

INFOSYS: TROUBLE IN
CORPORATE PARADISE



THE TAMIL NADU **ROLLER COASTER**

www.indiatoday.in

FEBRUARY 27, 2017 ₹60



INDIA TODAY

UP ELECTIONS

BROTHERS IN ARMS

**CAN THE SAMAJWADI-CONGRESS
ALLIANCE RIDE TO POWER?**

**EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW
WITH AKHILESH
YADAV**



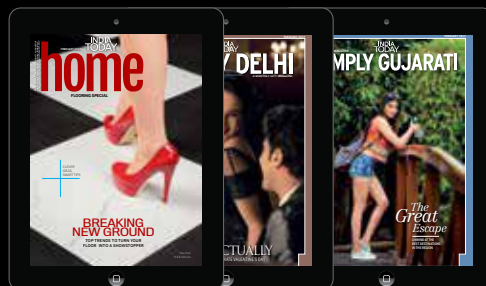
INDIA TODAY



DIGITAL EDITION



FREE WITH YOUR DIGITAL EDITION



EXCLUSIVE MULTIMEDIA CONTENT ONLY FOR IPAD

COVER STORY BROTHERS IN ARMS

COVER STORY THE PM SHOULD TRY THE NEW EXPRESSWAY. HE'LL VOTE SP

SPECIAL REPORT TIME TO REBOOT

NATION FIGHT TO THE FINISH

STATES 'I WANT A LEAGUE OF REGIONAL PARTIES'

WORLD TRUMP'S CHINA WALL

UPFRONT A VIOLENT WINTER

EXCLUSIVE POLITOONS BY INDIA TODAY GROUP

#BrothersInArms

SUBSCRIBE NOW

www.indiatoday.in/digitalmagazines

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Aroon Purie

GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Ashish Bagga

GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Raj Chengappa

EDITORS: Kaveri Bamzai (Special Projects), Ajit Kumar Jha (Research)

GROUP CREATIVE EDITOR: Nilanjana Das; **GROUP PHOTO EDITOR:** Bandyopadhyay

MANAGING EDITORS: Kai Jabir Friesse, Rajesh Jha

EXECUTIVE EDITORS: Damayanti Datta, S. Sahaya Ranjit, Sandeep Unnithan

DEPUTY EDITORS: Prachi Bhuchar, Uday Mahurkar, Manisha Saroop
MUMBAI: M.G. Arun HYDERABAD: Amarnath K. Menon CHANDIGARH: Asit Jolly

SENIOR EDITORS: Shweta Punj, Sasi Nair, JAIPUR: Rohit Parihar

SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Kaushik Deka, Ashish Mukherjee
MUMBAI: Suhani Singh, Kiran Dinkar Tare; PATNA: Amitabh Srivastava

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Shougat Dasgupta, Chinki Sinha
KOLKATA: Romita Sengupta; BHOPAL: Rahul Noronha
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Jeemon Jacob; BEIJING: Ananth Krishnan

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Pune: Aditi S. Pai

CHIEF COPY EDITOR: Aditya Mohan Wig

PHOTO DEPARTMENT: Vikram Sharma (Deputy Photo Editor),
Rajwant Singh Rawat (Principal Photographer),
Kekhrizhazo Mischie-O (Senior Photographer), Chandra Deep
Kumar (Photographer); MUMBAI: Mandar Suresh Deodhar
(Chief Photographer), Danesh Adil Jassavala (Photographer);
AHMEDABAD: Shalish B Raval (Principal Photographer);
KOLKATA: Subir Halder (Principal Photographer);
CHENNAI: N.G. Jaisan (Senior Photographer)

PHOTO RESEARCHERS: Prabhakar Tiwari (Chief Photo Researcher),
Saloni Vaid (Principal Photo Researcher),
Shubhrojit Brahma (Assistant Photo Researcher)

CHIEF OF GRAPHICS: Tanmoy Chakraborty

ART DEPARTMENT: Sanjay Pipilani (Senior Art Director);
Jyoti K. Singh, Anirban Ghosh (Art Director),
Vikas Verma, Rahul Sharma, Vipin Gupta (Associate Art Director);
Bhoomesh Dutt Sharma (Senior Designer)

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT: Harish Agarwal (Chief of Production),
Naveen Gupta (Chief Coordinator),
Vijay Kumar Sharma (Senior Coordinator)

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR: Manoj Sharma

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER: Anil Fernandes (Impact)

IMPACT TEAM

Senior General Manager: Jitender Lad (West)
General Manager: Mayur Rastogi (North),
Upendra Singh (Bangalore), Veli Subramaniam (Chennai),
Kaushik Chakraborty (East)

GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER: Vivek Malhotra

Assistant General Manager: Garima Prashar (Marketing)

SALES AND OPERATIONS: D.V.S. Rama Rao, Chief General Manager
Deepak Bhatt, General Manager (National Sales)
Vipin Bagga, Deputy General Manager (Operations)
Manish Kumar Srivastava, Regional Sales Manager (North)
Rajeev Gandhi, Regional Sales Manager (West)
Arckia Raj L., Regional Sales Manager (South)



**Volume XLII Number 9; For the week
February 21-27, 2017, published on every Friday**

• Editorial Office Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group Mediaplex,
FC-8, Sector-16A, Film City, Noida - 201301; Phone: 0120-4807100
• Subscriptions: For assistance contact Customer Care India Today Group, B-45,
Sector-37, Noida (UP)-201301; Phones: Toll-free number: 1800 1800 100 (from
BSNL/MTNL lines); (95120) 2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad; (0120) 2479900
from Rest of India (Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.); Fax: (0120) 4078080;
Mumbai: 022-66063411/1412, Kolkata: 033-40525327, Chennai: 044-24303200;
e-mail: irc@indiatoday.com

• Sales: Direct all trade enquiries to General Manager (Sales), Living Media India
Limited, B-45, Sector 37, Noida-201301 (UP)
• Regd. Office: K-9 Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110001

• Impact Offices: 1201, 12th Floor, Tower 2 A, One Indiabulls Centre, (Jupiter
Mills), S.B. Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai-400013; Phone: 66063355;
Fax: 66063226 • E-1, Ground Floor, Videocon Towers, Jhandewalan Extn,
New Delhi • Guna Complex, 5th Floor, Main Building, No.443, Anna Salai,
Chennai-600018; Phone: 2847 8525 • 201-204 Richmond Towers, 2nd Floor,
12, Richmond Road, Bangalore-560025; Phones: 22212448, 22213037,
22218343; Fax: 22218335; • 52, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, 4th Floor,
Kolkata-700071; Phones: 22825398; Fax: 22827254; • 6-3-885/7B, Somajiguda,
Hyderabad-500082; Phone: 23401657, 23400479, 23401000, 23402481,
23410982, 23411498; Fax: 23403484 • 39/1045, Karakkatt Road, Kochi 682016;
Phones: 2377057, 2377058; Fax: 2377059 • 2/C, "Suryarath Bldg", 2nd Floor,
Behind White House, Panchwati, Office C.G. Road, Ahmedabad-380006; Phone:
26560393, 26560929; Fax: 26565293 • Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All
rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.

Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media
India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited,
18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana)
and at A-9, Industrial Complex, Maraimalai Nagar, District
Kancheepuram-603209, (Tamil Nadu). Published at K-9, Connaught
Circus, New Delhi-110001. Editor: Aroon Purie.

• INDIA TODAY does not take the responsibility for returning unsolicited
publication material.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of
competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only



For reprint rights and syndication enquiries, contact
syndications@indiatoday.com or call +91-120-4078000
www.syndicationtoday.in

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With polls in five states, we are faced again with the vexed question of whether the electorate votes the same way in state and general elections. Nowhere is this more relevant than in Uttar Pradesh, where assembly elections are under way. In the 2014 general elections, a Modi wave swept across UP. The BJP grabbed 71 of 80 seats with a 43 per cent vote share. This, if overlaid onto an assembly poll, would mean wins in 328 of 403 seats. In contrast, in 2012, in the last assembly election, the BJP, pitted against the same opponents, got a mere 15 per cent vote share and 47 seats. The difference? Clearly, 2014 was an overwhelming mandate for Candidate Modi.

Five years later, the scenario has changed. Candidate Modi is now PM Modi who, midway through his tenure, detonated the D-bomb. Also, two of the BJP's rivals in UP are now allies—Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, currently in power, and Rahul Gandhi's Congress, which was humiliated in the state in 2014, winning just two Lok Sabha seats. The two hope to reach out to not only the traditional SP-Congress vote bank of Yadavs and Muslims but also to young people, cutting across conventional ties. There is also four-time chief minister Mayawati and her BSP, which is strong among the Dalits and with 100 Muslim candidates, hopes to make a powerful play for that community. There has already addressed 35 rallies.

The question is who to elect as CM. Therein lies the rub. The BJP campaign has been headlined by PM Modi, who has addressed six rallies in the state so far. The party, however, has not projected a strong local candidate. Though this strategy worked in polls in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, wherever they have faced strong local rivals, such as in Delhi and Bihar, they have faltered. Where they

put up a strong local candidate, such as in Assam, they did well.

It's worth remembering that in the absence of a 'wave', UP's electorate is far from monolithic. In western UP, the Jats and RLD may be an element cutting into the BJP's loyal Hindu base. In eastern UP, the dominance of extremely backward castes has meant a plethora of candidates from that section in all party lists. Will Akhilesh emerge victorious for a second term and beat anti-incumbency? His ready-to-market bromance with Rahul and their relative youth (Akhilesh is 43, Rahul 46) seem to have energised voters as was evident in their three joint roadshows and his 80 solo rallies so far. Akhilesh seems confident of victory. Group Editorial Director (Publish-



(From left) India Today's Ashish Misra, Anshuman Tiwari and Raj Chengappa with UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav

ing) Raj Chengappa and INDIA TODAY (Hindi) Editor Anshuman Tiwari, who interviewed him in Lucknow, say Akhilesh avoids clichéd rhetoric on Dalits and minorities and prefers to talk about roads, cities, markets and electricity.

There is a lot at stake for each contender—for the PM, his prestige; for the young CM, his record sans his father; for Mayawati, her hold over her vote bank; and for Rahul Gandhi, the revival of a moribund Congress. Given all this, March 11 is going to be one stressful day for everyone. I can only hope the winner gets a clear mandate to avoid messy coalitions and chaotic horse-trading.

Aroon Purie

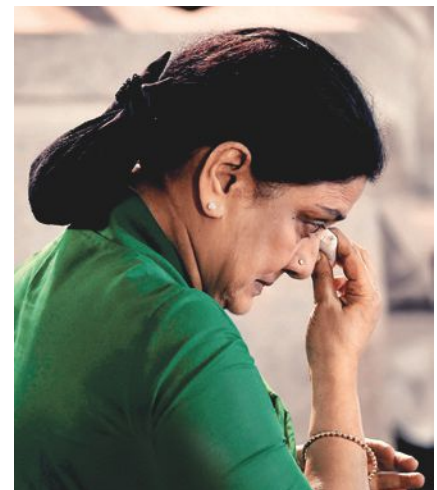
UPFRONTKASHMIR: SEASON OF
ENCOUNTERS PG 3ARUNACHAL: MINORITY
REPORT PG 7

INSIDE

LEISURE
EATING, MUMBAI
STYLE PG 62Q&A WITH ANOUSHKA
SHANKAR PG 64

TAMIL NADU

36

**UNCERTAIN
FUTURE**Sasikala's conviction
in a corruption case
crushes her chief
ministerial ambitions
and brings AIADMK
politics to a climax

22

COVER STORY

**Brothers
in Arms**Why the Samajwadi Party-Congress
pre-poll alliance in Uttar Pradesh
will be hard to beat for rivals
BJP and BSP

INFOSYS

40

**CRISIS OF
CREDIBILITY**The Infosys board
battles serious
allegations of
falling corporate
governance
standards.**EXCLUSIVE**Interview with
Vishal Sikka

STATES

16 **EXIT
MODE**Shiv Sena
chief Uddhav
Thackeray hints
at a break-up
with the BJP,
speaks for a
regional league

Cover by NILANJAN DAS

Photo imaging by AMARJEET SINGH NAGI



Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before sending money, incurring expenses or entering into commitments in relation to any advertisement appearing in this publication. The India Today Group does not vouch for any claims made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, editor-in-chief and the editor of the India Today Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences in the event of such claims not being honoured by the advertisers.

E-MAIL to:
letters.editor@intoday.com or
log on to **www.indiatoday.in**

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE, CONTACT: Customer Care, India Today Group, B-45, Sector-57, Noida (Uttar Pradesh)-201301. Phones: 2479900 from Noida, 95120-2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad, and 0120-2479900 from Rest of India. Toll Free No.: 1800 1800 100. Fax: 0120-4078080. E-mail: wecare@intoday.com

DEFENCE:
MISSILE COVER
PG 9

DEMOGRAPHICS:
MINORITY REPORT
PG 12

GLASSHOUSE:
CITY OF DREAMS
PG 10

STORYBOARD:
TEAR LEADERS
PG 23

UPFRONT



▶ TAP TO WATCH VIDEO

SECURITY FORCES
ON PATROL IN THE VALLEY

ABID BHAT

JAMMU & KASHMIR

A VIOLENT WINTER

By Asit Jolly

Three fierce encounters in the space of three days, resulting in 15 deaths and gunshot or shrapnel injuries to dozens—the winter calm one expects in the Kashmir Valley is clearly not on the cards this year.

Early on February 14 morning, a joint 'cordon and search' operation by Jammu & Kashmir Police Special Operations Group, CRPF and two Indian Army Rashtriya Rifles (RR) units escalated into a full-blown encounter with four terrorists. Armed with Kalashnikov rifles and grenades, the four men, suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants, were hiding

inside a house in Parraypora village, some 65 km from Srinagar in Bandipora district. It ended with three army jawans and one terrorist killed. Eleven security personnel including a major and six policemen were injured, many of them critically. Three terrorists managed to escape.

Only hours after things ended in Bandipora, gunfire rang out again, this time in the relatively peaceful northern border district of Handwara. Here, security forces, perhaps acting on more precise intelligence, surrounded and shot dead three more terrorists, without taking any casualties.

Since January 3, as many as eight security personnel—five soldiers and three general reserve engineer force workers have been killed. In addition, 23 terrorists, including category A operatives like Muzaffar Ahmed of Al-Badr and LeT commanders Abid Sheikh, Maqsood Ahmad and Adil Reshi were felled in 14 separate encounters. Senior police and intelligence officials in Srinagar attribute the unusual spurt in armed encounters to the long months of strife following the slaying of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani on July 8 last year.

The unrelenting agitation and furious stone-pelting demonstrations had forced security forces to back off, virtually abdicating control of the hinterland in both north and south Kashmir. The situation, a senior J&K Police officer told INDIA TODAY, made it conducive for infiltration from Pakistan. Indian intelligence agencies name “12 active terror launch pads”—Balakot, Garhi Habibullah, Batrasi, Mashar-e-Akshah, Abdullah bin Mausam, Dalai, Chela Bandi, Kotli, Dungi, Gulpar, Barali and Mandakuli—across the Line of Control. Police officials estimate that of

Since January 3, as many as eight security personnel and 23 terrorists have been killed

the 300 ready-to-be-launched terrorists at these camps, over a hundred may already have made it to hideouts across the Valley. Adding to this number, according to chief minister Mehbooba Mufti's own response in the J&K assembly to a question by National Conference legislator Mubarak Gul on January 3, “59 youth have joined militant ranks after July 8, 2016”. Worse, as J&K's People's Democratic Party-Bharatiya Janata Party government told members of the house, since January 1, 2016, “63 rifles (AK-47s, SLRs, INSAS rifles), pistols and carbines and 186 magazines and a huge number of loose rounds of ammunition looted by militants and mobs in 16 separate incidents under the jurisdiction of nine Valley police stations”, remain untraceable.

