



# Kedarnath to be reopened for public on May 9



## Ceremony held at Omkareshwar to finalise date for reopening of Kedarnath

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The portals of Kedarnath shrine will be reopened to the public on May 9 at 5:35 AM. The date for reopening of the portals of Kedarnath was announced on the occasion of Mahashivratri on Monday. Rituals and calculations based on the Hindu almanac were held at the Omkareshwar tem-

ple in Ukhimath-the winter seat of lord Kedarnath, to arrive at the date of reopening of the shrine. The ceremonial procession carrying the Panchmukhi (five-faced) idol of the lord will depart for Kedarnath on May 6.

The Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee (BKTC) had organised the ceremony at Omkareshwar on the occasion of Mahashivratri. In the presence of Kedarnath Rawal (head priest) Bhimashankar Ling, other priests, Pundits and traditional right holders, the Panchang (Hindu almanac) was referred to for arriving at the date for reopening of the shrine to the pub-

lic.

The Chal Vighra procession of lord Kedarnath will start on May 6 and arrive at Fata on the same day, at Gaurikund on May 7 and at Kedarnath on May 8. During the ceremony held at Omkareshwar, the BKTC chairman Mohan Prasad Thapliyal, chief executive officer BD Singh, other office bearers of the temple committee, local public representatives and devotees were also present in large numbers.

It will be recalled that the date of reopening of Badrinath shrine to the public-May 10-was announced earlier on the occasion of Vasant Panchami.

# Light snow, rain likely at isolated places of U'khand



Pedestrians on a city road during a spell of rain in Dehradun on Monday Pioneer photo

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Meteorological Centre has forecast very light to light snowfall, rainfall and thunderstorm for some places across the State on Tuesday. Some places in Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag and Pithoragarh districts are likely to experience snow and rain on the day as per the forecast. The rest of the State would have mainly clear to partly cloudy climate and dry weather is likely to prevail.

Meanwhile, Dehradun received a good measure of hail and rain on Monday.

However, the weather is likely to clear here on Tuesday. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 25 degree Celsius and 9 degree Celsius respectively.

# CM unveils logo of Young Uttarakhand programme

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat and State Minister Dhan Singh Rawat, along with officials, unveiled the logo for the event 'Young Uttarakhand-Towards Entrepreneurship and Employment' here on Monday.

The CM said that this event is being held on March 6 keeping the youth of the State at the center is a historic initiative. "Our attempt is to ensure the participation of youth in the State's development. In a way, this endeavour is being started on March 6. Our youth are today's citizens and should also do their bit for building the State."

The Young Uttarakhand programme is being held with this aim. By establishing communication with the youth, the event will also be helpful in linking them with employment," said the CM. An application is also being developed to link the youth with self-employment and employment. It will also enable the youth to give their suggestions while also ensuring their involvement in governmental programmes.

The CM further said that to provide better opportunities for self-employment and



employment to the youth, special focus is being laid on skill development. The youth have also been linked with schemes related to solar power and generation of power from Pirul (pine needles). Tenders amounting to ₹800 crore and ₹ 50 crore have been issued for solar power and generation of power from Pirul respectively. Regarding the Young Uttarakhand programme, Rawat said that in addition to 10,000 youth attending the programme, students of 52 colleges will be connected through video link.

Further, 50 prominent industrialists have also been invited to the event.

They will help link the youth to employment through counseling. The CM said that traditionally, it has been seen that the dependence of youth is more on Government and

salaried jobs.

Due to technological developments, opportunities are becoming limited in these spheres while new possibilities are rising in the sphere of entrepreneurship.

This is why, the State Government is stressing on entrepreneurship and skill development for youth for which various programmes are being run by different departments. Youth knowing about the available opportunities will boost the state's development. The Young Uttarakhand-Towards Entrepreneurship and Employment programme is being held with this in view. Principal secretary Manisha Panwar, secretaries Radhika Jha, R Meenakshi Sundaram and Information director general Deependra Kumar Chaudhari were also present at the unveiling of the logo.

# WECDD set to award some accomplished women on March 8

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Women Empowerment and Child Development Department (WECDD) of Uttarakhand is all set to conduct an award-giving programme on the occasion of International Women's Day slated on March 8. For the programme, the women are being nominated who have done exemplary work in any field.

Informing, the state women commission chairperson Vijaya Bathwal said, "WECDD is conducting a programme to mark the International Women's Day.



Women who have done exemplary work in various fields would be nominated and awarded on the occasion."

"The schedule and number of the nominees is being prepared. Things would be firmed up soon. The programme is meant to spread awareness about the rights among women. Things are now progressing satisfactorily," she added.

# BHEL Haridwar bags first prize at NCM

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

A national competition for managers (NCM) on the theme 'Innovative Organisation and Disruption' was organised by All India Management Association (AIMA) during which a team of managers from BHEL Haridwar comprising Anjali Sharma and Tuhin Mitra won the first runners-up prize in the finals of the prestigious event.

The national level managerial combat is a symbolic event of AIMA being conducted on yearly basis for which teams from many technological giants compete. The finale which was attended by many high-level corporate executives across the nation consisted of 12 teams from both the public and the private sector companies. It is noteworthy that the team

from BHEL Haridwar clinched the first position in the regional level competition held in New Delhi.

BHEL Haridwar sources said that the fiercely contested finale was adjudged by Vivek Mehta, CEO and MD, Sage Publications India, Prabhu Aggarwal, former chief learning Officer, JSPL and Jaskiran Arora of BML Munjal University. The event was attended by many officials and dignitaries who were also encouraging their respective teams to perform at the event, the BHEL sources added.

Executive director, BHEL Haridwar from HEEP unit Sanjay Gulati congratulated the team on its achievement. This team was initially selected by Haridwar Management Association by conducting local level competitions, he added.

# Gujaratis based in Haridwar meet Gujarat CM, deputy CM on NRG benefits

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

A delegation of a little over 200 families hailing from Gujarat which have been residing in Haridwar for the past many decades has met the Gujarat chief minister and the deputy chief minister recently and demanded non-resident Gujarati (NRG) benefits. Notably, they have been running a number of pharmaceutical and other companies in the state.

On returning from Gujarat, members of the delegation Pawan Dave and Rajesh Pathak said on Monday that NRG cards would be made available for all the Gujarati residents of Haridwar soon. Notably, NRG Foundation issues such cards which help the people of Gujarati origin now settled outside the state to remain connected with their original state and the people living there.

It is learnt that there are some special privileges extended to the non-resident Gujaratis



who have the cards like certain discounts at hotels, garments stores, jewelry shops and hospitals.

Speaking to The Pioneer on the visit, Kirtan Desai said, "We met the CM Vijay Rupani and the deputy CM Nitin Patel there. The chief minister appreciated our role in the progress of the state and asked us to be associated with the foundation to avail the benefits."

He further said that the Uttarakhand government should take cue from the initiative. "It would give a sense of security to the natives of Uttarakhand who are settled outside the state. Besides, it would help them to maintain their emotional connection to the state they hail from."

# Maha Shivaratri celebrated with devotion and fervour in Haridwar

PNS ■ HARIDWAR

The Shiva temples of the holy city were decked up for the Maha Shivaratri which was celebrated with devotion and fervour on Monday. Devotees thronged the legendary temples of Daksh, Bilwakeshwar, Shankar Ashram and Pardeshwar in their thousands since early morning. No temple, big or small, was left out of the celebration. Ganga water was offered on the Shivalingas everywhere. The celebration also marked the end of the fortnight-long Kanwad pilgrimage. Most of the devotees fasted on Monday by way of paying obeisance to the Lord.

"The auspicious period lasted till the evening on Monday. The whole day was thus left for the devotees to visit the temples and offer holy water on the Shivalingas," said a city-based astrologer Prateek Mishrapuri. Meanwhile, elaborate security measures were made by Haridwar police at the prominent temples of the city for Shivaratri.

Speaking to The Pioneer, SSP Janmejay Khanduri said,

"Appropriate security arrangements have been put into place to ensure a glitch-free the Shivaratri snan. A per our report, thousands of devotees took the holy dip on the special day. A drone camera was deployed in the mela zone for vigilance. No person was allowed to enter any Shiva temple without passing through the metal detector."

As per Hindu mythology, Ganga had the boon from Lord Prajapati that every stone found on her banks would be worshipped in the form of Shivalinga by 'Shav' devotees. "Thus every stone turned into Shivalinga reflects the glory of the Lord in equal measure," said a priest of a Shiva temple.

Since early morning, the devotees thronged Har Ki Paudi and other ghats on the Ganga to have a holy dip and then they offered milk to the mother Ganga and did 'abhishek' of Shivalingas with panchmarit (drink made of five derivatives from cow's milk). 'Bam Bam Bhole' and Har Har Mahadev reverberated through the air of the holy city throughout the day.

# CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA AT PARMARTH NIKETAN

PNS ■ RISHIKESH

Chief justice of India Ranjan Gogoi along with his wife and other judges participated in Ganga poojan at Parmarth Niketan here on Monday. He also had discussion with the head of Parmarth Niketan Swami Chidanand Saraswati on the green technologies for conservation of natural resources.

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**CORRIGENDUM (PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE)**  
With reference to our Sale Notice of "PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE" published on 03.03.2019 in Pioneer (English) newspaper, Dehradun Edition, the sale of the property mentioned in Sr. No. 3 Borrower's name: Smt. Seema Tyagi/W/o Sh. Suresh Chand Tyagi was wrongly published so now read as Borrower's name: Smt. Seema Tyagi/W/o Sh. Vinay Tyagi instead of Smt. Seema Tyagi/W/o Sh. Suresh Chand Tyagi. All other terms & conditions will remain the same.

Date: 04.03.2019 Authorized Officer,  
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# Doon scientist receives national award

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Scientist and secretary of Society of Pollution and Environmental Conservation Scientists (SPECS) Brij Mohan Sharma received a national award for innovation and communication of science and technology through traditional medium. Sharma recently received the Department of Science and Technology (DST) award from principal scientific adviser to Government of India, professor K Vijay Raghavan and DST secretary professor Ashutosh Sharma at a function held in the national Capital.

