to his fellow Tibetan exiles from Dharamsala in the foothills of the Indian Himalayas. He remains the universally recognised face of the movement for Tibetan autonomy, but the global spotlight he enjoyed after winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 has dimmed and the deluge of invitations to hobnob with world leaders and Hollywood stars has slowed. Partly because the ageing leader has cut back on his punishing travel schedule, but also due to China's growing economic and political clout. —AFP



Tell Prince Andrew to call FBI: U.S. style bus

London: A yellow, U.S.-style school bus displaying Prince Andrew's face and asking him to call the FBI drove past Buckingham Palace on Friday, in a move designed to press him to help authorities investigating U.S. sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Queen Elizabeth's second son stopped carrying out royal duties last year after giving rambling and contradictory answers in an interview about his friendship with the financier Epstein, who was found dead in prison while awaiting charges of trafficking minors. The bus drove along The Mall — the wide, ceremonial avenue leading up to the palace, the Queen's London residence — displaying the message, "If you see this man please ask him to call the FBI to answer their questions." Andrew, who turned 60 this week, lives in Windsor, west of London. He denies an accusation by a woman who said she was trafficked by Epstein and forced to have sex with his friends, including the prince, when she was 17. He said in the interview he would be prepared to give testimony under oath to investigators "if push came to shove and the legal advice was to do so." But a U.S. prosecutor said last month Andrew had provided "zero co-operation" to the investigation into Epstein's activities. The bus displayed a U.S. telephone number and the web address "gloriaallred.com". Allred, the lawyer representing some of Epstein's alleged victims, spoke to reporters in New York on Friday. —Reuters



The yellow school bus with a message for the Prince Andrew in London on Friday. —AP

SHORT TAKES

Scientists find new powerful antibiotic using AI

London: In a world first, scientists have discovered a new type of antibiotic using artificial intelligence (AI). It has been heralded by experts as a major breakthrough in the fight against the growing problem of drug resistance. A powerful algorithm was used to analyse more than one hundred million chemical compounds in a matter of days. The newly discovered compound was able to kill 35 types of potentially deadly bacteria, said researchers. Antibiotic-resistant infections have risen up by nine per cent in England between 2017 and 2018. —Agencies

'Meditation may be linked with brain connection'

London: The subjective feeling of well-being experienced by many people with the practice of meditation is associated with specific changes in the brain, according to a study which may lead to better clinical recommendations of the practice. The study, published in the journal Brain and Cognition, examined the effects of the technique known as Transcendental Meditation (TM), which consists of the silent repetition of a meaningful sound. Around 34 young volunteers were enrolled by the researchers from the IMT School in Italy. —PTI

Company asks to retrieve radio from wreck of Titanic

Virginia: A judge deciding whether RMS Titanic Inc. can retrieve the radio used to call for help after the ship hit an iceberg needs more time before issuing a decision, said the company's attorney David Cannon. US District Judge Rebecca Beach Smith heard the proposal presented by Atlanta-based RMS Titanic Inc. — which has exclusive rights to salvage artifacts from the Titanic — in a Virginia federal court earlier this week. The removal of the radio would require the company to remove a part of the historic ship's deckhouse to access the room where the radio is. —Agencies

DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2020



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Ishant sizzles, Williamson dazzles on an intriguing 2nd day



SPORT | 16

Giroud, Alonso score as Chelsea win at home, finally

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Thappad makes inroads into intellectual minds



GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 Which one of the following scripts of ancient India was written from right to left?

- Brahmi
- Kharoshti
- Nandnagri

2 The famous dialogue between Nachiketa and Yama is mentioned in?

- Kathopanishad
- Kenopnishad
- Mundakopanishad

3 The title of 'Viceroy' was added to the office of the Governor-General of India for the first time in?

- 1858 AD
- 1862 AD
- 1848 AD

SHORT TAKE

2 arrested with pistol in Dwarka

New Delhi: The Delhi Police have arrested two members of "Shakti Sharda group" while they were on their way to commit crime in Dwarka area. Police said that they have also recovered a country-made pistol along with three cartridges from the possession of the accused. The accused have been identified as Pradeep (34) alias Birju and Karim Khan (28), both residents of Gopal Nagar. Police said that Pradeep is found previously involved in 10 criminal cases registered across the city and he was also declared a "bad character" of Baba Haridas Nagar police station. Khan is also found previously involved in a murder case registered at Najafgarh police station. During interrogation, the duo revealed that they were searching for their target in the area.

4 held for cheating senior citizens

New Delhi: Four members of a gang, who used to impersonate themselves as police personnel, were arrested for allegedly cheating senior citizens and their belongings on pretext of checking, officials said on Saturday. The accused have been identified as Sadiq Kambar Jafari (25), a resident of Bhiwandi Thane, Kasim Beg (30), Khaibar Ali (23), Salim Ali (35), all residents of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, they said. The accused were identified as member of "Irani Gang". Interrogation revealed that two members of the gang used to impersonate themselves as police personnel and asked senior citizens to take off their jewellery on the pretext of checking. They would pack the jewellery in a paper packet and instead of the real one, would hand over fake items in a similar packet to the victims. Meanwhile, another gang member, pretending to be a passerby, will come there and hand over his belongings to gain the confidence of the victims, police said.

SDMC demolishes tilted building

New Delhi: The South Delhi Municipal Corporation on Saturday demolished a six-storeyed building in Delhi's Munirka. The building had tilted and posed a danger to the public safety, according to the municipal body. One of the owners has claimed that they did not receive any compensation from the government yet. Kamla, an owner of the building said: "The building had only a minor crack, there was no need to demolish it. We haven't received any compensation from the government. All our belongings are still inside the building. They are not even allowing to enter the building." — ANI

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE
1. Brahmi
2. Kathopanishad
3. 1858 AD

■ City BJP general secretary says 'core committee' must do self-introspection

After humiliating defeat in election, bickering in BJP comes out in open

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

Days after BJP's humiliating defeat in the Delhi Assembly polls, party's city unit general secretary and candidate from Matia Mahal constituency Ravinder Gupta on Saturday raised questions on state leadership and said that the leadership must undertake self-introspection to find out reasons for the defeat.

Mr Gupta, a former mayor of North Delhi, lost to AAP's Shoaib Iqbal from Matia Mahal by a margin of over 50,000 votes. Questioning the ongoing review on the direction of party's central leadership to find reasons for the defeat, Mr Gupta told this newspaper that instead of asking reasons from workers for the humiliating defeat, the state leadership must do



Ravinder Gupta

► Questioning the ongoing review on the direction of party's central leadership to find reasons for the defeat, Ravinder Gupta, who lost to AAP's Shoaib Iqbal from Matia Mahal by 50,000 votes, told this newspaper that instead of asking reasons from workers, the state leadership must do self-introspection

► If the party was not able to form government even after 22 years, the state leadership must be at fault, Mr Gupta said.

self-introspection as they are the ones who are responsible for the defeat. "It's an irony that even after having lost seven consecutive Delhi Assembly polls since 1998, we are preparing report on the party's poor performance by taking feedback from workers. Now, it's time for the state leaderships to do self-introspection as they

are the ones responsible for defeat as they are the decision makers and takers. If the party was not able to form government even after 22 years, the state leadership must be at fault," Mr Gupta said. According to a senior party functionary, Mr Gupta directly questioning the state leaderships means he was directly

pointing fingers at Delhi BJP in-charge Shyam Jaju, co-incharge Tarun Chugh, state unit president Manoj Tiwari, state general secretary (organisation) Siddharthan, and senior leaders like Vijay Goel and MPs who are part of the "core committee" or the key decision making body. "To some extent, Mr

Gupta is right as decision makers must be held accountable and they must self-introspect to find out the reasons for the defeat," said a senior Delhi BJP leader.

On February 13, two days after the results were announced, BJP president J.P. Nadda held a review meet with the party's city unit president Manoj Tiwari. He asked the state unit to submit a detailed report citing reasons for party's humiliating defeat by next week.

Following the direction of Mr Nadda, Mr Tiwari held several rounds of review meets. However, meetings with party candidates have still to take place. Sources in the party said that earlier such meetings with candidates were normally held after voting took place. But no such meetings have been held till date.

