

NOT JUST THINKERS BUT DELIVERERS

ADVERTORIAL

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) intends to revolutionise the knowledge economy. Degrees won't simply be an acquisition but empower students with goals and skills to fit into industry-ready jobs and self-start their own businesses. Theoretical understanding will give way to practical wisdom. Mahatma Gandhi had argued for a well-prepared plan on foundational learning or buniyaadi talim for our nation, one that would inspire students to think, innovate and apply their knowledge in practical situations. That was 1937. But the need for it is being felt most today as the nation embarks on its journey to claim the leadership of its destiny and the global knowledge economy, aspires to be self-reliant and is keen to harvest the demographic dividend of its young talent pool. Which means students need to be employable, industry-ready and be creators and originators of ideas, products and future growth models.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) fills this need and proposes a holistic model of education so that the focus is just not on the degree but life skills and vocational courses. Where the focus is not just on learning but outcomes and the approach is student-centric, where education is both accessible and affordable. As the policy gets implemented, the equity and inclusion through open schooling, online education and Open Distance Learning will ensure a complete revamp of the education sector by 2040. There NEP 2020 proposes a lot of reforms in the higher education sector and globalises our universities. Students can now have a flexible format of skilling themselves to the best of their ability and time as a Credit Bank of Academic Progress allows them to build scores during their entire educational journey. The credits obtained in a year will be transferred to the next level after completion of successive academic years.

The Government is also taking steps towards establishment of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) with global education standards just like Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT). A National Research Foundation will prioritise research and development activities, something which should stop our brain drain and help our young talent to innovate and develop solutions here.

The new model allows a level-playing field for global discourse and co-creating a shared future by letting the world's top 100 universities to operate in India. According to the HRD ministry document, "Such foreign universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance and content norms as par with other autonomous institutions in India." The idea of internationalisation of higher education is based on the mobility of students, faculty members, programmes and institutions across countries.

The core structure of universities will be revamped. As per the vision and mission of NEP, educational institutions will be categorised with teaching-intensive or research-intensive universities and autonomous degree-granting colleges coming into existence. The college affiliation procedure will be phased out in 15 years as institutions become autonomous. Independent technical, agricultural, health, science and legal universities will head towards becoming multi-disciplinary institutions for a rounded approach. The multi-disciplinary focus is necessary for practical wisdom such as making a discipline like engineering sensitive to societal needs, develop a science that is ethical, sustainable and eco-compliant. Agreed that students get a bit of the multi-disciplinary education through elective subjects. Currently, there is less or no opportunity at all for cross-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary thinking in higher education institutions. The idea is to align major and minor streams for developing allied expertise. Traditional classrooms have already given way to a digital mode of instruction. The NEP provides for a dedicated team to develop a digital infrastructure, including E-content and digital libraries, to help students maximise their learning outcomes. All content will be available in regional languages, starting with the eight major ones, besides Hindi and English. Technology is expected to play a great role in planning courses, teaching methodologies, maximising the scope of learning, facilitating assessment as well as in training teachers and students. The NEP 2020 paves the way for a de-regulated, freer and autonomous environment for our centres of excellence. The focus is clearly on high-quality teaching, research and community engagement. This will benefit students with increased flexibility and choice of subjects across various streams of arts, humanities, sciences, sports, and other vocational subjects. Some changes in the instructional system are already taking place. For example, our examination system, for long based on rote learning, killed all creativity and innovation. Now, there is talk of testing knowledge application, a precursor to the many start-ups that are witnessing a rapid growth. Empathy, industry-based courses, customised learning plans, integrated techniques, entrepreneurial empowerment and life skill development are some of the evolving trends. Degrees aren't simply meant for study but to give students goals and skills that will help them find jobs and start their own businesses once they enter the workforce. Quality education to everyone should be the core focus and meaningful pursuit and not racing to the top. It should be about cognitive skills, learning outcomes and quality research.

The foremost challenge to effect a transformation is undoubtedly funds. Education being a concurrent subject, both the Centre and the States need to share the responsibility for implementing changes as well as finances. The allocation for education is still hovering around four per cent of the GDP and needs to be at least six per cent. Perhaps a public-private partnership (PPP) model could be looked into the sector to harness equitable resources. Well-designed PPPs can create models of innovation for the school system in India.



Aninder Singh Arora
Director, BFIT

Since its inception, BFIT has stood as a contemporary educational hub recognised for its creative, innovative, technical programs and teaching methods oriented towards bearing and training young pioneers fit for today's demanding industry. Being mindful of our new National Education Policy (2020) BFIT offers a holistic curriculum and access to diverse range of experiences which shapes the personalities of each and every BFITIAN. As a non profit institution, we pay special attention at meeting the needs of our demographically as well as economically diverse student composition. To embrace equity each year BFIT offers more than scholarships and contributes to the aim of our new National Education Policy by making higher education and trainings not only accessible but also affordable for masses.

Up To 100% SCHOLARSHIP

BFIT
GROUP OF INSTITUTIONS
SUDDHOWALA DEHRADUN

KIPS HAJIRA DEHRADUN
LIBRA COLLEGE OF LAW DEHRADUN
KINGSTON IMPERIAL INSTITUTE DEHRADUN
Guru Nanak COLLEGE DEHRADUN

Affiliations Approved by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education Ministry of HRD, Govt of India) H.N.B. Garhwal Central University (Central Govt. University) UGC Approved University, Ministry of HRD, Govt of India NAAC 'A' Accredited University) Uttarakhand Technical University (State Govt. University) Uttarakhand Board of Technical Education (State Govt. Board), Pharmacy Council of India (PCI), Bar Council of India (BCI), NCTE

Admission Executives: 7300777702, 7300777703, 7300777709, 7300777725, 7456000107, 999777828
 7300900900, 7300900901, 7300900902, 7300900903, 7300900904, 7300900905
 www.bfitdoon.com, www.gncmh.com, www.kiims.in, www.libracollegeoflaw.com
 admissionbfit@gmail.com, info@bfitdoon.com

SCHOLARSHIPS: Upto 60% merit scholarship • 20% scholarship for Uttarakhand candidates/ Girl candidates or wards of Defence Personals • 20% scholarship on early bird admissions (limited seats).

SCHOOL OF PARAMEDICAL STUDIES		SCHOOL OF LAW		SCHOOL OF PHARMACY	
Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem
B.Sc Radio & Imaging Tech.	25,000/-	BA. LLB	30,000/-	D.Pharma	27,500/-
BMLT/B.Sc Medical MicroBio.	27,500/-	LLB	25,000/-	B.Pharma	42,500/-
		LLM	40,000/-	Lateral Entry in B.Pharma	42,500/-
SCHOOL OF LIFE & ALLIED SCIENCES- SLAS		SCHOOL OF PARAMEDICAL STUDIES		SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION & COMPUTER SC.- STICS	
Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem
B.Sc BioTech./Micro Bio	25,000/-	M.Sc BioTech./Micro Bio.	35,000/-	B.Sc Optometry	27,500/-
B.Sc Food Technology	25,000/-	M.Sc Food Technology	32,500/-		
B.Sc Geology	27,500/-	M.Sc Biochemistry	30,000/-		
B.Sc Economics	22,500/-	M.Sc Botany/Geography	22,500/-		
B.Sc Statistics	22,500/-	M.Sc Zoo./Phy./Chem./Stats.	25,000/-		
B.Sc PCM/CBZ	19,000/-	M.Sc Maths/EVS.	20,000/-		
B.Sc Home Science	20,000/-	M.Sc Geology	35,000/-		
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE SCIENCES- SAS		SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES- SMS		SCHOOL OF ARTS & JOURNALISM (SAJ)	
Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem	Course	Fee Per Sem
B.Sc Agriculture	32,500/-	M.Sc Agronomy	37,500/-	BA.(Hons.) Mass Com.	25,000/-
B.Sc Horticulture/Forestry	27,500/-	M.Sc Seed Science & Tech.	35,000/-	BA. English/Hindi	17,500/-
		M.Sc Horticulture/Forestry	32,500/-	MA. English/Pol. Sc.	22,500/-
				BA. Sociology/Pol. Sc.	17,500/-
				MA. Economics	22,500/-
				BA. Economics	17,500/-
				MA. Maths	20,000/-
				MA. Geography/Edu.	22,500/-
HOSTEL FACILITIES					
Ultra modern separate hostel facilities available for boys and girls along with hygienic food, feels like "HOME AWAY FROM HOME". Hostel fees starting from 25000/- per semester including Veg/Non Veg food.					
PLACEMENTS:					
BFITians working with more than 1000 MNCs and private/ government organizations. Register and grab your seat at BFIT group of institutions TODAY, for a successful future.					

CAMPUSES: "BFIT Group of Institutions", Chakarata Road, Sudhowala, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 248007. • "Guru Nanak College", Jhajra Chakarata Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 248007. "Libra College of Law", Dunga Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 248007. • "Kingston Imperial Institute", Dunga Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 248007.

SBS University

Balawala, Dehradun-Uttarakhand

27 Years of Holistic & Comprehensive Education

ADMISSIONS - 2021

SCHOOL OF PHARMACEUTICAL SC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> D.Pharm. (4th Batch) Approved by PCI B.Pharm. (27th Batch) Approved by AICTE & PCI B.Pharm. II year (Lateral Entry) M.Pharm. (12th Batch) Pharmacology, Pharmaceutics, Pharmacognosy Approved by AICTE & PCI 	SCHOOL OF PHYSIOTHERAPY & ALLIED HEALTH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B. Physiotherapy* (26th Batch) M. Physiotherapy* (22nd Batch) Neuro, Ortho, Sports B.Sc. MLT - Pathology (26th Batch) B.Sc. Medical Microbiology (20th Batch) M.Sc. MLT - Pathology (4th Batch) <p><small>* Recognized by Indian Association of Physiotherapists</small></p>
SCHOOL OF APPLIED SCIENCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.Sc. (Hons) Chemistry (4th Batch) B.Sc. PCM/CBZ (4th Batch) M.Sc. Chemistry (11th Batch) M.Sc. Pharmaceutical Chemistry (25th Batch) 	SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.Tech. Biotechnology (4 Years) B.Tech. + M.Tech. Biotechnology (5 Year Dual Degree) B.Sc. (Hons) Biotechnology (17th Batch) B.Sc. Clinical Research & Health Care Management* M.Sc. Clinical Research* M.Sc. Biotechnology (22nd Batch) M.Sc. Microbiology (26th Batch) M.Sc. Biochemistry (20th Batch)
SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture (4th Batch) B.Sc. (Hons.) Forestry (4th Batch) 	M.Sc. Ph.D. Dual Degree <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microbiology, Biotechnology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, & Medical Lab Technology <p><small>* In technical association with Institution of Clinical Research India</small></p>

Ph.D. Programs offered in Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Life Sciences & Lab Tech.

20 ACRES SERENE CAMPUS
OVER 20000 SQM. OF ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE
1000+ PUBLICATIONS 25+ PH.D'S AWARDED
ULTRA MODERN HIGH TECH LABS VOLUMINOUS LIBRARY
ONLINE VIRTUAL CLASSES
ON CAMPUS SEPARATE HOSTELS FOR BOYS & GIRLS
OVER 7000+ ALUMNI SERVING MANKIND ACROSS THE GLOBE

SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- Covid Specific Relief : - Special waiver of 50% in tuition Fee for applicants who lost their Earning Head/ Family Head during Covid-19 Pandemic. Merit Scholarship upto 50% waiver in tuition fee
- Concession in Admission fee for local residents, Girl domicile of Uttarakhand & wards of Corona Warriors.
- 33% concession in tuition fee for sports personnel (Basketball, Volleyball, Cricket, Badminton etc.) & Sikh Minority Students.

