



# MCD to begin SMS service for property tax payers

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In order to remind and keep the property tax payers informed about the pending money, amount paid and time left for payment, the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun is planning to start a bulk SMS generator service soon.

Dehradun municipal commissioner Vinay Sankar Pandey on Monday said that the service will work as a reminder for the people to pay the property tax on time or before time.

This will be more convenient for the officials and payers as well.

Pandey said, "We are capable of receiving the property tax online from 55 wards. The remaining wards will also be brought under the ambit of this service soon. We are planning to take help of the bulk SMS generators to keep in touch



with the payers about all the details and current status of their bills. This has not been used so far but it will work now." Adding more in this he

said, "The service will work in three steps starting with the tax payers being informed of their payment status, the second will be informing them about

their pending time and third will be sending notices as we use to do earlier. This is expected to help us more in keeping things convenient."

## Govt permission pending on commercial property tax collection in new wards

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The 40 wards brought under the purview of Municipal Corporation of Dehradun last year were exempted from any type of tax as compared to the existing 60 wards, fewer services and facilities are provided there by the MCD.

However, officials are now trying to collect property tax from at least the commercial property owners. Earlier this year Dehradun mayor Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' had

announced that property tax would be collected on commercial properties in order to enhance the revenues of the corporation.

However, the permission from the State Government has been pending for nearly six months.

Municipal commissioner Vinay Sankar Pandey said, "We have already sent a letter to the State administration seeking permission to allow us to collect tax on the commercial properties however no reply has reached us so far."

## MCD to test quality of compost and RDF

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey on Monday informed that in order to check the quality of the compost and Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) which is being made in the waste management plant at Shishambada, officials are going to test the quality of the formed products.

Pandey said, "The garbage that gets collected from the city gets deposited in the waste management plant. It is the duty of the appointed employees to separate types of garbage there. Like the dry waste, wet waste and medical waste like a syringe, medicines are kept

separate from the garbage and further the other process follows. In order to check this, we took samples of the RDF and compost from the plant."

Adding in this he said, "The samples are given to Sri Ram Labs and report will likely reach us within 15 days. We will see if these by products are usable or not as they are used for various purposes."

It is pertinent to mention here that while the compost is used mainly as manure, the RDF is used for various purposes including use alongside traditional fuels in power plants. The MCD sells RDF and compost to the government or private firms as per its uses.

# Domestic violence tops issues lodged with WHC

MONISHA BAHUGUNA ■ DEHRADUN

Women helpline number 181 which was introduced in the state in the year 2016, has received a total of 2409 calls so far of which 2159 cases were resolved while 250 are yet to be resolved.

According to the data, the majority of the calls were made regarding domestic violence apart from which call received were registered under 13 different categories of crimes related to women.

The service was started in the state to provide 24-hour immediate and emergency response to women affected by gender crime.

It also helps women to learn about various schemes run by the government in the state especially for the welfare of women. As per the data provided by the Uttarakhand State Commission for Women



(USCW), Women Helpline Cell (WHC) registered 715

cases of domestic violence from 2016 till June 2019. Of these, 582 of the cases were resolved and 133 are still pending.

Further, 634 cases of advice and information were registered out of which 610 were resolved and 24 still remain pending. A total of 374 cases were registered under the category of 'any other crime' out of which 337 were resolved and 37 remain pending.

Further, 303 cases of cyber crime were registered out of which 286 were resolved and 17 remain pending. Similarly, of the 113 registered cases related to dowry harassment, 94 were resolved and 19 still remain pending.

Nearly 50 cases were registered under the 'missing and kidnapping' category out of which 44 were resolved and six remain pending. Under the category of sexual harassment 44 cases were registered out of which 40 were resolved and

four still remain pending. Similarly, out of the 17 registered cases related to child sexual abuse, 13 were resolved and four are pending. Of the six cases of alleged rape, two were resolved and four still remain pending.

Three cases of acid attacks were registered with all the three being resolved. Under the category of child marriage, three cases were registered out of which two were resolved and one remains pending. One case of human trafficking was registered in the women cell which was resolved.

When asked about the pending cases especially regarding domestic violence, a WHC official said, "These complaints are pending due to court cases or internal issues of the family. At times, the case remains pending as it is under legal procedure or when the parties involved are undergoing counselling."



Players jostle for the ball during a match played as part of the 97th Landau league football tournament in Nainital on Monday Pioneer photo

# The Shershaah of Kargil launched at Batra Top

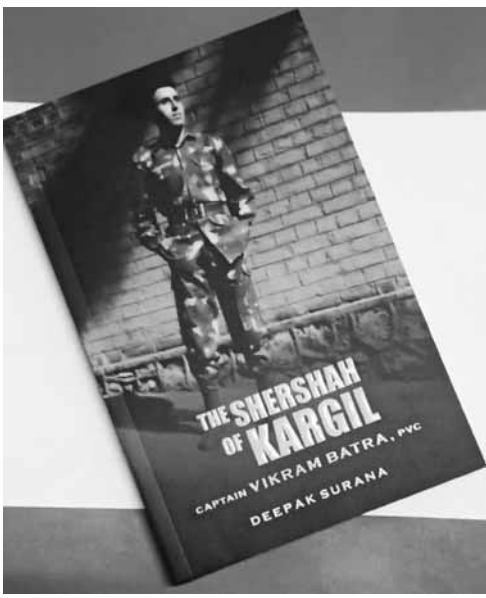
THIS TALE IS A SYMBOL OF INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY FOR THE NATION

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Shershaah of Kargil: Captain Vikram Batra PVC, by Deepak Surana was launched by his twin brother Vishal Batra at Point 4875 renamed Batra Top, where the brave son of India laid down his life for the nation.

The twin brother of the late captain launched the authorised biography recently on the eve of Kargil Diwas. The book has been published by Natraj Publishers.

July 26, is marked in history as the day when courage and valour decorated itself on the peaks of Kargil. A war between two nations was not only about victory but about brazen bravado that screamed



out of the Indian soldiers who relentlessly took on their adversaries on the other side.

One such Indian army officer captain Vikram Batra, who received the highest military honour of Param Vir Chakra posthumously, left behind a legend that will echo in the hearts of every Indian around the world.

This authorised biography Shershaah of Kargil takes the reader through the life and times of late captain Vikram Batra who was among the nation's greatest soldiers.

Through the book the reader can embark on a journey of this ordinary lad who went to become a legendary warrior before he turned twenty five.

This tale is a symbol of integrity and sovereignty for the nation and the generations to come as it describes the role of a soldier whose audacious sacrifice sent out a massive wave of inspiration to others who would live to tell the tale.

For the hero of Batra Top, Point 4875 was decisive. Captain Batra realised that a direct assault was the only way to capture the feature, volunteered to carry out the task despite indomitable conditions. This thrilling account and his life story are impressed in this book with graceful empathy.

Recently, while addressing a gathering to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Kargil war, Prime Minister Modi had recalled Param Vir Chakra awardee, who had famously said, "Yeh Dil Maange More".

## Ruby Gupta comes up with another crime thriller

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

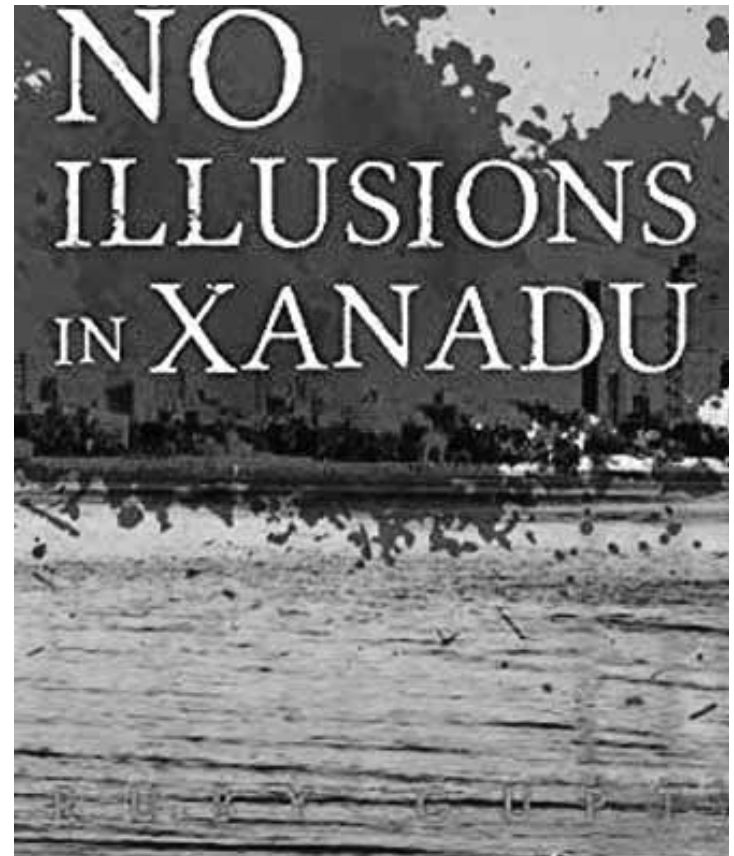
Author Ruby Gupta has recently come up with her eighth book No Illusions in Xanadu. This murder mystery has been published by Bloomsbury Publishing.

The story starts with the handsome, legendary Bollywood superstar Rajvir Kapoor being found dead in the thirtieth-floor study of his swanky new home, Xanadu.

Barely hours before his death, Xanadu, had been teeming with the pick of the country's elite: hot-shot celebrities, business magnates and close friends and family of the actor - all of whom had come together for the grandest party Mumbai had ever seen. Investigations reveal that Rajvir Kapoor was murdered, and now everyone is a suspect. Professor Shantanu Bose, eminent nano-expert and part-time sleuth, a houseguest at the time, is willy-nilly forced to join the investigation.

He finds himself in an alien world of the glitterati and their idiosyncrasies, where murky secrets are revealed and facts muddled.

As Shantanu struggles to piece together the puzzle amidst the confusing moral codes adopted by the people



of this starry realm, glamorous Mumbai seduces him and he finds himself irresistibly attracted to the enchanting prime suspect.

The author then reveals if and how the professor manages the tightrope walk between emotion and justice. The author, Ruby Gupta is an author who initially chose to study science, then switched

to creative writing, dabbled in journalism, earned a PhD and thereafter joined the world of academics.

In addition to her latest book, she has published seven other books. Of her eight books, four are non-fiction while four are fiction. Her forte is mystery and all her novels are essentially mysteries. Her current focus is crime

fiction and both her recent novels, A Degree in Death and No Illusions in Xanadu are murder mysteries featuring the intriguingly dapper detective, Professor Shantanu Bose.

She is currently working as professor and head of the humanities department at the Indian Military Academy and also working on her next crime thriller.

## State Bank of India

RASMEC-CUM-SARC, Haridwar (Uttarakhand) Tel:01334-228349,220256 Fax: 01334-220257

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties) Where as, the undersigned being the Authorised officer of the State Bank of India, RASMEC-CUM-SARC, HARIDWAR under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 (No.3 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on below mentioned Dates. The borrower/guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India, RASMEC-CUM-SARC, HARIDWAR with further interest and incidental expenses. If the borrower/guarantor does not repay the all amount of loan within 30 days after publication of this notice, then the loan will be levied by selling of the property.

Name of Borrower / Surety/Owner	Description of the Immovable Property	Out-standing as on the date of Demand notice	Date of Demand Notice
Borrower : M/s Shree Sai Trading Company Proprietor Sh. Ajay Kashyap S/o Sh. Mahendra Singh Kashyap, A-18, Dev nagar, Rawli Mehdood,Haridwar	A Residential property bearing Plot No.-88 measuring East- 60 feet, West-60 feet, North-40 feet and South- 40 feet having total area 2400 square feet or 223.04 square meter whose Khasra No is 839/2 M situated at Village-Rawali Mehdood, Pargana-Jwalapur, Tehsil & District-Haridwar which is bounded by:- On the East- Plot No-87 of Rajrani Gupta, On the West - Plot No-89 of Trishala Jain, On the North - Rasta 15 feet wide, On the South- Plot No-79 which owned by Shri Mahendra Singh S/o Shri Kali Ram. Which is registered at Sub Registrar Office Haridwar on 22.10.2001 at bahi no. 1, zild no. 1260/1320, page 204/365-368, Sale deed No. 5805.	Rs. 6,27,685.00/- (Rs. Six lakh twenty seven thousand six hundred eighty five only) as on 13.07.2018 and further interest & cost etc. thereon less any amount deposit after 13.07.2018.	18.07.2018
Surety : - Sh. Mahendra Singh S/o Sh. Kali Ram, A-18, Dev Nagar, Rawli Mahduid, Haridwar.			23.07.2019

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फोन: 0135-226220, 2716021 Web: www.doonmedicalcollege.com

**कोटेशन सूचना**

राजकीय दून मेडिकल कॉलेज देहरादून द्वारा संस्थान में अध्ययनरत छात्र-छात्राओं की उपस्थिति कार्य हेतु RFID मशीनों को स्थापित करने तथा वर्ष भर संचालित करने हेतु इच्छुक फर्म/एजेंट्स को कोटेशन आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं। कार्य से सम्बन्धित शर्त एवं अन्य जानकारी दिनांक 30.07.2019 प्रातः 11 बजे से कोटेशन जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि दिनांक 05.08.2019 तक किसी भी कार्यदिनस में प्राचार्य कार्यालय से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

पत्रांक: 30000/कॉलेज/कोटेशन/2019-20/3433 दिनांक 29.07.2019 प्राचार्य



# Capt bats for Priyanka as Congress Prez

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Reposing his full confidence in the Congress national general secretary, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday said that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra would get all-round support if chosen to take over as the All India Congress Committee (AICC) president.