And it looks like the summer will only bring more of the same. An intra-government report, prepared by the J&K police, warns of a bloody 2017, while underscoring the administration's lack of preparedness to handle another crisis—like the strife in the wake of Wani's killing last July. Officials at the top of J&K's security establishment confirm the apprehensions, but the new director general of police, S.P. Vaid, claims that his men are ready to handle any situation.

The ‘unified’ Hurriyat, with the pro-Pakistan Syed Ali Shah Geelani and moderate Mirwaiz Umer Farooq on the same page, is another, separate worrisome prospect for the establishment. ■

MANIPUR

Irom Sharmila Is Not for Sale

By Kaushik Dekka



In October, a couple of months after she ended her 16-year-long fast, Irom Sharmila, the iron lady of Manipur, formed a political party—the People's Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA). Manipur goes to the polls in two phases, on March 4 and 8; Sharmila is contesting from Thoubal, seat of the chief minister, Okram Ibobi Singh. And though she stands little chance of winning, sparks have already begun to fly.

According to the PRJA's expenses report, the party spent about Rs 1.63 lakh from January 1 to 10, more than three times the Rs 43,218 it spent through December. Though rising, the expenses are petty for a political party—especially in the light of Sharmila's recent claims that the BJP offered her Rs 36 crore to contest the elections. That is the figure, she says, the party calculated it would take to beat Ibobi Singh, a Congress stalwart and Manipur's chief minister for close to 15 years. She says she turned down the offer, intending to fight her campaign on resources her party can raise for itself—at present, slightly more than Rs 3 lakh.

The BJP has dismissed Sharmila's allegations. “I have great respect for her commitment to the welfare of her state, but such baseless allegations don't go with what she stands

for”, says Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is also the convenor of the North-East Democratic Alliance, a political coalition of the BJP and various regional parties. BJP general secretary Ram Madhav accused her of lying, and the party has threatened to take legal action if Sharmila fails to substantiate her story. Whatever the truth, Sharmila’s political debut is likely to be an uphill struggle. Ibobi Singh retains immense support on his home turf, and is unlikely to view Sharmila as a threat. The recent decision to create new districts has enhanced his popularity among the Meitei majority, even if it has angered the Nagas. The United Naga Council, vigorously opposed to the new divisions, has imposed an economic blockade on the state since November.

Win or lose, the question is this: will the assembly elections give Sharmila the necessary experience to become as compelling a politician as she was an activist? ■

PULLQUOTE

“People have seen Congress for 15 years, BJP for 10 years and AAP for the past 2 years. All have failed to deliver. People don’t want to suffer... They want political parties to work for them.”



YOGENDRA YADAV, whose Swaraj India promises to be the alternative to the alternative, gave a speech at the Ramlila Maidan. It was a symbolic choice—Yadav was once the intellectual heart of AAP, but fell out with Arvind Kejriwal. Swaraj India will compete in the Delhi municipal polls in April, and has challenged AAP to win 50 per cent of the seats or resign

DEFENCE

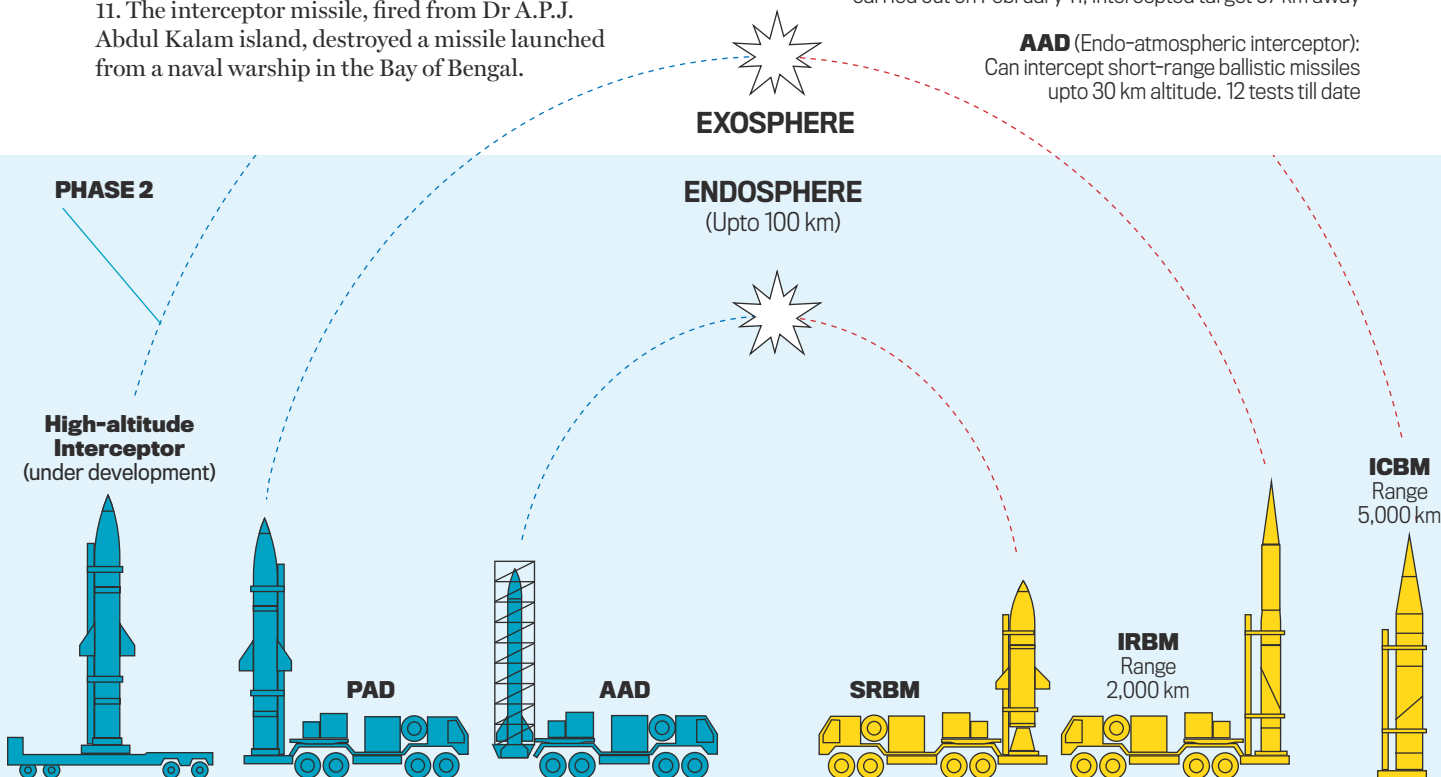
SECURITY BLANKET

The first phase of India’s long-delayed two-layered missile shield, designed to intercept incoming ballistic missiles with a range of 2,000 km, got a boost with a successful test on February 11. The interceptor missile, fired from Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam island, destroyed a missile launched from a naval warship in the Bay of Bengal.

LRTR (Long Range Tracking Radar): Can detect incoming ballistic missiles 600 km away. Intercepting 5,000 km-range IRBMs requires LRTRs that can detect incoming missiles at ranges of 1,500 km

PAD (Exo-atmospheric interceptor): Can intercept medium range ballistic missiles up to 100 km altitude. Successful test carried out on February 11; intercepted target 97 km away

AAD (Endo-atmospheric interceptor): Can intercept short-range ballistic missiles upto 30 km altitude. 12 tests till date



GLASSHOUSE

City of Dreams

Having run a truncated Andhra Pradesh for two-and-a-half years without a capital city, chief minister Chandrababu Naidu is dreaming big. Foster + Partners, the famous architectural practice led by Norman Foster, is expected to present its plans on February 22. Naidu himself has talked of creating a modern city in a historical setting. The capital is to be called Amaravati, the abode of the immortals, and located on the banks of the Krishna. Apparently, part of Naidu's inspiration for the capital are the sets of grandiose epics such as *Baahubali* and *Gautamiputra Satakarni*, the latter starring his brother-in-law and Telugu Desam Party MLA Nandamuri Balakrishna. The Amaravati Capital Development Authority, headed by Naidu, has also announced it will float Rs 1,000 crore bonds to fund development. Naidu is also hoping the World Bank will pitch in to help build a city which, in 20 years, is expected to become home to over 11 million people.



Sabka Vikas

Having divided Telangana into 31 districts by adding 21 on Vijayadashami last year to the existing 10, chief minister **K. Chandrasekhara Rao** now plans to create centres of excellence across the state. The intent is to decentralise and ease migration to Hyderabad. Plans include urban nodes such as a 'sports city', a 'cinema city', and so on. The budget announcement at the end of February will be one to look out for.



No Rest for Rashmi

Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's wife, **Rashmi**, has been giving pep talks to flagging workers before the February 21 municipal elections in Mumbai. Apparently, Rashmi has been burning the midnight oil while doing so. "Thackeray daughters-in-law don't get any free time," she said. She has built a strong rapport with Sena workers, but will her efforts be rewarded at the polling booth?



MANDAR DEODHAR

Flying Visit

J.S. Saharia, Maharashtra's election commissioner, said the EC would keep an eye out for chartered planes and helicopters that could be used to transport cash and liquor into the state before the municipal elections. But should that apply to Saharia himself? That's what the people of Maharashtra were asking after his whirlwind trips across the state. Saharia might say there is no other way he could do his duty, but why then did he make an unscheduled stop in Pandharpur, and pay a visit to the Vitthal temple? Perhaps, like frequent travellers, he knows how to mix business with pleasure.



VIKRAM SHARMA



Ban Plastic, Save Cows

Madhya Pradesh chief minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** recently announced a total ban on plastic bags in the state, effective from May 1. It's good for the environment, and as the prime minister pointed out, good for cows.

So, not unexpectedly, the Hindu Sammelan in Betul on February 8, presided over by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, proved an opportunity for enthusiastic early adoption. Only paper and cloth bags were allowed at the venue.

—Sandeep Unnithan with Amarnath K. Menon, Kiran Tare and Rahul Noronha

VIKRAM SHARMA



DEMOGRAPHICS

MINORITY REPORT

By Kaushik Deka

On February 12, Kiren Rijiju, MoS for home affairs, tweeted: “Hindu population is reducing in India because Hindus never convert people. Minorities in India are flourishing.” He claimed he was responding to allegations that Arunachal Pradesh was being converted into a Hindu state by the BJP. The tweet caused considerable outrage. MP Asaduddin Owaisi reminded Rijiju that he was a “minister of India for all Indians”, while Congress spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala, said, “Rijiju is a habitual liar known for spreading canards to polarise people”.

However, in Rijiju’s home state of Arunachal at least, the Hindu population has been in relatively steady decline since 1991, despite a strong RSS presence. Muslims form a negligible 2 per cent of the population.

Christians, on the other hand, have grown from less than 1 per cent in 1971 to over 30 per cent in 2011. The numbers show that the surge has come at the expense of ‘tribal faiths’: in 1971, over 63 per cent followed tribal religions; in 2011, that number had dropped to 26 per cent.

Most tribes in Arunachal practise animism. Rituals, including animal sacrifices, cost about Rs 60,000 a year. Conversion to Christianity, argue social scientists, is a relief from the expense.

“Though RSS-affiliated organisations have been working in the state,” says Professor Maguni Charan Behera of the Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies, “they don’t focus on religious conversions, while Christian missionaries have been able to attract the tribal youth.” It appears the Congress was wrong and Rijiju was right. Sort of. ■

INDEX

Drug Nation

Figures recently released by the home ministry offer an intriguing look at India’s narcotics habits. The standout fact is the astonishing rise in popularity of methaqualone, sold as ‘Quaalude’ in the US and ‘Mandrax’ in Britain. It diminishes sexual inhibition, and was used by both Roman Polanski and allegedly Bill Cosby to drug women before sexually assaulting them. Curiously, only a fraction of the drugs seized are disposed of. Where does the rest go?



BANDEEP SINGH

182,623^{kg}Amount of **ganja** seized11,304^{kg}Amount of **ganja** disposed of24,106^{kg}Amount of **methaqualone** seized (up from 90 kg in 2015)23,518^{kg}Amount of **methaqualone** seized in Delhi aloneRs 4,700^{cr}Value of **methaqualone** seized in Delhi1,600^{kg}Amount of **heroin** seized in India967^{kg}Amount of **heroin** seized in Punjab and Haryana375^{kg}Amount of **heroin** disposed of in India

(All figures for 2016)

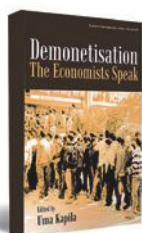
REVIEW

THE MYSTERY OF DEMONETISATION

By Shougat Dasgupta

Three months on from the Prime Minister's spectacular decision to make 86 per cent of the money supply illegal tender, two books seek to shed some light on the note ban. Arun Kumar's *Understanding the Black Economy and Black Money in India* argues that the heart of the darkness, as it were, is "the political class... governments are an integral part of the reasons the black economy exists." *Demonetisation: The Economists Speak*, edited by the estimable Uma Kapila, offers 20 essays that serve as an effective primer on the policy.

Narendra Modi, in his address on November 8, cited corruption, black money and terrorism as the pressing reasons for demonetisation. **Manmohan Singh**, Modi's predecessor, acknowledges in his essay



Demonetisation: The Experts Speak; Edited by Uma Kapila; Academic Foundation; pp 150; Rs 595



Understanding the Black Economy and Black Money in India; Arun Kumar; Aleph; pp 144; Rs 399

that "counterfeit currency and black money are as grave a threat to the idea of India as terrorism and social division", but pours scorn on the execution. "The road to hell", he reminds us, "is paved with good intentions." **Arun Kumar** agrees that "demonetisation should not have been imposed on the country", that it "has had little effect on the problem of the black economy."

Kapila has recruited only Bibek Debroy, a member of Niti Aayog, to defend demonetisation. His is the first essay in the volume, but it is a

turgid effort, an exercise in extended throat-clearing that doesn't hazard a guess at the medium- and long-term benefits of such a disruptive move.

He argues that demonetisation "isn't meant to address creation of new 'black' income". So what is demonetisation meant to most effectively address? Already fake Rs 2,000 notes have made their way into the country, so it's not counterfeit currency.

Parthasarathi Shome observes that policymakers should "realise that not just tax evaders, smugglers or terrorists use cash but also the poor." **Ajay Shah**, of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, argues that "the key question is firm failure... once it has happened, it cannot be undone. You can turn an aquarium into fish soup, but you cannot turn fish soup back into an aquarium.... If a significant scale of firm failure were to come about, it would convert a temporary shock into a more long-term recession."

