

REFLECTING GLOBAL SELLOFF, SENSEX FALLS 5.17% TO LOWEST LEVEL IN 13 MONTHS

# Markets infected

Bloodbath on global markets as oil plunges, virus impact spreads

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
MUMBAI, MARCH 9

STOCK MARKETS in India crashed on Monday with the Bombay Stock Exchange's Sensex and NSE's Nifty indices logging their biggest ever fall in absolute terms as global markets witnessed a meltdown in the face of an oil price war and the economic fallout of the coronavirus outbreak.

The Sensex plummeted 1,942 points or 5.17 per cent to 35,635 and the Nifty plunged 538 points to 10,451, wiping out as much as Rs 6.8 lakh crore of investor wealth, or market capitalisation of listed shares. All sectoral indices ended in a sea of red with oil and banking stocks among the worst hit. At one stage, the Sensex had plummeted more than 2,400 points during the session and the broader NSE Nifty benchmark had slumped to as low as 10,294, down more than 700 points, before making a mild recovery towards the end of trade.

The rupee also dropped below the 74-level against the US dollar to settle at 74.17, down 30 paise, amid rising concerns over the sell-off in stock markets, capital outflows and economic slowdown.

In the US, the S&P 500 sharply plummeted 7 per cent in the first few minutes of trading Monday morning, and losses were so steep that it led to a halt in trading.

Analysts said fears about the worsening global slowdown in the wake of the spread of coronavirus were exacerbated by the shock decision by Saudi Arabia over the weekend to increase oil production in an attempt to drive competitors such as Russia and the US out of the market. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



The Bombay Stock Exchange shed 1,942 points, Monday; workers sanitise a DTC bus in Delhi. Reuters & Tashi Tobgyal



MORE REPORTS, PAGES 3, 7, 15

## Silver lining: Sharpest oil slump since 1991 may help ease pressure on deficit

SANDEEP SINGH & SUNNY VERMA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE SHARP slump in crude oil prices offers a silver lining to the Indian economy otherwise battered by a spate of negative factors as it helps ease pressure on the current account deficit and enables the government to improve its fiscal health if it is able to raise duties.

In the biggest slump since the 1991 Gulf War, crude oil prices fell as much as 33 per cent between Friday and Monday and hit a level of \$33 per barrel — as Saudi Arabia and Russia signalled they would hike output despite sliding demand globally. Saudi Arabia has cut its official selling prices for April for all crude grades to all destinations by between \$6 and \$8 a barrel, reigniting a price war among major oil-producing nations.

Saudi Arabia's decision came

**EXPLAINED**  
E Falling oil helps but not for long

THE BIGGEST crash in oil prices since 1991 provides an opportunity for India to stimulate the economy, pushing consumption and increasing its coffers to address deficit concerns. However, a prolonged slump in oil prices and a delay in respite from the virus spread can set off global recession that may hamper domestic growth too.

after the collapse of the OPEC supply cut agreement with Russia last week which ended more than three years of co-operation to support the market. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## 3-year-old in Kerala among 5 new cases, count is 44, three others under watch

ABANTIKA GHOSH & AVISHEK DASTIDAR  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

FIVE NEW coronavirus cases — including a three-year-old boy in Kerala — were reported on Monday, taking the total number of cases detected across the country to 44, including three in Kerala who were discharged last month.

WORLD

WHO WARNING: THREAT OF PANDEMIC NOW VERY REAL  
PAGE 14

The other new cases were reported from Jammu, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## First time in India, anti-HIV drugs used on Italian couple with coronavirus in Jaipur

ABANTIKA GHOSH & HAMZA KHAN  
NEW DELHI, JAIPUR, MARCH 9

BATTLING THE coronavirus threat, India has, for the first time, used the Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination, usually a second line HIV medication, in the treatment of two Italian

patients — a couple on a tour of India — who tested positive for COVID-19 in Jaipur. Due consent of the patients, officials said, was obtained before administration of the drug.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said: "Yes, ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) has approved the use of Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination for the treatment of COVID-19 patients." CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



‘CONSIDERING OUR SIZE, WE HAVE HANDLED SITUATION TO BEST OF ABILITY’  
HARSH VARDHAN  
UNION HEALTH MINISTER



## In MP, Kamal Nath govt battles threat from Scindia camp, BJP sniffs a chance

MILIND GHATWAI & MANOJ CG  
BHOPAL, NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE CONGRESS-LED government in Madhya Pradesh was pushed to the brink Monday by a series of political developments with at least 11 MLAs and six Ministers close to party leader Jyotiraditya Scindia snapping contact with their colleagues, the Opposition BJP entering into a huddle with its national leadership, and 20 other state Ministers submitting their resignations in a show of support for Chief Minister Kamal Nath.

Party sources told *The Indian Express* that Labour Minister Mahendra Sisodia, Women and Child Development Minister Imarti Devi, Transport Minister Govind Rajput, Health Minister Tulsilal, School Education Minister Prabhuram Chaudhary, and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pradyumna Tomar were among those who have broken ties with the state Congress leadership.

The crisis is expected to escalate over the next 24 hours, with the BJP calling a meeting of its



11 MLAs, 6 ministers close to Scindia are 'out of contact'

legislature party in Bhopal Tuesday evening, six days before the state Budget session begins on March 16. The Congress legislature party will also meet Tuesday.

State BJP sources told *The Indian Express* that "the party is now ready to play the game" and that "the national leadership is in the loop". But a senior party leader said it was too early to say whether the state government would fall.

Kamal Nath, meanwhile, rushed back to Bhopal after meeting Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in Delhi Monday afternoon when he was told to ensure that there is no threat to the government. Late Monday, PWD Minister Sajjan Singh Verma said

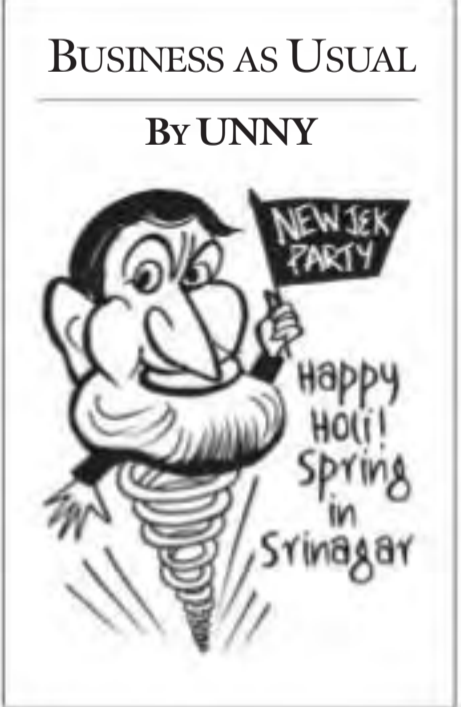
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Cong stays away as 6 Opp parties demand release of J&K leaders

MANOJ CG  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

INA joint statement on Monday, six Opposition parties demanded the immediate release of former J&K chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti. Calling their detention a "blatant violation of their fundamental rights", they said "democratic dissent is being muzzled by coercive administrative action".

The statement — which comes a day after former J&K minister Altaf Bukhari launched a new regional political outfit, the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party — has been signed by NCP's Sharad Pawar, West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC leader Mamata Banerjee, JD(S) leader H D Deve Gowda, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI leader D Raja, RJD leader Manoj Kumar Jha, and former Union



Ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie.

The Congress, however, chose not to sign the statement. Saying that they had reached out to the Congress, an Opposition leader involved in the exercise said: "We wanted a big name, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## 44 companies from 10 big groups account for Rs 34,000-crore Yes Bank bad loans

SANDEEP SINGH  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

AT A time when Rana Kapoor, former MD and CEO of Yes Bank and his family are under investigation on charges of alleged money laundering and grant of suspicious loans extended by the Bank to various groups in the country, data sourced from top sources in the financial industry

EXPLAINED

SIMPLY PUT  
HOW YES BANK RAN INTO CRISIS  
PAGE 11

AFTER ED, CBI RAIDS RANA KAPOOR HOUSE  
PAGE 9

show that at least 44 companies, belonging to 10 large Indian business groups, accounted for bad loans of over Rs 34,000 crore of Yes Bank.

While at least nine companies of the Anil Ambani Group accounted for NPAs worth Rs 12,800 crore, at least 16 companies belonging to Subhash Chandra's Essel Group made up Rs 8,400 crore worth of bad

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Murder cases filed in 4 bodies fished out of Delhi drain: Youth arrested, hunt for others

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

POLICE HAVE arrested a 20-year-old man in connection with the murder of four persons during the northeast Delhi riots, with officers saying the bodies were found in a drain in Gokulpuri. Police alleged that the man,

Lokesh Kumar Solanki, and others murdered the four before dumping their bodies in the drain.

Additional PRO (Delhi Police) Anil Mittal said they had registered four murder cases on March 5 at Gokulpuri police station following the violence, which left 53 people dead.

"The cases were transferred to the special investigation team (SIT). Through manual and tech-

nical investigation, it emerged that a group of people were involved in these incidents. Based on evidence collected, Solanki was apprehended Sunday. He disclosed details of his other associates. Raids are on to nab the others," he said. The arrest was made by Crime Branch's SIT.

Police said three bodies were found on February 27 and one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## HC orders hoardings removed: Shameless depiction, colourable exercise by UP admn

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

UNDERLINING THAT "no court can shut its eyes if a public unjust is happening just before it", the Allahabad High Court Monday ordered the Lucknow district administration to remove banners and hoardings carrying photographs and details of over 50 people accused of violence during the anti-CAA protests.

It called the action of the State an "unwarranted interference in privacy of people", a "shameless depiction" and said "placement of personal data of selected persons reflects colorable exercise of powers by the Executive".

Passing a detailed order in a public interest litigation on the basis of suo motu cognizance taken by the Allahabad High Court, the bench comprising Chief Justice Govind Mathur and



Hoardings had photos, names of anti-CAA protesters

Justice Ramesh Sinha directed the District Magistrate and Commissioner of Police, Lucknow "not to place such banners on roadside containing personal data of individuals without having authority of law".

"...suffice to state that no law is in existence permitting the State to place the banners with personal data of the accused from whom compensation is to be charged....the act of the State

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

## Monsoon months away, fearful Kerala prepares: Canoes at home

K CARUN  
KOCHI, MARCH 9

THEIR LIVES battered by rain over the last two years, and the annual southwest monsoon just three months away, scores of residents in flood-prone areas of Kerala are marking a new addition to their parking slots at home alongside two-wheelers and cars: small fibre-glass canoes.

Most of these canoes are being purchased from boat-building yards in Ernakulam and

Alappuzha districts, with owners saying that they are light-weight and long-lasting, can be easily transported through land — and don't require much storage space.

According to Jeevan Sukumaran, managing director of Alappuzha-based Samudra Shipyard, his company used to sell an average of about 150 canoes a year before 2018. But over the last two years, he says, Samudra has sold nearly 600 canoes.

"There are people coming from Kannur, Thrissur and Ernakulam to purchase our boats,

apart from those in Alappuzha. In Alappuzha, most of them were sold in the Kainakary, Ambalappuzha and Paravur areas, which were among the worst-hit by the floods," says Sukumaran.

Most of those who have purchased these boats — Rs 25,000 for a three-seater and Rs 35,000 for a five-seater — are owners of homes near rivers, lakes and other water bodies.

P K Ashokan, from a resident of Muvattupuzha in Ernakulam district, says he bought a canoe for Rs 25,000 after his family's



Ashokan, a businessman, at home with his canoe in Muvattupuzha, Ernakulam. Express

"harrowing experience" in 2018. That year, his family of three had to relocate to his brother's residence, 2 km away, after floodwaters entered his home.

"When I was a child, we used to row canoes all the time. During those days, the river used to swell constantly, flooding the area, and a lot of families used to keep wooden canoes. But gradually, as flooding stopped over the years, people began selling their canoes because they were hard to maintain," says Ashokan, 50.

In 2018, Kerala recorded the

heaviest monsoon rain in nearly a century, leading to widespread floods and landslides that claimed about 500 lives and displaced thousands. Marooned in their homes, many were rescued on boats by the Army, NDRF and volunteers, including fishermen.

In 2019, too, heavy monsoon showers flooded several parts of north and central Kerala, leading to about 100 deaths.

Ashokan says that in 2018, when he ventured out with his friends for rescue work, they struggled to find boats. "Even the

families that resided close to the Muvattupuzha river did not have any. Many of them remained stranded in their homes until help arrived," he says.

S Gopalakrishnan, who owns Bristol Boats that specialises in two-seaters, says there have been "more enquiries after the floods over the last two years".

Ashokan's friend Prince Elias, a businessman, says he used a three-seater canoe for relief work in 2018. But now, he has purchased a five-seater — for his own family.





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WEB EXCLUSIVE

US FIRM HELMED BY INDIAN CREATED PLATFORM TO REMOTELY MONITOR VIRUS PATIENTS

Boston-based Biofourmis, a digital therapeutics company, has modified its AI-based remote monitoring platform to keep a tab on patients suspected to have, or diagnosed with, Covid-19. The simple platform was built in two weeks to help clinicians monitor symptoms among infected patients.

FULL COVERAGE



THE YES BANK CRISIS

The moratorium on Yes Bank could be lifted by Saturday.

EXPLAINED



THE MEGA FILM KERALA IS TALKING ABOUT

Marakkur: Arabikadalinthe Simham was made for Rs 100 cr

EXPRESS AUDIO

Will coronavirus cancel the 2020 Olympics?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

The latest episode of the Express Sports podcast talks about the impact that cancelling the Olympics would have on the sporting ecosystem as well as individual athletes.

FROM PAGE ONE

44 cases

The three-year-old from Kerala, who had travelled to Italy with his parents, had arrived in Kochi, via Dubai, on March 7. The patient in Jammu, the first case in J&K, had travelled to Iran; the UP patient is linked to the six people from Agra who had tested positive last week — the person worked as an accountant in the factory of one of the Agra patients; the Delhi patient is a contact of the Paytm employee from Uttam Nagar who had tested positive earlier; the Punjab patient is learnt to be an NRI from Italy.

The health ministry clarified that a patient from Murshidabad, West Bengal, who died on Sunday had tested negative for COVID-19 and "hence so far no death has been reported due to the disease in the country".

Meanwhile, the government sent an aircraft to Iran to evacuate stranded Indians — mostly pilgrims and students. "An IAF C-17 'Globemaster' aircraft got airborne today at 2030 hrs from Hindan airbase to airlift Indian citizens from Iran. The aircraft has a specialist medical team on-board. Indian citizens will be flown to Hindon where medical facilities including quarantine have been set up," the IAF tweeted.

It said the aircraft would return on Tuesday morning.

The Centre has asked the paramilitary forces to build isolation facilities for over 5,000 people. The Indian Railways has also prepared 2,000 isolation wards in its 91 hospitals across the country, and has identified quarantine facilities for 20,000 patients.

In an appeal, apparently triggered by Sunday's case of a family that missed screening in Kochi, the Centre asked people to "reveal clearly about their travel history and fill the details in self-declaration forms properly". All international passengers are now being screened at airports and seaports.

In all, 11,913 cases are under Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) community follow-up; 404 Indian contacts of the US citizen who tested positive in Bhutan have been identified and put under surveillance in Assam. A total of 9,41,717 international passengers from 8,827 flights have been screened at air-

ports till now with 54 passengers being referred to IDSP/ hospitals. Of these, 177 have been hospitalised, 33,599 are under observation, and 21,867 have completed their observation period.

Meanwhile, as part of the country's preparedness, the Indian Railways has prepared 2,000 isolation wards in its hospitals and identified quarantine facilities, including hostel rooms in training institutes in Vadodra, Lucknow, Pune, Hyderabad.

Anti-HIV drugs

Research has taken approval for use of second line HIV drugs on COVID patients, but this Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination therapy has been approved for emergency use among COVID-19 patients with moderate degree of severity with laid down protocols. Till now, this combination therapy has been given to two Italian patients hospitalised in Jaipur.

Health officials said due procedure was followed, including obtaining the consent of patients, but it is too early to say if the drugs are working. "The drug has been used in China, it is not exactly a new drug. Of course, it has some side-effects. We cannot say if it is working but since this is new use of an existing drug, we have to take consent of the patients before use," a senior official said.

In Jaipur, health officials said a 69-year-old from Italy, who had tested positive for coronavirus, will be discharged in the coming days.

Rohit Kumar Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health and Family Welfare, said the 69-year-old "who was presented with right lower lung lobe pneumonitis and was corona positive, now has no fever and is constantly improving". "His blood counts have become normal and pneumonia is decreasing, and is requiring much less oxygen. Looking at this, we expect to be able to discharge him, fully recovered, within the next ten days. His wife, who too was corona positive, is also much better," Singh said.

The ICMR, the apex medical research body in the country, had obtained permission for "restricted use in public health emergency" of the two second line HIV medications for use against coronavirus. Seventy per cent of HIV positive patients in

India are on first line drugs. The medicines are manufactured in India mainly for export purposes, mostly to African countries. The combination of Lopinavir and Ritonavir has been approved for emergency medical use only if the COVID-19 situation in India turns into a public health emergency. Guidelines have been framed for their use.

Madhya Pradesh

that 20 Ministers attended a meeting at the Chief Minister's official residence in Bhopal and submitted their resignations while requesting Nath to "restructure the Cabinet".

Nath also met the other senior state leader Digvijaya Singh. Scindia remained "out of contact", with party sources saying that his supporters have moved to Bengaluru.

In a late-night statement, Nath accused the BJP of trying to "destabilise" his government through "illegal means". "The BJP is frustrated because it had lost power in seven states in the last few months and is trying to topple the Congress government before it completes five years," he alleged.

But Congress sources told The Indian Express that at the heart of the latest tussle in the party's MP unit is the race for the two Rajya Sabha seats, which the party can win out of the three that fall vacant on April 9, and the post of the state party chief, which is currently held by Nath.

Both Digvijaya, whose Rajya Sabha term ends next month, and Scindia are eyeing two of those seats while the third is expected to go to the BJP, given the thin margin that separates the two parties in the state assembly. Scindia, sources said, wants his name as the first-choice candidate to ensure a berth in the Upper House.

Sources close to Scindia said his fight is for "justice" with "no intention to rock the boat". They say he has been "ignored" and is "upset" with the "one-man show" in the state in a reference to Nath. His supporters suspect there could be "foul play" if he is not the first choice. The last date for filing nominations for the three seats is March 13.

Sources said most of the MLAs and Ministers who have snapped contact, and are believed to have moved to Bengaluru, belong to the Gwalior-Chambal belt where Scindia wields influence. In Bengaluru, police sources said that a group of 25, including legislators from MP and their associates, arrived in the city on chartered flights Monday afternoon. The group has been lodged in a "gated community in the far eastern part" of Bengaluru, sources said.

In Delhi, BJP sources said Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar was engaged "hands-on" in the evolving situation. Sources said Tomar was part of a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP president J P Nadda, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and former MP CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

The latest development follows a week-long drama that began with allegations that about 10 legislators, including six Congress MLAs, had moved to Gurugram and Bengaluru. Eight of those MLAs, including one Independent, and one SP and two BSP MLAs, have since returned. Two Congress legislators are still "out of reach", sources said.

The 2018 assembly elections had thrown up a fractured mandate, leaving the Congress with 114 members in the 230-strong assembly. The total strength has since been reduced to 228, following the deaths of two legislators. Currently, apart from the 114 Congress legislators, the government has the support of four Independents, two BSP MLAs and one SP MLA. The BJP had 109 members. Tuesday, incidentally, marks

Bloodbath on markets as oil plunges

price of Brent crude oil fell almost 30 per cent to \$31.14 a barrel on Monday, its biggest single fall since the start of the first Gulf war in 1991.

Falling Chinese exports, faster than expected pace of shrinking of the Japanese economy, increasing cases of Coronavirus outside China, and disruption of global supply chains, have contributed to the panic in the financial markets worldwide. While the fall in oil prices is good for India in the long-term, FI outflows from all emerging markets and the Yes Bank crisis at home, added to jittery market sentiments.

"The risk of recession increased fuelled by crash in crude oil prices and increasing virus cases outside China. The coronavirus fear is intensifying too and fresh travel bans seem to hurt the global economic sentiments more than feared," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research,

Silver lining: Oil crash helps ease pressure on deficit

Amid all the domestic concern around decline in GDP growth and the impact of coronavirus on global economic activity, the fall in the prices of crude augurs well for the economy as India imports more than 80% of its oil requirements.

Two leading corporate voices suggested that the fall in oil prices can act as stimulus and recommended certain steps that the government could take to capitalise on the same.

Anand Mahindra, chairman, Mahindra Group said in a tweet Monday, "So this is what a global meltdown feels like. For India, it's a crisis we must not waste. Three opportunities we need to leverage: a) The government can use low oil prices to spur consumption but also re-

tain some of the windfall gains to tackle the deficit. b) Step up sanitisation and the swachh movement which will make India appealing to tourists looking for alternatives to China. c) Step up our incentives and step down regulations for global investors who will look for alternative manufacturing sites to China."

On Sunday, Uday Kotak, CEO Kotak Mahindra Bank, said in a tweet: "Amidst turbulence and the virus, some good news - oil at \$45/ barrel. Recent \$20 drop saves India \$30 billion per annum. Also global interest rates have collapsed making money cheap. Let's leverage these for policy to boost growth."

According to a report by Care Ratings, in the current financial year India has imported

4.5 million barrels per day (April-January) of crude oil and the import dependency based on consumption has increased to 85 per cent as compared with it being 83.5 per cent a year ago in the same period.

While a decline in crude oil prices also brings inflation to lower levels, the report said, "With imports of 1651 million (4.5\*366) barrels of crude oil in FY20 (till January) a dollar decrease in prices on a permanent basis would decrease the bill by roughly \$1.6 billion per annum.

Crude oil import bill during FY19 was around \$112 billion and in the current fiscal is \$87.7 billion (until January). Thus the fall in crude oil prices will further aid in softening the deficit and moderating inflation.

However, the fall in crude oil

prices also brings some concern. "Oil remaining below \$40/barrel on a sustained basis might lead to a global recession and not good for the markets. It reduces FDI, portfolio investment and even remittances," says Debasish Mishra, Partner at Deloitte India.

Following a sharp decline in crude oil prices and decrease in trade from China and other countries in the wake of fear of spread of coronavirus, India's foreign exchange reserves jumped \$5.4 billion in the week ended February 28 to hit a new all-time high of \$481.5 billion. The country's forex reserves have grown by \$53 billion since September 20 when the government cut corporate tax rate to attract domestic and foreign investment.

and assess the situation on the ground," it said.

This is the second time in a fortnight that non-Congress Opposition parties have come together to issue a joint statement. Following the communal violence in Delhi, while the Congress had met President Ram Nath Kovind to demand that Home Minister Amit Shah be sacked, the Left and some other parties — including the NCP, RJD and DMK — had written to the President separately.

Yes Bank

loans of Yes Bank. Dewan Housing Finance Corporation and Believe Realtors Private Ltd of the DHFL Group took loans worth Rs 4,735 crore while Yes Bank had exposure of over Rs 2,500 crore to IL&FS that turned bad. Yes Bank is also learnt to have loaned Rs 1,100 crore to Jet Airways. Among other groups that account for bad loans of Yes Bank are Kerker Group whose two companies Cox & Kings and Go travels have taken loans of around Rs 1,000 crore; Bharat Infra, McLeod Russel Assam Tea and Eveready of B M Khaitan Group (Rs 1,250 crore); two projects of Omkar Realtors and Developers (Rs 2,710 crore); Radius Developers (Rs 1,200 crore) and C G Power of Thapar Group (Rs 500 crore).

This list of companies clearly reflects the bank's exposure to most stressed companies that operate in sectors including those relating to infrastructure, real estate and financial sector.

Delhi drain

the next day, after locals saw a hand jutting out of the garbage piled up in the Gokulpuri drain.

Around 7 am on February 27, a patrolling team of around 50 personnel called local divers and told them to bring out the body.

"The divers took out the first body, which was decomposed. We suspected there could be more inside, so divers were sent in again. Half-an-hour later, another body was fished out. While the first one was found near the garbage, the second one was deep inside. In total, bodies of four persons, all residents of Mustafabad, were found in the drain," said a senior officer.

Solanki, who is an undergraduate correspondence course student, was arrested after a team led by Inspector Vinay Tyagi received information about his alleged involvement. During the probe, they found a purported audio clip where he describes how he had killed the people on February 24-25.

"During questioning, police came to know that one of his associates, Sumit Chaudhary, may also have been involved but he was arrested on charges of rioting. Police have now moved an application for production warrant of Chaudhary, to verify all allegations, before making an arrest on murder charges," said an officer, adding that prima facie it appears the four victims were beaten to death.

Meanwhile, northeast district police have arrested four men on charges of rioting, robbery and vandalising a mosque in Ashok Nagar. "Using footage, we identified one Rahul (23) and arrested him. Two men, identified as Suraj (42) and Yogendra (45), have also been arrested, and a juvenile was apprehended for allegedly looting a footwear showroom. One man was arrested for firing in the area," said an officer.

Two brothers, Arif and Abid Qureshi, have been arrested in connection with the murder of civil engineer Rahul Solanki in Dayalpur, police said. Meanwhile, police said suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain's brother Shah Alam and two of his associates has been arrested in connection with the riots.

CLARIFICATIONS & CORRECTIONS

01.03.2020, PAGE 1

IN THE article, 'A Sense of Direction' in Sunday Eye, a part of the research on the origin and development of theatre in Manipur (Paragraph beginning with "The history of performances in Manipur can be traced to the fertility cults and ancestor worship of the 12th century" and ending with "By the 1970s, separatist ideology was driving a lot of experimental productions.") was based on an article by Lokendra Arambam, published in The Oxford Companion to Indian Theatre (ed. Ananda Lal). The credit was inadvertently omitted in the copy.

The error is regretted.

Classifieds

EXPRESS EDUCATION ANTHRO Interview Sessions One-to-One with Vaid Sir On Mar 1 & Mar 12 VAID'S ICS, DELHI Ph: 0-9311337737, 0-9999946748

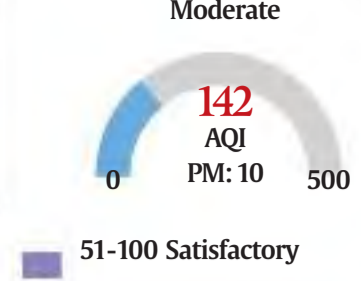
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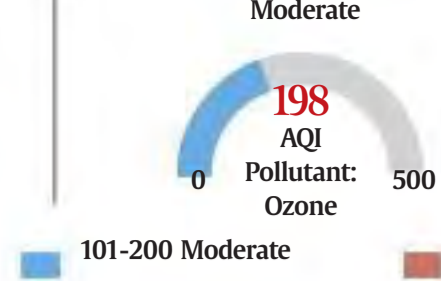


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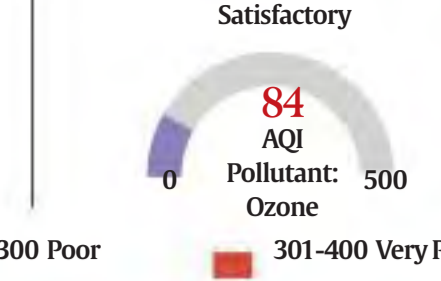
ANAND VIHAR Moderate



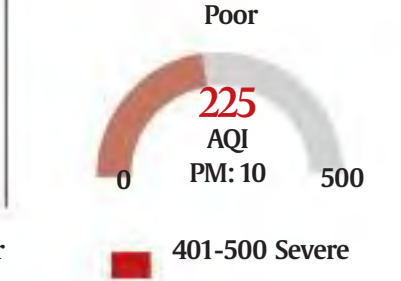
SIRIFORT Moderate



SHADIPUR Satisfactory



DWARKA-SECTOR 8 Poor



## AT VASUNDHARA ENCLAVE

# Woman, daughter found dead, model held in Jaipur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

A 30-YEAR-OLD model has been arrested from Jaipur for allegedly killing a 45-year-old woman and her 25-year-old daughter at Mansara apartment in East Delhi's Vasundhara Enclave on Monday morning.

Police identified the victims as Sumita and her daughter Samrita. The accused, Vikrant Nagar alias Vinay, is learnt to have claimed during police questioning that he was in a relationship with Samrita, but she had started avoiding him of late. He is also learnt to have told police that she had started seeing someone else. Police are verifying his claims and conducting raids to catch Nagar's associate, who allegedly helped him commit the murders.

The accused told police that on Sunday, Samrita had gone to watch a movie with a friend. In the meantime, he and his friend entered her society and waited for her. "Samrita returned around 11 pm and met Nagar at the staircase. The three of them then went to Samrita's house. CCTV footage shows Samrita leaving the house at 3 am. It seems she told the building guard she had forgotten her phone and that she will return in a bit with it. But she didn't," an officer said.

Police alleged Nagar and his accomplice killed Samrita and Sumita — whose bodies had multiple stab wounds — using a sharp-edged weapon after 3 am.

Police said Sumita, who hailed from Kerala, worked for an event management company, while Samrita was undergoing



(From top-left) Sumita and her daughter Samrita; the accused Vikrant Nagar; the mother and daughter lived in a flat at Vasundhara Enclave. Express

training in the hospitality sector. Neighbours told police that Sumita's husband was no more. "The incident came to light around 8 am when their domestic help found the door of their third-floor flat ajar. On entering, she found their bodies lying in pools of blood in two different rooms. She raised an alarm and informed the neighbours, who called police," said the officer.

Police rushed to the spot and a crime team of forensic experts was called to lift fingerprints. "Police found that the house had been ransacked. After questioning neighbours, colleagues and

relatives, police learnt that both women had gone to work on Friday. Relatives are yet to ascertain the items missing from the house, but claimed that some cash and jewellery were gone. The bodies have been preserved in a mortuary for post-mortem," said an officer.

Police also found that Nagar visited their house frequently over the last few months.

"CCTV cameras showed Nagar coming to the society with his friend and later leaving in the victims' car. He accidentally hit the exit gate while leaving the society," said the officer.

An FIR has been registered at New Ashok Nagar police station. "Various clues were developed by analysing CCTV footage and local intelligence. We coordinated with Rajasthan Police and apprehended the accused with their help," said DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh.

Singh said the bus in which the accused was escaping to Jaipur was intercepted by a team of SP Jaipur, Rural. "A team of Delhi Police has been sent to Rajasthan and further investigation will be carried out after the accused is brought to Delhi," he added.

# Delhi confirms 4th coronavirus case, Kejriwal, Vardhan hold joint meeting

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan Monday held a joint meeting to review the preparedness for tackling coronavirus cases, as the national capital confirmed its fourth case. The CM said strict action would be taken by his government against black marketers and chemists who stock up on sanitisers.

He warned the public against hoarding of masks and hand sanitisers, and reiterated those who are not suffering from any respiratory issues are not required to wear masks: "Only those with respiratory diseases, infected patients, or those who came in contact with infected people are required to wear masks. Hand sanitisers are also not needed. Washing hands with regular soap and water for 20 seconds is enough," he said.

The Centre, meanwhile, con-



At an office in Barakhamba Road, employees are checked for signs of fever with an infrared thermometer. Tashi Tobgyal

firming that 44 Covid-19 cases have been reported in India so far. The fourth case in the capital is a woman who came in contact with the Paytm employee from Gurgaon — the second case.

Sanjeeva Kumar, Special Secretary, Union Health Ministry, said the disease has not caused any deaths in the country so far.

"All ministers and officials of the Delhi and Central governments were at the meeting. We want to thank the Union Health

Minister for convening a meeting on Covid-19. We have successfully been able to contain the spread of coronavirus because both governments are working in a coordinated manner. The general public is also very alert and is cooperating with us to a large extent," said Kejriwal after the meet.

The CM also said most cases so far have been seen in people who have travelled from other countries. "All those who came in contact with the infected people

have been identified and quarantined, which has contained the outbreak. We will also conduct awareness drives, make public announcements and distribute pamphlets regarding coronavirus. Airport authorities have been directed to conduct thermal screening of passengers. Those from Delhi are also being monitored consistently for 14 days for symptoms," he added.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government has begun a drive to disinfect Metros and buses. "We are carrying out a deep-cleaning of 10% of the fleet each day," said a government official.

"Advisories have been put up in both English and Hindi, one behind the driver's seat and one at the entry gate of the bus," said DTC Chief General Manager Dr Ravinder Manhas.

A state-level training exercise for Covid-19 was also conducted at the Delhi Secretariat for 195 people including nodal officers from hospitals, district surveillance officers and health officers from local bodies.

# In Gurgaon, traders say Holi material has no takers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE GURGAON, MARCH 9

PRASHANT BANSAL, who has been running a shop in Gurgaon's Sadar Bazaar for the last 15 years, looks forward to Holi every year for the surge it brings to business. The colours and *pichkari*s he stocks up practically fly off the shelves, he said. But not this time. "Most people don't seem to be celebrating Holi because of fear of (coronavirus) infection," he said.

In the Phase-1 market, similarly, a shopkeeper who did not want to be named said that sales

have dipped by 70%.

"Normally our sales begin to rise in the week leading up to Holi. In the last week though, there have been very few people who have purchased colours," said the shopkeeper.

"Our sales this year have been 30% of what it usually is. I don't blame people for being cautious, but what do we do with all these extra products?" he said.

Meanwhile, Gurgaon Police, after a meeting held by Police Commissioner Muhammad Akil, decided to deploy additional police force across the district to ensure law and order is maintained during celebrations.

# HC asks lawyers, public not to crowd premises

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

REPORTS OF coronavirus cases in the capital have prompted the Delhi High Court administration to issue a circular asking advocates and the general public to avoid "unnecessary overcrowding in the court premises".

"As per the said advisory, one should avoid going to crowded places. Therefore, advocates, general public and litigants are requested to adhere to the guidelines/advisory issued by the Government of NCT of Delhi and avoid unnecessary

overcrowding in the court premises," said the circular signed by Registrar (general administration) Ramesh Chand.

The High Court circular stated that the information regarding the virus be put up on the Delhi High Court Bar Association's notice board and also be uploaded on the websites of all the district courts in the national capital.

The circular also contains 'Dos and Dont's', and provides the number of a state-level control room for any query.

The number of coronavirus cases in India rose to 44 Monday.



# Central Industrial Security Force

## 51<sup>st</sup> Raising Day

10 March 2020

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- >>> CAPF having largest public interface.
- >>> Providing Security and Fire Consultancy services.
- >>> CAPF having highest percentage of women workforce.
- >>> Providing security cover to 349 units.
- >>> Providing Fire protection to 103 units.
- >>> A Central Armed Police Force with the strength of more than 1,62,000 personnel.



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## REBUILDING BLOCKS

Renovation work on at a school that was damaged during the riots at Shiv Vihar, Monday. Praveen Khanna

## NORTHEAST DELHI RIOTS

## Life between hospitals, police stations for many whose relatives are still untraced

SOURAV ROY BARMAN  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

A WELDER, a generator set trader, a scrap dealer, and a mother of two—all of them ventured out between February 22 and 26, when riots gripped Northeast Delhi, but none of them have returned so far.

Their hearts pounding, family members of those missing have lifted shrouds off the faces of several unidentified bodies over the last two weeks, inside mortuaries and beside *nallahs*, while some are awaiting reports of DNA tests.

According to police records, between February 22 and 26 at least 15 missing person reports were filed in stations across the district. However, not all missing cases are connected with the riots that have claimed at least 53

lives, police said.

Over the last two days, some families have seen their worst fears come true. Feroz (25), who had gone missing on February 24 from Pusta Road at Karawal Nagar, was found dead on Sunday, a family member said. His family had even pasted 'missing' posters across the area.

Mohammad Haroon, father of an 18-year-old, had checked at least 25 bodies in mortuaries before his son was finally found—alive—on Sunday. "He is physically unhurt but mentally a little disturbed. We are still not sure how he went missing," said Haroon.

Family members of 23-year-old Mohsin, who went missing on February 26, said the Noida resident ran a business of renting out generator sets.

"He was in Karawal Nagar during the riots as four genera-



Families have been making the rounds of hospitals to see if any of the bodies are of their relatives

tor sets were rented out to a community centre in the area. Police claim they saw him being set on fire in front of them. Why did they not save him? The DNA test report (from a body sus-

pected to be his), which was supposed to come on Monday, is not out yet," said his brother Shahrukh.

While Mohsin got married close to three months ago, Shahbaz (22), "jiski shaadi ki baat chahi thi", went missing on February 25. His brother Matloob Alam said Shahbaz, who worked as a welder, had left home at 7 am the same day to get his eyes tested at the Guru Nanak Eye Centre.

"As he worked as a welder, he had to frequently visit eye clinics. *Aksar chingari padti thi*. On February 24, he complained of severe pain in his eyes. The next morning, he left for the clinic despite our objections. Since then, we have not heard from him," Alam, employed as a book binder, said.

Since then, the family has been rushing to mortuaries

every time there are reports of bodies being found. "On March 8, we went to Gokulpuri after we were told of a body being taken out from a drain. But that was not him. Even on Monday, we checked another unidentified body—it was not Shahbaz," said Alam.

Mursalin (33), a scrap dealer, went missing on February 25. The father of two last spoke to his wife Nargis at 6 pm. "Since then, his phone is off. We have been to morgues of GTB, RML, and a few other hospitals. Police had also told us to look for him in police lock-ups. We don't know where else to look for him now," said his brother Hafizuddin.

The family stays across the Loni border, and the missing complaint has also been filed with the Uttar Pradesh police.

The father-in-law of Farah, who went missing on February

24, said the homemaker had left for a dispensary in the Welcome area, with her son around 10 am.

"We have absolutely no idea where they went... maybe she eloped with someone... it is also possible that something happened during the violence, maybe when they were returning," her father-in-law said.

The Delhi High Court had on Friday directed all hospitals, under the central as well as the Delhi governments, to video-graph post-mortems of all bodies at their mortuaries and preserve them till March 11.

A bench of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice I S Mehta had also directed the hospitals to collect DNA samples from all bodies. There are at least five unclaimed bodies at the mortuaries of the GTB and RML hospitals currently.

## For students in riot-hit areas, board exams on till mid-April

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

BOARD EXAMS for some students in riot-hit Northeast Delhi will go on till mid-April, according to the revised examination schedule released by the CBSE on Monday. The riots in Northeast Delhi had broken out in the midst of the class X and XII board examinations, following which the Board had postponed four exams for students writing their exams at over 80 centres in the affected areas.

It decided to resume the examinations in the region from March 2 onwards, with the provision that students who were unable to do so could choose to



CBSE had postponed four exams for students in riot-affected areas

write the exam at a later date set by the Board. However, this provision only applied for examinations till March 7.

On Monday, the CBSE released the revised schedule for

both the postponed examinations as well as the papers for which students had the option of appearing later. According to the original schedule, the examinations were supposed to end on March 30.

Now, for some of these students, the examinations will end as late as April 13—which is the rescheduled date for the class XII political science paper. The first exam to be cancelled was the English paper for class X students, which was originally scheduled for February 26. This exam will now be held on March 21.

From now, students from the region will have to sit for all scheduled exams and will not have the option to appear on a later date.

## Rashes to UTIs, illnesses take a toll at relief camps

ANANYA TIWARI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

SKIN ALLERGIES, urinary tract infections (UTI), breathing problems, and lack of sleep due to stress—these are some of the ailments that have afflicted Northeast Delhi residents currently seeking refuge at the Mustafabad Eidgah following riots in the district.