Through his work, the SPECS secretary has taken up various public interest issues. He has been instrumental in con-



ducting water quality and food adulteration tests by SPECS in Uttarakhand. The society had started a campaign in 2000 for testing water purity in Dehradun and since then this campaign has been conducted regularly.

A report on the quality of drinking water in Dehradun is published every year by the society. In 2005, Sharma also initiated a campaign to check food adulteration on the Char Dham Yatra route. This sample survey and testing has been conducted annually along with publication of report by the society. SPECS also developed low cost LED lights, trained people in the same following which seven Watt LED bulbs were installed in 327 villages in 2018.

# Devotees celebrate Shivaratri

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

On the occasion of Maha Shivaratri on Monday, thousands of devotees visited various temples located in the city. People of all ages looked equally enthusiastic about the auspicious occasion. Chants of 'Har Har Mahadev' were heard throughout the day. A big crowd of devotees gathered at the oldest temple of the city known as Tapkeshwar temple. The fabled temple witnessed a long queue of devotees since early morning. They queued up in the serpentine lines to offer prayers to Lord Shiva. A large number of youngsters were seen flocking to the temples throughout the day.

Rahul Kamal, a resident of Patelnagar, said, "I keep the fast every year on the day and reach Tapkeshwar temple to offer my prayer to the Lord. The queue seems to be a long one this time. But we must keep patience and must reach the Lord."

Those present at the temple said that nearly 9000 devotees had come to the temple to pay their obeisance to Lord Shiva. "The queue started



around Sunday afternoon. The number is swelling with time," said one of them.

Rekha, a resident from Rajpur Road, said, "We keep standing in the line here since 7 o'clock in the morning. It is advancing very slowly. But we do not mind. We all have come to seek blessing from the Lord. It is an occasion too to show

our gratitude to the Lord who has given us everything we have."

Many said that the enthusiastic participation of the youth in the city in the celebration is a noticeable feature of the day. "We are particularly devoted to Lord Shiva. He embodies power and simplicity mingled together," said a

young girl found waiting in the queue of the devotees at a temple patiently. Amita Mehra, a devotee, said, "My family celebrates this day with special devotion. However, we celebrate all other festivals. This is the first time that I am doing fast. I am happy being on fast on this auspicious day," she said.

**Review of OROP this year**

# Ex-servicemen to benefit: Defence Minister

## Nirmala strikes a chord, touches feet of Veer Naris



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the first review of the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme would be done later this year. She said this while addressing a programme organised to felicitate the family members of the martyrs at Survey of India auditorium here on Monday. Notably, at the time of implementing OROP, the Centre had announced that it would be reviewed every third year.

The announcement of the Defence Minister on review of OROP is, thus, significant in view of the fact that it would result in an increase in the pen-

sions of the ex-servicemen among whom the BJP enjoys a groundswell of electoral support.

Sitharaman claimed that a major part of OROP has already been implemented by the Government. Comparing the UPA Government's decision on OROP with that of NDA, the Minister said that UPA had shown just tokenism on OROP as a meager ₹500 crore was provided on the count while the NDA Government has so far transferred a sum of ₹35,000 crore to the ex-servicemen under OROP. "We have given four installments to the ex-servicemen in two years and now, no arrears is left pending," she said.

Sitharaman added that the

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman received appreciation of those who had assembled at Survey of India auditorium when as a mark of her respect and gratitude for the sacrifice of the families of the martyrs, she touched feet of the war widows. The programme was organised by Mussoorie MLA Ganesh Joshi.

When the Defence Minister arrived on the stage, the organisers announced that the mother of the martyr

country had had no war memorial in the last 70 years. "But now, a magnificent National War Memorial in New Delhi has been dedicated to the nation," she said. Requesting the ex-servicemen and Veer Nari not to believe in the mischievous messages being circulated on the social media, she said that the Union Government has decided not to appeal against the ruling of Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) on disability pensions of the armed forces personnel and has withdrawn the notification

Ajit Pradhan (Sena Medal), Hem Kumari would welcome the Minister by offering a bouquet and a shawl. When the mother of the martyr came to the stage, the Defence Minister surprised everyone by refusing to accept the bouquet and said instead that she had come here to honour the family members of the martyrs.

Then, she touched the feet of Hem Kumari and wrapped the shawl round her shoulders. Later in the programme too when the Veer Naris were being honoured,

on equivalence in 2016. Inviting the girl cadets of NCC who were present at the auditorium to join the armed forces, Sitharaman said the women officers would now be provided with permanent commission in the army.

At present, the women officers at end of 14 years of service are retired.

She said that the Prime Minister has announced that three super-speciality ECHS hospitals on the lines of AIIMS with capacity of 200 beds each



she made it a point to touch their feet, a gesture which

won the heart of all present.

would be set up. She assured the gathering that the Narendra Modi Government is sensitive towards the issues of the armed forces personnel.

In his address, the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat declared that the State would soon have a directorate for the para-military forces. Attacking those who had cast question on the visits of PM Modi to foreign countries, Rawat said that the whole nation has now seen the effect of these visits when Pakistan found itself isolated in

the world community following the Pulwama attack.

He said that the country is in safe hands today and the Prime Minister has given a clear message that India would not tolerate terrorism any longer.

Haridwar MP Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said that apart from being the land of the gods, Uttarakhand is a land of warriors too. Lt General O P Kaushik (Rtd) said that history shows that every sixth martyr

# CM inaugurates Ajabpur Railway overbridge

## 'Focusing on high-end tourists visiting Uttarakhand'

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Government is focusing on the rise in the number of the high-end tourists visiting Uttarakhand as such tourists have more capacity to spend money, said the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a four-lane Railway Over Bridge (

ROB) at Ajabpur on Monday.

He said that that over the past three years, the number of tourists, visiting the State, is showing a steadily upward trend. He said that in 2018, six lakh more tourists had arrived in Uttarakhand as compared with 2017. He further said that the State is becoming fast a destination of film-making which would help the economy great-

ly.

Reiterating the commitment of his Government to the all-round development of the State, Rawat said that orders for construction of roads worth ₹15,000 crore have been issued. He further said that the State has achieved a good progress in the construction of rural roads. "It has also received an award from the Government of India

in recognition," he said. He listed implementation of NCERT syllabus in all the schools, appointment of permanent faculty members in the medical colleges and the Government colleges and starting of classes in Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) as some of the achievements of his Government.

Heaping praise on the Prime Minister Narendra Modi

for his steely resolve and invincible political will which resulted in air strikes of Indian Air Force (IAF) inside Pakistan, Rawat said that the message of India being ready to go to any extent to deal with terrorism has gone forth to the world.

He added that the feat of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman of shooting down a much advanced plane F-16 from his Mig-21 is unmatched and it shows the calibre of the IAF pilots to brave risks.

The Chief Minister also unveiled foundation stones of

some other projects on the occasion.

Tehri MP, Mala Rajya Laxmi Shah and MLAs Harbans Kapur and Umesh Sharma Kau-were among others present on the occasion.

**The Chief Minister also unveiled foundation stones of some other projects on the occasion**

# Waiver of ₹ 847 crore by U'khand Government uncalled for: Congress

## The State Cabinet on Sunday decided to waive off the forest land transfer money it was to receive from the Centre

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Congress has questioned the State Government's 'largesse' on waiving off compensation to the tune of ₹847 crore it was entitled to receive from the Centre in lieu of the transfer of forest land for the all-weather road project.

Speaking of the matter while addressing the media persons at the State party office here on Monday, the state Congress vice-president Surya Kant Dhasmana said that the State Government's waiver has exhibited its mental bankruptcy and lack of commitment to the State.

Notably, the State Cabinet on Sunday had decided to waive off the forest land transfer money it was entitled to receive from the Central Government regarding the much-hyped all-weather road project.


"While on one hand, the

State Government is regularly seeking loan even for paying salaries of its employees, it is on the other hand showing misplaced largesse on the money it is entitled to get from the Centre. This is queer and detrimental to the interests of the State," he said.


The Congress leader further recalled that the State Government had also waived off ₹75 crore it was entitled to get under Tehri dam displacement head. "The people here expect that funds in a good measure would flow into the State coffers from the Centre thanks to BJP running the Government both at the Centre and in the State.

But what is happening is that the funds are flowing into the Centre from the State. The Centre is, thus, getting richer at the expense of the State. This is ludicrous and also against the interest of the State," the Congress leader said.





**Trivendra Singh Rawat**  
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand



Towards Entrepreneurship & Employment

# Young Uttarakhand

Towards Entrepreneurship & Employment

## INAUGURATION




Wednesday, 06 March, 2019 | 10:00 am | Parade Ground, Dehradun

**Chief Guest**  
**Trivendra Singh Rawat**  
Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

**Presiding**  
**Dr. Harak Singh Rawat**  
Minister, Forest & Wildlife, Environment & Solid Waste Management, Labour, Skill Development and Employment, Ayush, Ayush Education, Uttarakhand

**August Presence**  
**Dr. Dhan Singh Rawat**  
State Minister (Independent Charge), Co-operatives, Higher Education, Dairy Development, Protocol, Uttarakhand

Courtesy : Higher Education, Skill Development and Employment, Industry, Agriculture, Tourism, Information Technology and Co-operative Department, Uttarakhand


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## Political ammunition

A new factory to manufacture rifles for the Army is welcome but its location in Amethi will inevitably ruffle feathers



Events of the past few weeks have highlighted just how slow the process for acquiring new hardware for Indian soldiers, aviators and seamen is. While the MiG-21 Bison that was flown by Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was based on a 1960's design, the airframe itself was over 40 years old, although it had been modified after the Kargil War. The Mirage-2000 jets used to penetrate Pakistan and send a message to the terror-supporting state have been in service for over three decades and replacing these

capable French fighters has been an unending struggle with several missed opportunities. The slow pace of India's ship-building process has meant that we have commissioned less than ten new capital ships in the past decade whereas China is commissioning almost one a month. And while our special forces do not lack equipment, our regular jawans and paramilitary forces do not even have adequate bullet-proof armour. Nothing highlights India's glacial pace of acquisition as much as replacing the inadequate INSAS (India Small Arms System) rifle. In a nation that faces threats both on its borders and inside its territory with enemies using advanced weapons thanks to the proliferation of the latter due to global conflict, the INSAS was woeful, forcing many soldiers and paramilitaries to use imported weapons, including the venerable AK-47.