Maybe no one knows the answer to 'why demonetisation?' **Mihir Sharma** scathingly writes that "only in long-suffering India... will already trodden-on people accept additional inconvenience if assured that everyone else is suffering too." Maybe the results of state elections on March 11 will prove otherwise. ■



VIKRAM SHARMA



The week in social media

@ShougatDasgupta



Trump's Grabbing Hands

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's relief when he finally disengaged his hand from **Donald Trump's** unusually small orange mitts was so palpable, the video went viral last week. Shortly after, Trump welcomed Canadian premier **Justin Trudeau** to the White House, leading to another meme. Trudeau stared blankly at Trump's outstretched paw for a moment before surrendering to the inevitable. Trump pulls people with whom he's shaking hands towards him, tugging them off balance. It's an alpha male gesture, exuding power and confidence. Or it's really weird. Take your pick. ■

Amarinder's Facebook War

Remember the scene in *Annie Hall*, where a blowhard is showing off to his girlfriend by holding forth on Marshall McLuhan? Woody Allen's character, unable to take any more hot air, pulls McLuhan out from behind a poster to put the loudmouth straight. Sometimes, that happens in real life too. Recently, a Facebook comment thread on the Punjab elections was derailed by none other than former chief minister Amarinder Singh. A commenter had said his sources indicated AAP would win. "If you want to know the ground situation in Punjab," thundered the Captain, "ask me, not your so called informants." That put the commenter in his place, but there's a thin line between confidence and bravado. ■

No, You Can't Punch Nazis

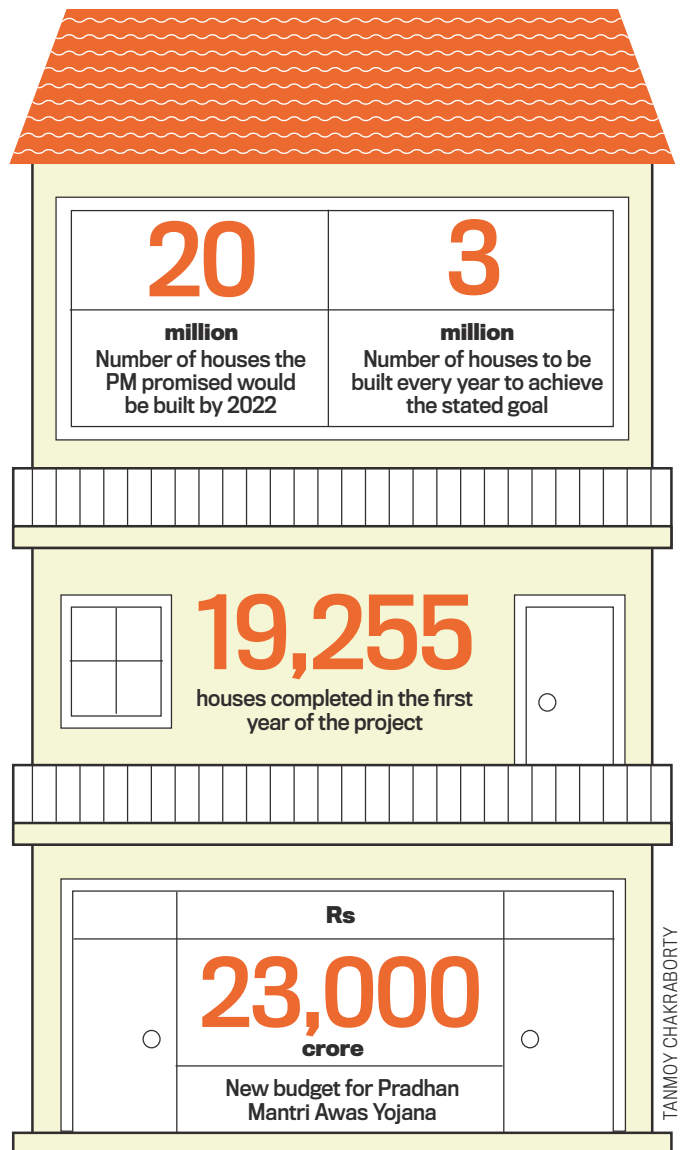
Some weeks ago, the alt-right leader **Richard Pence** was sucker-punched while giving an interview in Washington, DC. It led to much social media soul searching—in the form of videos of the punch set to music, comparisons to comic book superheroes punching Nazis, and of course an online game. Finally, professionally dishevelled Hegelian Marxist Slavoj Zizek was called upon for an authoritative opinion. So, is it okay to punch a right-wing creep? What do you think? ■



INDEX

Housing for Too Few

Finance minister Arun Jaitley announced in the budget that affordable housing would be granted infrastructure status, meaning greater access to institutional funding at lower rates of interest and, therefore, lower construction costs. It is meant to be a fillip for the prime minister's Awas Yojana scheme, announced in July 2015, to provide housing for all by 2022. The budget provided tax breaks and increased funding and redefined the size of an 'affordable' house to bring more properties into the scheme's ambit. Still, getting anywhere near the target will be an extraordinary feat.







EXPOSURE

BEAUTIES AND THE BEAST

According to the organisers of the event, 109 couples tied the knot in a mass ceremony in Bahirkhand, a village some 70 kilometres north of Kolkata. The couples—tribal, Muslim and Hindu—came from all across West Bengal. The event is an annual affair, one intended to assist those who might otherwise be unable to bear the high costs of an Indian wedding. Loans taken for wedding expenses, and the usurious interest rates charged by moneylenders often force already poor people deeper into penury. (Sadly, there was no news on whether the gorilla found a mate.)



REUTERS

MINORITYISM

OF MINORITY UNIVERSITIES AND 'SABKA VIKAS'

By Uday Mahurkar



YASBANT NEGI

A recent decision by the Narendra Modi government to set up five universities for students from minority communities has set tongues wagging in the Sangh Parivar. No one is willing to go on record, but questions are being asked. There was a similar reaction when the Reserve Bank of India appeared to be ready to allow Islamic banking in the country. Many in Sangh Parivar circles were asking how Modi could permit such a thing after making 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' and equal treatment for

all the cornerstone of his election campaign. The plan was scrapped, however; the government said Islamic banking would require too many laws to be changed, and would be superfluous anyway, given the number of inclusive-banking programmes already in place.

One of the questions now being asked has to do with why universities are being set up specifically for minority students, given the Modi government's decision to grant minority status to Aligarh Muslim University. Are these pre-poll sops?

Well-placed BJP insiders say that they believe Modi has a larger plan—he wants to encourage moderate Sufis and Wahhabis to find a place in mainstream society. They say that this is not his first attempt to do so, pointing to the fact that just last year, he gave the inaugural address at the first World Sufi Forum, held in New Delhi. Then there is the fact that alongside the announcement regarding new universities was another about the Gharib Nawaz skills development programme, pointedly named after Moinuddin

TALKING SOP:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the World Sufi Forum on March 17, 2016

Chishti, the 12th century Sufi saint of Ajmer.

According to Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, minister of state for minority affairs, 40 per cent of seats at the new universities will be reserved for Muslim girls—and non-Muslims will also be allowed to attend. A BJP insider says Modi understands the "power of education to improve people's lives and give them a stake in society". ■

INDEX

Why is this still a thing?

On February 6, Lalitha Kumaramangalam, chairperson of the National Commission for Women, demanded an end to the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). Still enforced by communities like the Bohras, FGM, or 'khatna', involves the surgical removal of the clitoral hood, and sometimes the entire clitoris—in girls as young as seven. A survey by Sahiyo, an NGO, found that 80 per cent of respondents had been subjected to such mutilation.

385

Number of Dawoodi Bohra women in India and the US who participated in the survey by Sahiyo

80%

of these women had been subjected to genital mutilation

74%

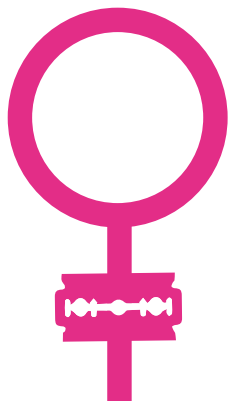
say the procedure was performed by a medically untrained 'traditional cutter'

66%

of them were aged between 6 and 7 when it was done

81%

of women surveyed said that genital mutilation had to stop



Movie
Reviews

Magazine
Stories

Celebrity
Interviews

INDIA
TODAY
GROUP

Latest
Headlines

Live TV

Photo
Gallery

Exclusive
Videos

Breaking
News



Stay Updated
with India Today App

Download to experience!
SMS **ITAPP** TO **52424**

Available on



Visit www.indiatoday.in/apps for more information



POINT OF VIEW

The Lawless Lawmaker

By Navin B. Chawla

The country has reposed faith in the Election Commission (EC) to deliver free and fair elections and conduct each election—be it to Parliament or the state assemblies—on time. Unlike many countries, elections in India have invariably resulted in orderly transfers of power. This is no small achievement. Indeed, our electoral management is the envy of many countries.

While our political establishment has, quite rightly, come to expect the EC to be a fair umpire and deliver a level-playing field, that as many as 30 per cent of our parliamentarians should have criminal antecedents is disquieting. Why should we allow lawbreakers to become our lawmakers?

Five states are currently in the electoral fray: UP, Manipur, Goa, Punjab and Uttarakhand. In Punjab and Goa, where polling is over, almost 15 per cent of the candidates have criminal records. This information comes from the candidates' own affidavits, in compliance with the Supreme Court's orders. These orders of 2002-03 culminated after stout opposition from the political establishment. Today, election watchdogs analyse these affidavits relating to declared wealth, educational qualifications and, importantly, criminal records, if any.

This phenomenon of lawbreakers turning overnight into lawmakers has had a chequered history. Till the early 1980s, many contestants relied on local 'mafias' to garner votes. Soon enough, local warlords realised that helping others to win was not the solution to their problems. They offered themselves as candidates. Many were welcomed into the political fold because they demonstrated their 'winnability'. Power and criminality now began to feed upon one another with the result that criminality within political ranks rose. Studies show when 'muscle' is combined with 'money', the chances of winning increase dramatically over 'clean' candidates.

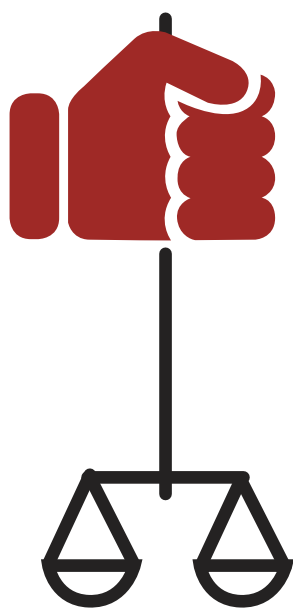
As chief election commissioner, I ran into

the leader of a major political party. I asked why his political party nominated criminals. I pointed to MLAs with heinous criminal cases pending against them, including murder, rape and kidnapping. Was there a solution to this problem? He replied, "When elections are on the horizon, our only 'mantra' is 'winnability'."

What I continue to find surprising is that even the political leaders who have publicly spoken against giving party tickets to those with criminal backgrounds are strangely silent in the face of this growing malaise. Why should voters wish to elect 'criminals'? There appears to be a combination of factors. Voters appear to trust a criminal especially where caste, religion, region or ethnicity are contributing factors. Others perceive the institutions of the state to have broken down (or as beyond their reach) when it comes to the settlement of their fundamental problems on issues relating to land, irrigation, power, justice and problems within the social structure. The criminal justice system is seen to have failed the 'little man'; witness the plight of our undertrials, who have no one to represent them in a court of law. It is widely recognised that the courts are clogged with over 30 million cases. Therefore, the local 'don' turned politician is able to dispense a rough and ready justice and successfully intervene with the administration.

The EC has written to successive governments that those charged by a court of law with heinous offences, punishable by five years of imprisonment or more, be debarred from contesting elections. The EC believes this to be a reasonable restriction. However, various parliamentary committees have turned this down, instead offering the establishment of special courts and day-to-day trials. No such mechanism is in sight. The conclusion is inescapable. 'Winnability' continues to prevail over clean politics.

The writer is a former chief election commissioner of India



Studies show when 'muscle' is combined with 'money', the chances of winning increase dramatically over 'clean' candidates

STORYBOARD



UTTARAKHAND: TOO
MANY TURNCOATS
PG 26

RAJASTHAN:
TEMPLE LOOT
PG 28

STATES

GUJARAT: HARDIK'S
POLL PREDICAMENT
PG 27

JHARKHAND: THE
DIRTY LINEN CLUB
PG 28

MAHARASHTRA

'I want a league of regional parties'

Sitting prominently in the study of **UDDHAV THACKERAY** is a diminutive statue of his spiritual guru Swami Samarth and a steel plaque bearing the words: 'I like people who can get things done.' Now, in the build-up to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls, the Shiv Sena chief is invoking the motto as a possible reason to break with the BJP. "Things are not getting done," Uddhav says, impatience writ large on his face. He talks of grudges he holds against Prime Minister Narendra Modi over not being consulted on key policy decisions like demonetisation. He says he feels "isolated" in the alliance. Excerpts from an interview with **Kiran D. Tare** ahead of the February 21 BMC polls:

Q. Are you going to withdraw support to the Devendra Fadnavis government?

A. Our unhappiness is limited to the government's policies. It's not a crime for a mahout to use a goad to control the elephant. Can we afford to have the mahout get off, let the elephant run amok? But then if the elephant is out of control, the mahout has to get off it.

Q. So the government is on a notice period?

A. The BJP has assured waiver of farm loans in Uttar Pradesh but it neglects our demand for a similar waiver in Maharashtra. Why can't

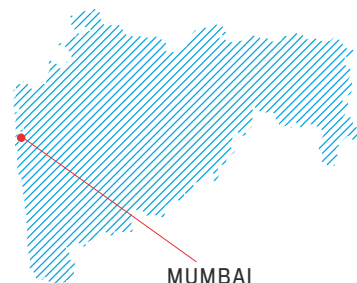
a financially sound state like Maharashtra waive farmers' loans? The Centre collected a tax of Rs 2 lakh crore from Mumbai this year. We are demanding that the local municipal corporation must get a 25 per cent share of this. The alliance cannot move ahead till they (BJP) respond.

Q. You are part of the government, but you say your mind is not with it?

A. It is time for people to think about the quality of the government they have elected. They (BJP) have been inducting people with criminal backgrounds. Earlier, (Atal Bihari) Vajpayee and (L.K.) Advani were their faces. Now, Pappu Kalani (a convicted murderer) is their face. If Dawood Ibrahim returns to India, I'm sure BJP will induct him too. They were talking about *achhe din*, Ram temple, Article 370, uniform civil code. What have they done?

Q. You had refrained from criticising Fadnavis. Why are you taking him on now?

A. He was new at the time but it's now clear he's lying. He had promised a Rs 6,500 crore package to Kalyan-Dombivli (in 2015). Not a single paisa has been released. He's not been able to get clearances from the Centre for development of Mumbai's east coast and coastal road. The proposal for converting the



37,000
CRORE RUPEES
BMC's annual
budget, 2016-17



MANDAR DEODHAR

^ **PENSIVE STATE** Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray has a lot to think about

“IF DAWOOD IBRAHIM WERE TO RETURN TO INDIA, I’M SURE THE BJP WOULD INDUCT HIM TOO”

racecourse land into a world-class theme park is stuck. His comparison, saying Mumbai was as backward as Patna, is an insult to both the cities.

Q. Do you want the CM replaced?

A. The CM will be replaced in 2019. Then it will be a CM from the Shiv Sena.

Q. Is regional pride still an issue in this age?

A. Of course! In fact, I am willing to form a league of regional parties. Let us have a common minimum programme apart from the pride of every state. If I work for Marathi pride, let Nitish Kumar do it for Bihari pride and Mamata Banerjee for Bengali pride. But we should be together on several subjects.

Q. What are these subjects?

A. First let them respond to my proposal.

Q. Can the Shiv Sena grow without the BJP?

A. The Shiv Sena rotted through the 25 years of its alliance with the BJP. We were expanding after the Babri Masjid demolition. However, Balasaheb was of the view that there should not be division in the Hindutva parties, so he allowed the BJP to grow in other states and concentrated on Maharashtra. ■

MAHARASHTRA

The Matoshree of All Battles

By Kiran D. Tare

The elections to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), Asia’s richest civic body, are raising political temperatures in India’s financial capital like never before. With friends-turned-foes BJP and Shiv Sena taking up most of the space in the poll campaign, the other two parties in the fray, the Congress and the NCP, are struggling to remain relevant.

Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray has not let up on his attacks on the BJP. He has compared the BJP to a wild bull which needs to be tamed, called it a party of goons, opportunists and much worse.



^ **TALLY-HO** Shiv Sena rally in Goregaon

He has also kept the pot boiling by praising the development work that took place during the Congress regime.

Sensing that Thackeray is prone to evoking emotional issues (like his oppo-

sition to a separate state of Mumbai), the BJP has smartly forced his hand by keeping the focus on corruption in the BMC. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has made it clear that “transparency” is their main plank this election, a not-so-veiled attack on the Sena which has controlled the corporation for long. “There has been no internal BMC audit in the last couple of years. We are determined to root out the corruption there,” he says. He even levelled a direct attack on Thackeray saying that “he must be feeling the pinch on black money post-demonetisation”.

The strategy seems to be working.