Capt Amarinder, speaking to some journalists, regretted Rahul Gandhi's decision to step down from the top party post. "India is a young nation, and will respond to a young leader," he reiterated.

Asked to comment on Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's statement that Priyanka would be a good choice for being chosen as party chief, he said: "Priyanka would be a perfect choice to take over the party reins but it would all depend on the

Congress Working Committee (CWC), which alone is authorised to take a decision in the matter."

The Chief Minister, it may be recalled, had earlier also advocated for a young leader to take charge of the party at this critical juncture in the nation's journey. With majority of India's population now comprising youth, only a young leader could connect with the people and resonate their aspirations, he had said.

Capt Amarinder made it clear that Priyanka "is ideally suited to head the party, which needs a dynamic young leader to rebuild it after the recent Lok Sabha election loss."

"She has the intelligence and instinct to understand and relate to the needs of the nation, and also has the courage to take on any challenge and take the fight to vic-



tory," he added.

"Given Rahul's refusal to take back his resignation, Priyanka was a good bet to replace him as the new leader," said the Chief Minister while expressing the confidence that she would easily get the support of the party's rank and file, across regions.

In response to another question, the Chief Minister described the events relating to the Unnao rape victim as shocking. "Are we living in jungle raj?" he asked, adding that "if we cannot protect our daughters and give them justice, then we are doomed as a nation."

The law must be upheld at all costs, he asserted, urging the Supreme Court to take cognizance of the case and order a thorough probe to ensure that the victim is protected and gets justice at all costs.

## INBRIEF

### DPS HOLDS INVESTITURE CEREMONY

Dehradun: Delhi Public School, Dehradun organised the investiture ceremony of 2019-20 session to bestow responsibilities on the deserving young talents of the school and make them learn the leadership qualities, its commitments, confidence and competence. As the chief guest, Dehradun SSP Nivedita Kukreti along with school principal BK Singh inaugurated the function. The newly elected members of the student council presented a march past. Ex-head girl Anshika Kala administered the oath to the head boy Divyansh Ghildiyal, head girl Shambhavi Mangani, student council presidents (boy) Tejaswa Rizal and (girl) Nandini Bisht among others. Speaking on the occasion, the SSP congratulated the school team and the new office bearers. She encouraged all the council members to work earnestly and always walk on the right path. The school principal exhorted the students to uphold the honour and glory of the institution while embarking the vital role of a leader.

### Aakash Institute Student Tops NEET in State

Dehradun: Vaibhav Garg, a student of Aakash Institute recently topped the state in NEET 2019. He had scored an All-India rank of 74, securing 682 marks in the recently conducted NEET 2019 exam. Vaibhav has secured a seat for himself in Vardhman Mahavir Medical College in Delhi. In 2016 Vaibhav had participated in ANTHE, a national level scholarship exam held by Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), where he was able to secure 43 per cent of scholarship. Congratulating Vaibhav recently, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, said, "We are proud that Vaibhav has done the state proud by securing a top rank in NEET exam. It is the result of the hard work by the student that paid off. I wish Vaibhav all the best for his future endeavours."

## Inter State racket busted, three held



DSP and Officer in-charge Cyber police station Sumit Prasad alongwith senior officers showing arrested Cyber fraudster Ratan Lal I Pioneer

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a major breakthrough against cyber crime on Monday, Jharkhand Cyber Cell busted an inter State racket of fraudsters and arrested four Cyber frauds.

Addressing a press meet, Deputy Superintendent of Police and Cyber Police Station Incharge, Sumeet Prasad said that three Cyber frauds including Prabhat Darekar, aged 25, resident of Niti under Powai Police Station in Mumbai, Maharashtra, Sarthak Prasad,

aged 20, resident of Niti under Powai Police Station in Mumbai and Jayesh Kumar, aged 24, resident of Dade under Poraiyhat in Godda District, Jharkhand were arrested for allegedly withdrawing Rs 4, 31, 742 from the Debit and Credit card of Pratap Venkata Subramanya.

"The incident took place on June 3 when Jayesh Kumar working as supervisor at Subramanya's guest house with the help of Jayesh Kumar and Sarthak Prasad withdrew the amount from his account. Subramanya registered a case at

the Cyber Police Station and a team to investigate the matter was constituted.

The Cyber Cell busted the gang and arrested all three who were involved in committing the crime. They have confessed their involvement in the crime," said Prasad.

Prasad said that in an attempt to control increasing numbers of cyber crimes in the State, Jharkhand Cyber Cell constituted a Special Investigation Team to investigate the cases of fraudulently withdrawing cash from customers' accounts.

## Punjab mulls policy for gallantry awardees from defence, police

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Government is formulating a policy to award one-rank promotion for any defence or police personnel or officer from the State winning a gallantry award in war or in peace time.

Announcing this while pipping the stars of Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) on the uniform of Kargil war hero Satpal Singh, the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Monday said: "If any such officers or personnel wish to join Punjab Police, their service and bravery would be given due recognition."

Interestingly, Satpal finds mention in Capt Amarinder Singh's book 'A Ridge Too Far - War in the Kargil Heights'.

Capt Amarinder had promoted the Vir Chakra awardee on Friday, from his earlier rank of Senior Constable, in which capacity he was managing traffic in Sangrur district till July 26. The state Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta was also present at the pipping ceremony.

"I have merely set right the wrong perpetrated on Satpal by the previous SAD-BJP government, which had ignored the valour of the soldier, and failed



to give him the recognition and respect he deserved," said the Chief Minister.

He said that he had not been aware earlier of the situation and what he had done now was merely a case of 'too little too late' for the brave soldier. This should have been done at the time of Satpal's recruitment in 2010, he added.

Capt Amarinder maintained that the policy, to be drafted by the state government, will leave no scope for such injustice. He made it clear that the policy would cover police gallantry award winners, including JCOs and NCOs, in addition to the jawans of the defence forces.

The Chief Minister said

that his Government was committed to the welfare of soldiers or ex-soldiers, whose sacrifices to the nation and its people could not be allowed to go unrecognized. "I have been pained on hearing that Satpal was working as a senior traffic constable and wanted to give the dignity and respect that the brave soldier deserved," he said.

On Friday, the 20th anniversary of the Kargil War, the Chief Minister had ordered double promotion for Satpal, lamenting that the valiant soldier had not been given due recognition at the time of his recruitment into Punjab Police by the erstwhile SAD-BJP government in 2010.

Capt Amarinder came across Satpal's plight through newspaper reports and issued the orders for his promotion as ASI, directing the DGP to relax Rule 12.3 of Punjab Police Rules. The Chief Minister also authorized the DGP to grant the required relaxation in age (DOB 07-11-1973) to Satpal, who also belonged to the Chief Minister's 8 Sikhs battalion.

Satpal Singh, who joined Punjab Police after his discharge from the Army, was posted in Drass sector during Operation Vijay. Part of the team that helped the Indian Army capture Tiger Hill, Satpal killed Captain Karnal Sher Khan of the Northern Light Infantry and three others.

Sher Khan was later conferred the Nishan-e-Haider, Pakistan's highest gallantry award, on the recommendation of the Indian brigade commander who vouched for his bravery on the icy heights.



CM TS Rawat interacts with a delegation of citizens headed by Devprayag MLA Vinod Kandari to whom he assured that a big institution would be opened in soon in Devprayag to boost employment. Pioneer photo

## Delhi's water conservation plan hits roadblock

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's Water Conservation project to create reservoir at flood-plain area will not become a reality at least in this monsoon season as the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has refused to pass an order on a plea by the Government seeking nod to start work on pilot project.

This may be noted that few days before, NGT gave its approval to start the pilot project but on Monday, hearing a plea of Flood and irrigation department of Delhi government, the court refused to pass the project and asked authority to look into the matter.

A bench headed by NGT

Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said the NGT has no objection to any legitimate project which does not interfere with the rejuvenation of Yamuna and protection of its flood plains. "The tribunal, however, can express no opinion on merits of any particular project. Merits of such projects have to be gone into by concerned statutory authorities in accordance with the laid down procedure," the bench said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by the Irrigation and Flood Control Department of the Delhi government for creation of water bodies or reservoirs in Yamuna floodplain by retaining excess flood water of the river

Yamuna during the monsoon season for recharging the groundwater from Palla to Wazirabad.

The plea said the proposal has been approved by the Principal Committee constituted by this tribunal, subject to conditions, including that the proposal would be carried out as a pilot project at one location only to study the techno-economic viability and to identify the quantum of the ground water recharged. Removal of silt to be carried out in a regulated and limited manner, so as to keep the morphology of the river undisturbed.

Sufficient safeguard needs to be built for implementation of the project to ensure that no

misuse takes place through unauthorised activities such as extraction of sand and other natural resources," read one of the conditions imposed by the committee.

The petition also claimed that the project will not disturb the main direction of this tribunal for rejuvenation of the Yamuna and is to be executed subject to the conditions imposed by the committee.

According to the plan, water will be conserved in stretches from Palla till Wazirabad.

During the launch, Delhi government also claimed that no construction or use of concrete material will be used and regular flow of Yamuna will also not be disturbed.

## WII Dehradun to conduct wildlife census in Haryana



MANOJ KUMAR ■ CHANDIGARH

In a move to intensify its campaign for wildlife conservation, Haryana Wildlife and Forest Department has planned to carry out a wildlife census in the state. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, is the nodal agency for wildlife counting, said VS Tanwar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden, Haryana.

Tanwar said, "Earlier, we had sent a proposal to WII, Dehradun to conduct wildlife survey in the state which it has accepted at a cost of Rs 39 lakh.

We have forwarded WII's proposal to the state government for financial approval. Counting



of wildlife in the state will start once we get approval from the state government."

The Chief Wildlife Warden said that the counting, being done for the second time in the state after five years, will be completed in four months by involving department officials, WII, Dehradun, officials and representatives of non-government organisations.

Haryana is a natural habitat of many species if animals and

birds. There are some indications of the declining of certain bird species and, animals in this area.

The entire survey exercise is expected to take about four months and the estimated survey cost of Rs 39 lakh includes expenses of installing camera traps, wild animal surveillance systems, ascertaining the availability of prey species, Proof of Performance (PoP) for tracking the pug marks of animals including leopard, leopardess and cubs,

labour costs, transport charges and expenditure on hiring field biologists among others, Tanwar said, adding the census will take around four months and the final result will be released after a thorough study of collected data.

The Chief Wildlife Warden said, "Before the counting starts, we will impart adequate training to all the staff and those who would be part of the exercise.

The counting of these animals would also help the forest



and wildlife departments to push their agenda of protecting bird species, animals and more forest areas."

The department has taken several steps to protect wild animals. Cases against poachers are being lodged under Wild Life Conservation Act for hunting and attacking these animals for various reasons. The counting study will help to identify key areas where mitigation options are needed to minimise man-animal conflict.

Another senior department officer said, "The previous wildlife census in the state was held around five years ago in 2014. Normally, such counting is being done in four years.

The distribution, numbers and behaviour of birds and animals are changing over the period of time because of various reasons.

The population of the black partridge (kala teetar), Haryana state bird, sparrow, butterfly, hog deer or pada deer, white nape tilt, leopards among others has been decreasing over the past few years," he added.

Many species have already disappeared and many more are following the same path. The number of individuals across species of birds and animals has declined as well in many cases due to human activity, especially since the industrial revolution, severely affecting genet-

ic variation, biodiversity, among other issues. Officials said as of now, there are no exact figures of the population of many bird species and animals in the state. "After completion of the counting, more effective measures would be taken to conserve wildlife in state, an official said, adding the census would focus on counting of bird species, animals like deer, Nilgai (blue bull), monkey, peacock, leopard and others.

"It has been observed that migratory birds from China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tibet, Siberia and Iraq start thronging the wetland in October-mid.

The winged visitors return to their native countries in March with the onset of the spring season. Such birds will also be counted if counting starts in above months," the official added.

Haryana has two national parks, eight wildlife sanctuaries, two wildlife conservation areas, four animal and bird breeding centres, one deer park and three zoos, all of which are managed by the Haryana Wildlife and Forest department.

### THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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नोटिस बनाम- रविन्द नाथ सिंह पिता गुरुकुल नारायण सिंह, हाल पता- बुन्दान बहार, लेन-1 आयाज हातरल के पीछे बालावाला देहरादून, उत्तराखण्ड।

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# Tiger tales

Yes, the numbers of the big cat have doubled but so has the intensity of man-animal conflict. Let's address that too



In 2008, alarm bells had rung when the tiger census in the country threw up a dismally low number of 1411, despite years of initiatives under Project Tiger. Home to 70 per cent of the world's wild tiger population, India had no option but to turn the needle through aggressive pursuit of various conservation efforts. So it is indeed heartening that in little over a decade, we now have almost doubled that number, clocking 2,967 tigers and registering an increase of almost 33 per cent in the fourth cycle of the latest census.

Little wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who released the new figures, seized another moment of national pride that India has achieved by claiming that the target of doubling the tiger population has been met four years before the deadline. What makes the numbers remarkably reassuring is that they have come at a time when biodiversity is severely challenged. Yet the government and the community have persistently been in sync with their conservation efforts. Also the four-year counting exercise, the world's largest wildlife survey effort in terms of coverage and intensity, is a celebration of technology. Over 15,000 camera traps were installed for capturing tiger images and recording their unique stripe pattern with the help of a dedicated software, there were satellite mapping and GIS-based apps for in-depth tracking of the big cats and the data collection process. Madhya Pradesh saw the highest number of tigers at 526, followed by Karnataka at 524 and Uttarakhand with 442 tigers. So it is the healthy patches which have pushed up the total numbers rather than the dotty ones.