Thankfully, the last item on that list is changing. After several delays, the construction of a new section at the small arms factory at Amethi in collaboration with the Russian state-owned Kalashnikov Concern will start manufacturing the new AK-203 rifle. This is not only a huge step forward for domestic manufacturing but the new weapon will finally give the Indian jawan and paramilitary officer an advantage over their enemies, both internal and external. It will also help us achieve some sort of self-sufficiency in the category of small arms and generate jobs. Since the inter-governmental agreement was signed in the shortest possible time as opposed to delays in the Rafale deal, there was little doubt that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not going to lose an opportunity to take a dig or two at Congress president and the local Member of Parliament Rahul Gandhi. Like many other projects inaugurated in Amethi and Rae Bareilly, this factory also sat idle for years and Modi pulled a few punches in highlighting that. Not only that, he rubbed salt into the wounds by modifying this project as a "Made in Amethi" instead of his much-touted "Make in India." The events of the past few days have made it very clear that the forthcoming General Elections will be fought on a national security plank and there is little doubt that successive governments have dilly-dallied on this front, giving ammunition to both sides. While the new AK-203 will help the Indian soldier, it might not help the BJP shoot down Rahul Gandhi's political ambitions. Yes, there is an emotional surge post-Pulwama, but the Modi Government is bound to face challenges surrounding the economy, joblessness and farmers' distress when the affected voter casts his ballot. But we must celebrate the Amethi move in the right direction when it comes to hastening and improving arms acquisition. Whoever comes to power next must not stop considering our multi-pronged threats to national security.

## Tell us the truth

ASCI pulls out 232 ads for not being ethical and hurting consumers. We need a statutory code



Ad guru Leo Burnett once said how advertising does not just circulate information, it penetrates the public mind with desires and belief. And at a time when lifestyle choices are aplenty and we seek to govern our lives with the right one, advertisements, especially those helmed by celebrities and their gone-in-60-seconds wisdom, have a profound impact. Artful lying it is, but when it is deceptive, then there is a problem. That's why the Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI) has decided to verify tall claims made by companies in mass media campaigns, especially after the fiasco of biggies advocating Maggi as healthy, and banned 232 ads for violating consumer rights and interests. Most of these campaigns were by topline brands and found to be selling mistruths concerning crucial sectors like healthcare, personal care, food and beverages and education, in short our everyday life and well-being. The ASCI said the most common reason for pulling out ads was their unsubstantiated and exaggerated claims that exploited the consumers' lack of knowledge. Besides, some of the products made unverifiable leadership claims, improper use of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) logo in contravention of the FSSAI advisory and labelled products organic without fact-checks. It also came down heavily on celebrity campaigns, considering their mass popularity and impact, suggesting that each brand ambassador should, while endorsing products, at least ensure that all description, claims and comparisons made in the advertisement are genuine. Quite rightly, the ASCI took down the HeroMotoCorp ad where cricketer Virat Kohli is seen driving rashly in normal traffic conditions, in violation of traffic rules and safety. Dangerous driving is a deep-seated malaise in all our cities and when an icon like Kohli depicts such a behaviour on screen, it legitimises reckless youth behaviour on the streets, one that has resulted in an ever rising graph of road accidents and fatalities. Similarly, products that falsely claim doctoral research or clinically-proven results have been pulled out, be it enriching clay shampoos, chemical-free hair colours or pure *atta* noodles, all of which have concentrates and ingredients that they claim to have done away with. For example, *atta* noodles have *maida* or refined flour too and 100 per cent dandruff-free shampoo is never a possibility. Consumer awareness and rights are anyway not scaled up in this country and without questioning, such products are not only misleading and overrated but cheating the consumer of his expectation and right to a good and healthy life. Going by the list, most of the products prey on the consumers' health insecurities instead of addressing them through scientific corroboration.

Of course, there are consumer laws and various codes about advertisement in general to curb malpractices. And though food safety norms have made labelling with details mandatory, the same does not extend to other product categories with equal seriousness. However, the absence of a single statutory, regulatory body further aggravates the problem. It is time for a comprehensive law/regulation on advertising in all forms of media which could provide clarity in the matter and act as a one-stop window for addressing controversial matters. Disclaimers should run as tickers on both audio, print and video campaigns. The core of the advertising industry is based on tempting the consumer, capturing their mind-space and then driving up sales. True, it is hard to expect the creators to be "conscience-oriented," but given the social cascade of information flow, they have to be self-regulatory, considering they rule cultural sensibilities.

# Pakistan in meltdown mode

Neither Beijing nor Muslim capitals or the West seem to be on Islamabad's side. Its survival now demands uprooting all terrorist camps and arresting every recruit



SANDHYA JAIN

Opposition parties and their choi-boys are understandably unenthusiastic about post-Pulwama developments, especially the prompt return of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, because a regime that seemed doomed in the forthcoming general elections will now enjoy the incumbent's advantage. While it would be premature to state that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have a walkover, it is undeniable that a second retaliatory strike for attacks emanating from Pakistani soil has changed the national mood.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan released our pilot gracefully but we do not know what understanding he arrived at with the Army before doing so. We know that Pakistan faces possible blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force in June, which Beijing may not help stave off. This would make a possible bailout from the International Monetary Fund difficult (or very punitive) and deter other foreign investments in its faltering economy. Islamabad has much to gain from de-escalation.

Interestingly, the institution that performed with great dignity during this episode was the Islamabad High Court, which considered a petition (W.P. No.786/2019) by Barrister Muhammad Shoaib Razaq versus the Federation of Pakistan, on March 1, 2019. Aggrieved at the decision to return the Wing Commander, the petitioner argued, inter alia, that the Prime Minister of Pakistan was not competent to take this decision, which was arrived at without taking the Parliament into confidence, and that the Wing Commander had violated Pakistan's sovereignty and was liable to be court martialled in Pakistan.

In a crisp ruling, the Islamabad High Court asserted that the Prime Minister had announced the release of the Indian Air Force pilot on the floor of the House during a joint session of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), where not a single Member objected. Moreover, the decision "pertains to matters of foreign policy, defence and security of Pakistan. It is settled law that such issues are neither justiciable nor fall within the domain of a High Court for interference... It has been unambiguously held by the august Supreme Court that any such interference... would be violative of one of the foundational principles of the Constitution, which envisages trichotomy of powers between the three branches, namely, Legislature, Executive and Judiciary".

The Court said, "Framing of a policy is within the exclusive domain of the Executive... The Legislature represents the people of Pakistan and primarily promulgates laws... The Judiciary is entrusted with the task of interpreting the law and to play the role of an arbiter in case of disputes between individuals and between individuals and the State". As the petitioner admitted that his fundamental rights were not violated in this case, Chief Justice Luqman Khan dismissed the petition



stating, "The decisions which are taken by the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), particularly during challenging times, are inevitably required to be respected and upheld... India's Supreme Court should have dismissed the Rafale and many other petitions; now as it ponders the merits of teaching students 'tamaso ma jyotirgamaya' (from darkness lead me to light), one cannot but marvel at the sagacity of the Islamabad High Court.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj addressed the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation on March 1 and upheld multi-religious India's civilisational ethos as a land "that has been for ages a fountain of knowledge, a beacon of peace, a source of faiths and traditions, and home to religions from the world — and now, one of the major economies of the world". In a tribute to India's new standing in the comity of nations, the host, United Arab Emirates, removed the Pakistan flag after its Foreign Minister boycotted the meeting.

It appears that Muslim capitals are withdrawing from fundamentalism as a tool of foreign policy. Dhaka under Sheikh Hasina has long focussed on economic development and has cracked down on fundamentalists. Afghanistan, the Maldives and others crave peaceful development. Swaraj urged the gathering, "We must tell the states, who provide shelter and funding to the terrorists, to dismantle the

infrastructure of the terrorist camps..."

In an interesting but unconfirmed news at the time of writing, Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar, the brain behind the attack on the Indian Parliament (2001), Pathankot air base (2016) and the Central Reserve Police Force convoy at Pulwama (February 2019), died in a military hospital in Rawalpindi on March 2, 2019. While Islamabad has not made any formal announcement so far, the information is considered credible because on March 1, Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi admitted on CNN that Masood Azhar was in Pakistan and hinted that he was on his death bed.

The leak of Azhar's death (if true) is deliberate; a continuation of the "gesture" of returning our captured pilot. A few points may be made. India has found the lily-pads (terrorist bases) it can strike without opprobrium from the international community. With the United States withdrawing aid (and patronage) to Pakistan on account of its obduracy in Afghanistan and proximity to China, Islamabad's utility to the West is over. That is why the US, UK and France again moved the UN's 1267 Committee on February 27, to list Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.

London and Washington had decided on a Cold War with the Soviet Union even before

World War II ended and Pakistan was created as a base for the West to monitor Russia, China, Central Asia, the Gulf region and India. It no longer helps in monitoring Moscow or Beijing; the Gulf is changing rapidly and Pakistan is afraid to commit troops for the Saudi war in Yemen. India has the muscle to defend itself and de-privileging the Kashmir valley will refashion Jammu & Kashmir into an ordinary Indian State. Pakistan's 30-year-old strategy of supporting insurgents in Kashmir is failing.

Worse, the terrorists have become too autonomous. After Jaish al-Adl attacked Iran (February 13), the JeM struck India (February 14), the Taliban (harboured by Pakistan along with the Haqqani Network) killed around 25 Afghan soldiers at Shorab military base in Afghanistan's Helmand province (March 2-3). American troops stationed in another part of the base were unharmed but they can easily be targeted as the US retreats from Afghanistan under a Pakistan-brokered deal with the Taliban. None of these attacks served any Pakistani objective and could have frightened Beijing about Pakistani *jihadis* joining hands with Uighur militants in Xinjiang. Pakistan's own survival demands uprooting all terrorist camps and arresting every recruit.