Taken aback, Thackeray has been investing more and more of his time into clarifying that the BJP's claims are nothing but wild allegations. For this, he has even referred to the economic survey tabled in Parliament on January 31. It mentions that the BMC is the most transparent administration in the country. "Does the BJP believe its own government in Delhi is full of donkeys who have prepared this survey report?" Thackeray tends to shout back when asked about transparency.

Meanwhile, the Congress finds itself on a sticky wicket with infighting at its peak. Four state heavyweights—Gurudas Kamat, Narayan Rane, Naseem Khan and Kripashankar Singh—first announced their intention to 'sit out' the campaign protesting Mumbai Congress president Sanjay Nirupam's "autocratic behaviour" and his unilateral candidate selections but later relented after the high command's order. "There is a feeling that

THACKERAY HAS BEEN TRYING HARD TO NIX THE BJP'S 'TRANSPARENCY' ALLEGATIONS

loyalists are being neglected," says Congress legislator Anant Gadgil.

Political analysts believe Thackeray's decision to contest independently of the BJP could benefit the Shiv Sena. He has succeeded in enthusing party workers hitherto demoralised by seeing the Sena reduced to a secondary role in the state government. For the BJP, there's the prospect of the Sena withdrawing support to the Fadnavis government after the BMC polls. "Our priority will be to save the government," a state BJP leader said indicating that talks were already under way with "NCP and Congress MLAs".

With little doubt on which side the NCP will turn if the Sena withdraws support, there seems little chance that the Congress's 2016 plan to try and instal a Sena-Congress-NCP government led by Thackeray could take shape. ■



UTTARAKHAND

Turncoats and Rebels

There's little talk of development as confused voters try to make sense of all the defections

By Santosh Kumar

Across Uttarakhand, huge mist-laden hoardings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Harish Rawat signal the election fever that is warming up the freezing Himalayan winter here. But it's an election curiously bereft of issues pertaining to development. Successive defections between the ruling Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party over the past six months have confounded voters. Contesting faces have changed camps. Within the BJP, for instance, they now see faces the saffron party had for the longest time dubbed as "corrupt". In the other corner, the Congress too has embraced rebels from the other side.

And while the Congress has proclaimed Rawat their CM face, the BJP, with its surfeit of new entrants, has found it impossible to name a leader and is once again banking on Modi working his 'magic'. Uttarakhand faces huge challenges in areas like health, education, water supply and roads, but these are not part of the popular discourse. Street-side conversations are now centred on turncoats and blurred party lines.

State BJP chief Ajay Bhatt says the "corruption" and the "sense of fear" about another Rawat regime will decide these polls, while Surendra Singh Negi, state minister and the Congress candidate in Kotdwar, insists "the government's work on the ground" will win the party a second

200

CROREPATIS
among the 637
candidates
in the fray



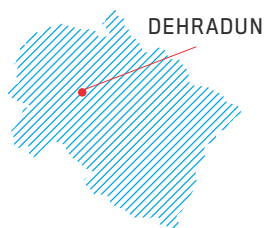
▲ **SHOW OF HANDS** Rahul Gandhi at a Congress roadshow in Roorkee

term. It's an interesting contest in Kotdwar where Negi's challenger is former Congressman Harak Singh Rawat, who was among the first to revolt against the Rawat government. Negi, who's running for the third time, predicts a 'cakewalk', pointing to how he defeated BJP stalwart B.C. Khanduri in 2012. Harak Singh, he says, "is no match for me".

Like Harak Singh, the BJP nominee in Chaubattakhal (Garhwal district), Satpal Maharaj, and Ajay Bhatt in Ranikhet, too, are recent entrants to the saffron fold. Both, incidentally, are not shy about their chief ministerial ambitions. Out in the Terai constituency of Bazpur, BJP nominee Yashpal Arya, who had earned considerable respect as a Congress leader, is finding it difficult to make a connect wearing his new political colours.

But, some believe that with more armed forces veterans than most states, many of Uttarakhand's voters could buy into the narrative PM Modi has carefully crafted around ex-servicemen. OROP (one-rank-one-pension), the surgical strikes against Pakistan and the recent decision to appoint Gen. Bipin Rawat as the army chief, a government official says, could turn things the BJP's way. However, even saffron strategists are wary of CM Rawat's reputation for micromanaging polls. "Things could turn out quite different on polling day," a BJP leader admitted pointing to how just three months after the Modi tsunami in Lok Sabha 2014, Rawat unhinged the BJP by winning all three assembly by-elections in the state.

Meanwhile, other than the turncoats and defectors, both parties also face the common challenge of rebel candidates. Past the deadline for withdrawal of candidature, there are still as many as 28 Congress rebels in the fray. The BJP has done only marginally better, it has only 25 rebel candidates. The battle for Uttarakhand, analysts say, could have a somewhat 'messy' conclusion. So many rebels, they point out, contesting as independents could well become 'kingmakers' in the event of a photo finish between the Congress and the BJP. ■



GUJARAT

Hardik's Predicament

The rebel Patidar leader may be running out of options

By Uday Mahurkar

With barely 10 months to go for the assembly elections in Gujarat, Hardik Patel, the young Patidar quota agitation leader who made waves in 2015, has come to a point where he has to make his political choices clear. And his chosen course will be key to both the fate of the Patels' quota demand and to his own political future.

The alignments he has stitched up till



▲ **THE AGITATORS** Hardik meets the Thackerays in Mumbai

now, like with Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, are unlikely to aid Hardik's objective of carving an electoral niche for himself as the leader of the state's affluent Patel community.

Meanwhile, the BJP is being very cautious in its response to Hardik's renewed threat of a Patidar agitation. Incumbent CM Vijay Rupani is playing a waiting game, hoping to wear Hardik down. He has also invited him for talks, aware that alienating the Patel youth would have serious consequences for the BJP in the coming polls. The Patidars, after all, have long been the political backbone of the saffron party. ■

PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR



RAJASTHAN

Temple Trouble

The death of the Pushkar priest exposes large-scale loot in the state's temples

By Rohit Parihar

The death of a priest in Rajasthan's Ajmer district may have exposed largescale misappropriation of devotee donations in private temples across Rajasthan.

When mahant Sompuri, head priest of Pushkar's highly revered Brahma temple, was killed in a road accident on January 21, the Devasthan Vibhag (government department for regulation of temples, charitable institutions and religious trusts) stepped in temporarily to manage the shrine, pending the

< BUNDLE IT

Officials count donation money in Pushkar; inset, late mahant Sompuri

appointment of a successor. But what the Devasthan-appointed panel found was an eye-opener. Compared to the Rs 10 lakh reported as donations over three months preceding Sompuri's demise, the collections topped

Rs 11 lakh in just three weeks after it took control. The ad hoc managing committee headed by the Ajmer collector also recovered Rs 26 lakh in cash from two rooms in the temple.

The revelations, while shocking worshippers, have now prompted demands for greater state control and reforms in the succession of ownership of Rajasthan's private temples. Chief minister Vasundhara Raje, fearing political repercussions, has hitherto avoided tinkering with the ownership of Hindu temples. Will she change her mind in light of the Pushkar shocker? ■

JHARKHAND

The Dirty Linen Club

Ex-minister Harinarayan Rai first in the country to be convicted under PMLA

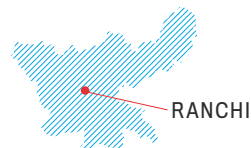
By Amitabh Srivastava

Ten years ago, independent legislator Harinarayan Rai, known for his Machiavellian manoeuvring, made the most of Jharkhand's fractured 2005 mandate to register a meteoric rise in the state's politics. Alongside other independent MLAs, Rai wielded enormous power in Jharkhand, as he switched sides to make and break three successive governments.

But in a sharp turn in fortunes, 12 years since he started out, the one-time 'kingmaker' finds himself cooling his



JAIL TIME Ex-minister Harinarayan Rai after the verdict



heels in jail. On January 30, an Enforcement Directorate special court pronounced Rai guilty of offences under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and handed him a seven-year jail term. He was also fined Rs 50,000.

Rai is the first person in the country to be convicted under PMLA. The ex-minister was accused of laundering Rs 3.72 crore, illegally amassed between 2005-08. It's Rai's second conviction in two months. Now 55, Rai will have company in prison. The court handed wife Sushila Devi and brother Sanjay Rai identical sentences for abetment. ■

RAJASTHAN

JODHPUR

Selection Trials



The ACB's tightening noose has ex-CM Gehlot in a sweat



PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR

▲ **NO MARKS** Ex-MLA Jugal Kabra, third from left, after his arrest by the ACB

By Rohit Parihar

On January 15, former Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot made an unexpected appearance at the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) office in Jodhpur, demanding to meet two close associates who had been arrested for alleged irregularities in faculty recruitment at Jodhpur's Jai Narayan Vyas University. Former MLA Jugal Kabra and the ex-university vice-chancellor Bhanwar Singh Rajpurohit, now out on bail, were part of the selection process.

Shaken by the developments, Gehlot promptly called for a bandh in hometown Jodhpur on January 24 to protest the arrests. Sources say the former CM apprehends further action against his close aides, including in the alleged Jodhpur Development Authority (JDA) scam, where just days before

the 2013 assembly polls, tender values for construction works were hugely inflated to benefit contractors (the majority of the contracts, suspiciously, also pertain to his own constituency, Sardarpura). Rajendra Singh Solanki, the JDA chairman appointed by Gehlot, is already on the run.

Gehlot's call for a bandh and threats to ACB officers smells of panic

The ACB chargesheet in the varsity case says Kabra wielded considerable influence because of his proximity to Gehlot who was CM when the recruitments were done between 2011 and 2013.

Many see Gehlot's bandh call and the threats to ACB officers about "repercussions" as evidence of a growing panic that the bureau's action could severely dent his image. Arch-rival and PCC president Sachin Pilot is already the Congress's CM candidate for the polls next year. ■

BIHAR

The Cheat Sheet

Leaked papers and a new recruitment scam in the state

By Amitabh Srivastava

On February 6, a concerned Chief Minister Nitish Kumar ordered a special investigation team (SIT) headed by Patna SSP Manu Maharaj to investigate rumours suggesting a question paper leak in the second phase of the Bihar Staff Selection Commission's (BSSC) exam, held to fill 13,000 clerical grade vacancies. Just 24 hours later, the state was forced to scrap the four-phase exam.

Early findings by the SIT indicate that at Rs 5 lakh apiece, some 1,000 aspirants



▲ **NO ANSWERS** Protesters burn CM Nitish Kumar's effigy in Patna

fixed deals to pay Rs 50 crore for the leaked question paper. Among the 28 people arrested so far is BSSC's secretary and state administrative service (SAS) officer Parmeshwar Ram, believed to be the mastermind. His cellphone had names of select aspirants; text messages and calls from influential people, including politicians—all now in the SIT's possession. The modus operandi included a WhatsApp group for candidates who had made advance payments. ■

BROTHERS



THE SAMAJWADI-CONGRESS PRE-ELECTION TIE-UP IS PROVING TO BE A GAMECHANGER, WITH RIVALS BJP AND BSP PLAYING CATCH-UP

By Ajit Kumar Jha

B

arely a month ago, the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections seemed like a cakewalk for the Bharatiya Janata Party, which was riding high after its 'strong' response to the Uri attack in September and the avowedly 'pro-poor' move to demonetise currency in November. The Samajwadi Party, in contrast, appeared on the verge of a split, with the young UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav embroiled in a battle with his uncle Shivpal Yadav and father Mulayam Singh Yadav. The Congress seemed clueless after Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi's *khat sabha* came to an abrupt end.

S IN ARMS



Photographs by PANKAJ NANGIA AND GETTY IMAGES

Then came the SP-Congress alliance in January, and the electoral wind changed direction completely. A classic game-changer, the alliance began dictating the campaign, with the BSP and BJP reduced to playing catch-up and scrambling for ways to counter the alliance.

Polls in UP have for a long time now been four-cornered contests, which this pre-poll alliance has altered. In the past, parties would win polls with less than 30 per cent of the vote. The SP, for example, swept UP in 2012, winning 224 of the 403 seats, with only 29 per cent of the votes, just three percentage points more than the runner-up, Bahujan Samaj Party. In 2017, the minimum threshold would end up being over a third of the total vote, in

the range of 35 per cent, for any party or combine to get a majority. The alliance has a higher chance of reaching that threshold than any individual party, unless there is a strong wave in its favour. And given that the fervour for Modi is not as strong as it was in 2014, it will possibly work to the alliance's advantage in 2017.

VIEW FROM THE GROUND

On February 11, the day of the first phase of polling in UP, Akhilesh and Rahul held a widely televised press conference in Lucknow after the Varanasi roadshow was officially cancelled on grounds of security. Jointly releasing their common minimum programme, a list of 10 commitments including an employment guarantee to 2

12

MILLION

No. of people who
voted for the 73
seats in 15 districts
on February 11

TWO ARE A TEAM

THE SAMAJWADI PARTY SWEEPED FIVE OF THE SEVEN (BARRING WEST UP AND BUNDELKHAND) REGIONS IN THE STATE IN 2012; WITH HELP FROM THE CONGRESS, IT LOOKS WELL PLACED FOR AN ENCORE

7 REGIONS, 75 DISTRICTS

1. West UP: Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Prabhuddha Nagar, Panchsheel Nagar and Bhim Nagar
2. Rohilkhand: Bijnor, Moradabad, Rampur, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Budaun, Bareilly, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur
3. Awadh: Sitapur, Kheri, Lucknow, Unnao, Hardoi, Rae Bareilly, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Faizabad, Barabanki
4. Northeast: Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Gonda, Siddharthnagar, Basti, Sant Kabirnagar, Maharajganj, Gorakhpur, Kushinagar, Deoria
5. Purvanchal: Kaushambi, Allahabad, Ambedkarnagar, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Sant Ravidas Nagar, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra
6. Bundelkhand: Jalaun, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Chitrakoot
7. Doab: Aligarh, Mahamaya Nagar, Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Etah, Mainpuri, Farrukhabad, Kannauj, Etawah, Auraiya, Kanpur Dehat, Kanpur Nagar, Fatehpur

SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN 2012 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

WEST UP

(Total 44)

SP **10**
 Cong **8**
 BSP **17**
 BJP **9**

ROHILKHAND

(Total 52)

SP **29**
 Cong **2**
 BSP **11**
 BJP **8**

AWADH

(Total 73)

SP **55**
 Cong **4**
 BSP **8**
 BJP **3**

NORTHEAST

(Total 61)

SP **32**
 Cong **7**
 BSP **9**
 BJP **10**

DOAB

(Total 73)

SP **41**
 Cong **8**
 BSP **15**
 BJP **8**

BUNDELKHAND

(Total 19)

SP **5**
 Cong **4**
 BSP **7**
 BJP **3**

PURVANCHAL

(Total 81)

SP **52**
 Cong **4**
 BSP **13**
 BJP **6**

Rest other parties

SEAT DISTRIBUTION IN 2014 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

UTTAR PRADESH

(Total constituencies: 80)

BJP **71**
 Apna Dal **2**
 SP **5**
 Congress **2**
 BSP **Nil**



42%

The BJP's vote share in Lok Sabha 2014, on the back of an unprecedented Modi wave

140

MILLION

Size of the UP electorate, 200 million is its total population

million youth through skill development, distributing free smartphones to the youth, waiving farmer loans, cheap power, proper remuneration for crops, free cycles, Akhilesh used the occasion to take a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying they talked of "*kaam ki baat*" as opposed to his '*Mann ki baat*'.