This brings us to the most important aspect of tiger management in their habitats than just recording figures. While tiger numbers have increased, tiger habitats have been dwindling due to human encroachments, infrastructure projects and truncated wildlife transit corridors. The man-animal conflict has never been worse, therefore. Be it the killing of Avni or villagers beating up straying tigers, or the confused tiger hitting back with a counter-charge, the headlines point to a dangerous trend of overpopulation not being commensurate with increase in prey base-rich forest zones. The Wildlife Trust of India's conflict database for Uttar Pradesh records 63 cases of attacks on humans by tigers from 2014 to February 2019, an average of 10.8 cases per year. This marks a dramatic increase from an average of 5.6 attacks on humans per year between 2000 and 2013. The tiger will stray into human settlements when its food chain is frayed and villagers cannot be expected to prioritise conservation when the lives of their own and the livestock are at stake. It is now imperative to understand what's causing the conflict on the ground on a case by case basis and address it immediately before avenging kills start showing up in the numbers. Awareness of tigers should now also include equal awareness about its ecology and behaviour and the need to provide alternative ranges. Recent examples have shown how some railway underpasses to facilitate wildlife transit are working as animals, like the elephant and tiger, are adapting to changed migration routes. There are still viable tracts of pristine forests that can be turned into reserves by relocating animals from overpopulated stretches. But forests are a state subject and an inter-state agreement on shared corridors needs to be ironed out and coordinated if translocation is to succeed. Meanwhile relocation needs are mounting. The entire process cannot be fast-tracked but needs to be graded and spaced out to ensure tigers' acceptance of a new territory as their own household. Apart from peripheral villagers, a new tiger also has to deal with resident cats or in the total absence of its kind, reconcile to being a lone ranger and sync up with other relocated companions. And if forest dwellers have co-habited with tigers before, there is no reason why we cannot make them stakeholders in conservation efforts, keeping them invested as park patrollers and monitors, generating a subsidiary tiger economy that ensures them revenue, incentivising forest produce and enhancing the tiger gene pool that can promote "sighting tourism." Till this is done, our pride will continue to be their enemy. The tiger sits on top of the food chain in the forest and by saving it and giving it a home, we are protecting all sub-species and curating a biosphere that even includes grasslands and rivers.

## Time for a green bonus

The Himalayan States have demanded that the Centre give them an environment grant, not really an unfair demand



India's extremely fertile plains are nourished with water and nutrients from its mountains, like a bloodstream disseminates life force across the human body. Without the Himalayas, there wouldn't be glaciers or the resultant rivers to water our vast plains. There wouldn't be rains if the peaks hadn't blocked the monsoon clouds and trapped them in the Valleys. It is important, therefore, for India as a whole to treat the Himalayas and the ecology of these mountains carefully to ensure that civilisational life as we know it can continue

as it has for five millennia. Ergo, it is not imprudent for the Himalayan states to demand a 'Green Bonus' so that they can preserve the ecology of the mountains and plan for sustainable development.

We have seen what rampant, unplanned development in the mountains can do. Shimla, the erstwhile colonial summer capital of this country, ran out of water last summer. Rampant development has seen the destruction of thousands of acres of primeval forests and wanton construction activity continues with nary a concern for the future or resource management. Satellite imagery shows that the rapid retreat of large Himalayan glaciers, through a combination of both local and global environmental contagion, is grave indeed. It is only fair then that the citizens in the plains do their bit to contribute for the health of the mountains and the economy of the states because in the long run, they are protecting themselves and their progeny. There has to be a stop on the race to develop huge projects and even too much industry in the mountains, but the population of the mountain states needs some sort of compensation for this denial, which seems like a small price to pay. Without any financial incentive, unrestricted development will continue, because the fear of penalties will be overridden by economic interests. We need to incentivise and not just penalise. Ten of India's 11 hill States met as part of a recently concluded campaign and made this demand to the Finance Minister. They also advocated for a separate Central ministry to explore concerns specific to them and for better efficacy of ecological programmes targeted for the mountains. This is something that should be explored, maybe not as a ministry but definitely as a department of the government that looks at some of these critical issues. In the end, these would not just impact residents of these States but every other Indian. The Himalayas might be one of the world's youngest mountain ranges but they have suffered from the ravages of civilisation. This must be controlled now, if we, as a nation, are to continue.

# Karnataka impasse

A few MLAs going back to the people for a fresh mandate on another party's ticket is far better than dissolution of the House and fresh Assembly election



A SURYA PRAKASH

The ugly political drama in Karnataka has finally ended with the defeat of the HD Kumaraswamy Government on the floor of the State Assembly and the appointment of a new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Government headed by BS Yediyurappa.

But the story is not over yet because of the Constitutional issues that have sprung up vis-a-vis the decision of the Speaker of the Karnataka Assembly, KR Ramesh Kumar, to disqualify 17 MLAs, who had earlier sent in their resignations. The MLAs wanted their resignations to be accepted and 10 of them even appeared before the Speaker to assert their right to resign from the House. The Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) wanted them disqualified because they did not turn up when the HD Kumaraswamy Government faced a trust vote in the Assembly. The Speaker has also barred these MLAs from contesting elections afresh during the life of the present Assembly. This will now completely upset the plans of these MLAs and the new Chief Minister, who had planned to give them BJP tickets in the by-elections. The matter is already before the Supreme Court and it is likely that these MLAs will challenge the Speaker's decision to disqualify them. Whatever the eventual outcome, there can be little doubt that this has done considerable damage to the democratic traditions in the country.

The drama began with the Congress and Janata Dal(S) rebels going to the office of the Speaker and submitting their resignations. As the resignations were tendered in his absence, the Speaker insisted that the MLAs present themselves before him because he was duty-bound to ascertain whether they were under any duress or if they were resigning from the Assembly by their own volition. Rules of the Assembly state that when the resignation letter is handed over personally and the MLA says his action is "voluntary and genuine" (and if the Speaker is satisfied), he has to accept the resignation "immediately." If the letter of resignation is not handed over personally, the rules give the Speaker scope to begin an inquiry on whether the resignation is voluntary and genuine. He also has the right to reject such a letter. Ten MLAs met the Speaker after the apex court directed them to do so. They complied with the directive and informed the Speaker in person that they wished to resign from their seats.

Days later, when the Kumaraswamy Government had to face a trust vote, the two parties in the ruling coalition issued whips, directing their members to be present in the State Assembly and to vote for the trust motion. The rebel MLAs, having tendered their resignations, stayed back in Mumbai. Given this chronology



of events and the rules regarding the resignation of MLAs, the Speaker ought to have accepted the resignations. Since the resignations were tendered before the trust vote was taken up by the House, the rebels contended that the whips issued by the two parties were infructuous.

There was something repulsive about the fortnight long drama in the State with the leaders of the Congress and the JD(S) trying every trick to win back the dissidents. A police complaint was lodged alleging wrongful confinement of MLAs in Mumbai. On one occasion, DK Shivakumar, an influential leader of the Congress in the State and a senior Minister in the Kumaraswamy Government, who tried to enter the hotel, was "escorted out" of the hotel after the rebel legislators wrote to the Mumbai police and sought "protection" from the visiting politicians from Karnataka.

The conduct of the Karnataka Speaker is in contrast to the approach of Venkaiah Naidu, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, in regard to resignations.

Naidu received a letter of resignation from Neeraj Shekhar, a member of the House belonging to the Samajwadi Party, on July 15. The following day, he informed the Rajya Sabha that he had accepted Shekhar's resignation. The Chairman called the member and asked him if his resignation letter was genuine and whether he had taken the decision voluntarily. He also asked him if he would like to reconsider his decision.

When the member insisted on resigning from the House, the Chairman accepted the same "with immediate effect" and asked his secretariat to complete the formalities. He also made a formal announcement about the MP's resignation on July 16 in the House.

Coming back to the drama in the Karnataka Assembly, it is indeed unfortunate that the people of the State failed to give a clear mandate to one political party or a pre-poll coalition in the last Assembly election in 2018. The final verdict left the BJP high and dry with 104 seats and the State ended up having a Chief Minister from the

third largest party — the JD(S) — which had 37 seats and which had the support of the Congress, the second largest party with 78 seats. In the Assembly election held in 2008, the electorate gave the BJP 110 seats in the 224-member House. Yediyurappa had to entice some Independents and form the Government, which survived precariously for some time. But this was neither here nor there, and there were no easy solutions to the problem.

Following the Constitution 91 Amendment Act, it has become difficult for poachers to get MLAs to cross the floor. Therefore, if a party falls short of a majority by a few seats, the only option available for the ruling party is to entice Opposition legislators to vacate their seats and contest the elections afresh on the ruling party's ticket. This is what Yediyurappa did in 2008 and succeeded in bolstering his numbers in the State legislature.

It also speaks of the maturity of the electorate that some constituencies, which had never voted the BJP before,

electorates put up by this party and, thus, voted to provide stability to the Government. This entire operation was code-named "Operation Kamala" and came in for a lot of criticism. But this writer is of the view that a few MLAs going back to the people for a fresh mandate on another party's ticket is far better than dissolution of the House and fresh Assembly election. This is also a much better option than the shameful defection of MPs and MLAs from one party to another, which was the case until the anti-defection law came into being.

Yediyurappa was hoping to undertake a similar exercise this time, too, and get the defecting MLAs to contest afresh on a BJP ticket. This is stymied by the Speaker's order. We will now have to await a judicial decision. Until then, a fresh round of instability is on the cards and the people will watch helplessly as another Government will hobble along.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

That they selected the team for West Indies brings up the question whether Virat Kohli is the captain of the team at his or the selection committee's pleasure.

Former cricketer — Sunil Gavaskar



I've requested Dr Farooq Abdullah sahab to convene an all-party meeting. Need of the hour is to come together & forge a united response.

PDP President, — Mehbooba Mufti



Why is the BJP MLA still in the BJP? Why the lack of security to the victim and witnesses? Is it possible to get justice from BJP?

Samajwadi Party leader — Akhilesh Yadav



No civilisation or society under the rule of law would ever allow acts of violence to take place. We call on the general public of Hong Kong to be aware.

Hong Kong Affairs spokesman — Yang Guang



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Safety comes first

Sir — The fines proposed under the new Motor Vehicles Bill, 2019, will serve as an effective deterrent to violations such as over speeding of vehicles, riding triplets on two-wheelers, jumping traffic signals and not wearing a helmet among others, all of which endanger the lives of not only the offenders but others as well.

Neither are traffic rules strictly followed nor are they toughly enforced even as the roads are perennially ridden with pot-holes. Talking of airbags, which the Indian Government recently made mandatory in automobiles, one cannot but recall the pioneering efforts of the internationally-renowned American lawyer-turned consumer activist, Ralph Nader, who for the first time in the automobile history, got airbags and similar safeguards against accidents such as seat belts, shatterproof windshields and padded dashboards to be made compulsory in American cars in 1966. This effectively saved thousands of lives over there.

Well, it is said of Rama Nama that it protects us whether we chant it with or without attention.

### Accident or cold-blooded murder?

It was sad that the Unnau rape survivor was 'critically injured' when a truck hit the car in which she was travelling. At this juncture, she is battling for her life. The disfigurement of the number plate of the truck involved in the head-on collision and the withdrawal of the police personnel despite the court order to provide security cover to the young woman and her family round-the-clock raise the suspicion that it could have been a premeditated attempt to murder the rape survivor.

Her family alleges that the accident was purely the handiwork of BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar. A 'car crash' is a common and time-tested method used to eliminate inconvenient truths and witnesses. The rape accused has a lot of clout with the State Government, something that explains the ill-disguised collusion between the police and the perpetrators of the crime of attempted murder. The contention by the cops that the crash happened during heavy rains was a feeble attempt to establish that it was just a road mishap and an indication of how the investigation would proceed. Notwithstanding its zero tolerance for violence against women, the BJP is appearing to be extremely protective of the accused in this case. It was possible that the teenage rape survivor's attempted self-immolation in front of the house of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath incensed the ruling dispensation and pro-



voled it to take revenge on her. If those who seek justice are weak and vulnerable, they are targeted in ruthless ways. Remember the death of the victim's father in police custody obviously due to torture. The latest incident smelling of conspiracy and foul play is one more example of lawlessness in Uttar Pradesh belying the claim of "Ram Rajya." We urge the Supreme Court, the protector of the right to life, to take suo motu cognisance of the incident, monitor the CBI probe and see to it that the culprits, however powerful or influential they are, do not go unpunished.

G. David Milton Maruthancode

So are traffic rules. We may find them irksome, but they save our lives, whether we follow them dutifully or perfunctorily.

CV Krishna Manoj Hyderabad

### A true statesman

Sir — Veteran leader S Jaipal Reddy was known for his exceptional oratorical skills, political ac-

men and outspokenness. He always spoke his mind. Despite limited physical mobility due to childhood polio, he did not fail in reaching a higher role in politics. He became a Union Minister, was

five-time member of the Lok Sabha and two-time member Rajya Sabha. He was a multi-talented person, prolific writer, honest and upright and was bestowed with the best Parliamentary award. His speeches were always forceful and inspiring. He was a true statesman.

Ramesh G Jethwani Bengaluru

### Train rescue

Sir — The heroic rescue of the passengers on board the Mahalaxmi Express, which was caught in flood waters about 65 km from Mumbai, is much appreciated. The Railways should now be proactive and cancel train services in flood-affected regions in the best interest of passenger safety. The incident should lead to better facilities on board trains. A public announcement system to communicate information to passengers during an emergency/crisis is needed. Railway staff should also be equipped to handle any emergency.