Son-in-law on run after woman shot dead, 1 held

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

A man was arrested for allegedly killing his gang member's mother-in-law over some family dispute, the police said on Saturday. The accused has been identified as Ujjawal Dabas, they said. "The police received information and arrested Ujjawal on Wednesday from Ladpur village. They recovered one pistol and nine cartridges from his possession," DCP (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said.

According to the police, on February 14 a nurse of a private hospital in Paschim Vihar was killed in Mundka while she was returning home from work. Ujjawal and his associates, Ajit and Pankaj, shot the woman while she was sitting in an e-rickshaw.

The victim received five bullet injuries and died on the spot, the police said.

The accused fled from the spot in their car after killing the victim and later burnt the vehicle in Ladravan village, the police said.

During investigation, it was found that the victim had some dispute with her son-in-law Pankaj, who is a criminal. Pankaj suspected that his wife had terminated her pregnancy twice due to her mother. She also left him and started living with her mother, the police said.

ED raids 12 locations during probe against Greater Noida Ponzi firm

Company accused of duping 2.25 lakh investors of ₹4,000 crore

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday conducted searches at around a dozen locations in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in connection with its money laundering probe against a Greater Noida-based firm, alleged to be involved in a ponzi scam. According to sources, searches were conducted at about 12 premises in Delhi, Noida and Lucknow under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in connection with the "Bike Bot" case. The searches were aimed to collect additional evi-

► Over a dozen officials including the chief of Bike Bot company, Sanjay Bhati, are behind bars while a few others wanted in the case are absconding

dence and documents to take forward the probe in the case, sources said. The Greater Noida-headquartered Bike Bot tax service is accused of duping around ₹4,000 crore from 2.25 lakh investors in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana. Over a dozen

company officials including the chief of Bike Bot company, Sanjay Bhati, have already been sent behind bars by the Noida police, sources said adding that a few others wanted in the case are absconding. The Garvit Innovative Promoters Limited (GIPL), a company in Greater Noida, had come out with multi-level marketing scheme "Bike Bot" and lured investors with a promise of double returns in a year. They sought ₹62,100 investment for a motorcycle tax and assured monthly returns besides double the investment amount in just one year but failed to deliver on

the promise, as per the local police.

The bike-taxis have been operating in districts like Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Hapur and Bulandshahr in western Uttar Pradesh, while its network was also active in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and other states, sources said. The company had used internet, social media, pamphlets, and motivators to spread word about the scheme and encourage gullible people to invest in it. The investors would be further assured of some extra bonus if they could connect more investors with the scheme.

Court rejects Nirbhaya convict's plea

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

A plea filed by one of the four death row convicts in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case seeking treatment for "insanity" was on Saturday dismissed by a Delhi court which said that he is "malingering" and "desires himself to be falsely diagnosed mentally ill".

Additional session judge Dharmender Rana rejected the plea by Vinay Kumar Sharma saying there are no objective signs of psychological dis-

tress and he did not find any occasion to refer the convict to IHBAS (Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences) or any other hospital at this stage, as sought in the plea.

The plea had claimed that Sharma had sustained grievous head injury and fracture in his right arm, and was suffering from "insanity", "mental illness" and "schizophrenia".

The court said that "general anxiety and depression in case of a death row convict is obvious," as it noted that adequate med-

ical treatment and psychological help has been provided to the condemned convict. "The jail superintendent is once again directed to ensure adequate care of the convicts as per rules," the judge said.

The court noted the submissions made by Dr Vivek Rustogi and Dr Akash Narade, both working in Tihar, that although the convict has been observed to be anxious, agitated and restless, he has responded well to the supportive therapy conducted by the specialist psychiatry. The court noted that in

the CCTV footage, the convict was seen conversing with his counsel and family members and the "apparent tone and tenor of the convict is not suggestive of any abnormal behaviour; rather it convincingly corroborates the opinion of the medical experts.

In their submissions, Tihar jail authorities termed the plea as "a bundle of distorted facts" and told the court that the convict was not only being provided regular medical care but also regular supportive therapy by the specialist psychiatry.

Melania's school visit: Kejriwal, Sisodia not invited

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia are unlikely to be present when US First Lady Melania Trump visits the Delhi government-run school in Nanakpura near Moti Bagh on February 25, according to sources.

As per the original schedule, both Mr Kejriwal and Mr Sisodia were to accompany Ms Trump during her visit to the school, people familiar with the matter said. Mr Kejriwal and Mr Sisodia were also to brief the US First Lady about the "happiness curriculum" introduced by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, sources said.

When contacted, a US embassy spokesperson referred the query on the matter to the Delhi government. There was no immediate reaction from the Delhi government.

US President Donald Trump, accompanied by wife Melania, daughter Ivanka, son-in-law Jared Kushner, and a high-level delegation, will arrive in Ahmedabad around noon on February 24 for a less than 36-hour-long trip to India.

From Ahmedabad, the delegation will travel to Agra before arriving at the national capital for the main leg of the visit.

Vasant Vihar councillor Manish Agrawal said that all departments including the sanitation department and horticulture department are engaged in beautifying the path through which the First Lady will visit the school. "We have been beautifying the path through which Melania Trump will go to the school. All municipal departments are busy in the preparations," he said.

AAP on Saturday allegedly said that both Mr Kejriwal and Mr Sisodia, who were given briefs about the "happi-



Arvind Kejriwal



Manish Sisodia

► AAP leader Preeti Sharma Menon tweeted about this issue and wrote: 'There is no match for the pettiness of Narendra Modi. You may not invite Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, but their work speaks for them.'

ness curriculum," were scheduled to welcome Ms Trump at a South Delhi government school, but their names were dropped by the Central government.

AAP leader Preeti Sharma Menon tweeted about this issue and wrote: "There is no match for the pettiness of Narendra Modi. You may not invite Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, but their work speaks for them."

BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra responded on this controversy and said: "There shouldn't be low-level politics on some issues. India comes under disrepute if we start pulling each other's legs. The Indian government doesn't influence the US, as to whom they invite or not."



Hundreds of schoolchildren and parents demonstrated at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday to protest against the rise in prices of books. Some parents alleged that the paper

that came from outside for books has stopped, due to which the prices of copy and books are increasing. Several paper associations also participated in the sit-in.

— ASIAN AGE

Shaheen Bagh protesters open road to Noida, Faridabad

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 22

Southeast Delhi's road number 9, connecting Noida to Kalindi Kunj, which is blocked for last 69 days due to ongoing protest at Shaheen Bagh against Citizen Amendment Act (CAA), was opened by a group of protesters on Saturday for sometime before closing it again. Later, the police confirmed that it was opened again.

Meanwhile, Sadhana Ramachandran, one of the Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors, reached Shaheen Bagh for the fourth round of discussion with the protesters. The stretch of the road was "opened", though

police barricades continued on one side.

Deputy commissioner of police (Southeast) R.P. Meena said: "Road number 9 in Shaheen Bagh was reopened by a group of protesters, but later it was closed by another group". However, locals later said the road was again reopened by protesters in the evening.

Protesters claimed that they "opened" the stretch, which would allow passage between Noida and South Delhi, at around 5 pm near the protest site, but the Delhi police and the Noida police were continuing to barricade it from one side restricting access to commuters. The Delhi Police had maintained that it has bar-

► Protesters claimed that they 'opened' the stretch, which would allow passage between Noida and South Delhi, but police barricaded it from one side restricting access to commuters

ricaded adjacent roads due to security reasons. The development came after three days of talks between the Supreme Court-appointed interlocutors, senior advocates Sanjay Hegde and Sadhana Ramachandran, and the protesters over the

issue of difficulty to commuters due to blocking of roads.

Sadhana Ramachandran reached Shaheen Bagh at around 10 am for the fourth round of discussion with the protesters. "We are not saying that Shaheen Bagh should dismantle. Let's get that very clear. Shaheen Bagh kayam rahe," Sadhana Ramachandran told the protesters.

"We are here to talk about roads and let's stick to it. If you want to go to meet the home minister, you can go. And if you want to go to the government, then go. But, we are not here from the government's side," Ms Ramachandran said. Presenting their

demands, the Shaheen Bagh protesters told her that they want "security". "We want security and the Supreme Court should give an order on the same," the protesters said. "We want the cases against people of Shaheen Bagh and Jamia to be taken back," the protesters said.