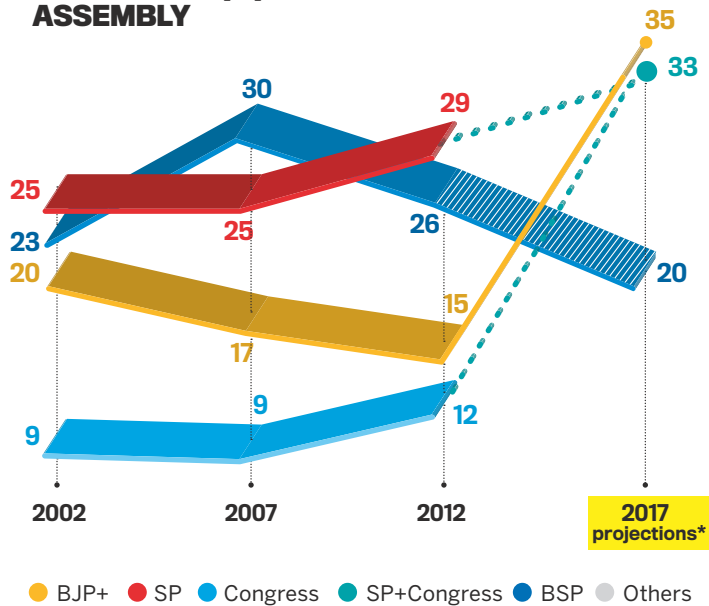
The same day, at an election rally in Badaun, the prime minister retorted, "Akhilesh Yadav says '*kaam bolta hai*', (but) even a child knows it is your '*kar-nama*' (misdeed) that is speaking."

Turning then towards the Congress, Modi said, "Lohiaji was against the

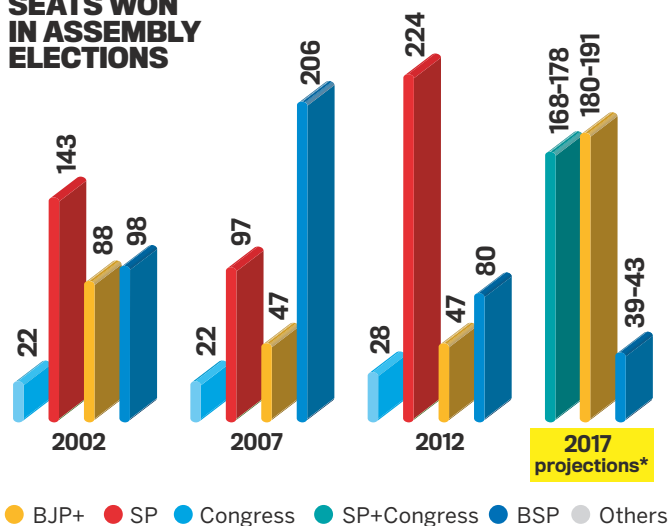
Congress. Those who follow the ideals of Lohiaji are supporting the Congress." He even coined the acronym SCAM for the Samajwadi Party, Congress, Akhilesh and Mayawati, a barb Akhilesh effectively turned on the BJP saying it meant "Save the country from Amit Shah and Modi."

The alliance magic seems to be working. A week earlier, in Agra, batches of placard-carrying older Congress supporters, sporting tricolour scarves, had descended on Dayalbagh, the spacious and spectacular headquarters of the Radhasoamis, mingling cheerfully with younger SP activists in red caps. After Lucknow,

VOTE SHARE (%) IN ASSEMBLY

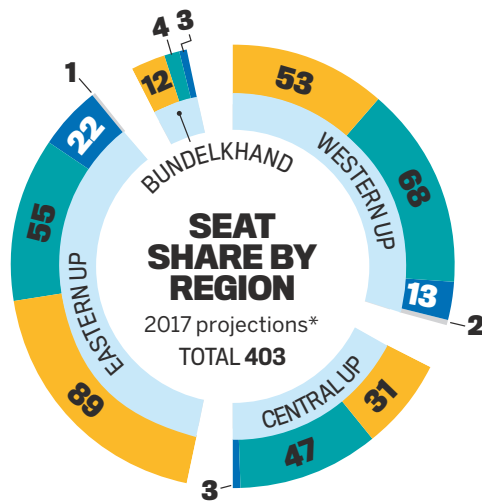
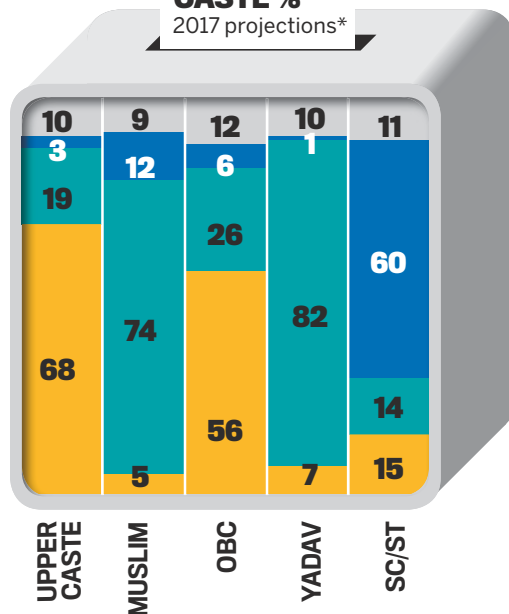


SEATS WON IN ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



VOTE SHARE BY CASTE %

2017 projections*



*India Today-Axis poll, January 2017 (Regional divisions by Axis)

7

PHASES

in which the assembly election is being held, over a month

Agra was where the alliance held its biggest roadshow. The SP has traditionally been on a weak footing here. In 2012, it was the rival BSP that won six of the nine assembly constituencies in Agra district, while the BJP got one seat.

On February 3, the day of the roadshow, the loudspeakers blared: “*Akhilesh nahin yeh aandhi hai, saath mein Rahul Gandhi hai* (Akhilesh is a storm with Rahul Gandhi in tow)”, “*Ek haath mein Sapa ka jhanda, doosre haath mein lehraye Congress ka tiranga* (SP flag in one hand, Congress tricolour in the other). Three in the afternoon, the timing was perfect as

scores of college-goers came out on their cycles, the SP’s election symbol, with lap-tops donated by the Akhilesh government.

All along the 12 km route, from Dayalbagh to Chhippitol and Bijlighar cross-road along the Mahatma Gandhi Road, connecting the four assembly constituencies of Agra north, south, cantonment and rural, colourful campaign posters proclaimed: “*Yeh hui na baat bhaiyya, UP ko yeh saath pasand hai* (UP likes this alliance)”, “*Kaam bolta hai, Anjaam bolta hai* (Work and outcomes speak volumes)” and “*Mann mein hain Mulayam, irade loha hain* (soft at heart, but an iron will)”.

Graphics by TANMOY CHAKRABORTY

Hundreds of thousands of supporters threw rose petals at the two UP boys, dressed identically in white kurtas and black jackets. Overwhelmed supporters drew lofty comparisons with Karan and Arjun, Ram and Lakshman.

The Agra roadshow was much bigger than the first roadshow, organised in Lucknow on January 29. About 14 such joint roadshows have been planned all across the state for the entire duration of the campaign besides individual rallies and regular election speeches by local leaders.

And if the crowds at their roadshows are any indication, it could be cause for worry for the BJP and BSP. Zaheer Rizvi is an orator and one of the patrons of the red brick 16th century tomb of the Shia jurist and scholar Qazi Noorullah Shustari. A BJP sympathiser, Rizvi admits that had it not been for the alliance, the BJP might have won a majority. But the situation has dramatically changed now, he says. Even if the BJP were to emerge as the single-largest party, it would not be able to form a government on its own. And who knows if the rising popularity of the alliance, as evidenced by the roadshow, might swing the tide? Why does he support the BJP? "The local BJP MLA candidate is my friend," he says, a rare simple answer in the churn of UP politics.

THE AKHI-RA CHEMISTRY

The duo has certainly created a buzz. The UP boys do not have the chalk-and-cheese difference that Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad had in Bihar, though their UP *gathbandhan* is fashioned after the *maha-gathbandhan* the Bihar chief minister and the RJD leader formed to defeat the BJP in 2015. The Bihari versus Bahari slogan that pitted locals Nitish and Lalu against outsiders Narendra Modi and Amit Shah is finding an echo in UP as well, where it is "UP *ke ladke* (UP boys) versus the Baharis".

The two also have a lot in common. Both are young—Rahul is 46, Akhilesh 43; both have studied abroad—Rahul in the UK and US, Akhilesh in Australia; both are GenNext scions of families with strong political roots. Both are emerging from the shadows of their respective parents, Akhilesh after a very

BATTLE PLAN UTTAR

SP-CONGRESS ALLIANCE GAME PLAN

ELECTION STRATEGY

SP to contest
298
SEATS

Congress
105
SEATS

FOURTEEN
joint roadshows
by Akhilesh Yadav
and Rahul Gandhi in
major urban centres
including Lucknow,
Agra, Varanasi, Kanpur

KEY ELECTION STRATEGISTS



Prashant
Kishor



Harvard prof.
Steve Jarding

- Focus on Akhilesh-Rahul personalities, their youth and Akhilesh's record
- 10 point common minimum programme, focusing on jobs, farmers, women
- Alliance prevents division of votes and helps transfer votes to ally
- 'Kaam ki baat' vs PM Modi's 'Mann ki baat'

STRENGTHS

- Young leadership—Akhilesh 43 and Rahul 46—should appeal to first-time voters
- Akhilesh as chief minister face, most popular leader in UP
- UP boys versus Baharis (Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi)
- Incumbency advantage, control over local administration and media
- Strongest in Awadh, Purvanchal, Rohilkhand and Doab areas
- Good strategists—Prashant Kishor and Harvard professor Steve Jarding

WEAKNESSES

- Family rift and factionalism in SP—Akhilesh versus Shivpal and Mulayam
- Poor law and order record
- Late alliance, still facing unfriendly fights in few constituencies. Late start to campaigning
- Congress low presence among voters difficult to transfer to SP
- Dynastic politics in both Congress and SP

SUPPORT BASE

- Support among OBCs (Yadavs), Muslims and upper caste and SC base of Congress

UPRADESH



CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

BJP GAME PLAN

ELECTION STRATEGY

BJP to contest

380

SEATS

NDA allies

23

SEATS

➤ Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address 14 elections rallies, two in each of the seven phases, besides seven earlier rallies

➤ 400 video vans, 1,650 motorbike-riding campaigners to build buzz

➤ UP state unit runs 8,000 WhatsApp groups for all 7 electoral regions, with a reach of 1.2 million people; FB reaches 13 million voters

STRENGTHS

- Charismatic PM Modi as main mascot; surgical strike and demonetisation positives
- Great organisational strength with RSS cadre and other Sangh Parivar activists
- Booth- and panna (page)-level management
- Advantage of 2014 Lok Sabha polls, where BJP-led NDA won 73 of 80 seats
- Stronger in West UP and Purvanchal areas

WEAKNESSES

- Lacks a chief ministerial face
- Too many tickets to outsiders, therefore open rebellion in some constituencies
- Attempts at communal polarisation weakening development record
- Mandir plank in manifesto reveals weakness since no attempt to build
- Slogan of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' but not a single ticket given to Muslims

SUPPORT BASE

- Support among upper castes and OBCs sans Yadavs, mainly among Kurmis, Kushwahas, Lodhs and also Dalit castes like Khatiks, Pasis, Valmiks and other ati-Dalits

BSP GAME PLAN

ELECTION STRATEGY

BSP to contest

403

SEATS

Several big rallies by Mayawati (she has already addressed 35), the party's only charismatic face, across UP, including Lucknow, Agra, Saharanpur and Azamgarh

STRENGTHS

- Charisma of Mayawati as CM candidate, great crowd-puller
- Strong record of controlling crime
- Gave highest number of tickets to Muslims: 103
- Strongest in West UP and Bundelkhand, which go to polls early, and will create an early buzz
- Pivotal player, can be wooed by both sides given a hung assembly
- Has revived BAMCEF, trade union of Dalit workers, which will help her; has strong core voters
- Advantage of early ticket distribution with regular updates. Made headway in terms of time

WEAKNESSES

- No connect with mainstream media
- No second line of leadership
- Despite good crime record, gave tickets to infamous dons for their 'winnability'
- Several senior OBC leaders have left the party
- Party supremo Mayawati dictatorial, trusts very few people

SUPPORT BASE

- Strong presence among Dalits, Muslims and Brahmin voters

public defiance of his father and uncles; Rahul taking over after mother Sonia's illness and gradual withdrawal from party affairs.

Both also share dreams of reviving a pan-India socialist party to combat the conservative BJP in 2019. Both are secular politicians, who believe in protecting minorities from the BJP brand of majoritarianism. Both share a visceral dislike of the saffron party, and are vocal critics of demonetisation. And most importantly perhaps, they share a chemistry their parents—Sonia and Mulayam—did not.

In April 1999, for instance, Mulayam had held Sonia Gandhi's Italian origin against her and refused to back her claim to form the government, forcing a mid-term election on the nation.

Thereafter, he steadfastly refused to recognise her as the leader of the Opposition. He did not attend meetings she convened and communicated with Congress leaders only through the CPI(M)'s Somnath Chatterjee, a friend of Sonia's. Since then, Mulayam has always dilly-dallied on supporting the Congress and has ambiguous views on the Congress to this day.

Akhilesh and Rahul themselves were bitter rivals in 2009. SP was then part of the Fourth Front, not the Congress-led UPA. Later, however, the party provided the Manmohan Singh government outside support. "The real personal chemistry between Rahul and Akhilesh matured during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections," says Congress Legislature Party leader in UP and sitting MLA from the nearby Mathura and Vrindavan seats, Pradeep Mathur. "Rahul would exchange SMSes with Akhilesh."

The two have also refrained from attacking each other in public even in the days of their rivalry. Rahul, in fact, was sympathetic to Akhilesh throughout his fight with his father and uncles. Akhilesh too has publicly remarked that Rahul was a friend and "a good person" (*see accompanying interview*).

NEED FOR AN ALLIANCE

UP has a fierce tradition of anti-incumbency: no chief minister with the exception of the first, Gobind Ballabh Pant, has won two consecutive elections in the state—though some chief ministers have been elected a few times, including Mulayam, thrice. Could Akhilesh have bucked the anti-incumbency trend and won a second time on his own?



PANKAJ NANGIA/MAIL TODAY

THE BSP SPINS ON MUSLIM-DALIT AXIS

Six days after her birthday on January 15, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati called a press conference at the party's state headquarters on Mall Avenue in Lucknow. Here, she introduced Ambika Chaudhari, MLA from Ballia and till recently a minister in the Samajwadi Party government. A week later, on January 29, another ex-minister in the SP government who had been sidelined, Narad Rai, joined the BSP. Both were quickly given party tickets.

This open courting of leaders from other parties is a first for Mayawati. Sources say party general secretaries Satish Misra and Nasimuddin Siddiqui were expressly saddled with the task of identifying "disgruntled elements". Her plan is to get the Muslim vote on her side. Which explains the rapprochement with jailed don and politician Mukhtar Ansari (whom she had sacked in 2010) and his Qaumi Ekta Dal. The BSP is hoping the Ansaris' support base gives it an edge in districts like Ghazipur, Mau, Varanasi, Ballia, Chandauli and Azamgarh in eastern UP. Siddiqui, the man behind the alliance, says, "The Ansari brothers have a good reputation among Muslims in the state. It will help the BSP not only in eastern UP but also in Muslim-dominated sections of western UP."

The BSP is hoping the Ansaris' support base will help them in eastern UP

The BSP has fielded 100 Muslim candidates, half of them in the 140 assembly seats to be polled in the first two phases. Political scientist Dr M.M. Beg says, "The BSP is facing pressure to woo the minority community, as the popular sentiment is that the Muslims are with the Congress-SP." To counter this, the party has been circulating pamphlets and organising community outreaches to remind Muslim voters about the communal incidents during the SP regime.

The party has also revived the BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation), an organisation founded by Kanshi Ram even before he launched the BSP. A BAMCEF district president from Kanpur division says they "work in the same manner as the RSS does in helping the BJP". Workers are involved in monitoring strategy at the grassroots level, and taking feedback from the public back to the local candidate.