Call us : +91-7534078714, 7534078716, 7534078718
 visit us- www.sbsuniversity.edu.in

SUNDAY WORKING

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

The new chief

In a dramatic turn of events, BJP replaced its Gujarat CM with a first-time MLA last week. RITU SHARMA & PARIMAL DABHI on Bhupendra Patel's dizzying rise — from a young man who sold firecrackers, to the owner of a construction firm and corporator, to the 17th Chief Minister of Gujarat



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

IT WAS a turbulent start in office for Bhupendra Patel. Parts of the state were reeling under floods, and after an aerial survey of Jamnagar, the new Gujarat Chief Minister was to head to Rajkot. But the aircraft was grounded due to bad weather and Patel had to travel the nearly 100-km distance by road — a rough start that would have thrown the most seasoned of administrators off-kilter.

Worse, the swearing-in ceremony of his new team that was to be held the following day was postponed, reportedly because of protests from ministers set to be dropped.

An IAS officer, who was with the CM as he met the flood-affected, told *The Sunday Express* that the hours-old CM was "firm", "composed", "not overwhelmed". "He told the administration to prioritise rescue operations, asking officials to forcefully evacuate those who resisted as the priority was to save lives," said the officer.

With the Central BJP plucking the first-time MLA from near anonymity and placing him in the hot seat, Patel's every move, every order, every nod of the head, will be watched and scrutinised — in Delhi and Gandhinagar.

According to his affidavit in his debut Assembly election in 2017, Patel holds a diploma in civil engineering from Government Polytechnic College in Ahmedabad, where his father Rajnikant was principal, and runs Vihan Associates, a construction company managed by his son and son-in-law.

According to son Anuj, their firm, now renamed 'Ansh Construction' after Patel's grandson, handles commercial and residential projects and is currently building an affordable housing project in the posh Ahmedabad neighbourhood of South Bopal.

Apart from being the first Kadva Patidar CM, the 59-year-old Patel is also the first from Ahmedabad city to get selected for the top job — the 16 chief ministers before him have all been from other parts of the state.

Engineer, businessman

As a young man, Patel would set up a temporary firecracker shop during the festive season in Dariapur, in Ahmedabad's Walled City area, while the family lived nearby in Dhantura Pol, a close-knit neighbourhood — it celebrated his anointment with bursting of crackers.

After college, Patel worked at a private construction company for around three years. He later launched Vardan Tower, a residential project in Naranpura, with eight of his college friends.

Like several other Hindu families, the Patels moved out of the Old City neighbourhood in the 1990s, to get away from the communal riots that frequently broke out in the area. The family, says Anuj, first moved to Naranpura and later to Memnagar, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. It was from here that Patel launched his political career, becoming a member of the Memnagar municipality in 1995-96.

These were the years that the BJP, riding the Ram Janmabhoomi wave, was on a steady ascendancy — in 1995, the party won all the major municipal corporation elections in the state. Patel rose to become president of the Memnagar municipality, holding office for two terms, 1999-2000 and 2004-06.

He fought his first Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election from Thaltej ward in 2010 and went on to become the standing committee chairman twice. In 2015-17, he chaired the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority that makes town-planning schemes for the city's periphery.

In the 2012 Assembly election, Patel managed the campaign of Anandiben Patel from

Ghatlodia, a role that established his people management skills and endeared him to the former chief minister. After Anandiben moved on as Governor, having been deposed as chief minister, Patel contested the 2017 election from the same seat and won by a record 1.17 lakh votes.

BJP MLA from Naroda constituency of Ahmedabad Balram Thavani, who often sat next to Patel in the Assembly, said being from the city, Patel would understand its problems

"The first few months will be very important. Patel and his Cabinet will have to prove that they can administer the state effectively and efficiently. The second challenge is to ensure that the dropped ministers do not sabotage governance"

better. "As soon as Patel's name was announced as Chief Minister, I went and hugged him," Thavani added.

Anuj says nobody in the family expected it. "My mother and I were having an afternoon nap when the news came about papa becoming CM. The phone has not stopped ringing since."

What no one doubts, as a senior leader puts it, is that Patel's elevation "bears the clear stamp of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi". On the reason why, a BJP leader said one important factor was that Patel was clean and non-controversial apart from being "acceptable to both Anandiben and Amit Shah". "But more than that," the leader added, "the reason seems to be his inexperience — thus ensuring a person who will toe the line of the high command without questioning it."

Another BJP leader said that while any successful government should have a mix of experience and youth, having an all-new ministry had its risks. "The leaders might be successful in running their enterprises or ventures, but how good they will be in running the government is anybody's guess."

Those who have worked with Patel attest to him being "hardworking" and "calm" under stress. Anil Jodhani, who served as Patel's personal secretary when he was the AMC Standing Committee chairman, recalls how during Patel's term in 2010-14, a delegation of Congress corporators had confronted him over drinking water issues. "One of the corporators picked up a glass of water and threw it on Patel's face. But he was unfazed. He didn't call the security... instead, the next day, he invited them all for a discussion over tea," says Jodhani.

Former Ahmedabad Mayor Meenaxiben Patel, 63, who worked with Patel in the 1990s, says, "His working style has not changed since his days in the municipality. He would always visit the local party office and address people's issues. This made him very popular."

Describing him as "sensitive", a party worker says that at the peak of the Covid pandemic, Patel ran a tiffin service for nearly 1,000 Covid patients at the Ahmedabad Civil hospital. His office also ran a 24X7 helpdesk for people seeking treatment, food and other services. The BJP leader says they fondly call Patel "Dada" for his faith in the late spiritual guru Dada Bhagwan.

The CM is also a follower of Simandhar Swami, a living tirthankara, whose idol adorns his new office.

Jatin Patel, a corporator from Ghatlodia and a close Patel associate, says the new CM also took up the responsibility for five children who lost parents to Covid-19.

A former AMC official said that as standing committee chairman, one of Patel's initiatives — to form a "review committee that would meet every month for major projects" — resulted in "99 per cent of these projects being completed".

His association with the AMC finds a reflection in the new CMO, with Patel bringing in two former deputy municipal commissioners as Officers on Special Duty.

What lies ahead

With just over a year to go for the Gujarat elections, Patel has to hit the ground running.

BJP Gujarat chief C R Paatil has set a target of winning all the 182 Assembly seats in the upcoming 2022 elections. With the Opposition Congress "fragmented and directionless", says a BJP leader, the party does not expect any obstacles in its bid to return to power.

Patel's challenges are, however, more immediate.

"The first few months will be very important. Patel and his Cabinet will have to prove that they can administer the state independently, effectively and efficiently. The second major challenge is to ensure that the dropped ministers do not sabotage governance," said a political observer.

TAKE 5

DINING TABLES IN GOVT SCHOOLS

NILESH PARIKH,
CEO, GUNA ZILLA PANCHAYAT



Tables are made from local stones. Students will also be taught use of cutlery, napkins

'Wanted to serve meals in dignified manner, on table instead of floor'

Madhya Pradesh has launched a scheme to set up dining tables in schools for mid-day meals, starting from Guna district. So far, students in government schools sat on mats on the floor to have their meals

IRAM SIDDIQUE

1 What prompted the initiative?

Students stand in long queues and sit on the floor for mid-day meals. Last year, Rural Development Minister Mahendra Singh Sisodia floated the idea of setting up benches for meals. These benches, he suggested, could also be used for classes. His vision was to serve meals in a dignified manner on a table and not have students sit on tarpaulin sheets for meals.

2 Are you also teaching table manners to students?

We are using available resources to teach children the use of basic cutlery, napkin etc. Students are only given a brief set of instructions when the meals are served. The idea is to raise standards of government schools, whether it is about serving meal or showing students how to eat it. We want students to have well-grounded personalities.

3 Is there a specific design for the tables?

These are basic benches made of cement and concrete. The surface is made of locally available stone and granite.

4 What is the budget for the project?

The cost comes to about Rs 50,000 per school. The construction work is being done through the MGNREGA. We aim to cover 100 schools under 80 gram panchayats in Bamori. We have completed 20 so far. Later, the project will be taken up across Madhya Pradesh.

5 How has the response from students been?

The schools have not opened so far because of Covid-19 guidelines. I'm sure they will be delighted.



NUMBER PLATE

34.1 lakh tonnes

The gap between the amount of food grain required to feed the country and the food production, according to the 1951 Census. Since then, India has tackled its food insecurity, going from a food-secure to a food-surplus country, thanks to government intervention in the field of agriculture. In May this year, the country produced 304 lakh tonnes of food grains.

Food per capita up 32%

The net availability of food grains per capita grew by a third in the period between 1951 and 2019.

In 1951, the food available per capita was 144 kg per year. The number increased to 191 kg in 2019.

Fewer famines

In the first half of the 20th century, India recorded 24 famines. Over three million people were killed in Bengal in the 1943 famine. Independent India witnessed just one famine — in Bihar in 1966 — which killed 2,000.

NUSHAIBA IQBAL

Hunger continues

As per a 2015 Food and Agricultural Organisation report, India had 190 mn undernourished people. At present, India is ranked 94th among 107 countries on Global Hunger Index, behind Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Everything but politics

SANTANU CHOWDHURY

SITTING ON a bench outside Habu Da's tea stall, opposite the heritage 'Mitra Institution' in Bhabanipur, Babla Ghosh, 36, speaks dismissively. "What election? People already know the outcome."

Bhabanipur — the constituency in south Kolkata thrust into the limelight as the seat from where Mamata Banerjee will seek to enter the Assembly through a by-election on September 30, after her loss from Nandigram in the state elections earlier this year — has had an extended electoral season, and the fatigue is showing.

The conversation in the town's popular *addas*, from Habu Da's tea stall to the famous Balwant Singh's Eating House, mostly focuses on the mundane — price rise, the unusually heavy rainfall this year, and Mamata Banerjee's intervention to find a sponsor for the East Bengal football club.

Sitting around a table outside Shyam Da's tea stall, a group of men are having an animated conversation on MS Dhoni's selection as team mentor for the T20 World Cup. When asked about the bypoll, one of them says, "Everyone knows who will get 98 votes out of 100. What's the point asking? Forget Didi, Dada (Sourav Ganguly) has done a superb job by bringing in M S Dhoni. Now India has a solid chance of winning the T20 World Cup." Located in south Kolkata, Bhabanipur is

A LETTER FROM
BHABANIPUR,
KOLKATA
WEST BENGAL



arguably the most cosmopolitan part of the city. About 40 per cent of its voters are non-Bengalis — mostly migrants from Punjab, Gujarat, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh.

The place has the quintessential old Kolkata charm — with dilapidated centuries-old bungalows, narrow bylanes, hand-pulled rickshaws and a *potua para* (potter's quarters).

Idol-maker Bapi Pal, 52, has no time to discuss the bypoll. He has more pressing

Mamata Banerjee fights a bypoll from Bhabanipur on Sept 30. But in this seat of yellow cabs, heritage buildings, there's a different buzz — price rise, 'Dada' Ganguly getting in Dhoni as Team India mentor



Outside Netaji Bhawan in Bhabanipur. The neighbourhood's status as a VIP constituency explains why it's not starstruck about the bypoll. Partha Paul

things on his mind, with Durga Puja starting on October 11. "Bengal's biggest festival is just a month away. We were anyway running into losses for two consecutive years due to Covid. Now we have got some orders for idols. We are working round the clock to finish them on time," says Pal, who lives within 200 metres of Mamata Banerjee's Kalighat residence.