The road, which connects Noida to south east Delhi and further to Faridabad in Haryana, was closed for traffic in the wake of the anti-Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) protest at Shaheen Bagh since December 15. Only emergency vehicles like ambulances and school buses are being allowed to pass through the stretch, the police said.

200 women protest near Jaffrabad Metro

New Delhi, Feb. 22: Over 200 women gathered near the Jaffrabad Metro station in Delhi on Saturday night in protest against the new citizenship law and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The women, raising slogans of "aazadi", said they would not move from the site till the Centre revoke Citizenship (Amendment) Act. There is an anti-CAA protest already going on near the main Seelampur road. — PTI

Hindan to Hubli flight now 5 days-a-week

Ghaziabad, Feb. 22: The frequency of flights from the Hindan airport to the Hubli of Karnataka has been increased from three to five days a week. A meeting has been called with firms providing air service on March 5 with regard to initiating flights to Allahabad and Lucknow, district magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said on Saturday. Connectivity by road from various points of Ghaziabad to the terminal would be provided from the second week of March. The BSNL has also been instructed to provide mobile network at the terminal, Mr Pandey said. — PTI

SHORT TAKES



Pakistan to grant Sammy citizenship

Karachi: The Pakistan government would confer honorary citizenship on former West Indian captain Darren Sammy for his role in bringing international cricket back to the country, the PCB announced on Saturday. Sammy, who is presently leading Peshawar Zalmi in the fifth Pakistan Super League season, will be given the honorary citizenship and Pakistan's highest civilian award, Nishan-e-Haider, on March 23 by President Arif Alvi. Sammy, who has appeared in the PSL since its inception, played an important role in helping the PCB bring back international cricket to the country when in 2017 he agreed to come to Lahore and play in the PSL final after majority of the foreign players declined to play in the country due to security concerns. — PTI

West Indies defeat debutants Thailand

Perth: The West Indies overcame a batting stutter to defeat gallant debutant Thailand by seven wickets at the women's Twenty20 World Cup in Perth on Saturday. The 2016 champions appeared set for an expected easy victory after restricting Thailand to a modest 78 for nine off their 20 overs. But the West Indies struggled at 27 for 3 in the chase before captain Stafanie Taylor (26 not out) and Shemaine Campbelle (25 not out) chased down the total with 20 deliveries to spare. Naruemo Chaiwai's spectacular run out of opener Lee-Ann Kirby for three highlighted Thailand's impressive fielding performance. Thailand, the lowest ranked team in the tournament, are making their debut at a cricket World Cup — men's or women's — after a fairytale run in qualification. — AFP

Hasaranga stars in SL's thrilling win

Colombo: A late cameo by Wanindu Hasaranga helped Sri Lanka pull off a thrilling chase to edge out West Indies by one wicket in the first one-day international on Saturday. Hasaranga, known for his leg-spin bowling, hit an unbeaten 42 after coming in to bat at number eight as Sri Lanka chased down their target of 290 with five balls to spare and lead the three-match series 1-0. Hasaranga held his nerve after Sri Lanka slipped to 253 for seven following the departure of Thisara Perera for 32 to register his highest ODI score. He built crucial partnerships including a 38-run stand with Perera and then put on 27 runs with Lakshan Sandakan for the ninth wicket. With one to get off the last six ball Sandakan was run out but Keemo Paul bowled a no ball. "Of course, winning is the ultimate thing but we made couple of mistakes that we have to learn from," skipper Dimuth Karunaratne said. — PTI

Kiwis edge ahead

Ishant sizzles, Williamson dazzles on an intriguing second day

Wellington, Feb. 22: Ishant Sharma's lion-hearted bowling effort met its match in Kane Williamson's elegance as New Zealand ended an attritional second day of the opening Test against India with a slight upper-hand, here on Saturday. After another lower-order collapse that saw get India bundled out for 165, Ishant, coming straight back from an ankle injury, took three for 31 in 15 overs despite Williamson's effortless 89 in New Zealand's day-end score of 216 for 5. New Zealand now lead by 51 runs.

Mohammed Shami (1/61 in 17 overs), during his final spell of the day, removed Williamson, who couldn't check an uppish drive. Henry Nicholls' (17 off 62 balls) struggle seemed to have hampered Williamson's rhythm.

During the final hour, Ravichandran Ashwin (1/60 in 21 overs), who also bowled beautifully throughout the day, relieved Nicholls of his agony with a delivery that had drift and a hint of turn as India skipper Virat Kohli snapped the low catch at second slip. Williamson looked good as he hit some delightful strokes square off the wicket.

The square drive on the rise off Jasprit Bumrah (0/62 in 18.1 overs), followed by a cover drive, showed his class. In all, the New Zealand skipper hit 11 boundaries off 153 balls. Bumrah, in particular, was punished by Williamson, who also back-cut him for a boundary and Taylor then punished another half volley through the covers.

Either Bumrah bowled too full and drivable length deliveries or too short that even Rishabh Pant failed to gather the ball over his head. This was where Ishant came into the picture. While he was lucky to get opener Tom Latham out with a delivery drifting on leg-stump, the other opener Tom Blundell (30) had a typical Ishant dismissal written all over it.

The ball was full on the off-stump channel and jagged back enough to find the gap between his bat and pad. "Actually, the wicket became slow. It had tennis ball bounce at the start but when we bowled, there was no seam movement available," Ishant said after the end of the day's play.

Williamson and Taylor then had a partnership of 93 runs during which New Zealand also got the lead before Ishant, coming back for his third spell, bowled one that reared up from good length and proved to be an easy catch for Cheteshwar Pujara at short-leg.

Looking good for his 22nd Test hundred,



FIVE
Number of wickets Ishant Sharma needs to complete a tally of 300 wickets in Tests.

Actually, the wicket became slow. It had tennis ball bounce at the start but when we bowled, there was no seam movement. Also for first timers, problem in Wellington is getting used to wind which is a big factor.

SCORECARD

India (1st Innings): Prithvi Shaw b Southee 16, Mayank Agarwal c Jamieson b Boult 34, Cheteshwar Pujara c Watling b Jamieson 11, Virat Kohli c Taylor b Jamieson 2, Ajinkya Rahane c Watling b Southee 46, Hanuma Vihari c Watling b Jamieson 7, Rishabh Pant run out (Ajaz Patel) 19, Ravichandran Ashwin b Southee 0, Ishant Sharma c Watling b Jamieson 5, Mohammed Shami c Tom Blundell b Southee 21, Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 0. Extras (LB-1 W-3) 4. Total (In 68.1 overs) 165. FoW: 1-16, 2-35, 3-40, 4-88, 5-101, 6-132, 7-132, 8-143, 9-165.

Bowling: Southee 20.1-5-49-4, Boult 18-2-57-1, de Grandhomme 11-5-12-0, Jamieson 16-3-39-4, Patel 3-2-7-0.

New Zealand (1st Innings): Tom Latham c Pant b Ishant 11, Tom Blundell b Ishant 30, Kane Williamson c (sub) Ravindra Jadeja b Shami 89, Ross Taylor c Pujara b Ishant 44, Henry Nicholls c Kohli b Ashwin 17, BJ Watling (batting) 14, Colin de Grandhomme (batting) 4. Extras (B-1, B-1, W-5) 7. Total (for 5 wickets in 71.1 overs) 216. FoW: 1-26, 2-73, 3-166, 4-185, 5-207.

Bowler: Bumrah 18.1-4-62-0, Ishant 15-6-31-3, Shami 17-2-61-1, Ashwin 21-1-60-1.

Williamson, in his bid to get another boundary, couldn't check a cover drive and the low catch was taken by substitute fielder Ravindra Jadeja.

Earlier, New Zealand's debutant Kyle Jamieson (4/49) and veteran Tim Southee (4/49) took four wickets apiece as Indian innings folded in 68.1 overs.

The duo took four of the five wickets that fell on the

second morning with India adding only 43 runs to their overnight score. Rishabh Pant (19) started with a six but then a horrible mix-up with senior partner Ajinkya Rahane (46) resulted in a run-out and the little chance of recovery was gone for good. Southee then got rid of Rahane when he tried to shoulder-arm a delivery that made a late inward movement. — PTI

SLEEP-DEPRIVED ISHANT KEEPS KIWIS AT BAY

Wellington, Feb. 22: Speedster Ishant Sharma slept barely four hours in the past two days but kept India in the fight with three New Zealand wickets in the first Test even as he struggled hard to deal with a "jet-lag".