Even today, Dalit candidates are restricted mostly to their reserved seats (85 in UP). And among the Dalits, the Jatavs remain Mayawati's core support base; of the 87 BSP Dalit candidates, 80 per cent are Jatav. Which could cause grief among other Dalit sub-castes. Ashish Sagar, a social activist from Bundelkhand, says, "In Bundelkhand, Dalit subcastes like the Sonkar, Kori, Shankhwar have a significant population. Neglecting them could cost the BSP." How good is Behenji at math?

—Ashish Misra

Especially after openly taking on his father and uncles? The expulsions and counter-expulsions of senior SP leaders and the numerous official lists of candidates put up by the rival factions had made the party fractious and fragile. An alliance with the Congress, Akhilesh must have reckoned, would strengthen SP organisationally and improve its vote and seat arithmetic.

Likewise, Rahul too, as CLP's Pradeep Mathur says, "faced opposition from older Congress members like Madhusudhan Mistry, who were either in favour of rebuilding the party by contesting alone, or leaders like Rajiv Shukla, who were more inclined to build an alliance with the BSP rather than the SP". He says Rahul tried rebuilding the party from the grassroots by organising the *khat sabha* and *kisan yatra* from Deoria to Delhi in September 2016, but soon realised the enormity and the futility of the entire exercise, given that elections were so near. "I told Rahul Gandhi four months ago that 20-25 party MLAs will desert us if we do not build an alliance with the SP", says Mathur. For the Congress, which has been out of power in UP for almost 27 years, 2017 is a battle for survival. Given the impossibility of a revival in the short term, the alliance is their best bet.

ADVANTAGE ALLIANCE

What advantage does the alliance have to offer voters? Former councillor Mohammed Suhail Qureshi of SP says "it has ensured that the minority votes will not get divided, will not get wasted. The Muslim youth who were earlier confused about which way to vote now seem to have got a totally new direction. Today, the minority vote is totally focused on the alliance".

"The Congress-SP coalition has youthful energy, a futuristic outlook and has set a new paradigm of development," says Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala. "This is the only coalition with a positive agenda of propelling UP forward as against the parochial visions of caste and religion both the BJP and BSP propagate."

When asked what the Congress will bring to the table, Surjewala said: "The fact that the party that came to power on its own in the last assembly elections has decided to shed over 100 seats for the Congress speaks volumes for the acceptance of the Congress among UP voters. The Congress brings a new awareness of the rights of the farmers and the youth, and a cohesive, cohabitative and composite outlook to the coalition."

To get a sense of where the SP-Congress alliance stands currently, it is pertinent to consider the performance of the various parties in 2012 in the seven regions of UP. In western UP, the SP won merely 10 out of 44 seats, with 20.5

per cent vote share. Its best performance was in Meerut district, where it won three out of seven seats (the BJP won the other four seats, and despite its sagging performance in the rest of the state, the BSP swept western UP, winning 17 of the 44 seats, with 29.2 per cent of the vote). The SP's performance was also weak in Bundelkhand, where it won just five out of the 19 seats, with 23.5 per cent votes.

However, in the five other regions of UP, the SP was ahead of its rivals. The party's best performance was in Awadh, where it won 55 of the 73 seats, with a vote share of 33 per cent. It won 52 of 81 seats and had a vote share of 32 per cent in Purvanchal, 32 of 61 seats with a vote share of 28 per cent in northeast UP (Terai belt bordering Nepal), 41 of 73 seats in Doab, which has the maximum concentration of the dominant OBC caste of Yadavs. In Rohilkhand, the SP won 29 of 52 seats.

"The alliance is bound to change the entire arithmetic of the 2017 assembly polls," says Adil Khan, 70, an SP leader from Agra. It is likely to bear fruit even in western UP, according to SP leaders, where the party base has traditionally been weak. The region has a strong concentration of Muslims (almost 22 per cent), Dalits (about 18 per cent) and Jats. This is where the alliance concentrated its road shows and rallies.

However, though the alliance has generated a buzz across UP, its success will rest on the quality of the campaign and the ability to transfer votes from one party to another. Traditionally, the SP is better at transferring votes to its allies compared to the Congress.

Going by pure arithmetic, if the SP and Congress had hypothetically tied up in the previous three assembly polls, the alliance would have secured a decisive majority in each of them. In 2012, the SP swept the polls on its own, forming a majority government. A

Congress alliance would have turned that into a three-quarters majority. But even in 2007, when the BSP beat SP and Mayawati formed a majority government, the combined SP-Congress vote would have easily helped them form a government.

Moreover, pre-poll alliances tend to work geometrically in a first-past-the-post system of plurality vote. The seat share gets exaggerated algebraically once votes are combined. If the transfer of votes between the SP and Congress works smoothly, only a massive 7 to 11 per cent swing away from the SP-Congress alliance can ensure its defeat. Given the popularity of the Akhilesh-Rahul combine among the youth and the manner in which the alliance is dictating the agenda of the campaign, the alliance appears in more or less the same advantageous position as the Nitish Kumar-Lalu Prasad Yadav *mahagath-bandhan* in Bihar in the 2015 assembly election. ■

71

SEATS

The number BJP won out of 80 in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls

224

SEATS

The number SP won out of 403 in the 2012 assembly polls



COVER STORY | **INTERVIEW**

**“THE PM SHOULD TRY
THE NEW EXPRESSWAY.
HE’LL VOTE SP”**



Photographs by MANEESH AGNIHOTRI

SHORTLY after the conclusion of campaigning for the second round of polling for the Uttar Pradesh assembly election, a confident and assertive **AKHILESH YADAV** met with Group Editorial Director **RAJ CHENGAPPA**, *India Today* (Hindi) editor **ANSHUMAN TIWARI** and **ASHISH MISRA** at his residence in Lucknow. The UP chief minister spoke on a range of issues—from the fight within his family to the alliance he has forged with the Congress. Excerpts from the interview...

Q. After the first few rounds of polling, what kind of outcome are you expecting?

A. It's much better than before. I'm sure the SP-Congress alliance will emerge number one with the maximum seats. Initially, there was confusion among voters. But the coalition has allayed their fears and we will get a consolidated vote. Our rivals earlier were talking about victory margins, now they are not sure they will win. It's evident in their reaction. Listen to the prime minister's speeches, and Amit Shah's, and Mayawati's. The BJP leadership sounds rattled. Just today, the PM said he wants to buy a ticket and ride in the metro. *Arre*, you are the prime minister, you should know the procedure. You have to follow a 90-day mandatory standard procedure after the train is put on track. If the railways gives us the NOC (no objection certificate), we will start transporting people in the metro from tomorrow.

At least, the public has faith that the Samajwadi Party delivers. Wide roads have been constructed in western UP, electricity is available 24 hours in homes. The ambulance service is trusted. A modern police control room has been established for the first time, the police are on call and can reach any spot in 10-15 minutes. Medical colleges have been built. The Samajwadi pension scheme is on. The laptop scheme has been a success. The improvements are visible to the people. It has created an environment in favour of the SP... and our getting together with the Congress has given us the image of being a progressive party. It has provided a strong, secular platform.

Q. Did it occur to you that before the election battle, you'd have to battle the family and the party?

A. I had no idea I would face such a situation. But I believe that, in politics, if your goal is big and you want to accomplish it, you need to be prepared for every situation.

Q. Was the humiliating defeat in the 2014 Lok Sabha election a turning point for you?

A. The SP government began working with full responsibility from 2014, though preparations had begun earlier. It took us time to sort out the mess the previous BSP government had left. Since there was no industrial policy, there were no investments. More money was spent on monuments so the initial days of my government were spent arranging for money in the budget. We had huge liabilities. The previous BSP government had started many schemes; had I discontinued them, I would have been accused of stalling the previous government's

work. There were huge liabilities in the roads sector, so an allocation was made for roads. Now I can say, the next Samajwadi government will start working from day one.

Q. All is still not well in your family. Your uncle, Shivpal Yadav, has stayed away from canvassing. Will it have an impact?

A. Till February 19, he will be busy with his own election. After that, wherever he wants to go or wherever he is invited to campaign, he should go, I will not stop him. Because we have already put the party on the path it needs to be on.

Q. You cite the work in irrigation and roads in UP as an example of your achievements, but these departments were under your uncle Shivpal till six months ago...

A. After becoming chief minister, the first thing I did was go to the Sharda barrage and direct authorities that it should not flood. It didn't. I had detected irregularities in the construction of bridges on the river Ghaghra. We were constantly monitoring these things, that is why we could provide results. But I do not reject the work of any minister.

Q. You are campaigning alone this time, whereas you had many SP leaders with you in 2012. Even your father Mulayam has mostly stayed away.

A. This is Netaji's (Mulayam Singh Yadav's) party, his cadre. He is campaigning in some places, many of our leaders are busy with their own elections. As they get free, they will join the campaign in the next round. I am myself a candidate and also president of the party. If the party loses, the entire blame will be on my head. If all goes well, then everyone will say all was anyway well with the party.

Q. Your father blames you for failing to realise his dream of becoming prime minister...

A. Mulayam Singh Yadav has been in politics for a long time. He has made many leaders prime ministers. He could have been prime minister, but didn't.

Q. Has your relationship with your father changed since you took charge of the SP?

A. Both of us are busy campaigning. Our relations are fine. We talk on the phone. We will now build all relationships

only after the elections are over on March 11.

Q. What issues do you have with Amar Singh?

A. Though Amar Singh was my uncle, he was close to Netaji. But now the matter is over. Today, the party is treading a new path. Why should we discuss him? If he is saying something, it is his viewpoint. In a democracy, you have to bear with these things. People in the party know who's wrong and who's right.

Q. Why are you not contesting?

A. Initially, I wanted to fight. In Hamirpur, it was proposed that I fight the election from Bundelkhand. Party leaders said as there had been no chief minister from this area, I should fight elections from Bundelkhand. Meanwhile, these developments unfolded in my family. That is when I decided I won't fight elections, I'll help people fight elections. I could have contested from any seat, but I would have been stuck there. My own election would have been on my mind. Now I am free and campaigning vigorously.

Q. You gave the Congress over 100 seats, despite some people in your party opposing it...

A. Friendship is fruitful only if it is done with a large heart; a miserly friendship will not last. The Samajwadis are large-hearted people.

Q. How will allying with the Congress benefit you?

A. What the Congress does or doesn't give does not matter. The coalition has given people the impression that together these people will think better. The BJP is saying this is an alliance of dynasties, I say it is the alliance of two youth, alliance of new thinking. Rahul and I think UP should move ahead.

Q. Is your alliance a sign of the SP's weakness?

A. Well, people were anyway saying the SP will do well this election, it will form the next government. We wanted to be absolutely sure, hence the alliance.

Q. What brought you and Rahul Gandhi together?

A. I have known Rahul Gandhi for quite some time. We



Q. PM Modi is attacking you directly in his rallies...

A. The prime minister is asking me about *achhe din*. I never talked of *achhe din*. The promises I made, I kept. *Achhe din* is their slogan, not ours. They are unable to say what they look like...

are both the same age, we are both young. He has seen the world, so have I. Other countries in the world have moved ahead. Now, even we can dream of our state moving ahead and its people becoming better off.

Q. Barring Rahul Gandhi, senior Congress leaders are not putting much effort in the campaign. Even Priyanka has stayed away from campaigning so far.

A. That is not the case. Leaders of both parties are campaigning. No one would have done as many rallies as I have. Millions thronged my roadshows with Rahul in Lucknow, Agra and Meerut. Congress leaders are holding separate rallies so that we can reach out to the maximum number of places.

Q. What is the big issue you see in this election?

A. This is a period of transition in UP politics. Politics today has to be progressive and development-oriented. Last time, my election campaign was based on '*Umeed ki cycle*'. This time, my campaign slogans are '*Umeedon ka pradesh, Uttar Pradesh*', '*Roz naya ek kadam*', '*Kaam bolta hai*' and '*UP ko ye saath pasand hai*'. Perhaps social media was not so active before this election. Which is why we are thinking of distributing smartphones to connect them to the government. In the coming days, only a political party which shows results will survive.

Q. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been criticising your government on the law and order situation...

A. The prime minister is saying Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of rape and riot cases. What is a riot? We need to find out, as [even] a feud between two communities is being dubbed a riot. I also want to ask, you have been in power at the Centre for two-and-a-half years, what have you done for UP on the law and order situation? The previous UPA government used to give money to modernise the police which they have stopped. We have introduced 'UP-100', one of the most innovative initiatives to enhance police response, entirely with state money. I think the prime minister should try the Agra-Lucknow expressway once. After that, he too will vote the SP.

Q. You are soft in your response to the PM's attacks. Why?

A. I don't want to say it but I am compelled to: whoever is advising the prime minister is likely to lose his job after the elections. The SP government has worked for farmers. Sugarcane payments were made when sugar mills were in a crisis. Today, 95 per cent of the sugar mills have paid the farmers. Very few states in the country are offering Rs 280 per quintal as the price for sugarcane. The prime minister is saying that nobody can get one's blood pressure checked in Medanta hospital. He should know that only land is provided to private hospitals, they build the hospitals

themselves. The SP government has built several medical colleges. The prime minister can get his blood pressure checked at any government hospital. After the elections, all the BJP leaders will require their blood pressure checked. The day passengers will start moving in the metro, we'll be sure to invite the prime minister.

Q. Do you think the BJP will raise Hindutva or Ram Mandir issues to counter your campaign?

A. They can try what they want, people won't listen to them. The issue in UP is development. Now they can't fool people with Hindutva and temple issues. On Dussehra day, the prime minister had come to shoot an arrow at the Lucknow Ramlila, but could not do it. No work should be done without practice. Practice makes a man perfect.

Q. In your father's time, the Samajwadi Party would connect with Muslims directly. You do not believe in doing so. Is this a planned strategy or an attempt to change the character of the SP?

A. In all our state-level schemes, we have given Muslims representation in proportion to their population: they've been given 20 per cent representation in laptop distribution, Lohia housing for the poor and Kanya Vidya Dhan. If we have given money to build the walls of a cemetery, we have also given money for the maintenance of Hindu places of worship. If we have regularised one-and-a-half lakh *shiksha mitras* [as assistant teachers], we have also regularised Urdu *moallims*. Beautification around the Imambara was done in Lucknow, 24-hour power is supplied to the state's religious sites. Nobody can accuse us of discrimination. Hence our slogan, '*Kaam bolta hai*'.

Q. But the BJP accuses you of appeasing Muslims.

A. Whatever my rivals might say, I am giving people their rightful due. The BJP has not constructed roads, bridges. Therefore, they are raising issues of law and order, Muslim appeasement. We have built roads, bridges, restarted choked canals, worked for the betterment of tribals such as the Thaar. The BJP has been pushed out of the battle of UP. Therefore, they are angry. The prime minister threw

the word 'SCAM' at us, saying the state has to be saved from the SP, Congress, Akhilesh and Mayawati. We said 'scam' means 'Save the country from Amit Shah and Modi'.

Q. BSP president Mayawati has fielded more Muslim candidates. Will it harm your party?

A. The BSP's strategy is to disperse the Muslim vote. Mayawati is helping the BJP. The Muslims understand this. They know whom to vote for.

Q. How do you plan to counter her Dalit support?

A. The Constitution itself provides for reservations for Dalits. So, they get help in each of our plans. Who else will help them more than us? I'm giving a Samajwadi pension of Rs 500 a month to 5.5 million women, of whom 27 per cent would be Dalits. I distributed food in Bundelkhand, and most of the poor in the area were Dalits. Now these Dalits will vote for us. We decide on the basis of ideology, not caste.

Q. What importance do you attach to caste in elections?

A. Such politics is practised in democratic countries all over the world. America too says it will seal its border with Mexico. Even in developed countries, there are local issues. We too have issues like caste and the Ram mandir.

Q. Which party is giving you the closest fight in UP?

A. From day one, I have said SP and Congress will take the number one and two positions. Who will be number three or four is for the BSP and BJP to decide.