Despite the ennuvi surrounding the election, Bhabanipur has issues that its residents

want fixed — the poor drainage system, the desilting of the Tolly Nullah, and the uneven roads that need to be fixed.

"The next MLA should ensure the Tolly Nullah is cleaned up. Every time there is high tide, the water overflows and all our homes get flooded," says Pal.

The highly polluted *nullah*, also known as Adi Ganga, runs by Banerjee's home. The canal continues to receive untreated sewage and waste from homes in the neighbour-

hood, despite the National Green Tribunal's intervention over the years.

The constituency is also the hub of Kolkata's famous yellow taxis as most of them have garages here.

Shankar Verma, 47, who hails from Ambedkar Nagar in Uttar Pradesh and has been a taxi driver in Bhabanipur for 30 years, says the condition of roads needs to improve. "Every monsoon, the roads get affected due to heavy rains. It gets difficult to drive on potholed roads," he says.

Balwant Singh's 'Eating House' on Harish Mukherjee Road is known for its famous 'chai'. The eatery is adjacent to Gurdwara Shant Kutiya, where CM Banerjee paid a visit last week seeking the support of the Punjabi community. On a Thursday morning, the eatery is all abuzz but there is hardly any talk of the upcoming bypoll.

"People here have no interest. We are busy running our business," says Saminder Pal Singh, whose family owns the eatery.

Sipping tea from a *kulhad*, businessman Manbir Singh says, "The TMC is already in power. There is no point supporting the Opposition."

Banerjee's opponent is the BJP's Priyanka Tibrewal, a young lawyer who was instrumental in ensuring a CBI probe into incidents of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

Banerjee has won twice from Bhabanipur since 2011. In the Assembly elections earlier this year, she had moved out of Bhabanipur

to contest from Nandigram in East Midnapore district, but lost to her former confidant-turned-BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari by a margin of 1,956 votes.

The TMC's Sovande Chatteropadhyay won from Bhabanipur, securing 57.71 per cent of the votes, but vacated the seat to allow Banerjee to get elected to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

Bhabanipur's status as a VIP constituency — besides Banerjee, former West Bengal Chief Minister Siddhartha Shankar Ray was twice elected from here — and the fact that it is part of Kolkata city, probably explains why it's not starstruck about the highly anticipated bypoll.

Standing outside Gupta Brothers, a sweet shop across the road from 'Eating House', businessman Akash Mehta, 42, admits that there is no excitement over the bypoll. "It's a non-contest. In the Assembly polls, all eyes were on Nandigram because Mamata Banerjee was up against Suwendu Adhikari. This time, the BJP has not fielded any heavy-weight against the Chief Minister. This has made the contest easier for Banerjee," he says, unwilling to be drawn into any more talk on politics.

But there is somebody who is willing to hazard a guess. Umesh Kamath, 55, whose family hails from Madhubani district in Bihar, has a clear winner in mind. "Didi will win. Her government has provided a lot of social welfare schemes which have helped people like us," says Kamath.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW

The First Table

At the Rashtrapati Bhavan, what goes into the making of a feast to showcase India's culinary diversity to visiting dignitaries

Benita Fernando

IT WAS perhaps in kindergarten that we first heard the story of the relentless spider, the one that tried, tried, tried again until a novice Scottish king resolved to defeat the English army. Or, perhaps, it was in primary school when we were taught that Thomas Edison failed only a thousand times (or 5,000 or 10,000) before he invented the light bulb. Maybe it was none of these legends, but the time we won a silver medal and a coach told us, "Next time, gold." We were told that the world is our oyster, that the word "impossible" doesn't exist in our dictionaries, that we can achieve anything we want, if only we persevere and never lose sight of the prize.

Then came Naomi Osaka, throwing a hammer in the works. In May, the 23-year-old American tennis player — the world's highest-paid female athlete — withdrew from the French Open, citing mental-health concerns. The following month, she withdrew from Wimbledon as well. In a social-media post on May 31, Osaka wrote that she's been suffering from long bouts of depression since the US Open in 2018 (where she won against Venus Williams) and has had a hard time coping.

Similarly, in July, Simone Biles, 24, shocked the world when she announced that she was withdrawing from the individual all-round competition at the Tokyo Olympics. The 24-year-old American athlete, the winner of most world championship medals and the greatest gymnast of our times, had said, "We also have to focus on ourselves, because at the end of the day, we're human, too." Biles would later go on to clarify that her decision was not so much about giving up as it was about re-arranging the definition of success.

Osaka's and Biles' decisions to choose what they wanted to participate in gave permission to others to do so as well. "That someone could take such a step at such a level... especially for a woman of colour. Ten years ago, it wouldn't have been possible," says Shivangi Tiwary, 30, a Bengaluru resident. Biles' decision resonated with Tiwary, who finished her post-graduation studies in gender, society and representation in 2020, but the road to it had been littered with obstacles.

In 2015, Tiwary left her MBA programme at Alliance University, a course she had entered mainly because her family expected her to. In the days after she decided to quit, in her rented one-bedroom apartment, Tiwary tried to self-diagnose why she felt the way she did. She knew she was suffering; she just didn't know why.

Eventually, when her parents learnt of the situation, they were supportive, but it didn't quite help. She says, "There is a lot of shame and guilt around quitting. You end up feeling you are disappointing someone but you don't know who that is. It could be your family, society or that aunt who comes home once a year and asks why you didn't finish your MBA." The stigma against quitting was so high that Tiwary eventually completed her course in 2017.

The pressure to perform consistently well, with the world watching, is a weight to bear. The stakes are high, making us want to quit precisely when we are at the top of our game.

"What Simon Biles and Naomi Osaka have done is nothing short of pathbreaking; they have normalised asking for help at the highest level of achievement, recognition and fame... to put yourself first, and to prioritise well-being over work," read a social media post by Mumbai-based entrepreneur and youth mental-health advocate, Nikhil Taneja in July.

In 2017, after a year in therapy, Taneja quit his job at Yash Raj Films. Taneja, then 30, describes that time as a high-point in his career — he was general manager at the production company and also a producer.

Following a diagnosis of clinical anxiety, Taneja had initially opted for a sabbatical. His therapist said that he was close to a nervous breakdown. "When you fulfil a middle-class goalpost that you'd set many years ago, you realise there is the next one and then another. How many goalposts are going to be there? Until therapy, I had never stopped to consider who I am or what I wanted. There had been no time to pause and reflect," says Taneja. Quitting should have been the clear decision, but he was doubtful. "Did I quit because I was weak? Did I quit because I was not mentally 'strong'?" he asks.

Our lives, and their reflections in art and cinema, are filled with cautionary tales that make quitting difficult, even when there is

Our lives, and their reflections in art and cinema, are filled with cautionary tales that make quitting difficult, even when there is every reason to do so



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY



ARTS etc

From Clay We Rise

Anuradha Roy on being a writer of the changing world and her new novel that interrogates grief, friendship and creativity

working, there were still deadlines, meetings were still happening. That's a huge example of industrial time. We had to beat our bodies and minds into shape and do whatever was expected of us to churn out a deliverable and make money. We had to keep producing," says Delhi-based writer, Riddhi Dastidar.

During this time, Dastidar, 29, volunteered with medical resourcing and then founded Mutual Aid India, which gathers fundraisers from grassroots collectives for marginalised communities. Volunteering, however, brought on its own share of grief, anxiety and fear. Dastidar, who has been managing her Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder since college, was reporting from Jharkhand on a freelance assignment this year. She got wary of the sheer numbers of people moving about without masks due to a failure of public messaging. Dastidar used to report for *Khabar Lahariya*, a feminist grassroots news network, a job she quit in July this year. The flipside is that her lifestyle will have to be as frugal as possible. Quitting, she acknowledges, is a matter of privilege. "Clearly, I am an anxious person but all this made me realise that I badly wanted to finish writing my book, to focus on a project of my own at my own pace," she says.

For Pune-based Nasrin Anwar (name changed), 25, quitting not one but two jobs, since the pandemic began, was a decision that was hard to arrive at. With a double Masters' in economics and population studies, Anwar was faced with a job market that was waning. Her father was a lawyer and her mother gave tuitions, but, as senior citizens, neither of them could work. Anwar's job as a data analyst in the public-health sector became far more demanding in the pandemic and her employers were tight-lipped about raises.

"After I sent out the email that I was quitting, I never looked back. I wondered why I'd stuck around for so long," says Anwar. None of this meant that Anwar didn't have to deal with the emotional fallout of quitting. Even though it was a decision that was backed by her parents, they had already started dipping into their savings and they were ready to mortgage their jewellery for any worst-case scenario. "When you are not productive, it can badly hamper your self-esteem. And therapy isn't affordable all the time either," she says.

Anwar eventually took another job but the second wave of the pandemic changed things drastically. She lost her father to the virus and her mother has been dealing with post-COVID-19 effects ever since. "We were already in debt and I was in the strange position of being a 25-year-old who had to pay off the family loans," says Anwar, who quit her new job over religious discrimination at the workplace. "The environment in the house is really tense and I can feel the weight of being a provider day in and day out," she says.

This intense regulation of time and the need to be eternally productive is possibly the most important reason why many of us hold back from quitting

It's not leaving jobs or courses alone for the sake of one's mental well-being that can be financially draining. After being in a bad marriage for more than a decade, Varanasi-based

Preeti Didwaniya, now 43, decided to separate from her husband in 2014. "But married daughters living with parents are not so acceptable in Varanasi," she says.

With a son to look after and only receiving basic maintenance for his schooling, Didwaniya had to look for salaried work, though her parents were more than willing to support her. Among the reasons that she had decided to leave her marriage was physical and mental abuse, in addition to the fact that she was not allowed to have a salaried job. Now, Didwaniya took up a job as a teacher, but as the divorce proceedings stretched on for years together, she reached a point where taking care of a household, her young son and the demands of the workplace were too much to handle together. "You quit one thing but there is another crisis to face. I constantly felt as if I had to flee, that anything could happen to me," says Didwaniya, who left her teaching position. Her divorce came through last year in the pandemic, after six years. Didwaniya went on to open a daycare centre in Varanasi with the contacts she had built over the years since her separation.

Given these pressures, the art of quitting is tough to master and without many takers. Indeed, it takes a fair amount of unlearning to acknowledge that it might be a sign of agency to sometimes just give up. That quitting is not a desperate sign, but an investment in an act of hope, in believing that we deserve better.

LET'S CALL IT QUILTS

Steadfastness is a virtue, but only if it doesn't come at a personal cost. Letting go is the new script for mental and physical well-being

every reason to do so. And, when one does quit, it's rarely allowed to be the whole story. People are expected to come back "stronger", having rested and recharged. It's the narrative arc for dropouts-turned-billionaires. It lists on life-coaching websites of "inspiring people who quit jobs to travel". Quitting some soul-crushing (but well-paying) job in the city is acceptable only if you turn to a life that is radically different and fulfilling, like buying a vineyard in Italy or farming in the Nilgiris.

Shaheen Khan, a Delhi-based psychotherapist and psychologist working with Proactive for Her, a women's digital health clinic, says, "I have seen that even if people are extremely unhappy with their job or if it's a misfit, then too, they don't quit because they feel quitting will make them a failure. Capitalist society has ingrained in us that if we are not working for money or generating stuff, then we are not a

valuable member of society. This way, we function out of guilt," says Khan. As a society that emphasises on community, taking time out for oneself is seen as a selfish act, she adds. We don't hear enough people in our lives validating the decision to quit. "What we need to understand is that most people quit after months of pondering, quitting only when they can't take it anymore," he says.