Varun Dambal Bengaluru

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



**FIRST COLUMN**

## Hullabaloo around media freedom

It is now time for intellectuals to stop treating media freedom as a shibboleth and instead broaden their mindset



**MARKANDEY KATJU**

The so-called "liberals", Opposition leaders and eminent people have accused the Modi Government of crushing the media freedom (by various ways, for example, getting "inconvenient" journalists dismissed by putting pressure on media owners and stopping Government advertisements, among others). Soon after the house and offices of Prannoy Roy, the owner of NDTV, were raided by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in June, 2017, a meeting was held in the Press Club of India, which was addressed by Fali Nariman, the eminent Supreme Court lawyer, Arun Shourie, former journalist and former Union Minister and many others. They all waxed eloquent about media freedom and the need to protect it.

In my opinion, people, who speak for media freedom overlook the fact that it is not an end in itself but only a means to an end. The end must be to benefit society. So, if media freedom benefits society, if it helps in raising the standard of living of the people and gives them decent living, if it helps in creating a social order where people are happy and prosperous, this should be supported. But if it does the contrary, which means if it harms society, it should be suppressed.

When I became the Chairman of the Press Council of India in 2014, I gave an interview to Karan Thapar on his show, *Devil's Advocate* (available on YouTube titled 'Media deliberately dividing the people: PCI chief'), wherein I explained my viewpoint.

Historically, the media (which was then only in print, and that, too, not as regular newspapers but as leaflets and pamphlets) arose in Western Europe, particularly in England and France, in the 17th and 18th centuries as an organ of the people against feudal oppression. At that time, all the organs of power were in the hands of the feudal authorities (kings and aristocrats). Hence, people had to create new organs, which could represent their interests. One of the powerful organs created by the people was the media. It represented the voice of the future, in contrast to the feudal organs of power, who wanted to preserve status quo. Great writers like Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Paine and Junius (whose real name we still do not know), combated religious bigotry and feudal oppression and were of great help in transforming feudal Europe to modern Europe.

In India, too, at one time, we had great journalists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and Nikhil Chakravarty, among others, who were opposed to social evils. Even today, we have great journalists, who almost single-handedly expose issues like the farmers' suicides, something ignored by other journalists. There are others, too, who have consistently opposed communalism and for which, they had to pay a price. However, these are exceptions only. What about the rest of the media? What were they doing before the Modi Government came to power in 2014? Were they helping the people in their struggle to better their lives?

As I mentioned in my interview with Karan Thapar, the Indian media, even before Modi came to power, largely worked in an anti-people manner in three ways: First, by diverting the people's attention from real issues, which range from socio-economic (for example, poverty, record unemployment, appalling child malnourishment, widespread farmers distress, almost non-existent health-care and good education among others) to non-issues or trivialities like fashion parades, cricket (which is almost religion in India), petty politics (which has assumed a new low level). It was behaving like the Roman Emperors, who had said that if you cannot give the people bread, give them circuses. Second, by dividing the people. Third, by spreading superstitions and unscientific thinking like astrology. And what about paid news and planted news? These were very much active even before the coming of the Modi Government.

So, relative freedom, which the Indian media enjoyed in the pre-Modi period, was not used to benefit the Indian people but largely to harm them. Why then is the media (and the so-called "intellectuals") lamenting over the suppression of media freedom? Even before it came to power, media freedom was being used in a manner detrimental to the people's welfare. It is time now to stop treating media freedom as a shibboleth and an *idee fixe*. It is only a means to an end, and not a sacrosanct end in itself. The so-called "liberals", "intellectuals" and champions of media freedom should develop some depth in their thinking. And if the Indian media wants to be respected, it must act like the European media when it was fighting against feudalism. Only then does its freedom deserve to be supported and only then will the people respect it.

*(The writer is former Judge of the Supreme Court of India)*

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

**THE CHAIR ON WHICH I SAT BELONGS TO ALL. NOT JUST ME. HE HAS USED SUCH LANGUAGE FOR ALL THE WOMEN IN THE COUNTRY.**  
—BJP MEMBER  
**RAMA DEVI**



**I HAVE BEEN AN MLA NINE TIMES, A MINISTER FOUR TIMES, I WAS PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER... I KNOW LEGISLATIVE PROCEDURES**  
—SAMAJWADI PARTY MEMBER  
**AZAM KHAN**

# The American shock & awe

**Though the present US-Pak bonhomie is Afghan-specific, India will have to be watchful and tread its path carefully in case Khan succeeds to placate the Taliban**



**ANIL GUPTA**

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's recently concluded three-day visit to the US and his one-on-one meeting with US President Donald Trump have evoked mixed reactions in India not only due to the latter's controversial statement but also due to a lukewarm concern displayed by American authorities with regard to terrorism. Relations between Pakistan and the US have been strained ever since the Trump Administration assumed power due to Islamabad's support to the global *jihadi* terrorist organisations and its involvement in cross-border terrorism in India and Afghanistan. Though Pakistan's involvement in cross-border terror in Iran is also well established, the US does not show much concern due to its strategic concerns in the Gulf region.

Pakistan's continued support to the Taliban and the Haqqani network operating in Afghanistan irked the new US Administration, which put it on notice, threatening to suspend all aid, including the package to its Army. Islamabad failed to read the US' intent. In the past, it got away playing the nuclear card. The Western world, particularly the US, is scared of the nuclear arsenal falling in the hands of *jihadi* terrorists operating from Pakistan's soil and succumbed to its black mail, dishing out doles to it. Trump, however, is different.

"The US has foolishly given Pakistan more than \$33 billion in aid over the last 15 years and they have given us nothing but lies and deceit, thinking of our leaders are fools. They give safe havens to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!" — this is what Trump tweeted on the first day of 2018. Pakistan went to the extent of blaming Trump for "flinging accusations at Pakistan," as he was disappointed at the "US' defeat in Afghanistan." Trump responded by blocking American aid of approximately \$3 billion that also included the \$300 million for the Pakistani Army. The Army-to-Army contact between the two nations was suspended. It was a big setback for Pakistan, which was already going through an economic crisis. Islamabad did try to put up a brave front initially but its dwindling economy, India's diplomatic offensive in exposing Pakistan, the firm stand of the US Administration and the strictness of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) compelled the Imran Khan Government to take stern measures against the terror industry. Whether these measures are a "show window" to win the trust of Trump and the US authorities (a prelude to Khan's visit to the US) or is there a sense of seriousness or permanency, only time will tell.

Meanwhile, the US has begun preparations for the next presidential election and Trump has also thrown his hat in the race. He is desperate to have one major diplomatic victory about which he can boast to the American people. His initiative in the Korean Peninsula is not making much headway. The strained relations with Iran are harming him more than helping him boost his image. His high-handed tactics of dealing with other countries have got him more enemies than allies. Both China and Russia also have tense relations with America. Although India is likely to be granted the status of the most-favoured non-NATO ally and is already designated with special STA-1 status, the relationship between the two countries is blowing hot and cold. Many in India perceive the US as a fickle ally. In a nutshell, Trump has more negatives to his credit than positives as



far as foreign and strategic relations are concerned. He is desperate to win the Afghan tangle, which is not possible without placating the Taliban. The US also knows that only Pakistan can exert the desired influence on the Taliban. This forms the background of Khan's visit to Pakistan as far as American perspective is concerned and unblocking the US aid.

Let's first discuss Afghanistan. India has emerged as a major soft power in Kabul and has a big stake in whatever final settlement takes place. The Taliban has been recognised as the key impediment to the end of conflict in Afghanistan. Earlier, India was elbowed out of the direct negotiations with the Taliban, as claimed by a section of the media. To my mind, it is a deliberate decision by the Government to stay away from direct negotiations with the terror group due to adverse ramifications back home. India, however, cannot be ignored. Sooner than later, we will be involved in the final settlement. India remains steadfast on its traditional position of supporting only an "Afghan-led, Afghan owned and Afghan controlled" process, which includes the duly elected Government in Kabul.

With Pakistan forming a key partner in Trump's South Asia strategy for achieving a political settlement in Afghanistan; defeating Al Qaeda and IS-Khorasan; providing logistical access for US forces and enhancing regional stability, it certainly has gained an upper hand. That is why Pakistan was included for the first time in the trilateral consultations with Russia, China and the US on the Afghanistan peace process held in Beijing in July.

The entire focus of the US was concentrated on Afghanistan during Khan's visit, which included the Pakistan Army Chief and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief in the entourage. While

Khan has agreed to work with Trump to prod the Taliban to strike a peace deal with the aim of extricating the US Army from its longest war, the latter has dangled the offer of unblocking \$3 billion aid to Pakistan if Khan succeeds. Khan said, "I want to assure President Trump, Pakistan will do everything within its power to facilitate the Afghan peace process. The world owes it to the long-suffering Afghan people to bring about peace after four decades of conflict."

There is no doubt that the US is desperate to exit from Afghanistan but is the negotiation with the Taliban the best solution? The terror organisation has not been reformed and its five-year brutal rule is still fresh in the mind of the Afghans. It certainly suits Pakistan because this will help it achieve its aim of achieving strategic depth and the use of Afghan territory to promote terrorism. It will also end the hope of a democratic Afghanistan, disappointing millions who are holding out still for a brighter future. India must, therefore, press for its involvement in the peace talks and ensure that the Taliban does not elbow out the elected Afghan Government. Trump's desperation can be gauged from this statement, "I could win that war within a week, and I don't want to kill 10 million people. Afghanistan could be wiped off the face of the earth. I don't want to go that route."

India has lot at stake because Afghanistan holds significant economic, security and strategic implications for it. We cannot be a mute spectator and have to ensure that democracy survives in Afghanistan. As far as counter-terrorism is concerned, not much time was devoted to the same possibly to avoid public embarrassment to the visiting premier, whose services are badly needed by the US in view of its leverage over the Taliban, thanks to the safe havens it provides to the groups

leadership. But as admitted by Khan himself, with more than 40 terror groups existing in Pakistan, the situation is very fragile. Any terror attack in Afghanistan or India with mass casualties with proven links to Pakistan will reverberate the newfound relationship between the US and Pakistan. The latter will have to tread the path very carefully.

Khan was successful in raising the Kashmir issue during the one-on-one meeting with President Trump. It was a spin-doctored question asked by a correspondent to prevent difficult questions on Pakistan's involvement in terrorism, which would have caused a lot of embarrassment to Pakistan. The question successfully diverted the topic to Kashmir, when Khan lost no time in seeking Trump's mediation and assistance in resumption of Indo-Pak dialogue. India has made its stand very clear by stating that talks and terror cannot be held together.

Trump surprised everyone with his signature trademark off-the-cuff remark. He has developed a habit of speaking or tweeting without preparation or proper briefing. His remark stoked a controversy, to which New Delhi reacted promptly and set the record straight. Fearing a strain in Indo-US relations, a number of American bureaucrats and leaders also jumped in to save the situation from worsening. But Trump is Trump and his remark should be seen in the light of his desperation for an early Afghan exit.

But Khan has succeeded to once again to internationalise Kashmir after numerous failed attempts by past Governments. India has to be careful and thwart the ISI's design to portray home-grown terror groups in India by promoting the proxies of IS like ISJK, Al Qaeda like Ansar Ghazwa-ul-Hind, Hizbul Mujahideen and other IS-affiliate/inspired terror outfits. The ISI will certainly attempt to influence Left-wing extremism as has been exposed by the Pune Police disclosing links between urban Naxals and HM.

Khan's attempt at reviving bilateral trade, was evident from the large number of businessmen and traders that formed his entourage and unblock the US aid, has failed for the time being and is in no way going to help him to come out of the current economic mess. It may force him to persist with various counter-terrorism mechanisms put in place, including the arrest of Hafiz Saeed. More arrests are likely provided the Army and ISI permit. The imminent danger of being placed in the blacklist by the FATF may tie the hands of the ISI and Army. So the axe is likely to fall more on Afghan-specific terror groups like the Taliban and the Haqqani network.

The visit has been significant as far as bilateral security cooperation and military-to-military relations are concerned. There is a bright chance of resuming suspended military training programmes for Pakistan. At one point during President Trump's meeting with Khan, the former also hinted at resumption of the security assistance for Pakistan depending on what both countries achieve concerning Afghanistan. The major plus point was the personal rapport established between the two. There is a great likelihood of a direct tele-line between the two leaders to further cement their bonhomie and smoothen any bureaucratic hiccups that may erupt. Islamabad would like to use such an opportunity to sort out other issues in the bilateral realm.

Will there be a change in the Indo-Pacific strategy of the US? Will Pakistan succeed in elbowing out India from the US equation in the region? Indian diplomats will have to work hard to ward off any such possibility. Though the present bonhomie between the two is Afghan-specific, what shape it takes in the future in case Khan succeeds to placate the Taliban, will have to be watched carefully.