At the Eidgah relief camp, set up by the Delhi Waqf Board and where over 1,000 families are staying, two medical camps have been opened by Holy Family Hospital and other doctors to provide aid and medicines for residents. At a Delhi government relief camp in Shastri Park, riot victims said ambulances provide them medical aid.

Skin allergies in the form of rashes from wearing the same clothes for too long was a common problem reported at the Eidgah camp among young children. Shama Parveen (30), mother of a one-and-a-half year old boy named Taimur, said, "He has only one pair of clothes and has developed slight rashes on his body."

Anshu Anthony, an organiser of the Holy Family Hospital camp, said, "Because of lack of cleanliness and from staying in a common place for long, toddlers are developing skin rashes. We are giving them new clothes and Dettol." With many women also complaining of UTIs, doctors collected their blood and urine samples and sent them for testing.

Soap and Dettol solution are being distributed as preventive measures against coronavirus, said Dr Imran Khan, who is volunteering at the Eidgah. All volunteers are wearing surgical or N95 masks.



The relief camp at the Mustafabad Eidgah. Praveen Khanna

Those suffering from mental health issues are being counselled by nurses and volunteers. "Stress and shock, along with a great degree of fear, is leading to sleeping disorders in many people... some have not been able to sleep for four-five days. We have given them sleeping pills," said Dr Khan.

The camp is also home to many pregnant women, with some of them giving birth since. "For two women, contractions began at the camp and we took them to the hospital for delivery," said Anthony.

Aasima (26), who is nine months pregnant, has been staying at the camp with her husband and two young girls since February 24. "I don't have any pain and doctors are regularly checking my condition," she said, adding that she does not want to go back to her home in Shiv Vihar just yet as she is afraid.

Anthony said infants not more than three months old had to be sent to the hospital as they developed jaundice. "One child was 22 days old, the other 18 days old."

Diabetic issues and difficulty in breathing were ailments seen

in the older women. Others were also provided medication for high blood pressure. Ruksana (55), who is at the Shastri Park camp, said, "Because the diet is mostly rice, my sugar levels have risen. They gave me pills."

Noor Jahan (48) developed breathing difficulties and chest pain, and was given glucose. "This has not happened before. For the past few days, I've been having difficulty in breathing, and chest and back pain," she said.

With two adult working daughters and two school-going children, Jahan did not want to go back home to Shiv Vihar: "The house was looted, not burned down. But I've been living there for 30 years and everything has been fine. It is just not the same anymore."

A civil defence volunteer at Shastri Park relief camp, which had around 40 people during the day, said, "The camp fills up at night. People go back home during daytime, trying to build a routine. But they come back at night as they're still in fear. But if they don't go, the fear won't go either."

## Transistor blasts: 30 acquitted, but long case took heavy toll

SHIVAM PATEL, SUKRITA BARUAH & ASHNA BUTANI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

IN 1985, a young Dalvinder Singh was expecting the result of his Class XII examinations to come out soon, hopeful that a promising future lay ahead of him. The result was brought to him while he was in police custody.

Singh was one of the 59 men and women accused in the transistor bomb blasts of May 10, 1985, that happened in Delhi and adjoining areas of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The explosions killed 49 and injured 127 people in the capital alone.

A Delhi court on March 5 acquitted 30 of the 59 accused, including Singh, saying that the "investigation conducted in these cases was defective, lopsided, unfair and suffered from various lacunae".

Nearly 35 years after his life was turned upside down, Singh is now hopeful of making a fresh start: "Saari zindagi khatam ho gayi iss mein (all my life has ended in this case)... I was 17 years and 8 months old at the time. The officer who brought my result had said, 'Pass ho gaya, Dalvinder. Mithai lao'."

After he was released on bail in 1986, Singh took admission in Deshbandhu College, but had to drop out after the second year as his family began fearing for his safety. He ran a few businesses with his brothers—an electric car parts factory and a pen factory—but they too had to be closed, either due to family issues or because he couldn't pay attention.

"After the charges were framed in 2006, I was required to be in court every day from morning to evening... I got married late, hoping to clear the case first and establish myself a little.

## Called 'coronavirus' near DU: Woman from NE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

AN FIR has been registered on the complaint of a woman from the Northeast who alleged she was hit by water balloons and called 'coronavirus' by two men on a bike near DU's North Campus.

The incident is alleged to have taken place on March 5 near Kamla Nagar. "The incident took place in the afternoon and the woman filed a complaint. In the complaint, she said was with her friend when two men on a motorbike hit them with water balloons and made racist remarks," said DCP (North) Monika Bharadwaj.

My mother died in 1993 and my father in 2011. Both of them would have been happy today," he said.

Many others who were acquitted by the court said the support from their families and community kept them going. When Manmohan Singh was arrested, his wife was pregnant with their first child. He went to spend six months in jail, during which time his first son Amanpreet was born.

"When news of the blasts arrived, I was working at my textile printing factory in Uttam Nagar. I wasn't even aware of it. A Hindu neighbour came to me and said, 'Brother, haven't you heard what has happened? Go home to your family at once.' When the police came to arrest me, I was sleeping in my house with my family. I was going about my normal life as usual," he said.

Now 65 years old, Singh lives in a well-to-do locality in Vikaspuri with his family. "No one believed the allegations against me, and I received full support from everyone. Luckily, I lived in a joint family and my pregnant wife was looked after by my parents and brothers during a very worrying time. I did not receive any hatred from any Hindu," he said.

Tej Partap, the son of accused Tarjeet Singh, said, "Many Sikh youngsters were falsely implicated in the case. My uncle, Sarveet Singh, and father were among them. They were in their early 20s then. They spent almost a year in jail."

Narinder Singh (65), another accused who was acquitted by the court recently, said he was 30 when he was arrested by police around the end of May 1985. His first child was born around 15 days after his arrest. "I have not been able to find a steady employment since," he said.

## Congress demands judicial probe into Northeast Delhi riots

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE CONGRESS Monday demanded a judicial probe into the Delhi riots and sought the immediate resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and registration of cases against BJP leaders for alleged inflammatory speeches. It added that the Centre and AAP government in Delhi had failed in their responsibilities.

The demand for a judicial probe was part of a report by a Congress fact-finding committee, set up by party chief Sonia Gandhi. The report, which expressed apprehensions about the two limited mandates of the SITs set up to probe incidents of violence, was handed over to Gandhi Monday.

"There should be an independent judicial inquiry under the supervision of a Supreme Court or High Court judge that could independently look into the reasons that led to the violence, and ascertain who was behind it," said senior Congress leader Mukul Wasnik, one of the committee members. The other members were Tariq Anwar, Sushmita Dev, Shaktisinh Gohil and Kumari Selja.

"We feel that Shah, as the Union Home Minister, did not take enough measures to stop the violence. We demand that he resign immediately. We also demand that FIRs and cases be registered immediately against those BJP



The demand was part of a report by a Congress fact-finding committee. Prem Nath Pandey

leaders who made inflammatory speeches and legal action be initiated against them," Wasnik said. "Both the state and union governments should identify the bureaucrats and police officers responsible and ensure they face due procedure for dereliction of their duties. They should be charged for utter incompetence and inefficiency in handling the situation," the report said.

FIRs, it said, should be filed "against all perpetrators as well as inciters, including Minister of State (Finance) Anurag Thakur, BJP MP Parvesh Verma, BJP leader Kapil Mishra, and BJP MLA Abhay Verma," it said. The committee demanded that the Delhi government establish sufficient relief centres and provide rehabilitation as well as legal, medical and other kinds of support to the victims and affected people.



# NOVAL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) GENERAL ADVISORY FOR PUBLIC



The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious virus that causes respiratory infection, can transfer from human to human.

## SYMPTOMS

- FEVER
- DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING
- COUGHING
- TIGHTNESS OF CHEST
- RUNNING NOSE
- HEAD ACHE
- FEELING OF BEING UNWELL
- PNEUMONIA
- KIDNEY FAILURE

## MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Human Coronavirus (COVID-19) most commonly spread from an infected person to other through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hand
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

## HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION (COVID-19)

- Clean hand with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing & sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact & maintain 1 meter distance with anyone
- Isolation of persons traveling affected countries for atleast 14 days.

### DO's

- Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid crowded places/big gatherings
- Person suffering from Influenza like illness must be confined at home
- Stay more than one meter distance from persons sick with flu
- Take adequate sleep and rest
- Drink plenty of water/liquids and eat nutritious food
- See a doctor if feel unwell (fever, difficulty breathing & cough). While visiting doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your month and nose.

### DON'Ts

- Touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Hugging, kissing and shaking hands while greeting
- Spitting in public places
- Taking medicines without consulting doctor
- Disposal of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas
- Touching surfaces usually used by public (Railing, door gates, etc)

### Control Room Numbers at State and District level

State DGHS (HQ) 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036  
North 011-27708768  
South 011-29531277

East 011-22050908, 22051234  
West 011-25195529  
North-West 011-25951182  
South-West 011-25066674

South-East 011-26476410  
North-East 011-22115289  
New Delhi 011-23385743  
Central 011-23270151  
Shahdara 011-22111077

## CELEERATE SAFE HOLI!

- Avoid big gatherings
- Avoid close contact with others
- Maintain one meter distance
- Home quarantined should remain at home

24\*7 Control Room has been established at DGHS (HQ), may be contacted for any query related to COVID-19 Ph: 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036





# 6 GOVT & POLITICS



**DELHI CONFIDENTIAL**



## EXPRESSING OPPOSITION

AMID THE crisis in Madhya Pradesh Congress over nominations for Rajya Sabha elections, trouble seems to be brewing in Rajasthan Congress as well. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is said to be pitching for the candidature of diamond merchant Rajiv Arora for one of the two seats which the party is in a position to win. An upset state Congress president and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot rushed to Delhi and is learnt to have conveyed his opposition to the Congress high command. Giving ticket to a moneybag, Pilot is learnt to have told the senior leaders, will send a wrong signal.

## SALUTING WOMEN

VICE-PRESIDENT Venkaiah Naidu gave a new twist to the concept of Women's Day. Speaking in Hyderabad on the occasion of Woman's Day on Sunday, he said vidya (education), lakshmi (wealth), shakti (energy) and shanti (peace) are all named after women, which goes to show that said this is a woman's world, as "there is no life without women". Usha (dawn), sandhya (dusk) and annapurna (food) are also women, as are Gayatri (mantra), Gita (epic), vandana (greeting), puja (worship), aarti and shradha (devotion). Human values of karuna (compassion), mamta (love) and kshama (forgiveness) are also female. Not to miss rivers such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Sarawati, Narmada, Tapi, Cauvery, etc. So, it is a woman's world and such omnipotent women should be given their due, he stressed.

## QUIET IN CONDOLENCE

WHILE BOTH Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad condoled the death of former Law Minister and Congress veteran H R Bhardwaj on Sunday, the Congress leadership was surprisingly quiet. It was only 24 hours later that party president Sonia Gandhi and former chief Rahul Gandhi offered their condolences on Monday. Sonia issued a three-line statement in which she only remembered Bhardwaj as former Law Minister and Governor, and recounted his long years of service as a Parliamentarian. Rahul tweeted that Bhardwaj's "long years of dedicated service to the Congress party will always be remembered". Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Rahul went to the Bhardwaj residence to pay their condolences.

## Police probing channel editor's speech: Soren

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, MARCH 9

JHARKHAND CHIEF Minister Hemant Soren on Monday said police is investigating a video tweeted by Sudarshan News editor-in-chief Suresh Chavhanke in which he is asking people at an event in Ranchi to "economically boycott rioters".

On Monday, Chavhanke tweeted the video with a post, "Mayor, former Minister, business persons pledged to boycott the rioters economically." In the video, he is seen taking a pledge and people are seen repeating: "Hum shapath lete hain hai ki kisi bhi gaddar se hum samaan nahhi kharidenge. Hamare bhai ko maame wale ko naukri par nahhi rakhege. Iss sankalp ko poora karne par hamare kul deite, hamare gurujan, bhagwaan humko shakti de (We take an oath that we will not buy any product from traitors, won't employ people who have killed our brothers. May God give us

the power to fulfil the oath." Chavhanke told *The Indian Express* that the video was from an event at a Ranchi hotel on March 4. "Various Hindu organisations took part in it, including (Ranchi MLA) C P Singh and Mayor Asha Lakra. There was a call to boycott all rioters who killed, burned our brothers' homes... many other issues were also discussed."

Asked who he was referring to when he said "rioters", he said, "I have said dangai (rioters). Ab jisko jo samajhna hai samjhe (People may interpret it the way they want to)."

BJP MLA from Ranchi, C P Singh, said: "...I also took the pledge of the economic boycott of rioters... there is only one community which is involved in this, there is no point hiding it."

Jharkhand Police IG Naveen Singh, who is monitoring the investigation, said, "In the video, there is limited information. We will collect information of the organiser and who all came. We have started the investigation."

## Weeks after Aug 5 move, seeds of new J&K party sown in Delhi

Decided last Sept engagement needed through local leaders: officials, BJP leaders

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & LIZ MATHEW  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

WHILE A new Valley-based political — Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party, under the leadership of former PDP leader Altaf Bukhari — was announced on Sunday, preparations for it had begun with a quiet nod from New Delhi back in September 2019, weeks after the erstwhile state was stripped off its special status on August 5, it is learnt.

More than 20 former MLAs and leaders from parties such as PDP, National Conference and the Congress are part of the new party.

According to sources in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), a month into the shutdown imposed following August 5 decisions and incarceration of key political leaders in J&K, New Delhi had begun to feel the need for political engagement with people there. It was felt that despite all promises made by the Centre, acceptance of Kashmir's new status and credibility of the government's assurances could only be established through political engagement by local politicians.

"Even though Home Minister Amit Shah said on multiple occasions that panchayat polls had already started the political process, and that new leaders would emerge from there, the government knew it was easier said than done," an MHA official said. "They had little political influence on ground, and practically no acumen to handle the fragile political situation in the



Former PDP leader Altaf Bukhari at the launch of 'Apni Party' in Srinagar on Sunday. Shuaib Masoodi

new Union Territory."

It was decided back in September 2019 that political engagement would have to be done through leaders of mainstream parties, sources said. "Various options were considered — from known faces to political pariahs," an official from Kashmir said. "Even the Abullahs (former J&K CMs Farooq and Omar) were given a thought, but Delhi was not keen on engaging with either Abdullahs or the Muftis (former CM Mehbooba Mufti's family). Shah Faesal (former IAS officer who quit to join politics), with his fiercely critical media interviews and attempt to go to Turkey, had become a persona non-grata, while Sajjad Lone (former J&K MLA) was considered to have limited influence beyond Kupwara."

Altat Bukhari's luncheon meet with National Security Adviser Ajit Doval in October 2019 in Delhi was a noteworthy development in this process, sources said. The choice of Bukhari, sources suggested, was both due to his acumen at political juggling and availability. "It's not that Delhi had to bring these people together — they were already available," an MHA official said. "Bukhari had been making noises for political alternatives since the collapse of the PDP-BJP government in 2018. We are only facilitating it. Those who need security are being given; those who need to be released are being released."

The only nudge from the security establishment, it is learnt, is that the new party must start a political dialogue using the language of governance. Agitating

over Articles 370 and 35A is a no-go zone for Apni Party, sources said. However, the party's articulation on protection of jobs and land and restoration of statehood are likely to be indulged by New Delhi.

The Centre is, in fact, willing to grant these demands in due course, sources maintained.

Stating that Apni Party comprises all the known political forces of the erstwhile state, the MHA official said, "They will hopefully start development work as well — we hope that will build their credibility."

An official from Kashmir, however, cautioned that a political outfit that does not engage with the people on core issue of the Kashmir problem will find it difficult to gain the confidence of all sections.

Senior BJP leader Ram Madhav, who played a key role in BJP's political decisions in J&K, told *The Indian Express*: "There is a large section of political dispensation in the Valley which has been longing to resume political activities. We only see this new development as an expression of their desire for normal political activities.... Leaders of the two major regional parties who are not in prison got together and formed this new party to resume their political activities."

Madhav did not want to comment about prospects of the new party, but added, "We (BJP) always wanted normal political activities in the Valley. But our focus will be on expanding our footprints as BJP."

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE PIPELINE

### Include inputs from local MPs in DPRs, suggest 2 House panels

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

AT LEAST two Parliamentary Standing Committees have recommended that inputs should be sought from local MPs for preparation of any detailed project report (DPR) of infrastructure projects after the Centre last year unveiled the Rs 100 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline — the government's spending push in the sector — over the next five years.

The suggestions came months after a few MPs, during the Winter Session, demanded that inputs from respective Parliamentarians be taken while preparing DPRs for better implementation.

In its report presented in Parliament last week, the Standing Committee on Water Resources said, "The Committee note that National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) has been launched on 31st December 2019... The States have started submitting Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) to be included under NIP. In this context, the Committee are of the view that based on the past experience regarding preparation of DPRs of any projects, there have been numerous is-



BJP MP Dr Sanjay Jaiswal and Shiv Sena MP Prataprao Jadhav head the two committees.

sues that arise due to not properly taking into account the area-specific needs with which the local elected Representatives... are expected to be well conversant... the Committee urge the Department (of Drinking Water and Sanitation) to take all necessary steps to have inputs from local MPs at the DPR preparation stage for better implementation of the Scheme."

The Committee, headed by the BJP MP Dr Sanjay Jaiswal, examined Demand for Grants (2020-21) of the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS). "The Committee would like to be apprised of the measures taken in this regard."

According to the report, water and sanitation projects worth Rs 3,61,810 crore have been included under the rural infrastructure component of the NIP



for FY 2019-25. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had unveiled NIP on December 31, 2019.

Another committee echoed similar views. In its report to Parliament last week, the Standing Committee on Rural Development said, "It is pragmatic that the view and opinions of the concerned Member be solicited and taken into consideration while sanctioning any project or preparing any DPR for the concerned constituency."

"...The DoRD (Department of Rural Development) is strongly urged to devise mechanism in such a way to ensure greater participation of the MPs in the implementation of schemes in their respective constituencies for better progress of the schemes," said the Committee headed by Shiv Sena MP Prataprao Jadhav.

## Former Kolkata mayor likely to get CPM-Cong nod for RS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA, MARCH 9

FORMER KOLKATA mayor Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya is likely to be the consensus candidate of both the Congress and CPI(M) for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls, a senior Left party leader said on Monday.

Bhattacharya will "in all probability" be backed by both the parties, but the final decision rests with the CPI(M) central leadership, he said.

Bhattacharya, a veteran Left leader and Calcutta High Court lawyer, had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections from Jadavpur constituency.

"We have no objection to Bhattacharya becoming a RS member from West Bengal, supported by the Congress and the Left. We need to fight the ruling Trinamool Congress and BJP together," a senior Congress leader said.

The Congress and the Left have a combined strength of 52 members in the West Bengal Assembly.

Rajya Sabha polls for the five seats of West Bengal will be held on March 26. The election for the fifth seat will be a litmus test for the CPI(M)-Congress tie-up in the state.

## Kushwaha meets Rahul, keeps RJD guessing on Cong's next move

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, MARCH 9



Rahul Gandhi and UPendra Kushwaha

RASHTRIYA LOK Samata Party (RLSP) chief UPendra Kushwaha on Monday met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, sparking speculation about the grand old party's next move ahead of the forthcoming Assembly polls in Bihar.

The meeting comes after the RJD refused to concede a Rajya Sabha berth to its Grand Alliance partner, the Congress — a stand that soured relations between the allies.

Five Rajya Sabha seats have fallen vacant in Bihar, out of which the RJD, or the RJD-Congress alliance, can get two.

Kushwaha on Monday tweeted in Hindi: "RJD should fulfill its commitment on the demand for a Rajya Sabha seat because the demand is justified. It was announced during a joint press conference of Grand Alliance."

An RLP source said: "With Kushwaha's growing proximity to Congress, there could be a pos-

sibility of a Congress-led Grand Alliance minus RJD, if the RJD continues its stubborn attitude towards its alliance partner."

Senior leaders of the Bihar Congress have been in favour of the alliance with RJD, but a section of the party believes that Nitish Kumar cannot be challenged with Tejashwi Yadav as the chief ministerial face.

"Not much should be read into Kushwaha's meeting with Rahul Gandhi. It may well be part of pressure tactics," said RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tewary. RJD has been clear on going to polls under the leadership of Tejashwi, who should be accepted by other Grand Alliance constituents, he said.

## Telangana govt proposes creation of state health directory

SREENIVAS JANAYALA  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

**EXPLAINED** Aim to deliver targeted health services

THE TELANGANA government has proposed the creation of a Telangana Health Profile — a directory of the health status of all citizens in the state.

Health Department officials said this directory will enable the government to deliver targeted health services and benefits, like conducting free eye testing camps or holding medical camps. The government will also initiate a special action plan to diagnose ear, nose, throat and dental-related diseases.

The government has previously conducted an eye-screening drive called the 'kanti velugu' programme to treat eye-related ailments. Eye tests were conducted on 1.54 crore people and medicines and spectacles were distributed free of cost to those with ailments.

The government is an example that action taken by the government to improve public health is yielding good results," he had said.

As part of the government's plan to improve public health, government will set up 350 'basthi dawakhana', on the lines of Delhi's mohalla clinics. Rao said 118 basthi dawakhana that were set up as an experiment in April 2019 received a good response, and so the government has decided to make them permanent and also set up 232 new ones.

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## Ahead of civic polls, Rs 10,000-cr push for Hyderabad in Budget

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 9

THE TELANGANA government has made a big push for the development of Hyderabad in the state budget, making an allocation of Rs 10,000 crore for the state capital which is set to go to civic polls later this year.

The budget, presented by finance minister T Harish Rao Sunday, announced no new sops or schemes, but instead apportioned the lion's share of funds to existing schemes. It plans an expenditure of Rs 1.82 lakh crore, an increase of Rs 40,762 crore compared to financial year 2019-20.

A major push has been given to the medical and health sector which has been given Rs 6,186 crore. The allocation for Hyderabad will cover the Musi river purification and Musi riverfront projects, as well as several special projects in the city's urban agglomeration area.

Rao said over Rs 50,000 crore would be required in the next few years to develop Hyderabad into an international city. He also said the remaining five kms of the first phase of Hyderabad Metro Rail would be completed shortly.

The state finance minister flagged the economic slowdown and reduced devolutions from the Centre to the state as pain points. "The economy is facing a slowdown for the past one-and-a-half years. As a result, there is reduction in tax devolution and other transfers to the state by the Centre. The tax devolution from Centre to the state is expected to be lower in 2019-20 by Rs 3,731 crore as compared with the budget estimates," Rao said.

"Following the economic slowdown, the growth of the state's own revenues in 2019-20 (till the end of February) is estimated to be at 6.3% much below the growth of 16.1% achieved in 2018-19," he added.

## To Cost Rs 700 FOR 750 ML BOTTLE, WILL COME IN SIX FLAVOURS Govt to launch mahua-based alcoholic drink

DIVYAA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE GOVERNMENT is set to launch a mahua-based alcoholic beverage in the market for the first time. Called Mahua Nutribeverage, it will be available as early as next month for Rs 700 for a 750 ml bottle, and will come in six fruit-based flavours.

The beverage has a high nutritional value and relatively low alcohol content, at 5 per cent. It has been developed by IIT-Delhi after two years of research in collaboration with TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India). Pravir Krishna, MD,

TRIFED, said, "We are currently awaiting licenses from the excise department after which it will be sold at all the five Tribes India outlets in Delhi." He added that even as they plan to sell the beverage across the country, each state will have to acquire the relevant clearances on its own.

TRIFED has signed a memorandum with National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) to undertake the assignment of technology transfer to the suitable entrepreneurs for production and marketing of the beverage.

The federation is planning to distribute this technology to parties selected by NRDC to set up such enterprises so that they can own these enterprises to pro-

duce the beverage. Initially, Adivasi Bahuuddeshiya Co-operative (ABC) Society, Raigarh, entered into a MoU with NRDC on March 6, 2020, to produce and market the beverage.

The marketing is being undertaken under the Tribal Affairs Ministry's value-addition scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur in 2018. Called the Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram, Rs 500-600 crore has been earmarked under the nation-wide programme for training tribal clusters to add value to their produce and sell it in a packaged format, aiming to increase their income manifold.

Besides mahua, sourced mostly from Bastar in Chhattisgarh,

other tribal staples such as tamarind and amla will be de-seeded and brought to the market in the form of candies and jams.

According to Krishna, the products marketed under the scheme include only those that need primary-level processing, including handicrafts, textiles, food items, jams and pulps, and jewellery.

"What Amul did for milk, we want to do for non-timber forest produce through this scheme. Milk sold as milk wouldn't have got the people of Anand anything. But if you turn it into yoghurt, ice-cream, desserts, the income increases manifold. That's the model we will replicate," Krishna said.

## Top Reliance executive gets YSRCP ticket to RS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, AHMEDABAD, MARCH 9

THE RULING YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh on Monday nominated Parimal Nathwani, senior group president, Reliance India Ltd, as one of its candidates to Rajya Sabha.

Nathwani, currently an Independent Upper House MP from Jharkhand, hails from Gujarat. He is a member of the Select Committee on Surrogacy (Regulation), and the Select Committee on Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

After the nomination, he tweeted, "I sincerely thank Hon'ble Chief Minister Sh @ysjagan and his party @YSRCP for considering me as their Rajya Sabha candidate from Andhra Pradesh. I am committed to serve the people of #AndhraPradesh..."

The YSRCP has four seats going to polls in the Rajya Sabha on March 26, for which it announced candidates on Monday. There are 11 Upper House seats in Andhra Pradesh.

Deputy Chief Minister Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose, Minister Mopidevi Venkata Ramana and realtor Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy will be the party's candidates for the upcoming elections, senior party leader Ummareddy Venkateswarlu said.

Presently, the YSRCP has two members — V Vijay Sai Reddy and Prabhakar Reddy.

—WITH INPUTS FROM ENS, AHMEDABAD AND PTI



# 7 EXPRESS NETWORK

## 'Considering a country of our size, we have handled the situation to best of our ability'

**HEALTH MINISTER HARSH VARDHAN** speaks to **ABANTIKA GHOSH** on the preparedness to tackle the coronavirus outbreak. Excerpts:

### How serious is the Covid-19 situation in India and how prepared are we?

Considering a country of our size, we have so far handled the situation to the best of our ability. As of today, there are 44 total cases with 3 positive cases from Kerala which have already been discharged. Regular contact surveillance has been initiated across the country for all cases having travel history from Covid-19-affected countries and for people having contact with such persons and/or having symptoms. No death has been reported... we have already advised states and the central government-run hospitals to assess isolation and critical care facilities and adhere to infection prevention and control guidelines... As on date, around 17,500 beds are available at various government facilities at the central and state government level. Further, around 14,000 quarantine beds have been made available. The facility for collection and testing of clinical samples has been established in 51



Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan with Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Lt Governor Anil Bajjal during a meeting in New Delhi on Monday. Prem Nath Pandey

laboratories across the country... We are also spreading awareness among the general public...

### If large gatherings are to be avoided, how safe are crowded public transports?

I understand that we have already issued advisory to the states to avoid mass gatherings based on advice received from experts... I agree that public transport is an area of concern. But threat perception also lies from any infected in-



dividual visiting public places despite advice to the contrary...

### Is it safe for children to go to school?

We want our children to be safe and healthy. As a precautionary measure to ward off infection, we have asked state governments to take all measures to create awareness about preventive interventions among students...

**ICMR has taken approval for use of second-line HIV drugs**

### on Covid-19 patients. Have we used them so far? Do we have enough masks, personal protection equipment etc?

Yes, ICMR has taken approval for use of second-line HIV drugs on Covid patients but this Lopinavir/Ritonavir combination therapy has been approved for emergency use among Covid-19 patients with moderate degree of severity with laid down protocols. Till now, this combination therapy has been given to two Italian patients hospitalised at Jaipur. We have asked leading manufacturers of masks, personal equipment etc. to share details of their production capacities, stocks in hand etc.

### How safe is it for people to travel abroad if the destination is not among those for which a travel advisory has been issued?

...As of now, we are not saying anything about other countries. But we have clearly mentioned in our travel advisory that even during travel to foreign countries, they should follow simple public health measures at all times...

### We started screening flyers from Thailand very early in the first week of February. How then did the third Delhi case get past airport screening? How did the Kerala patients escape it?

I know of only the Delhi case who had travelled back to India on February 23 from Thailand but developed symptoms on February 25. Thus, at the time of screening at the airport he was asymptomatic. Further, as far as three Kerala patients are concerned, even though they landed on February 29 and despite onboard announcements, signages and help desk, they did not report their travel history voluntarily... there are many reasons as to why the airport screening might miss such cases, which include: (i) The individual might be

in incubation period and therefore not showing signs and symptoms at the time of screening, or, (ii) The individual might have taken anti-fever medicine to suppress fever during travel.

Therefore, we have been requesting people to come forward and divulge their true travel history at the time of landing at the airport so that preventive action can be taken on time.

### How long do you think before the outbreak is controlled?

My gut feeling is that it should subside in the coming weeks. It further depends on various factors such as how other countries are handling the situation, awareness among the masses and their attitude...

### How will import restrictions from China affect availability of medicines? How much stock do we have?

Department of Pharmaceuticals is closely monitoring the effect of import restrictions from China. We have stocks of medicines varying from five months to nine months depending on the medicine.

**FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com**

## In Jammu, family and neighbours of patient put in isolation facility

**ARUN SHARMA**  
JAMMU, MARCH 9

AS THE Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday reported the first confirmed case of coronavirus in the Union Territory on Monday, 17 family members and neighbours in Sarwal area of Jammu division who had come in contact with the patient have been shifted to a quarantine facility at Bhagwati Nagar in Jammu, officials said.

Earlier, on Wednesday last week, two people were isolated at a quarantine facility at Government Medical College Hospital — one of them has now tested positive — after it was found that they had travel history to Iran and South Korea during self-declaration at Jammu airport on March 4. While they are learnt to have left the hospital for home against medical advice, they were brought back later.

A preliminary report received by the UT's Health Department on Saturday had found both as suspected cases, prompting the administration to immediately order closure of all government and private schools up to primary level in the districts of Samba, Jammu,

Baramulla, Bandipora and Srinagar until March 31.

According to officials, 41 local residents who arrived in Budgam district from Iran and China will be quarantined at nine isolation locations in the area. Disclosing this at a meeting to review preparedness for the coronavirus threat, Budgam Deputy Commissioner Tariq Hussain Ganai said 31 Budgam residents have returned from Iran and 10 from China.

Most patients admitted in isolation wards with suspected cases of coronavirus have tested negative after a 28-day quarantine period, according to information. The meeting was also informed that five groups comprising 160 pilgrims from Budgam, expected to reach there from various counties, will also be quarantined, besides students who are returning from Iran and China.

As part of its preventive measures, the UT administration has suspended biometric attendance across the Union Territory till this month-end, while the J&K State Board of School Education has allowed students to appear in masks and bring sanitisers in examination centres.

**WITH INPUTS FROM ENNS IN SRINAGAR**

## Back from Italy with parents, 3-year-old boy tests positive in Kerala

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MARCH 9

A THREE-YEAR-OLD boy, who returned to Kerala from Italy with his parents, on Monday tested positive for Covid-19, taking the number of active cases in the state to six. Three other patients had been discharged last month.

The fresh bout began on Sunday when five people, three of them from Italy and two of their close relatives, tested positive in Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. Across the state, the number of persons in isolation rose to 1,116 on Monday.

The baby and his parents had arrived from Italy on March 7. His fever was detected during universal screening at the Cochin Airport. "The baby is stable now and we are awaiting the test results of the parents, who have

also been isolated," said an official.

Health Minister K K Shailja, who held a review meeting, told reporters that preventive steps have been intensified. "Chances of the parents of the positive cases reported in Pathanamthitta emerging as positive are very high. If the couple, aged 91 and 88, become positive it would turn very risky. We are giving them the best treatment," she said.

The Health Minister also said that the three people who returned from Italy on February 29 had not reported themselves at the health department. "Screening of passengers from Italy and other nations began on March 1. But they could have reported later at the primary health centre," she said.

Those returning from other countries and failing to report themselves would be booked, she warned.



Outside the special isolation ward at Kochi medical college. PTT

## Samples from Indians in Iran sent to NIV

**ANURADHA MASCARENHAS**  
PUNE, MARCH 9

AMID THE Covid-19 outbreak, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) headquarters will send some of the 108 samples collected from Indian nationals stranded in Iran to the National Institute of Virology, Pune. Iran is one of the countries worst-hit by Covid-19, with over 7,000 people infected and over 230 dead.

A six-member team of scientists and engineers had earlier lifted laboratory equipment to Tehran to set up a field lab to screen Indian nationals. Over the weekend, more than 108 samples were tested at AIIMS, New Delhi.

On Monday, ICMR officials said that some of the samples will be sent to NIV for reconfirmation of the results. "We are not sending the entire lot of samples to NIV but some of them for another round of tests," said Dr RR Gangakhedkar,

head, Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases division at ICMR.

As on 4 pm on Monday, a total of 5,255 samples from 4,601 individuals have been tested by ICMR's Virus Diagnostic and Research Labs.

According to Dr Gangakhedkar, the institute currently has enough reagents to test 57,000 samples, and this number will go up to 90,000 by March 12. Scientists say each sample takes about 4.5 hours to test.

ICMR director general Dr Balram Bhargava said "Multiple teams are visiting commissioned labs across India to help them troubleshoot and meet quality requirements for testing."

The Department of Health Research and the ICMR have commissioned a total of 52 laboratories for coronavirus testing in India. Each lab has at least two scientists who are connected with the team at NIV, and all these laboratories have an operational real time PCR platform.

## In Valley, Jaishankar assures kin of students stuck in Iran

**NAVEED IQBAL**  
SRINAGAR, MARCH 9

UNION MINISTER for External Affairs S Jaishankar arrived in Srinagar on Monday and met parents of more than 300 students stuck in Iran following the coronavirus outbreak in that country, assuring them of the government "facilitating their early return to India".

In a memorandum submitted to the minister, the parents have urged the Union government to evacuate students enrolled at different universities in and around Tehran at the earliest.

Syed Mehdi, who was part of the delegation that interacted with the minister, said: "Our daughter has been stuck there, locked in her room. We get to speak with her but feel even more helpless with every passing day. They (students stuck in Iran) are doing their best but they are tired and terrified; the government needs to reach out and help them."

Mehdi's daughter, Masooma Rizvi, is a third-year student of MBBS at Tehran University.

Mehdi said while Jaishankar listened to the concern ex-



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the passport office in Srinagar. Shuaib Masoodi

pressed by the parents, he did not provide any time-line or assurances on the safe return of their children. "For now, they are not infected. They (government) can bring these students back and quarantine them, but at least give them a chance. Most of them are medical students and are aware of the precautions they need to take," he said.

Another parent, Shafiq Ahmad Khan, said the students should have been put on return flights more than two weeks ago.

"With their tickets cancelled, they have no option but to wait for help. We are worried for our children," he said.

His son, Abdul Rehman is a second-year student at Shiraz Medical University, in Shiraz, south-central Iran.

After the meeting, Jaishankar tweeted, "Met in #Srinagar the families of Indian students in #Iran. Assured them that our Embassy @India\_in\_Iran is monitoring their welfare. We are committed to facilitating their early return to India."

## PM's Bangladesh visit cancelled

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Bangladesh next week to attend the birth centenary celebrations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been put off after commemorative programmes were deferred due to detection of novel coronavirus cases in the neighbouring country, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday. The MEA said it has received a formal notification from Bangladesh that a decision has been taken to defer the public events being organised to mark the occasion. **ENS**

## IAF aircraft sent to Iran

New Delhi: India sent a military transport aircraft to Iran with a specialist medical team on board on Monday night to bring back Indian nationals stranded in the coronavirus-affected nation. According to the Indian Air Force, its C-17 Globemaster military aircraft left for Iran from the Hindon airbase at 8.30 pm. "Indian citizens will be flown to Hindon where medical facilities including quarantine have been set up," the IAF tweeted. **ENS**

## FAMILY BEING QUARANTINED: DISTRICT COLLECTOR Pune couple who returned from Dubai test positive: Maharashtra

**ANURADHA MASCARENHAS**  
PUNE, MARCH 9

A 53-YEAR-OLD man and his 45-year-old wife who returned from Dubai tested positive for the novel coronavirus infection (Covid-19) late on Monday.

District Collector Naval Kishore Ram told *The Indian Express* that the couple returned to India from Dubai on March 1. They did not show any symptoms but as a precautionary measure had reported to doctors at Naidu hospital on Tuesday. Their throat swabs were sent to

National Institute of Virology and tested positive for Covid-19.

The District Collector said there was no reason to panic and that the administration was keeping a close watch on the situation. "We have checked their travel history and contacted several persons they may have connected with in the last few days. They have a son and daughter and family members are being quarantined at their homes. We are keeping a close watch on the situation and there is no reason to panic," Ram said.

Reiterating the administration's appeal to avoid Holi cele-

hospital in Amritsar on being suspected of having coronavirus symptoms, Aggarwal said.

Their samples were subsequently sent to AIIMS, Delhi and the man and wife initially tested positive. The samples were subsequently sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, which confirmed Monday that the man is suffering from coronavirus infection, said Aggarwal.

The man's condition is "stable", Aggarwal said, adding his wife and child's samples returned negative.

Earlier, Punjab government had written to Centre urging it to track all the passengers on the two flights that the trio took to first reach Delhi and then Amritsar.

Meanwhile, the state government issued a bulletin Monday stating that 10 persons with symptoms of the deadly virus have been admitted to various hospitals and their blood samples sent for testing.

The total number of patients who have tested negative are 58, while 1,388 are under observation at their homes, as on March 8.

## Techie who returned from US is state's 1st Covid-19 case: Karnataka

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
BENGALURU, MARCH 9

A SOFTWARE engineer who returned from a visit to the United States on March 1 has tested positive for the coronavirus," Karnataka Health Secretary Jawed Akhtar said on Monday.

The man's colleague has also shown symptoms of upper respiratory tract infection, along with the engineer's wife and daughter. They have all been quarantined at the government-run Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Chest Diseases, pending arrival of test reports, health department officials said.

"We are tracking 2,666 people the patient had primary or secondary contact with since re-

turning by flight on March 1, including those on the flight, his driver and family, those in the apartment complex where he lived, the school of his daughter, the IT company where he worked," health officials said.

As of Monday, 12 persons were admitted in quarantine facilities in Karnataka with symptoms of the virus, including one person who tested positive.

The state health department has called for closure of pre primary and primary departments at all schools in Bengaluru until further notification.

The Union Health Ministry is yet to confirm the case as Karnataka's first.

## Vlogger who documented his stay in isolation ward discharged

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOCHI, MARCH 9

A KERALA-BASED vlogger, who sought to quell fears about the novel coronavirus through informative videos from an isolation ward at a government hospital in Kannur, was discharged on Sunday after testing negative for Covid-19.

Shakir Subhan, whose YouTube account 'Mallu Traveler' has more than 6 lakh subscribers, was admitted to the isolation ward at a government hospital in

Kannur last week due to his travel history. Subhan, who began a road trip in October last year, covering several European countries and Iran, had cut short his tour in Azerbaijan after being denied entry to Georgia, and flew to his hometown Kannur from Dubai.