Q. In case you win, a new kind of politics will emerge from the Hindi belt. Will Delhi be next on your agenda?

A. I don't dream of going to Delhi. I have read history well. I've found that he who lives in Lucknow rules. Whoever goes to Delhi cannot sustain his rule for long. I am happy here and do not want to go to Delhi.

Q. The last SP government was said to have five-and-a-half chief ministers. How many will the new SP government have, if you win?

A. The opponents don't have one chief ministerial face. My next government will have only one chief minister.

Q. How will your second term be different?

A. I'll give the state the world's best infrastructure. I built a 302 km long access control expressway in 23 months, I know how to do it. If I get the opportunity, I'll build a 350 km long expressway from Lucknow to Ballia in 30 months.

Q. What will you do if you lose?

A. I am still young. I'll have more time to work for the party. With age, will power, dreams and the right path on our side, the SP will return to power. ■

Reader's
digest

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO THE WORLD'S LARGEST SELLING ENGLISH MAGAZINE

And enjoy your copies on
all your favourite devices

NO PAPER. NO LIMITS!

Same articles, no different from the print version. Get access to Reader's Digest digital subscriptions or single issues across all your devices.





NATION | TAMIL NADU

FIGHT TO THE FINISH

With Sasikala's arrest and the AIADMK divided into warring camps, all eyes are on the contest between Panneerselvam and Palanisamy

By Amarnath K. Menon



▶ TAP TO WATCH VIDEO

SOUTHERN POTBOILER

The two months that transformed Tamil Nadu politics

Dec. 5
2016

Jayalalithaa passes away at 11.30 pm; O. Panneerselvam sworn in as CM on Dec. 6

Dec. 14
2016

All 49 AIADMK MPs visit Jaya's home, Veda Nilayam; plead with Sasikala to steer the party

Dec. 29
2016

AIADMK meeting passes resolution for Sasikala to be interim party general secretary

Feb. 5
2017

Sasikala elected legislature party leader by MLAs; OPS faxes resignation to Governor

Feb. 7
2017

OPS revolts; goes to Jaya's memorial, meditates, tells the media he was forced to resign

Feb. 14
2017

SC finds Sasikala guilty in disproportionate assets case; gives her four years in jail

◀ **TWO FACES** Sasikala (left) visits Jaya's memorial before going to Bengaluru to serve her sentence, Feb. 15, 2017; O. Panneerselvam meets the press at his home the same day

F

or over a week, Tamil Nadu Governor Chennamaneni Vidyasagar Rao waited, refusing to act on All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) general secretary V.K. Sasikala's demand that she be sworn in as chief minister.

In hindsight, the decision was a good one, for, on February 14, Supreme Court judges Pinaki Chandra Ghose and Amitava Roy delivered their verdict in a 21-year-old case of disproportionate assets against Sasikala and the AIADMK's late leader J. Jayalalithaa. Upholding the trial court's conviction order of September 27, 2014, Sasikala and two of her family members were found guilty and sentenced to jail, shattering whatever succession plans she had for the AIADMK.

A day later, Sasikala surrendered before a special court within Bengaluru's Parappana Agrahara jail, her home for the next four years. The intervening hours before she left for

Bengaluru were spent in the company of party legislators and loyalists at the Golden Bay Resort at Koovathur, some 80 km from Chennai (where they were cooped up since interim chief minister O. Panneerselvam's rebellion). Sasikala was showing little signs of relenting or remorse. In a desperate bid to hold on to the party reins, even by remote, she expelled OPS (as Panneerselvam is commonly known) and 19 other leaders of his faction from the party and named Edappadi K. Palanisamy leader of the legislature party and chief ministerial candidate. Sasikala also re-inducted two others into the party—nephew T.V.V. Dinakaran (as deputy general secretary) and her brother's son-in-law S. Venkatesh, who had been expelled by Jayalalithaa in 2011—stunning the AIADMK cadre in the process.

The latest developments have only added to the uncertainty that grips the party rank and file, already reeling from factional strife among party MLAs over who should be chief minister. For the party's MPs, their concerns are different. With Lok Sabha polls barely two years away, and

THE LOYALIST'S TURN



THE NOMINEE Palanisamy talks to the media in Chennai after being elected legislature party leader

His years as a stalwart of Jayalalithaa's *naalvar ani* (four-man army) have paid Edappadi K. Palanisamy, 62, rich dividends. He was also second in command and PWD minister in the Pannerseivam cabinet. Palanisamy is with

Sasikala now and is her man for the chief minister's post. No one from his Gounder community, also referred to as the Kongu Vellalar Gounders, traditional landowners and farmers from the western districts, has ever held the

top post since P. Subbarayan who was chief minister of the erstwhile Madras Presidency (1926-1936).

Palanisamy's electoral debut came in somewhat similar circumstances to what the AIADMK is facing now, split into two factions, one headed by party founder M.G. Ramachandran's widow Janaki and the other by rebel J. Jayalalithaa. He joined the Jayalalithaa group and won the Edappadi assembly seat in the 1989 polls. He has won three of the five assembly polls he contested and was also Lok Sabha MP from Tiruchengode in 1998. He's also said to have vast financial resources with MLA K.A. Sengottaiyan, a strongman from the western districts, serving as a mentor. Which maybe why he was chosen, as someone who can stand up to

the Thevars and even take on Panneerselvam if it comes to the crunch.

The soft-spoken Palanisamy's sway in the Gounder-dominated western districts was the most important factor that tilted the scales in favour of the AIADMK in the 2016 polls. The party won 45 of the 57 seats from here. In his home district, Salem, the party won 10 of the 11 seats.

While rallying the MLAs from western Tamil Nadu may be his primary task, Palanisamy will have many other challenges: to ensure there is no infighting in the Gounder group and also deal with the extended Sasikala family. Like most other AIADMK leaders, he too comes with baggage. Corruption charges, publicised or not, could prove to be a burden.

widespread public anger against Sasikala, they reckon there is no hope of returning to power in her company.

The ongoing strife brings to mind the goings-on of 1987 and the AIADMK split after party founder M.G. Ramachandran passed away. It was only after the merger of the two factions and an election debacle in 1989 that the party swept the polls in 1991 to establish itself as a serious political contender under Jayalalithaa's leadership. Now, Tamil Nadu politics is undergoing another turbulent transition.

Picking Palanisamy, a party veteran of equal standing to OPS, is a shrewd move by Sasikala. He is from the influential, landowning Gounder community of western Tamil Nadu, a dominant presence among AIADMK MLAs. Also, no Gounder has been chief minister till now which should shore up party support in the region. But then there's a flip side—the party's traditional Thevar caste cohort, to which both Sasikala and OPS belong, may not take to this too kindly.

And it's not like she had much choice in the matter, having already made another veteran, K.A. Sengottaiyan, also a Gounder, the party presidium chairman. DMK's

improved strength in the current assembly implies that Panneerselvam needs just 18 MLAs to bring the AIADMK below the halfway mark in the assembly, but at the risk of his ginger group being disqualified. It will have to be at least 90-strong if it is to evade the anti-defection law.

The widespread public support for OPS is because of the growing revulsion for Sasikala and her family (the 'Man-nargudi mafia') which had tightened its grip on the party post-Jayalalithaa. "The Supreme Court verdict has possibly staved off prospects of what would have been an insufferable oligarchy," says ex-bureaucrat M.G. Devasahayam of the Forum for Electoral Integrity. BJP national general secretary and Tamil Nadu in-charge P. Muralidhar Rao says, "Sasikala's attempt to prop up a proxy will not help the party win the people's trust. She does not enjoy the same level of public endorsement as Jayalalithaa does." (Interestingly, the safe-front party too has taken some flak in all this. The fact that Dr V. Maitreyan, the first AIADMK MP, and K. Pandiarajan, the first minister, to defect to the OPS camp were once with the BJP raised many eyebrows about the ruling party in New Delhi playing a murky role.)

Outside the party, there aren't too many willing to take up cudgels for Chinnamma. One of the few is the perennial maverick, BJP Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy. He alleges that two Union ministers (Swamy refuses to name them but says they are not from Tamil Nadu) were behind the delaying tactics of Governor Rao, and alleges that there has been constitutional impropriety. The irony here is that it was a petition filed by Swamy and pursued vigorously by him for two decades which led to this historic Supreme Court verdict that has finally led to Sasikala's four-year jail term and her being debarred from holding any elected office for 10 years. Though the governor secured legal opinion on the way forward before February 14, he has opted to wait a bit more before deciding on the process of naming the next chief minister. Constitutional experts say convention and procedures dictate that Rao administers the oath of office to Palanisamy and ask him to prove his strength on the floor of the assembly considering that he has a letter claiming the support of 124 MLAs, which is a majority, albeit a slender one, in a 234-seat house (one seat is vacant). And it is for the challenger, Panneerselvam, who demitted office and currently holds interim charge, to prove otherwise.



Another approach, suggested by Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi and other legal luminaries, is to call for a meeting of the legislative assembly at which 'a composite floor test' can be done, by secret ballot, to determine who enjoys a majority (a judicial innovation used to settle the Kalyan Singh-Jagdambika Pal imbroglio in UP in 1998). And if neither fails to muster the magic 118 figure, then the governor can keep the legislature in suspended animation by imposing President's Rule. Of course, in the 1998 case, the governor had assumed the majority of one claimant was no more there and therefore the other was sworn in but without offering the mandated floor test as decided by the Supreme Court in the S.R. Bommai case. In Tamil Nadu now, Panneerselvam is not technically chief minister, other than as caretaker, as the governor has already accepted his resignation, and there can be no second claimant unless and until Rao swears in Palanisamy. "The governor's entire conduct, beginning with him travelling to Delhi from Coimbatore, then to Mumbai and remaining incommunicado on developments in Tamil Nadu could come under judicial scrutiny, whatever the fate of OPS or Palanisamy," says political analyst N. Sathiyamoorthy. "Should the governor recommend it and the Centre keeps the legislative assembly under suspended animation for a period, then both will face a stiff challenge both inside and outside the courts."

An additional factor Governor Rao has to weigh is the claim of Maitreyan that at least 40 MLAs were on their side but had backed Palanisamy under duress at the Golden Bay

Resort legislature party meeting. In the coming days, this factional rivalry could also bring out claims and counter-claims about which is the real AIADMK. "If there is one claimant, the governor can swear in the claimant and ask him to prove his majority. If there are two claimants, the governor should call a composite vote," says Congress leader and former Union finance minister, P. Chidambaram.

Rao has a daunting task ahead to ensure that the AIADMK MLAs are able to choose their next leader without fear or coercion. Whatever be the process he adopts, the party is teetering on the verge of a split. Meanwhile, Sasikala is still putting up a brave face and is determined to run the party by remote, if not from Veda Nilayam in Poes Garden, then from prison. "Amma (Jayalalithaa) lived like a lioness. I am like her. Whichever prison they put me in, I will not be deterred and will continue to look after you and the AIADMK," she declared to supporters before leaving for Bengaluru and jail. She did attempt at first to buy time and stay out of prison on health grounds, but now, along

OPS needs just 18 MLAs to dislodge the AIADMK from power, but at the risk of his ginger group being disqualified

with her fellow convicts, nephew V.N. Sudhakaran and sister-in-law J. Elavarasi, she will appeal to serve her jail term in Tamil Nadu. The special court had tried the accused in neighbouring Karnataka following apprehensions about a fair trial in the home state.

On his part, OPS has launched a signature campaign to convert Veda Nilayam, the late Jayalalithaa's home which has been taken over by Sasikala, into a national memorial. He also

wants an inquiry headed by a sitting judge to probe the 'circumstances' surrounding Amma's death. "Any AIADMK government that emerges from all this will lack credibility among the people. It is unlikely to last the entire term even if they remain together now as Sasikala loyalists," says Ramu Manivannan of the Department of Politics and Public Administration, Madras University.

A regrouping by those in the AIADMK with some leaving the Dravidian party's fold is imminent. "If party MLAs flock to OPS, the game is over for Sasikala," says Manivannan. "But OPS himself may not survive as leader for long as he is perceived as weak. Glorified by the anti-Sasikala camp and egged on by some in the BJP, he is walking into a dead-end situation." Though the last of the Dravidians linked to tinsel town, the ailing DMK chief M. Karunanidhi, is also fading, their legacy leaving behind no dearth of potboilers on Tamil Nadu's political stage. ■

SPECIAL REPORT | INFOSYS

Time to Reboot

WITH ITS CO-FOUNDERS RAISING ISSUES OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AT INFOSYS, THE INFOTECH MAJOR IS FORCED TO TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE WAY IT DOES BUSINESS

By M.G. Arun

DANESH JASSAWALA

R Seshasayee



Never before in his 45-year-old career has R. Seshasayee, 68, the soft-spoken and reclusive chairman of Infosys, hogged so much media limelight. All through his professional life, mostly with automotive major Ashok Leyland and as chairman of IndusInd Bank since 2007 and as a board member of ICICI Bank for five years till 2003, he has steered clear of controversies. But the past few days, perhaps, have been his most challenging as he battled accusations of laxity in corporate governance at India's second-largest IT services company, with its co-founders wanting to settle for nothing less than his resignation from the board.

But 'Sesh', as close friends and colleagues call him, is nonplussed. On February 13, as the Infosys board presented itself before the media for the first time since controversies shook its seemingly unshakeable edifice, Seshasayee wore a confident demeanour, setting out to clear the air on a series of allegations against the one-time IT bellwether, by none other than its iconic co-founders, including former chairman N.R. Narayana Murthy, former CFO V. Balakrishnan and Mohandas Pai, who was part of the early leadership of the company.

Admitting there could have been cultural differences between the current board and the founders, Seshasayee deflected questions regarding the demand for his ouster: "There is a board that has reposed full faith in me and what I am doing. As long as I enjoy that faith, I shall continue." Minutes after the press meet, reports quoting Murthy said he was sticking to his demands (including appointing a co-chair for Infosys, inducting new independent directors on the board and scrutinising pay and severance packages for top Infosys executives). Balakrishnan insisted the Infosys board had lost credibility and pressed for Seshasayee's removal.

HOLDING FORT Infosys chairman R. Seshasayee and CEO Vishal Sikka at the press meet held by the company's board in Mumbai on February 13



At the heart of the problem at Infosys is a certain 'erosion in values', allege the co-founders. They cite the exorbitantly high salary drawn by CEO Vishal Sikka, 49, who was brought in from German software company SAP AG in June 2014. Sikka draws \$11 million, or around Rs 74 crore, annually, including stock options (revised from \$7 million last year). Murthy says this is 2,000 times the entry-level salary at Infosys. The pay might correspond to global standards or could be lower (Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella drew \$18 million in fiscal 2016), but according to reports, it's much higher than Sikka's counterparts in the industry—former TCS chief N. Chandrasekaran was paid Rs 25.6 crore for 2015-16 while Wipro CEO Abidali Neemuchwala's annual pay was Rs 12 crore.

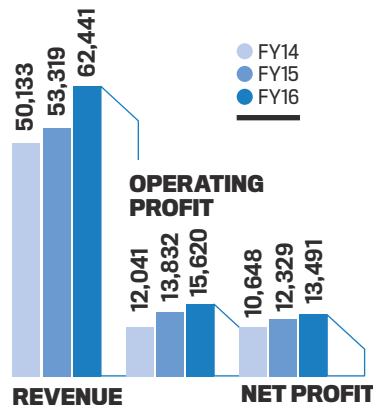
"When Vishal's compensation was raised to \$11 million, the fixed component came down from \$5.8 million to \$4 million," Seshasayee explained. The variable component went up, and was tied to the length of the CEO's association with Infosys and his performance. "We had a global consultant look at his compensation, and it was benchmarked with his peers before taking the decision," he added. On allegations that Sikka used private jets to attend meetings, Seshasayee said Sikka had occasionally used chartered flights, but it constituted only 8 per cent of his travel for November-December 2016. "While we need to look at the cost, we should not forget the value part," Seshasayee said, alluding to Sikka's contribution to Infosys's turnaround.