Three weeks back, the veteran of 96 Tests was all but out of New Zealand series after suffering multiple ligament tears in his right ankle during a Ranji Trophy game but travelled for 24 hours and arrived here 72 hours before the start of the first Test.

"I am not happy because I have not slept for two days and I was struggling a lot today (with my body). The way I would have liked to bowl, it did not happen. They asked me to play and I played. Anything, for the team," said India's senior-most player.

His uneasiness was the lack of sound sleep that made him struggle on a track that is getting slower and a kookaburra ball whose seam can go soft after 40 overs. "Not that I wasn't happy with my bowling. I wasn't happy with my body as I could only sleep for 40 minutes last night and day before the Test match, I slept for three hours," said Ishant, narrating his struggles with jet lag. — PTI

PANT'S WICKET WAS TURNING POINT: SOUTHEE

Wellington, Feb. 22: New Zealand pacer Tim Southee believes that Rishabh Pant's freak run-out went a long way in changing the course of the Indian innings that eventually folded up for 165 in the first Test here on Saturday.

Pant, who started the day with a six in the first over suffered because of Ajinkya Rahane's poor call and India lost five wickets for 33 runs from that point. Rahane himself fell to Southee as he inside edged to the keeper trying to shoulder arms and late inward movement became his undoing.

"The run-out of Pant was a big this morning. With him (Pant) being such a dangerous player and leading into that second new-ball, he could have scored quickly along with Jinks (Rahane's nickname)," Southee said. — PTI

RANJI BRIEF SCORES

At Ongole: Saurashtra 419 & 93/2 in 33 overs (Avi Barot (batting) 44, Vishvarajsinh Jadeja (batting) 35) vs Andhra 136 in 78.2 overs (C R Gnaneshwar 43, Ricky Bhui 28, KS Bharat 26; Jaydev Unadkat 4/42, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 3/27).

At Cuttack: Bengal 332 & 79/2 in 45 overs (Koushik Ghosh 41, Abhimanyu Easwaran 30) vs Odisha 250 in 102.1 overs (Debasish Samantray 68, Shantanu Mishra 62, Subhanshu Senapati 46; Nilkantha Das 3/43, Mukesh Kumar 3/51, Ishan Porel 3/72).

At Valsad: Gujarat 602/8 decl. & 158/1 in 48 overs (Samit Gohel (batting) 70, Bhargav Merai (batting) 49; Suyash Prabhudessai 1/32) vs Goa 173 (Amit Verma 56, Chintan Gaja 5/19).

At Jammu: Karnataka 206 in 69.1 overs (Siddharth 76; Nabi 3/45, Yousuf 3/45) vs J&K 88/2 in 34 overs (Khajuria (batting) 39, Pundir (batting) 16).

Saurashtra take lead of 283 runs

Ongole (AP), Feb. 22: Saurashtra took control of their Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Andhra by dismissing the hosts for 136 for a massive 283-run first-innings lead here on Saturday.

By stumps on the third day, the visiting team extended the advantage by reaching 93 for 2 in their second innings. Resuming on overnight 40 for 2 in response to Saurashtra's first-innings total of 419, opener CR Gnaneshwar (43) and Ricky Bhui (28) put on 53 runs for the third wicket.

The two looked assured while negotiating the Saurashtra attack led by skipper Jaydev Unadkat, who was the best bowler for the visiting team, picking up 4 for 42. Though they found runs hard to come by, Gnaneshwar and Bhui were willing to grind it out and scored when the bowlers erred in line and length.

Left-arm spinner Dharmendrasinh Jadeja broke through when he had Gnaneshwar caught behind by Avi Barot. The keeper was in action again as he caught Bhui two runs later off Chirag Jani's bowling.

Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (3/27) and Jani (2/14) blew away the middle and lower-order to put Saurashtra in the driver's seat. As a result, Andhra capitulated from 117 for 4.

Unadkat finished things off by getting the wicket of Andhra captain K S Bharat (26). He had on Friday removed opener D B Prasanth (1) and Jyothisaikrishna (17) to put the home side in trouble.

Saurashtra did not enforce the follow-in despite the huge lead and suffered an early setback in the second innings when opener Harvik Desai (0) was bowled by Mohammad Rafi off the first ball. Kishan Parmar (12) too did not last long, falling to C V Stephen. Barot (44 batting) and Vishvarajsinh Jadeja (35 batting) saw the team through without any further damage.

J&K bowl Karnataka out for 206

Jammu and Kashmir were in a good a position to take the crucial first-innings lead after bowling out Karnataka for 206 on day three of the Ranji Trophy quarterfinal at Jammu on Saturday.

A full day's play was finally possible after not a single ball was bowled on day two due to unfit playing conditions following a brief spell of rain. Only six overs were possible on day one.

Resuming the day on 14 for two, Karnataka somehow managed to get past the 200-run mark with K Siddharth scoring 76 off 189 balls.

— PTI

Agar's hat-trick drubs Proteas

Johannesburg, Feb. 22: Left-arm spinner Ashton Agar took a hat-trick as Australia crushed South Africa by 107 runs in the first Twenty20 international at the Wanderers Stadium.

Steve Smith, back in South Africa for the first time since the 2018 ball-tampering scandal, hit a top score of 45 for Australia, who made 196 for six after being sent in.

South Africa made a bad start against the pace of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins before Agar's triple strike sent them hurtling to their all-time



lowest T20 total of 89. It was also the host country's biggest defeat in the format. Man of the match Agar finished with career-best figures of five for 24. — AFP

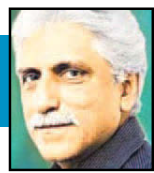
Women's game is growing by leaps & bounds

India's stunning 17 run victory over Australia put the ICC Women's T20 World Cup above all other cricket action on Friday. A modest score of 134 looked indefensible against the reigning champions, but India fought back in sterling fashion to win a tense match.

In a tri-series competition leading into the World Cup, India had been upstaged by Australia in the final, losing by 11 runs. Apart from home advantage therefore, even the momentum was with the Aussies when the two teams met in Sydney on Friday.

At the innings changeover, India looked to be in the dumps. Runs on the board seemed inadequate, and the Australian batting had looked in very good form in the tri-series. In the event, the turnaround that followed was highly unexpected and therefore enthralling. Pint-sized leggie Poonam Yadav spun a web around the Aussie batters, claiming 4 wickets for just 19 runs. Her stellar performance perked up the other bowlers and fielders, and India were able to snatch a dramatic win that left players emotionally drained and fans in disbelief.

This was just the 'big bang' start the Women's World Cup was hoping for. The ICC



Ayaz Memon Over The Top



Aussie skipper Meg Lanning and India's Harmanpreet Kaur.

has pitched the tournament very high for this edition with a slew of initiatives propagating it. What could be better than a cliffhanger of sorts between the two strongest teams in the opening match itself?

The final of the tournament will be played on March 8, which is also International Women's Day. The scheduling of the tournament has been well thought out and the day of

the final has been chosen to highlight gender sensitization.

That apart, there's also the box office aspect that has to be considered. Every major sports event today is high-stakes business. If attendances are good at the World Cup matches, it can grow in the interest of sponsors and broadcasters for the future.

The ICC and Cricket Australia (as host nation) are pulling out all stops to

make the World Cup a huge success. Among the wish list of things they would like to see happen is an India-Australia final on March 8.

This is without malice to other teams, and for the faster growth of women's cricket, I am informed by some associated with the ongoing World Cup. A home team will obviously attract audiences, and India provides the most 'eyeballs'.

It's a win-win situation scenario, but this does not mean that other teams have come to the World Cup as also-rans. Sure, Australia and India are the two best sides on form, but the road to the final has many hurdles. Harmanpreet Kaur and Co have to be consistently good to reach there.

That said, what's commendable and a matter of delight is how rapidly India's women cricketers have climbed the ranks to be a topnotch side in the world. Largely, this has become possible after women's cricket came under the BCCI umbrella.

There was always good talent in the country. Shantha Rangaswamy, Diana Edulji, Shubhangi Khapre, Fouzia Khaleeli etc, who played 30-35 years back, were all world class, but suffered from lack of facilities, encouragement and finance.