It was in therapy that Taneja realised that if he had a weekend or a day off, he would fill it up with activities to make the best use of time. "I would have this anxiety about a free day," he says.

This intense regulation of time and the need to be eternally productive is possibly the most important reason why many of us hold

back from quitting. We are expected to mark the milestones in our lives at the appointed times, none of which is helped by ambitious lists of "30 under 30". The unhurried day feels like a wasted opportunity. Given how Asian countries have some of the longest working hours in the world, we grow up evaluating ourselves based on how productive we are. This makes quitting difficult, particularly if there is no job offer or a personal venture to back up the decision, or if the reasons are a toxic environment or a bully boss. The same can be said of those managing mental health, as though we let an illness win.

In a rather twisted way, the pandemic has greatly warped our sense of time and made a sudden shift in our lives, leading to a radical reassessment of these prescribed milestones. "During the second wave of the pandemic, people in Delhi were dying and we were still

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Man vs Wild in the Lawn

Moments of war and peace in my garden, and why I had to take down the scarecrow

IN THE last couple of months, there's been war and peace in the garden. Human-animal conflict, like a never-ending cold war, has, at times, culminated in brief skirmishes. To counter the infiltrations, measures had to be taken. An old kurta hung up on a frame, with a baseball cap for head, stuck at one end of the then bed of palak — the peacocks' favourite — and dangling discarded CDs strung on ropes.

Alas, a terrible, undignified fate befell the scarecrow. After a few days, the birds got the measure of it. Babbler began playing see-saw on the fellow's arms, stood on the head and played being judge. Then, flew up to the dining-room window hammering away on it.

Several thunderstorms couldn't save the poor scarecrow's dignity. The final humiliation was still to come. I soon noticed tiny holes all over the thin material. I spotted an orange wasp alight upon it, cut out a tiny hole and fly off — it was using (and chewing up) the cotton for home-construction. Soon, the poor scarecrow was pock-marked all over, as if peppered with buckshot. We saved it from further indignity and took it down.

Not that it had made any difference to the monkeys: One morning, I looked out into the garden to find a huge lot of a rhesus macaque coolly snacking on the shiny purple brinjal I had earmarked for lunch, wasting more than eating. A threatened lathi-charge and much shouting saw the intruder stalking off calmly, least bothered.

Now look, I have nothing against the birds and the beasts from sharing my greens — in fact, I have donated an entire guava tree to the parakeets (guavas are invariably full of worms and make me burp), and love it when the small cheeping bands of scaly-breasted munias descend to have breakfast with me. They pick up all the bajra that the parakeets upstairs have bestowed upon them like manna from heaven, just recently, I happily allowed a shiny little fellow clip the long leaves of a plant and fly off with strips to the garden next door, only to reappear and repeat — several times. He was ob-



A FEW GOOD THINGS
Red Pierrot butterflies

viously setting up a cosy home with his wife. Alas, we had a very heavy downpour soon after and I haven't seen the fellow since.

They're said to make rather large ball-shaped nests with an entrance to one side. On the other side, every afternoon, families of White-eyes assiduously inspect the bougainvillea for spiders, and the tailorbird shouts exultantly in her usual megaphone manner. Late in the evenings, the magpie-robin will let loose a long very sweet whistle.

The tori (ridge gourd cousin of zucchini) and ghia (bottle gourd) are in a rapacious strangling battle (gourd vs gourd). The tori has so far claimed the high ground sneaking across the fence, swarming right to the top of the tall saptaparni trees in the common lawn, its crepe-like yellow flowers, fluttering like flags. The ghia has mostly been smothered but has yielded several heavy-weight ghas, which had to be given away, there's only so much ghia one can have! In spite of watching time-lapse coverage of creepers and lianas ruthlessly winding themselves around other plants, I never really thought that "domestic" plants were so nakedly aggressive. Between the two, the poor young mango tree, engulfed by both these ruthless creepers, has been struggling to escape.

Regrettably, I don't put out water for the birds anymore, because mosquito larvae make the container their private Jacuzzi.

But there have been good things, too. A gigantic, stunning owl moth visited one morning, its huge eye spots mesmerising. Two pairs of red Pierrots — their red, black and white pattern so striking against the dark green foliage — spent a couple of months fluttering around, becoming fond of the mint flowers.

There's been hunting, too. Lynx spiders lurk under tulsi leaves. Once, I saw one grab a hoverfly and hastily make off with it, lest I prosecute it for poaching. A cat, barely off kittenhood, pounced repeatedly on a garden lizard, missing it by metres, but obviously getting more delight out of the sport (like a child on a mattress).

And, then, more happy events. Two evenings ago, I heard tailorbirds make an unholy racket and thought a cat was on the prowl. But it was a family — a mom and her two recently-fledged youngsters — hopping around excitedly, being shown where to find tidbits. Vociferously, the fledglings insisted on being spoon-fed and their exasperated mom obliged! Some kids just never grow up!

The First Table

Smoked lentils and quinoa kebabs, kasundi fish tikka with beetroot hummus — the making of a menu that's as nutritious as it is eclectic



Living History

AN INDIAN EXPRESS COLLABORATION WITH THE RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

Mukesh Kumar

WHEN PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind hosted a reception for India's Olympic contingent recently, the Rashtrapati Bhavan kitchen had an opportunity to express gratitude to the sports persons for making the nation proud. When we designed the menu, we kept in mind two key elements: Accommodating the athletes' dietary requirements and presenting before them an array of regional as well as international flavours. To ensure the meal was nutritious and wholesome, exotic vegetable tortilla wraps, well-complemented delicacies such as murgh hazarvi tikka and mushroom pies. The dessert was a combination of rava kesari and pistachio baklava, a fusion of classic Indo-Western symphonies. And how could we let them go without serving the traditional, highly nutritious Indian beverage, the Punjabi power drink, kesar badam lassi?

Serving the first table of the nation, we had to be acutely careful while planning the menus. At the Rashtrapati Bhavan events, the aim is to incorporate the vast and varied food cultures and showcase the diversity of India to the visiting dignitaries. The state banquet is an opportunity to give the visitors a sense of the vibrancy of India's various cuisines. At the same time, food habits, likes and dislikes of the visiting dignitaries have to be considered too. Often, flavours and combinations of ingredients need a little tweaking to suit the preferences of the visiting guests, but it is equally important to ensure that the authenticity is not lost in the process.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan kitchen is in charge of nourishing the President and first family every day, catering to official guests, including heads of states, as well as private functions for the President and the first lady. There was a time when the Willingdons and the Mountbattens were served consommés, soufflés, steaks and other traditional European delicacies. Curiously, their kitchen operations were never headed by a European chef. The British entirely relied on their team of Indian cooks for the preparation of Western food.

The tradition of preparing and serving Western food in the state banquets was bound to change after Independence. In search of the most exquisite Indian dishes suitable for state banquets, the cooks turned to Mughlai cuisine for inspiration. In the 1960s, one of the first state banquets to feature Indian food on the menu offered a mix of both — Indian and



PHOTOS COURTESY RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN PHOTO ARCHIVES



Western cuisine. It started with French onion soup followed by biryani along with dum aloo and naan and concluded with a British style tutti-frutti dessert.

Over the years, awareness grew of the distinctive culinary traditions of the different regions of India. The first families also had a major role in transforming the culinary repertoire of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Major inputs started flowing in during the presidency of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (1974-77), when the first lady, Begum Abida Ahmed, encouraged cooks to excel in their craft and initiated briefings before every banquet. She made sure that the presidential kitchen offered the finest quality of Awadhi delicacies such as murgh nihari, dum pukht biryani and flaky sheermal breads to guests.

DINNER IS SERVED

(From top) Lovlina Borgohain (left) and PV Sindhu at the reception hosted by the President for India's Olympic contingent recently; President Kovind's (in blue) banquet for heads of states, including French President Emmanuel Macron, in 2018

First lady Usha Narayanan (1997-2002) continued the legacy and took a great deal of interest in introducing south Indian dishes such as mini idlis and vadas in the menus, thereby challenging the dominance of north Indian and Northwest Frontier cuisines in banquets. The initiative had two outcomes. It not only introduced lighter entrée (mid-sized meals) options for proper balancing of menus but also contributed significantly in augmenting the Bhavan's culinary collection. At a banquet, in honour of then president of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, in July 2001, the dessert served was Kerala's ada pradhaman, a coconut-jaggery-rice pudding, traditionally eaten during the harvest festival of Onam.

Such considerations about the various aspects of food spur the creativity of chefs. We

had a taste of it recently. This year, a day before the "at-home" event, part of the Republic Day celebrations, the food-testing committee comprising senior officials suggested adding some twist to subz shami kebab to make it more tempting. We had to act fast to create something surprising and appealing. The foremost challenge was to deliver excellent zero-error service while meeting the timelines for the preparation and pick-up of meals. What came to the rescue was the advice of my mentor chefs during my initial days in the culinary career — the importance of flavours and food scents and the warmth they can add. After a small round of discussion and analysing different combinations of flavours and aromas, we decided to incorporate beetroot ki shami in the menu. It was an uncommon blend of ingredients but to our surprise, it came out as the most appreciated dish of the day.

Mukesh Kumar is executive chef at the Rashtrapati Bhavan

Shaken, not Stirred

How COVID-19 and solitary confinement made me homesick for an Indian way of being — for warmth, hospitality and connectedness

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

IT WAS a triumphant feeling to have left India COVID-free in June, when the virus was wreaking havoc across the Indian map. Not because Charlie and I had been living in a cave; rather, we'd taken every precaution and care to not catch it.

My family is by no means strangers to COVID-19. We have dealt with its challenges closely. In the first wave, my mom contracted it from our family chef, who'd picked it up from one of his many hospital visits. It was a feat to keep these family members comfortable and well cared for. More challenging was the task of keeping the remaining household safe. We

succeeded and were proud to have endured.

The second wave had my brother Samir catching the virus from a colleague. Once again, we strove to care for a COVID patient. Samir emerged from it without much challenge, the household did too. We fought the virus tooth and nail twice, and each time we stayed together and beat it.

The second wave was not without its tragedy. We lost two of our family's closest and most precious members, Abba aunty and Ajay uncle. Their loss within days of each other brought home the ugly and vicious nature of this disease. Like parents to my siblings and me, these two had seen us through the arc of our lives, and in Papa's absence, it was Ajay uncle who often played that role. And, now, we were left bereft of that presence, too. Then we lost Prabha aunty, a great gynaecologist of Delhi, who brought me and my siblings into this world and was by our side at every noteworthy moment of our lives. These three deaths at the hand of COVID will remain stark reminders for us to appreciate the heft and might of this deadly disease.

My mother and I flew into New York City early this summer with certificates that proved we were COVID-free, but nobody checked, nobody questioned; we weren't asked to show them. We were coming from India, the land of the Delta variant, and there was no requirement for us to be tested when we arrived. As I settled in Manhattan, I realised how the richest nation in the world was fooling itself into believing we were post-COVID. Everywhere, I saw people without masks — in buildings, streets, cars. At once, I realised that America is a country that isn't paying attention to its own needs and thinks of itself as too strong to be bothered by such trifles that the rest of the world is



SUVIR SARAN

THAT WE HOLD CLOSE

In life, we must have one way of living, loving, caring, and thinking, one set of values that is unshakeable

having to face. But a pandemic is a pandemic because it is universal. It doesn't care if you're rich or poor, a developing or developed nation. It affects you no matter what, no matter who.