(The writer is Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; the views expressed are personal)

WITH THE US WITHDRAWING AID (AND PATRONAGE) TO PAKISTAN ON ACCOUNT OF ITS OBDURACY IN AFGHANISTAN AND PROXIMITY TO CHINA, ISLAMABAD'S UTILITY TO THE WEST IS OVER. THAT IS WHY THE US, UK AND FRANCE AGAIN MOVED THE UN'S 1267 COMMITTEE ON FEBRUARY 27, TO LIST MASOOD AZHAR AS A GLOBAL TERRORIST

## SOUNDBITE

The IAF is not in a position to clarify the number of casualties. The government will clarify that. We count targets and hits.



Air Chief Marshal —BS Dhanoa

Rafale fighter could have proven useful in the fight against Pakistan, claims PM Modi. Even then not a single Rafale inducted into IAF fleet.



BSP chief —Mayawati

Ranbir Kapoor said, 'Mere ghar mei toh bijli, paani aata hai, why should I care about politics?' You have this house because of this country. Irresponsible.



Actor —Kangana Ranaut

I have asked for storage of urine at airports. We import urea but if we start storing urine, we won't need to. So much potential it has.



Union Minister —Nitin Gadkari

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kumble for ICC

Sir — The re-nomination of Anil Kumble for the final tenure as the Indian Cricket Council's (ICC) chairman at the recently held ICC board meeting in Dubai is welcome. The move comes at a crucial time before the World Cup this summer and enhances the representation of cricketing talent from the sub-continent.

Among other functions, the primary responsibility of the ICC's Cricket Committee remains to promote and envisage cricket as a sporting event across the world and ensure adherence to governance and regulations set in all formats. Kumble's nomination to the Cricket Committee is highly appreciable, as is the nomination of other notable experts from India to ICC Board/Committee like Shashank Manohar (Chairman), Ms Indra Nooyi (as Independent Director), Rahul Dravid, Shubhangi Kulkarni and others as technical and legal experts.

The much-debated implementation of DRS to further raise the bar for the gentleman's game and empower the local umpires with technology should

### Implement Forest Rights Act, 2006

I breathed a sigh of relief when the Supreme Court of India stayed its February 13 order directing the eviction of over 11 lakh forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers across 16 states, whose claims for forest land rights have been rejected under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006. However, we need to do what China has done. It has given direct rights of over 100 m hectares of forest area to 400 million of its traditional inhabitants, which helped it reduce poverty and protect the environment.

Moreover, the saying, "Possession is the nine-tenths of the law," has been recognised for ages. Even in the legal battle between the rightful owner of a property and the person who has been in the possession of the same for a long time, the latter is considered to have a better position. Indeed, the forest dweller's claim for the forest land must be more than the nine-tenths of the law as there exists no actual owner of forest land. We are already suffering the effects of over commercialisation in the education and health



sectors. Market players have hijacked the agenda in the name of improving services. Now, if forest dwellers are banished under the pretext of stopping deforestation and then the commercial sector is allowed to manage the forest land, then what will happen is not difficult to guess. We need to immediately implement the 2006 Forest Rights Act.

Sujit De  
Via email

the reins of governance in Pakistan, depends and leans heavily on its Army and other unseen forces for mere survival and acts as per their directions, notwithstanding their personal predilections. Peace talks with Pakistan are a sham. It will be an insult and a mockery of sorts, if the prize, especially for peace, is awarded to any ruler in Pakistan.

VS Jayaraman  
Chennai

### Time for self-restraint

Sir — Lent is a period of self-restraint, marked by fasting, repentance, prayer and self-control for Christians around the world. Luxury items or eating rich foods, such as meat and dairy products, are often avoided during this period. The observance starts on Ash Wednesday and lasts until Easter Sunday, as Christians imitate the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting before being blessed by John the Baptist.

Jubel D'Cruz  
Mumbai

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

be given primary focus. At times, the non-availability of technology has nearly cost deserving teams the title. And as the Chairman of Cricket Committee, Kumble could spearhead change at the domestic level and help towards better perception of the game in the eyes of the cricket fraternity and fans.

Varun SD  
Bangalore

### Making a mockery

Sir — The Information Minister of Pakistan is reported to have moved a resolution in the National Assembly, recommending the Nobel Peace Prize for Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan for having released Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, thus de-escalating

the tension between Indian and Pakistan.

Actually, the prize should be awarded to those who worked behind the scenes and persuaded the Pakistan Prime Minister to release the Indian pilot. But for the extreme pressure from world leaders and Indian diplomacy, Pakistani leaders would have never conceded our demand. Every leader, who takes over



## FIRST COLUMN

### Thumbs up for quick diplomacy

The international response to the IAF's air strike in Balakot reflects not only the changed course of India's foreign policy but also its growing clout



ANNPURNA NAUTIYAL

In the midst of a troublesome war hysteria in the Indian sub-continent, the release of Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was heartening. This is not only indicative of India's determination to fight terrorism but also speaks volumes about a very successful foreign and defence policy as we were able to expose and isolate Pakistan at international fora. Despite urging both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint, China's keenness for India's participation in the 16th meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Russia, India and China in Wuzhen on February 27, and the issuance of a joint communiqué to bring countries who back terrorism to justice, reflect Pakistan's complete isolation.

Statements issued by China are important as they came at a time when Pakistan violated Indian airspace and captured our pilot in the wake of IAF's pre-emptive strikes at the JeM camp in Balakot. The condemnation of all forms of terrorism as a threat to humanity by the three Ministers signifies the success of India's foreign policy in isolating Pakistan, an aim which India always failed to achieve in earlier wars/disputes with Pakistan. The best example is the 1971 India-Pakistan war, wherein despite awareness and knowledge about cases of grave violation of human rights, the US sided with Pakistan in support of its policy of triangular relationship with Pakistan and China. The Cold War mindset was so much dominant that the US not only gave a cold shoulder to India's then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi but also sent its seventh fleet enterprise in the Bay of Bengal to demoralise and terrorise India with its gunboat diplomacy. India neutralised this threat with an all-out support of the erstwhile Soviet Union. However, the diplomatic advantage of good relations with the USSR was lost with the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. India was left on its own. The new economic stratagem — nuclear power status and Look East policy — provided India an opportunity to register its presence in a fast changing, power-hungry world.

China's resurgence as an aggressive power after the fall of the Soviet Union, policies of territorial aggrandisement and encirclement of India through the Belt and Road Initiative led to a close collaboration between India and America. Though the US' pivoting of Asia and its stress on the Indo-Pacific paradigm highlight the importance of India in the US' designs to check China's growing influence, the kind of support reflected by its current statements was not available earlier. During the Kargil war of 1999, the US' policy of equating India and Pakistan and the two-country visit was intact even though India was confronting terrorists and the Pakistani Army. Although during his South Asia visit after the Kargil crisis, the then US President, Bill Clinton, refrained from meeting the then Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf, he did visit Pakistan and gave a message of four 'R's to both India and Pakistan, which was not in good taste for us. However, this time, even though the US insisted on exercising restraint and avoiding escalation to both India and Pakistan, in contravention to the previous administration's policies, it did acknowledge India's right to conduct punitive action against terrorist camps and shifted the onus on Pakistan to take a significant action against the terrorist groups it hosts.

In a press conference held by the three chiefs of the Indian armed forces, where they showcased the pieces of missiles loaded in F-16 planes — sold by the US to Pakistan for the purpose of fighting terrorism — as a proof of Pakistan's military misadventure, Islamabad stood completely exposed. Further more, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's participation and address as a guest of honour in the organisation of 47 Islamic Countries' association for the first time put Pakistan in a disadvantageous situation. The non-participation of Islamabad in this forum to protest India's participation, which generally extends its support to Pakistan on Kashmir issue, is a big diplomatic victory for India's foreign policy. The opportunity provided to India after a long gap clearly means that Modi's hugging diplomacy has been successful. Although Modi's stage-managed town hall-type gatherings at foreign countries and his gesture of receiving important dignitaries at the airport received criticism as being "wasteful" and "useless", they have surely reaped benefits. The consensus of France and other countries to support the proposal of identifying JeM chief Masood Azhar as an international terrorist in the UN further confirms the same.

The use of F-16 against India instead of counter-terrorism operations has also put Pakistan in a bad light. The support received by India from the international community for its non-military pre-emptive strike against Pakistan was unprecedented. This not only reflects the changed course of India's foreign policy but also its growing clout. India has entered a new path and phase of activist foreign policy, which needs to be appreciated and not criticised.

(The writer is professor of political science, HNB Garhwal University, Uttarakhand)

## POINTCOUNTERPOINT

I LAID THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR AMETHI ORDNANCE FACTORY IN 2010 AND IT HAS BEEN MANUFACTURING SMALL ARMS. YOU (PM) LIED.  
—CONGRESS PRESIDENT RAHUL GANDHI



YOU ARE SCARED OF DEVELOPMENT IN AMETHI. WHAT WAS INAUGURATED IN KORWA WAS A JV BETWEEN INDIA AND RUSSIA ON MAKING AK-203.  
—UNION MINISTER SMRITI IRANI

# Reclaim self-confidence

The lack of will has allowed a non-disputed issue like the Ram Janmabhoomi to acquire such dimensions. It's high time we get over old complexes and act as free citizens



PRAFULL GORADIA

Many an onlooker would be laughing at the manner in which India has dealt with the Ram Janmabhoomi issue. Until 1947, it was understandable that the Hindus held no trumpcard to win at Ayodhya, but why the lackadaisical handling of the issue thereafter? In 1949, the local court allowed the mahants to place the idol of Rama on the *chabutara* so that the worshippers would have access to the deity. That was sufficient to delight most devotees until 1983 when the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) appealed to every village to send a brick or Rama *shila* to Ayodhya. This was symbolic of their desire to build a Rama temple. Other members of the Sangh *parivar* kept aloof until 1989, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) included the temple in its manifesto. On December 6, 1992, the demolition of the Babri edifice took place. A fortnight later, the BJP distanced itself from the demolition. Thereafter, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board claimed ownership of the land and dragged the dispute to court and still after 27 years, it remains unresolved. This despite the Archaeological Survey of India testifying that there was a stone temple below which the Babri structure had stood.