Appearing cheerful in the videos, Subhan documented how he walked through the Kannur airport with people maintaining a distance from him due to the suspected infection. "I'm travelling like the Prime Minister. They (airport officials) moved all the passengers away



Shakir Subhan flew to his hometown Kannur from Dubai after discontinuing his road trip.

and removed the customs check. For the first time in my life, I feel like a VIP," Subhan said in a video before an ambulance whisked him away to a hospital in Kannur. When an airport official asked him not to be afraid, he replied, "I am not afraid at all. Even if I have to be in bed for 15 days, I will enjoy. I will make sure not to spread the infection to anyone."

At the isolation ward, Subhan credited the state government with respectful treatment of patients and cleanliness in wards. "There's nothing to be scared about. Because we are living in

Kerala. The health system in Kerala has been recognised by the world. Our doctors and nurses are great," he said in a video.

In other clips, the vlogger detailed his diet as well as precautionary steps that must be taken by those travelling from the affected countries. "If anyone has symptoms, you must get admitted immediately. You shouldn't stay at home and risk infecting your family... you should cancel all your trips... This is not a good time to travel," said Subhan, who grabbed headlines in 2018 by hitchhiking from Kerala to Nepal in seven days

while depending solely on the benevolence of strangers.

During his three-day stay in the isolation ward, he also managed to convince nurses who looked after him to subscribe to his YouTube channel. "We should never be scared of our medical system... I'm doing this for the Malayalis who want to understand how an isolation ward works. I want to give strength to them," he said in a video. According to Subhan, the only problems in the hospital were mosquitoes and irregular water supply in the bathroom.



Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Gurvindra Singh S/O Tara Singh R/o-27A, Chandher Vihar, Niloti Extn, New Delhi-110041 have changed my name from Gurvindra Singh to Gurvinder Singh. 0040534980-1

I, hitherto known as DOLLY BHARTI alias MOSES JAMES son of INDERJEET residing at RZ-F-22D, Gali No.24, Sadh Nagar, Palam, New Delhi-110045, have changed my name and shall hereinafter be known as MOSES JAMES. 0040534972-1

I, hitherto known as CHINKI KANOJIA alias AKASH KANOJIA son of MOHAN KANOJIA residing at RZ-C-10/7B, Gali No.21, Sadh Nagar, Palam, New Delhi-110045, have changed my name and shall hereinafter be known as AKASH KANOJIA. 0040534972-2

I, ZAINAB D/o Azeemuddin W/o Mushtaq Ali H.No.C-5-B, Street-5, New Brijpur, Krishna-Nagar, Delhi-51 have changed my name to Nazma. 0040535055-3

I, Sunil Datta S/O Ram Phal H.No.A-3/18D, Green Apartment, Mig Flat, Paschim Vihar, Delhi-110063. Changed My Name To Sunil Kumar. 0040535038-8

I, Shobhit Kumar S/O Ishwar Singh R/o-A-48, Samrat Palace Garh Road, Gandhi Ashram, Meerut, UP-250002, have changed my name from Ayaan Bhadana aged 1.5 years to Abeer Bhadana forever. 0070702139-1

I, Shiw Shanker Mahato S/O Khehdar Mahato R/o-F-208, 2nd-Floor, Lado Sarai, N.Delhi-110030 have changed my name to Shiw Shanker Mahato. 0040535055-1

I, Shivraj S/O Vir Singh R/o-Flat-210, Patrak Parisar, Sector-5, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, UP have changed my name to Shivraj Teotia. 0040535049-5

I, Shalini Pandey D/o Surender Pandey W/o Deepak Joshi R/o- LP-50E, Pitampura, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Shalini Joshi. 0040535055-2

I, Shaileendra Kumar Gupta R/O vill + post-Sataon, distt-Raebareilly U.P.-229122 have changed my minor son's name aged 11 yrs Aryan to Aryan Gupta. 0070702159-1

I, Service.No.4487186-P, Rank-NK, Harpreet Singh of Unit-17, Sikh Li C/o- APO, R/o-Village- Veela Bajan, PO- Ghoman Tehsil-Batala, Distt-Gurdaspur(Punjab), inform that in my service document my daughter's name wrongly mentioned as Avhineet Kaur instead of correct-name Avneet Kaur. 0040535072-6

I, Shyam Dutt Bhatt S/O-Late, Mr. Nityanand Bhatt R/O-RC-760, Vandana Enclave, Khoda Colony, Near Ram Kaur Inter College, Ghaziabad, inform that, in-the-school record, (10th/12th) of my daughter Himani Bhatt, my name is written, as Shyam Bhatt instead of Shyam Dutt Bhatt. My real name is Shyam Dutt Bhatt. 0040535013-3

I, SHAKEEL AHMAD S/O MOHAMMAD SHAFI R/O 5A/50, Vishnu Garden Extn., New Delhi-110018 declares that spelling of my name is mistakenly written wrongly as SAKIL AHMED or SHAKIL AHMED instead of SHAKEEL AHMAD and it is also informed that my father name is also wrongly written as SAFI AHMED or SHAFI AHMED instead of MOHAMMAD SHAFI in some documents. 0040535060-1

I, Ram Kumar Singh S/O Sh.Kanchid Lal R/O House No.E-994, G/F, Kha No.265, Gali No.21, Amar Colony, East Gokalpur, North East Delhi, Delhi-110094 have changed my name to Kunwarpal Singh for all purposes. 0040534974-1

I, Ram Govind Warti S/O Govind Maruti Warti R/o BB Rathod Chawl No-1, R.No-1, Ghatkopar West, Shivens Office, Mumbai, Maharashtra-400084, have changed my minor daughter's name from Shrayu Ram Warti aged 6 years to Palak Ram Warti forever. 0070702146-1

I, Rajni W/o Pawan Agnihotri R/o-E747/B Air Force Road, Dabua Colony, Faridabad have changed my name to Rajni Agnihotri. 0040534971-5

I, Rajesh Kumar Pal R/O-H-49, Street.No.5, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, have changed my daughter's name from Moksha to Moksha Pal. 0040535049-4

I, Keerti Sharma D/o Sh.Deen Dyal W/o Sh.Alok Shukla R/O 309-A, Una Apartment, Narwana Road, Near Mother Dairy Plot No.3, Patparganj, Mandawali Fazalpur, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kirti Shukla for all purposes. 0040534974-2

I, Joginder Singh S/o Jodha Ram R/O H.No.98, Jhenda Colony, New Delhi-110074, inform that my name in my Daughter's School Record Wrongly mention as Jogender but my correct name is Joginder Singh. Jogender and Joginder Singh are one and same person. 0040534991-1

I, Karm Raj, S/o Arjun Singh, R/O-RZ-A3/29, Durga Park, Nasir Pur, Palam-Village, Delhi-110045, have changed name Karam Raj, for future. 0040535072-3

I, Kameish Sh/S/O Sudama Sah R/O-H.No.355, Gali No.10-A, Swatantra-Nagar, Narela, Delhi-40 have changed my name to Kamesh Sah permanently. 0040535049-10

I, ISRAIL S/O MD Jahid R/O E-2822, J.J. Colony, Bawana, Delhi-110039 have changed my name to MD ISRAIL for all purposes. 0040534977-1

I, Haimlata D/o Vinod Kumar Jain, H.No.K-233, K-Block, Jahangir Puri, Azadpur, Delhi-110033 have changed my name to Haimlata Jain. 0040535038-2

I, Geetanjali W/o Gyan Chandra Sharma VIVEK R/O-61 3rd-Floor, Kiran-Vihar, Delhi-110092 Have Changed My Name To Geetanjali Vivek. 0040535049-1

I, Nasim Alam S/o Mohammad Jalil R/o-E-34/A, Block-E, AbdulFazal-Enclave-I, Jamia Nagar, Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Naseem Alam. 0040535038-1

I, Mukul S/O Arun H.No T-334/4, Near-Balimiki Mandir Baljeet Nagar Patel Nagar Delhi. Changed My Name To Mukul Bohat. 0040535055-7

I, Mohd Nadeem S/O Rustom R/O-31J, Extn. Street No.8, Laxmi-Nagar, Delhi-110092. changed my minor son name Amaan Khan to Mohd Amaan. 0040535038-6

I, Manju Bala w/o Krishan Kumar R/O-E-3, Geeta Colony, Delhi-110031, have changed my name to Manju Pahuja permanently. 0040535055-4

I, Manjit Nijjar S/O Harbhajan Singh R/O-E-3, Akash-Bharti, 24 I.P.Extn, Patparganj, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Manjit Singh. 0040535038-3

I, Manish Kumar Arora, S/O Shri.Kailash Bihari R/O-102, Magadh-Tower, IP-Apartments, Sector-30-33, Amarnagar, Faridabad Haryana, have changed my name to Manish Arora, for all future purposes. 0040535052-10

I, Mangalchand Baid R/O E-101, Pnb Road, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110052 have changed my minor son's name from Rohan Baid to Rohan Mangalchand Baid for all purposes. 0040535029-1

I, Man Mohan Singh S/O Charanjit Singh H.No.978, Ground Floor, Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009. Changed My Name to Manmohan Singh Bajaj. 0040535038-7

I, Madhu W/o Ramesh R/O-H.No.221, North Lambi Gali, Village-Khera Kalan, Delhi-82, have changed my name to Saroj permanently. 0040535049-9

I, Laxman Dass S/O Murlidhar R/O J-56-D, Lig-Flats, Ashok Vihar Phase-I, Delhi-110052. Changed My Name To Laxman Talreja. 0040535038-9

I, Lata Rani D/O Kishori Lal, W/O-Sidharth Vir, R/O-H-101, Ashok-Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-110052, name of my father Kishor Lal and spouse name Sidharth Vir wrongly mentioned in my passport no-J 2523323, date-of-issue-04/08/2010, RPO, Delhi, but actual-name is Kishori Lal and Sidharth Vir. 0040535072-4

I, L.N. VIJAYALAKSHMI, W/o R. Sridhar, H.No. 22, First Floor, Back Side, Block-J, Mohan Garden, Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Chitra Sridhar after marriage as per Affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Delhi. I declare that L. N. VIJAYALAKSHMI & Chitra Sridhar are the names of one and the same person i.e. Myself. 0040534985-1

I, Kusum Lata Shukla d/o Brij Narain Sharma r/o Shukla Bhawan Road, Loko Colony, Adarsh Colony, Haridwar, Uttarakhand-247663 have changed my name to KUSUM LATA. 0040534986-1

I, Krishan Kumar S/O Bhupat Ram R/O-2/146, Geeta Colony, Delhi-110031, have changed my name to Krishan Kumar Pahuja permanently. 0040535055-5

I, Khairul Nisha & Khairun Nisha W/o Aas Mohammad Qureshi R/O D-59 Gali No-4 Shastri Park Delhi-110053 have changed my name to Khairun Nisha Quresh. 0040535008-1

I, Nirhu Prasad S/O Santu Prasad R/O-A-209, Jawahar Lal Nehru Camp, Govind Puri, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19, do hereby solemnly inform that my true and correct name is Nirhu Prasad. But my name is written in my ID proof as Radhey Shyam. Radhey Shyam and Nirhu Prasad is one and the same person. I inform that my name is known in all future purpose as Nirhu Prasad. 0040534993-1

I, Desh Raj S/O Dhalu Ram Ranjan R/O-A-83, First-Floor Rampuri Surya-Nagar Chander-Nagar Ghaziabad UP-201011. changed my name to Desh Raj Ranjan. 0040535049-7

I, Chandan Kumar R/O, A-102 Metro vihar Sector-46, Gurugram-122001 have changed the name of my minor female child aged 09 yrs (D.O.B:- 07/11/2010) from "Ishi Singh" to "Shradha Singh". 0070702144-1

I, Ameer Husain Alias Ameer Ahmad Alias Amir Ahmad Alias Amir Ahmad S/O Abdul Aziz R/O Miyaji Moksha Street, Afzalgarh, Binjor, UP-246722, have changed my name to Ameer Ahmad 0070702151-1

I, Pawan Kumar Agnihotri S/O Pawan Kumar Agnihotri R/O-E-747/B, Air-force Road, Dabua Colony, Faridabad have changed my name to Pawan Agnihotri. 0040534971-4

I, Nitu Krashi W/O Dhamma Sirdindh Wala resident L-35 SF Gali No.22 New Mahavir Nagar Delhi 110018 have changed my name to Neetu Qureshi 0040535035-1

I, Mehboob Singh Banwait S/O Amrik Singh Banwait, R/O-Flat-no.2A, RBI-Colony, Shalimar-Bagh, Delhi-110088, have changed my name to Mehtaab Singh Banwait. 0040535049-3

I, Jyoti R/O House No-213, Sector-6, Karnal-132001, Haryana have changed my name to Jyoti Solanki. 0070702157-1

I, Kutubdeen S/O Zateel R/O-E-44/A-194, New Seema Puri, Delhi-110095 Have Changed my Name to Mohd. Kutubdeen Ashraf. 0040535049-2

I, Khurshed Jahan Alias Khursheda Khatoon Alias Khursheda Begum Alias Khursheda D/O Abdul Hakeem and W/O Ameer Ahmad R/O Miyaji Moksha Street, Afzalgarh, Binjor, UP-246722, have changed my name to Khurshed Begum 0070702148-1

I, Kapil S/O Hari Ram R/O-16 Dheeraj Nagar Near B.B.L School Atmadpur, Faridabad have changed my name to Kapil Sharma 0040534971-2

I, Hare Ram S/O Lala Ram R/O-16 Dheeraj Nagar Near B.B.L School Atmadpur, Faridabad have changed my Name to Hari Ram 0040534971-3

I, Hansi Rawat W/O Jitin Mohindra, H.No-M-18, Kasturba Niketan Complex Lajpat Nagar-II, New Delhi-110024, Changed My Name To Hema Mohindra. 0040535072-8

I, Gyanendra Baool Prasad Jaiswar S/O Chhaban R/O Dehua, Bhatnagar, Jaunpur, UP-222203, have changed my name to Gyanendra Chhabban Jaiswar 0070702170-1

I, Ghulam Husain Roomi Alias Ghulam Hasan Roomi Alias Ghulam Hussain Roomi Alias G H Roomi S/O Ahtisham Ali R/O RZC-187, Nihal Vihar, Nangloi, Delhi-110041, have changed my name to Ghulam Hussain Roomi 0070702155-1

I, Gauhar Sultana W/O Tariq Jamal R/O 1578, St. 16, 25 Fata Road, New Mustafabad, Delhi-94 have changed my name to Gauhar Jamal 0070702101-1

I, Devinder kumar S/O Madan Lal Arora R/o 217 Sector-17, Faridabad have changed my name to Devender Kumar Arora 0040534971-1

I, Rajender S/O Shobhnath R/O A-255, Agar Nagar, Premnagar-III, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Rajender Yadav for all purposes. 0040535026-1

I, Azeem Abbas Rizvi S/O Rais Husain Rizvi H.No-B-42, Top-Floor 15-Foota Road, Dilshad Colony, Delhi-110095 Have Changed My Name To Azeem Abbas. 0040534827-1

I, Chru Gupta D/o Late Sh. Prem Nath Gupta R/O H.No. 901, Tower A, Park View Apartment, Sector 5, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201012 have changed my minor Son's name from Dhruv Sharma to Dhruv Gupta for all future purposes. 0040534869-1

LOST & FOUND

Lost my original Architectural Assistantship Diploma-Marksheet of 1st 4th-semester. Roll.No.294801. Finder pls contact: Abhishek Vashisth, S/O Shri.Satish Kumar, R/O-H.No.941A, Krishna, Gali.No.9, Adarsh Mohalla, Maujpur Delhi-110053. Mob.9958054765. 0040535072-9

It is notified for the information that my Original Qualifying Examination Certificate of Main, Secondary Examination of Year 1984 and Roll No. 104559 issued by CBSE has been actually lost. Name of the candidate Beena H. Full Address C-46, Tarang Apartments, Patparganj, IP Extension, Delhi-92, Mobile No. 9868819812. 0040534986-1

MISSLENIOS

Public Notice DDA BUILT UP SFS FLAT NO. 32, THIRD FLOOR, POCKET -N1, SECTOR-19, DWARKA, NEW DELHI. Public at large is hereby informed that the applicant property is subject matter of Equitable Registered Mortgage with State Bank of India (Other Banks) / FI, and the present owner Smt Anika Trivedi wife of Shri. Nayank Trivedi, aware of any person possessing or using any part of the mortgaged property in violation of the terms and conditions of the mortgage deed, is hereby notified that any person in violation having any claim or any charge, interest or lien or claim on the basis of documents mentioned above or otherwise any / or objection to the same, should file a written notice to the undersigned with documentary proof, accompanied by the original copy of the mortgage deed, within 15 (Fifteen Days) from the date of publication, including the Sale Deed, enclosed in form of Smt Anika Trivedi, at the office of Smt Anika Trivedi, at the address mentioned above. The undersigned is not liable for any loss or damage caused by the publication of this notice. Smt Anika Trivedi, who is the present owner of the mortgaged property, is hereby notified that any person in violation having any claim or any charge, interest or lien or claim on the basis of documents mentioned above or otherwise any / or objection to the same, should file a written notice to the undersigned with documentary proof, accompanied by the original copy of the mortgage deed, within 15 (Fifteen Days) from the date of publication, including the Sale Deed, enclosed in form of Smt Anika Trivedi, at the address mentioned above. The undersigned is not liable for any loss or damage caused by the publication of this notice. 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### 3 Infosys employees held in tax fraud case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, MARCH 9

THREE EMPLOYEES of information technology major Infosys Ltd, who were attached to the Central Processing Centre (CPC) of the Income Tax department, have been arrested by police in Bengaluru for allegedly offering to speed up a tax refund of Rs 15.89 lakh to an assessee for a "commission" of four per cent.

The three employees — Renukanta Kalyan Kumar, Deveshwar Reddy and Dinesh K — were arrested on charges of cheating and criminal breach of trust following a police complaint filed by Sibichen Mathew, an Income Tax director, on March 2.

According to the complaint, Kumar, who was deployed from Infosys to work as an accountant and data manager at the CPC, allegedly contacted a tax assessee whose refunds were held up and offered to get the money released within a week on payment of four per cent.

According to the complaint,

Kumar allegedly used a mobile phone in his possession and the services of his associates, Reddy and Dinesh, to make the approach to taxpayers.

Apart from the assessee who was approached, Kumar is alleged to have released the PAN numbers of other assessee to his accomplices to facilitate similar offers. The Income Tax department is said to have got wind of the scam after an assessee refused to be drawn into the fraud.

"We are investigating how many such deals were carried out by the accused. There are many instances, everything is being verified," Deputy Commissioner of Police (south east), Joshi Srinath Mahadev, said.

"Infosys is aware of the allegations against certain employees who have been found violating the company's policies. The employees have been terminated, after a thorough internal investigation," Infosys Ltd said in a statement. "Infosys takes any breach of its policies and code of conduct seriously and we are fully cooperating with the authorities," it said.

### MADHYA PRADESH

## Man assaulted over 'forced conversion'

MILIND GHATAWI  
BHOPAL, MARCH 9

A FUNCTIONARY of a Pentecostal church in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore was assaulted by a group of men after he was accused of converting people to Christianity.

Isaac Paulose (47) has said he was attacked on March 4, while he was returning home after dropping his son at school when he was waylaid on an isolated stretch of road by bike-borne assailants.

"A bike stopped in front of my car and two riders asked me to come out. I had barely come out when the duo was joined by riders on two other bikes. They beat me up mercilessly with chains, rods and sticks," he told *The Indian Express*.

He was then rushed to the same hospital and referred to a Bhopal hospital because his injuries were serious. The assault has left Paulose with multiple fractures and head injuries.

Church pastor Uttar Kumar Deep alleged that Paulose was attacked after being accused of converting people to Christianity. The pastor alleged

that the attackers ran their bikes over him and also made him chant "yeshu" (Christ).

Paulose has also alleged that he was attacked after being accused of converting people to Christianity. He, however, said that neither he nor his father, who had been a pastor, had ever been attacked before or accused of conversion.

"We have been living in the area for decades and never faced any problem. Everyone knows me here because I get actively involved in all activities of church," he said.

The church has approached the Sehore police with a request to arrest the attackers. An FIR under sections related to attempt to murder, criminal intimidation, wrongful restraint and grievous injuries was filed in the Kotwali Police Station. Five days after the incident, the police said they were clueless about the motive or the identity of the attackers.

"He (Paulose) told us he was attacked because of his religion but could not provide any clue leading to the attackers. He told us he works with an NGO that preaches Christianity," Inspector Manoj Mishra said.

## Army requests Rampur royal family to donate arms for museums

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE INDIAN Army has requested the Rampur royal family to consider donating some of the rare antique weapons kept in the recently-opened armoury at Khasbagh Kothi in Rampur.

Last month, the armoury was opened for the first time in decades for evaluation as a part of an ongoing legal process with regard to a property dispute between different branches of the family. Inside the armoury — handed over to the Indian government by the last Nawab soon after Rampur's merger with India — were found hundreds of carved vintage guns, gem-studded swords and knives with handles of precious stones.

"I have received proposals from the Indian Army to donate some of these arms to them to be kept in Army museums," said Kazim Ali Khan, one of the Nawab's grandsons who now lives in Noor Mahal in Rampur.

Kazim said he has been ap-

proached by both the Army headquarters in Lucknow as well as the J&K and Rajpur regiments.

In his letter to Kazim, Lt General N S Raja Subramani, GOC North India, has written, "These unique firearms and weapons, made centuries ago, are of particular interest to the Armed Forces and I believe they would be best preserved by being displayed in museums and army messes." Khan however said that before the arms can be handed over, the legal case will have to be resolved.

In 1949, Nawab Raza Ali Khan merged Rampur with India. In return, the Indian government bestowed two key rights to the Nawab — full ownership of properties and guaranteed succession to the "gaddi" or rulership of the state based on the customary law, which gave exclusive property rights to the eldest son.

When Raza Ali Khan died in 1966, his eldest son Murtaza Ali Khan succeeded him.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

# CBI searches Rana Kapoor's house, firm linked to family

Look-out circulars issued for family members, DHFL's Wadhawan, others

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

A DAY after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) took Yes Bank promoter Rana Kapoor into custody, the CBI on Monday carried out searches at his residence and official premises of a company associated with his family.

The CBI has also opened look-out circulars against all members of the Kapoor family, apart from Dewan Housing Finance Limited's (DHFL) Kapil Wadhawan and several others accused named in its FIR. Sources in the agency said it is probing financial transactions of the Kapoor family's companies with multiple companies that received loans from Yes Bank.

"Rana Kapoor, Director of Yes Bank Limited obtained undue pecuniary advantage from DHFL in the matter of investment in the debentures of DHFL by Yes Bank, through companies held by his wife and daughters," the CBI FIR states. "It is also apprehended that Rana Kapoor has similarly (abused) his official position in



Depositors in a queue to withdraw money from a Yes Bank branch. File

several other transactions and obtained illegal kickbacks directly or indirectly through entities controlled by him or his family members."

On Saturday, the agency had booked Kapoor and 11 others for alleged criminal conspiracy and corruption in connection with funds received by a company owned by his family from DHFL. The agency's FIR has also booked RKW Developers, a company linked to Wadhawan. Its name had last figured in the Iqbal Mirchi case, where the underworld don's Mumbai properties were al-

legedly purchased by Wadhawan using funds from the company.

Other accused named in the FIR include DHFL; Doit Urban Ventures Pvt Ltd (the company owned by Kapoor family); RAB Enterprises (the holding company of Doit); Morgan Credits Pvt Ltd (company through which Kapoor's daughters hold stake in Doit); Rana's wife Bindu Kapoor; their daughters Roshini, Raakhe and Radha; and Dheeraj Wadhawan (as director of RKW Developers).

According to the FIR, Yes Bank invested Rs 3,700 crore in short-term debentures of DHFL between April and June 2018. Almost at the same time, Wadhawan allegedly "paid a kickback of Rs 600 crore" to Rana Kapoor and his family members in the garb of builder loan given by DHFL to Doit Urban Ventures, it said.

The CBI alleged that despite being a short-term debenture investment, DHFL has not redeemed Yes Bank's investment till date. "It has been learnt that loan of Rs 600 crore was sanctioned by

DHFL to Doit Urban Ventures on the basis of a mortgage of a sub-standard property having very meager value and by considering its future conversion from agricultural land to residential land," it stated.

It alleged that Doit is a wholly owned subsidiary of RAB Enterprises in which Kapoor's wife Bindu is a director and 100 per cent shareholder. Rana Kapoor's daughters are 100 per cent shareholders of Doit through Morgan Credits Private Limited, it added.

On RKW Developers and its role in the case, the FIR stated, "...Yes Bank also sanctioned loan of Rs 750 cr to RKW Developers (Director Dheeraj Rajesh Kumar Wadhawan) which is a DHFL group company for their Bandra Reclamation Project, Mumbai, and the whole amount was siphoned off by Kapil Wadhawan since the entire amount was transferred by RKW Developers to DHFL without making investment in Bandra Reclamation Project for which the loan was sanctioned."

## Jharkhand: Three get death penalty for raping, killing six-year-old girl

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, MARCH 9

IN LESS than a month after a six-year-old girl was raped and murdered at Dumka in Jharkhand, a district court has sentenced three persons to death. Special Judge Taufiqul Hasan conducted the trial in four working days, sometimes holding court till late in the evening, and passed the sentence on March 3.

The order, which was recently made available, stated that the court "must respond to the cry of society". "Our society has also a reasonable and bonafide expectation from the courts of law and the exception is that such an exemplary and deterrent punishment commensurate with the gravity and nature of the offence be awarded to the convicts that the likes of them may take a lesson in the days to come, and may ponder what happened with the likes of

them in the past and what the courts of law and prosecuting agency did with them in the past and this is why the court must respond to the cry of society," the order said.

According to court records, the incident took place on February 5 when the girl's uncle and two others took her away on the pretext of treating her with "golgappas". When the girl did not return home until late at night, the uncle lied to her parents, saying they left the daughter on their doorsteps. After two days of search, the villagers found that the child's body had been buried. Meanwhile, the uncle had fled to Mumbai and the two others had fled from their homes. All three were arrested later.

The three accused had taken the girl to a lonely place, "gagged her mouth", "smothered her face", and "committed gang sexual penetrative assault", said the court records.

## Like each year, police cover Aligarh mosque ahead of Holi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 9

ALIGARH POLICE on Sunday evening covered a mosque in the city with cloth on all sides in order to prevent any communal flare-up when colours are sprayed on the occasion of Holi on Tuesday.

The police said it is a regular exercise Halwaiyan mosque is situated in an area under Kotwali police station near Sabzi Mandi crossing in the city.

Aligarh Superintendent of Police (City) Abhishek told *The Indian Express*: "This is being done ahead of Holi for the last few years

because Holi is played on the chauraha (crossing) near the mosque. After consultation with local residents, the police put up a cloth cover every year on Holi to ensure colours played on Holi don't splash on walls of the mosque, and it does not become a communal issue."

The caretaker of the mosque, Haji Mohammad Iqbal, 70, said, "This practice is on for the last three years and we support it. The police bear the cost every year. It is a good move because it prevents any kind of communal flare-up in the area and protects the mosque... There is a lot of hooliganism when colours are played."

## Lancet study decodes progression of novel coronavirus symptoms

Pune: A new study published by medical journal *The Lancet* has shed light on the duration and progression of the symptoms associated with novel coronavirus.

The study analysed 191 adults with Covid-19 who were admitted after December 29 to the Jinyintan Hospital and the Wuhan Pulmonary Hospital in Wuhan, the epicentre of the

deadly outbreak. As many as 54 of them had died, with 137 being discharged, by January 31.

Published online in *The Lancet* on Friday, the study said the median duration of fever was about 12 days in survivors, similar to the duration in non-survivors.

But the cough may last for a long time. In survivors, shortness

of breath would cease after about 13 days, but would last until death for non-survivors.

In addition, the authors of the study have also presented new data on viral shedding. The median duration of viral shedding was 20 days in survivors (ranging from 8 to 37 days), and the virus was detectable until death in the 54 people who died. **ENS**

### JAMMU & KASHMIR

## 2 LeT militants killed in gunfight

Srinagar: Two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants were killed in a shootout with security forces in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, police said.

Security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation in Khojpora village in the Reban area of the south Kashmir district during the intervening night between Sunday and Monday after receiving an input on the presence of militants there, a police spokesman said.

"During the search operation, the terrorists tried to break the cordon by firing indiscriminately upon the search parties... During retaliation by the security forces, the hiding terrorists were neutralised," he said. **ENS**

## 2 killed in blast at Army camp

Srinagar: Two labourers were killed in what officials called an accidental explosion at an Army Camp in Khundru, in South Kashmir's Anantnag district on Monday. Army officials in Srinagar said two more people were injured in the explosion and are under treatment.

Srinagar-based defence spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia said the explosion took place during "during the repair of ammunition" at the camp.

"The injured were immediately evacuated to a nearby medical facility. Unfortunately, two labourers succumbed to their injuries and two others are under treatment," he said. **ENS**

**भारतीय वायु सेना/Indian Air Force**  
**AIR FORCE STATION NEW DELHI INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR INSTALLATION OF SHARED COMMUNICATION TOWERS**

- Air Force Station New Delhi invites Expression of Interest from Interested Access Service Licensees and IP-1 Companies for installation of Static Mobile Towers/ Cell Towers on Wheels/ Roof top Towers for locations situated in Air Force Station New Delhi area on or before 30.05.20. The EOI shall specify exact details of sites identified by the companies on a proper plan which shall include name of road/ building, close land marks, longitude and latitude of sites and other relevant details in this regards. The interested Access Service Licensees and IP-1 companies shall be required to submit their Expression of Interest (EOI) for locations in Air Force Station New Delhi under policy guidelines issued vide Government of India, Ministry of Defence letter No. F.11026/1/2005/D (Lands) dated 26.02.2018 on Shared Communication Towers and other Infrastructure to extend communication network in Military Stations/ Cantonments. The sites in which the Access Service Licensees and IP-1 Companies have shown interest will not necessarily be given to them but the same will be considered and decided in terms of the policy issued by Ministry of Defence, Govt. of India letter No. F. 11026/1/2005/D(Lands) dated 26.02.2018 by the competent authority. The land to be licensed should be minimum as required for setting up of such towers and related equipments, subject to maximum area of 200 sq mtrs (Static & CoW)/ 50 Sq Mtrs (Roof top Tower). The sites will be initially given on license for a period of 10 years (Static)/05 years (CoW & Roof top Tower) by the competent authority, which may be renewed every 10 years (Static)/02 years CoW) for a maximum period of 30 years(Static)/05 years (CoW & Roof top Tower).
- For further query, this office may please be contacted on any working day during working hours.  
AFND : 011 - 23010231/Extn  
2113-7220, 7223, 7230  
011-23013717(PA to C Adm O) } on all working days

davp 10802/11/0069/1920

**HSI IDC**  
your partner in progress

**LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS**  
**20th MARCH, 2020**

**Online applications for allotment of Industrial Plots in**  
**IMT Faridabad Under**  
**Mega Project Category**

(Projects involving fixed capital investment (i.e. land, building, machinery & misc. fixed assets) of Rs.100 crores and above or projects involving employment generation of more than 500 persons and serving as anchor units for proliferation of ancillaries)

Estate	Plot Size (Sq. meters)	No. of Plots offered (Tentative)	Plot No.	Tentative Allotment Rate (Rs. Per sqm)
IMT Faridabad	7200	01	772-775 Sector-69	15500/-

- Geo Reference mode
- Transparent procedure for allotment of plots
- No enhancement
- Ease of doing business by self certification
- Relaxed provisions
- Supporting service sector

The applications shall be filed online through Single Window Portal of the State Government at [www.investharyana.in](http://www.investharyana.in)

For more information relating to procedure for filing online applications for allotment and other terms & conditions of allotment, visit e-governance portal of HSI IDC [www.hsiidcesewa.org.in](http://www.hsiidcesewa.org.in)

In case the number of applications received are more than number of plots offered for allotment, HSI IDC will conduct e-auction or manual auction/open auction for sale/allotment of industrial plot, as per its discretion. Further, the Corporation reserves to itself the right to accept any bid subject to approval of the Competent Authority or reject any bid/ even the highest bid or withdraw the site from auction at any stage without assigning any reason.

**Haryana State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited**  
Regd. Office: C-13 & 14, Sector-6, Panchkula, Ph. 0172-2590431-83, Fax: 2590474, Website: [hsiidc.org.in](http://hsiidc.org.in), E-mail: [info@hsiidc.org.in](mailto:info@hsiidc.org.in), CIN: U29199HR1987SGC034545

**ACC**  
**ACC Limited**

Registered Office: Cement House, 121 Maharshi Karve Road, Mumbai - 400020  
CIN: L26940MH1936PLC002515  
Tel: 022-41593321, E-mail: [ACC-InvestorSupport@acclimited.com](mailto:ACC-InvestorSupport@acclimited.com)  
Website: [www.acclimited.com](http://www.acclimited.com)

**NOTICE TO THE SHAREHOLDERS OF THE COMPANY**  
Sub.: Compulsory transfer of Equly Shares to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Account

Notice is hereby given pursuant to the provisions of Section 124(6) of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016, and subsequent amendments thereto ('Rules') notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ('MCA'), the Company is required to transfer all shares in respect of which dividend has not been paid or claimed by the shareholders for seven consecutive years or more in the name of Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Account.

The Company in compliance with the aforesaid Rules has sent individual notices to all those shareholders whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF Account and have also uploaded full details of such shares due for transfer as well as unclaimed dividends on the website of the Company at [www.acclimited.com](http://www.acclimited.com). Shareholders are requested to verify the details of unclaimed dividends and the shares liable to be transferred to the IEPF Authority.

Shareholders may note that both the unclaimed dividends and the shares transferred to the IEPF Authority can be claimed by them from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed under the Rules.

The concerned shareholders may take further notice that in case the Company does not receive any communication from them by June 9, 2020 the Company shall, in compliance with the requirements set out in the Rules, transfer the shares to the IEPF Authority. Further, for facilitating the transfer of such shares in cases where the shares are held in physical form, the Company will be issuing duplicate share certificate(s) in lieu of the original share certificates held by them, and upon such issue, the original share certificate(s) which stands registered in their name will stand automatically cancelled and be deemed non-negotiable. The shareholders may further note that the details uploaded by the Company on its website should be regarded as and shall be deemed adequate notice in respect of issue of duplicate share certificate(s) by the Company for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPF Authority, pursuant to the said Rules. In case of shares held in dematerialized mode, the transfer of such shares will be done by way of corporate action through the Depositories to the demat account of the IEPF Authority, as per the procedure laid down under the Rules.

Shareholders having any queries on the subject matter, may contact the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agents M/s. KFIN Technologies Pvt. Ltd., Tower B, Plot Nos. 31 & 32 Selenium Building, Gachibowli Road, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Hyderabad - 500032.  
Telephone Nos.: +91-40-6716222 / 33211000.  
Email: [einward.nrs@kfinstech.com](mailto:einward.nrs@kfinstech.com)

For ACC Limited  
Sd/-  
**Rajiv Choubey**  
Chief Legal Officer & Company Secretary  
ACS 13063

Place: Mumbai  
Date: 9th March 2020

## EXPRESS Careers

**Government of India**  
**Department of Atomic Energy**  
Invites applications for the post of  
**Director (Technical) in**  
**Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL)**

Last date of receipt of applications is  
**20.04.2020 upto 17.00 hrs**  
For details login to website  
<http://www.dae.gov.in>



NSUI sweeps Gujarat varsity students' union election

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, MARCH 9

THE NATIONAL Students' Union of India (NSUI) swept the Gujarat University senate and board for students' welfare elections held Sunday after a gap of four years.

Out of the total 10 senate seats, eight went to polls on Sunday. Six of them were won by NSUI.

While ABVP won two, with only one nomination, the remaining two seats were uncontested.

Similarly for the total 14 seats of the students' welfare board, NSUI won nine and ABVP the remaining five. Out of total 22 seats that went to polls on Sunday, NSUI won 15 seats and ABVP 7.

Gujarat Youth Congress general secretary Parthiv Kathwadia said, "The election results have reflected students' faith and confidence in NSUI. They have voted against casteism and racism."

"Colleges with Congress management and Trust had threatened its students to vote for NSUI, else they would be marked 'failed' in the internal examinations." ABVP Karnavati secretary Ishandeep Suryavanshi claimed.

WILL CONTINUE FIGHT TO HIGHLIGHT IDENTITY OF RIOTERS: UP GOVT

57 named in posters hail HC order as 'victory of democracy'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, MARCH 9

PEOPLE WHOSE names, photographs and addresses were put up on posters in Lucknow have welcomed the order of the Allahabad High Court which issued directions to Lucknow District Magistrate and Police Commissioner to remove the banners.

They said the rule of law will now prevail in UP instead of the "lawlessness" of the Yogi Adityanath government. Claiming that enough damage has already been done, they said they are happy the government will not be able to do the same to others.

However, the UP government said that it will continue the fight to "highlight the identity of rioters". The district administration had put up the banners on Thursday night with the names and addresses of 57 people whom it had earlier held responsible for damage to property during the anti-CAA protests in Lucknow on December 19. The banners sought an amount of Rs 1.55 crore in damages, warning that properties will be seized if the money is not

deposited. Retired IPS officer S R Darapuri, among those mentioned in the posters, said, "The government action of installing banners was illegal. We believe that the Yogi government will now put an end to their wrong activities. The court order is a victory of democracy over autocracy."

Darapuri said that he wrote a letter to UP's Home Secretary and DGP about the "illegal" action. "I wrote that you have created a danger to our life and liberty and if anything happened to us then you will be held responsible for it. I requested them to immediately remove those banners," said Darapuri, who retired from UP Police in 2003 as Inspector General. He said enough damage has been done to those mentioned in the posters as they are receiving threats through social media.

Social activist and Congress leader Sadaf Jafar, whose photo was also in the poster, said, "The HC order reinforces my faith in the Constitution and judiciary of the country. It is a clear message to the state government that the state would be run by the rule of law." She alleged the government wanted to humiliate and put their

lives in danger through the banners. "It is now important that they would not do this to other people after the High Court direction," she said.

Advocate Mohammad Shoib, who is the chairman of the Rihai Manch that was formed to seek justice for innocent Muslims framed in terror cases, said, "The government wanted to threaten and defame us by putting up banners... Passing the order... the court has upheld its responsibility."

Meanwhile, CM Yogi Adityanath's media advisor Mrityunjay Kumar tweeted, "Dangaiyon ke poster hataney ke High Court ke aadesh ko sahi paripeksh mai samajhne ki jaroorat hai. Sirf unkey poster hatenay, unkey khilaf lagi dharaaye nahi. Dangaiyon ke pehchaan ujaagar karney ki ladai hum aagey tak ladenge. Yogi raj mai dangaiyon se narmi asambhav (The High Court's direction to remove poster of rioters needs to be understood in the right context. Only their posters will be removed, not the charges against them. We will continue the fight to highlight the identity of rioters. Mercy for rioters is not possible under Yogi raj)."