I've seen these wonderful cricketers run around trying to raise their own money to play tournament, travel third class in trains, stay 3-4 to a room to pursue their passion. It was extremely difficult for women cricketers of that era, but it is their commitment and diligence which has made things so much better for players today.

Women's cricket got assimilated into the BCCI when Sharad Pawar was president, and since then it's been a wonderful journey upwards. There is healthy livelihood possible now, including central contracts, but more importantly, opportunities to play far more international matches and tournaments.

This experience has made players get better, and in turn inspire more young girls to take to the game. Some of the finest exponents and stars today come from India: Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Poonam Yadav, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma to name a few.

Interest in women's cricket is growing by leaps and bounds, and a title win in this World Cup could trigger mania in the country, just as the 1983 triumph did for men's cricket.

Here's wishing them the best!

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Pint-sized Poonam stands tall on her self-confidence

Sydney, Feb. 22: A finger fracture leaving her T20 World Cup participation in doubt, India leggie Poonam Yadav says self belief gave her the confidence of playing the showpiece and it showed in her demolition of Australia in the opening match here.

Injured during a pre-tournament camp in December, the canny leg-spinner missed the preparatory tri-series in Australia and her participation in the showpiece was thrown into doubt. But the way she bamboozled Australia in the tournament opener, her absence may have been a blessing rather than a curse.

Poonam took four wickets to help India win by 17 runs on Friday. "I did not know myself if (injury) would turn out to be this bad. After the injury I focused on the diet and on fitness," she said.

"I was confident I could bowl at any time. (WV) Raman Sir (India head coach) asked if I was mentally ready. I told him men-



Poonam Yadav poses with former West Indian bowler Ian Bishop. — Twitter

tally I was, but it was also necessary for me to be physically prepared," Poonam was quoted as saying by the ICC.

The 28-year-old bowler said she never lost hope of playing in the T20 World Cup. "Within myself I had the belief I would make the comeback in time. The good thing is I got hurt about one-and-a-half months before the World

Cup. "God is great — whatever bad had to happen has already happened."

With a small stature and desire to float the ball high, Poonam's style is not a replicable one in the women's game and Australia opening batswoman Alyssa Healy admitted that her side failed against the Indian. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Duplantis aims to set another record

Clermont-Ferrand, France: Armand Duplantis said Friday he believes that he can break the pole vault world record for the third time in a fortnight as he prepares for an event in France this weekend. Swedish star Duplantis, who on Sunday is taking part in the "All Star Perche" (Pole Vault All-Star) event organised by 2012 Olympic gold winner Renaud Lavillenie, broke Frenchman Lavillenie's record on February 8 with a jump of 6.17 metres in Poland. Duplantis then added another centimetre to that record a week later in Glasgow before failing to clear 6.19m in the French town of Lievin on Wednesday, a target he now has in his sights in Clermont. "You never know when you could break the world record, it's sport," said Duplantis. "I think it would be a very good place to do it, I'm not gonna promise anything but I'm in good shape. Duplantis says that he isn't feeling the pressure to perform after a phenomenal last two weeks. — AFP

Bottas fastest in pre-season

Montmelo, Spain: Valtteri Bottas clocked the fastest time of the week as the opening session of pre-season F1 testing ended on Friday giving world champions Mercedes an early psychological edge and leaving rivals mystified by their revolutionary steering device. Bottas, the 2019 runner-up to six-time champion and teammate Lewis Hamilton, timed 1min 15.732sec off a total of 65 laps. Hamilton, who had been fastest on Wednesday's opening day, was second on Friday, also dipping below the 1min 17sec mark. Although pre-season testing is no guarantee of what will eventually play out in the 21-race season, Mercedes will be delighted in already having the likes of Ferrari and Red Bull pondering the impact of their DAS (Dual Axis Steering). Bottas said Friday that the DAS has been in development for a year and was used for the first time on track in Barcelona after being tested in a simulator. — AFP

Battle heats up for Wilder-Fury bout

Las Vegas: American boxer Deontay Wilder will be at a career high weight, but will still be 42 pounds lighter than Tyson Fury for their much-anticipated heavyweight rematch at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. Wilder weighed in at 231 pounds (105 kg) and Fury tipped the scales at 273 pounds on Friday as both boxers weighed in much heavier than they did for their first fight 14 months ago. Wilder is 18 pounds heavier and Fury added 15 pounds to his frame. Organizers cancelled Friday's face-to-face photo op at the weigh-in after the fighters exchanged shoves during the final news conference on Wednesday. But the pair did jaw at each other from a distance on the podium. "That's my belt. That's mine," Fury yelled at Wilder, who holds the WBC heavyweight title. The two will square off in one of the biggest heavyweight fights recent memory Saturday at the MGM's Grand Garden Arena. — AFP

DIVIJ-SITAK SUCCUMB TO BRYAN DUO

Florida: India's number two doubles player Divij Sharan and his partner Kiwi partner Artem Sitak lost to top-seeded defending champions Mike and Bob Bryan in the quarterfinals of the Delray Beach Open here. The Indo-kiwi duo lost 2-6, 6-4, (3-10) to the Bryan brothers who are playing their last Delray Beach open as they are set to retire post the US Open this year. Sharan and Sitak lost the first set 2-6 to the Bryan Brothers. They made a comeback in the second set, winning it 6-4 to set up a Super Tie Breaker clash. Speaking after the game, Sharan said, "It was a tough challenge against the Bryan Brothers and congratulations to them on the win." Sitak and I had some useful learnings from this tournament and look forward to the next week in Chile," he added. — PTI

Raptors scorch Sun

Pascal scores team high to trample Phoenix

Los Angeles, Feb. 22: Pascal Siakam scored 37 points as the reigning NBA champion Toronto Raptors won their 16th game of their last 17 with a 118-101 victory over the Phoenix Suns on Friday. Siakam scored 25 of his points in the first half and also had 12 rebounds overall as the Raptors won their eighth straight game at home.

"I just feel energized," said Siakam. Serge Ibaka delivered 16 points, Fred VanVleet chipped in with 14 points, seven rebounds and seven assists, and Terence Davis had 14 points off the bench in front of a crowd of 19,800 at the Scotiabank Arena.

Devin Booker scored 21 points and had eight assists and Deandre Ayton tallied 17 points and 10 rebounds for the Suns, who have lost seven of nine.

Ricky Rubio had 13 points and nine assists, and Kelly Oubre scored 11 points in the loss.

"They set the tone early. That's why they're a championship team," Suns guard Ricky Rubio said.

Elsewhere, the Indiana Pacers overcame a shaky finish and a slow start to hold and beat the New York Knicks for the eighth time in the past nine meetings with a 106-98 victory.

T. J. Warren scored 27 points to lead the Pacers, who outscored the Knicks 65-45 in the second and third quarters.

The Knicks held Indiana to just 12 points in the opening quarter but the Pacers recovered to shoot 53 per cent from the field in the second and third. Indiana managed to pull out the victory despite missing 15 of 20 shots in the fourth quarter.

Domantas Sabonis posted his 42nd double-double with 24 points and 13 rebounds and Doug McDermott came off the bench to score 14 points for the Pacers, who won



Patty Mills (centre) of the San Antonio Spurs goes up for a basket past Tony Bradley (right) of the Utah Jazz during their NBA game in Salt Lake City on Friday. The Spurs won 113-104.

their second consecutive game after losing six straight.

Victor Oladipo finished with eight points in little more than 25 minutes before exiting with back soreness.

Bobby Portis scored 19 points to lead the Knicks, who lost their third straight game.

Rookie RJ Barrett added 17 points and Frank Ntilikina contributed 14

● **Registering their 16th win from 17 games, the reigning champions, Toronto Raptors defeated Phoenix Suns 118-101 in their NBA match. Pascal Siakam scored a team high of 37 points for the champions.**

but leading scorer Julius Randle was held to just nine points in the loss.

Luka Doncic flirted with a triple double, scoring 33 points, grabbing 10 rebounds and handing out

eight assists as the Dallas Mavericks toppled the Orlando Magic 122-106.

Maxi Kleber did much of his damage in the fourth, hitting three three-pointers and scoring 12 points

in the quarter. He sparked a critical final quarter for the Mavericks, who also dominated in the opening quarter.