This writer's associates overseas are amazed at the lack of will which allows everybody to make a mockery of a non-dispute. Experts have identified about 3,000 temples, which over the centuries, were either converted or recycled into mosques. Hardly a single place of worship has been restored to the Hindus despite seven decades of our Independence. On the contrary, over 100 temples have been desecrated in Kashmir over these seven decades. It is distinctly possible that easy conquest, again and again over centuries, introduced a sadistic habit into the psyche of the conquerors, who then perpetrated a variety of crimes and cruelties on the conquered. They acquired an inclination to obtain pleasure out of inflicting pain on others. Nearly seven centuries of the invaders' rule may have reduced the vanquished to acquire a slave mentality. Such a state of mind could well have affected the conquered people in the absence of any alternative source of political pleasure.

To obtain pleasure by being subjected to pain has been classified by psychologists as "masochism." This is a psycho-sexual disorder in which erotic release is achieved through having pain inflicted on oneself. The term derives from the name of Chevalier Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, an Austrian, who wrote extensively about the satisfaction he gained by being beaten and subjugated. The amount of pain involved can vary from ritual humiliation with little violence to severe whipping or beating. While pain may cause a certain amount of excitement in many people, for the masochist, it becomes the chief end of activity. The term is frequently used in a looser social context in which masochism is defined as the behaviour of one, who seeks out and enjoys situations of humiliation or abuse. More commonly, the association of pain with sexual pleasure takes the form of both masochism and sadism, the latter obtaining sexual pleasure through inflicting pain on others. Often, an individual will alternate roles,

IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT MAHMUD GHAZNI HAD LED SEVERAL EXPEDITIONS INTO INDIA BUT WE SEEMED TO THINK THAT HISTORY TEACHES BUT ONE LESSON, NAMELY, THERE ARE NO LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM HISTORY. ALBERUNI, THE DISTINGUISHED ASTRONOMER, WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED MAHMUD, WROTE THAT ANAND PALA, AFTER HIS OWN DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF MAHMUD, WROTE TO HIM OFFERING HELP



becoming aroused through the experience of pain in one instance and through the infliction of pain in another. Perhaps, this explains why we have yielded ground so easily.

Ever since Professor Max Mueller, German philosopher, delivered his lecture in Westminster Abbey, London, in 1873, the six great religions of the world have been broadly classified into two categories. Missionary religions: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam; and non-missionary religions: Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. In the case of the missionary religions, it is a sacred duty cast on the followers to spread faith among the non-believers until, as it were, it is accepted by all members of the human family. It is only in the case of Islam that its followers have resorted to forcible means to convert non-believers.

For example, Professor Sir Thomas Arnold, who was the principal of Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh in the 19th century, recorded the following: "India is a country where Islam owes its existence and continuance in existence to the settlement of foreign conquering Muhammadan races, who have transmitted their faith to their descendants and only succeeded in spreading it beyond their own circle by means of persecution and forced conversions."

Ever since Islam was born in Arabia, it came into conflict with Judaism and Christianity. The clash mainly occurred because of the com-

mon characteristics of the two faiths rather than the differences. One book of faith; one leader; one religion and, in the latter, a similar missionary zeal. Professor Bernard Lewis, the eminent American scholar, observed: "The seesaw attack and counter-attack between Christianity and Islam had begun with the crusades and they ended with a conclusive Christian defeat." Besides, for almost a 1,000 years, from the first Moorish landing in Spain to the second Turkish siege of Vienna, 1682, Europe was under constant threat from Islam. In the early centuries, it was a double threat not only of invasion and conquest but also of conversion. Having conquered large parts of southern Europe, Muslims imposed their Sharia on Christians.

For a millennium, from the Arab invasion of Sind in 712 AD till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Hindu society was equally under the threat of conversion and conquest. This happened because after the death of Harsh Vardhana in 647 AD, Hindu rulers of north India generally embraced one idea: Self-aggrandisement, which spelt but only ruin.

It is well-known that Mahmud Ghazni had led several expeditions into India but Hindus seemed to think that history teaches but one lesson, namely, there are no lessons to be learnt from history. Alberuni, the distinguished astronomer, who had accompanied Mahmud, wrote that Anand Pala, after his own defeat at the hands of

Mahmud, wrote to him. "I learn the Turks have rebelled against you. If you wish, I shall come to you or send my son with 500 horses, 1,000 soldiers and 100 elephants. I have been conquered by you and, therefore, wish that another man should not conquer you." Such examples of Hindu mindset abound. In this context, an eminent Indian historian said, "The people en masse seldom act except as they are led. Given effective leadership, they are capable of achieving almost anything."

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had invited the distinguished historian, Sir Arnold Toynbee, to deliver the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad memorial lectures. In the course of them, he expressed surprise that two prominent mosques stood on the bank of the Ganges at Benaras so many years after Independence.

He went on to quote the example of Warsaw, whose biggest church had been converted from Catholic to an Eastern Orthodox place of worship when the Russians conquered Poland. When, however, a century later, the Poles were able to free themselves, they demolished the Russian church. They promptly replaced it with a Roman Catholic edifice of worship. That is what Sir Arnold expected of Indians too. Indeed, it is high time, Hindus got over their old complexes and became self-confident free citizens.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author)

# Let's not forget the basics of countering terrorism

The Balakot air raid is a wake-up call for the Modi government to modernise its defence forces rather than putting the blame on previous regimes. Otherwise, it would cut a sorry figure during encounters with age-old weapons against its adversaries



PK VASUDEVA

After the Pulwama massacre, where more than 40 CRPF jawans were martyred by Pakistani terrorists, as claimed by Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Masood Azhar, the Modi Government gave a befitting reply to the Pakistani terrorists. In the early hours of February 26, 12 Mirage-2000 combat jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF), armed with Israeli Precision Guided Munitions (PGM), also known as SPICE-2000 and Crystal Maze Mk2, called AGM 142 Popeye PGMs, retaliated by taking off from their Gwalior airbase on a crucial mission, cloaked in the highest secrecy to keep an element of surprise.

The terror launch pads along the Line of Control (LoC) were moved deep inside after the Pulwama attack. The camp in Balakot, which was targeted, is the JeM's major training camp. It's close to Abbottabad, infamous because of Osama bin Laden. Balakot is situated about 60 km from the LoC, in the Mansehra district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and is about two hours' drive from Abbottabad. It is believed that a large number of JeM terrorists, trainers and senior commanders were eliminated in the air strikes launched at the camp in Balakot.

The IAF's air strike sent a robust but calibrated message to Islamabad. The latter is manifest in New Delhi's diplomatic utterances. India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale referred to the action as a "non-military, pre-emptive strike." This phrase is indicative of the fact that action was completely based on an assessment of an imminent threat to our national security, ensured that Pakistan's military personnel and infrastructure were not targeted and avoided civilian casualties at all cost. In effect,

New Delhi's line has been that the operation was an intelligence-driven, counter-terror strike; rather than an escalatory military aggression.

On February 27, Pakistan crossed the LoC with three F-16 jets to undertake strikes in Jammu & Kashmir. Indian officials said Pakistani F-16 fighter jets violated the Indian air space in Jammu & Kashmir's Poonch and Nowshera sectors but were pushed back by Indian MiG-21 jets. However, the Pakistan foreign office said in a statement, "Pakistan Air Force undertook strikes across LoC, from within the Pakistani airspace. This was not a retaliation to continued Indian belligerence but an action in self defence. If India is striking at the so-called terrorist backers without a shred of evidence, we also retain reciprocal rights to retaliate against elements that enjoy Indian patronage while carrying out acts of terror in Pakistan. We do not wish to go to that route and wish that India gives peace a chance to resolve issues like a mature democratic nation."

The aerial skirmish began when three Pakistani jet fighters, out of a "fairly large formation" of over 10 F-16s, JF-17s and Mirage-5 attack jets, crossed the LoC in the Kalal area in Nowshera region of Rajouri in Jammu around 10.20 am. A media report said four military installations were being targeted — the Brigade headquarters in Krishna Ghati (Poonch), a battalion headquarters in Nangi Tekri, supply dump and ammunition point in Niyari. A small number of these fighters then proceeded to cross the LoC when eight IAF jets, which included four Sukhoi 30s, two upgraded Mirage 2000s and two MiG-21 Bisons, intercepted them. The Air Force fighters chased the Pakistani jets on their return leg after they had dropped a handful of laser-guided bombs that narrowly missed their military targets along the LoC.

Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was in hot pursuit of a Pakistani F-16 jet, which he engaged with an R-73 air-to-air missile. The state-of-the-art Pakistani fighter, thought to be a two-seater variant of the jet, was shot down. Both pilots

were seen parachuting down on the Pakistani side of the LoC.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan offered talks with Prime Minister Modi to de-escalate a war-like situation between the two countries and promised that they were being targeted — the Brigade headquarters in Krishna Ghati (Poonch), a battalion headquarters in Nangi Tekri, supply dump and ammunition point in Niyari. A small number of these fighters then proceeded to cross the LoC when eight IAF jets, which included four Sukhoi 30s, two upgraded Mirage 2000s and two MiG-21 Bisons, intercepted them. The Air Force fighters chased the Pakistani jets on their return leg after they had dropped a handful of laser-guided bombs that narrowly missed their military targets along the LoC.

To the satisfaction and great solace to every Indian, brave and bruised hero Wing Commander Abhinandan returned on March 1 after an agonising day-long wait as Pakistan rejected India's request to allow IAF to fly him in a special aircraft. A "confession" video having 20 cuts praising Pakistan was extracted from Abhinandan at an ISI facility in Lahore. Indian officials said it was extracted under duress and only

undermined Khan's "peace gesture" of releasing him. This video delayed the homecoming of Abhinandan by four hours.

Pakistan denied that the Indian strike caused any damage on the ground. Surprisingly, even Opposition parties in India doubted the IAF having caused severe damage to the JeM terrorist camps in Balakot. The photographic proof of the target strikes are available with the IAF and can, therefore, be released by the government.