CAA protest: Firozabad families cough up Rs 4 lakh in damages

AMIL BHATNAGAR NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE FIROZABAD administration has recovered Rs 4 lakh from people allegedly involved in violence during anti-CAA protests on December 20.

The recovery was made from families in Nalband area, which, according to officials, saw the maximum destruction to property in the city. The recovery process is now being carried out in other areas.

"The damage to public property following arson comes to Rs 45 lakh. More than 40 lakh is still due and the administration is making efforts to recover it," said Aditya Prakash Shrivastava, Additional District Magistrate (Firozabad).

According to officials, at least 26 families have been served notices for damages. Many of them belong to a lower economic strata. Most of the accused say they were not present in the area during the violence, while some claim had been held arbitrarily as the clashes broke out.

CAA-RELATED VIOLENCE IN MANGALURU

HC grants bail: Different sites, same accused

16 part of group of 21 granted bail by HC in another case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE BENGALURU, MARCH 9

THE KARNATAKA High Court has granted bail to 16 youths accused by police of attacking the Mangalore North police station in the violence related to anti-CAA protests on December 19 on the grounds that the same people have been named in other similar cases in different locations at the same time.

Mohammed Suhail and 15 others, who are accused of attacking the police station, were also allegedly part of a group of 21 persons granted bail by the High Court on February 17 after finding no prima facie evidence to link them to the mob violence last December. Following an appeal by the Karnataka government, the Supreme Court had on March 6 stayed the grant of bail to the 21.

High Court Justice John Michael Cunha had granted bail to the 21 — Mohammed Ashik

and others — citing the partisan behaviour of police and failure to register cases lodged against police by two victims of alleged police firing.

In a second bunch of bail pleas relating to the Mangalore incidents of December 2019, which is among 31 cases registered by police over violence linked to the anti-CAA protests, the High Court ordered the release of 16 youths on the grounds that the cases filed against the accused were overlapping. The court observed in a February 27 order, granting bail to the 16, that of the 31 police cases registered over the violence, four cases were "registered against the very same petitioners alleging that they were members of unlawful assembly at different places between 4.00 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. on the same day".

"As the petitioners could not be present at four different locations at the same time, there appears to be a deliberate attempt

to falsely implicate the petitioners in multiple cases. Hence, it is necessary to admit the petitioners to bail," Justice Cunha has observed in the February 27 order.

In the FIR No 133/2019, on which bail was granted on February 17 by the High Court, 21 youths were accused by Mangalore Police of unlawful assembly with lethal weapons, attempting to set fire to a police station, obstructing police from discharging duties and damaging public property while violating prohibitory orders imposed from 9 pm on December 18 to midnight December 20.

In FIR No 131/2019, on which bail was granted to 16 of the 21 youths, they were accused of being part of a group of 300 to 400 Muslim youth "armed with jelly stones, clubs, soda bottles and glass pieces" involved in setting fire police vehicles and pelting stones and soda bottles on the police station. The February 27 order has not been challenged by the government, as yet.

Man harasses IAF officer, held

Jodhpur: A 21-year-old has been arrested for allegedly passing lewd comments and making obscene gestures at a Flying Officer with the Indian Air Force, Jodhpur police said.

On the evening of March 7, around four men in a car started fol-

Day after arrest, Kashmiri couple's kin claim they were framed due to identity

ADIL AKHZER SRINAGAR, MARCH 9

A DAY after the Special Cell of Delhi Police arrested a couple from Kashmir, alleging that they had links to the Islamic State and that they were instigating protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the couple's family on Monday accused the police of framing the couple because they are "Kashmiri Muslims".

Jahanzaib Sami (36) and wife Hina Bashir Beg (39), who belong to Srinagar's Shivpora, were arrested from Delhi's Jamia Nagar on Sunday morning and booked under IPC sections for sedition and criminal conspiracy and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"We were not informed by Delhi Police about the arrest. The landlord called my brother's friend and he told us. We informed a cousin in Delhi and he was allowed to meet my brother

after several hours and told that they had been brought in for questioning and would be released in the evening," Jahanzaib's sister Sehrish Sami told The Indian Express at her residence in Kashmir. "By 3 pm, it was circulated in the media and we were shocked to see a different story, allegations after allegation levelled by Delhi Police," she added.

According to the family members, the couple married in October last year and soon moved to Delhi after the Srinagar-based IT firm Jahanzaib worked with temporarily shifted operations to the national capital due to the Internet shutdown in the Valley.

Hina had not been working currently, said the family members.

A relative said, "He (Jahanzaib) was never interested in any such topic. He wouldn't even talk about Kashmir issue. He never took part in any protest here. If he was not interested in



Sami and Hina, from Srinagar, resided in Delhi's Jamia Nagar. Express

the Kashmir issue, then how come he suddenly got interested in the CAA issue? Police's allegations are totally false and concocted."

Jahanzaib's father Abdul Sami, a businessman, left for Delhi on Monday morning.

Sehrish questioned if it is "wrong to follow your religion and keep religious literature at home?" "My brother was a keen follower of his religion. They [Delhi Police] talk about seizure of religious literature. I want to ask one question, is it wrong to

follow your religion and read the literature? Every house has a religious text," she said. "Just because they are from Kashmir, a big hype has been created. They have been framed because of their identity i.e Kashmiri Muslims."

Jahanzaib's mother Mehjabeen, too, says the couple is innocent. "They [couple] are not like this... In every channel, they are talking about my son as if he is a big name. Government should investigate about the whole matter. Both of them are totally innocent. They have levelled so many allegations against both of them. I am his mother. You go and ask anyone here. They will tell you how my son is," she said.

The family members said local police visited their house on Sunday. "We told everything they asked," said Sehrish. Asked if the couple had an adverse police record, SP (East) Srinagar Sheema Nabi Qasba said she needs to check the records. "I don't know anything about the matter. The matter has not come to my notice," she said.

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## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED DAILY

### Which strain of coronavirus has come to India?

ABANTIKA GHOSH

A STUDY from China has claimed that the novel coronavirus has two strains — 'L' and 'S'. The research looked at 103 coronavirus specimens and identified 149 mutations. The researchers inferred that of the two subtypes, 70% of were of type L; the remaining were of type S.

However, the World Health Organisation (WHO) is yet to confirm this finding. The Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) says: "Whole genome sequencing analysis of 104 strains of the COVID-19 virus isolated from patients in different localities with symptom onset between the end of December 2019 and mid-February 2020 showed 99.9% homology, without significant mutation."

Scientists at the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune are still working to determine which strain of the virus has come to India.

Dr R R Gangakhedkar, head of the division of epidemiology at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination, and promotion of biomedical research, said that virulence is not a function of the genetic



Checking for fever in Delhi on Monday. Tashi Tobgyal

composition of the virus alone.

"We are trying to find out about the strain in India, we should know in a few days. However if you look at that one study, they have only looked at the genes and looked at the deaths caused by each strain to decide which is less virulent, which is more," Dr Gangakhedkar told The Indian Express.

"However, in reality", Dr Gangakhedkar said, "mortality depends on a large number of factors including the kind of treatment the person has got, the existing medical conditions, when the person started getting medical attention, all of these things. In China alone there are some 80 different trials on (so there are that many different treatments). So it is not correct to say that virulence depends only on genes."

### What treatment is given to the patients of COVID-19?

THERE IS no specific treatment. Patients are mostly given medicines for symptomatic relief — for example, paracetamol to bring down fever, sometimes medicines for relief from pain. Care is also taken to ensure they stay hydrated.

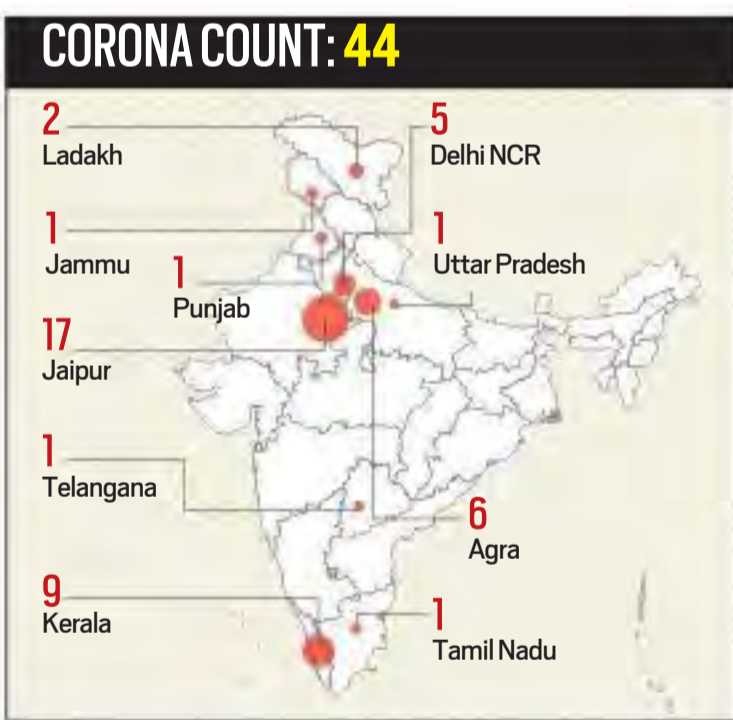
The mortality of the virus is a little over 3%, and for most patients the body's own immune system succeeds in fighting the virus. This is what happened with the first three cases in India — students from Kerala, who had come back from Wuhan. They showed steady improvement with symptomatic treatment, and eventually recovered and went home.

ICMR has obtained permission for "restricted use in public health emer-

gency" of two second-line HIV medications to fight the novel coronavirus. Top Health Ministry officials said the combination of lopinavir and ritonavir has been approved for emergency medical use. Guidelines have been framed for the use of these drugs. Officials said the drugs are to be used only for the "vulnerable", as they are not without side effects.

However, WHO Chief Scientist Dr Soumya Swaminathan had told *The Indian Express* last week: "Some small trials (of the combination) in China have reported negatives."

Seventy per cent of HIV-positive individuals in India are on first-line drugs. The medicines are manufactured in India mainly for export, mostly to African countries.



#### NEW CASES ON MONDAY:

A three-year-old girl in Kerala, and a case each in Delhi-NCR, UP, Jammu, and Punjab.

Have a question on the COVID-19 outbreak and what you should/should not do? Write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# How Yes Bank ran into crisis

How did Yes Bank go from being one of the buzziest banks to among the most stressed? To which sectors was it lending? Why have the RBI's decisions triggered concern among depositors and bond owners?

UDIT MISRA

NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

ON MARCH 5, the Reserve Bank of India announced that it was superseding the Yes Bank Board of Directors for a period of 30 days "owing to serious deterioration in the financial position of the Bank". But what created panic among the general public, and in particular the deposit holders in Yes Bank, was the RBI's decision to cap withdrawals at Rs 50,000. The RBI said it had "no alternative but to" place the Bank under moratorium "in the absence of a credible revival plan, and in public interest and the interest of the bank's depositors..."

#### What caused Yes Bank's problems?

Between 2004, when it was launched, and 2015, Yes Bank was one of the buzziest banks. In 2015, UBS, a global financial services company, raised the first red flag about its asset quality. The UBS report stated that Yes Bank had loaned more than its net worth to companies that were unlikely to pay back. However, Yes Bank continued to extend loans to several big firms and became the fifth-largest private sector lender (see Chart 1).

But, the type of firms and sectors to which Yes Bank was lending resulted in the start of the crisis. According to one estimate, as much as 25% of all Yes Bank loans were extended to Non-Banking Financial Companies, real estate firms, and the construction sector. These were the three sectors of the Indian economy that have struggled the most over the past few years. As Charts 2 and 3 show, Yes Bank was overexposed to these toxic assets. It was only a matter of time that non-performing assets (NPAs) started rising in Yes Bank.

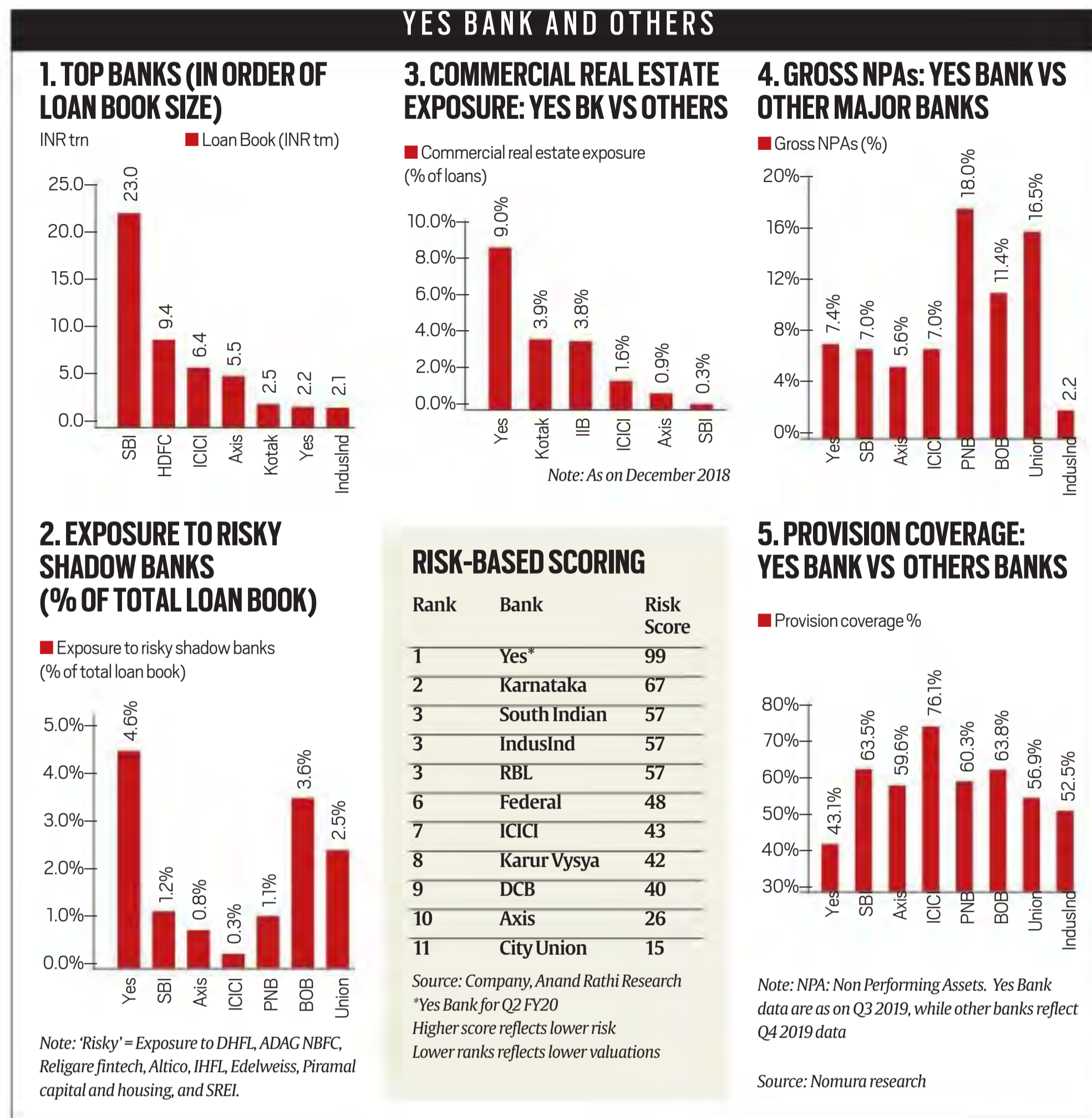
Still, as Chart 4 shows, Yes Bank's NPAs were not as alarmingly high as some of the other banks in the country. But what made it more susceptible to bankruptcy was its inability to honestly recognise its NPAs — on three different occasions, the last being in November 2019, the RBI pulled it up for under-reporting NPAs — and adequately provide for such bad loans. Chart 5 shows how Yes Bank fared poorly on provision coverage ratio, which essentially maps the ability of a bank to deal with NPAs.

While debtors failing to pay back was the central problem, what further compounded Yes Bank's financial problems was the reaction of its depositors. As Yes Bank faltered on NPAs, its share price went down and public confidence in it fell. This reflected not only in depositors shying away from opening fresh accounts but also in massive withdrawals by existing depositors, who pulled out over Rs 18,000 crore between April and September last year. It is estimated that up to 20% more withdrawals could have happened between October and February.

So essentially, Yes Bank lost out on capital (money) from both depositors and debtors.

#### Will Yes Bank's fall affect other private sector banks?

The banking system runs on trust. The Yes



Bank episode could likely push depositors away from private sector banks. An analysis by AnandRathi Equities tries to evaluate the contagion impact on other private banks.

It states: "With these developments, we expect deposit growth for select private banks to slow, leading to lower credit growth". The table above shows the calculated risk-based scores of 11 private banks.

#### What is RBI's solution to Yes Bank's revival; why has it triggered a controversy?

On March 6, the RBI released its "draft" revival plan for Yes Bank. Accordingly, State Bank of India could pick up 49% stake, and hold on to at least 26% for the next three years.

While this issue is still to be settled, another decision by the RBI created consternation among investors of Yes Bank.

The RBI stated that the so-called

Additional Tier 1 (or AT1) capital that was raised by Yes Bank would be completely written off. In other words, those who lent money to Yes Bank under the AT1 category of bonds would lose all their money.

As much as Rs 10,800 crore fall under this category, and many popular mutual funds like Franklin Templeton, UTI Mutual Fund, SBI Pension Fund Trust, etc. stand to lose out. Indirectly, a lot of common investors too will lose out on their investments.

#### What is AT1 capital?

In a bank, there are different tiers (hierarchies) of capital (money). The top tier or T1 has the "equity" capital — that is, money put in by the owners and shareholders. It is the riskiest category of capital. Then there are different types of bonds (such as AT1 and AT2), which a bank floats to raise money from the market.

Last is the depositor — the one who parks her money in the bank's savings account.

The depositor's money is the safest type of capital. When something goes wrong, the depositor is paid back first and the equity owner the last. When the going is good, the depositor earns the lowest reward (rate of return) while the equity owners earn the most profits.

What has created a problem is that RBI has said that capital raised via AT1 bonds, which is in the same tier of capital as equity (i.e., Tier 1), will be written off even though equity will not be.

Bond owners, that is the mutual funds who loaned the money to Yes Bank, argue that they are being unfairly written off. They argue that equity capital should be written off before AT1. But the RBI has thrown the rule book at them. In all likelihood, this matter will be only be decided in court.

# Why all of Europe is at risk from Italy's flu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE NOVEL coronavirus outbreak has triggered in Italy what could be the most sweeping restrictions ever put on free movement in a democratic country during peacetime. Some 16 million people in the cultural and economic heart of northern Italy have been put under lockdown in order to arrest the spread of the virus that had killed 366 individuals and sickened 7,375 by Monday.

The Italian lockdown has economic and social implications for all of Europe. Factories in several industries could see full or partial closure. Across Europe, trade fairs are being cancelled, airports are empty, and nearly all

tourism has slowed down dramatically. European economic growth was already near zero when the virus hit, and some economists have said that a recession is probably inevitable now.

This situation has triggered a debate on whether a China-style lockdown is indeed the best response to the crisis — and whether the economic cost is not actually higher than the health risk from COVID-19 which, despite its potential to make some vulnerable people very sick, is, according to the WHO, a mild disease for most people.

"We are in a world where viruses like this one will appear more and more often," François Bricaire, a member of France's Academy of Medicine and a specialist in infectious diseases, told *The New York Times*. "If

every time countries react this way, we will bring the whole economy down."

The responses of governments in London, Berlin, Paris, and Madrid have reflected this concern, and their statements and reactions have been more cautious than Italy's.

Indeed, the massive public health crisis is testing the very idea of European unity, which the exit of Great Britain has already undermined badly.

Each EU country has its own public health system, and as national survival instincts have kicked in, and depending on the countries' assessment of the levels of infection within their borders, some countries (France, Germany, the Czech Republic) have capped exports of protective medical equipment. Brussels has protested — the EU Health

Commissioner has pleaded that "solidarity is key", and the Health Minister of Belgium, Maggie De Block, has posted on Twitter: "Blocking exports between member states is not in the spirit of the European Union" — but no country has shown enthusiasm for a uniform European response.

This disagreement aside, some analysts have argued that Europe's unique social programmes and labour laws in general have the potential to provide a degree of protection against possible economic recession.

The universal healthcare systems of European countries, these analysts believe, could shore up the economy by supporting consumer spending because people would worry less about large medical bills.

# What is Haryana's 'quota within SC quota' for college admissions?

SUKHBIR SIWACH

CHANDIGARH, MARCH 9

THE HARYANA Assembly last week passed a Bill to split the 20% quota for Scheduled Castes (SCs) in the state's higher educational institutions into two, creating a quota within the quota for a new group of "Deprived Scheduled Castes". The Deprived Scheduled Castes category has 36 communities including Valmiki, Bazigar, Sansi, Deha, Dhanak, and Sapera.

#### What does the new law say?

Section 3(1) of the Haryana Scheduled Castes (Reservation in Admission in Government Educational Institutions) Act, 2020 lays down that "twenty per cent seats shall be re-

served for the members of the Scheduled Castes while making admission..."

Thereafter, Section 3(2) says: "Fifty per cent of the 20 per cent seats reserved for Scheduled Castes for admission in any Government educational institution shall be set aside for candidates belonging to deprived Scheduled Castes as enumerated in the Annexure". Section 4 says that "Where a seat set aside for candidate from deprived Scheduled Castes... is not filled up in any academic year due to non-availability of candidate of deprived Scheduled Castes possessing the requisite qualifications, the same shall be made available to candidate of Scheduled Castes."

#### Is this subquota a new idea?

No. The Manohar Lal Khattar government has replicated the initiative of the state's

Congress government in 1994, when Bhajan Lal was Chief Minister. Bhajan Lal's government bifurcated the Scheduled Caste quota into two categories: Block A and Block B.

In 2006, the Punjab and Haryana High Court quashed the 1994 notification, citing the decision of a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in *E V Chinnaiiah vs State Of Andhra Pradesh And Ors* (November 5, 2004). Haryana filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court against the order. The SLP remains pending with the court, which did not grant a stay in the matter.

#### What is the government's argument?

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Act says that the representation of the Scheduled Castes now categorised as "Deprived Scheduled Castes" is "only 4.7%, 4.14%

and 6.27% in Group A, Group B and Group C services respectively, even though their population is about 11% of the total State population". Also, the Statement says, "the population of other Scheduled Castes in Haryana is also about 11% of the total State population but in respect of representation in Government Services their share is 11%, 11.31% and 11.8% in Group A, B and C, respectively."

The reason for the poor representation of the Deprived Scheduled Castes in government jobs can be found in their educational qualifications, the Statement says. Thus, even though the "minimum prescribed educational qualification for majority of the posts of Group A, B & C services... is Graduation, the SECC (Socio-Economic Caste Census) data reveals that in terms of education, only 3.53% population of the

Deprived Scheduled Castes is Graduate, 3.75% of them are Senior Secondary level and 6.63% are Matric/Secondary level. Also 46.75% of them are illiterate".

#### What was the opposition to the move?

Congress MLA Geeta Bhukkal, herself a Dalit, attacked the Khattar government's "divisive politics". "This government believes in dividing society in the name of Jat and non-Jat, Dalits in name of Block A and Block B. Dalits don't want to fight with each other. Such bifurcation is meant to divide our strength," she said. According to Bhukkal, only Parliament can take a decision in such a case. "The matter has already been covered by the Supreme Court in the *E V Chinnaiiah* case. The Haryana government's move is unconstitutional."

The Chief Minister said in the Assembly that Article 15(5) of the Constitution authorises the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for SCs/STs for admission to educational institutions. Bhukkal, however, argued that Article 15(5) did not mention powers to bifurcate the quota. "The government should have offered special package or scholarship to Block A to upgrade their educational status," she said.

#### What happens now?

However, the legal battle in the Supreme Court will continue. The opponents of the move say it is unlikely to survive legal scrutiny, especially in the light of the *E V Chinnaiiah* decision.





The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Politics after the Poetry

Anti-CAA protests gave us poetry to resist. Hard plumbing of alternative politics is yet to be worked out



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

TAKING THE PLUNGE

Lower crude oil prices could reduce India's import bill, ease inflationary pressures, boost government revenues

ON MONDAY, THE benchmark stock indices in India suffered their worst single-day fall (in absolute terms), tracking the sell-off in global markets, as crude oil prices crashed owing to disagreements between OPEC and Russia, and fears over the economic fallout of the coronavirus deepened further. The benchmark stock indices fell by over 6 per cent, trimming some of their losses thereafter to end the day down 5.2 per cent. The collapse in oil prices has been more severe. Crude oil prices plunged by around 30 per cent in early trading, ending the day at around \$35 per barrel, as Russia disagreed on production cuts to reduce supply as demand falls. According to some forecasts, global oil demand growth in 2020 will be less than 0.48 million barrels per day, down from 1.1 million barrels in December 2019, as the shut-down of factories in China, disruptions in supply chains, and travel restrictions imposed across the world depress demand.

For India, whose macro economic indicators are dependent on crude oil prices to a great extent, the sharp fall in price bodes well on several fronts. First, as India imports around 80 per cent of its oil requirement, the collapse in oil prices will cut the country's import bill, and soften its current account deficit. According to estimates, a one dollar decrease in crude oil price reduces the oil bill by around \$1.6 billion per year. The current account deficit has already become more manageable in recent times, as domestic demand has been sluggish. Second, the fall in crude prices will also help ease inflationary pressures that have been building up over the past few months, though the impact will perhaps be felt more in the wholesale price index (WPI) than the consumer price index (CPI). This will increase the space for the monetary policy committee to ease rates further. The 10 year G-sec yield has already fallen in anticipation, sliding below the 6 per cent mark during the day, recovering thereafter to end at 6.07 per cent.

Third, the collapse in crude oil prices, which comes at a time when concerns have been voiced over the central and state governments' fiscal position, is likely to help boost government coffers. As in the past, the central and state governments can choose not to pass on the benefits of lower prices to end consumers, and use this opportunity to shore up their revenues. If they do choose to pass on the benefit of lower prices to consumers, it will help boost their purchasing power and stimulate demand. However, while lower oil prices could provide a boost to the flagging economy, it is likely to be offset by disruptions in economic activity due to the coronavirus. The government must carefully assess the situation, monitor the sectors that are likely to be affected the most by disruptions in supply, and craft the necessary policy response.

DEJA VU PARTY

Test of JKAP's credibility will come when senior Kashmiri politicians are released from detention. It will be watched

THE FORMATION OF the new Jammu & Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) is no surprise. It has been in the works for months, even years, counting all the attempts by the BJP to form a government with a rump of the People's Democratic Party in the last four years. The first attempt could be said to have been in 2016, when Mehbooba Mufti seemed in two minds on continuing the alliance with the BJP. JKAP leader Altaf Bukhari led that failed coup too. In 2018, after the BJP pulled out of the coalition government, it fished for possibilities of forming a new government from the existing legislators before the Assembly was dissolved. The difference is that this time, there seems to be no fig leaf of democratic dissent that JKAP members can claim for their coming together against the leadership of their parent parties. The birth of this new outfit takes place in a political void, at a time when the top leadership of the PDP and the National Conference are under detention, and are unable to respond politically to the dismemberment of their parties. That the JKAP will be closely aligned to the BJP seems to be a given.

Despite the claim of the coming into existence of a new or "naya Kashmir" after the nullification of Article 370, the JKAP is deja vu for the Valley. J&K is no stranger to parties that have been created by the Centre for marginalising the regional political leadership. Though the BJP loves to say that the Congress messed up Kashmir, it has followed in the footsteps of the Congress in terms of its own political tactics. In 1953, Nehru, who the BJP holds responsible for much that is wrong in the country today, jailed Kashmir's tallest political figure, NC leader Sheikh Abdullah and installed a puppet regime led by Bakshi Gulam Mohammed. History records it as the "original sin". Delhi's first big blunder in Kashmir. In 1984, the Congress government at the Centre broke the National Conference and replaced Farooq Abdullah's government with one led by his brother-in-law, GM Shah.

The real test of the JKAP's credibility will come only when the senior-most Kashmiri politicians are released from detention and can lead their parties once again. The new party will be watched. After all, the PDP, which came up in 1998, was born out of a need to cut the NC to size, and then evolved. Sooner than later, JKAP too will face the same question that has haunted all mainstream politicians in the Valley: Whose party is it, anyway?

ANALYTICALLY, WE HAVE to admit that the anti-CAA protests have, for the moment, reached a strategic dead end. Many protesters, especially in Shaheen Bagh, have displayed the Gandhian virtues of courage and steadfastness. The protests politicised new constituencies, including women and students, and provided the glimmer that the republic would not topple over. But the protests risked running up against three dominant narratives of our contemporary moment: Communalism, authoritarianism and elite cohesion. These narratives have, for now, trapped the movement into being a curiosity at best, a pretext at worst. The movement revealed more about contemporary India, than it has succeeded at resistance.

The anti-CAA movement was poignant in its use of a new constitutional language to resist the evisceration of citizenship. It held on to that language despite grave provocation from the state, and a despairing lack of support from independent institutions. But the ruling dispensation was keen to portray it as a communal movement. It portrayed it as a velvet glove in which the iron fist of jihad was cloaked. If one moves out of our echo chambers, it must be admitted that this narrative succeeded to a shocking degree. The ruling dispensation will accelerate this narrative in coming days. The second was the violence in Delhi, which, even more than the violence in UP, allowed the communal shadow to hang over the movement.

For the ruling dispensation, the movement, and the riots that accompanied Donald Trump's visit, were part of a single plot to defame India. People often wonder why the rioting took place to coincide with Trump's visit. Was it an accident? Whose political purposes did it serve? We can speculate on that question. But, for the ruling party and its affiliates, the timing of the riots served as exactly the grist they needed for their propaganda mills. Judging by the tone of publications like *Organiser*, and sections of the Hindi media, the riots served the function of delegitimising the movement as a force that will stop at nothing, including embarrassing India. The violence allowed them to claim that all constitutional protest ends in a communal dénouement. There are reasons why the foisting of the

If the movement became an occasion to deepen communalism, it also becomes the pretext for deepening authoritarianism. For those whom the government could not tar with the brush of communalism, it took out the card of anarchism. In some ways, the fact that someone like Harsh Mander has to be in the dock for advocating constitutional protest is the ultimate parody of Indian democracy. The idea of peaceful political and civic mobilisation has become anathema to the new dispensation. If equal citizenship is communalism in disguise, sparks of peaceful civic and political mobilisation are anarchism in disguise.

communal narrative around the anti-CAA protests has gained the upper hand. Communal propaganda now so seamlessly works within democratic institutions, mass media and social media. It has become so second nature and ubiquitous, disseminated through so many respectable channels of information, that they have become almost normal political reactions. In this new information order, the asymmetry between truth and doubt works against any movement of resistance, since all you have to do is cast doubt on it. The constitutional subjectivity that is being formed in the protest is running up against our diminishing ability to think from the standpoint of someone else, particularly those who might be made vulnerable.

Orwell once said, "one defeats the fanatic precisely by not being a fanatic oneself." This was sage advice. But it underestimated the fact that under certain conditions, the success of communal propaganda is that it is already overdetermined who is a fanatic: The minority and the civic resister were already constructed as such. Under such circumstances, some citizens struggle to claim the civic standing to be heard, even when they are making demands that can easily be addressed.

If the movement became an occasion to deepen communalism, it also becomes the pretext for deepening authoritarianism. For those whom the government could not tar with the brush of communalism, it took out the card of anarchism. In some ways, the fact that someone like Harsh Mander has to be in the dock for advocating constitutional protest is the ultimate parody of Indian democracy. The idea of peaceful political and civic mobilisation has become anathema to the new dispensation. If equal citizenship is communalism in disguise, sparks of peaceful mobilisation are anarchism in disguise.

The authoritarian repression of anarchism will come in three different forms. It has become the pretext for the kind of indiscriminate repression being unleashed in states like UP. It is also increasingly manifest in the Supreme Court's approach to governance. The Court has become the custodian of the rule by law, not the rule of law. The third form in which repression will come is

the ruling party's core constituency's demand: That one of the reasons India is not doing well is that the government has been too soft on its critics. The fact of visible resistance or criticism of government is taken as a sign of weakness, not of the strength of Indian democracy. The political climate has now been created for further crackdown on dissent and Indian democracy will have to brace itself. Resistance, in the short run, becomes the pretext for repression.

Well entrenched states are not easy to move, especially if there is elite cohesion. The BJP might like to present itself as a victimised outsider, but the fact is that it is now the state and the establishment, with a firm grip on all tentacles of power. It is difficult to come to the conclusion that, at this moment, the anti-CAA protests have led to any defections or even softening in the establishment. No movement can succeed without some cracks in the establishment. In fact, we are seeing an authoritarian consolidation for two reasons. One, the political opposition to the government has not come up with an even minimal show of political or organisational strength. The conduct of the AAP, both in its abdication in the face of riots, and its imprimatur on authoritarian governance tactics in the aftermath, has convinced most people that there is no effective political cover for taking on the government. The Congress may have taken a stand, but it has not displayed the minimal organisational strength to be even a mild counterweight. So the self-fulfilling dynamic of authoritarianism continues, it is becoming our default condition. Every challenge seems to reveal its power, instead of shaking it.

Finally, if the exaggerated spectres of anarchism and communalism have worked, it is because it is convenient for us to believe in their power. It simplifies our political life by blaming India's weaknesses at the door of these internal enemies. As the economic crisis deepens, the calls for order will only grow. The anti-CAA protests gave us the poetry to resist. But the hard plumbing of an alternative politics is yet to be worked out.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express



MADAN B LOKUR

NELSON MANDELA SAID that there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children. How is our society treating our children today?

The treatment of children detained in Kashmir and the reaction to serious allegations of illegal detention made in a public interest litigation (PIL) are simply stupefying. The Chief Justice of the High Court was asked by the Supreme Court to report on the allegations, which she did. The contents of the report were not disclosed and it was discarded. A committee of judges of the High Court then forwarded a report given by the police, which admitted the illegal detention of many children. The contents of this report were made public but not acted upon. A third report was requisitioned. The contents of this report were not disclosed but it was accepted by the SC and the PIL thrown out. Was it with or without our society's soul?

The SC recently reiterated the law as it has always been: Even if bail is not granted to a child in conflict with the law, that child cannot be kept in jail or police lock-up and has to be kept in an observation home or place of safety. The Court made it clear that Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) can take note of the factual situation if it comes to their knowledge that a child has been detained in prison or a police lock-up. JJBs are not meant to be silent spectators and pass orders only when the matter comes before them.

The SC again has occasion to consider the

JUSTICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Courts must intervene to address violations of children's rights in UP and J&K

rights of children across the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. A sensational report titled "Brutalising Innocence" prepared by three civil society organisations on the treatment of minors by the police in UP has been released. It makes for some tragic reading and particularly painful is the clear victimisation of many children, the so-called future of our country.

The report is the result of investigations conducted last month. While it deals with cases in several districts, Bijnor and Muzaffarnagar deserve special mention. There is testimonial evidence of children (or their parents) being subjected to physical violence, intimidation and humiliation. A mother whose child had been picked up by the Nagina police station could not meet her son for two days. Another child complained of severe beatings at the same police station and was not given any reason for the arrest and detention. A journalist met two children who testified to abuse in the same station. But such is the fear generated by police excesses that a young girl wanted to know the consequence of her brother's statement being recorded. She had heard that if any child talks about the treatment meted out, the police would follow up with further harassment.

The report also mentions two children receiving bullet injuries in Lucknow, two others detained in Firozabad and the death of an eight-year-old in a stampede caused by the use of excessive force against protesters in Varanasi. The child's burial in Varanasi was

carried out in great secrecy and under police surveillance. While his soul will rest in eternal peace, what about our society's soul?

We need to develop an accountability jurisprudence. The establishment must be as (if not more) accountable as protesters who destroy public property. If police excesses are not checked, we will witness incidents like the arrest and detention of the mother of an 11-year schoolgirl and her teacher for a play that someone found objectionable. Even a week in jail for a crime not committed is traumatic. Being sorry is no recompense.

Our constitutional courts (not just JJBs) need to stand up and be counted as protectors of child rights. The "Brutalising Innocence" report and others like it should be made actionable and the establishment made accountable. Voiceless children cannot be illegally detained with no one being accountable, otherwise such incidents will multiply, including in a mutated form as in Bidar, with a new grammar of injustice for our society's soul to ponder over. Failure to act by the sentinels on the quiver would amount to rejecting the understanding of the law interpreted by the Supreme Court, apart from failure to provide constitutional justice to voiceless children.

Malala Yousafzai wrote that "we realise the importance of our voices only when we are silenced". And our society's soul?

The writer is a retired justice of the Supreme Court of India

ON A LOSING STREAK

Defeat of women's cricket team in T20 World Cup must touch off big questions, not patronising narratives

IN LESS THAN a year, India have suffered knockout defeats in three major ICC events. In July last year, Virat Kohli's team had gone down to New Zealand in the 50-over World Cup semifinal. Last month, the colts lost to Bangladesh in the U-19 World Cup final. The Indian women's team's failure against Australia in the T20 World Cup is third in this list. This losing streak should work as a wake-up call for the Indian board headed by one of India's most inspirational captains, Sourav Ganguly. The three-time losers must learn from the reverses and address them institutionally.

Having said that, Harmanpreet Kaur and her team winning against Australia in front of 75,000 fans at the MCG would have been an upset. India had beaten the hosts in the group stage, but Australia were too good to have another bad day, especially on their home patch. Meg Lanning's side has had an aura in women's cricket pretty much akin to Steve Waugh's boys. From skill-set to fitness and ruthlessness, they are a cut above the rest. The ICC women's T20 rankings, where Australia sit at the top with 291 rating points, attest to their supremacy.

The time has also come for women's cricket in India to move away from the patronising narrative of "well tried" and "well played". The BCCI needs to dissect vital cricketing issues — big-match temperament, team selection and consistency. The team's two senior-most players, Harmanpreet and Smriti Mandhana, had a forgettable World Cup. The captain returned with 30 runs from five matches, while Smriti could manage 49 runs from four outings. Questions must be asked about their form. Consoling the heart-broken team is fine but they also need to learn from their mistakes. In 2017, they had lost the 50-overs World Cup final against England after a nervous batting collapse. In 2020, the same story has been repeated. To be as ruthless as the Aussies, India needs to be critical about its team that finished a distant second.



MARCH 10, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

THE RSS CONNECT THE JANATA PARTY general secretary, Nanaji Deshmukh, said the former Jana Sangh members in the Janata Party would not sever their connection with the RSS. Talking to newsmen in Nagpur, Deshmukh said, "we are proud of our association with the RSS which ingrained in us the spirit of selfless service and patriotism". Denying that the Jana Sangh group was going back on the August 1979 formula — according to which office-bearers of the Janata Party, including MPs and MLAs, would not participate in the daily activities of the RSS — he said if the Pratinidhi Sabha of the RSS imposed such a ban, they would accept.

NEW PDS PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi promised the nation a new public distribution system for essential commodities and reiterated her commitment to the 20-point programme. Addressing public meetings during a whirlwind tour of the adivasi and tribal areas of Gujarat, Mrs Gandhi said that essential consumer items had become scarce. The public distribution system had broken down under the Janata rule and it would take some time for the government to remedy the situation. She said her government was determined to end the hoarding of essential commodities. She sought the cooperation of the people to implement the 20-point programme.