I'm a man from two countries. When in America, I consider myself an American. In India, I'm an Indian. I'm proud to be from both New Delhi and New York.

In India, as an Indian son and brother, I became an Indian caregiver when my mother and my brother were struck with COVID. They were isolated but not quite separated. I and the other members of the household were able to care for them, make them feel connected to the world, and feed them good food. They felt loved and provided

for. As Indians, we instinctively and collectively heal each other.

In America, as an American son and brother, I found myself thinking like an American and becoming an American patient. Here I was, with a loving, caring family, but I quarantined myself in a hotel room. It was a rather lonely moment, and I felt self-pity even though I was living in the hotel's luxury. In that room, I realised how tough life is in the US. How quickly we are left alone here, how quickly we are made to feel helpless, hopeless and hapless.

Lying in the hotel in Westchester, I felt like the last Mughal emperor of India, Bahadur Shah Zafar, who was sent to solitary confinement in the nation of Burma, away from his own nation. My family cared for me when I would let them. My mother and my sister would visit me — they sat in the car while I sat outside the hotel. They brought me food and caring every minute my American mindset would allow it.

I realised, in those moments, how different the approach to healing, suffering and malady is in our two nations, and I was homesick. Not for a place, but for a way of being. I was homesick for Indian warmth, hospitality, and connectedness. I was broken by this disease, and I was alone.

In the end, what saved me through the loneliness of quarantine was being connected to my extended big fat Indian family through the WhatsApp group that we have. Songs sung for me, poems written for me, messages of love, care, and nourishment sent my way. This was the healing and curing that brought me back to the mindset of those willing to fight this deadly battle. I came out victorious, with monoclonal antibodies, ready to brave the challenges of life and an impending surgery.

In life, we must have one way of living, loving, caring, and thinking. One set of values that is unshakeable, that we are never too far from. India shows me the beauty of the feminine, America the resolute power of the brute. I have learnt to combine the strength of the brute and the softness and maternalism of Mother India, and together they give me the ability to live life never too lost, never too strong, but always in the middle, loving and surviving.

And of Clay Are We Created

Writer Anuradha Roy on exploring grief and obstacles to creative impulses in her new novel and being a chronicler of a changing world

Paromita Chakrabarti

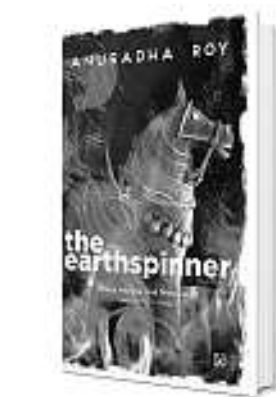
THERE IS a moment of premonitory awareness in Anuradha Roy's new novel, *The Earthspinner* (Hachette, Rs 599), when the potter Elango, one of its central characters, despairs over his love for a Muslim woman, Zohra. "He wanted this sign to bring him the only message he yearned for, one that would tell him the unbridgeable crevasse between him and Zohra would one day close, the earth would heal itself, and he would be able to walk across to the other side where she was waiting for him... He could not utter what she was, a Muslim. The space between the two was a charnel house of burnt and bloodied human flesh, a giant crack through the earth that was like an open mouth waiting to swallow him. He could not imagine a life without Zohra. That was unbearable. But he dared not imagine a life with her."

In the novel, it is the late Seventies and Morarji Desai has just been elected the Prime Minister after the horrors of the Emergency, but it could well be a day in the life of India today. The legacy of communal distrust, inherited at the time of Partition, lies smouldering below the surface, awaiting a spark to bring it out in the open. Yet, galvanised by his passions — for his craft, for Zohra, and for China, the abandoned dog who adopts him and his neighbourhood — Elango chooses love. Like countless others in this country, in the face of insurmountable opposition, he is ready to face its disproportionate consequences.

The perils to ordinary happiness has a deep history in the subcontinent that acquires new meaning in each retelling, serving as cautionary tales or, increasingly infrequently, as stories of hope. In the seven decades since Independence, the schisms driven by religion, caste or class have deepened to demand a homogenisation of identities. Roy's tale is a multi-stranded narrative that examines the nature of our diversity and creative impulses; the shadow of grief in our lives and the redemptive joy of friendships, human or canine. "I think I've just been wanting to write this book for a very long time, without knowing exactly the shape it would take. I wanted it to approach various themes that are important to me, one of which was the place of creativity and the resistance it faces from outside forces. The other was the place of animals in the hierarchy of life that we have in this country. And the third was to understand how bereavement affects someone very young. That's something I've thought a lot about, because I lost my father when I was very young and it's been something that affected me. I wanted pottery in it, because that was what was going to knit everything together, and because all these themes were very important to me, it took me quite a while to approach it," says Roy, 54, in a video interview.

At the heart of Roy's story lies an eight-foot clay horse that Elango creates, dredged from memories of his predecessors building one for the local temple, fired by his desire to create a tribute to his beloved, and whose destruction forms the pivot of the novel.

In her childhood, Roy had encountered the terracotta horses of West Bengal's Bankura. Later, in the course of her own fascination with pottery, she would come to know of the Ayyanar horses, made as an offering to gods for the safekeeping of local communities. "The horse in South India that was worshipped is not the horse that Elango is making, in the sense that the actual horse was a sacred thing. It was related to a myth of Shiva — in which Lord Shiva's fury is put into the mouth of a horse and it is sent underwater to cool off. Elango's horse is a secular horse, because he is doing it as an offering to his beloved. It is not as though India was gloriously harmonious or secular before, but we aspired to be those



DOWN TO EARTH
(Left) Anuradha Roy with her dog Piku; her new book

But just like Elango's horse represents syncretism, Roy says there is redemption in art, however frail it may be. "For the people who make the art, it really is how they respond to the world, how they find refuge, solace, everything united in that one thing. In the case of Elango and the horse he's making, that piece of art becomes something so representative of what is fragile in our society. I didn't start out thinking he would make a horse with calligraphy on it. But as the book developed, I think what was playing in my mind was the beauty of all these monuments — Islamic monuments we see around us — which have very beautiful script all over the doorways and arches and so on, which I have never, of course, been able to read because I don't read those languages. But I've always responded to it as a design, as art. Yet, it has meaning for the person who can read it. So I wanted to have these two things together on that horse — this language that to some people is beautiful just as a design, to some people it's threatening as an alien religion rather than as script. Therefore, that horse becomes a kind of speaking horse to me, which says different things to different people," she says.

Roy lives in Ranikhet with her husband Rukun Advani — with whom she runs the publishing house, Permanent Black — and her beloved coterie of strays. From the quiet of her surroundings, Roy trains her lens on small towns and cities, places of churn that become transformed under her thoughtful gaze. There's an atmospheric sense of place in her narratives — Songarh (*An Atlas of Impossible Longing*, 2008), Jarmuli (in the DSC Prize For Fiction-winning *Sleeping on Jupiter*, 2015), Muntazir (*All the Lives We Never Lived*) and even Ranikhet in *The Folded Earth* (2011), the only novel she's set in a real place. "I can't think of the novel as separate from the setting at all. It's completely vital to it. I really feel as if the place also is like a character for me, that I want to create it in the same way that I want to create the characters," she says.

She can feel change creeping up on Ranikhet, too. "Many people who come back after 10, 15, 20 years say they feel as if nothing changes here. But I can see change all around me, among the young particularly. First of all, they have huge access to information, they have higher levels of education. They are aware, well-informed, highly intelligent. And yet, there's a huge sense of frustration because there's gigantic unemployment. They really don't know what they will do once they leave school and college here because their English skills are not that great, they are not equipped to compete in the way urban kids may be. So you can feel a kind of seething turmoil among the young. There's a lot more drug use now. Change is coming in not very good ways in that sense. In some eternal sense, of course, the mountains and trees are the same and life goes on as always," she says.

For video excerpts of the interview, visit www.indianexpress.com

For the people who make the art, it really is how they respond to the world, how they find refuge, solace, everything united in that one thing

things. The destruction of this horse was, to me, a kind of symbol of the way we have stopped aspiring to harmony. Instead, it's now hatred that is the governing force," says Roy.

In her 2018 Tata Literature Live! Book of the Year Award-winning novel, *All the Lives We Never Lived*, that was set in an India on the brink of Independence, Roy had drawn on the transformative potential of memory and history and the warnings the latter sounds out for the future. As a writer, how does she react to this time of rising majoritarianism? "It just doesn't seem possible somehow, to someone of my generation, how did we get here. Were we deluded all along? Were we completely out of step? When I was a much younger person, at that time, it seemed to us that every-

body around us wanted the same things as us, which was to aspire to this kind of secular ideal that had been set in stone when we got Independence as a country, that we were taught non-stop as kids, that the cinema, art and books around us embodied when we grew up. And we thought that this was what everyone around us felt, too. Now, it's been a process of really feeling disillusioned and rather stupid that we are completely out of step with what most people seem to want. I think it is futile to keep blaming the government for everything. There are so many people you talk to, who seem to think everything is perfectly okay, what is going on, that is the part I find more alarming, even more than what leaders and politicians do," she says.

EYE SPY
EVERY FORTNIGHT, WE PICK, YOU WATCH

The Story Becomes Her



FRENCH ROAST
A still from the film *France*

Fronted by Léa Seydoux, French director Bruno Dumont zooms in on his country's media in his film *France*, screened at TIFF this week

Shubhra Gupta

THE PROTAGONIST in Bruno Dumont's *France* is a glamorous TV anchor-cum-intrepid reporter called France de Meurs, who knows exactly how to become the story rather than just report it. Léa Seydoux inhabits the character with great verve and conviction, always ready for action in her swish designer outfits and killer heels, brandishing her blinding lipstick as a weapon, and making *France* one of the most interesting films at this year's Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Right at the start we see France attending an important press conference. She is accompanied by her assistant Lou (Blanche Gardin) who seems to be at hand solely to give her (France) encouraging looks and an approving thumbs up. It's obvious France is not a rookie. So, why does she feel the need for her assistant to stand by? The exchange of these glances, which have more weight than the event France is covering, feels like a parody, and you very quickly realise that that's exactly what it is: having set the tone, the film gets busy sending up fame, and our fame-obsessed culture, filtered and mediated through dodgy ethics and too-ambitious practitioners.

All around us we are seeing the impact of this mad obsession with celebrities. It's crucial to have a zillion Instagram followers. The gram rules, but other social media platforms are not far behind. Twitter needs to explode when a person famous for being famous says or does something either inadvertently, or on instructions from their public relations team, whose sole job is to keep their client "out there". Either you are an influencer, or you're nothing.

Some situations in the film make you fear for France. She interviews a gun-toting "terrorist" and asks him to pose, while she records her questions against a "better" background. In another instance, we see her dodging bullets and running helter-skelter with her cameraman and interpreter. And there she is in a bobbing boat, chatting up fleeing refugees, the blue Mediterranean behind her. Where are these people from? Are they for real? Is this a "manufactured war", created to win the race for TRPs, and populist votes? These questions have strong resonance.

France has a husband she can't stand. And a young son she is unable to deal with. She lives in a home that feels like a museum, with gigantic paintings adorning the walls and heavy drapes masking the windows. The pressure of being on top and staying there tells on her; a terrible accident leaves her devastated, but stalking fans still ask for selfies.