*(The writer is a Jammu-based political commentator, columnist, security and strategic analyst)*

# Stop the illegal trade of human lives

**Given the trans-national nature of trafficking, there is need for a comprehensive legislation that should factor in a well-equipped criminal justice system, a rehabilitative mechanism, ranging from the district to the national level, time-bound investigation, trial, rehabilitation and reintegration**



**SILKY GREWAL**

Human trafficking is not a new crime, rather it is an age-old age practice prevalent in the form of "slavery" and was an accepted economic practice. Trafficking is nothing but "modern slavery" and has now emerged as a significant problem all over the world. The entire process of trafficking is a trans-national organised crime, starting from the identification of the victims, their transportation and lastly their exploitation, which operates seamlessly across national as well international borders. Trafficking is a market-driven industry based on the

principle of demand and supply. It is a demand-led crime wherein the victims are bought and sold for their exploitation and is one of the by-products of society's unchecked greed and lust. It is an alarming fact that human trafficking is the only industry in which the supply always meets the demand. At this juncture it is imperative to understand the dynamics of 'demand' and 'supply' sides of trafficking. The organised gang of traffickers meets such demands by targeting areas and people with vulnerabilities. The supply pool is generally confined to areas with poor economic growth, high rate of gender disparity, political instability and lack of job opportunities. Reasons for the demand are countless, ranging from cheap labour to beggary, use of children for prostitution, sex tourism, pornography, forced prostitution, illegal organ trade and adoptions. The victim most certainly



is too undeveloped to give "consent" for "exploitation." Sometimes the movement of children may be voluntary, wherein the victim is enticed or deceived by the trafficker; or as bonded labour where it is inter-generational; and sometimes involuntary where children are victims of coercion. Babies are trafficked to boost the business of illegal adoption, widely known as "child laundering." The child is

procured illegally from his/her parents and the legal system of adoption is used to "launder" him/her as a legally adopted child. In 2018, a probe was carried out by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) which revealed that illegal adoptions were being carried out by the Missionaries of Charity in Ranchi, India. The home, by the name of Nirmal Hriday, was established for unwed

mothers. It was found that the illegal adoption activities were going on there for the last several years. While the police traced the four children, who were sold by the home for adoption, 58 more suspicious cases came to light. In other words, in such rackets, a child is treated in a manner analogous to a criminal organisation engaged in money laundering, which obtains funds illegally but then "launders" them through a legitimate business as has been iterated in an article written by David M. Smolin.

Another frightening aspect of trafficking is exploitation of people, especially children, who are the victims of humanitarian crisis. According to BBC news, Shamim (name changed) aged 14, was forced to flee from her home country because of the fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, ethnicity and so on. BBC news also reported that she fled from Myanmar after her fam-

ily was killed. She was searching for help on the road to Bangladesh. In her own words, "Women came with a van. They asked me, if I'd go with them. After accepting their help, I was bundled into a car, with the promise of safe passage to a new life. Instead I was taken to the nearest city, Cox's Bazar. Not long after that they brought two boys to me. They showed me a knife and punched me in my tummy and beat me because I wasn't co-operating. Then the boys raped me. I wasn't willing to but they kept going."

It is unfortunate that despite the mounds of evidence, little is being done to stop preying traffickers. Neither is there any codified law or preventive measure to make the vulnerable people aware about the dynamics of trafficking, watching out for traps or the dark side of unsafe migration. Further, our legal system does not create adequate and effec-

tive deterrence against commercial exploitation of children; such deterrence is possible only when customers are dealt with sternly.

The existing enforcement mechanisms to curb the menace of trafficking are limited to punitive measures and a few schemes. They are grossly insufficient to address the multi-dimensional problems which trafficking poses. The present system is also grossly inadequate to meet the counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration needs of the victims of trafficking. Given its trans-national nature, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive legislation to deal with all aspects of trafficking, which should evolve a well-equipped criminal justice system and a rehabilitative mechanism, ranging from the district to the national level, to ensure prevention of trafficking, time-bound investigation, trial, rehabilitation and reintegration.

There is also need for the "victim-witness protection protocol" to punish the perpetrators.

Against the above backdrop, in 2018, the Ministry of Women and Child Development introduced a comprehensive legislative framework — Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 — dealing with various aspects like preventives, time-bound prosecution and rehabilitation. For some reasons the Anti-Trafficking Bill, 2018 could not be passed and lapsed. However, the need for a comprehensive legislative framework still exists. Trafficking continues to be a severe attack on human dignity. At this point it is apt to refer to Martin Luther King who said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

*(The author is an Anti-Trafficking expert and a practicing advocate in Delhi)*





## AutismLink

Researchers have identified a link between exposure to high levels of oestrogen in the womb and the likelihood of developing autism. The discovery adds evidence to support the prenatal sex steroid theory of autism first proposed 20 years ago



## DOCYARD

DR RAVI GAUR

MD Pathology &amp; COO

ONQUEST LABORATORIES LIMITED,  
NEW DELHI

## Hyposkillia is a reality

For better medical facilities there is an urgent need to train more teachers and improve doctor-patient ratio in teaching institutes, says DR RAJEEV SUDAN



## Keep fever at bay

Viral infections are common among people of all age but often seem to be concentrated in infants and children. The data released by The United Nations Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation also indicates the continued high mortality risk in the first year of Indian children's life. Viral infections such as rotavirus and enteric viral illness pose more serious threats to children in comparison to adults. Most childhood viral infections are not serious and include such diverse illnesses as cold, running nose, watery eyes, sore throat, fever, skin rashes, vomiting and diarrhea. Some viral illnesses that cause more serious disease, convulsions, measles and others, are less common now due to widespread immunisation.

If symptoms persists in children for more than a week, it's time to take them to a physician as these could be the clarion call against viral infections and lead to complications as pneumonia and others. At that time, a child should be taken for blood testing for malaria, dengue, typhoid, chikungunya, arbovirus and others including complete blood count. Parents generally take extra care of their children during the change in weather or when it rains badly. But, it is important to know that children require extra care across the seasons. Few of the common tips to protect children from viral infections are:

**■ Replace handkerchiefs with skincare wipe & tissue paper:** Parents are often seen carrying cotton handkerchiefs for wiping the face or running nose of their children again and again, which can be dangerous because the children are getting re-exposed to the virus. The wet and medicated skincare wipes and tissue papers are mild on the skin in comparison to the cloth handkerchief. And the best part is that they can simply be disposed off after use. Parents should make sure to immediately wash hands with soap and water thoroughly to wash off the harmful bacteria which tend to cling to hands.

**■ Keep children away from those with infectious illness especially while playing with friends.**

**■ Ensure good hygiene by keeping nails clean to prevent accumulation of germs and dirt.**

**■ Maintain cleanliness around the children:** Mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and bugs are the most active carriers of harmful bacteria and viruses. Children are their easy target. Check for any standing water nearby, in order to prevent mosquito breeding. Limit the outdoor visits of your children during the morning and evening. Keep neighborhood free from trash, discarded containers, and bins to inhibit mosquito breeding.

**■ Vaccinate in time:** Vaccination is the best and effective way to protect infants and children from deadly infections and diseases. Still, parents overlook this aspect, which is important for their children's well-being. Only when the signs and symptoms are visible, the parents rush to the hospital to get a vaccine. Vaccination for Diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough, polio (IPV), rotavirus (RV), influenza (flu), measles and mumps in the early life of the child is imperative.

**■ Boost immunity:** Strengthening the immune system of children is one of the unbeatable ways to provide protection against viral infections. Give nutritious food with a balanced diet. Fresh fruits and veggies are must for children of all age groups. Keep children hydrated with water, milk, and fruit juice. Limit their intake of unhealthy food and snacks such as soda, chips, chocolates and cookies, and increase the consumption of oatmeal and cereals.

**■ Keep children indoors during the first rain of the season as it contains acidic elements which can cause skin problems and also because children tend to fall sick frequently during this season.**

## SUMMER COOLERS

**CHERRY:** A cherry is the fruit of many plants of the genus Prunus, and is a stone fruit. These tiny fruits are loaded with Vitamins and antioxidants that help in reducing skin's signs of aging and making it look fresh and glowing.

It also helps in regulating blood pressure because of the high potassium content. The phytochemicals in cherries help reduce bad cholesterol levels.

They work wonders as sleep stimulants. If you want to have a good night's sleep then grab a cup of cherry juice before going to bed and after waking up in the morning. Cherries are a good source of melatonin, which helps us regulate our sleep cycles. Cherries have also been found to help with jet lag.

Sweet cherries have a low glycemic index of 22 — lower than apricots, grapes, and peaches. This makes them a better snack than many other fruits, especially for diabetics.

Furthermore, these small berries are good enough to keep you hydrated and energetic throughout the day.



Medicine is one of the most challenging, yet so fulfilling a profession. The early inspiration for most doctors comes from either the family or interaction with a pleasant mannered, warm hearted paediatrician. Some of course get inspired by rich fruits of hard labour. They start preparing for the entrance exams as early as tenth standard and few thousand manage to get through the barrier, to a medical school. The medical college for the most comes as a shocker. The basic subjects of anatomy, physiology and biochemistry seem so disinteresting, taught by a demotivated faculty, low on creativity and inspiration, at least in most colleges in India. The same happens later in clinical subjects. The conditions are worst in most private medical colleges. They not only lack good faculty but a good hospital infrastructure as well. Most of them are located in relatively remote areas and do not attract many indoor patients. Many of them employ ghost faculty, to be showcased during medical council inspections only. The bedside teaching and clinical skills, the bedrock of medical practice is left to senior resident or junior faculty. In absence of adequate indoor patients and lack of good clinical teachers, the skillset of graduates passing out of these colleges is anybody's guess.

There has been a rapid expansion of medical education infrastructure in last decade, more so in the private sector. The Government is planning to upgrade district hospitals to teaching medical colleges in many states, increasing the number of graduation seats. Similarly, many AIIMS-like tertiary centres have been started with eye at training both graduates and post graduates.

The issues of facilities and infrastructure though linger on. The most serious issues facing medical education in India is lack of teaching faculty. A parliamentary panel report on six new AIIMS has indicated a vast shortage faculty. About 48 per cent of faculty posts are lying vacant and some of them don't have a single teacher in super speciality services like neonatology, surgical gastroenterology and trauma management. The non-faculty positions are underfilled as well, 60 per cent of the sanctioned



non faculty posts are vacant. The doctors have to work under huge stress because of skewed doctor patient ratio, affecting both the clinical services as well as medical education. These institutions are created for an excellence in patient care, teaching and research. If they are in such a condition, the plight of state medical colleges is anybody's guess!

Since the expansion of corporate hospitals, most of the talented doctors opt for financially lucrative private sector or leave the country. The medical colleges especially the private ones don't get the best talent for teaching. Most of them employ retired medical faculty for heading departments and are most often have a notional presence. The medical faculty in clinical departments in Government medical colleges are overburdened with patients and also have busy parallel private practice to manage.

Since time for them is a constraint, teaching suffers in the end. The traditional clinical skills of history taking and thorough clinical examinations is taking a back seat. There is more emphasis on diagnostic investigations. The graduates are tested more for their rote skills in examinations than clinical acumen. The one year internship is mostly used for preparing for post graduate exam, than learning art of conversation with patients or honing clinical skills. Most of them join postgraduate courses or state services, hyposkilled. The training in post-graduation is no different, barring a handful of institutions. The clinical learning in medicine is by apprenticeship. The young

ones learn when the old cock crows. When the old cock has come up the heierarchy on considerations other than teaching skill, the skill transfer to students get compromised. Unfortunately, political patronisation of medical teachers is playing havoc like in all other fields. Eventually, a generation of specialist and primary physicians enters medical services without requisite skills, heavily dependent on clinical investigations for diagnosis and management of patients, driving up the cost of medical services. Medicine is not only a science but a skill and philosophy as well. The art of medicine is the history taking, a thorough physical examination and ordering minimal relevant test for confirmation of diagnosis. Prescribing plethora of tests without a diagnosis is antithesis of art of medicine. The practice patterns must suit the socio-economic

THE YOUNG RESIDENTS WITH KNACK FOR SKILL TRANSFER MUST BE GROOMED AND MENTORED AS FUTURE TEACHERS. THE FUTURE OF A QUALITY MEDICAL HEALTHCARE DELIVERY OF INDIA LIES IN THEIR HANDS

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## DadiKaKehna

One of the most common problems during rains is how to take care of the skin that is dehydrated and parched. ROSHANI DEVI shares home remedies to take care of the dry skin this monsoon



Nothing is worse than a dry and itchy skin. More so during rainy season. For people who have dry skin, the problem leads to invisible pores, patchy and scaly skin. One of the most important things to remember is that one needs to keep the skin damp free. A damp skin attracts infection leading to rashes to ringworm. Here is what one can do this monsoon:

Clean your skin at least three times a day. This will help remove excess grime and oil that can clog the skin pores. Use a skin toner to maintain the pH balance.

Exfoliate your skin by using a scrub to remove dead skin cells. Use the scrub at least

once a week if you have oily skin. Use lukewarm water instead of cold to wash off the scrub.

The humidity that the rains bring can make your skin dry. Use a nourishing moisturiser to keep the skin moist, supple and healthy. One can use olive oil. However, if you have an oily skin use a water-based moisturiser.

Drink at least eight glasses of water during the day. Those who sweat a lot, their skin can end up looking pale and dull.

Use a sunscreen even in the monsoons because even though there isn't any sun, the UV rays are still present and can damage the skin.



## TIPTOP

Many Governments are making progress in the fight against tobacco use, but the World Health Organisation's (WHO) latest tobacco report shows more could be done to help people quit the addictive substance. "Quitting tobacco is one of the best things any person can do for their own health," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a Press release.

About five billion people, or 65 per cent of the world's population, are now covered by at least one of the WHO's recommended anti-tobacco measures launched in 2007, according to the WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic 2019.

The number has more than quadrupled since 2007 when only about 1 billion people, or 15 per cent of the world's population, were protected by at least one of the measures.

— IANS

## SLIMLINE

Team of doctors from Indraprastha Apollo Hospital treated one-and-a-half-year-old Muhammadjon Hakimov, a resident of Uzbekistan, for a rare condition formation of laryngeal web in the trachea, which had obstructed his respiratory tract. The child had undergone tracheotomy in Uzbekistan, which was not successful.

Months later, the child landed in the care of Dr Suresh Singh Naruka, Consultant, ENT, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. Dr Naruka adds,

The set of tobacco-control measures, known as MPOWER, included six key strategies — namely monitor tobacco use and prevention policies, protect people from tobacco smoke, offer help to quit tobacco use, warn people about the dangers of tobacco, enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, and raise taxes on tobacco.

These measures provided "practical tools to help people kick the habit, adding years to their life and life to their years," Ghebreyesus said.