The computer memories of Sice-2000 precision guided bombs with satellite images and exact geographical coordinates of the major JeM camps were loaded on Mirage-2000 fighters. With their navigation/seeker systems, the fire and forget 1000 kg Spice-2000 laser guided bombs homed into the four to six targets selected within the JeM facility with an error margin of 1 metre. Some civilians and even Azhar's youngest brother Maulana Ammar confirmed IAF hitting the Jaish factory and ambulances carrying dead bodies. How can we make our Opposition

parties believe the strike capability of our highly professional defence forces?

The whole incident is a wake-up call for the Modi government to modernise its defence forces rather than blaming the previous governments. Or else it would cut a sorry figure during encounters with age-old weapons against its adversaries. India is the fastest and sixth largest economy in the world. However, its defence budget is 1.44 per cent of the GDP, which is the least since 1962. How long will the IAF continue flying 50-year-old vintage jet fighters for combat and how long will the soldiers continue sacrificing their lives with old rifles, carbines, sniper rifles, light machine guns and without latest night firing devices?

The Armed forces must have a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for coordination of operations during war and he must be a member of the Cabinet Committee on Security CCS for authentic and expert strategic military advice at such crucial times. (The writer is a retired professor in international trade)







Trend Blazer

Kangana slams Ranbir Kapoor

Actress **KANGANA RANAUT** has slammed actor **Ranbir Kapoor** for not taking a stand on the country's politics and other issues. When asked if she planned to join politics or to participate in an election campaign, Kangana said, "I don't have any intention to join politics. There are few actors in our industry like Ranbir Kapoor where he has been seen saying 'We have regular supply of water and electricity at home so, why should I comment about politics?' But I feel because of this country's people, if you are living in a luxurious home and travelling in your Mercedes. How can you talk like that? This is irresponsible behaviour and I am not that kind of person."



**'Some filmmakers are lucky, and who do not have to struggle once a film gets appreciation. And then there are those who are destined to struggle all the way in spite of proving their potential as a storyteller. I am one of them, now what to do?'**  
—Tigmanshu Dhulia



Actor **ANIL KAPOOR**, a part of the Hindi film industry for almost four decades, says his mission is to explore more of what he can do and how to improve it. Anil has shown versatility in the myriad genres, like drama, action, romance, comedy and socio-drama. He has even featured in Hollywood films, including *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* and *Slumdog Millionaire*. Asked if there is anything else he aspires to do, Anil said, "I aspire to do better. I believe there is no limit to human potential and that we are all capable of much more than we give ourselves credit for. It is my life's mission to explore more of what I can do and how I can do it better."



Hilton has no time for love

Socialite **PARIS HILTON** says she does not have time for love right now as she is too busy to find a man and settle down. The 38-year-old broke off her engagement to actor Chris Zylka in November last year, 11 months after he popped the question. "I don't have time for love right now. I hardly have time for myself. I am constantly travelling over 250 days a year, never home, just focusing on myself, my business and my friends," Hilton said. "There are always a lot of guys everywhere. When I am ready, the most important thing is loyalty, someone who is your best friend, who you can trust and who loves you for you. When you know you know. But I don't know yet."



Bride and bold

Bridal Asia 2019 revealed new trends — summer weddings, wholesalers becoming sought-after labels and lightweight couture.  
By AYUSHI SHARMA

Selecting a wedding outfit is more than just a fitting as it's actually a process, a memory in the making. The bridal attire is one thing that matters the most over everything for any woman. The Indian bridal fashion has always been changing and evolving ever since the concept of "big fat Indian weddings" came in. Bridal Asia curated its hand-picked Spring Summer '19 edition, exhibiting some of the renowned designers of the country. Through an amalgamation of opulence and craftsmanship, it showcased something for everyone, and a multifarious assortment of apparel, jewellery, footwear and accessories, from the choicest brands that came together for celebrating the Indian heritage. Dhruv Gurwara, chief marketing officer of Bridal Asia, says, "This year, the exhibition completed 20 years and we are absolutely elated. Our narrative has opened the curtains of a new era, where the bride declares her individuality. The brand is now celebrating the chasm between its history, the coy bride and its future, the bold bride. With every passing season, we understand our muses better, so this was the perfect time to also dedicate space to lighter collections." "This time we concentrated on the summer collection as summer weddings and even destination weddings have now become a trend. The time between April and June has actually become a period where lot of weddings take place. This is the reason why we started the summer edition. This has been our second

**"The dark maroon isn't there anymore which used to rule the hearts of Indian brides. Bright colours like blue, pink, white, off-white, even ivory, are working very well, everything other than dull velvets"**



edition," he adds. Dhruv apprises that this time there were a lot of jewellers from Jaipur mainly and other places as well, who were initially wholesalers, have started retailing themselves and are now coming out as brands, like Raniwala and Rambhajo. So it's quite interesting to see the wholesalers getting into the retail business. He further says that people are willing to experiment now, in terms of quality, colours, what suits them, fits them best, and they are consid-

ering comfort as their top-most priority. They are not just stuck on to the mainstream designers anymore. Weddings are a once in a lifetime experience, especially for brides and grooms, as it is their big day, their day to seek all the attention and look exactly like they have dreamt of all their lives. By being comfortable in what they choose to wear lets them enjoy their day. He feels it has been quite a refreshing change. People are opting for lighter, breezier outfits rather than heavy embroidered ones. Even when it comes to jewellery they are ready to tick something simple that goes along with their dress instead of extremely flared pieces. They are also considering cost effective designs, something classic, minimalist and modern with a touch of traditionality. Dhruv says, "Opting for lighter pieces even helps in destination weddings since you don't have carry too much weight of your lehengas and jewellery." Ask him about the colours which seem to be in trend, he adds, "That dark maroon isn't there anymore which used to rule the hearts of Indian brides. Bright colours like red, blue, pink, white, off-white, even ivory, are working very well, everything other than dull velvets." For Dhruv, a wedding dress is both intimate as well as personal for a woman and it must reflect the personality and style of the bride. After all, a bride's entire world stops to look at her on her wedding day, it has to be memorable.

Spielberg opposes digital films for Oscars

The news that filmmaker Steven Spielberg will be proposing a rule change at the next Academy meeting that will make it more difficult for Netflix films to compete at the Oscars, has sparked debate online among the film community. Spielberg is likely to take his criticism of Netflix films at the Oscars to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Spielberg's Academy Award attention is devoted to ensuring that the race never sees another *Roma*, a Netflix film backed by massive sums, that didn't play by the same rules as its analog-studio competitors. Now, several are arguing in favour of Netflix or pointing out that the situation is more complicated than theatrical release versus streaming. Indian actor Kabir Bedi tweeted in reaction to the news, "Dinosaurous! Never imagined Steven Spielberg so retrograde as to want different rules for films made by streaming services and those produced by all others. A film is a film is a film. No matter who produces it. And: Rule changes he wants would disqualify most regular producers." Sean Baker, *Tangerine* and *The Florida Project* director suggested that Netflix add a "theatrical tier" to its pricing plans. "This would help keep theatre owners and audience members who appreciate the theatrical experience satisfied," he wrote on Twitter, adding, "Just an idea with no details ironed out. But we need to find solutions like this in which everybody bends a bit in order to keep the film community... alive and kicking." Film and TV director Richard Shepard wrote that "good movies are good movies — wherever they play. And in a world where we have more *Jurassic Parks* than *Shirkers*, Netflix fills a gap. Love the big screen, but love the story/heart of movie more."



*The Blacklist* founder Franklin Leonard added that what matters isn't what would happen to Netflix, but to "every other film and filmmaker who will struggle to get access to the resources necessary to make a film but not get those allowing for a four week exclusive theatrical release", variety.com reports. *First Reformed* writer-director Paul Schrader emphasised that "distribution models evolve" and pointed out that "Netflix allows many financially marginal films to have a platform and that's a good thing." The director, however, said that some films are too esoteric to benefit from being added to Netflix's *larder*, using *First Reformed* as an example. *Dream Girl* associate producer Prasanna Ranganathan posted a thread explaining that Netflix has gone the distance in terms of giving distribution to projects from people of colour and other marginalised groups. "If the Academy's commitment to diversity and inclusion as articulated in its 2020 strategy is as robust as it seems, excluding Netflix and its diverse artists, storytellers and filmmakers from awards consideration makes no sense." *Jinn* director Nijla Mumin wrote that "no one is lining up to give you a full theatrical release. Smaller films are often put into smaller theaters, where many people don't see them." In her thread, she questioned whether a film's inability to find wide theatrical distribution should mean it is "erased from the entire awards conversation." —IANS

The experimental hero

Actor **NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI** tells **CHAHAK MITTAL** that films aren't propaganda that have to make an impact on society or always stand for a social cause

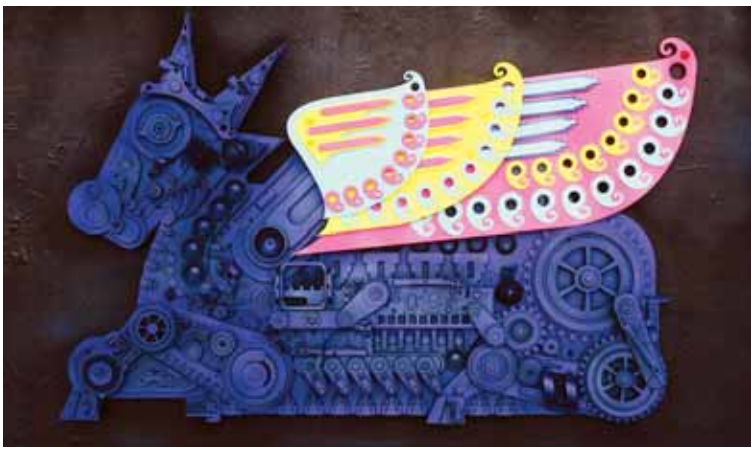


ed only once, as compared to 'selfie' and 'posing for candid' era. Talking about how he prepared or learnt the way the street photographers talk to people at the Gateway or other such national monuments, Nawaz says that for a few days before they began shooting, Ritesh had called a few photographers who helped him to know about their individual styles. "I learnt their way of walking, dressing and talking. I observed how they convinced people to get clicked since today everyone has smartphones with good quality cameras. They don't feel the need to pay the photographers for a picture. Hence, they need to have some convincing power to make their profession work. I observed how they clicked a picture and then got them printed through developing negatives," he says.