There are many rather obvious flourishes in this biting satire. Some of what France says and does makes you roll your eyes. But at no point does she appear fake, even when you can see she is faking it. "Things last 24 hours now," says the helpful Lou. "24 hours later, it will be a memory. It's how TV works. The worst is the best." So true. Fame is transient. Nothing lasts forever.

The Song I Came to Sing

Sri Lankan singer Yohani Diloka de Silva on becoming an overnight sensation with *Manike mage hithe*, recording it at home, and wanting to learn Hindi

Suanshu Khurana

MANIKE MAGE hithe (*In my heart*), the Sinhala song has broken the internet, with celebrities and common folk grooving to its lilting tune. A love song with a teen-pop aesthetic, it is an uncomplicated melody that plays on loop, a catchy folk rhythm that is club-friendly, and has a contemporary orchestration with a hint of sarangi. There is also a smattering of rap by Satheeshan Rathnayaka. Sung by Sri Lankan musician Yohani Diloka de Silva along with rapper Satheeshan, it caught Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan's fancy last month. He tweeted out his obsession with the song along with a video edited by his granddaughter Navya Naveli, who'd superimposed the Sinhala song over Bachchan's song-dance sequence *Jahan teri yeh nazar hai* (from *Kadla*, 1981). The actor even spoke about it on his Hindi television quiz

show *Kaun Banega Crorepati* when de Silva appeared in a question.

After soothing quarantined Sri Lankans three months ago, the song reached India and garnered over 110 million views in no time. If Hindi-film actors Madhuri Dixit, Parineeti Chopra and Tiger Shroff danced to it on their social media, K-pop boy-band sensation BTS listened to it in a "reaction video". The popularity spawned covers globally, instrumental as well as in many languages, including Tamil, English, Telugu, Konkani, Hindi, Bengali and Tripura's Kokborok; spurred TikTok videos, Instagram posts and memes, bringing de Silva instant fame. Her older songs are beginning to find new listeners now.

In Colombo, the 28-year-old YouTube star de Silva sat in her home watching how it felt to go viral. It was the unintended single's global moment. "This was a really random take on the song. It wasn't planned... it was a big thing for us,



CHARTBUSTER
Sinhala singer Yohani Diloka de Silva

We never thought it could be liked by so many people," says de Silva in a video interview.

Produced by Sri Lankan composer Chamath Sangeeth, de Silva's piece is the cover of a single that came out last year. Sung by Satheeshan and written by Dulan ARX who also performed the original rap, it wasn't even a blip on the charts. "I am a huge fan of Chamath Sangeeth. So, when I saw the song, I did a TikTok version after which Chamath asked if we could do a full version," says de Silva. The idea and the conversation both came about in the lockdown so she could not record it in a professional studio. She found the next best option — a corner in her home. The video was made in Chamath's studio in Colombo.

De Silva is also touched by how a song in Sinhala from Sri Lanka, "a tiny country", is suddenly the rage. "A lot of our music is inspired by Bollywood, probably because we are neighbours. The influence is really strong. But I'm seeing a renewed interest in Sri Lankan music and most importantly in our language... For me, this kind of love is also representative of a bond between India and Sri Lanka," says de Silva, who also sang a Sinhala cover of *Pehla nasha* (from *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar*, 1992) some time back.

De Silva was a child of the internet, learning to play the guitar on YouTube, creating a channel on the platform at 23 and uploading her music and videos on it. Daughter of a former army officer and former air hostess, de Silva grew up listening to different languages and a range of music because of her parents and through her travels. While her parents put her into piano classes early on, she was playing the

trumpet and French horn in her school band. She travelled to the UK and Australia to study accounting, where a mix of many kinds of music left an imprint on her. The highlight was Eminem's *Rapture* concert in 2019 in Australia.

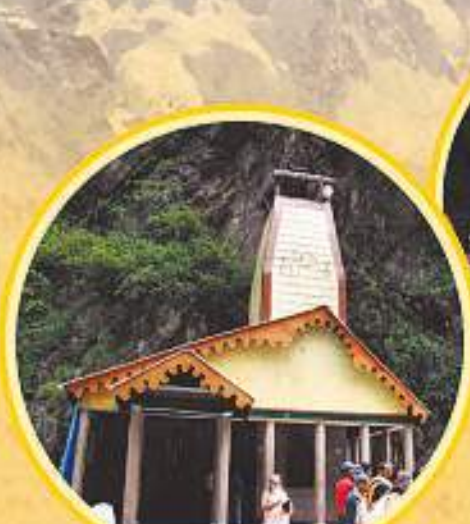
"My influences are probably why I haven't stuck to a genre. I like to experiment with my music and explore everything that I can. I rap, I sing, I play the guitar," says de Silva, who began her career by doing covers of Sinhala songs and Bollywood songs dubbed in Sinhala. She collaborated with friends for music videos and did a slew of original pieces, but it was only after her return from Australia in 2019 that she took up music professionally. She joined a record label, Pettah Effect, brought out *Aaye* (*One day*) in 2020, in which she sings of her nudes being circulated, of a life without money, singing at pubs to make ends meet. She followed it with *Rawwath dasin* in 2020, a song about 30 years of civil war in Sri Lanka. Right now, she's working on her first album. An upcoming single, which will be released this month, is going to be "completely different from *Manike mage hithe*," she says.

Unaware of the melodic structure of Pilu, the Hindustani classical raga of romance, de Silva has loosely followed its pattern — like many a Hindi-film song — in *Manike mage hithe*. Bollywood and Indian live-show offers are already knocking on her door. "I will begin by learning Hindi. I don't understand it at all. When I sing it too, I don't think I get the accent right," she says, before singing the top-grossing number one more time.

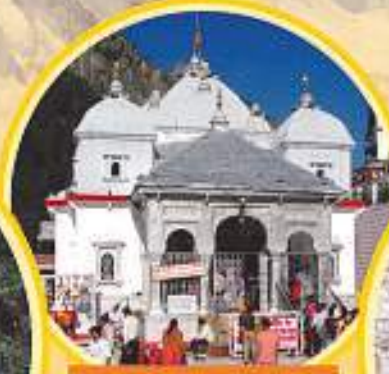
For video excerpts of the interview, visit www.indianexpress.com



देवभूमि उत्तराखण्ड



यमुनोत्री



गंगोत्री



केदारनाथ



बदरीनाथ



हेमकुंट साहिब

आस्था एवं विश्वास की प्रतीक चारधाम एवं हेमकुंट साहिब यात्रा

18 सितम्बर, 2021 से प्रारम्भ



नरेन्द्र मोदी प्रधानमंत्री



“ आध्यात्मिक एवं अलौकिक आनन्द की अनुभूति चारधाम यात्रा में आपका हार्दिक स्वागत एवं अभिनन्दन। श्रद्धालुओं के दर्शन हेतु उत्तराखण्ड की विश्व प्रसिद्ध चारधाम एवं हेमकुंट साहिब यात्रा को कुछ शर्तों के साथ प्रारम्भ कर दिया है। हम आपकी स्वस्थ एवं सुखद यात्रा के लिए संकल्पबद्ध हैं। आपकी यात्रा मंगलमय हो। इसी के साथ आपसे यह भी आग्रह है कि सरकार द्वारा जारी दिशा-निर्देशों का पालन अवश्य करें और चारो धामों के दर्शन कर पुण्य के भागी बनें। ”

पुष्कर सिंह धामी
मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

निम्नलिखित बातों का ध्यान रखें

- केदारनाथ धाम में प्रतिदिन 800, बदरीनाथ धाम में 1000, गंगोत्री में 600 और यमुनोत्री में 400 श्रद्धालुओं को ही प्रतिदिन दर्शन की अनुमति।
- चारधाम यात्रा हेतु प्रत्येक श्रद्धालु को अधिकतम 72 घण्टे पूर्व की कोविड नेगेटिव रिपोर्ट अथवा वैक्सीन की डबल डोज़ लगी होने का सर्टिफिकेट ले जाना अनिवार्य।
- धामों में श्रद्धालु किसी भी कुंड में स्नान नहीं कर सकेंगे तथा मन्दिर के गर्भगृह में भी प्रवेश निषेध रहेगा।
- मन्दिर में दर्शन हेतु एक बार में केवल 3 लोगों को ही होगी अनुमति।
- कोरोना प्रोटोकॉल एवं सामाजिक दूरी का पालन करना अनिवार्य होगा।
- देवस्थानों/मंदिरों में दर्शन के दौरान मूर्तियों को छूने की नहीं होगी इजाज़त।
- देवस्थानों में आवास, खान-पान, चिकित्सा-स्वास्थ्य, स्वच्छ पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता का विशेष ध्यान रखा जाये।
- चारो धामों में मौसम सर्द है, तीर्थ यात्री अपने साथ गर्म कपड़े जैसे कि स्वेटर, शॉल, जैकेट एवं टोपी आदि साथ लायें। तीर्थ यात्री मौसम की जानकारी प्राप्त कर यात्रा करें।
- यात्रा के दौरान किसी भी सहायता के लिए पुलिस, पर्यटन विभाग, देवस्थानम बोर्ड से संपर्क करें।

यात्रा हेतु देवस्थानम बोर्ड की वेबसाइट www.devasthanam.uk.gov.in पर तीर्थ यात्रियों को अपना यात्रा पंजीकरण कराना अनिवार्य है।

सूचना एवं लोक सम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड द्वारा जनहित में जारी www.uttarainformation.gov.in [f uttarakhandDIPR](https://www.facebook.com/uttarakhandDIPR) [DIPR_UK](https://www.instagram.com/DIPR_UK) [uttarakhand DIPR](https://www.youtube.com/uttarakhandDIPR)

सी.एम हेल्पलाइन नं. 1905 | एम्बुलेंस नं. 108 | पुलिस कंट्रोल रूम नं. : 112 | यात्रा कंट्रोल रूम नं. : 0135-3520100, 2552627, 2552628, 2559898

MPs can't claim disruptions are a privilege: RS Chairman

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 18

VICE PRESIDENT and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called disruptions of proceedings in Parliament a "contempt of House" and said "errant members" cannot claim that disruptions are a privilege.

Naidu made the remarks while delivering the second Ram Jethmalani Memorial Lecture — on "Is disruption of parliamentary proceedings an MP's privilege and/or a facet of parliamentary democracy?" — virtually in New Delhi on Saturday.

"Disruption of the proceedings is a certain negation of the spirit and the intention behind the Rules of the House, the Code of Conduct and the Parliamentary Etiquette and the scheme of parliamentary privileges, all aimed at enabling effective performance of individual members and the House collectively. Given the consequences, disruption of proceedings clearly amount to contempt of the House, by the logic of which disruption cannot be claimed as a privilege by errant members," he

said.

The Vice President pointed towards the recently concluded monsoon session which ended two days ahead of schedule and in which an emotional Naidu himself had expressed anguish over the disruptions and had said that he had spent a sleepless night due to incidents which took place inside Parliament.

"During the last six years, over 60% of the valuable Question Hour time has been lost due to disruptions. This state of affairs justifies the growing concern over persistent disruptions," he said.

Pointing to Rules 235 and 241 of Rajya Sabha which clearly lays down rules for the conduct of members, Naidu said that Rule 235 clearly stipulates members shall not obstruct the proceedings and interrupt members while speaking by disorderly expression or noises or in any other disorderly manner and shall maintain silence while not speaking in the Council. "Rule 243 requires that the Chairman whenever he rises shall be heard in silence and any member who is speaking or offering to speak shall immediately sit down. But

these Rules are being violated too often."