US EMBASSY CRISIS MILITANTS HOLDING THE US Embassy in Teheran said that they are not ready to handover their American captives to the Iranian foreign ministry, and the timing of such a transfer will be announced later. "Conditions have changed and the hostages will be handed over to the Revolutionary Council at another time," said a statement issued by the militants. The announcement contradicted the one they issued only a few hours earlier. It did not elaborate on the purported change of conditions, but it indicated that the militants are prepared to defy the ruling Revolutionary Council, at least for the moment.



# 13 THE IDEAS PAGE

## A prescription for revival

Government is barking up the wrong tree. Instead of tackling the demand side it is dealing with the supply side of the economy



YASHWANT SINHA

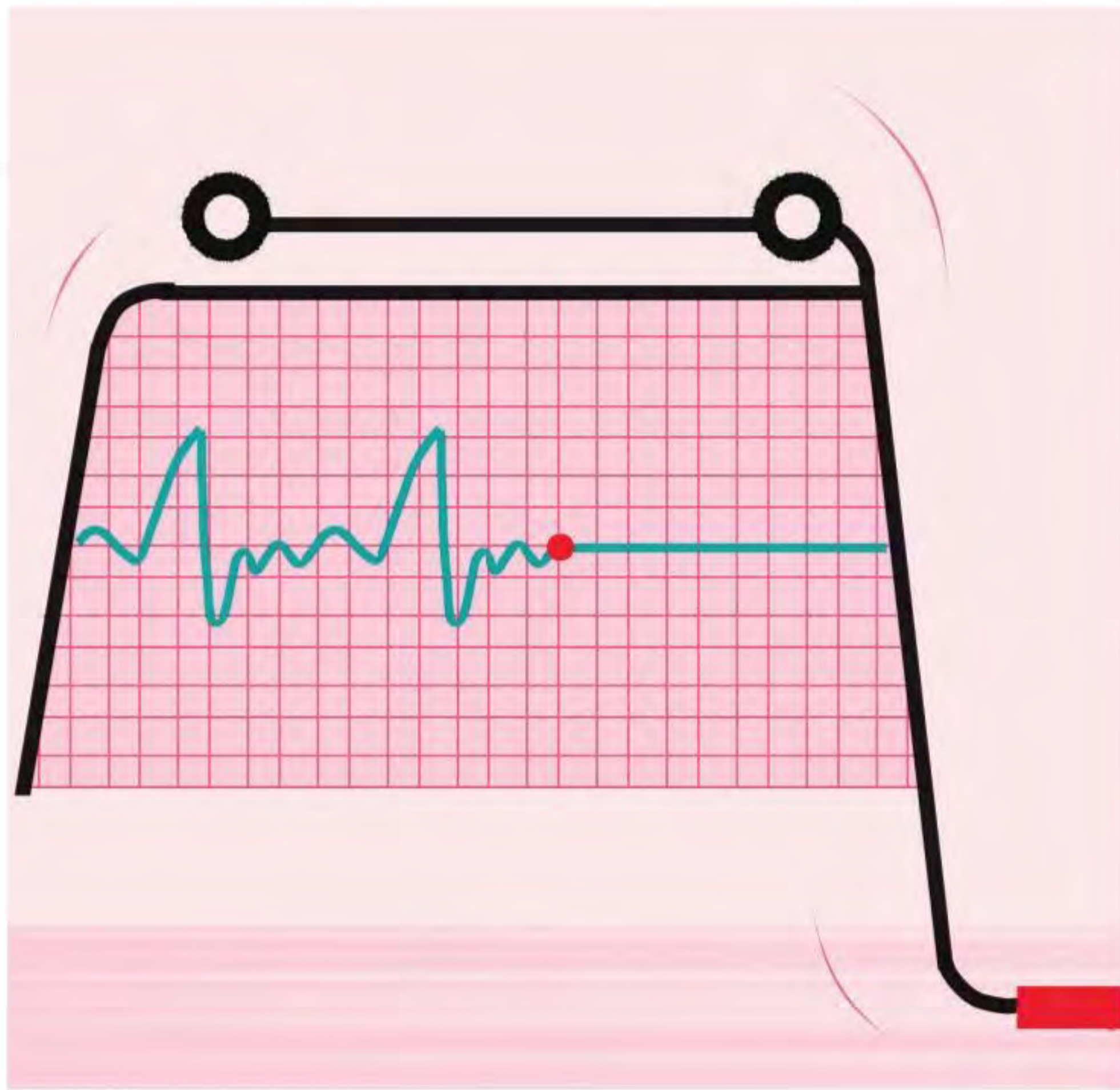
I HAVE OFTEN been criticised for being critical of the present regime, even by people near and dear to me. One argument, which has often been flung in my face, is that I am being critical without being constructive. Though that is not correct, perhaps there is no harm in making those suggestions once again in a concise form here.

What is the root cause of the present malaise in our economy? At the risk of differing slightly with a learned economist like Manmohan Singh, who in a recent article said that the root cause was lack of investment, I would assert that the root cause is the "death of demand". I am not an economist but according to me, growth in any economy depends on the growth in demand, both for investment as well as consumer goods. If that demand slackens, then the installed capacity will not be fully utilised, fresh investment will not take place, employment will slacken and the economy will get caught in a vicious cycle, as we are experiencing today.

The basic challenge, therefore, is to revive demand in the economy in a sequence where the revival takes place first in the investment goods sector, automatically followed by boost in demand for consumer goods through enhanced employment opportunities. This is the prescription we had followed in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government when we were faced with the East Asian crisis and the post-Pokhran global economic sanctions soon after the government assumed office in March 1998.

In a developing country like India, there is no dearth of "good" demand. We still have to provide so many goods and services to our people in order to improve their "quality of life". Simultaneously, we have to create new infrastructure and improve the existing ones to reduce the transaction cost in our economy and make it more competitive. There is so much to be done really. The emphasis on construction of roads of all kinds — rural, state and national highways, the new telecom policy, the investment in railways, the emphasis on housing construction and development of real estate, the improvement in rural infrastructure and reform in the agricultural sector were all meant to lead to creation of demand in the economy. But we also sequenced the creation of demand in such a way that the demand for investment goods picked up first and faster, which created the virtuous cycle of full capacity utilisation, followed by fresh investment for new capacity creation, larger employment opportunities of various kinds — unskilled, skilled and highly skilled — which reached money into the pockets of people leading to a surge in demand for consumer goods. In fact, my quarrel with the policy that the UPA government adopted in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008 was precisely on this count. The UPA government reversed the sequence, went for strengthening consumer demand first, which in the absence of sufficient supply side measures, led to inflation which in turn forced the RBI to raise interest rates 13 times, making money unaffordable and leading to a collapse of fresh investment. The fiscal deficit, especially revenue deficit, went up steeply.

This government is also barking up the wrong tree. First of all, it is solely responsible for the present slowdown. Second, it has no understanding of what has caused the problem. Third, therefore, it is flailing its arms in all directions except the right one and causing more pain. All commentators are agreed



C R Sasikumar

now that instead of tackling the demand side it is dealing with the supply side, which is tantamount to a doctor prescribing medicine for TB instead of dealing with the coronavirus. For instance, if, instead of wasting a precious amount of Rs 1,45,000 crore on tax relief to a limited number of corporates the government had spent that money on rural infrastructure and agriculture and a part of it on railways and highways, it would have led to the creation of demand both for investment goods as well as consumer goods. Alas, the money has been wasted, certainly in the short term. And who has seen the long term?

There is also the issue of resources. Where is the money for my prescription? Here, therefore, let me deal briefly with the issue of fiscal deficit. The government claims that it has stuck to the fiscal deficit targets despite all the pressures on the fisc. This claim of the government must be the subject matter of another discussion. But, as the author of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, I must express my great disappointment at the cavalier manner in which the provisions of this Act have been treated by all subsequent governments.

The basic purpose of the act was to eliminate the revenue deficit completely within a short period of time and live with a limited fiscal deficit. The reasons for this were simple. Revenue expenditure of the government is generally considered to be unproductive expenditure like the huge amount we pay by way of interest on past loans. Therefore, if you borrow money from the market to pay for revenue expenditure you will be hard put to repay that loan because that expenditure does not produce any returns. On the other hand, if you invest the money you have borrowed gainfully, debt servicing will not pose a problem.

In other words, borrowed money should

The government has taken credit in the budget for the fact that it has successfully restricted total fiscal deficit for this fiscal to 3.8 per cent and for next fiscal at 3.5 per cent of the GDP. What the finance minister has failed to point out is that the revenue deficit for the current fiscal is 2.4 per cent of the GDP and for the next fiscal it is 2.7 per cent. In other words, minus the revenue deficit the fiscal deficit is only 1.4 per cent of GDP for this year and for the next year, it is 1.7 per se. So, the real villain of the piece is revenue deficit and not fiscal deficit per se. It is clearly the government's responsibility to manage its expenditure and carry out reforms in it, including austerity in expenditure. I see no signs of that.

be spent as capital and not as revenue expenditure. The original FRBM Act, therefore, mandated that revenue deficit should be eliminated completely and rest of fiscal deficit should be limited to one per cent of GDP. I shall have no quarrel if, in special circumstances like today, the fiscal deficit is allowed to go up to even two per cent of the GDP, which will mean an amount of Rs four lakh crore. Can you imagine the multiplier effect on the economy if the government were to spend this amount on infrastructure?

But let us look at the latest figures. The government has taken credit in the Budget for the fact that it has successfully restricted total fiscal deficit for this fiscal to 3.8 per cent and for next fiscal at 3.5 per cent of the GDP. What the finance minister has failed to point out is that the revenue deficit for the current fiscal is 2.4 per cent of the GDP and for the next fiscal it is 2.7 per cent. In other words, minus the revenue deficit the fiscal deficit is only 1.4 per cent of GDP for this year and for the next year, it is 1.7 per se. So, the real villain of the piece is revenue deficit and not fiscal deficit per se. It is clearly the government's responsibility to manage its expenditure and carry out reforms in it, including austerity in expenditure. I see no signs of that. Controlled fiscal deficit will make more money available in the market for private sector investment and help RBI in reducing interest rates — things which will have an overall benign influence on the economy.

A lot of other things will have to be done, no doubt, like preventing companies, specially banks from failing, to further strengthen the growth impulses but in the present situation, the key is government spending and in the desired sequence. Is any body listening?

The writer is a former finance minister

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Despite his shortcomings, (Prime Minister) Oli has displayed extraordinary resilience and willpower, and we wish him a successful surgery and speedy recovery."  
— THE KATHMANDU POST

## Medicines and frontiers

Impact on drug industry due to coronavirus highlights the national security implications of China's dominance over pharmaceutical industry



RAJA-MANDALA  
BY C RAJA MOHAN

AS THE coronavirus spreads far and wide, the global dependence on China for drugs and medical supplies has come into sharp focus. In both the US and Europe, the shortage of essential drugs to treat the victims of the virus is strengthening the arguments for restoring some domestic production of pharmaceuticals. Although the slowdown in Chinese manufacturing has disrupted the supply chains of many goods, the impact on the drug industry has helped highlight the national security implications of China's dominance over the pharmaceutical industry.

In recent decades, active state support from Beijing and Western drug companies eager to shift production to cheaper destinations has facilitated China's emergence as the most important global source for pharmaceutical products and medical devices. America and Europe are said to import nearly 80 per cent of their antibiotics from China. India is also an important supplier of generic drugs to the Western world, but it is itself dependent on massive imports of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from China. The reduction in supplies from China after the virus breakout has been accentuated by the recent decision of Government of India to limit the export of common drugs like paracetamol.

Well before the current crisis, there had been warnings in the US about the national security risks from the massive reliance on external sources for basic medicines. Late last year, the US-China Security Review Commission, established by the US Congress, pointed to the prospects of China weaponising its dominance over pharmaceutical production and its massive consequences for healthcare in the US. The report also pointed out that the Chinese government promotes and protects the nation's pharmaceutical companies to the disadvantage of foreign competitors and that leaves other nations little leverage with China.

While the current international focus is on the supply chains in the pharmaceutical sector, there has been growing recognition of the need to limit the expansive exposure to China in many different sectors. US President Donald Trump's trade war against China is premised on the conviction that his predecessors had let Beijing hollow out America's industrial base in the name of economic efficiency.

Trump's case for bringing manufacturing back to the America — by challenging the traditional framework of international trade — was not just economic. It also had a strong national security argument — that the US cannot rely on China for servicing its national security needs in a range of sectors from digital components and drugs. Supporters of economic globalisation had countered these arguments by saying that tight interdependence will reduce the incentives for taking unilateral advantage by nations.

But critics have pointed to the fact that

China was turning its role as the "world's factory" into a powerful leverage. The Chinese decision to stop rare earth exports to Japan during 2010 in relation to a minor political dispute had led many to put up red flags. Since then, China's greater political assertiveness and challenge to Western dominance in critical areas have strengthened the case in the West to regard China as challenge if not an outright threat. As the bipartisan political consensus in the US and Europe in favour of a strong economic partnership with China began to break down in recent years, the case for de-coupling has gained much traction.

The history of statecraft suggests that it was quite common for states to use economic leverage for strategic gains. This involved seeking monopoly of strategic commodities and denying the opponent access to critical resources. Access to food, fuel and other strategic materials acquired special importance for warfare in the industrial age. Through the Cold War, both America and Russia sought to corner strategic resources around the world. They also adopted policies for stockpiling special materials for use during conflicts. Sustaining a strategic petroleum reserve, for example, was a major priority for the US during the Cold War.

The importance of hoarding resources at home and denying it to one's adversaries seemed to diminish amidst great power harmony and economic globalisation that flourished after the Soviet Union collapsed. The erosion of that moment in the last few years has set up new tensions between the competing imperatives on Western governments. While the logic of security compels the state to limit strategic economic exposure, the logic of capital demands policies that reduce costs of production and increase the margins of profit. This tension has been at the heart of the recent Western debates on the China question.

In the US, Wall Street as well as Silicon Valley have been great champions of economic efficiency, unhindered globalisation, and deeper integration with China. But the political leadership is divided. Trump's supporters, for example, call for reorganising the economic relationship with China and restoring the domestic industrial base. The front-runner in the race for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, former Vice President Joe Biden, has dismissed the China threat and questioned the wisdom of Trump's trade war.

The uneven dispersal of strategic resources and differences in the levels of development mean there will always be a significant distribution of global production of critical goods across borders. While absolute "self-sufficiency" is impossible to achieve, the political pressures to move away from the current orthodoxies of uninhibited economic globalisation, especially in the strategic sectors, have begun to mount in the Western world.

In the health sector, meanwhile, large continental entities like the US, Europe and India are likely to insure against over-reliance on a single source for life-saving drugs. They are likely to find ways to shorten the supply chains, expand domestic production and explore coordination among like-minded nations.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

## In them we trust

Jurists like Justice S Muralidhar affirm values of constitutionalism



PRASHANTO CHANDRA SEN

SOME OF THE aspects surrounding the farewell of Justice S Muralidhar have no precedent. The serving of the transfer order, which was the genesis of the farewell, close to midnight, was unusual. The specific words of the order directing him to assume charge as judge were downright humiliating. The number of lawyers who attended the farewell in the main lobby of the Delhi High Court was unprecedented too.

Not just the ground floor, the ramp covering the two floors of the High Court was also packed. Muralidhar's speeches, both in the main lobby as also in the more formal Full Court Reference, exceeded expectations. And there was his sage advice to young lawyers — to never enter court without being fully prepared, even if it is just for the adjournment of a case. He recounted his experience in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case (the issue being whether interest of the amount awarded to the victims should be given to them) where, after multiple adjournments, and when least expected, the

case was taken up in the SC and relief given on that day itself.

In the more formal proceedings of the Full Court Reference, his speech described the role played by a judge in India's constitutional courts. What Muralidhar termed as "random thoughts" constitute the very essence of the act of judging. He describes it as taking place "in a space that is both meditative and meditative". He acknowledges the meditative space as constituting the primary function of judging, namely, dispute resolution. The meditative space contains two guiding principles: The Gandhian talisman of the "weakest person" and Ambedkar's adoption of George Grote's constitutional morality. He identified these two as guiding his judicial instinct and which he felt would fulfill "the constitutional vision of justice".

This articulation of the guiding principles of his judicial instinct brought to mind the iconic phrase of legendary US Supreme Court judge Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, who

had remarked that judges are guided by an "inarticulate major premise". The concept was that, apart from legal precedents and doctrines, judges' decision making is also influenced by their personal values and predilections. In his articulation of this "inarticulate major premise", Muralidhar was able to convey the hallmark of the highest traditions of judging by the judge of a constitutional court.

The second important element of his speech was his exposition of what he meant by neutrality. He said: It requires the judge to be able to "discern the weak from the strong litigant in terms of their capacities to access justice and lean on the side of the vulnerable in order to attempt to achieve the equality of arms".

He went on to describe what keeps him going as a judge: Moments when he brings to an end a two or three decade-old case, gets an 80-year-old pensioner relief, long overdue retirement benefits to the legal representatives of a deceased bus conductor or a

wrongly dismissed CRPF Jawan, reversing a wrong conviction or a wrong acquittal. "The cry for justice," he said, "is loud in every roster and in every court".

At a time when institutional trust is perilously undermined and allegations fly thick and fast, the afternoon with Justice Muralidhar reminded us that despite everything, as lawyers, while waiting for our turn to argue, we witness many cases which do not attract huge publicity; but which nevertheless are occasions for constitutional values to be discovered, practised and tested. It was an uplifting moment as it gave a sense of validation of ourselves as lawyers. This feeling lingered the next day when there was a second Full Court Reference for the retirement of Justice G S Sistani, another great judge who the Delhi High Court was losing that day, and whose commitment to these values is unassailable.

The writer is a senior advocate practising in Delhi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### AGENT OF CHANGE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'City of hope', (IE, March 9). Amid incidents of unrest and violence in Delhi, it was breath of fresh air to read a story of social conscience and brotherhood. It was an affirmation of the fact that change is worth fighting for.

Sangeeta Kampani, Delhi

### POOR IMAGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'External challenge' (IE, March 9). Since 2014 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office, he has walked an extra mile to reach out to many Muslim countries and he was successful to a great extent. After the Delhi riots, the country's and PM's image has taken a beating, especially in Muslim countries.

Bal Govind, Noida

### DIVERSITY IN PERIL

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Nation and its cheerleaders' (IE, March 9). The deshbhakti curriculum must be implemented with caution. Protecting India in the name of pseudo nationalism may cost us the diversity of our cultures. At least, that is what the experience of the

### LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to [editpage@expressindia.com](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

recent past shows.

Love Kumar Lalwani, Mehsana

### MATTER OF IMAGE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The diplomatic cost' (IE, March 7). Jingoism and ethnocentrism are affecting India. The country, which put secularism as one of its first principles, is now being criticised globally for majoritarianism.

Divya Singla, Patiala



TOP OF THE WORLD



Abdalla Hamdok

AFRICA

Sudan's Prime Minister survives assassination bid

**Khartoum:** Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok survived an assassination attempt targeting his convoy as he headed to work on Monday morning in the capital Khartoum, officials said. Hamdok said he was in "good shape" and that what had happened would be "an additional push to the wheel of change in Sudan", where he heads a transitional government following the overthrow last year of long-time President Omar al-Bashir. Hamdok's government is struggling to manage a severe economic crisis that triggered months of protests against Bashir and continued after his downfall in April. The convoy appeared to have been targeted from above, Reuters witnesses said.

BRITAIN

Police shoot knife-wielding man in London

**London:** British police shot dead a man brandishing two knives near Parliament in central London, officers said on Monday, adding that the incident was not terror-related. The Metropolitan Police said of officers on patrol at about 11.25 pm Sunday noticed a man they believed was behaving suspiciously. "Officers challenged the man who produced two knives. Armed officers responded. Taser and a police firearm were discharged during the incident," it said in a statement. "London Ambulance Service attended and the man was pronounced dead at the scene... The incident is not being treated as terrorism."

PAKISTAN

23 killed in road accident

**Islamabad:** At least 23 people were killed when a passenger bus veered off a mountain road and plunged into a deep ravine in northern Pakistan on Monday, authorities said. The bus was on its way from Rawalpindi to Skardu when it fell into the ravine at Round near Gilgit, according to Faizullah Firaq, the spokesperson of the Gilgit Baltistan government. Firaq said 25 passengers were onboard the vehicle when the accident occurred, adding that the cause of the mishap was not known. At least 23 passengers died in the accident, Ghulam Murtaza, Assistant Commissioner of Round tehsil, said.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK: CASES SURGE IN EUROPE

Threat of virus pandemic is now very real, warns WHO

Italy, neighbours attempt to limit spread; Germany reports first two deaths

AGENCIES GENEVA, ROME, MARCH 9

THE WORLD Health Organisation warned on Monday there was now a "very real" threat that the global outbreak of the new deadly coronavirus will become a pandemic, but stressed the virus could still be controlled.

"The threat of a pandemic has become very real," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters, while stressing that "it would be the first pandemic in history that can be controlled... we are not at the mercy of the virus".

EU leaders will seek a coordinated response to the coronavirus after global markets plunged on Monday and Italy sealed off much of its industrial north, where six prisoners were killed in a riot over curbs on visits.

European Union leaders will hold a teleconference to discuss their next moves, European Council president Charles Michel said. "We need to cooperate in order to protect the health of our citizens," Michel, who chairs EU summits, tweeted.

In little more than two weeks, the number of recorded coronavirus cases in Italy has surged to 7,375, with 366 deaths, the second-highest death toll after China's, putting its health system under huge strain.

More than 110,000 people have been infected in 105 countries and territories, and 3,800 have died, the vast majority in mainland China.

6 die in prison riot

Italy's prison administration



At St. Mark's Square in Venice on Monday following a lockdown order in Italy's north. AP

MORE CRUISE SHIPS AFFECTED

**USA:** Officials in California were preparing Monday to receive thousands of people from the *Grand Princess*, which has been idling off the coast of San Francisco with at least 21 people aboard infected with the virus.

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore said it would allow cruise ship *Costa Fortuna* to dock in the city-state Tuesday, after it was turned away from ports in Malaysia and Thailand over coronavirus fears, despite no reported case on board.

**EGYPT:** Scores of foreign tourists and Egyptian crew remained quarantined aboard a Nile River cruise ship, *A-Sara*, from which 45 suspected coronavirus cases have been evacuated, people on board said.

said six inmates had died in a prison riot in the northern town of Modena over new restrictions on visits. "There have been a series of rebellions across the country," said Francesco Basentini, head of the authority. Video aired on Italian television showed police and fire trucks outside the prison as black smoke swirled into the sky.

1,000 cases in Germany

Two people have died of the coronavirus in the western

German city of Essen and virus hotspot Heinsberg, officials said Monday, the country's first casualties of the outbreak.

The number of people testing positive for the coronavirus on Monday passed 1,000 in Europe's top economy Germany.

In the United Kingdom, the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus rose by 30% to 273, the government said on Sunday, and a third person who tested positive for the virus has died.

Spain shuts schools

In Spain, schools were closed in the town of Labastida near Vitoria in the Basque country after nearly 150 cases of coronavirus were identified in the region.

Spain has reported 999 cases in all, most of them in two areas around Madrid and around Vitoria in the north. Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said it had prepared an emergency plan to deal with the economic consequences of the virus.

China reports no new locally transmitted case outside Hubei

Phase of stability in South Korea soon, says President Moon

REUTERS BEIJING, MARCH 9

MAINLAND CHINA reported no new locally transmitted coronavirus cases outside the epicentre of Hubei province for the second day running on Monday, but a top Communist Party official warned against people dropping their guard.

China had 40 new confirmed cases of coronavirus infections as of Sunday, the National Health Commission said, down from 44 cases a day earlier, and the lowest number since the health authority started publishing nationwide data on January 20.

Of the new cases, 36 were in Wuhan, the provincial capital of Hubei, and four in Gansu province in people arriving from Iran.

Chen Yixin, secretary general of the Communist Party's Politics and Law Commission, said no one should drop their guard.

"We must stay cautious, and not be blindly optimistic and must not have war-weariness," Chen said. "We should not reduce the vigilance against the epidemic and the requirements of prevention and control."

The coronavirus emerged in the central province of Hubei late last year. The new cases on Sunday brought the total accu-



Soldiers spray disinfectant at an apartment building in Daegu, South Korea, on Monday. AP

SLOWING DOWN	
<b>IN CHINA</b> 40 NEW CASES the lowest daily increase since January	<b>IN SOUTH KOREA</b> 96 NEW CASES the lowest in 11 days, taking the total to 7,478
<b>22 MORE DEATHS</b> , total death toll in China goes up to 3,119.	<b>1 MORE DEATH</b> , taking total death toll in South Korea to 51

mulated number of cases in mainland China to 80,735.

South Korea reported 165 new coronavirus cases, bringing the national tally to 7,478, while the death toll rose by one to 51.

NETHERLANDS

MH17 MURDER TRIAL STARTS

Four men accused of murder over the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014 went on trial in the Netherlands on Monday, with families of the 298 victims calling for justice. The suspects — three Russians and a Ukrainian — were not present in the dock, but judges were expected to rule that the hearing could continue in their absence.

Ghani sworn in as Afghan president, rival holds parallel inauguration

Rockets strike Kabul during ceremony

ABDUL QADIR SEDIQI & OROOJ HAKIMI KABUL, MARCH 9

AFGHAN PRESIDENT Ashraf Ghani was sworn in for a second term on Monday but his main rival refused to recognise the inauguration and held his own swearing-in ceremony as a rival president.

Both Ghani and former chief executive Abdullah Abdullah say they are Afghanistan's rightful leader following a disputed election last September, a stand-off that threatens political chaos days after the US and the Taliban signed a deal on the withdrawal of US-led international forces.

Ghani's ceremony was disrupted by the sound of two rockets hitting the edge of the compound of the presidential palace compound in the capital Kabul, Reuters witnesses said, but there was no word of any casualties and he continued his speech.

Planned morning ceremonies were postponed, and guests kept waiting, while US Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad tried to broker a last-minute deal between the longtime political foes, but there was no immediate word of a breakthrough.

Television footage showed Ghani taking an oath at the presidential palace in a ceremony attended by foreign diplomats including Khalilzad and NATO forces commander Scott Miller.

Ghani said in a speech that the government he was forming would not include only members of his political camp though he would continue with the previous cabinet for two weeks.

He plans to finalise a negotiat-



Both Ghani (left) and former chief executive Abdullah Abdullah say they are the rightful leader following a disputed election.

EXPLAINED Intra-Afghan talks could be delayed

THE DUAL inaugurations are likely to delay the talks between Afghan political leaders and the Taliban, which was set to begin on Tuesday after the US agreed to pull NATO troops out of Afghanistan. Taliban consider both Ghani and his rival Abdullah as puppets of the West and has been reluctant to talk to them until the group made a deal with the US which involved the future removal of foreign troops from Afghanistan. In this context, the crisis regarding who Afghanistan's president will be has come at the worst possible time, analysts say.

ing team for talks with the Taliban on Tuesday and to make a further announcement on demands by the Islamist militant group for the release of prisoners. REUTERS

In a first, Twitter labels video clip shared by Trump as 'manipulated'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON, MARCH 9

TWITTER HAS used a new policy to identify misleading content for the first time on a post retweeted by US President Donald Trump that appeared to show Democratic Party rival Joe Biden endorsing his reelection.

The social media platform has struggled with removing deceptive and abusive content in the past, but has also faced accusations its curbs have suppressed some political views.

Last week it announced moderators would begin flagging media that had been "deceptively altered or manipulated," the same day it announced an expansion of a ban on hate speech.

A clip posted by White House social media director Dan Scavino appeared to show Biden telling a crowd: "We can only re-elect Donald Trump." The footage was later retweeted by Trump and had been viewed nearly six million times by Monday.

But the video cropped the end of Biden's sentence — made during a recent campaign speech Missouri state — where he was discussing the need for



RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

party unity in the wake of a bruising primary contest.

"We can only re-elect Donald Trump if in fact we get engaged in this circular firing squad here," Biden had said.

Twitter appended a label to the video describing it as "manipulated media," prompting a denial from Scavino in a later tweet on Monday.

The platform last month suspended dozens of accounts for spam-like posts supporting former Democratic presidential hopeful Michael Bloomberg.

MOST NOTABLY, HE HELPED GIVE FLESH TO BERGMAN'S OFTEN BLEAK BUT HOPEFUL, SOMETIMES COMIC VISION OF THE HUMAN CONDITION

Max von Sydow, Swedish star of *The Seventh Seal* and *Exorcist*, dies at 90

ROBERT BERKVIST MARCH 9

MAX VON SYDOW, the tall, blond Swedish actor who cut a striking figure in American movies but was most identified with the signature work of a fellow Swede, director Ingmar Bergman, has died. He was 90.

His wife, Catherine von Sydow, confirmed the death in an emailed statement. The cause and date of his death were not being released at the request of

the family, Lesley Duff, one of von Sydow's agents, said in a telephone interview.

Max Von Sydow, widely hailed as one of the finest actors of his generation, became an elder pop culture star in his later years, appearing in a *Star Wars* movie in 2015 as well as in the sixth season of the HBO fantasy-adventure series *Game of Thrones*. He even lent his deep, rich voice to *The Simpsons*.

By then he had become a familiarly austere presence in popular movies like William

Friedkin's *The Exorcist*, Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report*, Woody Allen's *Hannah and Her Sisters* and, more recently, Julian Schnabel's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*.

But to film lovers the world over he was most enduringly associated with Bergman.

If ever an actor was born to inhabit the World According to Bergman, it was von Sydow. Angular and lanky at 6 feet 3 inches, possessing a gaunt face and hooded, icy blue eyes, he not only radiated power but also registered



a deep sense of Nordic angst, helping to give flesh to Bergman's often bleak but hopeful and sometimes comic vision of the human condition in classics like *The*

*Seventh Seal* and *The Virgin Spring*.

But it was not until his later years that he could range widely in American movies. In *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) he was the possessive lover of the youngest sister, played by Barbara Hershey. In the science-fiction thriller *Minority Report* (2002) he was Tom Cruise's coolly efficient boss, director of a police force that benefits from telepathic powers to stop crimes before they are committed.

Von Sydow earned his first Academy Award nomination in

1988 — some 40 years after his movie debut — for his work in *Pelle the Conqueror*. A Danish film directed by Bille August, it told the story of Lasse (von Sydow), a down-at-heels widowed Swedish labourer who brings his young son, Pelle, to Denmark at the turn of the century in search of a better life, only to encounter still more hard times.

There were other late-career high points, including *Hamsun* (1997), in which von Sydow submerged himself in the tangled personality of Nobel Prize-win-

ning Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun.

By his late 80s, cast in the brief role of village elder Lor San Tekka in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and as the enigmatic Three Eyed Raven in Season Six of *Game of Thrones*, he was having, as critic Terrence Rafferty wrote in *The Atlantic* in December 2015, "the sort of late career that eminent movie actors tend to have, popping up for a scene or two in commercial stuff that needs a touch of gravity, and receiving, as famous old actors do, the honor of

"last billing."

Carl Adolf von Sydow was born April 10, 1929, in Lund, in southern Sweden. His father was a university professor, his mother a schoolteacher. He attended the Cathedral School in Lund, where he learned English at an early age and began his acting career in an amateur theatre group he founded with friends.

He was said to have adopted the name Max from the star performer in a flea circus he saw while serving in the Swedish Quartermaster Corps. NYT



# 15 ECONOMY

<b>GOLD</b>	<b>RUPEE</b>	<b>OIL</b>	<b>SILVER</b>
₹45,063	₹74.17	\$47.92	₹47,359

\*Indian basket as on March 6, 2020

SENSEX: 35,634.95 ▼1941.67 NIFTY: 10,451.45 ▼538.00 NIKKEI: 19,698.76 ▼1,050.99 HANG SENG: 25,040.46 ▼1,106.21 FTSE: 6,026.93 ▼435.62 DAX: 10,729.97 ▼811.90

## COLLAPSE IN OIL PRICES ADDS TO RISK OFF SENTIMENT

# Rupee below 74 level, bond yields down on global crash, COVID-19-led slowdown fears

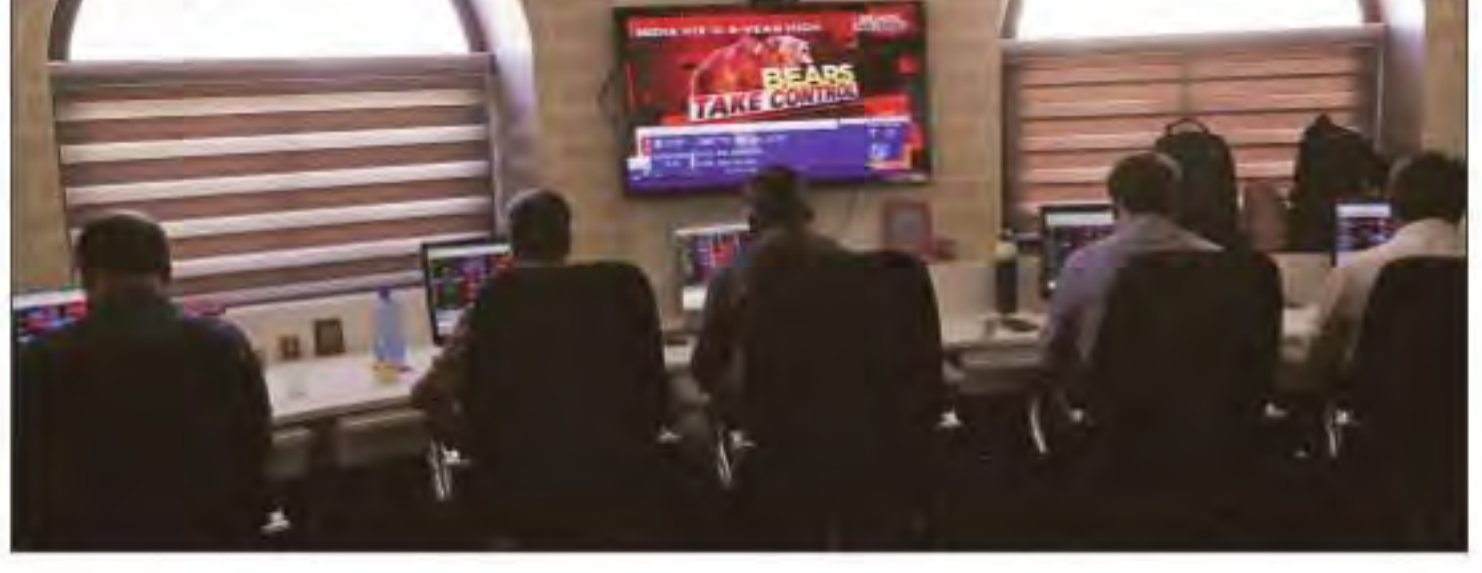
ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, MARCH 9

THE RUPEE on Monday fell below the 74-level against the US dollar to settle 30 paise down at 74.17 amid heavy selling in domestic equity market triggered by rising concerns over coronavirus-led economic slowdown.

Forex traders said the rupee depreciated versus major trading currencies as a 30 per cent collapse in oil prices added to risk off sentiment caused by relentless spread of coronavirus across the globe. "The heavy selling in the stock market that led to 1942 points crash in the SENSEX has raised fears over withdrawals by foreign investors," said analyst.

Foreign portfolio investors have already pulled out Rs 16,758 crore from India in March with the equity market alone witnessing around Rs 12,500 crore outflows, as per the NSDL data.

The yield on 10-year benchmark government bonds, which fell below 6 per cent during the day, declined by 12 basis points to close at 6.07 per cent on Monday. In the US, the yield on benchmark US 10-year Treasury briefly touched an all-time low of 0.318 per cent in overnight trading, adding another 30 basis



Stockbrokers keep an eye on the BSE index in Mumbai. AP

points to an unprecedented fall in the key interest rate. That rate was above 1.5 per cent as recently as mid-February.

Siddhartha Khemka, head — retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "the relentless FII selling in the last two weeks has added to the overall downtrend. There was panic globally as fears of rising cases of coronavirus in countries like Italy and US made investors nervous. This has led to worries over a prolonged global economic slowdown."

According to a Care Ratings report, the fear of a global slowdown that can deteriorate to a recession is palpable based on the

reaction of markets. "Just look at some of the developments: The 10-year government bond is now at around 6 per cent and breached this mark temporarily. It was 6.18 per cent on Friday. The US Treasury yields also have moved towards 0.50 per cent. Stock indices have fallen sharply across the globe and the SENSEX is down. The rupee is down to below Rs 74.11. Will this be temporary? One cannot tell right now as the virus factor has made forecasting extremely difficult. Volatile times are for sure in the coming days," it said.

D K Aggarwal, president, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the volatility in the

rupee and stock markets is short lived and is majorly driven by the spread of coronavirus disease in many countries.

The markets are expected to stabilise as fundamentals of Indian economy are strong enough to withstand the external shocks on the back of robust economic reforms undertaken by the government during the last many years, he said.

"India's economic resilience has strengthened during the recent times on account of factors such as improving FDI inflows, forex reserves and several measures undertaken to boost up investment sentiments in the economy," Aggarwal said.

### EXPLAINED FPI outflows can put more pressure on the rupee

STOCK INDICES have fallen sharply across the globe and the SENSEX crashed over 5 per cent on Monday. Indications are that volatility in the currency and stock markets are expected to continue in the near term. While the fall in crude oil prices is expected to boost the rupee's strength and bring down India's oil import bill, it's being negated by foreign portfolio outflows which can put pressure on the rupee. However, much will depend on global cues, especially the impact of coronavirus and oil price stability.

PRANAV MUKUL  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

WITH NUMBER of people testing positive for coronavirus increasing in India every day, countries like Qatar and Kuwait have prohibited entry of travellers from India. While Qatar's travel ban would mean that Qatar Airways continues its operations as a network airline, the move will hurt Indian carriers that function as point-to-point operators. Following the Qatar government's order, IndiGo, Air India and Air India Express cancelled their flights to Doha.

"In addition to Qatar Airways announcement regarding flights to and from Italy, entry to the State of Qatar is temporarily suspended for all those intending to travel from certain countries, as of 9 March 2020. This decision comes as a preventive measure due to the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide. The decision includes the following countries: Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand," the Qatari government said in an official statement.

As on Monday, there were over 40 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in India, and a total of 9,41,717 international passengers

## Qatar travel ban to hurt Indian carriers; IndiGo, Air India and AI Express cancel Doha flights

Hyderabad and Chennai.

According to information from flight-tracking portal Flightradar24, Air India and Air India Express' flights to Doha from airports like Delhi, Mumbai, Kochi, etc were cancelled. For Air India, Doha adds to the list of international destinations, for which the national carrier has reduced its flights in wake of the coronavirus situation. These include flights to Milan and Rome in Italy and Seoul in South Korea, where the flights have been reduced to two per week from three or four flights per week. Similarly flights to Tokyo have been reduced to four a week from five per week earlier.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation of Kuwait had announced last week that all flights to the country to and from India and six other countries — Bangladesh, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt — were temporarily suspended.

In a similar move, India had banned flights to and from Iran on February 27, but lifted the restrictions to allow Iran to evacuate citizens stranded in India and vice versa. India has also suspended all visas granted to foreign nationals from China, Italy, Iran, South Korea, and Japan. Both regular and e-visas, granted to all foreign nationals who have travelled to any of these countries on or after February 1, also stand cancelled.