However, no matter what character he plays, the *Haraamkhor* actor says that this time he wasn't playing anyone else, rather himself. "Here, I have actually played myself. I haven't done any characterisation. I relate and connect to my character a lot since it somehow takes me back to my initial struggling days in Mumbai. Rafi is just an ordinary, common man. He is not some larger-than-life character. *Woh bhi unn hazaaron me se hi ek hai, kuch alag nahi* (He is also one among thousands of others). I was also the same when I came here," says he. He goes on to tell us how "Ritesh never asked us to act. He just wanted us to be ourselves and look at the lens with our own eyes." The film, that was premiered at the 69th Berlin Film Festival and the

Sundance Film Festival, has received appreciation from a wide audience. The actor says that it is because there haven't been many films that showed a local guy and an urban girl romancing. "This one did and in a quite believable way. It was very much true," says the actor. He calls Ritesh's filmography style as "different, real and simple." He believes, "There is a simplicity in what he shows just like he even did in *The Lunchbox*. He doesn't romanticise the idea of romance rather shows it in a very subtle and real way." Talking about a shift in Bollywood's sensibility and understanding of modern relationships, he says that there have been a few directors like "Shekhar Sharma, Anurag Kashyap who had started this change a long time ago. But yes, there are mainstream directors who also moving towards realism now." However, explaining what 'realism' implies, he says, "It is not only about social issues or making biopics. A film is not propaganda that stands for or promotes a social cause. A film can pick up any subject. I don't see it as a responsibility that a film should follow such rules and show certain content." As the actor has played a number of characters unconventional to that of a typical Bollywood hero, and done films like *Manto*, *Thackeray*, *Gangs of Wasseypur*, *Manjhi - The Mountain Man* and many other critically-acclaimed film, he says that he doesn't see himself as an inspiration since he is not on a "particular mission that I have to inspire people. I am just an artist who is experimenting with himself and his craft. I just do what I feel is right and something that brings out the new in me." (*The film releases on March 15.*)



It's showtime



# THE MANTRA OF RECYCLING

Artist HARIBABU NATESAN works with electronic waste to create animal sculptures and impressions allowing one to look at junk with new eyes. By UMA NAIR

To engage with the dynamics of design, woven into Indian culture, is an odyssey that embraces both tradition and knowledge. At Art Positive in Lado Sarai, a Mumbai-based artist, Haribabu Natesan interprets popular idioms through his works. Natesan works with electronic junk to create animal fossil like an insect and a lady bird, other than a breath-taking *Nandi*, the bull and other hybrid compositions that can fascinate you to an extent which can't be put to words. Colours, contours and the charisma of creating compositional kinetics make this show worthy of deeper scrutiny.

Haribabu's works talk to us about the paradigms of waste. Not only does it cock an eye at conspicuous consumption but it also in some way tells us that we need to look at waste with new eyes. If you think that junk should be banished, you'll never look at a plastic fork or a damaged CD or a bent safety pin. But this show changes one's perspective of those objects as it reveals infinite possibilities of how waste can be turned into something spectacular. He makes the best use of the products that belong to the world of the junk.

Like a bolt from the blue, his materials of creativity are mind boggling. He creates an amalgamation of nuts, hooks, phone dials, broken zips, buckles, tooth-picks, mangled CPUs, monitors, hard disks and odds and ends. His mantra is to reinvent and reuse through the recycling chain to create a collection of mixed materiality sculptures.

**NOTHING IS WASTE**

At first you realise that Haribabu's art is born out of a passion for collecting useless things and experimenting with the forms they could take. "I'm a die-hard junk collector," says Haribabu. "After seeing all that I can create out of junk, my friends offer all their junk to me. So if you come to my house, you will see it overflowing with all such objects," says Natesan who also visits the Sunday market in Ahmedabad once in every

**'A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY THAT IT'S BAD FOR VAASTU TO KEEP SO MANY DAMAGED OBJECTS AT HOME AS IT ATTRACTS NEGATIVE ENERGY. BUT I DON'T AGREE. AFTER ALL, EVERYTHING WE MAKE IS REBORN OUT OF DEATH'**



three months to acquire waste materials.

"Broken things seem to just call out to me to take care of them. I've been doing this part-time for over three years and full-time for the last eight months," says the NID postgraduate in animation film design, who quit stable animation work to continue pottering around with the useless items at his home.

**BEYOND VAASTU**

Haribabu has deep convictions and you can envision that when you look at his magnificent *Nandi* bulls that have surreal colourative tones.

Haribabu explains his thought process. "A lot of people tell me that it's bad for *Vaastu* to keep so many damaged objects at home and that it attracts negative energy. But I don't agree with what they say. After all, everything we make is reborn out of death. If we look at it, even furniture is made from a dead tree, else where do we get it from? For me, art is a new journey and a way of breathing life into lifeless things."

His words have a technical truth to it. Haribabu uses his film animation

training to design animal/insect sculptures that can be used for stop motion animation work and could even move with the help of robotronics. His lady-bird and insect sculptures are surreal cutting-edge pieces that delight the senses.

**END OF RECYCLING**

"I feel very strongly about issues like global warming and recycling," states Haribabu. He adds, "We spend a lot of energy in recycling stuff like plastic and iron. I feel that when you recycle things into art, you also put an end to the recycling and all the effort and energy spent in it. Although, I don't do a 100 per cent sustainable recycled art (I need to use glue and boards.) This is a great platform to showcase my work. I hope I get positive feedback, and people realise that it is an important end product," he says proudly.

In a way, he reminds me of Salvador Dali and has me wondering about his ideations that meld the best of products in the waste material markets to come up with signature creations, which combine molten iron, eagle feathers and used hard disks.



# Beyond the postcard images

IDRIS AHMED's suite of images, titled *Shalom*, at the Kolkata Photo Festival builds a passage of time featuring the city life of Jerusalem and Israel's cultural landscape. By U NAIR

Bursting with lush, vibrant photographs, artist Idris Ahmed's images give us a modern-day glimpse of Israel as a timeless tribute to one of the world's most soulful, resolute and newsworthy countries. Embracing moments on land, light, life and the soul of its inner spirit, these images feature Israel's glorious landscapes, its city life, its culture and its people.

At the Kolkata Photo Festival, Ahmed's suite of images entitled *Shalom* at the Emami Art Centre are about life in quiet places and exploring the beauty of Israel through black and white photographs as well as coloured. From an enchanting image of 'Israeli kids playing on abandoned tank at Golan Heights' to the lively city life of Jerusalem — each of these images unveils as evocative echoes that define the passage of time.

**JERUSALEM**

No visit to the country would be complete without a trip to Jerusalem. With a history stretching back to almost 5,000 years and sights including the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and al-Aqsa Mosque, a few cities resonate in the same way. Religion, rituals and customs come alive in the images. The *Jewish family during bar mitzvah ceremony at Western Wall* as well as the expressionist elegance of *A young boy*

during his bar mitzvah ceremony are both images of deep intensity and inspiration. The black and white images have a resonance that speak to us about the mapping of infinite grays that come with it. The details are what enchant us and one glance is enough to make one realise that Idris's hand is experienced as well as restrained in its nuances of freezing the frame.

**EVERYDAY IDIOMS**

Situated at the mouth of the meandering Yarkon river, Tel Aviv has a six-mile beach. Young, laid-back locals, cyclists, joggers and dog walkers stroll the promenade, while sunbathers and surfers rule the beach, giving Israel's second city a "Californian feel."

"Israel has a tremendous history and legacy, architecturally speaking, much of which dates back to the architecture in Jerusalem that evolved over three millennia, formed by the inspiration from the top Persian, Roman, Ottoman, Turkish and a bit of colonial German architecture thrown in the mix," says Idris who captures vignettes of the modern.

**TIME REGAINED**

Idris gives us a repertoire of the confluence of communities and their moments in everyday symbolism. *Muslim woman walk towards Dome of the Rock*



**Young, laid-back locals, cyclists, joggers and dog walkers stroll the promenade, while sunbathers and surfers rule the beach of Tel Aviv, giving Israel's second city a 'Californian feel'**

and *Muslim kids play in front of Dome of the Rock* are two images that clearly signify the vitality of the religion as well as the insignia of the zest for living. The idea of the plurality of religions comes to the fore when we look at the images of young orthodox Jews walking on the streets of Jerusalem as well as the nonchalant symbol of gay abandon

when we look at *Young Israelis skateboarding around old port at Namal, Tel Aviv*.

Through these images, we can gauge the lifestyle that cruises in front of the camera — from colourful marketeers to families in prayer at the Western Wall — these incredible images move beyond the typical postcard images of the country to showcase the character of its people and the sanctity of the land they are so resolute in preserving. "While tourists flock to the salty waters of the Dead Sea and the historic sites around its shores, most are unfamiliar with the Western Galilee region (the country's most mountainous region)," says Idris.

He adds, "It calls itself the *Tuscany of the Middle East*, thanks to the lush greenery and Crusader sites, including the Montfort fortress, a ruined castle you can climb to enjoy spectacular views. The rolling landscape is perfect for cycling."

Ultimately, he suggests that one must pause over the two images that echo the passion of the rituals in Christianity — *Holy fire: Orthodox Christian pilgrim holding candles during the 'Holy Fire' ceremony on Easter and Divine Light: Monks lighting up candles at Coptic Chapel on 'Good Friday'*. These are moments in the passion of the model of worship that bring home the sense of devotion and the intrinsic impact of the ritual that transcends time and age.

**WATCH OUT**

The Gujral Foundation presents *Property of a Gentleman: Stamps from the Nizam of Hyderabad's Dominions*, an exhibition that aims to explore an aspect of Hyderabad's history and feature an iconic collection of Nawab Iqbal Hussain Khan. **WHEN:** Till March 24 **WHERE:** Bikaner House.



NEANGO Studio relaunches the Gita Art Gallery, through an exhibition of art works by artists like Rameshwar Broota, Mona Rai, Manish Pushkale, Shobha Broota and Hem Raj, to name a few. **WHEN:** Till March 31 **TIME:** 11 am to 6.30 pm **WHERE:** Gag Moderne, 39, Corner Market, Sadhna Enclave.