In Washington, Collin Sexton scored 25 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers posted a 113-108 victory over the Washington Wizards, making JB Bickerstaff a winner in his Cavaliers' head-coaching debut. — AFP

Lewandowski surges ahead

Berlin, Feb. 22: Bundesliga leaders Bayern Munich squeezed past bottom side Paderborn 3-2 on Friday as Robert Lewandowski netted twice to spare goalkeeper Manuel Neuer's blushes in their final game before facing Chelsea in the Champions League.

Lewandowski now has a league-leading tally of 25 goals in the top flight, illustrating his importance to the team ahead of Tuesday's last 16, first-leg tie in London.

Bayern twice surrendered the lead in Munich before securing the win which leaves them four points clear.

With Bayern leading 1-0 thanks to Serge Gnabry's early goal, Neuer mistimed a clearance outside his area, allowing Paderborn midfielder Dennis Srbeny to fire into an empty net just before half-time.

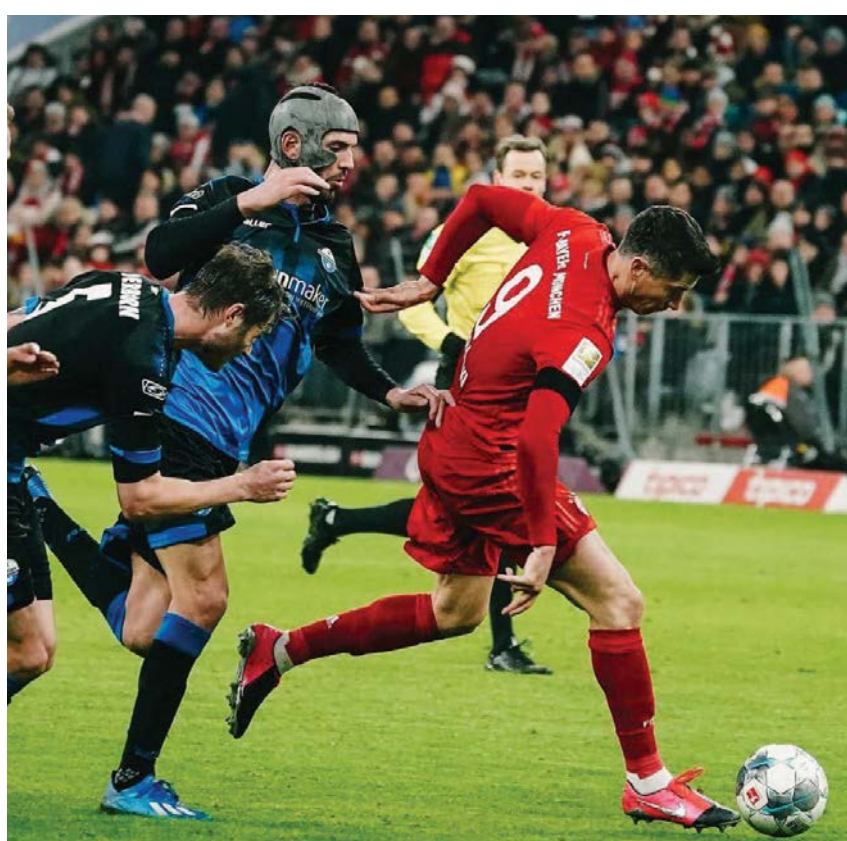
However, Lewandowski then struck in the 70th minute to make it 2-1, only for Paderborn to draw level again after poor defending allowed Sven Michel a simple tap in 15 minutes from time.

However, there was still time for Lewandowski to fire home the winner, thanks to Gnabry's superb cross. In the build-up, Bayern coach Hansi Flick warned his team had to focus on strugglers Paderborn, but the Bavarian giants seemed to have one eye on Chelsea.

Paderborn had the ball in Bayern's net after four minutes when their striker Strelci Mamba slid the ball under Neuer, but the effort was flagged offside.

As expected, Bayern took an early at the Allianz Arena when Gnabry celebrated his 100th Bundesliga appearance by turning and hitting into the bottom corner on 26 minutes.

Paderborn drew level after Neuer mistimed a clearance outside the box. — AFP



Robert Lewandowski (right) of Bayern Munich vies for the ball with Paderborn players during their German league match in Munich, southern Germany, on Friday. Bayern Munich won 3-2. — AFP

Napoli edge past Brescia

Rome, Feb. 22: Napoli coach Gennaro Gattuso admitted he was losing sleep ahead of next week's Champions League clash with Barcelona after his team warmed up for the Spaniards with a comeback 2-1 win over lowly Brescia in Serie 'A' on Friday.

Gattuso will make his Champions League debut as a coach against the Spanish, having replaced Carlo Ancelotti, who was sacked despite leading the southerners to the knockout rounds. "Don't make me think, leave me alone," urged Gattuso after the win which moved his side into the Europa League

● **Napoli rally from a goal down to beat lowly Brescia 2-1 in their Italian league match.**

● **Gennaro's Gattuso men next play Barcelona in a Champions League first-leg quarterfinal tie.**

places. Lorenzo Insigne and Fabian Ruiz's second-half goals rescued a win after Jhon Chancellor had put the northerners ahead after half an hour. "We will think about (Barcelona) tomorrow, today only Brescia count-

ed. It's a competition I'll lose sleep over, but on the other hand I almost never sleep now," said the 42-year-old, a former World Cup winner who won two Champions League titles as a player with AC Milan.

"When I talk to my colleagues who are a few years older than me, I ask if they sleep.

"They tell me that in time it will pass, but it doesn't pass," he added.

Napoli move up into sixth place before their last 16, first leg tie back in their San Paolo Stadium on Tuesday.

The Italian League's runners-up have won four of their last five league games. — AFP

Italian police raid Loginov's room

Rome, Feb. 22: Italian police carried out an early-morning anti-doping raid Saturday on the Russian team's hotel at the biathlon world championships, a police spokesperson confirmed.

Two Russians were targeted, biathlete Alexander Loginov, who won 10 kilometre sprint gold on February 15, and his personal coach Alexander Kasperovich, the head of Russia's biathlon federation Vladimir Drachev told Russian news agencies.

"Today police came to the hotel at 5:50 am... The police visit was on the request of a member of the IBU," Drachev told Interfax news agency, referring to the International Biathlon Union.

Drachev said the search was "linked to the fact that...Kasperovich was using another person's accreditation".

Loginov served a two-year ban for using the banned blood booster EPO from November 2014 to November 2016.

"This could be a repeat case. They (the police) searched his things for one and half hours and confiscated his devices," Drachev said.

An Italian police spokesperson said the raid had been requested by "prosecutors in Bolzano". "The alleged offence comes under article 586 bis of the penal code (use or administration of doping products)," the spokesperson said.

Loginov has already won gold in the sprint and bronze in the pursuit, and is due to compete in Saturday's relay.

Loginov told Match TV channel that police woke him and fellow biathlete

● **The Italian police stormed into the hotel room of Russian biathlete Alexander Loginov, who won the 10 kilometres sprint gold earlier this month, and his coach Alexander Kasperovich in the early hours in Rome.**

Evgeniy Garanichev by bursting into their room.

"They were only interested in my things," Loginov said, confirming that the search had been requested by the IBU and saying that he had not been charged with anything.

Loginov could be unable to compete Saturday, the head trainer for the male biathletes, Sergei Belozeroz told TASS news agency.

"I'm worried the police, after confiscating his computer and phone, could say before lunch that they need further information and pull him out," Belozeroz said.

Russia's sports ministry announced that it had been informed of the search.

It said the sports minister Oleg Matytsin sent an urgent request to the Russian biathlon federation for information on the raid.

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Russian television that diplomats in Italy and the Russian foreign ministry were trying to "clarify this situation".

"I can assure you that diplomats are working on this question and we hope that it will be possible to resolve it shortly," she said. — AFP

Moukoko to play for U-19 German side

Berlin, Feb. 22: After scoring a record number of goals in the German Under-17 league last season, Borussia Dortmund's 15-year-old striker Youssoufa Moukoko has made the Germany Under-19 squad for next month's games.

While 19-year-old Norwegian Erling Braut Haaland has sent records tumbling with 11 goals in his first seven games for Dortmund's senior team, Moukoko is making similar waves in the German junior ranks.

Youssoufa Moukoko has scored 29 times in 17 games in this season's Under-19 league, including hat-tricks in four matches and a stunning six-goal haul in a 9-2 demolition of Wuppertal juniors in the opening game of the season.