### After Kuwait, Qatar prohibits entry of travellers from India. However, flyers can pass through Doha airport for transit flights

from 8,27 flights have been screened at airports till date with 54 passengers being referred to the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme or other hospitals. Currently, Qatar Airways, IndiGo, Air India and Air India Express connect Indian cities to the west-Asian country's capital city Doha.

In a statement, Qatar Airways said that entry to Qatar was temporarily suspended for all those travelling from the 14 countries, and only those passengers with onward connections through Doha will be accepted for travel.

"Owing to the travel ban for people of multiple nationalities, including Indian nationals, IndiGo will be cancelling its flights to Doha till March 17, 2020. We will be monitoring the situation closely and will share further updates once the ban is lifted," IndiGo said in a statement.

IndiGo operates non-stop daily flights between Doha and Mumbai, Kochi, Kozhikode, Delhi,

### VIRUSEFFECT Moody's cuts 2020 growth forecast to 5.3%

New Delhi: Moody's Investors Service on Monday cut its growth forecast for India to 5.3 per cent for 2020 from 5.4 per cent estimated earlier, as it expects the coronavirus outbreak to dampen domestic demand globally. In its update on Global Macro Outlook for March, Moody's said the virus outbreak has spread rapidly. "It now seems certain that even if the virus is steadily contained, the outbreak will dampen global economic activity well into Q2 of this year," it said. Apart from supply chain disruptions, it also expects consumption and investment to be affected and prices of oil and other commodities to remain around current lows until the end of June.

### New York Fed to inject at least \$50 bn daily

Washington: The New York Federal Reserve Bank announced Monday it will increase its daily injections of cash into financial markets by \$50 billion to \$150 billion as a protective step amid the coronavirus epidemic. The increase "should help support smooth functioning of funding markets as market participants implement business resiliency plans in response to the coronavirus," the New York Fed said in a statement. AFP

## OIL DEMAND SET FOR FIRST CONTRACTION SINCE 2009: IEA Oil prices plunge by a third as Saudi, Russia turn on the taps

REUTERS  
NEW YORK/LONDON, MARCH 9

OIL PRICES crashed on Monday, suffering their biggest daily rout since the 1991 Gulf War, after the collapse of an OPEC+ supply agreement that now threatens to overwhelm the world with oil, inciting panic throughout the energy sector. After failing to come to an agreement to cut supply, Saudi Arabia and Russia over the weekend pledged instead to ramp up production, which could quickly flood global markets with oil at a time when demand has already weakened substantially.

The market's reaction has been furious, with crude futures plunging by nearly 20 per cent. Brent crude futures were down \$8.84, or 19.5 per cent, to \$36.43 a barrel by 1449 GMT. They earlier fell by as much as 31 per cent to \$31.02, their lowest since February 12, 2016. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell \$7.81, or 18.9 per cent, to \$33.47 a barrel. WTI earlier dropped 33 per cent to \$27.34, also the lowest since February 12, 2016.

Should these losses hold, it would be the biggest one-day percentage decline for both benchmarks since January 17, 1991, the outset of the US Gulf War, when it fell by a third.

Meanwhile, global stock markets plunged on Monday after Saudi Arabia-Russia price war, sending investors already spooked by the coronavirus outbreak fleeing for the safety of bonds and the Japanese yen. European stocks suffered hefty losses and a 7 per cent slide in the S&P 500 at the open on Wall Street

### Saudi Aramco shares dive

Dubai: Saudi Aramco shares fell by as much as 10 per cent on Monday, dropping below their December listing price after Saudi Arabia and Russia said they would raise oil production in a battle for market share, sending crude prices down by a third.

Aramco shares fell below their 32 riyals IPO price on Sunday. The December IPO valued the company at \$1.7 trillion in the world's biggest share offering. Aramco shares closed at 28.35 riyals (\$7.55), 11.4 per cent below its IPO price. The shares closed 5.5 per cent lower. REUTERS



A Saudi Aramco compound in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. AP

### A 7% slide in the S&P 500 at the open on Wall Street triggered a circuit-breaker, halting US stock trading for 15 minutes. At one point Dow Jones Industrials crashed 2,000 points in what would be its biggest one-day fall ever

triggered a circuit-breaker put in place after the financial crisis a decade ago, halting US stock trading for 15 minutes. The 10-year US Treasury note's yield slid as low as 0.318 per cent — a level unthinkable just a week ago — as investors rushed to cut risk assets and snap up safe-havens. At 1:12 p.m. ET,

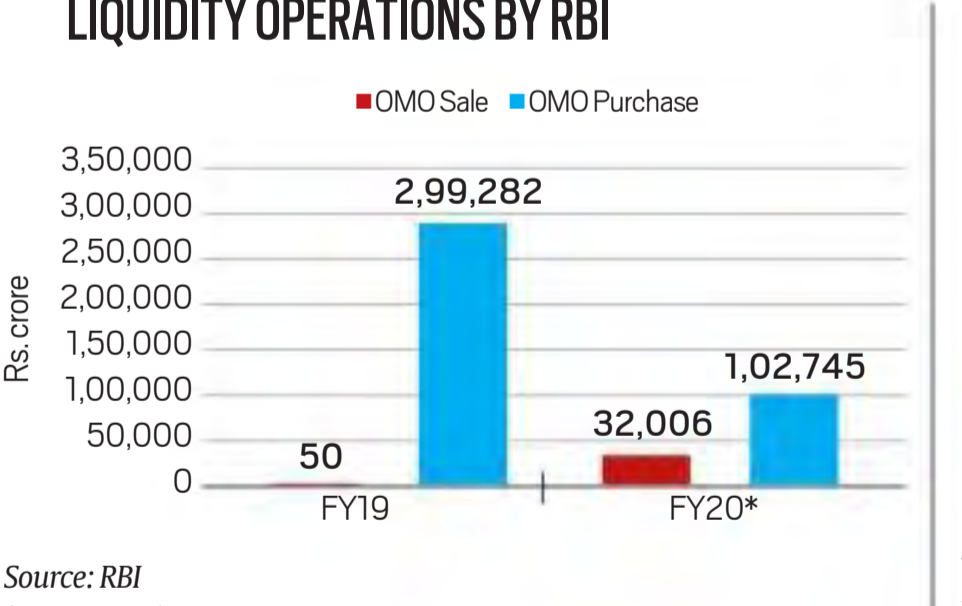
Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1,628.16 points, or 6.29 per cent, at 24,236.62 and the S&P 500 was down 175.94 points, or 5.92 per cent, at 2,796.43. The Nasdaq Composite was down 443.18 points, or 5.17 per cent, at 8,132.44. At one point Dow Jones Industrials crashed 2,000 points in what would be its biggest one-day fall ever.

Frankfurt and Paris markets tumbled about 8.5 per cent and London tanked 12 per cent. Italy's main index slumped almost 15 per cent. The pan-regional STOXX 600 fell into bear market territory — a drop of more than 20 per cent — from an all-time high in February. The losses in Europe followed sharp declines in Asia. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares ex-Japan lost 4.4 per cent in its worst day since August 2015.

### 'Surplus liquidity in system, but downturn fears remain'

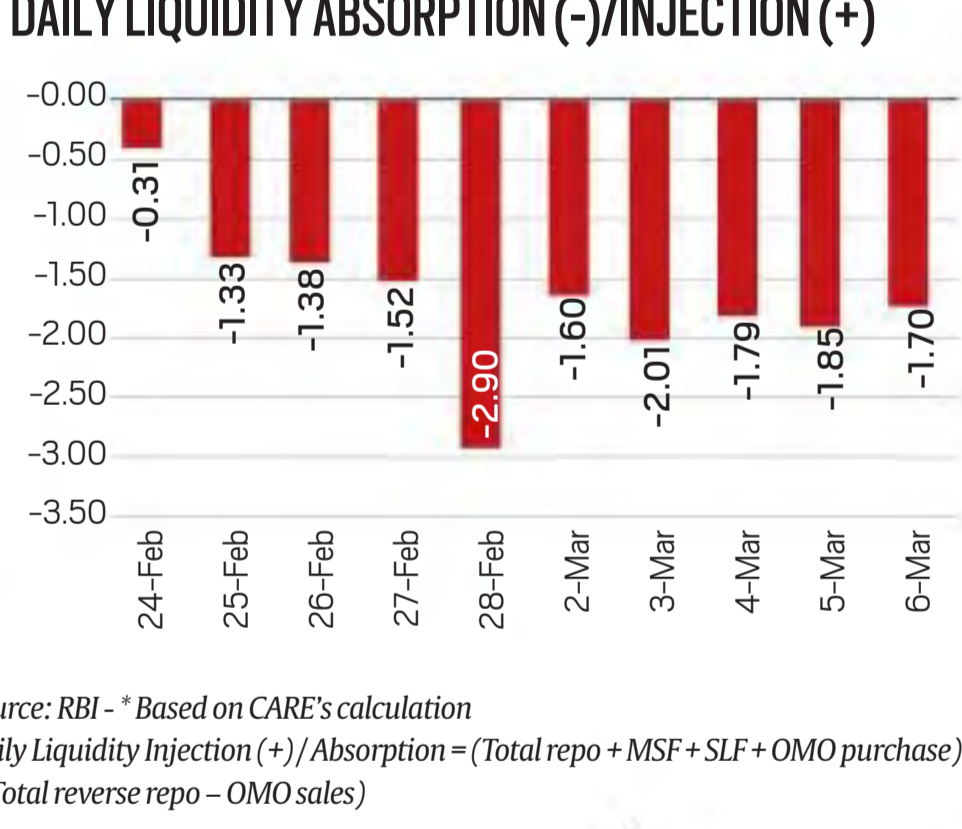
Though surplus liquidity was recorded in the banking system in the previous week, developments in markets around the world have led to a palpable fear of a global slowdown, that can deteriorate to a recession, Care Ratings said in its Liquidity Report for the week ended March 6, 2020

<b>INDIA'S BANKING SYSTEM LIQUIDITY IN SURPLUS:</b> During the week March 2-6, liquidity in the banking system remained in a surplus position. Outstanding liquidity surplus in banking system was nearly ₹3 lakh crore throughout the week ending March 6	have also added to the surplus in the banking system
<b>HIGHER GOVT SPENDING, RBI DOLLAR PURCHASES:</b> Higher government spending and the dollar purchases (cumulative net purchase of \$29 bn or Rs 2.05 lakh crore during April-December, 2019) by the Reserve Bank of India	<b>LTRO OPERATIONS:</b> The auctions of long term repo operations undertaken by RBI totalling Rs 75,084 crore might have partly attributed to the widening of the liquidity surplus in the banking system
	<b>2,300 POINTS:</b> Fall in Indian benchmark SENSEX during the week, with stock indices across the globe falling sharply
	<b>\$1,680:</b> Price of spot gold per ounce



**Lower credit off-take:** The sustained liquidity in the banking system could in part be ascribed to lower credit off-take when compared with the deposit growth

### 0.50%: LEVEL TOWARDS WHICH THE US TREASURY 10-YEAR YIELDS HAVE MOVED



**\$35/barrel:** Level of Brent crude futures, having undergone a steep fall on the back of the coronavirus impact

## IMF: Govts should offer cash transfers, tax relief to ease coronavirus effects

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 9

GOVERNMENT POLICYMAKERS will need to implement "substantial" targeted fiscal, monetary and financial market measures to combat the economic impact from the rapidly spreading coronavirus, International Monetary Fund chief economist Gita Gopinath said on Monday.

In a Gop posting on the IMF's website, Gopinath said her top recommendations involved putting cash directly into the hands of households and businesses. Broad interest rate cuts may instill confidence but would be effective in stimulating activity only once business conditions normalise, she added. "Households and businesses hit by supply disruptions and a drop in demand could be



Gita Gopinath, Chief Economist, IMF

targeted to receive cash transfers, wage subsidies, and tax relief, helping people to meet their needs and businesses to stay afloat," Gopinath wrote.

She cited as an example Italy's decision to extend tax deadlines for companies and a wage supplementation fund to support workers laid off amid quarantines and travel restrictions. South Korea also has introduced wage subsidies for small merchants and in-

creased allowances for homecare and job seekers, while China has temporarily waived social security contributions for businesses, she said.

"For those laid off, unemployment insurance could be temporarily enhanced, by extending its duration, increasing benefits, or relaxing eligibility," she wrote. "Where paid sick and family leave is not among standard benefits, governments should consider funding it to allow unwell workers or their caregivers to stay home without fear of losing their jobs during the epidemic."

Gopinath also said central banks should be ready to provide liquidity to banks and nonbank finance companies, "particularly to those lending to small- and medium-sized enterprises, which may be less prepared to withstand a sharp disruption."

## ANTITRUST HURDLES LOOM

# Aon to buy Willis in \$30-bn insurance mega-deal

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 9

UK-BASED AON Plc said on Monday it would buy Willis Towers Watson for nearly \$30 billion in an all-stock deal that creates the world's largest insurance broker but is almost certain to face regulatory hurdles.

The deal unifies the sector's second and third largest names into a company worth \$76 billion by current share prices and adds scale in a battle with falling margins and challenges ranging from the coronavirus to climate change. "We know each other well and this came together pretty quickly," Aon chief executive officer Greg Case said on a call with analysts, adding that

### First mooted a year ago, the deal between Aon Plc and Willis Towers Watson creates a company that will overtake market leader Marsh & McLennan in terms of value

the deal was motivated by "unmet client needs."

First mooted a year ago, the deal creates a company that will overtake market leader Marsh & McLennan in terms of value. It follows a period of brutal competition that has driven down insurance premiums even as claims continue to rise.

Analysts said that an Aon-Willis deal might have trouble clearing anti-trust hurdles and Aon's shares plunged nearly 11 per cent in pre-market trade, while Willis' shares rose just 3.14 per cent, although both moves came in a market hit heavily by Monday's collapse in oil prices. "The insurers and re-insurers are unlikely to be happy about the deal given the scale of the two players coming together," said analyst Ben Cohen at Investec.

The deal terms state Aon will be obligated to pay a fee of \$1 billion to Willis if the deal were to fall through.

Aon chief financial officer Christa Davies said she was confident of getting all the "necessary approvals" for the deal.

The deal follows other moves to consolidate the global insurance business. Marsh last April sealed its own purchase of British rival Jardine Lloyd Thompson for \$5.7 billion, at the time cementing its position as the biggest global player.

Under the deal, Willis shareholders would receive 1.08 Aon shares, or about \$232 per share as of Aon's Friday close, representing a total equity value of \$29.86 billion.

price on Friday.

When the deal closes, existing Aon shareholders will own about 63 per cent and existing Willis investors will own about 37 per cent of the combined company on a fully diluted basis. The deal is expected to add to Aon's adjusted earnings per share in the first full year of the deal, with savings of \$267 million, reaching \$600 million in the second year, with the full \$800 million achieved in the third year. The deal is subject to the approval of shareholders and regulatory approvals and is expected to close in the first half of 2021.

Aon will maintain its headquarters in London and the combined firm will be led by Aon CEO Case and Aon CFO Davies.



### AT-1 bonds write-down: Yes Bank debenture trustee moves high court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

AXIS TRUSTEE Services Ltd, a debenture trustee of Yes Bank, Monday petitioned the Bombay High Court against the RBI's proposal to write-down additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds. The petition is likely to be taken up for hearing by a division bench of Justices K K Tated and S K Kotwal this week.

The debenture trustee has sought relief against the proposal made by RBI as part of its plan to rescue the private sector lender, which has been put under a moratorium last Thursday.

Meanwhile, Yes Bank's RBI-appointed administrator Prashant Kumar on Monday said he is hopeful of the moratorium on the private sector lender being lifted by Saturday. "We are hopeful that we will be able to work around, where the moratorium will be lifted by this weekend," he said, making it clear that moratorium lift-off and the capital raising plans are "unconnected".

### SBI providing 'unfair public subsidy' to Yes Bank owners: Khemka

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

IN A letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday, IAS officer Ashok Khemka raised several objections to the draft reconstruction scheme for revival of Yes Bank, arguing that State Bank of India (SBI) is providing an "unfair public subsidy" to existing owners of the private lender using the wealth of SBI shareholders.

Calling the protection of existing common equity Tier I capital a "scam", Khemka said the total capital of Yes Bank should be written down permanently, before bringing in public money in any form. "Yes Bank, like IL&FS, DHFL, PMC, is not a case of genuine business loss. The losses are due to fraud by its promoters, directors, management and overlooked by regulators, auditors, credit rating agencies, trustees and other statutory intermediaries," he said, calling for action against such entities. He said licences of auditors,

credit rating agencies and trustees responsible must be suspended or cancelled. "Promoters committing fraud must be declared individually bankrupt and their personal wealth seized to repay creditors and depositors," the bureaucrat suggested. Last Friday, the Reserve Bank of India unveiled a reconstruction scheme under which SBI would be acquiring a 49 per cent equity stake in the Yes Bank, pumping in around Rs 10,000 crore in the troubled lender. The reconstruction plan also includes permanently writing down the Additional Tier 1 capital of Rs 10,800 crore raised by Yes Bank. The RBI, which gave time till Monday for public comments on the draft plan, is hopeful of finalising the reconstruction plan for the private bank by the week's end.

### Ashok Khemka called the protection of existing common equity Tier I capital a "scam"

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## INFY CHAIRMAN ASKED TO MAKE PRESENTATION AT GST MEET Plan resolution for GSTN glitches within 15 days: FinMin to Infosys

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

POINTING OUT the technical glitches faced during peak filing hours of goods and services tax (GST) returns and the "tardy" progress of resolution despite repeated concerns, the Finance Ministry has now asked Infosys to submit a resolution plan within 15 days.

Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani has also been asked to make a presentation in the upcoming GST Council meeting slated for Saturday.

In a letter to Infosys dated March 5, the Ministry said that some of the problems highlighted as early as 2018 are still unresolved and failures month after month lead to genuine taxpayers "getting frustrated".

"It is requested to go through the pending issues, day-to-day disruptions and the future road map and come up with a plan for

### PROBLEMS FROM 2018 YET TO BE RESOLVED

■ In a letter to Infosys dated March 5, the Ministry said that some of the problems highlighted as early as 2018 are still unresolved and failures month after month lead to genuine taxpayers "getting frustrated"

■ Infosys has developed software for GST Network,

the IT backbone of the indirect tax regime

■ The Ministry said that such glitches on the portal lead to an unhealthy tax compliance requirement more so when on account of such disruptions some taxpayers end up becoming liable for payment of late fee and interest

quick resolution within 15 days. Infosys has set high international standards and it is expected that the efficiency which your organisation is known for should be visible in the GST project also," the Ministry said in the letter to the IT company.

Some of the issues highlighted in the letter include multiple cache failure and long period of recovery, configuration issues, ear-

lier pending request to scale up the server capacity, wrong computation of late fee for annual return for financial year 2017-18, wrong credit of transition credit and transition issues to the new GST registration system for union territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The facility for Aadhaar verification of new and existing registrations is also yet to be created,

the letter noted.

The Ministry said even though the GST system has been in operation for the last 30 months, there have been instances of taxpayer complaining about facing issues in filing returns in the last two days of the filing of returns (for GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B).

"It is noticed that MSP (Master Service Provider) M/s Infosys have been repeatedly asked to take timely action and to identify the root cause of issues after each event and taken corrective action. However, the problem still persists," it said.

Infosys has developed software for GST Network, the IT backbone of the indirect tax regime. When contacted, Infosys refused to comment. The Ministry further said that such glitches on the portal lead to an unhealthy tax compliance requirement more so when on account of such disruptions some taxpayers end up becoming liable for payment of late fee and interest.

### 'Quick resolution of Yes Bank crisis to keep sector contagion at bay'

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

GLOBAL RATING agency S&P on Monday said a quick resolution of the Yes Bank crisis will keep India's banking sector contagion at bay but there could be a possibility of wider economic pain in the country as credit markets tighten. Also, any delay in, or uncertainty about, the implementation of the central bank-anchored resolution plan may roil markets, it said, calling for better governance standards at banks.

The RBI on March 5 superseded Yes Bank's board for 30 days on ground of a "serious deterioration" in its financial position and the absence of a viable revival plan. On the same day, the government imposed a moratorium on the bank up to April 3. During this period, the ordinary withdrawal by a depositor of Yes Bank is capped at Rs 50,000.

The central bank then unveiled a draft reconstruction scheme on March 6 for the capital-starved Yes Bank, under which State Bank of India is expected to buy up to 49 per cent in the country's fourth-largest private lender.

### "Many mutual funds hold Yes Bank securities, including subordinated debt and AT-1s. A depreciation in the value of these instruments would hurt credit funds, potentially triggering capital outflows"

S&P GLOBAL RATINGS

"Quick resolution of Yes Bank's insolvency will keep bank-sector contagion at bay, though it poses pain for investors in bank hybrid securities. As credit markets tighten, we also see a possibility of wider economic pain in the country," S&P Global Ratings said.

"Many mutual funds hold Yes Bank securities, including subordinated debt and AT-1s. A depreciation in the value of these instruments would hurt credit funds, potentially triggering capital outflows. This could widen spreads and drain the credit available to lower-rated entities," it added. The report said the government has historically not allowed commercial banks to fail and has in the past swiftly stepped in to address trouble. FE

### 'AT-1 bond exposure of investors to Indian banks at ₹93,000 cr'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, MARCH 9

INVESTORS HAVE total bets of over Rs 93,000 crore on the additional tier-1 bonds in Indian banks and a complete write-down proposed in the Yes Bank restructuring may lead to risk aversion, as per a report by rating agency Icr.

The report comes two days after IndusInd Bank virtually dropped a plan for the issue of the AT-1 bonds by deferring a board meet following the Yes Bank package by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), implementation of which is set to erode investments.

As part of the SBI-led restructuring package announced by the RBI, there is a proposal to write down the entire outstanding on AT-1 bonds, which has been pegged at Rs 8,695 crore by Icr on Monday. Investors have reportedly approached the banking regulator seeking help.

The proposal is "likely to further increase the risk aversion of investors as the investors will factor in a higher probability of write-downs on these bonds", Icr said in the report.

Appetite for future issuances and also the investor base for fu-

### The rating agency said the proposal to write down the entire outstanding on AT-1 bonds is "likely to further increase the risk aversion of investors as the investors will factor in a higher probability of write-downs on these bonds"

ture issuances will take a beating because of the move, it said.

A total of Rs 93,669 crore of AT-1 bonds is outstanding as on date (Rs 84,574 excluding Yes Bank), of which Rs 39,315 crore will be in private banks (Rs 30,620 crore excluding Yes Bank).

The largest outstanding is with SBI at Rs 27,432 crore, followed by ICICI Bank at Rs 10,120 crore, while the immediate call option is coming up for Bank of Baroda on a Rs 400 crore bond, it said. Most of these bonds were issued in 2016-17 and 2017-18 with first call option after fifth year from issuance, which means large bonds are due for call in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

### AS PER INTERIM REPORT RELEASED BY ETHIOPIAN INVESTIGATORS Ethiopian Airlines crash: 'Software pushed jet's nose down four times'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ADDIS ABABA, MARCH 9

SOFTWARE DESIGNED to stop an aerodynamic stall activated four times as Ethiopian Airlines pilots struggled to control their Boeing 737 Max 8 shortly before the jet slammed into the ground on March 10, 2019.

That's one of many findings in an interim report on the crash released Monday by Ethiopia's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau. The report came out just a day before the one-year anniversary of the crash, which killed all 157 people on board.

The report makes safety recommendations and gives clues to the cause, but an analysis won't be done until the final report, which is expected later this year. The software called MCAS pushes the nose of the plane down. That touched off the pilots' desperate struggle to regain control of the plane. The report also blames a faulty sensor reading that led to the cascading events that brought the plane down. And it says that pilots should have received simulator training on what to do if the flight-control system malfunctions.

One of Boeing's biggest selling points for the Max was that it was



US Representative Angie Craig (centre) with Paul Njoroge (right), who lost his wife and three children, as Michael Stumo (left), who lost his daughter, before the start of a House Transportation subcommittee hearing on aviation safety, on Capitol Hill in Washington, on July 17, 2019. AP file photo

essentially the same as older 737s and therefore no simulator training was needed to switch to the new aircraft. Boeing said in a statement Monday that it is providing technical assistance to support the probe. "We look forward to reviewing the full details and formal recommendations that will be included in the final report from the Ethiopian Accident Investigation Bureau," it said.

According to the report, the pilots de-activated MCAS and tried

to control a stabiliser on the tail manually to point the nose back up. But their air speed was 575 miles per hour (925 kilometers per hour), which some experts believe put too much force on the stabilizer, making manual movement nearly impossible.

About five minutes and 43 seconds after takeoff, the pilots apparently reactivated MCAS, and the plane descended despite the pilots exerting force to bring the nose up.

### NCLAT upholds Competition Commission order on Adani Gas for 'abuse of dominant position'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

The NCLAT has upheld the fair trade regulator CCI's order, holding Adani Gas Limited (AGL) "guilty of abuse of dominant position" while supplying piped natural gas to industrial customers in Faridabad.

However, a two-member NCLAT bench headed by Chairperson Justice S J Mukho-

padhaya reduced the quantum of penalty from four per cent of the average annual turnover of the relevant three years to one per cent, observing that it would be "commensurate with and proportionate to the level of proved abusive conduct of AGL".

Competition Commission of India (CCI) had on July 3, 2014 imposed a penalty of Rs 25.67 crore on AGL after finding its Gas Supply Agreement (GSA) had impose unfair conditions on the

complaints of Faridabad Industries Association.

CCI had also directed AGL to cease and desist from indulging in conduct found to be in contravention of the provisions of the Competition Act.

This was challenged by AGL before the NCLAT, which is an appellate authority over the CCI. Faridabad Industries Association, an informant before CCI, also appealed before the tribunal. The National Company Law

Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) found AGL's GSA imposed unfair conditions on industrial customers of Faridabad.

"Having found that AGL, being the only supplier of natural gas and there being no gaseous substitute for the same, we find that AGL abused its dominant position qua the Industrial Customers by imposing unfair conditions upon the buyers under GSA as it existed in original form," the bench said.

### RBI's LTRO for ₹25K cr gets bids worth ₹48,856 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, MARCH 9

THE RESERVE Bank on Monday said it has received Rs 48,856 crore of bids in the fourth long-term reverse repo operation (LTRO) conducted for an amount of Rs 25,000 crore with a 3-year tenor. The RBI received 37 bids in the LTRO with a reversal date on March 7, 2023.

"The total bids that were received amounted to Rs 48,856 crore, implying a bid to cover ratio (i.e., the amount of bids received relative to the notified amount) of 2," RBI said in a release.

It allotted an amount of Rs 25,021 crore, with a pro-rata allotment percentage to 51.18 per cent. Last week, the RBI received Rs 1.719 lakh crore in the LTRO conducted for an amount of Rs 25,000 crore with a 3-year tenor. It conducted two LTROs with three-year and one-year tenors for Rs 25,000 crore each on February 17 and February 24, respectively.

### Twitter, Elliott ink deal to add new 3 directors; Dorsey to remain CEO

SVEA HERBST-BAYLISS & SUPANATHA MUKHERJEE  
BOSTON/BENGALURU, MAR 9

TWITTER INC on Monday reached an agreement with Elliott Management that lets Jack Dorsey stay as CEO and adds three new directors a few days after Elliott's plan to push out the social media company's chief became public.

Elliott's head of US activism, Jesse Cohn, and private equity firm Silver Lake's co-chief executive officer Egon Durban, will join the social media site's board immediately and the company plans to appoint a third new director soon. Silver Lake also will invest \$1 billion in Twitter. The agreement brings together hedge fund Elliott, which owns a \$1 billion stake in Twitter, and Silver Lake in an unusual arrangement that lets Dorsey continue to lead the company, for now, and sidestep a potentially nasty proxy contest. "While our CEO structure is



In reaching the agreement, Elliott Management keeps a close eye on Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey. Reuters file photo

unique, so is Jack and so is this company," Twitter's lead independent director Patrick Pichette said in a statement.

Twitter shares were up about 0.4 per cent on a day of heavy selling on Wall Street. In reaching the agreement, Elliott keeps a close eye on Dorsey while also giving the company more time to formulate long-term plans and repair missteps, people familiar with Elliott's thinking said. REUTERS

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Due date for submission : 30.03.2020  
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GUVNL hereby invites e-tender for purchase of 500 MW RTC power for the period 01-04-2020 to 30-06-2020 at GETCO Periphery (interconnection point of Gujarat STU with CTU) as per Ministry of Power (MoP), Govt. of India Guidelines dated 30-03-2016. RFP will be available at www.mstcecommerce.com from 09-03-2020. Bid has to be submitted online through DEEP Portal of MoP. All terms and conditions shall be as per RFP.  
Date: 10-03-2020 General Manager (Commerce)

**ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION U.T., CHANDIGARH**

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
The Executive Engineer C.P. Division No.6, U.T. Chandigarh invited online the Percentage rate tenders on behalf of the President of India from eligible reputed contractors/agencies fulfilling the eligibility criteria mentioned below which shall be uploaded and received on http://tenders.cnd.nic.in/nicgeep.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Tender Amount	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Last Date of Submission of Bid	Date of Opening of Tender
1.	CONSTRUCTION OF 216 NOS. TYPE-II HOUSES AT CHANDIGARH ARMED POLICE COMPLEX, VILLAGE DHANAS, U.T. CHANDIGARH (COMPOSITE WORK).	a) Civil Component: Rs. 40,99,40,700/- b) PH Services Rs. 5,50,70,920/- c) Electrical Installation: Rs. 1,87,86,233/-	Rs. 58,37,979/-	18 Months	25.03.2020 11.00 A.M.	25.03.2020 12.00 P.M.
		<b>Total: Rs. 48,37,97,853/-</b>				

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer, C.P. Division No. 6, 2nd Floor, Additional Deluxe Building, Sector 9-D, U.T., Chandigarh. Ph. No. 0172-2740094, E-mail: xencp6@gmail.com

### Niti CEO to Trai: Set floor price for phone calls, data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

NITI AAYOG CEO Amitabh Kant on Monday came out in support of fixing minimum rates for mobile calls and data, saying there is no other option due to heavy debt of the telecom sector and unsustainable fall in prices.

At present, telcos are free to decide on call and data rates but due to stiff competition they have sought regulatory intervention.

Mobile subscribers get access to 4G data at a price as low as Rs 3.5 per GB but if the floor price is fixed as demanded by telecom operators, the mobile internet prices will rise 5-10 times from the current level.

Debt-ridden Vodafone Idea has proposed that the minimum price of data should be fixed at Rs 35 per GB, Bharti Airtel has proposed minimum price of Rs 30 per GB for low data users and Reliance Jio wants it to be priced gradually to Rs 20 per GB.

### EU again requests WTO to set up dispute panel against India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 9

THE EUROPEAN Union (EU) has again requested the WTO's trade dispute settlement body to set up panel for a case against India's import duty on certain ICT products like mobile phones and components. India has earlier blocked the first request from the EU for the establishment of a dispute panel.

"Now, this issue of request from the EU for the establishment of a panel will be considered in the next meeting of the dispute settlement body on March 30. This is the EU's second request," an official said. On March 5, India expressed its disappointment with the EU's request for the establishment of a panel as New Delhi believed that consultations held with the EU on May 21, 2019 were constructive and India was able to address the concerns raised by the EU by adequately explaining its measures on tariff treatment on certain goods in the ICT sector.

"Now, this issue of request from the EU for the establishment of a panel will be considered in the next meeting of the dispute settlement body on March 30. This is the EU's second request," an official said. On March 5, India expressed its disappointment with the EU's request for the establishment of a panel as New Delhi believed that consultations held with the EU on May 21, 2019 were constructive and India was able to address the concerns raised by the EU by adequately explaining its measures on tariff treatment on certain goods in the ICT sector.

### BRIEFLY

#### Union Bank cuts MCLR by 10 basis points

Mumbai: Union Bank of India Monday announced reduction in its marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by 10 basis points across all tenors, effective March 11. This is the ninth consecutive rate cut announced by the Mumbai-based bank since July 2019. It reduced one-year MCLR to 8 per cent from 8.10 per cent, according to a release. The overnight MCLR has been revised to 7.55 per cent, while the new one-month rate stands at 7.60 per cent, the bank said.

#### Cognizant names Archana Deskus to board

New Delhi: Cognizant Monday said Archana Deskus has been appointed to its board of directors as independent director. "...on March 5, 2020, Archana Deskus was appointed to its board of directors as a new independent director, effective immediately," Cognizant said. PTI

#### Japan economy shrinks to 7.4% in fourth quarter

Tokyo: Japan's economy shrank more than initially estimated in the fourth quarter, by the most since the 2014 sales tax hike, exacerbating economic fears at a time when the impact of the coronavirus outbreak is in creating recession risks in the world's third-largest economy shrank an annualised 7.1 per cent in the quarter ended December, revised data showed on Monday.

#### Australia sues FB, alleges user data breach

Sydney: The Australian privacy regulator filed a lawsuit against Facebook Inc, accusing the social media giant of sharing the personal details of over 300,000 people with political consultant Cambridge Analytica without their knowledge. The suit sought unspecified damages, adding that each breach of privacy law could draw a maximum penalty of Australian \$1.7 million. REUTERS

#### CP Group to buy Tesco's Thai, Malaysia stores

Bangkok: British supermarket chain Tesco has agreed to a \$10.6 billion deal to sell all its stores in Thailand and Malaysia to companies belonging to the CP Group, Thailand's biggest conglomerate. CP is controlled by the Charavanont family, listed by Forbes magazine as Thailand's richest outside of the country's royal family. AP



## ISRAELI POLITICS

## Limbo time

Binyamin Netanyahu's party has come out on top in Israel's election



Netanyahu's party, Likud, has won the most seats in Israel's parliamentary election—the third in less than a year. But his coalition is three seats short of a majority in the 120-member Knesset (parliament). Reuters

NEVER COUNT out Binyamin Netanyahu. For the past three decades that has been the cardinal rule of Israeli politics. And it was reinforced on March 2nd, when the 70-year-old prime minister pulled off another electoral feat. Mr Netanyahu's party, Likud, has won the most seats (36) in Israel's parliamentary election—the third in less than a year. But his coalition of nationalist and religious parties is three seats short of a majority in the 120-member Knesset (parliament).

The previous two ballots, in April and September last year, failed to produce a government. There is no guarantee that this one will either. But Mr Netanyahu has momentum. When Likud was overtaken by Blue and White, its main rival, as the largest party in September, some wrote Mr Netanyahu's political obituary. More earth was shovelled into his grave when, in November, the attorney-general indicted him for bribery and fraud. Mr Netanyahu, though, hung on, denying any wrongdoing. In December he soundly defeated a challenge to his leadership of Likud. Then he launched a blistering re-election campaign.

Already Israel's longest-serving prime minister, Mr Netanyahu had

plenty to brag about on the stump. He has kept Israel secure, improved ties to Arab states and overseen a growing economy. What is more, President Donald Trump has given him a succession of political gifts: the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the isolation of the Palestinian Authority and, most recently, a peace plan that gives Mr Netanyahu almost everything he wants.

Yet the prime minister's campaign was defined by its dirtiness. Mr Netanyahu questioned the mental health of Benny Gantz, Blue and White's leader and a former military chief of staff (appointed by Mr Netanyahu). He even suggested that Mr Gantz had been blackmailed by the Iranians. Mr Netanyahu's son, Yair, tweeted about alleged infidelity by Mr Gantz. As President Reuven Rivlin, a Likud member, cast his ballot, he lamented that the campaign had declined "to the point of filth".

But Mr Netanyahu also relied on data to target micro-constituencies, such as immigrants, cab drivers and airline employees. He bombarded each with promises, such as telling cannabis-users that he would decriminalise the recreational use of the drug, and delaying a measure

that would make taxi fares more transparent.

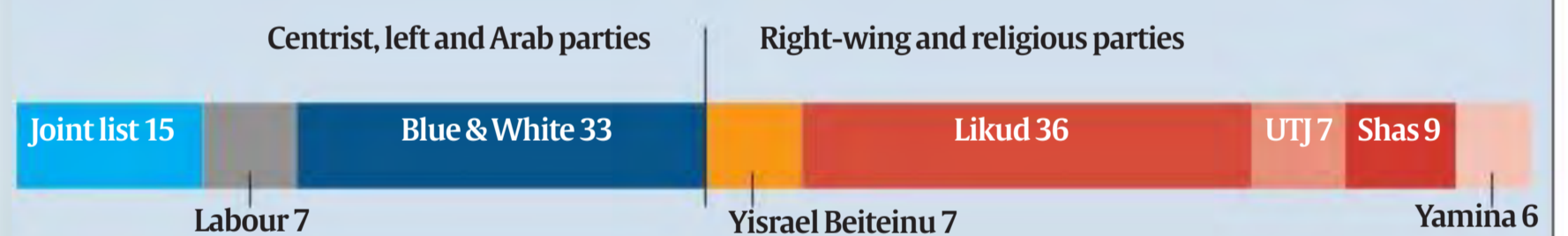
Mr Gantz's strategy was to appeal to "soft-right" voters fed up with Mr Netanyahu's alleged corruption. But this made the party almost indistinguishable from Likud, and many voters stuck to the original. Blue and White won 33 seats, as in September. Left-wing parties suffered. The coalition of Labour, Geshet and Meretz won just seven seats, down from 11 in September. Some of its former voters supported the Joint List, an alliance of predominantly Arab parties, which got 15.

The parties that oppose Mr Netanyahu won a small majority, but are divided. Right-wing members of Blue and White and the nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party refuse to work with the Joint List. So Mr Netanyahu will probably be given the first chance to form a government. If so, the Supreme Court might intervene. It will undoubtedly be

**The parties that oppose Netanyahu won a small majority, but are divided. So Netanyahu will probably be given the first chance to form a government**

## Until next time

Israel's Knesset, number of seats by party and political stance, March 2020 election, 120 seats available



Source: Central Elections Committee

asked to decide whether Mr Rivlin can legally invite someone under criminal indictment to assemble a coalition. Senior members of the opposition are also talking about changing the law in order to ban an indicted politician from forming a government. "Gantz is trying to steal the election," says Mr Netanyahu.

Even if he is given the green light, Mr

Netanyahu has work to do. His coalition won 58 seats, so he needs to peel off three opposition members to get a majority. Alternatively he could cut a deal with Blue and White. During the campaign Mr Gantz ruled out serving under an indicted prime minister. But his poor result might soften his stand. On election night he insisted only that the allegations against Mr Netanyahu be heard in court. The prime minister's trial is due to begin on March 17th (though some in his coalition still hope to grant him retroactive immunity).

The outcome also raises the question of annexation. Mr Netanyahu has prom-

ised to proceed with Mr Trump's peace plan, which allows Israel to apply sovereignty to large parts of the occupied West Bank, including the Jordan Valley. The prime minister has been working with the Americans on how to move forward. He may feel that action needs to be taken before Mr Trump might have to vacate the White House. And becoming the man who brought more of the promised land under full Israeli control would make for an excellent campaign slogan in case a fourth election is required to break the deadlock.