Despite the progress, the report cited by Xinhua news agency said that many countries are still not adequately implementing the MPOWER policies, which can effectively help people quit tobacco and save lives.

— IANS

with his team surgically corrected the laryngeal web which is a congenital or acquired condition of the larynx due to formation of extra tissue inside lumen of air pipe. Thus, starting the airflow through the respiratory tract, and closed the opening of the neck which was created to help the child breathe.

"After the surgery, the child's breathing pattern became normal and he even started to speak normally, whereas earlier he was not able to utter a single sound," Dr Naruka adds.

## HAVE A COLOURFUL LIFESTYLE

Colours can dictate the mood and is often a reflection of one's personality. KUNTAL VYAS AGGARWAL tells you how to choose the right one

The spectrum of colours is an endless variety to choose from and each of them has an effect on our frame of mind, mood and body. Interior designers have a sound knowledge about colours as they work with different styles, they know which colour will gel well and is fit for the combinations along with the psychological effects of one colour.

It is astonishing how a body harmonises its waves with the interiors of a building be it home, restaurant, hotel or any corporate office. How different colours can actually leave a great impact on our way of thinking and well being. Colours are capable of altering an individual's mood and often provoke them to show different emotions.

It is important to know and understand each colour and how they affect the mind, mood and body. The colour component of interior designing shouldn't be considered only as what it looks but how it makes one feel.

Shades or hue is the main component of how we feel and experience the world around us. Being an element of light, it communicates diverse feeling including passion, excitement, mystery or serenity. Understanding the theory of shades in interior designing can help in creating the right mood. Each colour has a different impact on different individuals.



ferent individuals.

**Play with black for mystery and sophistication:** Black signifies dark and deep feelings thus, incorporates strong will environment. A combination of subtle elegance without being conservative and enhances sophistication.

**Red for passion, stimulates and warms the body:** Red is known for increasing heart rate, respiration and brain wave activity. It elevates enthusiasm and increases the room's energy level. People with high blood pressure and hypertension then avoid designing rooms with red color.

**Energy booster orange:** The colour is meant for fitness purposes and stimulates all the emotions required for releasing in physical activities. It is known for healing lungs and escalating energy levels.

**Relax with blue:** It is totally the opposite of red and has a calming effect on mood, mind and body. It is known for lowering heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. It doesn't relate to sadness but implies how cool a person can feel.

**Happy with yellow:** It is known as a memory stimulator and increases pulse rate and blood pressure. The colour works well with workplaces and classrooms to gain focus and alertness.

**Elegant and stunning purple:** The colour is associated with luxury and gives an illusion of inspiring and dreamy. Shades of purple have a calming effect on the interior similar to blue but without the feeling of cold.

Colour choice is very personal so, decide the colour for your interiors which suits your lifestyle. The hue will dictate your mood and thoughts. It is natural that an individual tends to feel comfortable in those shades which reflect their personalities. Therefore, interior designers while selecting the colours for their clients must keep in mind their preferences to make them feel as comfortable as possible.

The writer is Founder & Design Head, Resaiki Interiors

## STUDYCENTRE

Hotter weather increases both suicide rates and the use of depressive language on social media, says a new study that analysed half a billion tweets. The research published in the journal Nature Climate Change suggests that the effects of climate change could be as devastating as the influence of economic recessions when it comes to increasing suicide rates.

Projected temperature rise through 2050 could lead to an additional 21,000 suicides in the US and Mexico, the findings showed. "Surprisingly, these effects differ very little based on how rich populations are or if they are used to warm weather," said lead researcher Marshall Burke, Assistant Professor at Stanford University.

To tease out the role of temperature from other factors, the researchers compared historical temperature and suicide data across thousands of US counties and Mexican municipalities over several decades. The team also analysed the language in over half a billion Twitter updates to further determine whether hotter temperatures affect mental well-being.

They analysed, for example, whether tweets contain language such as 'lonely', 'trapped' or 'suicidal' more often during hot spells. The researchers found strong evidence linking warmer temperature with higher suicide rates.

Temperature rise by 2050 could increase suicide rates by 1.4 per cent in the US and 2.3 per cent in Mexico. — IANS



Trend Slazer

Sara has a heart of gold: Kartik

It isn't an old news when it was announced that actors **KARTIK AARYAN** and **SARA ALI KHAN** were set to romance each other for director **Imtiaz Ali's** next, *Aaj Kal*, which is also a sequel to *Love Aaj Kal*.

Kartik has now opened up on working with the actress. He said, "Sara is a person with a heart of gold. She is a star. I thoroughly enjoyed working with her. She has a certain positive energy that she brings to the screen and I would love to work with her again and again."

Recently, a video had gone viral in which the Sara was seen sharing her experience of working on Imtiaz's film and her camaraderie with Kartik.



'I am not a party person. I don't go to parties at all but my friends help me write my party numbers. I frequently take inspiration from social media posts I come across, which are shared by my friends and acquaintances. I usually use the posts as a case study to write songs. At times, when I meet my friends, we openly discuss details such as body postures and gestures of people in the clubs.'

—Badshah

Telugu actor **MAHESH BABU** revealed that he is all set to launch his clothing brand called Humbl on August 7.

"Our Humbl endeavor unveils today. Thank you all for the astounding response. For us, The Humbl Co, is not just clothing, it's a way of life. We welcome you all to the HumblCo family. Stay tuned for the launch on August 7," Mahesh tweeted. The brand comes with the tagline: 'Dress like a Dream, Live Real.'

Mahesh Babu becomes the second south Indian actor after Vijay Deverakonda to launch his own clothing brand.



Evangeline vacays in India



Actress **EVANGELINE LILLY**, who is popular as the 'wasp' from the *Avengers* series, is in India and is currently enjoying her stay in New Delhi.

Lilly has already visited the Humayun's Tomb, Agrasen ki Baoli and other locales, as is evident from a number of posts on her Instagram. The actress took to her Instagram and shared a string of photographs.

In the first post, Lilly is as at the Agrasen ki Baoli. She is seen sitting on the flight of stairs leading down into the step well and captioned it, "Who are you solitary woman? Delhi, New Delhi."

Express yourself

Designer **TARUN TAHILIANI** says that there was no showstopper for his collection so that people could focus more on the craftsmanship than glitter. By **TEAM VIVA**

It took one of the old guards of Indian fashion to attempt something new. In the process, designer **Tarun Tahiliani** broke the stranglehold that the concept of showstopper has had on the Indian ramp where the audience is lining up the seats to see Bollywood A-listers sashaying down rather than focussing on what the show is all about, clothes.

Tahiliani brought in the first ever 'non-show-stopper-show-stopper' concept at India Couture Week. For those who are yet to see the photographs, the designer achieved this by closing his collection with an anonymous model who donned a simple yet stunning white tulle gown which was paired with a dainty net mask. It covered the entire face with the intent of emphasising on the outfit and making a statement about its own identity, the craft and workmanship that had gone into its making. Said Tahiliani, "There was no showstopper this time because people are more interested in the muse than the clothes. They don't care about the collection as much as they care about who wore your garment. So I didn't want it to be like that."

There were more than 80 pieces spanning bridal couture, occasion and festive wear which heralded the coming together of technique, craftsmanship and innovation. Lightweight lehengas, shararas, peplum blouses, concept saris, structured drapes, anarkalis and fusion-style jumpsuits exuded pure celebration. There was contemporary occasion wear for pre-wedding functions with *chikankaari*, *mukaish* embroidery and *kanjeevaram*. When it came to couture, contoured construction, patterns and unique fabrics merged to make the garment feel like second skin, sensually moulding to the shape of every curve, and yet, allowing the freedom and comfort to dance the night away.

The collection placed the new Indian bride at the centre who envisioned her wedding as a special extension of her personality rather than an occasion where she looks like a shadow of herself. So lush colours, lightweight lehengas and structured drapes which can be treasured for life could be seen in designer Tahiliani's, *Bloom* collection.

"It captured the metamorphosis of the Indian bride with a synthesis of different cultures, a reflection of today's generation. It represented the delicate confluence of artistic traditions and the pragmatism of

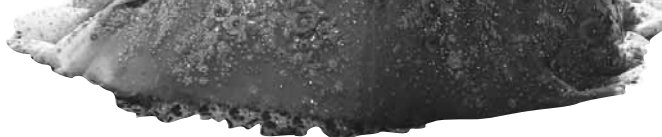
the times we live in," said Tahiliani.

Addressing the overall theme so swiftly was not easy. The biggest challenge Tahiliani said was, "A lot of bridal has become ridiculously heavy and uncomfortable. Brides look worse after spending so much. They are so pretty, why load them with 40 kg? Another challenge was to put the structure and think about techniques because as lifestyle changes, clothes must too. Most brides that I know today want to have DJ and dance till morning but they can't move in such heavy dresses."

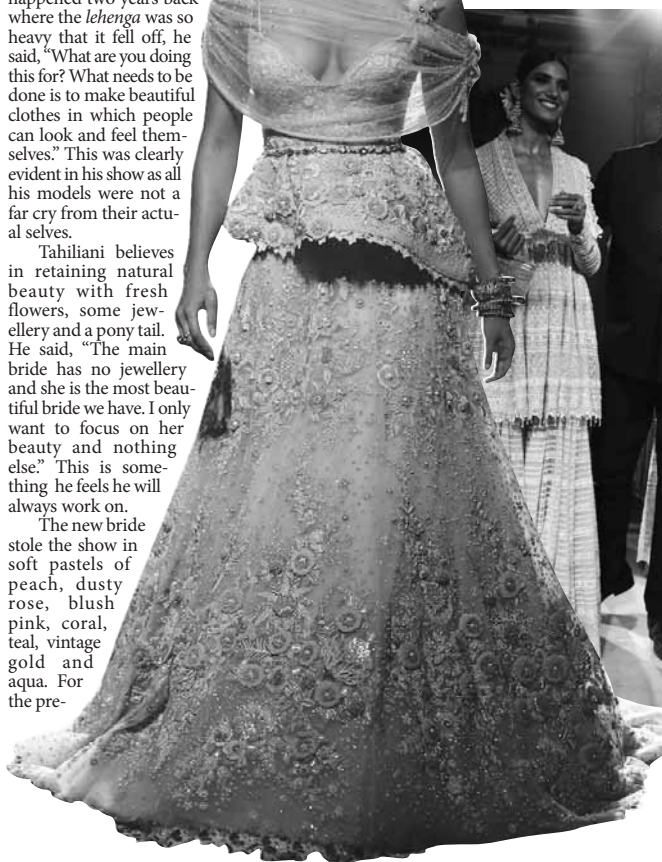
Recalling an incident that happened two years back where the lehenga was so heavy that it fell off, he said, "What are you doing this for? What needs to be done is to make beautiful clothes in which people can look and feel themselves." This was clearly evident in his show as all his models were not a far cry from their actual selves.

Tahiliani believes in retaining natural beauty with fresh flowers, some jewellery and a pony tail. He said, "The main bride has no jewellery and she is the most beautiful bride we have. I only want to focus on her beauty and nothing else." This is something he feels he will always work on.

The new bride stole the show in soft pastels of peach, dusty rose, blush pink, coral, teal, vintage gold and aqua. For the pre-



wedding functions and cocktails, the collection had a rich palette of electric blue, deep violet and plum. Diverse embroidery styles — from Kashmir-inspired *kashidakaari*, fine *zari* work used around prints, *jamavar* and *resham* embroidery



'Diamond jewellery flatters Indian skin tones'

To mark 15 years of couture, **GAURAV GUPTA** debuts with his jewellery collection. By **TEAM VIVA**

Designer **Gaurav Gupta** has been merging indigenous Indian construction and embellishment techniques with his idea of the future for the past 15 years. To celebrate the milestone, he interpreted the artistry and details of his couture language through creating and launching a fine jewellery brand under the name **Gaurav Gupta Occasions Fine Jewellery** at the FDCI's Indian Couture Week 2019. It had capsuled themes that captured the distinct elements like the feather, forest and infinity collections.

The debut line consisted of 50 pieces, all of which were hand-made and created with precious stones and diamonds and set in white gold. What made the jewellery couture unique was the collaborative approach wherein each diamond was individually cut according to the design sculpting that Gaurav had imagined. The collection included necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings and ear-cuffs which will be introduced as an extension of the brand's 2019 couture collection and will be available exclusively through the Gaurav Gupta flagship couture store in Mehrauli.

On the ramp was global influencer and founder of Post for Change, **Diipa Khosla**, who was seen in an unending ethereal lehenga layered in ombre hues of champagne. The perfect accent for this was a special *Liberation* necklace, designed in the shape of wings, interwoven together, stylised to project the movement of a bird gracefully taking flight. Each piece of this necklace was set under a microscope, a delicate combination of rose cut and full cut diamonds — 8,000 pieces in all, created over the period of eight months. Its highlight was that every feather was scooped from the back to keep the necklace



light. Actor **Diana Penty** strutted out in a sculpted mermaid-esque gown, fashioned in light organza in green-gray. She was accessorised with statement ear cuffs which had three woven and specially shaped diamonds.

Gupta talks about the jewellery collection and the idea behind these designs.

What made you decide to venture in the jewellery space? I have always loved jewellery and this

ellery and clothes?

Designing for me is a very personal process. I begin with some abstract thoughts and ideas and let my mind take the visionary wheel and conceive the whole thing. For jewellery, the starting point was my sartorial creations. I looked at them and ideated how best can I complement my own garments with diamond couture jewellery — this was the only difference. Apart from this, everything else was remarkably same.

What was the inspiration for these designs?

The inspiration for the jewellery designs came from my obsession with elements and infinity of nature — birds of flight and freedom and the mysterious, endless depths of forests.