Expressing disappointment over frequent disruptions, Union Minister for Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju said that disruptors making news is not a good thing for democracy. "If those who make effective representation or interventions or those who speak with high volume of oratory skills are not recognised while the disruptors make news, then it is definitely not a good thing for democracy."

Attorney General for India KK Venugopal recalled his friendship with Jethmalani which began in 1974 when the latter made a fiery speech against Indira Gandhi in Kerala. "Ram was not just a person, he was a phenomenon and a legend in law. The Bar misses him, the country misses him and I too miss him," Venugopal said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta spoke on the diversity of Parliament and said that disruptions result in people being disillusioned about democracy. "Can parliamentarians deprive the nation of intellectual brilliance merely by disruptions," Mehta asked.

BEHIND BENGALURU STADIUM MURDER

4 killings and a funeral song that sparked a gang feud

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, SEPTEMBER 18

THE KILLING of 27-year-old Aravind, alias Lee, at Bengaluru Football Stadium on September 12 was the latest in a series of murders resulting from a gang feud between two families in east Bengaluru that began following disagreement over the choice of a song to be played at a funeral in February 2013, according to police.

Before Aravind's murder, four others were reported killed as a result of this feud.

On one side of the warring groups is the family and associates of a former local criminal, Daniel Raj, who was killed in February 2013 in the slums of K G Halli in east Bengaluru and on the other side is a group linked to Vinod Raj, a local goon killed in November 2014 over Raj's murder, police said.

One of the key accused in the murder of Aravind, who was a player and coach of Karthick

Dilip Football Club, is Stalin Daniel, son of Daniel Raj. Aravind himself was associated with Vinod Raj's gang, police said.

"The origin of this running feud is not over area domination, drugs or any criminal activity. It started as a feud over a choice of song to be played at a funeral in 2013. These murders have occurred over petty issues," a police officer in Bengaluru east division said.

According to police records, Daniel, 40, a person with a criminal record, was killed during the mourning period for death of the grandmother of Vinod's wife on February 2, 2013. At the funeral, Daniel, allegedly inebriated and an associate, Arun, reportedly created a ruckus over a song that was played. They allegedly assaulted Vinod's mother and wife.

The same night, Vinod and a gang of associates, including his brother Mariya Dilip, alias Biju, allegedly attacked and killed Daniel, police and court records

state. In an alleged retaliatory attack carried out by Daniel's family, including his wife and then 19-year-old son Stalin, Vinod was murdered on November 23, 2014.

Daniel's family and their associates were acquitted in 2015 after the main prosecution witness, Mariya Dilip, brother of Vinod, turned hostile during trial. Police sources said it was a possible effort at striking a compromise.

In February 2019, sources said, the feud between the two gangs surfaced again when Prashant Raj, alias Prashant Kumar, 30, another brother of the murdered Vinod, was killed by a gang of more than 20 people. Prashant's murder was allegedly an act of revenge carried out by killers of Vinod after he threatened to continue to seek revenge, Prashant's wife told police.

Incidentally, Prashant and Aravind were allegedly hired in 2017 along with a few others with criminal records by then

personal aide of BJP leader and former CM B S Yediyurappa to kidnap a personal aide of BJP leader KS Eshwarappa in an effort to extract a video from the phone of Eshwarappa's aide.

In May 2020, the fourth murder in the feud between the two gangs occurred when Mariya Dilip, alias Biju, 39, accused in Daniel Raj's murder, was killed while he was playing rummy with a gang of seven to eight persons. The case registered with police named two sons of Daniel — Stalin and Subhash — as being among the gang that carried out the murder. The killing was allegedly carried out over fear of an impending attack by the Vinod Raj gang for the 2019 murder of Prasant.

The latest murder in the series was of Aravind on September 12. Aravind had been associated with the Vinod Raj gang and his murder was reportedly an effort to prevent an attack over the 2020 Mariya Dilip murder.

PORN RACKET

Kundra moves bail plea in Mumbai court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 18

BUSINESSMAN RAJ Kundra, an accused in pornography racket case, on Saturday moved a regular bail plea before a metropolitan magistrate court in Mumbai, claiming that he was being made a scapegoat in the case without any conclusive evidence and that the Mumbai Police has practically completed its probe against him.

The Mumbai Police Crime Branch had recently filed a supplementary chargesheet against Kundra and three others in the case pertaining to alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through mobile applications like Hotshots and Bollyfame.

In an application filed through advocate Prashant Patil, Kundra said he should be granted bail on grounds of parity with the co-accused, as eight of the nine accused against whom the primary chargesheet was filed have been granted bail by the court. He added there is not an "iota of evidence" in the first chargesheet to show his connection with Hotshots.



Lt General M K Das awards the Sher-e-Kashmir Sword of Honour to Peer Sartaj Ahmed Wani, at Dansal in Jammu on Saturday. Express

Army recruits being trained to tackle emerging challenges: Lt Gen Das

ARUNSHARMA
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 18

TAKING THE drone threat "very seriously", the Indian Army has incorporated training to tackle the menace and emerging cybersecurity challenges in its course for soldiers, a senior Army officer said on Saturday.

"Our Army Chief has taken the drone challenge very seriously and the Indian Army, including JAK LI, is fully prepared to tackle it," said Lt General M K Das, Commandant of the OTA Chennai and Colonel of the JAK LI, while talking to the media after the attestation parade for 460 new recruits of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAK LI) at its Regimental Centre in Dansal.

Due to the pandemic, the ceremony was conducted without the parents of the recruits following all the norms.

"As part of the preparation as to how to tackle this challenge, the threat of drone and how to act against it has been included in our training programme... During training at the Regimental Centre, our recruits are made fully aware of the threats posed through science and technology, cybersecurity among other emerging challenges," he said, adding that "they are further imparted orientation training when they join their respective units so as to make them fully prepared".

Recruit Peer Sartaj Ahmed Wani was awarded the Sher-e-Kashmir Sword of Honour and Triveni Singh Medal for being adjudged 'Overall Best Recruit'.

J&K trade group calls Jammu bandh on September 22

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, SEPTEMBER 18

THE JAMMU Chamber of Commerce and Industry Saturday called a bandh in Jammu on September 22 over "directionless policies" of the UT administration affecting the business fraternity.

It raised a range of issues, including closure of wine shops, restrictions on banquet halls, opening of Reliance stores and the ending of the annual darbar move, among others.

On wine shops, the organisation said in a statement: "Firstly it was wine shop owners who got the jolt by the so-called New Excise Policy and now the liquor bar owners are the next targets of the anti-Jammu administration. Hundreds of wine traders have lost their livelihood after the introduction of e-auction of liquor vendors in Jammu and Kashmir."

The Jammu traders body also expressed resentment over the "proposal of big companies like Reliance to open stores in Jammu in the retail sector". It said if that happens, "small shopkeepers of Jammu will be ruined". "The Annual Darbar Move process was aimed at maintaining communal harmony and brotherhood especially among the people of Jammu and Kashmir regions and ending this process would have an adverse impact not only upon the traditional bond between the two regions and their people but also on the business community."

Abrogation of Art 370 ensured equal rights to women: Tejasvi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
VADODARA, SEPTEMBER 18

BJP MP from Bengaluru South, Tejasvi Surya, Saturday said that the Narendra Modi-led government has ensured equal rights to women of Jammu and Kashmir with the abrogation of Article 370, which he termed as an "anti-woman law".

Speaking at a Women's Conclave in Vadodara as part of the 71st birthday celebrations of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Surya hailed Vadodara for setting up an example in women empowerment with two women MLAs, a woman MP, woman Deputy mayor looking after civic affairs, and a woman as the Municipal Commissioner.

Addressing the conclave, the Bengaluru South MP said that one of the reasons for abrogation of Article 370 was to empower women of Jammu and Kashmir. "Two Gujaratis revoked the Article 370, which prohibited a woman from Jammu and Kashmir, who decides to marry a person from an outside state, from having her rights to her property or purchasing property in J&K," Surya said.

"The DNA of BJP is made up with values of respect and empowerment of women... One of the founding members of the BJP was Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia," he said while reacting to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's remarks on the RSS chief."

Tokyo Paralympics-2020

Grand Felicitation

of Paralympic Medal Winners & Participants

Chief Guest

Sh. M. Venkaiah Naidu, Hon'ble Vice President

Presided over by

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

August Presence

S. Sandeep Singh

Minister of State, Sports and Youth Affairs, Haryana

Date - 19th September, 2021 ; Gurugram

Time - 3:15 pm

Please Scan QR Code to join the programme

GOLD MEDAL

Sumit Antil

Men's Javelin

GOLD MEDAL

Manish Narwal

Shooting

SILVER & BRONZE MEDAL

Singhraj Adhana

Shooting

SILVER MEDAL

Yogesh Kathunia

Men's Discus Throw

BRONZE MEDAL

Harvinder Singh

Archery

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/DiprHaryana) | [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/DiprHaryana) | [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/DiprHaryana) | [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/DiprHaryana) | [WhatsApp](https://www.whatsapp.com/DiprHaryana) | [Telegram](https://www.telegram.com/DiprHaryana) | [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/DiprHaryana) | [Snapchat](https://www.snapchat.com/DiprHaryana) | [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/DiprHaryana) | [DiprHaryana](https://www.linkedin.com/DiprHaryana)

New Delhi

NOTICE BOARD CORPORATE ASSOCIATE DIARY APPOINTMENTS, MOVEMENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HONOURS



AWARDS - NHPC AK Singh, CMD, NHPC has received 1st Prize of 'Rajbhasha Kirti Puruskar (Griha Patrika) in Region 'A' for 2019-20 from Amit Shah, Home Minister during Hindi Diwas ceremony organized at Vigyan Bhawan, ND.



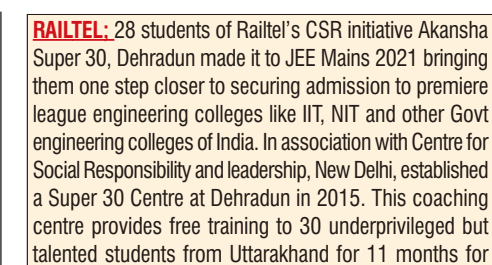
POSHAN ABHIYAAN - CWC CWC IS organizing the 4th Rashtriya Poshan Maah which comes under POSHAN ABHIYAAN. The campaign of Poshan Maah is to be celebrated under 4 different themes during 4 weeks in the month of September, 2021.



FREEDOM RUN - PNB PNB organised the 'Fit India Freedom Run 2.0' to commemorate the Central Government's initiative, 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. V Dube, ED, SK Saha, ED and other senior management, congregated at the PNB HO in Dwarka.



APPOINTMENTS N. Nirlep Singh Rai has taken over as CMD of National Fertilizers Limited. Prior to this, NS Rai was Director (Technical) from April, 2020. He has been associated with the NFL for 38 years and has worked in various capacities. He is also the Nominee Director on the Board of Joint venture Company of NFL, Ramagundam Fertilizers & Chemicals Ltd. As CEO RFCL, he is credited with commissioning of the project. NS Rai is a B.E. (Instrumentation & Control) from Thapar University. He has rich professional experience of technical services & operation & maintenance of large scale Fertilizer Plants.