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## THE WAR IN SYRIA

## An ally in need

Why NATO should grit its teeth and help Turkey in Idlib

FEW PLACES on Earth are more miserable than Idlib province, the last big pocket of rebel-held territory in war-torn Syria. It is home to some 3m people, roughly half of whom are there only because they have fled fighting elsewhere. Along with the poor, huddled masses came jihadists, who now largely control the territory. Syria's dictator, Bashar al-Assad, wants it back, even if that means reducing it to rubble. His months-long bombing campaign has destroyed schools, houses and hospitals, and pushed a million people towards Turkey's sealed border. Many are trapped there, cold, hungry and exposed.

The world is at last waking up to this humanitarian crisis—and to the fact that Turkey is the only country trying to stave it off. Fearing another flood of migrants, its president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has sent thousands of troops to Idlib in recent weeks to stop Mr Assad's offensive. Dozens were killed in an attack by Syrian (and perhaps Russian) forces on February 27th, prompting retaliatory strikes from Turkey. But what got the attention of European countries was Mr Erdogan's decision to open Turkey's borders and send refugees streaming their way.

Turkey is crying out for help in Idlib. Its NATO partners should provide it, not only to stop the suffering of desperate Syrians, but also to reinvigorate their faltering alliance.

Some NATO members are reluctant to

**Erdogan sees Vladimir as the man to deal with in Syria—and elsewhere. Putin, in turn, uses Erdogan to divide and weaken NATO. Russia's sale to Turkey of an S-400 anti-aircraft system has deepened the rift between Turkey and its allies**

work with Mr Erdogan. This is understandable. He locks up dissidents, cosies up to Russia, uses refugees as bargaining chips, and is often at odds with NATO. Look no further than Syria, where Turkey has pounded Kurdish fighters, whom it calls terrorists, but whom America regards as allies in the fight against Islamic State. Mr Erdogan sees Vladimir Putin, Russia's president, as the man to deal with in Syria—and elsewhere. Mr Putin, in turn, uses Mr Erdogan to divide and weaken NATO. Russia's sale to Turkey of an S-400 anti-aircraft system, which is incompatible with NATO systems, has deepened the rift between Turkey and its allies.

But Turkey is too important for NATO to abandon. It has the alliance's second-biggest army and sits at the crossroads between west and east. The situation in Idlib, dire as it is,



A Turkish soldier walks near Turkish military vehicles in Hazano near Idlib, Syria, on February 11. Reuters

provides an opportunity to reset relations. Turkey has renewed its call for NATO to patrol a no-fly zone over the province and asked America for Patriot missiles to defend itself against attack. Western leaders are understandably reluctant to put troops on the ground or planes in the air around Idlib. NATO, though, can do more than merely ex-

press solidarity. Promises of more ammunition, humanitarian aid and radar surveillance over Syria are a start. Spain already stations Patriot missiles in Turkey and other European allies should step in. NATO should put its weight behind talks to reach a political settlement over Idlib. And Turkey should insist that some of its allies should be present

at such talks, something Russia rejects.

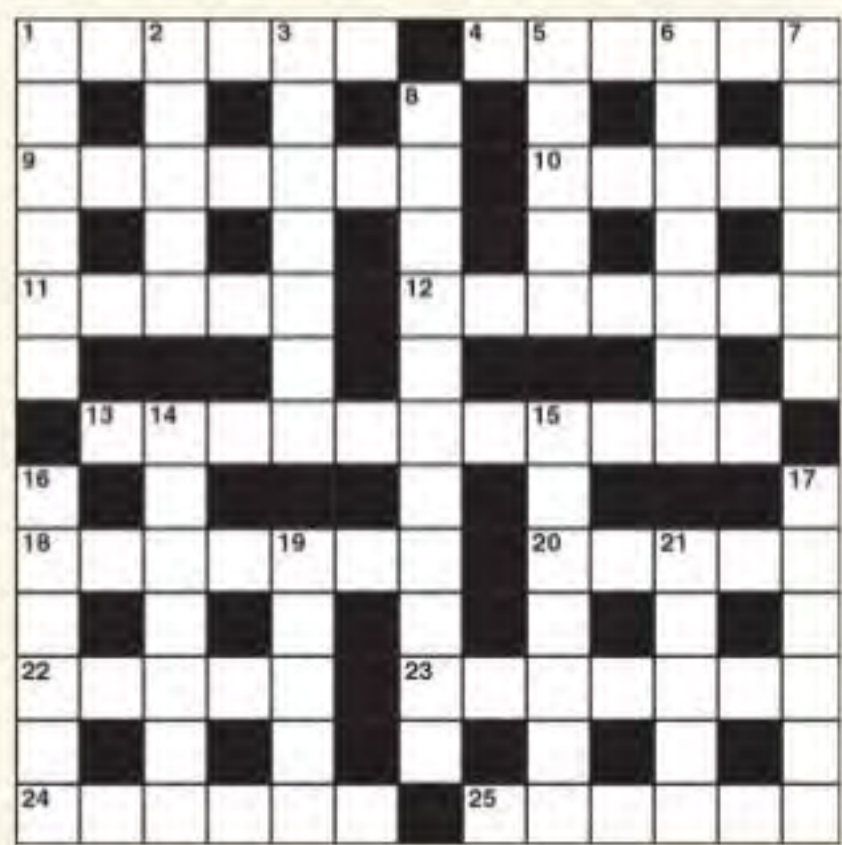
These moves will not completely heal the rift between Turkey and the West, nor will they solve the problem of Idlib, which has been festering for years. But they might restore some of Turkey's faith in its allies and send a message to Mr Putin. The fact that such strategic considerations—and a fear of Syrian

refugees—might motivate Western policymakers more than their concern over struggling Syrians is disheartening. Yet NATO attention would look the same to the people of Idlib whatever its motive. Helping Turkey there would alleviate some of their suffering.

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## CROSSWORD 4062



- ACROSS**
- 1 A motley collection of biblical characters (3,3)
  - 4 A short time back (6)
  - 9 In grave trouble, certainly in a pickle (7)
  - 10 It's a great change for her (5)
  - 11 Perfume from far Oman (5)
  - 12 Ran wild in captivity, causing dreadful loss of life (7)
  - 13 Competent crew showing polite behaviour (4,7)
  - 18 Where incoming mail is also appreciated, no doubt (7)
  - 20 Girl that is unhappy being in the lead (5)
  - 22 Turning point for an oarsman (5)
  - 23 A reptile makes an unusual present (7)
  - 24 Knock out some facts about an aircraft (6)
  - 25 Not open for business, yet clinched the deal (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 John, half-gone on the bottle, is jolly (6)
  - 2 Strange job an instrumentalist may hold (5)
  - 3 Wreck aground despite exercising caution (2,5)
  - 5 Composer of regal variations (5)
  - 6 Opera in revival outdoors (4,3)
  - 7 Temple ornament I'd made wrongly (6)
  - 8 It's clear-cut as a decisive trial (7,4)
  - 14 Prospect denied the introvert? (7)
  - 15 A snuff-taker (7)
  - 16 Fastened securely, but escaped (6)
  - 17 Ran fast when bombarded (6)
  - 19 It is evident Trevor hasn't finished getting up (5)
  - 21 Waste grounds (5)

Solutions Crossword 4061: Across: 1 Recount, 5 Tried, 8 Walking sticks, 9 Ratio, 10 Eremita, 11 Thelma, 12 Assent, 15 Diocese, 17 Expel, 19 White elephant, 20 Yield, 21 Reprisal. Down: 1 Rover, 2 Call the police, 3 Uniform, 4 Tagged, 5 Tithe, 6 Inclined plane, 7 Dessert, 11 Tideway, 13 Sweep up, 14 Teller, 16 Emend, 18 Lotus.

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## JUMBLED WORDS

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

Always imitate the behaviour of the \_\_\_ when you \_\_\_ (7..4)

EIEER      EIOLNN

DMIOS      HOOPSW

SOLUTION: EERIE, MISDO, ONLINE, WHOOPS

**Difficulty Level 2s**  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

**SUDOKU 4145**

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

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 4144**

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

**कार्यालय निदेशक मानसिक स्वास्थ्य संस्थान एवं चिकित्सालय आगरा**  
पत्रांक - IMHH/AGRA/ई-निविदा/2019-20/734 दिनांक 09.03.2020

**CORRIGENDUM**  
अतिअल्पकालीन ई-निविदा

www.etender.up.nic.in को वेबसाइट पर आई.डी. सं-2020\_IMHH\_443922\_1 से PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS & EQUIPMENTS हेतु आमंत्रित तथा दिनांक 07.03.2020 के समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित विज्ञापन में अंकित अर्नेट मनी को धनराशि रु. 50 लाख के स्थान पर उक्त को रु. 50, 500/- पढ़ा जाये। शेष सूचनाएँ पूर्ववत् है।

चिकित्सा अधीक्षक  
मानसिक स्वास्थ्य संस्थान एवं चिकित्सालय, आगरा।

**BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (Irrigation Wing)**

E.O.I. No. 01/2019-20 IMPORTANT NOTICE

Extension in last date of submission of Expression of Interest (EOI)

The last date for submission of EOI for Geophysical Investigation of Beas Dam at Pong has been extended from 9th March 2020 to 3rd April 2020. Timelines for other subsequent activities will change accordingly. The details of EOI are available at BBMB website <http://bbmb.gov.in>. Prospective parties interested in this EOI are requested to regularly visit this website for updation.

Executive Engineer, Pong Dam Division, BBMB, Tahwara Township-144216  
368-PR- Beas Dam-6 For Your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today

**HARYANA IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**  
"NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION"

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Last Date of Receipt of Quotation
1.	Sealed quotation for deploy staff under the outsourcing policy of Haryana for the Year 2020-21.	19.03.2020

For further details visit [www.hid.gov.in](http://www.hid.gov.in).

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
W/S Feeder Division, Rohtak.  
80295/HRV

**TENDER/RFP FOR SERVICES LIKE AMC, HOUSEKEEPING ETC. GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB**  
TENDER REFERENCE NO. 10, DATED- 2020

The Department of Punjab Water Supply & Sewerage Board invites online bids for:

S.No.	Name of Work
1.	Providing, Laying, Cutting, Joining of DI K-7 Pipe at Partap Nagar Vishkarma Mandir Area at Bathinda.

Closing Date & Time for Tender: 30.03.2020 at 03.00 P.M.  
For details log on to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
NOTE: Corrigendum(s) to the Tender/RFP Notice shall be published on the above website only.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer,  
Pb. W/S & Sew Division No. 2, Bathinda.  
D-671/Pb

# NOTICE BOARD CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS



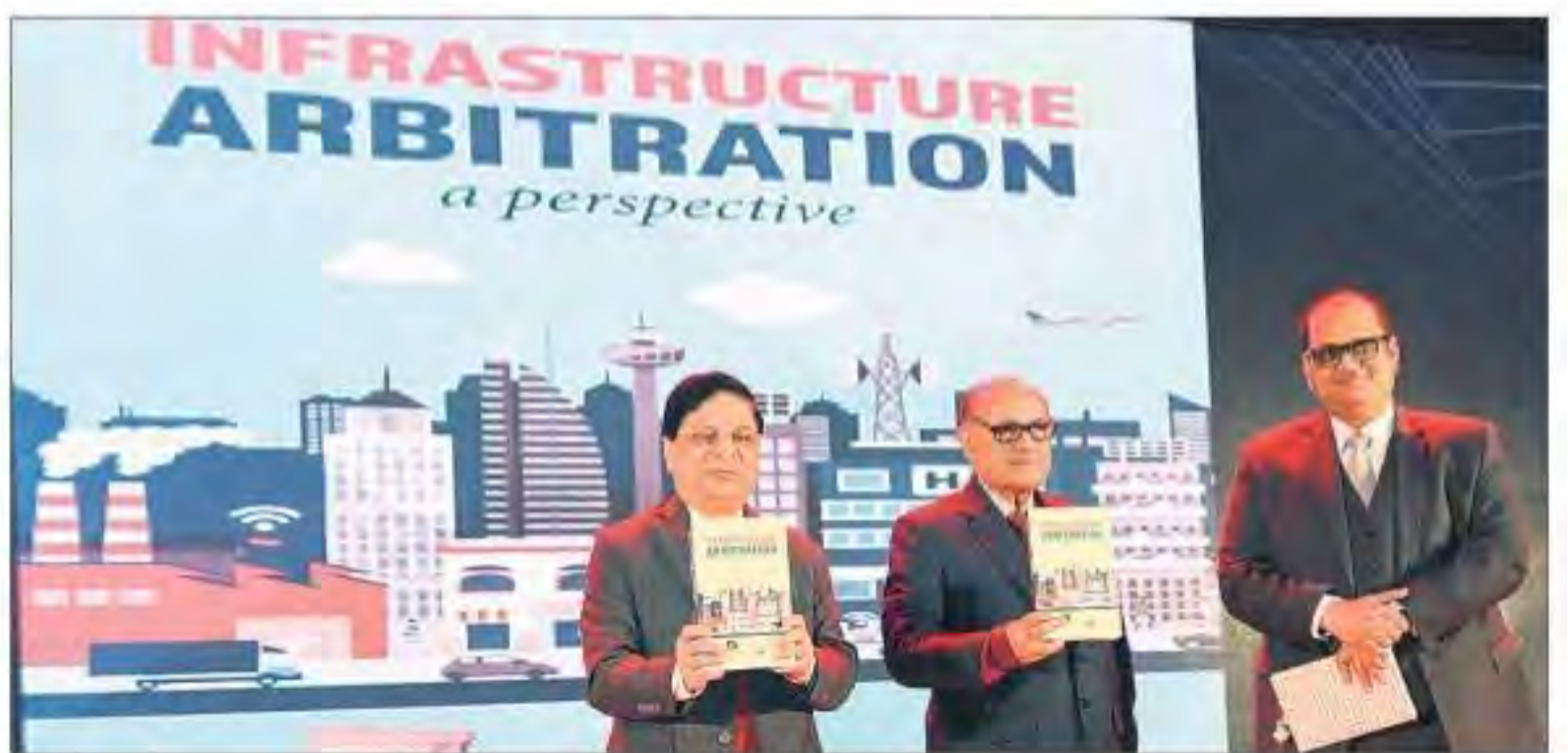
**CELEBRATION-CWC**  
CWC celebrated its 64th Foundation Day, in the presence of Chief Guest Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution; AK Shrivastava, MD; S. Charles, Dir. (Fin.); and RK Sinha, Dir. (Personnel).



**MEETING-NHPC**  
AK Singh, CMD, NHPC, met Jai Ram Thakur, CM, Himachal Pradesh and evinced NHPC's keen interest in taking up new projects in HP. During the meeting, issues regarding execution of NHPC's Hydroelectric Projects were discussed.



**AWARD-PFC**  
SS Rao, Sr. GM (PR), PFC, recently received the prestigious "Hall Of Fame 2020" Award from Basavraj Bommai, Home Minister, Govt of Karnataka and others at the "14th Global Communication Conclave" organised by PRCI.



**BOOK LAUNCH-SINGH AND ASSOCIATES**  
Manoj K. Singh, Founding Partner, Singh & Associates, Advocates and solicitors, is well-known as "an excellent and solution oriented lawyer" and specializes in Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). He is a name to reckon with for large-scale commercial litigation along with domestic and international ADR matters, both ad-hoc and institutional. He is recognized & ranked for Dispute Resolution Practice by Legal 500, Chambers & Partners and such other renowned legal directories. He recently authored his first ever book on "Infrastructure Arbitration - a perspective" (with special emphasis on road projects) which has been published by Lexis Nexis. The book was unveiled by Hon'ble Justice Dipak Mishra, Former Chief Justice of India and Dr. Lalit Bhasin, President Society of Indian Law Firms and President, Bar Council of India during "Quest 2", an in-house conference which brought together leading experts from the legal fraternity, in-house counsel to share their insights, knowledge and views on Arbitration: Legal Insights and Updates'. The book primarily gives a detailed view about the Infrastructure Arbitration and all the aspects related thereto. Looking at the large-scale infrastructure development scenario, the disputes in the sector are also taking an important seat. In Infrastructure sector all the circumstances cannot be contemplated by the parties in the beginning of the contract and perhaps that is the primary reason for the dispute due to interpretation of the contract, deviation, Right of Way (ROW) related issues etc.



**MOU-EPCH**  
EPCH and TMU, Moradabad, recently signed a MoU to collaborate for MBA Courses with specialization in Handicrafts Export Management. RK Verma, ED, EPCH, was present during the MoU signing in the presence of other officials.



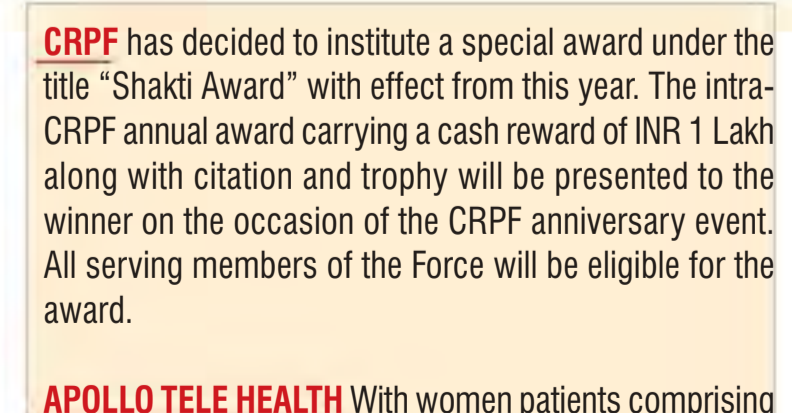
**CSR-PRPC**  
SK Tripathi, GM (A&W,CC&CSR), PRPC and Hema Sharma, Deputy Commissioner, Panipat and President of district Red Cross Society, Panipat, recently signed a MoU for Setting up BCSU for Red Cross Blood Bank.



**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY-IREDA**  
IREDA organised International Women's Day celebration with a health talk by Dr. Anita Malik (Consultant, Radiation Oncologist) at its Corporate Office, New Delhi. Dr. P. Sreenivasan, GM (HR & CSR), IREDA was also present.



**CEREMONY-ITPO**  
Recently, Rajesh Agrawal, Executive Director, ITPO, presented the Gold Medal to APEDA at AAHAR 2020 - the International Food & Hospitality Show, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.



**RESULT-INTERNATIONAL TRACTORS LTD**  
International Tractors Ltd, India's youngest and fastest-growing tractor company, registered growth of 5.8% in exports with sales of 1595 tractors in Feb'20 as compared with 1507 tractors same period last year.

**HANDLOOM EXPO 2020 - DIRECTORATE OF I&C**  
National Handloom Expo 2020 was recently inaugurated at IGNC. The event was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Shri Immatiba, Advisor, Industries & Commerce, Labour & Employment, Skill Dev & Entr, Govt. of Nagaland.

**INITIATIVE-LIC**  
LIC recently launched an Online & Paperless process of Completion of Policies of Micro Insurance, thereby extending its digital reach to promote financial inclusion of the financially weaker sections of the society.



# 19 TALK

ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD



## A PIECE TO KEEP

The wooden stage from a Liverpool venue, where The Beatles performed before they rocketed to fame, and Paul McCartney's scribbled notes for a studio recording of *Hey Jude* are among the 300 items, which will be auctioned in New York in April.

## SNAP SHOTS



### From the Masters

THE 8TH Habib Rahman Memorial Lecture Series at Jamia Millia Islamia last week brought together architects from various disciplines. One of India's early modernists, Rahman's designs in Kolkata and New Delhi have been embedded in the history of Indian architecture as examples of fine architecture. Among the speakers were Rahman's son, photographer Ram, architect-planner Charanjit Shah, green building exponents Zeenat Niazi and Neha Koul, and landscape architects Akshay Kaul and Sujata Hingorani. Architect and urban designer Nishant Lall spoke of how "understanding the architecture and the science of the city" was important to renewal projects. Freddie Ribeiro, known for infrastructure projects in cities such as Bengaluru, Goa, Sikkim and Dehradun, said, "Once you know what your master plan is, and you bring in landscape in it, you need to go down to the person who is actually going to live here, work here, entertain himself here... so there is a kind of back and forth from user's point of view to your planning." Qamar Irshad, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Jamia Millia Islamia, one of the organisers of the event said, "The event shows how contemporary Indian architecture is very different from its colonial past. It is meant for students to learn from it."

GAFIRA QADIR & ZENAIRA BAKHSI



### Virus Scare

ACTOR CHRIS Hemsworth (pictured) has called off his India visit due to the coronavirus scare. The *Thor* star was supposed to promote his upcoming Netflix film *Extraction*, where he plays a black market mercenary, who rescues the kidnapped son of an international crime lord. The film, predominantly set in the Indian sub-continent, has actor Randeep Hooda playing a key role in the film.



### Falling Out

STEPHEN KING (pictured) has hit out at the publishing house Hachette over its decision to drop publication of filmmaker Woody Allen's memoir after a protest from his son, journalist-author Ronan Farrow. "I don't give a damn about Mr Allen. It's who gets muzzled next that worries me," he wrote on Twitter, affirming concerns of censorship among writers.

# 'I've faith in obtaining the unattainable'

The indefatigable Irrfan on *Angrezi Medium*, his unconditional love for his sons, and the futility of Friday fears

## ALAKA SAHANI

ACTOR Irrfan, 53, has been kept away from theatres for about two years by what he refers to as "unwanted guests" in his body. This Friday marks the return of one of India's finest actors to the big screen with the release of *Angrezi Medium*, a heart-warming tale of a father-daughter relationship. On March 16, 2018, Irrfan shared the shocking news of being diagnosed with neuroendocrine tumour, a rare type of cancer. Almost a year later in the first half of 2019, the actor, who has given us classics such as *Maqbool* (2003), *Life of Pi* (2012) and *The Lunchbox* (2013), shot for *Angrezi Medium* in between his treatment. In a recent recorded message, Irrfan regretted not being able to be part of the promotions of this movie which is made "with so much love". Yet, the consummate professional that he is, Irrfan responded to our questions via email. Excerpts:

**Each of your messages in public, ever since your illness was detected, is infused with gentle humour and optimism. *Angrezi Medium* is about a father's desperate attempt to fulfil his daughter's wish. How closely do you relate to this?**

You know what's worse than one's fear of death? To live and be dead. I relate to everything which works against the odds. I have faith in miracles and I have faith in obtaining the unattainable with undying spirit. And the father in this film represents that undying spirit.

**You have played the role of a father in many movies earlier such as *Qissa*, *Paan Singh Tomar*, *Hindi Medium*. What makes this story special?**

Husband, wife, daughter, son, uncle, aunt are names of relationships. But the relationship doesn't determine all the men who are fathers or all the women who are wives. Each story is different as it plays out as the situations are different and in its own way, each is special or I wouldn't do them.

**You have been spending more time with your sons and family. Have you discovered new things about each other?**

I am spending all my time with them whenever I am in India. They have bloomed and are blooming. I have discovered also how my unconventional parenting has finally paid off. I have never been a strict father and just loved them unconditionally and that's the mantra. I have consciously cultivated no-expectation policy from my children, and that makes us all happy.

**When you look back, what does cinema and acting mean to you? Can a Friday release ever be treated merely as yet another movie release?**

Once upon a time, a very young Irrfan wanted to have name, fame and money. But slowly it changed to stories (that needed) to be told, moments to be lived,



**I have never been a strict father... I have consciously cultivated no-expectation policy from my children, and that makes us all happy**

IRRFAN  
ACTOR

memories to be with you, immaterial of material things. This Friday release is a burden we have been carrying on our shoulders for far too long. The success of a film is never a single factor. Yes, one can't deny the repercussions. But at the end of the day, after a film is released, can you change a thing? No. Then, we all must learn to live with it and not die of anxiety.

**The day before *Angrezi Medium's* trailer launch, you mentioned in your message, "you are there and you are also not there with us (main aaj aapke saath hoon bhi aur nahin bhi)". Has this unexpected challenge given you a different perspective about life, the world we live in and the dreams we pursue?**

Of course, it has, it's the micro mechanism of life you touch now. You have looked at life with a new relaxed eye without hurry and anxiety. At least, that's what I try. There is this realisation that perhaps you don't control a thing. The time with a capital 'T' has become magnetic and wondrous.

**You are someone who has always been aware of what's happening around. Have you been taking time out to watch movies, read or keep up with news?**

I stopped for a while and took a complete break from structure — be it movies or books. I just floated and watched myself, discovering, coming to terms with myself. Now, I am slowly getting back — watching mostly, reading a little less.

# When West is Right

Rapper Naezy on his new album *Maghreb* and why being from the street is not 'cool'

## PARTH KHATAU

AFTER HIS success with *Gully Boy* (2019), hip-hop and rap sensation Naved Shaikh aka Naezy returns with his new album *Maghreb*. He talks about the current political climate and the odd Taylor Swift track on his playlist. Excerpts:

**After your hiatus in 2018, you returned with your single *Aafat wapas*, which got six million views on YouTube. Tell us about your latest album, *Maghreb*.**

*Maghreb* literally translates from Urdu as 'West'. Even though I am so inspired by the West, my roots are here. So I am kind of stuck between the West and the East. Also my city Mumbai belongs to the west of India. The origins of hip hop belong to the West, so I represent that.

I started writing the songs after the break in mid-2019. One song, *Khamakha*, is about how people on the streets are crying more and laughing less. People today are more into their own troubles and not enjoying life. Then there are songs that touch on my personal life, and issues from the street. After watching *Gully Boy* everyone thought that being from the street is cool but I want to put it out there that it's not. People don't get meals on the table or clean drinking water. I have always been a conscious rapper and have used my music to talk about women's safety and politics.

**What's your take on the current political scene in the country?**

Things have been happening in India for a long time and I don't see the political climate changing. In the title song of *Maghreb* too, there is a line that says *Kal tak jo ladke goli chala re the, aaj desh chala re toh kya kare*.



Rapper Naezy

But mind you, I am not pointing at anyone in particular. I let my music do the talking and I will tweet sometimes, but that's it.

**What's on your playlist?**

I listen to a lot of hip hop, jazz, blues and Indian classical music. I am into old school Bollywood, and '90s Bollywood, but I also listen to Taylor Swift. It's kind of hard to believe... I used to love her and when I share this with my rapper friends they laugh at me. But she's good, especially her song *Love Story*, it used to be my favorite at one time.

**What are your plans for the future?**

It looks very exciting. Some more albums, international collaborations, tours, music videos are all in the pipeline.

# The Red Carpet

Conversations around India's hotel industry dominated the book launch of *From Oberoi to Oyo*

## SURBHI GUPTA

IT WAS the title of the book that piqued the interest of many and a clarification on the same kicked off the launch of journalist Chitra Narayanan's *From Oberoi to Oyo* (Penguin, Rs 399), where she charts the journey of the Indian hotel industry and the challenges thrown at it by the entry of various disruptors. "Oberoi was up-set over the association with Oyo but one has to understand that whatever association your brand holds, it is in context

of something current. But their disapproval comes from a place of incumbency and they don't see it the same way," said Narayanan. "Though Taj was the first hotel in the country and is a much older chain, Oberoi can be considered the first hoteliers of the country, as the Tatas are a conglomerate and had other businesses." The event was held in Delhi's India International Centre last week.

An engaging conversation revolving around the hospitality industry, hotel models and modes of doing business dominated the evening. The panel,



Chitra Narayanan (extreme right) at the launch with other panelists; the book cover

moderated by Dilip Puri, Chairman, Indian School of Hospitality, had Aman Nath, Founder and Chairman, Neerana Hotels, Aditi Balbir, CEO and Founder, V Resorts, and the author in discussion. It was while covering the hospitality industry over the years

for various financial publications in the country that Narayanan noticed the evolution and disruption it was facing. The entry of foreign chains, companies like Oyo, online travel agents, and young start-ups that changed the course of business got her to look at the industry with a deeper view.

"I saw a lot of older chains did not keep up with the changing times and wanted to look into the future. A lot of foreign chains I spoke to were aware of the new players like Airbnb, understood the disruption and were trying out new things but I thought the Indian chains were slow. But over the course of the book, I saw Taj being experimental with introducing the mid-market hotel chain Ginger and brand segmentation with Vivanta," she says.

The evening saw veterans discuss how hotels are built over time and if there is an Indian standard of hoteliering or one should follow the West, and how the buzz word these days is "experiential".

# Bridging the Gap

Academic and queer rights activist Anish Gawande on how publisher Popular Prakashan's foundation created a unique collection that bridged art, literature and theory

## BENITA FERNANDO

FROM 2005 to 2012, publishers Popular Prakashan were on a mission to invigorate India's art scene by sponsoring "art camps". Through their visual arts initiative, Foundation B&G, the publishers flew artists to locations across India and the world — Goa and Kashmir in India, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and Mexico. They concluded the series of art camps with a staggering 350-plus collection. Anju Dodiya, Rekha Rodwitiya, Laxma Goud, Bose Krishnamachari and Brinda Miller were among those who were part of these camps. A selection of 52 works from the collection are now on display at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, in an exhibition curated by aca-

demic, queer rights activist and Rhodes Scholar Anish Gawande, 23.

"This is a unique art collection by a publishing house, and a Marathi publishing house at that. Some of these artists were travelling abroad for the first time. Art theorists like Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania were travelling with them. This wasn't just a free trip abroad, but a reflective space," says Gawande.

In the last 95 years, Popular Prakashan has brought out notable titles in Marathi and English by authors such as Romila Thapar, Bhalchandra Nemade, Vijay Tendulkar, Jayprakash Narayan and Amol Palekar. It has been associated with other companies, such as Encyclopedia Britannica and children's magazine Chandamama.

Set up as Popular Book Depot in 1924 by



(From left) Works by Manu Parekh; Veer Munshi; Anish Gawande Sakshi Gallery

Ganesh R Bhatkal in Mumbai, the company became Popular Prakashan Pvt Ltd after Ganesh's sons Sadanand and Ramdas took over the reins in 1962. The publishing house is currently run by Harsha Bhatkal, Ramdas' son, who initiated the art camps.

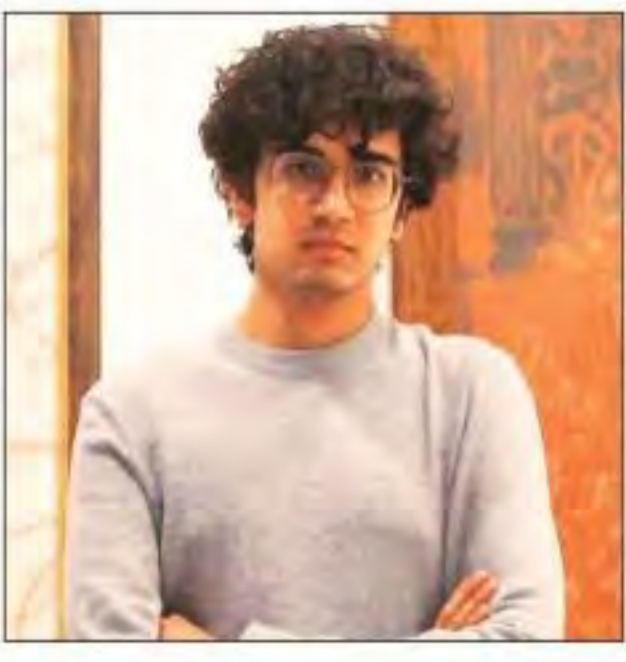
Gawande has titled the exhibition "Katarvel: Journeys Into the Foundation B&G Collection". Loosely translated, *katarvel* means dusk, when the day cuts into night, a time for nostalgia. Most people who have visited the exhibition have found it hard to pro-



(From left) Works by Manu Parekh; Veer Munshi; Anish Gawande Sakshi Gallery

nounce the Marathi word, laughs Gawande. He says, "It's an invitation and a challenge to engage. This is a white cube space but the first thing you see is this huge Marathi word. It establishes that you are in a multilingual space."

True to this nature, the exhibition brings together artists with a variety of visual vocabularies. It also points out how art and publishing influenced each other, such as Sudhir Patwardhan's painting *Homage to Marathi Theatre* that became the cover art for a Popular Prakashan book on Marathi theatre



(From left) Works by Manu Parekh; Veer Munshi; Anish Gawande Sakshi Gallery

by Makarand Sathe titled *Marathi Rangbhoomichya Tees Ratri*. Gawande has also added a reading space, with Popular Prakashan titles on poetry, politics, theatre, criticism, and, of course, art. Many of these books are last editions and out of print now.

One of the biggest successes of the camps, says Gawande, was to provide artists with the space to think of possibilities beyond their commercial successes. A work by Atul Dodiya, not the largest in the exhibition, has a white bull made in the Tyeb Mehta's style.

Dodiya was at camp in Turkey in 2009 when the news of Mehta's passing away reached him. Once he was back home, he made *Dancing Dervish & Trussed Bull*. He set three twirling dervishes in marble dust, wrote the names of the 14 artists who attended the camp in Arabic and thus paid homage to his late friend. Dodiya could have given any work to Foundation B&G, but he chose to give this particular one, Gawande says. "It shows how intimate it all was."

The first-time curator was drawn to the Foundation B&G collection in a personal capacity. Not only does he live in the same lane as the Bhatkal family in Prabhadevi, but the Foundation B&G's collection came as an affirmation for the work Gawande does with the Dara Shikoh Fellowship, a cross-disciplinary residency programme he founded five years ago. "We have separated art, literature, theatre, film, academia. But this exhibition was an attempt to break that. The collection had its faults — the representation of women and the marginalised is not here — but it still creates the conversation between art, literature and theory. And, as I have seen with the works in this collection, art is not just about the market," he says.

*Katarvel: Journeys Into the Foundation B&G Collection is at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, till March 31*



You listen to (an) American talk, that is something we hear always, you play for five days and sometimes you don't have a winner, that could be a little bit of (an issue). A winner in every game should be possible."

BRIAN LARA, WINDIES GREAT IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT DURATION OF TESTS AS LONG AS THEY PRODUCE RESULTS

## BRIEFLY

## SA players likely to avoid customary handshakes: Boucher

The South African cricketers could avoid the customary handshakes during their stay in India, head coach Mark Boucher has said as the number of reported positive coronavirus cases in the country crossed 40 on Monday. "With regards to handshakes and type of stuff that's concern, so it will probably be fine if we do the same if it comes to that. I think it's a way to stop anything from happening to our guys," Boucher told the media during his pre-departure press conference when asked about shaking hands with the opposition team's players. "I think it's out of respect for players around you and not to pass on something that you might have," the former Proteas stumper added. South Africa went ahead with the tour only after their medical and security team gave a go-ahead after doing a risk assessment. "Look we have a security staff and if we have medical concerns, we give it to them and they come up with recommendations. If they think it's too dangerous, they will pull us out and they are no different," he said.

## Lanka name squad for England Tests

Sri Lanka on Monday named a 16-member squad, including two injured players, for the two-match Test series against England starting next week. Sri Lanka Cricket said Kusal Perera was included in the squad even though the injury-hit wicket-keeper may only be fit to play in about two weeks. Another injured player, Wanidu Hasaranga, was also included in the squad despite never having played at that level before. A replacement for Hasaranga will be named before the first Test against England on March 19 in Galle. **SQUAD:** Dimuth Karunaratne (captain), Oshada Fernando, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dinesh Chandimal, Kusal Perera, Dhananjaya de Silva, Niroshan Dickwella, Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Dilruwan Perera, Lasith Embuldeniya, Lakshan Sandakan and Wanindu Hasaranga

## 'Start women's IPL from next year'

Sumil Gavaskar feels that time is appropriate to set the ball rolling for a full-fledged Women's Indian Premier League to unearth more talented players after the national team was outplayed in the T20 World Cup final by defending champions Australia. "To Sourav Ganguly and the BCCI, I would like to say, maybe next year, look at having a women's IPL because that will unearth a lot more talent. There is already a lot of talent which we see and that will come to the fore with this performance of this Indian team throughout this tournament," he told 'India Today'. "Even if there are not 8 teams, a women's IPL will make a lot of sense. There will be a lot more exposure for women. A lot more talent, which is there but we don't know at the moment will come to the fore. And then, as the years go by, Indian women's team will start winning a lot more trophies." **AGENCIES**

## Pujara ill, Saurashtra worried

Hosts on tenterhooks after batting star walks off due to bad throat, Bengal bounce back with timely strikes in Ranji final

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
RAJKOT, MARCH 9

CHETESHWAR PUJARA'S illness, the pitch, Anustup Majumdar's injury, and a ball change were the highlights of an engrossing opening day of the Ranji Trophy final. Everybody was waiting for Pujara to walk out when Saurashtra's second wicket fell at 113 in the 49th over on an interesting pitch, but the India Test specialist didn't. He only emerged in the final session after the fourth wicket fell at 182. A throat infection overnight had turned to dizziness and fever and Pujara, who was seen padded up during the national anthem before start of play, not only batted late but retired hurt after facing 24 balls when he began to feel feverish again.

The Saurashtra camp believes that Pujara will come out to bat on the second day – at 206 for 5, they need a special from their star as a score of 350 in the first innings on this low-slow pitch, where bowling within the line of the stumps seems an effective strategy, could put great pressure on Bengal. Incidentally, the visitors would be sweating over their middle-order batsman and crisis man Anustup Majumdar after he suffered a painful blow to his left thumb, and coach Arun Lal admitted it doesn't look good.

At tea, despite Pujara's illness, Saurashtra would have felt they were on their way to their usual bundle of tricks at Rajkot. They had reached 155 for 2 on a pitch that blunted the Bengal pacers to an extent and their own seamers, led by skipper Jaydev Unadkat, had intimate knowledge of what works on such tracks which are also likely to take turn later.

Things progressed satisfactorily for them on resumption of play in the final session but it all turned in the 65th over. The umpires relented to the complaints from the bowlers that the ball had gone out of shape and changed it with a suitably-old replacement. This one provided some conventional movement and Bengal swooped in, buoyed also by Pujara's return to the pavilion. Akash Deep got one to move back in and Vishvarajsinh Jadeja, who was batting on 54, hung back and left a bat-and-pad gap for the ball to crash his stumps. Jadeja had batted well until then, showing intent to score. He slammed three fours off left-arm spinner Shadab Ahmed, who bowled 23 overs, and pulled Ishan Porel.

Saurashtra had batted cautiously at the start, reaching 77 without any loss in 35 overs at lunch. No one outside the Saurashtra camp had known about Pujara's illness as it was a developing situation inside the dressing room.

Openers Harvik Desai and Avi Barot soldiered on though Bengal did relieve both of them. It was in an attempt to catch Desai on 22 that Majumdar hurt himself, a situation that could come back to really hamper Bengal. Pujara came to bat after Sheldon Jackson was trapped lbw by a nip-backer from Bengal's spearhead Ishan Porel. Pujara whipped a four off his legs but called the physio after 24 balls. He had a sip of water, chatted briefly with the physio before walking back. Akash Deep soon prised out next man Chetan Sakaria.

Once they sussed out the pitch, the Bengal bowling got better – they started to attack the stumps and got some movement in the final session. Also, a bit of variable bounce was already on offer. Batting could be hard work, if not downright tricky, as the game progresses and home advantage, the familiarity and knowledge of how to bowl and bat on this surface, could come really handy. Especially, if Bengal do end up losing Majumdar, who has been their main troubleshooter this season.

The game was poised nicely at stumps. Would Pujara be fit enough to drag them towards 350, another almost 150 runs more for the last five wickets, and allow his bowlers to attack Bengal on this pitch?