Who are the women that the jewellery is aimed at?

The jewellery is for confident, fearless and strong women who revel in the sense of elation and liberation. It is for the Indian contemporary global bride who enjoys finer details in her jewellery with respect to the cuts and design.

How often do you aim to bring out collections?

Well, our collections will be unveiled annually during the couture season. But, having to move along with the dynamics of time and to keep the momentum going, we will be adding jewellery suites throughout the year to our main collection — just something to offer more to our clients.

Coloured jewellery is a huge trend. What according to you are the ones that work for the skin tones of Indian woman?

I think, diamond jewellery looks very flattering on Indian skin tones. It not only brings out our rich complexion but also complements it really well. In diamond jewellery only, the use of coloured stones like rubies, emeralds, tanzanites and opals further accentuate the whole look.

Is the jewellery more for Indian or Western couture?

My jewellery can be paired very well with both Indian and Western couture.

Bachchan reveals how he got his surname

**Amitabh Bachchan** has shared anecdotes about his last name and said that "Bachchan" was his father and legendary poet **Harivansh Rai Bachchan's** poetic *nom de plume*.

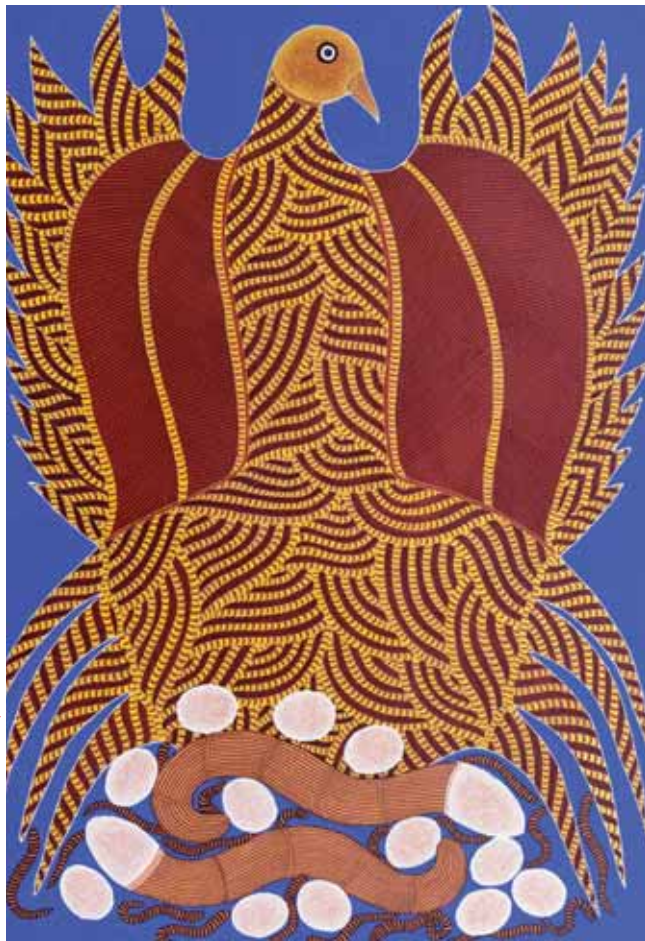
The 76-year-old cine icon took to his blog and discuss about the caste system prevalent in ancient India. "The caste system in the land has been prevalent for centuries, followed diligently by many and now defied by many too, (it is) an ailment that has plagued our society," he wrote.

He said that his father was a "strong opposer" of the caste system. "Babuji was born in a Kayastha home and a Srivastava. But

his temperament was always against the ailment of caste, his *nom de plume*, his *takhallus* his pen name he designed as 'Bachchan'. Eminent poets and writers often designed their names with a *nom de plume*. So 'Bachchan' became my Father's pen name, his poetic name, but it lent credence of its concept later when I was born, on being admitted to my first school. It was when I was asked by the teachers about what surname was to be filled against my name in the admission form. My parents had a quick discussion and it was decided that 'Bachchan' would be the family surname," he wrote.

The actor said he became the first bearer of the surname. "And it has remained so and shall also remain. My father and I are the proud bearers of this surname," he added.





# Every tree has a tale

Artist BAJJU SHYAM's works tread the path of surreal and divine stories from the forests of the Gond tribe. By UMA NAIR

I had been keen on looking at Padma Shri artist Bajju Shyam's artworks because I consider him to be the finest artist after his uncle, late Jangarh Singh Shyam. And his series of artworks, titled *Message From Trees*, currently exhibited at the Ojas Art Gallery, are indeed a delight to behold. Bajju used to assist his uncle and now has inherited a finer and subtler sense of detail. His works tread the path of surreal stories in the forests of the Gond tribes.

The term *Gond* comes from the Dravidian expression *kond*, meaning 'the green mountain', which quite aptly depicts the close kinship with nature that the tribals maintain in all aspects of their existence. The forest and its many beings become an integral part of their visual representations — a cultural entity, visible through the variety of vibrant depictions painted on the walls of their homes.

While the Gond artists earlier used vegetable and mineral dyes, charcoal, coloured soil and other traditional things, their modern mode of painting has seen the use of acrylics and canvases and large-sized sheets of watercolour paper. Bajju's four compositions involve the local flora, fauna and the hidden tales of gods.



**Mitrata**  
Mitrata (friendship) is a painting of the gorgeous plumed eagle-like bird, with snakes and its eggs at the foot of the composition. It is a versatile and emotive

tale that takes us back to many legions. One of the many tales that Bajju had shared in the past was of Lord Shankar. "When Shankar bhagwan, the creator, made the first man, there wasn't a single

leaf on earth. The man said, 'Lord, what will I eat? How will I survive?' The creator pulled three hair from his own body and through them, made three great trees. Then the man said, 'But Lord, there are no fruits on these trees. Three will remain three, and they must die one day.' Then Lord Shankar took the ash, coated his hair and sprinkled the trees with it. And flowers and fruits began to blossom on the trees. So during the time before we knew how to cultivate grains and crops, fruits on trees helped fill our stomachs. Here, I am just telling one of those stories," says Bajju, who has created six eggs, which symbolise the co-existence of Neel Raja, and the entire world.

The artwork also echoes the beauty of birds. We don't have to be told that birds are one of the most exquisite creatures on our planet. With a rich array of colours, a widely varying display of plumage and an unmatched ability to compose a symphony of songs and birds of all species, the work collectively captures our attention at once. One of the many ways that we appreciate our birds is by looking at paintings or photographs of them in the wild. Bajju recreates a magnificent bird in a composition that speaks of awe. However, the symbolism of birds has differed in different eras and regions. For Egyptians, a bird symbolises the soul, which is threatened in everyday idioms of life and nature's mortality. Inspired from that, Bajju's birds talk to us about harmony in living.

## Tendu tree

Trees are central to the Gond tribal imagination. In addition to the stories that surround them, they are important in an everyday sense. There is a belief among the community that trees are busy during the day in giving shade and food to humans and animals. It is only during the night that their real spirit emerges.

Bajju's drawing of the *tendu* tree and a bat has a tensile and tactile intricate beauty. "According to the ancient mythology of the tribe, during the day, trees nourish and protect and at night, they have a life of their own," states Bajju. The spirits of these trees, with whimsical tales and beliefs, are brought out through this delicate illustration by Bajju. It's uncanny how he poetically illustrates a particular aspect of Gond tradition related to the tree.

## Mriga

Equally elegant is his deer painting, *Mriga*. Its intricate details can entice an art-lover — the leaf-like ear, the distinctly feminine slender-striped legs. In his weaving of the modern, fashionable elements, he gives us an image that is rare and unique. His use of fluorescent colours are at once subtle and the manner in which he creates its position and intensity is one of great poise. "I love the deer, I consider it the most beautiful animal," says Bajju. "I find its whole body one of great grace. Its eyes are so beautiful. I have always felt that among all animals, it is a class apart because not only does it personify extraordinary beauty, it is the majesty and royal signature of the forests that make it an inspiration. After all, deer has been a part of literature and songs and poetry since time immemorial."

(*Message from Trees opens on August 2 and runs till September 1 at Ojas Art.*)

# A visual diary of memories

Artist NANDITA RICHIE names her exhibition of artworks in Urdu as she thinks that the language beautifully describes every frame. With her new series, *Khwabeeda*, she brings forth her idea of dreams. By TEAM VIVA



What specific term would you use to describe yourself as an avid dreamer? Artist Nandita Richie calls herself a *Khwabeeda*, which is also the title of her latest solo exhibition. She says that she's not very familiar with Urdu but is fond of giving titles to her paintings and exhibitions in different languages. "I have named one of the paintings as *Gurub-e-Aqtab*, which means setting sun. It just sounds so beautiful in Urdu," she says.

Art is something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go further. And if this imagination is the result of childhood memories, then, it grows into many ideas that are endearing. For Nandita, her foray into art began with the memories of her grandfather's garden and matured when, as a young teenager, she attempted to turn away from the canvas to experimenting on wearable fabrics.

At the age of 14, Nandita painted a few sarees for her mother with fabric dye paints to try new ways of expressing her art form. Today, she has diversified her art into 'wearables' and owns her signature line of ties, scarves and pocket squares. She has started her own line of digitally printed limited edition sarees too. "I believe art should not be limited to galleries and only for those who can afford to buy original art. Bringing out my line of designer sarees, silk wear seemed one of the best options. These products are limited edition prints of my canvas art and they are affordable," she says.

But her art continues to be rooted in her childhood. "My work is a visual diary of my memories of the garden where I grew up as a child watching my grandfather and father, who had green thumbs, working to create the most beautiful garden full of exotic flowers and lush trees for us to play, enjoy and respect nature in my hometown of Jaipur. Today, a large multi-storeyed building stands where my grandpa's garden used to be. I not only miss watering his plants and tending to the saplings but also sitting in that open space surrounded by nature's beauty," Nandita says and goes on to add, "I am very much inspired by nature especially waterscapes and lotuses. The lotus is more than just a flower. It conveys a very strong message to humans. Even though it is rooted in mud, it continues to float on water without becoming wet or muddy. This aspect of the flower dictates how humans ought to live in this world."

The architecture, fabrics, handicrafts and gemstones provide Jaipur with a myriad of colours labelling it famously as the Pink City of India, she says, adding that it is one of her favourite colours, therefore. "I paint lotuses and lilies. The latter are captivating blooms, both in the garden and on the canvas. If only I could capture their subtle fragrance. None of my water paintings feel complete without the lotus. The one that is close to my heart is the *Blue Tranquil*, which is a water body with floating lotus leaves and flowers. I have created a special light effect using bold strokes and layers of paint to depict how the water shines during the early morning hours."

Although impressionist and post impressionist styles have greatly influ-



**'I WORK WITH PALETTE KNIFE AND ACRYLIC COLOURS ON CANVAS USING THE IMPASTO WET-ON-WET TECHNIQUE. I HAVE CREATED A SPECIAL LIGHT EFFECT USING BOLD STROKES AND LAYERS OF PAINT TO DEPICT HOW THE WATER SHINES IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS'**



enced her work, she is also moved by modern and contemporary art and is not shy of experimenting with abstract styles and mixed mediums. Her work is a result of her vivid imagination, love of nature and years of experience with the palette knife. Her paintings depict joy, romance and beauty and are highly textured giving a three-dimensional effect. She says, "I am a die-hard nature lover which is evident from my paintings. I paint using my imagination and memories. My formal training during my college years and the critique provided by my talented teachers keep me disciplined about form and dimensions while the appreciation of art lovers lends me new vigour to experiment further with textures. I work with a palette knife and acrylic colours on canvas using the impasto wet-on-wet technique."

# Bharatnatyam tuned with technology

Dance guru JAYALAKSHMI ESHWAR is using electronic music and animated visuals of the Tamil culture to enhance the classical art tradition



Months ago, Bharatnatyam guru Jayalakshmi Eshwar wowed her audience with a dance production that was much more than a regular classical piece.

Fused with electronic music and animated visuals of the Tamil culture, it spoke to viewers about her openness to merge technology, her dance practice and even, her dance lessons. For viewers who saw Eshwar's production *Antariksha Sanchar* — literally meaning transmission in space — it was a mesmerising tale of ancient aeroplanes, complete with technological elements that attract the youth today.

It featured many of her own students but the performance stage is not the only place where the dancer shares a relationship of technology with her pupils, many of who often juggle dance practice with other activities. As classrooms change from the *guru-shishya parampara*, where disciples learnt under their

teachers almost everyday, modern-day classrooms become another place where the strict classical often merges with everyday tech. "The students have so fast moving lives that they don't even have time to write their notes and make sketch drawings of every movement — that we needed to make because there were no photographs or tape in our times," Eshwar said.

Even dancing for them is a great thing, she said, adding that some of her students who are as young as six years, use mobile phones to record the movements and practice it later. "Technology as a teacher helps a lot. When I am teaching my professional-level students, who are all abroad, and they want to learn a new item, I just tape in it my class bit-by-bit, and upload it. I send the lyrics, meaning, everything and they ask questions and seek clarifications as per the usual practice," added she.

Many factions of the artiste

community are still sticking to pure classical but Eshwar sees no harm in mixing it up a little. "The lives of our generation, our parents, our grandparents was so in tune with arts. My grandfather used to tell mythological stories to children in the evening. That link is not there for children now."

"*Antariksha Sanchar* was an eye-opener for me. I've found that little bit of electronic music gives interest in the classical idiom for the youth. If I just have classical, many youth find it 'boring,'" said the prolific author and Bharatnatyam guru at the Triveni Kala Sangam. On the fusion, she said, "Without deviating from that classical tradition, keeping it intact, we're using technology only for enhancement. We're not losing the grammar. It depends from dancer how you can merge and keep moving forward."