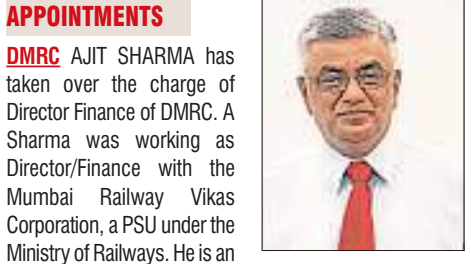
RAILTEL: 28 students of Railtel's CSR initiative Akansha Super 30, Dehradun made it to JEE Mains 2021 bringing them one step closer to securing admission to premiere league engineering colleges like IIT, NIT and other Govt engineering colleges of India. In association with Centre for Social Responsibility and Leadership, New Delhi, established a Super 30 Centre at Dehradun in 2015. This coaching centre provides free training to 30 underprivileged but talented students from Uttarakhand for 11 months for admission examinations of reputed engineering colleges like IIT, NIT and state engineering colleges.



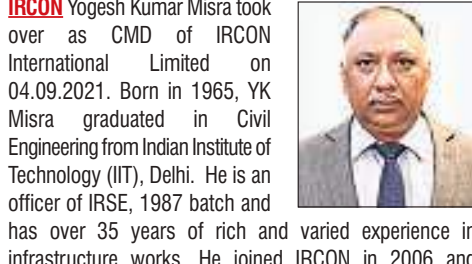
AWARDS - RITES VGS Kumar, Dir. (Proj.) & CMD, RITES Ltd., was conferred the prestigious 'Eminent Engineer Award' by the Institution of Engineers (India) for his outstanding contribution towards the advancement & application of practice of engineering in the country.



FELICITATION - POWERGRID POWERGRID's Corporate Communication team has featured in Reputation Today's India's Top 30 Corporate Communications teams. The Team has ranked 18th in the list which features only two PSUs from India.



APPOINTMENTS DMRC AJIT SHARMA has taken over the charge of Director Finance of DMRC. A Sharma was working as Director/Finance with the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation, a PSU under the Ministry of Railways. He is an Electrical Engineer from PEC, Chandigarh and MBA from the Faculty of Management Studies, Delhi University and has a vast experience of 32 years with distinction in various capacities in Indian Railways as well as in areas of planning and dealing with Multilateral Development Banks in procurement and financing during his tenure in Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation.



APPOINTMENTS IRCON Yogesh Kumar Misra took over as CMD of IRCON International Limited on 04.09.2021. Born in 1965, YK Misra graduated in Civil Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. He is an officer of IRSE, 1987 batch and has over 35 years of rich and varied experience in infrastructure works. He joined IRCON in 2006 and subsequently took an absorption in IRCON. He has made valuable contributions while working earlier on Design & Construction of J&K Rail Link Project and on other Railway capacity enhancement works. Under his leadership, IRCON has secured several projects within India and abroad on EPC, BOT and HAM basis in the highway and railway sectors.



IRCTC: IRCTC has launched Shri Ramayana Yatra by Deluxe AC Tourists train to promote Religious Tourism. This tour will start from Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station on 7th Nov 2021 and cover the visit of all prominent places associated with the life of Lord Shri Rama. The tour will be completed in 17 days. First half of this train will be Ayodhya where tourists will visit Shri Ram Janmabhumi temple and Hanuman temple and additionally Bharat Mandir at Nandigram.



AGREEMENT - PSB PSB has entered into an agreement with Shriram Automal India Limited; a company specialized in repossession and auction of pre-owned vehicles. SAMIL will support Bank in resolution of non-performing vehicle loans.



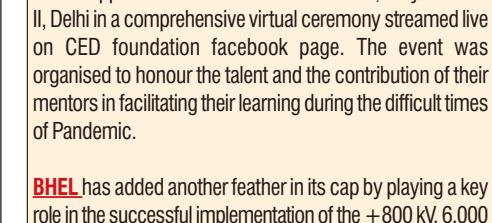
FOUNDATION DAY - ORIENTAL INSURANCE Oriental Insurance has celebrated 75th foundation day on 12th September 2021. Activities carried out were tree plantation, vaccination drive, health check-up, COVID test at Head Office.



NSIC Alka Nangia Arora, IDAS (91) has assumed the additional charge of the post of Chairman cum Managing Director (CMD), The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd, on 14th September, 2021. On this occasion, she interacted with senior officers of NSIC and encouraged all employees to continue giving their best performance during 2021-22. Ms Alka Arora is an industry veteran with over 30 years of the experience in diverse activities across the country.



RCPSCD The Rubber, Chemical and Petrochemical Skill Development Council recently announced the appointment of Rummy Chhabra as its new Chairman. R Chhabra was elected at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Council held on 1st September 2021. He will be responsible for overseeing the operations of RCPSCD and work closely with its governing Council on strategic issues related to the growth of the Rubber, Chemical and Petrochemical industry in India. R Chhabra is also the CMD of Metro Tyres Ltd with over 38 years of experience in the Rubber sector. He is also the President of the Indian Cycle & Rickshaw Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ICRTMA).



BBPS: Global Talk Education Foundation in association with CED Foundation recently rewarded class X and XII school CBSE toppers of Bal Bhawan Public School, Mayur Vihar-II, Delhi in a comprehensive virtual ceremony streamed live on CED foundation facebook page. The event was organised to honour the talent and the contribution of their mentors in facilitating their learning during the difficult times of Pandemic.

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

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (E-TENDERING PROCESS) Tender Inviting Authority Specification No. and Description of work/Material Due date & time for Submission of e-Tender

DIRECTORATE OF URBAN LAND TRANSPORT URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT BMTCL, TTMC, 'B' Block (Above Bus Stand) 4th Floor, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560 027. Ph: 080-22226627 / 6628, Fax: 080-22226630, e-mail: dultbangalore@gmail.com

NOTIFICATION The Directorate of Urban Land Transport invites applications from qualified candidates for certain contractual positions. Details could be seen on the website: www.urbantransport.kar.gov.in Last date for receiving the applications is 04.10.2021 upto 5:30 pm.

Paschimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd., Victoria Park, Meerut.

E-TENDER INVITING NOTICE Tenders are invited through e-tendering for supply of following material: 1- 425,000 Kg, Various Sizes of S.E Aluminum Winding Wire against tender specification no. PVVNL-MT/MM/44/21 -22, Tender Cost Rs. 11800.00 (with GST), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) :- Rs. 15,30,000.00, 2- 166,000 Kg, Various Sizes of DPC Aluminum Winding Wire against tender specification no. PVVNL-MT/MM/45/21-22, Tender Cost- Rs. 5900.00 (with GST), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Rs. 4,98,000.00, 3- 510,000 Kg, Various Sizes of DPC Aluminum Strip against tender specification no. PVVNL-MT/MM/46/21 -22, Tender Cost Rs. 11800.00 (with GST), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) :- Rs. 15,30,000.00, Last Date & Time of tenders submission for all above tender specifications:- 18.10.2021 at 2:00 PM Tender opening date & Time (Part-1st&IInd) for all above tender specifications:- 18.10.2021 at 5:00 PM, Note:- In case of any amendment in tender specification or extension of date, the same shall be uploaded on e-tender website www.etender.up.nic.in and www.pvvnl.org. "Help line Number For Information of Theft of Electricity: "1800-180-3002 (Meerut), & 9412207451" Sd/- Superintending Engineer (MM-I) For Managing Director, RO. NO-8532 DATED: 18.09.2021

कार्यालय शहीदखण अभियन्ता, निर्माण मण्डल, उत्तराखण्ड पंचजल संस्थान विकास एवं निर्माण विभाग, नई दिल्ली रूपाय : 01276-233911, E-mail: setehripayal@gmail.com

Save Energy for the benefit of self and nation HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD. (A State Government Undertaking) Press Tender Notice (E-Tendering Mode Only) Online Tenders are hereby invited on turnkey basis (two part bid) by the undersigned for & on behalf of Managing Director, HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-4, from the Bidders/Joint venture firms/Co-operative Societies of Retired Employees of HPSEB Ltd., having A-Class Electrical contractor license from Chief Electrical Inspector, for the following work-

INDIRA GANDHI DELHI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (UNDER DELHI ACT 9 OF 2012, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI) (ISO 9001 - 2015 CERTIFIED UNIVERSITY) SL JAMES CHURCH, NEW CHURCH ROAD, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI - 110006. RECRUITMENT NOTICE NO. : IGDTUW/RECRUITMENT/2021/2 ADVERTISEMENT FOR VARIOUS TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING GROUP 'A' POSTS

VACANCIES FOR THE POST OF PROFESSOR - PAY SCALE/LEVEL : Rs. 1,44,200 - 2,18,200 /Level-14, as per 7th CPC/UGC

INDIRA GANDHI DELHI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN (UNDER DELHI ACT 9 OF 2012, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI) (ISO 9001 - 2015 CERTIFIED UNIVERSITY) SL JAMES CHURCH, NEW CHURCH ROAD, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI - 110006. RECRUITMENT NOTICE NO. : IGDTUW/RECRUITMENT/2021/2 ADVERTISEMENT FOR VARIOUS TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING GROUP 'A' POSTS

SALUTE THE SOLDIER Martyr of CISF on 19th September On 19 Sep 2007 No 9419877X Late Hav Shri Kumar Rai of 6/11 GR had made supreme sacrifice during OP Rakshak (J&K) in Sep 2007. Colonel 11 GR & Sikhim Scouts and All Ranks

B. I. T. SINDRI (DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, GOVT OF JHARKHAND) P. O. SINDRI INSTITUTE, DHANBAD (JHARKHAND) 828123

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE Notice Title : Extension of the date for admission to M. Tech. (2021-2023) Notice Reference Number : BIT/692 Dated: 26-08-2021 and No. 479 dated 26-08-21 PR 252163 Science & Technology 21-22: D

Notice Inviting e-Tender E-NIT NO 45/PHE/SPR OF 09/2021.DATED 17/09/2021 For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis including the maintenance cost for a period of (3) three years which includes 12 months of DLP are invited from Reputed and resourceful contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of repute in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments for the following work, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal http://jktenders.gov.in

Position of Funds:- Available; Major Head of Account: Deposit contribution works of Horticulture Deptt. The bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "http://jktenders.gov.in" as per schedule of dates given below:-

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir Sd/- Executive Engineer (JSD) PHE Division Sopore

"IMPORTANT" Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals, advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/ E.C.Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in E-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways:-

EASTERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM to Tender Notice NO. : COM-PUB-HWH-SPIIIA-21-R1, COM-PUB-HWH-SPIIIB-21-R1, COM-PUB-HWH-SPIIIC-21-R1, COM-PUB-HWH-SPIIID-21-R1, Name of work: Reduction of Security Deposit in the tender for awarding rights for Commercial Publicity at Station Premises of all stations under Cluster-III-A, III-B, III-C and III-D of Howrah Division for 01 year or till issue of RDN LOA by Railtel whichever is earlier.



TORBIT
BEING ONE HELPS EVERYONE



THINK
REAL ESTATE
THINK
TORBIT



Knowledge • Services • Technology

JOURNEY SO FAR

₹ 500 cr.+
Real Estate Sales

1,00,000+
Sales Lead Generated

RERA Services
Provided in UP/Himachal

TORBIT 2020
First Real Estate Book of
Enlightenment & Awareness Series
Compiled & Sold (1050 Copies)



OUR SERVICES



Real Estate Sales



Digital Marketing



Creative Solutions



Web Design & Development



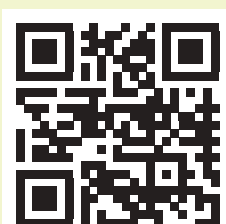
Legal & Finance Services



Rera Advisory



Training & Upskilling
(For Real Estate Professional)



Contact: +91 97397 47833, 7428155490, priyanka@torbitconsulting.com

www.torbitconsulting.com