Pacer Akash Deep was Bengal's standout bowler with three wickets. PTI

## Pitched battle: No spice, just a garnish of dhaniya

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MARCH 9

THERE IS a saying in the Mumbai dressing room about the nature of the pitch at Rajkot. "Don't be fooled by how it looks, it's just dhaniya (coriander) sprinkled on top to hide the real danger underneath". It would look good to naked eye, sometimes some grass can also be seen, but dents would soon mushroom, the pitch would play slow and the ball start keeping low, and turn later.

Arun Lal, Bengal's coach, was left fuming about the pitch at stumps on opening day of the Ranji final. "Poor" was his most go-to word, "disgrace" too popped up in his ire. The pitch looked flat initially but as the day progressed it started to wither and produced low bounce.

Rajkot curators can produce all tracks: a complete batting paata, a rank turner, or something like the they have served up for the final – a slow, low strip that rewards bowlers' patience when they keep it fairly straight and help turn later.

This is what Lal said: "Very poor, it's a very poor wicket. The board has to look into it, this is not good for cricket. The ball is not getting off the thing, its dusting the first day," Lal said. "It's not necessary to have the final on neutral venue but the board has neutral curators and the board should look into it. Send your curators 15 days before, even [neutral] curator has not done a good job. It would be disgrace if the ball start rolling through on the third day." The people who have worked on the



Very poor wicket. The board has to look into things like these. The ball is not coming up. This is not good for cricket. The ball is not getting off, it is dusting, reversing. Very poor... You have got neutral curators. The board should look into it. Send your curator 15 days before the game. Even the curator has not done a good job"

ARUN LAL, BENGAL COACH

pitch offer a couple of reasons for the state of the surface. Firstly, a lack of preparation time due to the first semi-final between Saurashtra and Gujarat that ended on March 4th. With the final starting on the 9th, they just had four days. The final is being played on a fresh pitch in the square but because of the semi-final, they couldn't work on it. There was a neutral pitch curator from Karnataka but the situation of the semi-final wasn't conducive to the preparation.

Secondly, they didn't water the pitch the last two days, this newspaper has learnt. They watered on the first two days, after the semi-final ended, and let it breathe on the two days leading up to the final. The experts reckon that the lack of sufficient watering was probably to ensure that cracks open up soon – a home association doing its thing.

Rajkot pitch alchemists also have history, that probably has also led to few tongues wagging. Some in the know talk about the

curators haven't exactly remained "neutral" in the past. Not that pitch-tweaking is restricted to them; most associations around the country do. As do the national teams.

Saurashtra curators in the past have been quite efficient tweakers. Stories have been told about how they can alter just a specific part of the pitch – a rough patch that would develop on a good length – to suit the likes of Ravindra Jadeja or whoever was their main spinner in games. Three years back, a local curator had explained the methodology. The trick is pretty simple. Water on good-length areas, let it soak in to 2mm depth, and just wait for the potion to do its bit. Those areas go softer in couple of days and an odd boot pressed on it on the first day would dent it enough to produce decent rough to aim for their bowlers.

It would be interesting to see how the track continues to play in the final. Saurashtra would wish to get to 350 if possible, and squeeze in the pressure on Bengal.

SCORECARD >>  
Saurashtra vs Bengal

Ranji Final | Rajkot | Toss: Saurashtra

SAU 1ST INNS 206/5 IN 80.5 OVS

H Desai c sub b Ahmed 38 (111b, 5x4)

A Barot c Saha b Akash Deep 54 (142b, 6x4)

V Jadeja b Akash Deep 54 (92b, 7x4)

A Vasavada not out 29 (94b, 3x4)

S Jackson lbw b Porel 14 (15b, 3x4)

C Pujara retired hurt 5 (24b, 1x4)

C Sakariya c Saha b Akash Deep 4 (8b, 1x4)

■ Extras: (b 1, lb 5, nb 1, w 1) 8

Fall of wickets: 1-82 (Harvik Desai, 37.5 ov),

2-113 (Avi Barot, 48.1 ov), 3-163 (Vishvaraj

Jadeja, 65.3 ov), 4-182 (Sheldon Jackson, 68.6

ov), 5-206 (Chetan Sakariya, 80.5 ov)

■ Bowling:

I Porel 16-5-37-1

Mukesh Kumar 22-3-55-0

Shahbaz Ahmed 23-6-56-1

Akash Deep 14.5-3-41-3

A Nandi 5-1-11-0

## COACH, ANALYST, COMMUNICATOR

## Defeat in final can't undermine Raman's work with women's team

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
MARCH 9

THERE'S NO shame in losing to Australia, the unquestionable numero uno in women's cricket and now the five-time world champions in the shortest format. But defeat in the final notwithstanding, India could bring home a lot of positives from their campaign in the Women's T20 World Cup.

They won all their group league matches, including a victory against Australia, and all along, Harmanpreet Kaur and her team gave enough indication that they have been upwardly mobile. From behind the scenes, WV Raman has made a telling contribution to the team's progress; from nurturing young talent like Shafali Verma to bringing back stability in the dressing room. And Deep Dasgupta, who knows Raman from close quarters, is not at all surprised.

"He (Raman) is a fabulous coach. He does not over-coach. He stays in the background, he is always there for you... He is technically very strong, but he will come in only when you require him," Dasgupta, a former India stumper who also led Bengal to back-to-back Ranji Trophy finals in 2005-06 and 2006-07, told *The Indian Express*.

"He (Raman) is not someone who talks a lot, because he is a support staff. That's the

whole idea of coaching. But he gives you the confidence that you are being looked after and you are not alone. And he gives you the freedom to express yourself," Dasgupta adds, explaining how as a young cricketer he benefited from the association with Raman during he latter's first stint as Bengal coach in 2001.

"One thing I learnt from him is that your talent and performance can vary, but discipline is non-negotiable."

Raman took charge of the Indian women's team at a time of ferment. Things had turned ugly after the 2018 World T20, where India had lost to England in the semifinal. After being left out of the playing XI for that match, Mithali Raj had accused then women's team coach Ramesh Powar of discrimination and bias. She had taken her protest to the BCCI through a letter as well. Just hours after the semifinal exit, Mithali's manager had hit out at captain Harmanpreet via a tweet, which she later deleted.

During the interviews in December 2018, the ad-hoc Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) comprising Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy asked the coaching aspirants about their methods to win over the dressing room. Raman trumped 28 candidates to get the job. Ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup this year, when Raman was asked about the dressing-room atmosphere, he spoke about how the team was united to win



WV Raman has made a telling contribution to the team's progress, from nurturing young talent like Shafali Verma to bringing back stability in the dressing room. BCCI

matches for India. Player-management is a delicate issue in women's sport. Former Bengal medium pacer Shib Shankar Paul, who now coaches the Bengal women's cricket team, elaborates on the subject. "First, you have to be fully aware of the players' strengths and weaknesses with regards to technique and power.

You can't enter the dressing room when a match is on. If you want to convey or discuss anything, you have to send someone to inform the players about your impending arrival. This could affect in-game coordination. Your communication skills must be top-class, for you can't have a go at the players to drive home

your point. I had conversations with some India players (before the World Cup) and they spoke highly of Raman's management. They were also impressed with his methods to develop team spirit," Paul tells this paper.

Paul himself played under Raman's coaching and liked the planning aspect and also how clearly the latter analysed opponents. One of the major attributes of Raman's coaching, according to former India seamer Lakshmiopathy Balaji, is his ability to be ahead of his time.

"During my injury phase (2006-07), he handled a cricketer who was looking to make a comeback... It was a very doubtful moment for me, whether I would be able to play again. I was under so much stress. Raman sir played a huge part. I had a back stress fracture and we discussed a lot whether I needed to go for surgery. Eventually, I went for a surgery. During that phase, he was very eager to take up the challenge, in fact, more than me," Balaji recalls.

Back in 2006-07, sports medicine, and the importance attached to it, was not the same in Indian cricket as it is now. There was hardly any data available in terms of injury management and recovery. "He (Raman) was far ahead of his time. Now we talk about bio-mechanics. I remember Raman sir used to talk about bio-mechanics during that period. That way he was the only person I was able to trust those days," Balaji says.

Raman worked for four seasons from 2006

during his first stint as Tamil Nadu coach. That was a transitional phase for the state team and under Raman's tutelage, Ravichandran Ashwin and Murali Vijay flourished and went on to become established India players.

"When he took over as coach, not only did he bring in changes from the past, but he also changed the future of some of the players he nurtured. His eye for talent and his talent-scouting had been fantastic. He gave opportunities to young players who went on to play for India. Murali Vijay and Ashwin were pretty young when Raman sir took over as the coach. I think they all owe something to him," Balaji observes, adding: "Irrespective of the result in the (World Cup) final, he has been doing a great job with the Indian women's team."

Even mercurial pace bowler Ashok Dinda falls for Raman's ability to improve players. "In 2010 (when Raman came for a second stint as Bengal coach), I had already played for India. But I was having problems with my rhythm. He advised me to bowl with a shorter run-up and worked hard with me at the nets. My bowling, from loading to release and rhythm, improved significantly and I enjoyed a very successful domestic season," Dinda rewinds.

Performance in the T20 World Cup attested the Indian women's team's steady progress. By Raman's own admission, though, the team now needs to reach the next level – winning big matches and big moments.



# Ticking all the boxes

With Mary, Panghal and Simranjit qualifying, India equal biggest-ever Olympic contingent, tying London's tally of eight

**NITIN SHARMA**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 9

INDIA HAS MATCHED its biggest Olympic boxing contingent when MC Mary Kom and Simranjit Singh made it eight pugilists on their way to Tokyo, the same number that went to London 2012.

Mary booked her ticket with a 5:0 win over Irish Magno of the Philippines in the 51Kg category at the Asia-Oceania Olympic Qualifiers in Amman, Jordan on Monday. Simranjit beat Namu Monkhor of Mongolia by the same scoreline in the 60kg category.

Earlier in the day, world number one Amit Panghal had become the sixth Indian boxer to seal the Olympic quota with a split 4:1 decision over Carlo Paalam of the Philippines after five boxers bagged spots on Sunday. Mary will be returning to the Olympics after missing out on a berth in the 2016 Rio Games.

"It's an incredible feat from Mary Kom. She keeps rewriting history and the fact that she has qualified after missing the 2016 Olympics is really commendable and inspiring for other boxers. She took her time in the opening round but from second round onwards, found her rhythm and landed cleaner punches. She is a legend and we all work hard for her so that she can win her second Olympic medal," said Santiago Nieva, India's high performance director.

Out of the last six Olympics, India did not send more than five boxers in four Games but eight qualified in 2012 when women's boxing was introduced. In Rio 2016, India only had three boxers with Vikas Krishan (75 Kg), Shiva Thapa (56 Kg) and Manoj Kumar (64 Kg) making the cut, but returning empty-handed.

But four men and four women have so far qualified for Tokyo. Manish Kaushik (63 Kg) and Sachin Kumar can still earn spots to take the number into double figures. Kaushik has a box-off bout while Kumar has to go through two to secure an Olympic quota in the next two days.

"Obviously it feels good to see eight boxers qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics so far and there are chances that we can earn two more quota places. We have to be happy about that but we want more. We had more chances here and we have another qualifier coming up in Paris. In this tournament, we have seen many good nations losing early and if we keep that in mind, having 8-9 quota places from here is a big thing for us," Nieva said. "Also considering the number of Indian boxers at the Rio Olympics, it's a huge improvement for us. We want to make it the biggest team ever going to the Olympics and the focus will be on converting these quota places into medals."

## Tough bout for Panghal

On a day when two-time World Youth champion Sakshi Chaudhary and World Championship bronze medallist Manish Kaushik lost their bouts, Panghal booked a place in his first Olympics in the men's 52 Kg category.

At the World Championships in Russia last year too, Panghal had scored a 4:1 split verdict against the same opponent to secure his first Worlds medal. There Panghal had stated slowly with Paalam swinging more and making counter-attacks on Amit's ad-



Second-seeded Mary Kom scored a 5-0 win over Philippines' Irish Magno in her quarterfinal bout, while Amit Panghal edged out familiar foe Carlo Paalam of Philippines in a 4-1 split verdict to book his ticket to Tokyo.

vances in the opening round. The Haryana boxer had to rely upon his combinations and right punch to make a comeback.

On Monday, Paalam kept coming back after Amit's combination of punches in the opening round and looked the more aggressive boxer in the first minute before Panghal relied on his accuracy and straight punches to take the first round with a split 3:2 verdict. While Panghal did not look very convincing in the second round even if he won the round with a split 4:1 verdict, the Haryana boxer was superior against a tired Paalam in the final round to complete another split 4:1 win and earn his ticket.

"I think Amit had a better performance than his previous bout. Paalam was more difficult to face this time as he started very aggressively. The main challenge for Amit was to maintain his composure against stronger opponents and he landed clear shots when Paalam opened himself up. Amit used his speed and elusiveness despite Paalam com-



ponents. When he scores from outside, he is doing well but he has been aiming too high and does not land punches with his knuckles against slightly taller opponents. We want him to land punches with his knuckles landing on the face or head and with more power. He is also getting a bit tired in the third round and we have to work on this area ahead of the Olympics."

With less than six months to go for the Tokyo Olympics, Nieva believes that Amit has his problems against shorter. "We have to work on his inside game against shorter op-

## Baro Mukhia to Tokyo, Lovlina's long journey

**NITIN SHARMA**  
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 9

IT WAS several hours after her bout on Sunday when Lovlina Borgohain, 22, realised the significance of her achievement — qualifying for the Olympics. After beating Uzbekistan's Maftunakhon Melieva in the quarterfinals of the women's 69 kg category to earn a ticket for Tokyo, Lovlina was totally exhausted. Later when she reached the hotel, she sat with coaches Raffaele Bergamasco and Sandhya Gurung for a post-mortem of the day's fight and later watch the videos of her next opponent — 2018 World Championship silver medallist and reigning Asian champion Gu Hong of China. And it was finally while talking to her father, that it sunk in and she broke down.

"I was only thinking about the bout against Melieva and listening to coaches about the next bout. It was only when my father called me and showed my mother and neighbours celebrating that I started crying. Going to the Olympics has been my dream since I started boxing and this win is the first step towards realising my dream," shares an emotional Lovlina while talking with *The Indian Express*.

Growing up in village Baro Mukhia in Golaghat district of Assam, Lovlina would initially practise muay thai at the school ground in nearby Barpathar village. The youngster would accompany her father Tiken Borgohain, who used to first buy tea from gardens and sell it from his shop, to the school to train for the martial art. Her twin sisters — kickboxers Lima and Licha — too would follow them.

It was only the visit of SAI coach Padum Boro at their village in 2012 which saw Lovlina giving trials and getting selected as a trainee at Guwahati. Her selection also meant that she had to leave her village and shift to Guwahati, a city that was 300 kms away from her village. "I did not know anything about boxing except from reading about Mary Kom Didi in local newspapers. I would practise muay thai at my home too and when I was selected as boxing trainee by Boro sir, some of our relatives and neighbors told my parents not to send me to Guwahati to train. But my parents have been supportive to all three of us," recalls Lovlina.

It was at the end of 2016 that Lovlina was inducted into the senior camp in the 75 Kg category on the basis of her youth exploits and it also meant that the youngster trained under coach Sandhya Gurung. While she would make the shift to 69 Kg soon, Gurung saw many shortcomings in Lovlina's game including her fear of hitting the opponent. "A lot of junior and youth boxers face problems in senior category with their basics and it was the same with Lovlina. We worked on things like stepping and standing basics apart from correcting her leg position before any punch. She would cross her legs or would go back before the punch and could only hit 1-2 punches. Apart from the technique, she was also facing a mental block of hitting the



Lovlina now faces 2018 Worlds silver medallist and reigning Asian champion Gu Hong of China.

opponent with power," recalls Gurung.

Prior to the Asian Championships in Vietnam, where she bagged the bronze medal, Lovlina also had a chance meeting with coach Poonam Beniwal, wife of 2006 CWG champion Akhil Kumar, at Rohtak. Beniwal told her to use her long reach and suggested her to watch videos of two-time Olympic champion Claressa Shields of USA. "Sandhya mam made me go to the basics and made me learn counter-attacks too. When I came into the national camp, I would hesitate to approach boxers like Mary Kom and Pooja Rani but as I spent time, I would not hesitate asking them for tips. When Poonam mam told me to focus on long distance and suggested me to watch videos of London and Rio Olympics champion Claressa Shields, I would spend hours watching the videos and trying them out in practice," shares Lovlina.

The last two years have seen Lovlina winning two successive bronze medals in world championships in Delhi and Russia in 2018 and 2019 and India's high performance director for women's boxing Raffaele Bergamasco sees a big change in her boxing. "Initially, I spent some time in improving her feet movement and made her realise that she can move her body more to attack from different angles. Her strength has been her stamina gained in the last two years apart from her reaction time in the ring. We have some things in mind to improve in her game before Tokyo and she can win a medal," says the Italian coach.

As for the Borgohain family, it was holi in their village a day before the festival due to the celebrations in the village. "I have always loved watching sport and to see her now in the Olympics is the biggest gift for us and for our village. It was holi for us today after her win and the whole village celebrated her feat. It would be more celebrations when she wins the Olympic medal," says Tiken Borgohain.

## TRACKING THE VIRUS

### Flame, but no fans

The coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc with two more high-profile sporting occasions being impacted on Monday.

#### TORCH LIGHTING

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics torch lighting ceremony in ancient Olympia will be held without spectators. Greece's Olympic Committee said spectators would be excluded from both the dress rehearsal at the ancient site on Wednesday and the widely-broadcast ceremony on Thursday. This is the first time since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics that the ceremony will be held without spectators.

#### TENNIS

The BNP Paribas Open — popularly known as Indian Wells — was scheduled to start qualifying on Monday with the main draw getting underway on Wednesday, but has now been called off. World No.2 Rafael Nadal was already in the Californian desert when news came on Monday that the event had been postponed after a resident of the Coachella Valley tested positive for the coronavirus.

#### RUGBY

The Six Nations rugby match between France and Ireland, due to be played on Saturday at the Stade de France, has been postponed with a new date yet to be announced. Same has been the fate of the Wales vs Scotland game in Cardiff. The England-Italy match had already been postponed.

#### FOOTBALL

The UEFA Champions League Round of 16 second leg encounter between Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia Dortmund will be played behind closed doors at the Parc des Princes on Wednesday night, it was decided on Monday. All French top flight football matches will be played behind closed doors or with a maximum attendance of 1,000 people until April 15. All Romanian league games will be played behind closed doors till further notice, same for all Bulgarian league matches in the next two rounds.

#### BASEBALL

The Japanese professional baseball league season, due to start on March 20, postponed.

#### ATHLETICS

The 18th Federation Cup National Junior Athletics Championships, scheduled to be held from April 6-8 in Bhopal, has been postponed till further notice.

#### WINTER SPORTS

The Italian Winters Sports Federation has announced the suspension of all sporting activity across its disciplines, including skiing, snowboarding and biathlon. The only exceptions are Italian athletes who are already in position for World Cup or Junior World Cup events, or those currently in the running to win a competition or achieve a significant placement.

## 'Fifth slam' — Tennis's biggest casualty

**BEN ROTHENBERG AND CHRISTOPHER CLAREY**  
MARCH 9

THE BNP Paribas Open in Southern California, one of the world's leading tennis tournaments, will not be held this month because of the spreading coronavirus, making it one of the highest-profile sporting events canceled in the outbreak.

Organisers of the event, in the Riverside County community of Indian Wells, made the decision on the eve of its start on Monday after county officials declared a public health emergency when a case was confirmed in the area.

The tournament had previously announced Thursday that it would take various precautions in light of the virus, including having ball kids wear gloves and telling players not to handle pens or other items to autograph.

The decision came quickly and as a surprise to players, many of whom already were in Indian Wells preparing for the event. Many found out through social media on Sunday evening when the tournament announced the decision. The tournament has never been canceled before. Qualifying matches were due to begin on Monday, with main draw matches beginning Wednesday.

Steve Simon, chief executive of the WTA Tour, said that officials had considered playing the tournament without spectators but ultimately rejected that option.

"We were supportive of the concept," Simon said. "But ultimately the tournament didn't feel it was in their best interest."

The two-week tournament, which is a Masters 1000 tournament on the ATP Tour and one of four Premier Mandatory events for the WTA, would have concluded on March 22. A smaller warm-up tournament, the Oracle Challenger Series Indian Wells, concluded Sunday at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, the same stadium where the BNP Paribas Open is held. The tournament, which has colloquially earned "Fifth Slam" recognition for its large attendance and lucrative prize money, is the largest sporting event in the United States to be canceled over the growing concerns about



Indian Wells organisers said they were unwilling to take a chance. More than 450,000 fans attended the tournament in 2018 and 2019. AP

the spread of the disease. Another large international event, the South by Southwest Festival in Austin, was canceled on Friday. Organisers of Indian Wells, as the tournament is better known, said they were unwilling to take a chance on going forward. More than 450,000 attended the tournament in 2018 and in 2019.

"There is too great a risk, at this time, to the public health of the Riverside County area in holding a large gathering of this size," said Dr. David Agus, a professor of medicine and biomedical engineering at the University of Southern California, in a statement released by Southern California, in a statement released by Southern California, in a statement released by Southern California, in a statement released by Southern California.

California has reported 114 cases of the virus, including someone being treated at a hospital in Rancho Mirage in Riverside County. Gov. Gavin Newsom has declared a state of emergency. Tommy Haas, the Indian Wells tournament director, left open the possibility

of playing his tournament at a later date in the crowded tennis calendar.

"We are very disappointed that the tournament will not take place, but the health and safety of the local community, fans, players, volunteers, sponsors, employees, vendors, and everyone involved with the event is of paramount importance," Haas said. "We are prepared to hold the tournament on another date and will explore options."

But finding another two-week window on the overstuffed professional tennis calendar in 2020 will be a challenge. It is unclear, however, whether other upcoming tennis events will still be staged. The Miami Open, scheduled to begin March 23 and similar in prestige to the BNP Paribas Open, has not yet been canceled. The Ultra Music Festival, another major international cultural event scheduled for March in the Miami area, has been called off for 2020.

"The intent is still for Miami to operate," Simon said. "It's obviously two weeks away, but right now our approach is we are planning to operate all of our upcoming events and put

**We are very disappointed that the tournament will not take place, but the health and safety of the local community, fans, players, volunteers, sponsors, employees, vendors, and everyone involved with the event is of paramount importance. We are prepared to hold the tournament on another date and will explore options.**

**TOMMY HAAS,**  
INDIAN WELLS TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

every precaution in place. But we will obviously continue to work with the event very closely and will have to monitor all the situations there." The BNP Paribas Open is offering ticket holders refunds or credits toward tickets for the 2021 edition of the tournament. The tennis tours shift to Europe in April for the clay season, which includes the Italian Open in Rome in May, a prestigious tournament in one of the countries most affected by the virus.

No subsequent tournaments at tour level have yet announced cancellations. Several smaller minor tournaments in China had been canceled previously, and a tournament in Bergamo, Italy, canceled its final.

Founded in 1974 and played under various names and in various locations, the BNP Paribas Open has become one of the pillars of the professional tennis tour since its move to Indian Wells in 1987. Larry Ellison, the tech tycoon and co-founder of Oracle, bought the event and the tournament complex, the Indian Wells Tennis Garden, in 2009. Since the purchase, new stadium courts and amenities have been added, and the tournament is regularly voted by the players as the best event in its category.

Although this is the first time the event has been canceled, in 1980 the tournament was not completed because of rain, and the men's singles final was not contested.

Simon said the cancellation this year would be costly. "There will be losses for everybody," he said. "But at this point this isn't about the money per se. It's about what is right, and I think it's a challenging time right now." **NYT**



BRIEFLY

Ronaldinho 'didn't know' passport was fake: lawyers

Brazilian football legend Ronaldinho did not deliberately use a fake passport and should be released by authorities in Paraguay, his lawyer said. The two-time world player of the year and his brother Roberto, who was detained with him, spent their third night behind bars in the capital Asuncion on Sunday after using forged travel documents to enter the country. Their Brazilian lawyer Sergio Queiroz said he would ask for the pair to be released and allowed to return to their home country when they next appear before a judge on Monday. "Ronaldinho did not commit a crime because he did not know that the passport they gave him was faked," he said.

Real's loss vs Betis hands Barca a bonus

Real Madrid failed to build on last week's 'Clasico' victory as they lost 2-1 at Real Betis in a fiery match on Sunday and surrendered top spot in La Liga to Barcelona. Former Barca forward Cristian Tello grabbed the decisive late goal that saw his old team regain the lead in the see-saw title race. Real are now second on 56 points after 27 games, two behind Barca who beat Real Sociedad 1-0 on Saturday to regain first place a week after losing 2-0 at the Bernabeu. Betis had gone ahead in the 40th minute after a moment of confusion as they appealed for a penalty when Sergio Ramos collided into Nabil Fekir but the loose ball landed at the feet of defender Sidnei who rifled it into the roof of the net.

Dybala stunner sends Juve top

A wonderful winning goal from substitute Paulo Dybala sent Juventus back to the top of Serie A with a 2-0 victory over title rivals Inter Milan at an empty Allianz Stadium on Sunday. Juve, who opened the scoring through Aaron Ramsey, lead on 63 points, one ahead of Lazio and nine clear of Inter in third, although Antonio Conte's side have a game in hand. Ramsey fired home the first goal from close range soon after the break and was also involved in the second. Juventus's Argentine forward Dybala exchanged passes with the Wales international on the edge of the area before dribbling around defender Ashley Young and showing great invention to find the bottom corner with the outside of his boot.

Coach cuts ties with tainted ward

Disgraced Chinese swimmer Sun Yang's veteran coach Denis Cotterell has severed all ties with the three-time Olympic champion after his eight-year drug ban. Australian media reported, Australian Cotterell, regarded as one of the world's top coaches, had worked with the freestyle specialist since the 2008 Beijing Olympics and long maintained Sun was clean. But after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) banned Sun last month for refusing to give a doping sample in September 2018, Cotterell said he was now "retired". "I have terminated my contract with (the) Chinese Swimming Association," he told the Sydney Daily Telegraph on Sunday.

AGENCIES

# Numero Bruno

Fernandes and Martial inspire Manchester United to a 2-0 victory against defending champions City

RORY SMITH  
MANCHESTER, MARCH 9

OLD TRAFFORD, for a while, was quiet, apprehensive, a place without a voice. Manchester United's fans watched Manchester City draw its pretty patterns on the field in truculent silence for 30 minutes or so, fretting and murmuring whenever danger seemed imminent.

The only noise came from the corner reserved for City's traveling supporters, working their way through their songbook: crowing over past triumphs, gleefully reminding their hosts of the way power has switched in this city — and in English soccer as a whole — over the last decade or so.

There is a reason for this. Manchester United is a club, now, trained to expect the worst. Especially against City, its rival by accident of geography rather than, for a long time, any real shared history. Until the 2010s, United looked down on City with a mixture of pity and disdain. City was a pest; Liverpool and Leeds United and Arsenal were the foes. As City has transformed into the foremost power in the English game, so it has usurped the old order in Manchester.

It has lost at Old Trafford in the Premier League only once in a decade; Pep Guardiola, its coach, had won on all of his previous league visits here. Derby day no longer holds any real sense of dread.

The opposite, logically, is now true for United: This fixture is now nothing but trouble. But the malaise runs deeper than that.

All its travails in the years since the departure of Alex Ferguson have conditioned United's fans to disappointment: Manchester City, champion of England; Liverpool, champion of Europe; Manchester United, facing the prospect of a second straight year in which it does not even qualify for the Champions League, beaten at home this season by Burnley and Crystal Palace, among others.

So, no, for that first half-hour, Manchester United's fans did not feel much like singing; defiance does not come easy, even in the face of those taunts, if it feels like you are doomed.

Things had changed before the goal that settled the game; things changed, oddly, with the attack just before it, the attack that should have brought the goal. It changed when Anthony Martial broke down the left of City's box. Martial had two choices. He could shoot, from a challenging but not unkind angle, or he could pass to Bruno Fernandes, charging into the area, not far from the penalty spot.

He chose wrong: The shot was clasped eagerly by Ederson, City's goalkeeper. For several seconds, Fernandes stood and stared at Martial, arms outstretched.

Most of Old Trafford did the same. If there is one player it wants on the ball these days, it is Bruno Fernandes.

Modern squad-building is a complicated thing: both an art and a science, a matter not only of the ferocious consumption of data but of touch and eye and skill. It is faintly old-fashioned, really, to believe that hiring one player — no matter how good — can trans-



Bruno Fernandes set up the first goal for Martial in United's 2-0 victory. Reuters

form a club's identity. There are too many variables. Will he be able to produce the same numbers that made him appealing in the first place? Will he adapt to his new teammates, and his teammates to him? Will he settle in his new home — and often a new country — and be able to cope with the rigors of his new league?

These things take time, as another Manchester United midfielder, Fred, rather neatly proves.

There was a time, not long ago, when Fred was a punchline, forced to respond to criticism of his performances from some of the club's great and good, the ones who now populate the Premier League's vast punditocracy.

Over recent weeks and months, though, Fred has suddenly emerged as United's engine, a dynamic, driving presence in midfield.

He was Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's best player by some distance in United's defeat at Anfield in January. That should not be remarkable for a midfielder player coveted at one point by Guardiola, and secured only thanks to a \$60 million transfer, but in Fred's case, it is.

But the truth of it is that Fred was never a bad player; the ability that had drawn the eye in his first few weeks since finally joining United in January is a different matter — there are players, anti-Freds, who burn brightly and briefly — but his impact has been seismic.

On one level, it is easy to explain: he passes neatly and crisply. He plays on the half-turn, always ready to start an attack; he wants the ball, and responsibility; he is not afraid to shoot, or to try something different, something ambitious.

## How one (new) man made all the difference

A clinical 2-0 victory at Old Trafford is testament to Manchester United's fortunes turning for the better after the arrival of Portuguese midfielder Bruno Fernandes in January, as the Red Devils find themselves unbeaten since the signing.

PORTUGUESE TALISMAN

SIGNING FROM Sporting CP for £55 million, Fernandes joined a United side reeling in the wake of striker Marcus Rashford's back injury. The Portuguese has proved to be the difference-maker with two goals and three assists in just five league appearances. Occupying the attacking midfield spot, Fernandes has offered a plethora of tactical options for manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. With creativity and leadership, United provide a stark contrast to the floundering team of a few months ago.

FREEDOM IN OFFENCE

Forwards Anthony Martial and Daniel James now capitalised on Fernandes' supply with their pace and ability to find spaces. They drift wide on counter-attacks and press the opposition backline. Mason Greenwood performs a similar role with his speed, making him a viable option off the bench. With Rashford on the mend, United's offence looks rosy.

DISRUPTERS OF ATTACK

With Scott McTominay injured and Nemanja Matic suspended for Fernandes' first game against Wolves, he displayed his ability to play in a deeper role. Owing to the defensive ability of the Portuguese, the midfield duo of Fred and Matic have been providing cover for the centre-halves. Fred has become an integral player in Solskjaer's plans. With McTominay returning to drive the proverbial nail in the coffin against City in the dying moments, Solskjaer finally has options in the holding position.

DEFENSIVE VERSATILITY

Youngster Brandon Williams has made his mark in the United starting line-up. Making persistent overlapping runs, the Englishman

**5** United's Bruno Fernandes has been directly involved in more goals in the Premier League than any other player (2 goals and three assists).

**10** Solskjaer's side is unbeaten in its last 10 outings. They have won seven and drawn 3.

has been a constant threat for the opposition backline. While holding a more defensive stance than his counterpart on the left, Aaron Wan-Bissaka, his ability to withstand pressure from the wingers has been a highlight. Their abilities were highlighted against City with Williams pressing Joao Cancelo with Luke Shaw covering for him. Wan-Bissaka thwarted Raheem Sterling to perfection. With Harry Maguire and Victor Lindelof locking the central route, United look more solid in defence.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

After months of scrutiny, Solskjaer has the players his tactics require with Fernandes proving to be a vital piece in the puzzle. With the team firing on all cylinders, Champions League football is a possibility as United find themselves just three points from a top 4 spot. They also have a relatively comfortable run of fixtures, barring their next game against Spurs. United remain a strong contender to win the Europa League as well, facing Austrian side LASK in the Round of 16 along with a chance in the FA cup, drawing Norwich City in the quarter-finals. After a rocky start, they have found a crucial cog in the system that could potentially deliver silverware.

RAHUL ASNANI

# Mourinho's Tottenham fly to Leipzig with a mountain to climb



Jose Mourinho has been grumbling about his squad shortages. Reuters

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
LONDON, MARCH 9

TOTTENHAM TRAVEL to Leipzig on Tuesday needing to overturn a 1-0 first leg deficit to prevent adding an early Champions League exit to a season spiralling out of control.

Saturday's 1-1 draw at Burnley stopped the rot of four consecutive defeats in all competitions that has seen Jose Mourinho's men fall behind in the race for a top four finish in the Premier League and eliminated from the FA Cup by bottom-of-the-table Norwich.

Failure to fight back in Germany will also halt the progress Spurs have made in the Champions League in recent years.

Under Mauricio Pochettino, Tottenham went further in the competition for each of the past three seasons, culminating in a roller-coaster run to the final last season.

Rather than using defeat in Madrid to Liverpool last June as a springboard to continue competing with the European elite, Spurs have unravelled. Pochettino was sacked just three months into this season after five-and-a-half years in charge that transformed the club's fortunes. Rather than follow the template of Pochettino's appointment with a young and forward-thinking coach like Leipzig's Julian Nagelsmann, Spurs chairman Daniel Levy was wowed by Mourinho's past.

The Portuguese has 25 trophies to his name, but the last of them came three years ago and

recent spells at Chelsea and Manchester United did little to suggest he was the man to take Spurs forward.

So it has proved with Mourinho's negativity contributing to the gloom around the club. After losing Harry Kane and Son Heung-min to injury, Mourinho has repeatedly stated the end of the season cannot come soon enough. The 57-year-old is quick to bemoan his lack of resources at what is now the eighth richest club in the world, according to Deloitte's Football Money League. However, he was scathing of Tottenham's club record signing Tanguy Ndombele after hooking the French midfielder at half-time on Saturday.

"My thinking was that in the first half we didn't have a midfield. Simple as that," he

said. "I'm not going to run away and I have to say that Tanguy had enough time to come to a different level. I know that the Premier League is very difficult. For some players, it takes a long time to adapt to a different league, but a player with this potential and responsibility has to give us more than he is giving us."

Mourinho dressing down an underperforming star player in public is nothing new, but evidence from his previous clubs suggests it does little good.

At 23, and in his first season in England, it is questionable as to whether Mourinho's criticism of Ndombele is the best way for Spurs to realise the potential of their £63 million (\$82 million) signing. Levy also has to bear his share of the blame for Spurs' decline.

IT'S NOT FAIR!

# Doubles in India lacks care, love and funds, says outgoing coach

SHIVANI NAIK  
MUMBAI, MARCH 9

AIRDROPPING AN international coach into a doubles camp and assuming India will start producing world champions in the paired event might not be the wave of the magic wand India is looking for, reckons departed coach Flandy Limpele. Reiterating that his reasons for leaving are "mainly personal", the Indonesian coach insisted that doubles badminton in India lacked "care, love and funds."

"I tried hard to stay, believe me," he said, adding that he had had a word with the players in December after complaining about their attitude. This conversation had settled the issue. But Limpele remained discontented with the Indian structure that clearly prioritised singles over doubles.

"I'll repeat, reason for my leaving is personal. Nothing to do with attitude (of players) now, their attitude is going in the right direction after that (last time). That was all fine," he cleared.

What he sensed in India though was a huge cultural difference in badminton mat-

ters. "To add up to the personal reasons, I felt like the doubles department is not favoured here, which I can understand why. But I thought the percentage of importance would be at least 55 / 45 (latter for doubles). But it turns out it's 70/30. It's not fair, I think. So that's why I couldn't stay longer," he stressed.

It must be noted that Indonesia, powerhouses of the sport, have produced singles and doubles champions in equal measure. And India, which has never produced top-level talent, consistently presents a very odd skewed picture to coaches from Malaysia and Indonesia who are not used to singles stars being pampered.

"The Indian scene is not fair to the coaches also. Salaries are not equal (coach Agus Dwi Santoso for singles comes for \$8000 per month, Flandy was paid \$6500 pm), neither do they have equal assessment which I think is not fair, but that's not the main point. Overall, doubles is nothing like singles," he lamented.

"So I thought why stay in this situation?" Asked to elaborate, Limpele added, "There's less support (funding) for (exposure) tournaments. There are many potential play-



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FLANDY LIMPELE  
FORMER INDIA DOUBLES COACH

ers but support is less. Most of the times doubles seems to have no power to say what doubles needs and wants.

"That kind of stuff is not helping the team grow. But it is what it is. I learnt a lot. It was a good journey," he said of coaching the Indian pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy - Chirag Shetty to some fine results in Europe last year.

He struck down the speculation that national coach P Gopichand was driving away foreign coaches.

"No, no, he's a good boss. Him and his family extended every support possible to us at Hyderabad. He's trying to bring the level up. I had no problems on that front. We worked fine together," he said, adding that India needs to look deeper into systems which inherently favour singles and their attention-monopolising star system.

When pointed out that doubles had seldom produced consistent results despite many playing on the circuit, he retorted: "You can't have heroes in doubles if you are going to show less care and love towards it."

Limpele after making up his mind had sent texts to his doubles wards, and was clear on the path ahead: "All the best to Satwik-

Chirag, they have good potential but just need more care, more love, the right attitude and proper team coaches. With them anything is possible. They are good if they really want to work hard. But it'll take a big effort to achieve top results," he stressed.

Namrih Suroto, who has been working with the juniors, will now step up alongside the other foreign coach Dwi Kristiawan. "After December when I spoke to players, they have been ok. Gopi was also very supportive of me, but the care shown to doubles is less," he said of what seemed to be a deal-breaker.

Limpele's mind was made up after the doubles teams pulled out of All England. "No, that's ok. Players' parents had genuine concerns because of Corona (virus)."

"I'd like to wish Indian team the best and the good part was being with the team through ups and downs, win or lose. It's something I'll always remember."

Coaches leaving Indian badminton has always been gloom and doom, but Flandy Limpele would like to stick to the happier memories. "Tik tok fever here in India was funny... And I really liked it," said the Indonesian, adding that India, relatively a rookie nation in top-rung

doubles, will go through these chums before it settles into a system.

Agus good coach

Outgoing doubles coach Flandy said that incoming singles coach Agus Dwi Santoso, a fellow Indonesian, is "a very good coach," and it was a smart pick by Gopichand and BAI owing to his former assignment. "Agus has worked together with Kim Hi Hyun (earlier PV Sindhu's coach) and Park Tae Sung (current singles coach) back in Korea," Limpele said, adding it'll help him settle into the current system.

While his last assignment was with Thailand, it's the prospect of reuniting with Park with whom he worked in Korea that spells a good omen. Strategically, it'll be good for India to have onboard someone who coached Son Wan Ho, the ultra-defensive Korean former World No. 1 and the tall Korean women's singles player Sung Ji Hyun, elements of whose games can further fortify Sindhu.

Sung had beaten Sindhu at the All England Round 1 last year, but Sindhu has since become World Champion. The coming together of Park, Agus and Gopichand is good news for India, reckons Limpele.