(*The Bharatnatyam opera will be staged at the India Habitat Centre on July 31.*)

—IANS

## WATCH OUT



India International Centre (IIC), in collaboration with Prabhat Education Foundation, presents *Like Us*, an exhibition of photographs by Bindi Sheth on children with special needs. The show will be inaugurated by Poonam Natarajan, founder and chairperson, Vidya Sagar, Chennai, on August 1. **TIME:** 11 am to 7 pm **WHEN:** August 2 to 11 **WHERE:** Art Gallery, Kamaladevi Complex.

Threshold Art Gallery presents *Skin: The Finer Nuance*, an art exhibition, featuring the artworks of nine artists that reference several aspects of skin. **WHEN:** Till August 20 **WHERE:** Threshold Art Gallery, Sarvodaya Enclave.



Art Konsult presents *Iconic Forces*, a solo exhibition of Artist Suman Sen Gupta that brings the portraits of the icons of the world with the duality of the surroundings. **WHEN:** August 4 to 11 **TIME:** 11 am to 7 pm **WHERE:** Art Konsult Gallery, Hauz Khas Village.

Triveni Gallery presents Parul Golchha Ranka's solo exhibition of paintings, which features a range of paintings on the Buddha and his divine light. **WHEN:** August 1 **TIME:** 11 am to 8 pm **WHERE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, near Mandi House Metro Station.



India Habitat Centre presents *Liminal Spaces*, a solo exhibition of paintings by artist Kanwal Singh, which aims to explain that such threshold spaces are those where transformation begins. **WHEN:** August 2 to 5 **WHERE:** Open Palm Court, IHC.



# ALL IS WELL

Kohli says it baffling to read lies, disrespectful to drag personal lives on rift with Rohit

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian captain Virat Kohli on Monday categorically refuted rumours of a rift with his deputy Rohit Sharma, saying "people feeding off lies" are being disrespectful to the players' personal lives.

After India's ouster from the World Cup, stories of fissures in the Indian camp emerged with claims that Rohit and Kohli are not seeing eye to eye.

Theories of split captaincy were also floated.

"In my opinion, it's baffling. It's absolutely ridiculous to read these kind of stuff, that comes out there. I have been to public events where we have been praised and here we are feeding off lies, overlooking facts, turning a blind eye to all good things that happened and creating fantasies and scenarios in our head. We want to accept that this is the truth," Kohli said.

Adding fuel to all the speculations was a cryptic Instagram post by Kohli's actress wife Anushka Sharma, which was later deleted.

"I have seen this for too long now. Bringing personal lives into the picture. It's disrespectful after a moment. I have played the game for 11 years and Rohit has played for 10 years (12 years) and it's bizarre that people are creating this stuff from outside," the skipper said, with coach Ravi Shastri by his side.

Shastri made a tongue-in-cheek comment about the conspiracy theories.

"Very soon you will hear wives batting and bowling. The way this team plays, no individual is bigger than the game. Not me, not him, nobody in the team. I have a been a part of that dressing room and none of the nonsense is there," the commentator in the former all-rounder came out as he poo-hoed the rumours.

For Kohli, the Indian team couldn't have performed consistently across formats if there was no



Virat Kohli interviews Rohit Sharma after Indian opener scored his fifth World Cup hundred of the 2019 edition against Sri Lanka at Leeds AP/Photo

camaraderie amongst the players. "I have also heard a lot of things. Now you can only hear things from outside. If the dressing room environment had been bad, then we couldn't have possibly played the

quality of cricket that we played. "Because I know how the dressing room environment and trust factor becomes important to succeed in international cricket. The journey that we have had in ODIs, in Tests

(from No 7 to 1) and T20s, that wouldn't have been possible without camaraderie, respect and understanding," said Kohli, who urged people to come and see the atmosphere in the change-room.

"In my opinion, it's baffling. It's absolutely ridiculous to read these kind of stuff, that comes out there" — Virat Kohli

"I have always praised Rohit whenever I have got an opportunity because I believe he is that good. I don't know who is benefitting from all of this but we are living, breathing towards getting Indian cricket to the top" — Virat Kohli (on his relationship with Rohit Sharma)

"You people please come to our change room and see, how we speak to a Kuldeep Yadav, how we crack a joke with the senior-most player MS Dhoni. We can't shoot a video and show you guys. It baffles you as a leader, when lies are being floated around to make it look like actually they are believable," Kohli sounded irritated.

He emphatically denied that there could be any awkwardness between him and Rohit due to the events in the past few days.

"If I don't like a person or if I am insecure about a person, you will see it on my face or my behaviour towards the person and that's how simple it is," Kohli said.

"I have always praised Rohit whenever I have got an opportunity because I believe he is that good. I don't know who is benefitting from all of this but we are living, breathing towards getting Indian cricket to the top, and here we get some kind of pleasure in bringing Indian cricket down," the skipper said.

It's time that we all do some introspection, he felt.

"We have to reflect as cricketers everyone can take a step back and think are we creating something that's really not out there. You can't play with that kind of passion if you don't get along with each other. As I said, it's baffling and its time that we focus on taking Indian cricket forward," he said.

## Test championship will give much-needed boost to longest format



Virat Kohli plays a shot against England during 2018 Test series AP/Photo

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India captain Virat Kohli on Monday said the ICC World Test Championship, that gets underway on August 1, will add context to the longest format and give it a much-needed boost.

The inaugural edition will see the elite nations — Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies — fight for top honours across 71 Test matches in 27 series over the next two years.

The top two teams will then play the final, scheduled to be held in June 2021 in the United Kingdom. "I think it is a great thing for Test cricket to be honest. We all were looking forward to it because we all felt that after one big series or tour, a one-off Test or a couple of Tests were not apt but I think the Test Championship gives a lot of context to all the Test cricket that we want to play," Kohli said.

"Interest of the fans will also build going for the results. Test cricket really needed a boost. Players were putting the effort but from a global point of view, Test cricket needed an incentive attached to it which is presented in the form of Test Championship."

"So now every session, every game will be more intense. It will be challenging but it will be all the more exciting. All the teams will enjoy through this entire journey," he added.

The opening day of the Ashes series between England and Australia at Edgbaston on Thursday marks the beginning of the World Test Championship.

India will play two Tests during the tour of West Indies and those will be part of the championship.

"After the highs of a tournament like World Cup, it is only logical that the focus will shift to T20 World Cup but the Test Championship will keep the interest in Test cricket going as well."

"So that's the nature of international cricket today that you have to compromise on one format to keep the other two relevant. And I am glad that people have thought about Test cricket to keep it relevant through Test championship," said Kohli.

Each team will play three home and three away series and will be awarded points for every game. Each series will count for 120 points, distributed over the number of matches in a series. For example, a two-match series will mean 60 points for each Test while a three-match series will give 40 points to each match. A tie will be 50

- The inaugural edition will see the elite nations —fight for top honours across 71 Test matches in 27 series over the next two years.
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- Each series will count for 120 points, distributed over the number of matches in a series. For example, a two-match series will mean 60 points for each Test while a three-match series will give 40 points to each match. A tie will be 50 percent of the points available, whilst a draw will be a 3:1 points ratio.

percent of the points available, whilst a draw will be a 3:1 points ratio.

For Kohli, nothing comes above the longest format of the game. "When you are focussing on T20, you can say let's forget about the other two formats and just make the sport exciting for the people to watch and entertain. But for the sheer joy of playing cricket, executing your skills as cricketer, Test cricket is the most important format."

"And for me nothing comes above Test cricket. So the fact that the Test championship will keep the excitement going," said the Indian skipper.

Kohli said that the Indian team has done really well in recent years and would be fancying its chances in the Test championship.

"Test cricket is very challenging and coming out on top in the traditional form is always highly satisfying. The Indian team has done really well in recent years and will be fancying its chances in the Test championship," he said.

England's leading Test wicket taker James Anderson said Test cricket was the "pinnacle of our sport".

"It is the very essence of cricket and the majority of players want to strive to play the Test format of the game," Anderson said.

"The ICC World Test Championship is another brilliant initiative for the sport, adding context and relevance to every Test series. Every Test matters, but even more so now," he added.

Organised by the Member Boards, the matches will be played just like any bilateral series, but with the added context of a competition and one champion team.

## 'Happy with Ravi continuing as coach'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Captain Virat Kohli on Monday said he is in favour of Ravi Shastri continuing as the head coach of the Indian cricket team despite the criticism it faced following the semi-final ouster from the World Cup. The current support staff comprising incumbent head coach Ravi Shastri, bowling coach Bharat Arun, batting coach Sanjay Bangar and fielding coach R Sridhar were given a 45-day extension following the World Cup, covering the West Indies tour from August 3 to September 3.



Ravi Shastri and Virat Kohli answer media questions during press conference PTI

"Well, the CAC (Cricket

the appointment of chief coach.

"But as I had said, it's on the CAC to decide (how to go about it)."

They may have failed to win the T20 World Cup in 2016 and the ODI World Cup in 2015 and 2019, but the Shastri-Kohli duo helped India climb the top of the Test rankings with a historic series triumph in Australia.

Shastri was the team director till June 2016 until India lost in the World T20 semi-finals before being reappointed as head coach in 2017 after Anil Kumble was removed following his differences with Kohli.

Advisory Committee headed by Kapil Dev) has not contacted me on this. But all of us share a great camaraderie with Ravi bhai and would definitely be very happy (to have him around)," Kohli told reporters when asked for his opinion on



Ravi Shastri chats with MS Dhoni during practice session BCCI/Twitter

## Middle-order had been target of 'unfair criticism'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Virat Kohli on Monday said that there was no communication either from the former physio and trainer of the Indian team with regards to skipping the shorter formats during the upcoming West Indies tour. Kohli was tipped to be rested alongside Jasprit Bumrah but the captain said that no one told him that his workload has exceeded the prescribed limit.

"Our rest period is put on record. It's all on the e-mail given to the Board. So I don't know what report they have created. In my mind, until the trainer or the physio tells me to rest because my progress in such and such with datas collected from all games. I don't know what communication was sent out to the selectors because nothing was communicated to me in terms of rest," Kohli told mediapersons prior to team's departure.

It will be a new start after the disappointment of the World Cup but Kohli admitted that the team is yet to sort out the middle-order conundrum and joked that they might need a "crystal maze".

"I don't know whether it will have to be explained through a crystal maze," he said with a laugh.

On a serious note, he felt that the Indian middle-order had been a target of "unfair criticism" being judged on the basis of one or two performances.

"It's very subjective and situation-based. Sometimes you say you have the best top order in the world, which you can agree with; it leads to middle order getting just one or two opportunities, then we judge it based on it. I don't know how to strike balance in it," the skipper said, sounding a bit helpless.

India's top three performed more often than not during the World Cup but during the day when the middle-order faced stern test, they capitulated.

"If I am a middle-order player and I hardly get an opportunity to bat, then when I am expected to deliver in crunch, I don't think it's fair to be judged. If the top-order fails consistently, then you'll say they need to be given time since they have been performing.

"When it happens with the middle-order, I don't think it's right to be so critical of them. We obviously want to find people who can be consistent, who can do the job regularly for us and we have backed the players that we thought are good enough to do the job. And they have," Kohli said.

## Expect WI to give tough competition: Viv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

West Indies legend Vivian Richards is pinning his hopes on the current team to pose a tough challenge to Virat Kohli's battle-hardened outfit in the upcoming assignments in the Caribbean.

"India-West Indies series have always seen explosive action and I don't expect anything less this time around."

With the current form of the West Indies team, I look forward to them giving a



Windies player plays a shot during 'A' series WI

tough competition to the Indian side," Richards was quoted as saying in a media release issued by official broadcasters Sony Pictures Sports Network.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar, who made a memorable Test debut in the West Indies in 1971, said he has "respect" for players from the Caribbean.

"West Indies will always hold a very special place in my heart since I started my career over there and have immense respect for their players," said Gavaskar.



Rahul Chahar and Deepak Chahar pose with the winners trophy after India A series win Instagram

## Exciting opportunity for new guys

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India skipper Virat Kohli said it will be a "very exciting opportunity" for the likes of Chahar brothers and Navdeep Saini to make a mark in the limited overs format during the upcoming tour of the West Indies.

A number of players who are not a regular with the Indian team in either T20s or ODIs made the limited overs squads as the selection committee made its intention clear to move forward from India's semi-final ouster from the ICC World Cup and build for the future.

"The T20s as you have seen, the squads, when I met

SOME PLAYERS WHO HAVE DONE REALLY WELL IN THE FORMAT AND SHOWN GREAT COMPOSURE UNDER PRESSURE IN TOURNAMENTS LIKE IPL, DOMESTICALLY AS WELL. SO IT'S A GREAT MARKER FOR ALL THOSE GUYS AND US AS A TEAM AS WELL TO HAVE THEM IN THE SQUAD —VIRAT KOHLI

the selectors, the basic message from them was to try out a few players that they had in mind. I think it is a very exciting opportunity for all the guys who are stepping in for the first time," Kohli said.

Deepak and Rahul Chahar, Saini, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey and Washington Sundar are a mixture of new and old faces to have been included in the squad for the limited-overs format.

"The ODI side is more or less balanced and we have been really doing well, the Test side, needless to say the kind of performances we have put in, so I am particularly excited about the three

T20s, because as I said new lot of players coming in," Kohli said.

"Some players who have done really well in the format and shown great composure under pressure in tournaments like IPL, domestically as well. So it's a great marker for all those guys and us as a team as well to have them in the squad," the captain added.

India will play three T20s and as many ODIs, and two Test matches during their West Indies tour, commencing on August 3.

"West Indies obviously is a great place to go and play cricket. It is a relaxed place, we all have enjoyed playing cricket there," Kohli said.