This is the first time Moukoko has been picked for a junior Germany team since 2017, scoring three goals in four games for the German U16 team — when he was still only 12.

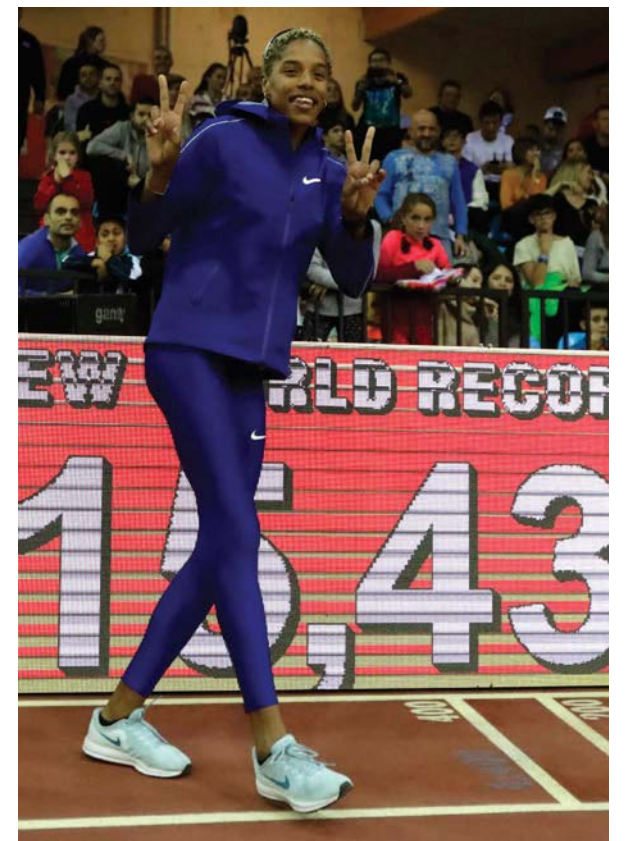
The German FA (DFB) and Dortmund had opted to not select Moukoko for the last two seasons to give him time to develop.

"Now we have come to the joint conclusion that a suitable time has come for the next development step at national team level," said Meikel Schoenweitz, head coach of Germany's junior teams.

"We want the best players to play for Germany and help our talents to advance," Schoenweitz added.

The 15-year-old has been picked for U-19 European Championship qualifiers against Wales, Austria and Serbia at the end of March.

Last season, Youssoufa Moukoko, who was born in Cameroon, set a new record in the U17 Bundesliga by scoring 46 goals. — AFP



Yulimar Rojas celebrates after breaking the world record in the women's triple jump final during the World Athletics Indoor Tour meeting in Madrid, Spain, on Friday. — AFP

Yulimar jumps to break record

Madrid, Feb. 22: Venezuela's Yulimar Rojas jumped 15.43m to set a new indoor women's triple jump world record of 15.43m at a meeting in Madrid.

The 24-year-old world champion bettered the previous world record of 15.36m set by Russia's Tatyana Lebedeva in Budapest in March 2004.

Rojas's new mark also left her just seven centimetres short of the outdoor world record of 15.50m set by Ukraine's Inessa Kravets at Gothenburg back in 1995.

"Tokyo is not far away. We will continue to train and stay focused," Rojas told Spanish television channel TVE in reference to the 2020 Olympic Games. "I am very proud. I don't believe it, it seemed so easy to me, it is indescribable, a huge emotion."

"I was looking for the record since the first jump, but it fell on the last jump. When I go home I will cry, because that's what all athletes want," she continued.

On Friday, the world champion opened with a foul but then registered 14.65m in round two. — AFP

● **Venezuela's Yulimar Rojas jumped 15.43m to set a new indoor women's triple jump world record at the World Athletics Indoor tour in Madrid.**

After another foul in round three, she sailed out to 15.29m in round four, breaking her own South American indoor record and moving to second on the world indoor all-time list.

Following a third foul in round five, Rojas, coached by Cuba's former world and Olympic champion Ivan Pedrosa, succeeded on her sixth and final attempt of the evening.

Her Cuban training partner Liadagnis Povea was second on Friday with 14.52m with Portugal's Patricia Mamona in third place with a best of 14.28m.

Rojas captured the world outdoor title in London in 2017, a first for Venezuela with 14.91m. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

Mohun Bagan blank Churchill

Margao: Kolkata giants Mohun Bagan on Saturday defeated Churchill Brothers FC Goa 3-0 here to inch three points closer to their second Hero I-League title. Former La-Liga and Senegalese striker Papa Babacar Diawara opened the scoring as early as the sixth minute, while V.P. Suhair (51st) and Tajik Komron Tursunov (58th) found the net twice in the second half to register the convincing victory. The league leaders were off the blocks early with Diawara scoring his seventh in as many games. Joseba Beitia played a free-kick out wide for Fran Gonzalez, who headed square for Diawara and the Senegalese tapped it home with the Churchill defence on his heels. Churchill fought back creditably after the setback and there was a period of play when they missed three clear-cut chances in a space of five minutes with the Dawda Cessay-Willis Plaza combination working wonders. Bagan's new defensive formation — Trinidadian Daniel Cyrus and Gurjinder — did well to absorb a determined Churchill push. Following the win, Bagan have now amassed 32 points from 13 games while Churchill remain third with 19 points having played one game fewer. — Agencies

Late goals help ATK hold Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Two late goals by ATK cancelled two scored in the first half by Bengaluru FC as the final scoreline read 2-2 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Bengaluru on Saturday. Bengaluru FC ended their league stage campaign with 30 points and could possibly finish fourth, should Chennaiyin FC win their final league game against NorthEast United. Dimas Delgado (18') and Kevaughn Frater (35') were on the score-sheet for the home side while substitute Edu Garcia (86') and Michael Soosairaj (90') scored for the visitors. Carlos Cuadrat handed Kevaughn Frater his first start as he partnered Thongkosiem Haokip upfront. Meanwhile, Antonio Habas, like Bengaluru, handed several of his star players on the bench as he named Dheeraj Singh in between the sticks. The breakthrough came in the 18th minute when Parag Srivas was brought down on the edge of the box by Salam Ranjan. From the ensuing free-kick, Dimas Delgado's effort went straight into the back of the net. ATK could have equalised soon after when David Williams' corner-kick was headed out by Harmanjot Khabra but the ball went straight to the feet of Jayesh Rane on the edge of the box. — PTI

RASHPAL, JYOTI AIM TO DEFEND TITLES

New Delhi: Elite Indian athletes Rashpal Singh, Sher Singh, Jyoti Gawte and Monika Raut will vie for top honours in the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon here on Sunday. Men's defending champion Rashpal, representing Army Sports Institute, Pune, has been in stellar form recently, having finished second in the South Asian Games in December and having won the Mumbai Marathon, and he will once again aim for a top spot finish in full marathon. He will hope to ride on this momentum and even improve on his previous best timing of 02:19:19. It will, however, not be easy as he will face fierce competition from his ASI team-mates Sher Singh and Bahadur Singh Dhoni. Sher Singh finished second in last year's edition and, just like Rashpal, has been going through a great patch. His third-place finish in the South Asian Games and second-place finish in the Mumbai Marathon will hold him in good stead in New Delhi. Bahadur, the winner at the Allahabad Marathon 2019, will also fancy his chances and knows that one good burst could very well give him his first title in New Delhi. In the women's category of the full marathon race, reigning champion Jyoti Gawte from Maharashtra will look to continue her dominance this year as well. Jyoti finished third in the South Asian meet and won the Mumbai Police International Marathon in the Indian female category as well. Another title contender in the women's category is Monika Raut who finished second runner-up in the 2018 edition of the New Delhi Marathon. She will look to better her performance and push hard for the victory. — PTI

NO MORE BLUES

Giroud, Alonso score as Chelsea win at home, finally

London, Feb. 22: Olivier Giroud and Marcos Alonso came in from the cold to inspire Chelsea's 2-1 win against Tottenham as the Blues cemented their grip on fourth place in the Premier League on Saturday.

Giroud and Alonso had been reduced to fringe figures in Frank Lampard's first season as Chelsea manager. But Lampard restored both veterans to the team at Stamford Bridge in a gamble that paid rich dividends.

With Tammy Abraham only fit enough to make the bench, Giroud started for the first time since November and the France striker's fine finish opened the scoring in the first half.