*Lightening in the Greys* is an exhibition of paintings by Artist Anupama Chatterjee Hara, inspired by a poignant memory of a monsoon storm, captured during a train journey to East India. **WHEN:** Till March 11 **TIME:** 11 am to 8 pm **WHERE:** Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg.

Curated by Priyanka Banerjee, *Panorama-14* Celebrates womanhood through an exhibition that brings together artworks by various artists around the theme of 'Women and Femininity'. **WHEN:** Till March 31 **TIME:** 11 am to 7 pm **WHERE:** Vivanta by Taj, Dwarka.



Delhi Art Society and India International Centre presents *Sculpt for Delhi II*, an exhibition of installation and sculptures, curated by Naresh Kapuria. **WHEN:** March 5 **TIME:** 6 pm **WHERE:** Gandhi King Plaza, India International Centre (IIC), Max Mueller Marg.



# CRUNCH TIME FOR SOLARI AND REAL

After losing back to back games against Barcelona in span of four days, Champions look UCL as last hope to avoid humiliation

AFP ■ MADRID

Santiago Solari's future is likely to hinge on Real Madrid again winning the Champions League but two defeats by Barcelona in four days have brought old problems back to the surface.

After being knocked out of the Copa del Rey and effectively deemed irrelevant in the title race, a third loss in as many games could see Madrid's season wiped out in a week.

"We have to react," said defender Dani Carvajal.

"It's probably been one of the toughest weeks in my time here."

Ajax deserved more from the 2-1 loss in Amsterdam that, in theory, puts their opponents firmly in charge ahead of the second leg on Tuesday.

But three consecutive defeats at the Santiago Bernabeu for the first time in 15 years means Madrid will be feeling the heat.

Solari too, the coach that was handed a contract until 2021 when appointed only five months ago but who might not last the season should Ajax do the unthinkable and reach the quarter-finals.

Jose Mourinho's criticism as a pundit for *beIN Sports* on the latest Clásico will be seen as opportunistic but the reality is he is still well-regarded at Real. Unlike other potential successors, he is also available to start immediately.

Still, Solari will know Madrid have been here before.

Last season, Zinedine Zidane's team crashed out earlier in the Copa del Rey and to Leganes, not Barcelona. They were adrift in La Liga too.

But victories in Europe over Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus blurred those failures while beating Liverpool in the final seemed to extinguish them almost completely.

Solari will surely pay the price if domestic disappointment is extended into the Champions League, where context could be significant — the stage, opponent and manner of defeat — but after four triumphs in five years, it is hard to imagine anything less than lifting the trophy would be deemed a success.

For Solari, that is a high bar set, and a reminder perhaps of why Madrid found so few elite coaches eager to follow Zidane last summer.



Real Madrid's playmaker Luka Modric dribbles the ball against Ajax's Frrenkie de Jong in UEFA Champions League first leg clash at Johan Cryuff Arena in Amsterdam

Real Madrid vs Ajax  
Live from 1:30am IST  
SON TEN 2 NETWORK



## GRIM GOAL RECORD

Real had finished 17 points behind Barcelona and then sold their best player. In the years with Cristiano, Madrid's goals scored tally at this stage in the league was 71, 62, 85, 64, 73, 75, 71, 67, and 62. This season it is 43.

And against Barcelona, the difference was precision in the final third, where Barca boasted Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele while Madrid had an out-of-form Gareth Bale, an inexperienced Vinicius Junior and Karim Benzema, who only scored five league goals last term.

Under Julen Lopetegui in October, Madrid went almost eight hours without scoring and the reaction to the latest defeat sound-

ed familiar.

"We failed to finish, just like the other day," said Solari. "When that happens, you cannot win the game. When you lack goals, you struggle," said Ramos.

The question is whether Solari can now revive his marquee players and cojole the youngsters, many of whom have been the driving force of his team in recent months. In the UCL, the pressure is on to deliver.

"We need the league for fitness and rhythm," said Ramos.

"So we must continue working and keep winning games. We have another final in the Champions League on Tuesday and we will fight for it," he added.

## Reus urges Dortmund to write history

AFP ■ DORTMUND

Marco Reus has called on Borussia Dortmund to write history on Tuesday as the Bundesliga leaders attempt to turn around their Champions

League tie at home to Tottenham Hotspur.

Spurs were the last team to win a Champions League game at Dortmund, in November 2017, when Son Heung-min and Harry Kane scored in a 2-1 group stage victory.

After Reus' defiant words, Dortmund head coach Lucien Favre offered a more modest perspective. "We know that it's going to be difficult, but you never know," said Favre.

Signal Iduna Park has seen some big nights in Europe, most recently when Atletico Madrid were routed 4-0 in the group stage last October.

And no Borussia fan could forget Poland striker Robert Lewandowski, now at Bayern Munich, scoring all of Dortmund's goals when Real Madrid were routed 4-1 in the semi-finals in 2013.

However, the home side must bounce back from a dreadful run of results to have any chance of overhauling Spurs.

FIRST LEG RESULTS	
Tottenham Hotspur	3-0 Borussia Dortmund
Son Heung-Min (47)	
Jan Vertonghen (83)	
Fernando Llorente (86)	
Ajax Amsterdam	1-2 Real Madrid
Hakim Ziyech (75)	
Karim Benzema (60)	
Marco Asensio (87)	

Pochettino's team at Signal Iduna Park in the return fixture.

Only three clubs, Barcelona, Roma and Deportivo La Coruna, have ever managed to progress in the Champions League knock-out phases after losing the first leg by three goals or more.

"I think there have already been some games in the stadium where history has been written — we can do it," said Reus, Dortmund's top-scorer and captain who missed the first leg with



Dortmund vs Tottenham  
Live from 1:30am IST  
SONY TEN 1 NETWORK



## Juve put one hand on title

AFP ■ ROME

Juventus closed all talk of a challenge to their Serie A dominance after coming through a second-half onslaught at Napoli to win 2-1 in an engrossing match that saw each side have a man sent off and stretch their lead at the top to a huge 16 points.

Massimiliano Allegri's unbeaten leaders have now as good as sealed their eighth straight Serie A title after a match that looked dead at half-time with Juve two goals and a man up, but sparked back into life when goalscorer Miralem Pjanic was sent off for handling a Napoli pass and picking up a second yellow card just after the break.

"I fell asleep, I should have replaced Pjanic when he had the first card. He was at risk, but I didn't expect him to handle," said Allegri, whose future at Juve is uncertain after what will be five seasons in Turin.

"I already said we'll sit down to talk about this season and the next. I am very happy to be at Juventus."

Midfielder Pjanic swept home his free-kick opener in the 28th minute, which came immediately after Napoli were reduced to 10 men thanks to goalkeeper Alex Meret slicing down Cristiano Ronaldo after the Portuguese nipped in to intercept a terrible Kevin Malcuit backpass.

Emre Can added the second from a corner 11 minutes later after substitute David Ospina tipped away Pjanic's stinging shot, but the Bosnian's red card gave Napoli a glimmer of hope.

They were back in the game in the 61st minute when Jose Callejon tapped home a pinpoint Lorenzo Insigne cross, and then piled the pressure on a suddenly creaking Juve, with Piotr Zielinski twice forcing fine saves from countryman Wojciech Szczesny.

It looked as though the hosts were set to launch a final assault when they were given a penalty six minutes before the end for a controversial handball decision against Alex Sandro given by VAR, only for Insigne to crash his spot-kick against the post and let the champions off the hook.



## Balotelli captures Marseille moment

AFP ■ PARIS

Mario Balotelli showed off a new goal celebration on Sunday as he took a selfie video with his Marseille teammates and posted it on social media during their 2-0 win over Saint-Etienne.

The Italian scored his fourth goal in six Ligue 1 games since joining Marseille from Nice in January by hooking home Florian Thauvin's 12th-minute corner with an excellent acrobatic volley.

"Balotelli takes the pressure, he takes the limelight. He reminds me of (Zlatan) Ibrahimovic and he scored an Ibrahimovic goal," said Saint-Etienne coach.

"He has brought back the public, the confidence, and many of his teammates will raise their level of play."

As he celebrated his volley, Balotelli took a phone from the cameraman behind the goal before filming the video with his laughing teammates and posting it on his Instagram story.

The 28-year-old then carried on playing.



He was not the first player to produce a selfie-based celebration, after Roma great Francesco Totti took a picture of himself after scoring against Lazio in the capital-city derby in 2015.

Marseille doubled their advantage nine minutes later through a Thauvin penalty and closed out the win with ease.

Rudi Garcia's men have now taken 13 points from their last five league matches to leapfrog Saint-Etienne into fourth, just five points adrift of Lyon in the race for the third and final Champions League spot.

## Neymar hints at joining Real

AFP ■ MADRID

Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar on Sunday left the door open for a potential move to Spanish giants Real Madrid.

The world's most expensive footballer is currently recovering from a foot injury which he suffered on January 23 and has been linked with a return to La Liga ever since joining PSG from Barcelona in 2017.

"In the future, everything is possible," he told Brazilian television channel *Globo*.

"I'm not saying I'm going to Real Madrid, calm down. Everybody knows I have already accomplished my dream which was (playing for) Barcelona."

"Real Madrid is one of the biggest teams in the world, every player perceived to have an interest in the club wants to play for them. Right now I'm very happy in Paris."

Neymar said Barcelona's Lionel Messi had sent him his

regards after hearing about the Brazilian's most recent injury.

"At the time I needed support the most, from people and the team, to be the best in the world came to me to say 'I'm here to help you,'" Neymar said.




The 27-year-old said PSG team-mate Kylian Mbappe will be one of the world's greatest ever players despite the pair both eyeing the biggest individual prizes in the sport.

"He's going to become one of the best players in the history of football and I'm trying to help him as best as possible. We have the same friendship as I had with Lionel, even competing for the Ballon d'Or," he said.

Neymar will miss Wednesday's Champions League last-16 return leg against Manchester United with the metatarsal problem he suffered six weeks ago.

PSG anticipate he will be back in time for a potential European quarter-final in April.


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