The 33-year-old could have joined Tottenham had Chelsea signed a forward in January, but instead he netted his first club goal since August and his first in the Premier League since April.

Alonso, 29, maintained the theme of exiles getting back in favour as the left-back struck in the second half of his first league start since Chelsea's win at Tottenham in December.

Antonio Rudiger's own goal came too late to ruin Chelsea's first win in five league games, moving them four points clear of fifth placed Tottenham in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

Ending Tottenham's three-game winning streak in the league was the perfect response to Monday's home defeat against Manchester United.

It was no more than they deserved after a vibrant performance that finally answered Lampard's call for a killer instinct in the final third.

Tottenham have now won just once in their last 34 visits to Stamford Bridge, making it a painful return for their former Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho, who was beaten by Lampard for the second time this term.

Mourinho had ramped up the mind games on Friday when he claimed to know Lampard was planning to use the same five-man defence that helped the Blues win at Tottenham earlier this season. — AFP



Chelsea's Marcos Alonso celebrates after he scores against Tottenham Hotspur in their English Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London on Saturday. — AFP

THE RESULT	
Chelsea (Giroud 15, Alonso 48)	2
Tottenham (Rudiger 89-og)	1

Everton face stern test of Ancelotti-led revival

London, Feb. 22: Carlo Ancelotti says Everton are ready for an acid test of their revival under his leadership as the Champions League hopefuls head to Arsenal on Sunday at the start of a tough run of games.

Ancelotti's side have taken 17 points from his eight Premier League matches in charge — a return bettered only by runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool (24) over the same period — and have moved from 15th to ninth since the Italian arrived in December. There are more tests lying in wait for the Toffees after the trip to north London, with home games against Manchester United and Liverpool and a trip to fourth-placed Chelsea offering a closer examination of their European credentials.

"Of course we have to be focused on Arsenal, but if we want to think about Europe there are very important games after Arsenal," Ancelotti said. "We have to play against United, Chelsea and Liverpool. After these four games we can see what's going for Europe." Everton arrive at the Emirates Stadium this weekend looking to close the five-point gap on Chelsea as they attempt to gatecrash the battle for Champions League. Man City's two-year European ban has opened the door for the team that finishes fifth to qualify for next season's tournament, pending the result of City's appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport. — AFP

Live on TV

PREMIER LEAGUE

Man Utd vs Watford from 7.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Arsenal vs Everton from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

LYON BAG KEY WIN AHEAD OF JUEVE TEST

Paris, Feb. 22: Five days out from facing Juventus in the Champions League last 16, Lyon clinched a morale-boosting 2-0 win at Metz on Friday in French Ligue 1.

A penalty from Moussa Dembele in the eighth minute of injury time at the end of the first half and a goal from Houssein Aouar after three minutes of stoppage time in the second half gave Lyon the three points.

It was a first win for Lyon after two draws and two losses and moved them into sixth place in the table on 37 points. "The best way to prepare for the Champions League was to win tonight and we did it. It was good to give playing time to those who need it," said Lyon coach Rudi Garcia. — AFP

PRO LEAGUE | HOCKEY

India take revenge, shoot out Australia

Bhubaneswar, Feb. 22: India bounced back in style to beat title holders Australia 3-1 via a shoot-out in the second match of the two-leg FIH Pro League match here on Saturday.

Both the teams were locked 2-2 at the end of regulation time at the Kalinga Stadium.

India converted two penalty corners through Rupinder Pal Singh (25th minute) and Harmanpreet Singh (27th), while Trent Mitton (23rd) and skipper Aran Zaleski (46th) were the scorers for Australia in the regulation 60 minutes.

India had lost 3-4 to the visitors in the first game on Friday.

By virtue of this win, India earned three points from the game while Australia pocketed one.

Both India and Australia have 10 points from six games but the Kookaburras are a rung above the Manpreet Singh-led side at third spot in the standings on goal difference.

In the shoot-out, Harmanpreet, Vivek Sagar Prasad and Lalit Upadhyay scored for India, while only Daniel Beale found the net for the visitors.

Australia made a positive start, earning a penalty corner inside the opening 30 seconds of the match, but Jeremy Hayward's flick was saved by India goalkeeper P. Sreejesh.

After that it was all India with the hosts pinning the Kookaburras deep in their own territory but failing to create clear-cut opportuni-

ties. In the eighth minute Australia secured back-to-back penalty corners, the second of which was converted by Lachlan Sharp with a rebound, but the goal was ruled out after India called for video referral for obstruction on goalkeeper Sreejesh.

The Kookaburras won another penalty corner in the 12th minute but Sreejesh once again came to India's rescue by denying Hayward.

Three minutes into the second quarter, Jarmanpreet Singh missed a glorious chance to put India ahead, slapping his first-time shot just wide of the left post after he was picked out by Amit Rohidas' searching cross from the right.

Seconds later, the Indians defended a fifth Australian penalty corner.

Mitton broke the deadlock for Australia in the 23rd minute after beating second-choice India goalkeeper Krishan Pathak at his near-post with a powerful slap-shot.

Australia earned their sixth penalty corner soon but failed to convert. — PTI



Members of the Indian team celebrate their win over Australia in Bhubaneswar on Saturday. — PTI

Gujrathi finishes second in Prague

Prague, Feb. 22: Indian Grandmaster Vidit Gujrathi lost his play-off game to finish second in the Prague Chess Festival here.

After an exciting final round, five players, including Gujrathi, finished in tied top place with five points from nine rounds.

With five players ending up with five points, the two best players with tie-break scores faced off in a blitz to decide the champion. The 16-year-old Alireza Firouzja of Iran showed his abilities, winning both the games to capture the title.

"The ninth and final round saw some interesting clashes with Gujrathi, who needed a win to have a chance of winning the title outright, slipping to a defeat at the

hands of top-seed Jan Krzysztof Duda of Poland. Gujrathi could not recover from a loss in round eight and went down on the final day to Duda on Friday.

The other key game to decide the title was between David Anton Guijarro and Alireza Firouzja of Iran and a win for either player would have been enough to secure first place outright.

Anton missed his chances during time trouble and Firouzja got the upper hand in the endgame as the game ended in a draw.

P. Harikrishna, the other Indian in the field, broke his sequence of draws by beating David Navara of Czech Republic to finish with 4.5 points and in seventh place. — PTI



Vidit Gujrathi

ASIAN WRESTLING | CHAMPIONSHIP

Gold for Ravi, Bajrang settles for silver

New Delhi, Feb. 22: India's Ravi Dahiya claimed the gold medal in 57kg men's freestyle category at the Asian Wrestling Championship here on Saturday.

Dahiya got the better of Tajikistan's Hikmatullo Vohidov 10-0 on technical superiority in the second half.

However, Bajrang Punia had to settle for silver as he fell short in the final of 65kg category, losing 2-10 to Japan's Takuto Otoguro at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall.

Dahiya's medal was India's only gold of the day as three other grapplers lost their respective final bouts, including Bajrang.

In the 97kg category, Satywart Kadian lost to Iran's Mojtaba Mohammadshafie Goliej 0-10 in the final.

In the 79kg category, Gourav Baliyan was



Bajrang Punia (right) in action on Saturday. Tugs

defeated by Kyrgyzstan's Arsalan Budazhapov 5-7 in the gold medal bout. Earlier, in 57kg, Dahiya, who is fast emerging a

strong contender at the Tokyo Games, too put up a strong show, beating Japan's Yuki Takahashi (14-5) before pinning

Mongolia's Batjargal. In the semifinals, Uzbekistan's Nurislam Sanayev too could not

challenge Dahiya much. In a strong performance, Bajrang conceded only two points en route to the final.

Poor leg defence and conceding a big lead in the first period has troubled Bajrang for some time but none of the issues cropped up Saturday as he remained strong from the beginning in the 65kg competition.

He won all his bouts by technical superiority, beating Tajikistan's Dzhamshe Shafirov, Uzbekistan's Abbas Rakhmonov and Iran's Amirhossein Azim Maghsoudi.

Of the five Indian in action today, it was only Naveen who missed out on final appearance in the 70kg category. He lost his semifinal to Iran's Amirhossein Ali Hosseini 2-3. He will now fight for bronze with Kazakhstan's Meirzhan Ashirov. — PTI