Sikka, who holds a PhD in computer science from Stanford University, got a relatively free hand in his first year at the helm. He came up with a slew of buzzwords and policies, such as 'design thinking', 'new & renew' and 'zero distance' to re-energise the company. Several senior Infosys employees who had helped build the firm left as Sikka brought in his own team, causing heartburn, say insiders.

One of the first things Sikka did was do away with the strategic business unit format in favour of a consolidated delivery approach to achieve greater economies of scale. He set a \$20 billion revenue target by 2020 (from \$10 billion

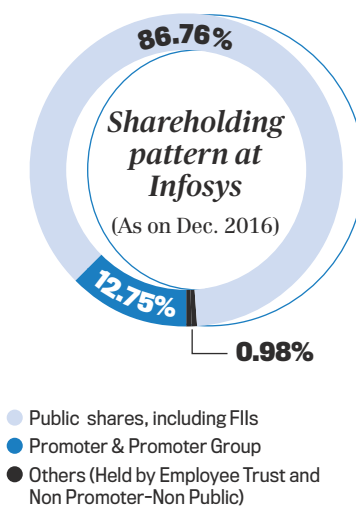
COURSE CORRECTION

How Infosys has performed under CEO Vishal Sikka



Figures in Rs crore

WHO OWNS WHAT



at present). This couldn't be achieved with traditional business methods. More automation and digitalisation is Sikka's vision for Infosys. "The endeavour is to transform to a reality where automation is coming in a big way," he said on February 13. "My target for the company is for it to become more innovative and go higher in the value chain."

No wonder Infosys investors have thrown their weight behind Sikka and the board. Oppenheimer Funds, Info-

THE BIG PLAYERS

Key shareholders of the Promoter & Promoter Group

PROMOTERS HOLD ONLY 12.75% STAKE IN INFOSYS

SUDHA GOPALAKRISHNAN

49,178,500* (2.14%)

ROHAN MURTY

31,799,128 (1.38%)

S. GOPALAKRISHNAN

21,626,904 (0.94%)

NANDAN NILEKANI

21,383,480 (0.93%)

SUDHA N. MURTHY

18,058,640 (0.79%)

ROHINI NILEKANI

18,004,696 (0.78%)

SHREYAS SHIBULAL

14,679,855 (0.64%)

SHRUTI SHIBULAL

13,687,696 (0.60%)

N.R. NARAYANA MURTHY

8,718,688 (0.38%)

KUMARI SHIBULAL

5,494,176 (0.24%)

* No. of shares held

THE SORE POINTS

Some of the allegations muddying the waters at Infosys

1 CEO'S HIGH SALARY

Charge

Exorbitant salary drawn by CEO Vishal Sikka. Sikka gets \$11 million, or around Rs 74 crore, annually. It was \$7 million at the time of revision last year. Former chairman N.R. Narayana Murthy says this is 2,000 times the entry-level salary at Infosys

Defence

Infosys says Sikka's salary matches global standards. When it was increased, the fixed component came down from \$5.8 million to \$4 million, the variable went up. A global consultant had evaluated the CEO's salary and it was benchmarked with his peers before the board took a decision

2 SPLURGING BY TOP EXECS

Charge

Vishal Sikka used private jets to attend meetings. Such expenses incurred by top executives are against the company's 'value system'

Defence

Infosys says it does not own jets. On certain occasions, Sikka used chartered flights, but the expense adds up to only 8 per cent of the CEO's travel for November-December 2016. And he brought in value through the travelling he did

3 SEVERANCE PAYOUTS

Charge

Former Infosys general counsel David Kennedy will get severance payments worth Rs 5.8 crore and other reimbursements over 12 months. In 2015, CFO Rajiv Bansal got a severance package of around Rs 17.4 crore. Murthy has alleged payout of 'hush money'

Defence

Infosys says all decisions were taken bona fide, in the overall interest of the company and full disclosures were made. The actual amount paid to Bansal was just Rs 5.2 crore; the balance remains suspended. The management has assured no repeat of such episodes

4 MINISTER'S WIFE IN BOARD

Charge

Appointment of Punita Sinha, wife of Union MoS for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha, as an independent director in January 2016. Jayant was MoS finance at the time of the hiring. Corporate ethics issues were raised. It was argued that Punita could be privy to government decisions on financial matters

Defence

Punita Sinha is eminently qualified for the job. She has 25 years of experience, including in senior positions at MNCs such as Blackstone, says Infosys

Infosys investigated, but found nothing untoward. However, Infosys board member Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said Bansal's severance package could have been handled better and "moderated".

Punita Sinha's appointment as an independent director in January 2016 was also questioned over corporate ethics, as her husband, Union minister Jayant Sinha, was MoS finance at the time.

Insiders say Sikka's drive for mergers and acquisitions hasn't gone down well with some co-founders. In its previous three decades, Infosys acquired just two companies. Sikka acquired four in 2015 alone, at \$550 million.

The Infosys crisis mirrors somewhat the developments at the Tata Group where the promoters, mainly Tata Trusts led by Ratan Tata, which hold over 60 per cent stake in Tata Sons, ousted Cyrus Mistry in a boardroom battle. The difference is Infosys shares are mostly held by the public (87 per cent), including FIIs, while Murthy and 18 others, part of the promoter family, hold 12.75 per cent. So, the latter's statements can influence public opinion, but they don't have much say in the firm's day-to-day management. Murthy and his family are the largest shareholders (3.44 per cent stake, worth Rs 7,800 crore).

"Murthy and the others have the right to raise issues, but it should not have been done in public," says Shriram Subramanian, MD, InGovern, a proxy advisory firm. In 2013, when he returned as Infosys chairman, Murthy himself had faced flak for inducting son Rohan Murty as his executive assistant.

The way forward? Some experts feel the Infosys board should be reconstituted with some new independent directors. The severance payouts should be reviewed. By agreeing to listen to the stakeholders, including the co-founders, more keenly, Seshasayee may have put an end to the public battle for now. But only a step-by-step mending of the firm's processes, including the slack governance standards, as alleged by the co-founders, will bring lasting changes as the IT giant struggles to compete in a tough global competitive environment. ■

With Venkatesha Babu in Bengaluru

\$100 million revenue zone, an IT industry benchmark for high-value clients.

Another issue is the severance payouts. In a January filing with the US market regulator, Infosys said former general counsel David Kennedy would get a severance payout of \$868,250, or Rs 5.8 crore. In October 2015, CFO Rajiv Bansal got a severance package of around Rs 17.4 crore. Seshasayee said Bansal's package "took into account complex circumstances and it was a bona fide busi-

ness agreement". The amount paid was just Rs 5.2 crore; the balance remains suspended since April 2016, he said.

But Murthy alleged the payouts could be "hush money". An anonymous whistleblower had written to the management (the letter was leaked to the media), alleging Bansal was paid Rs 17.4 crore to buy his silence, since he was privy to details of the February 2015 \$200 million acquisition of Israeli software firm Panaya, which he felt was overpriced.

“AWAY FROM THE NOISE, I’M TRYING TO CREATE A CULTURE OF INNOVATION”

VISHAL SIKKA, 49, the CEO of Infosys, is in the eye of the storm over the governance issues currently affecting the iconic Indian IT giant. Ever since he joined Infosys in June 2014, Sikka, who holds a PhD from Stanford University, has strived to arrest the downward spiral that most Indian IT companies have experienced because of technological disruptions. Last October, he spoke candidly and at great length to Group Editorial Director **Raj Chengappa** on the challenges Infosys was facing and what he was doing to overcome them. The interview was held back because demonetisation became the national focus soon after. But in the light of the current controversy that has hit Infosys, we are carrying excerpts. For the record, INDIA TODAY did request Sikka to answer questions on the current controversy, but he said there was not much he could add to what he had already said at the press conference held in Mumbai on February 13.

Q. What are the challenges you faced when you took over Infosys in June 2014, and how did you address them?

A. When I started at Infosys, there were many structural challenges. Some were generic, others were specific to the situation the company was in at that time. These have only become worse. The short-term issues—like the global delivery model, which was a very big deal even 20 years ago—have become much more differentiated. Things are becoming cheaper; more commoditised and so forth. These days, businesses are under immense pressure because of the enormous disruption caused by the digital revolution. By digital, I don’t mean just websites, mobiles and so forth; I am talking about the deep-rooted transformation that Nicholas Negroponte has talked about. Of atoms into bits. Physical experiences, physical parts of the supply chain, even machines are becoming digital, are being converted into software. It has created tremendous pressure for innovation among big companies, and also pressure on costs. That goes down the chain

and translates to cost pressure on us—the suppliers to the big businesses facing such disruptions.

Q. What about automation and artificial intelligence?

A. Yes, these are among the most important challenges we are facing: automation and artificial intelligence. Look at companies like Infosys: in the late 1980s and 1990s, most of the work we did had to do with software development, application development and maintenance. But the new millennium saw BPO, IT infrastructural and verification services becoming much more amenable to automation. That is a deep structural shift that is happening in our industry. Digitisation, automation and artificial intelligence are three big shifts that were Infosys-specific. The challenges imposed by these three shifts have become more severe in the past three years.

Q. What is your strategy for Infosys to deal with these key challenges?

A. The strategy I have laid out is actually relatively straightforward. It is inspired by nature. If you look around, you will see that there is a constant renewal taking place in nature. That is true for our business as well; there is a renewal of the work we do, the things we know about and constant improvements to them. So if you look at any business, including Infosys, there is always a dual imperative. There is a renewal of the businesses we do in right now.

“DIGITISATION, AUTOMATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ARE SHIFTS THAT IMPACTED INFOSYS. THESE CHALLENGES HAVE BECOME MORE SEVERE IN THE PAST THREE YEARS”



You can think of that imperative as 'becoming constantly better'. But, in parallel, in order to be relevant in an ever-changing world, we also have to be different; we have to do new things, things we don't have experience or expertise in. So there is this duality: renewing the existing work, and doing something completely new. These two things have to be done in the context of the culture of the organisation. Our values and purpose also have to be transformed, so that we can remain continuously relevant.

"I DEEPLY BELIEVE THAT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS A GREAT AMPLIFIER. IT AMPLIFIES OUR ABILITY TO BE CREATIVE"

Q. How are you implementing these changes?

A. What I have been trying to do is to create an atmosphere of transformation of the existing businesses, as well as creating new business. This is led by the two imperatives of automation and innovation. Artificial intelligence is important for us, to automate the work we do as far as possible. When we look at artificial intelligence or AI, we are tempted to see it as something that disrupts industries, makes people redundant. But in reality, going all the way back to the industrial revolution, technology has always amplified us. It helps improve our productivity. I deeply believe that AI is a great amplifier of people. When we equip ourselves with AI, we save time, enable ourselves to exercise creativity and amplify our ability to innovate.

Q. What does one do to foster creativity and innovation in Infosys?

A. My dream, my endeavour is very simple, but also very audacious. I want every single Infosysian to embrace automation, to become more productive and therefore more powerful. The only way we will be able to employ millions of people is to create millions of innovators. Since I joined, my endeavour has been entirely about bringing in automation and artificial intelligence, and, most importantly, creating a culture of innovation. We have around 200,000 people doing roughly 9,500 projects at the moment: I want every single person, every single project to innovate.

Q. How does one speed up the big elephant that Infosys straddles—IT-enabled services—and make it adaptable to the challenges you have mentioned?

A. In every generation, there is a new technological wave. The big thing in today's world is that every industry is becoming digital. It is creating digital experiences for

people, for customers, for consumers and even for economies. It creates a new set of opportunities for us—to go and help businesses become more digital. That means we have to improve our own skill sets; not only when it comes to technical abilities, but also in our problem-finding and problem-solving skills. There are also other important skills, such as how to engage with a customer and identify what it means for their business to become digital. Infosys has a tremendous learning culture. We have to become a key driver for people to learn.

Q. Nandan Nilekani told me we now live in a 'hyper-flat world', that there is a big shift from enterprise to consumers. Is that impacting Infosys?

A. Hyper-flat is a great phrase. When it comes to the shift from enterprise to consumer, look at it his way—in the physical world, there are many disconnects between the production of a thing and its consumption. Take the example of consumer packaged goods (CPG), like a bottle of shampoo. When you make a bottle of shampoo, you don't actually know who is going to buy it. It is made in a factory, from where it goes to a warehouse, then to shipping, then to a distributor or a retailer, and so on. Finally, the consumer buys it, and then the data begins making its way back to the manufacturer. In a digital world, on the other hand, everything is immediate. With Uber, you know exactly where the car is and who the driver is; the

"WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF BECOMING A HYPER-CONNECTED WORLD. THIS CREATES OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP BUSINESS"

driver knows exactly who and where the passenger is, all in real time. The enterprise world is becoming more consumer-oriented and is a reflection of the fact that there is tremendous connectivity in the world around us. More than the connectivity, there is a tremendous connectedness. We are on the verge of becoming a hyper-connected world. That creates huge opportunities to help business—for instance, CPG companies—become connected to what their consumers are doing.

Q. How will the Indian IT sector change its business model to profit from these developments?

A. We have to be able to relate to our customers and our businesses in a very deep way about these extremely important strategic problems they face. We have not

“INNOVATION IS THE ACT OF LOOKING AROUND A ROOM AND SEEING SOMETHING THAT IS NOT THERE”

done that. The IT service industry, especially the Indian IT industry, has been very content with its achievements. We need to become much more pro-active, much more responsive to things that really matter to the CEOs and COOs of our companies, and then work on those critical problems. If we don't, we will become irrelevant; we won't be the ones who are growing. We have to make this shift, and doing it will not be easy. It requires us to acquire completely new kinds of skills and develop relationships with our clients. In the past, all one had to say was that we are from India, and we are Infosys; the doors would open. Now, you have to go and engage with the CEO and understand their context and problems. Increasingly, it is about problem-finding. For example, we use a technique called 'design thinking'. We have trained more than 100,000 people on design thinking, for precisely the reason that we want to create a culture where our people can engage with customers, understand what is important to them, how to articulate the problems they are facing, and then engage to solve it.

Q. How come we don't see Indians inventing the next big things, like Google or Facebook?

A. We still live in a world where innovation is an abstract idea for most people. They think that one has to be a Mark Zuckerberg or a Steve Jobs to innovate. But the reality, I think, is that innovation is no more than the act of seeing something that is not there. When we force ourselves to be limited to doing what we are told, when we force ourselves to just take orders from others, we lose sight of what is 'not there'. Every innovator and every innovation we have ever had was a result of somebody seeing something that was not there. Something that, if invented, would make things better, would be desirable to people and would be feasible to make. Steve Jobs used to say that an important thing to remember is that everything around you is built by people like you and me—everyday people who are not superior in any way. You and I can do the same thing. This is the culture I am trying to create at Infosys.

Q. Won't the focus on bringing AI into business—to save on costs—lead to major job cuts for Infosys? Is that an area of concern?

A. In terms of overall job cuts... I don't see that happening. What I do see is that different kinds of jobs are being

created, and there is a reduction in the overall rate of job growth. Even so, I have spoken publicly about my aspiration to get to \$20 billion in revenue at 30 per cent margin and at \$80,000 revenue per employee by 2020. We are a company of 200,000 employees. If you divide \$20 billion by \$80,000, that still requires more than 250,000 people. So there is still scope for increasing the number of employees, just not as rapidly as before. When it comes to the jobs that AI displaces; those are the jobs of yesterday. AI creates opportunities as well. But the point you make about costs is incredibly important. We have had our traditional business models—which, ironically, are cost-driven—becoming a victim of the cost pressure. We cannot cut our way to success. The need is to develop a culture that is driven by innovation, rather than by costs. And people are rewarded for that.

“WE HAVE TO DEVELOP A MINDSET WHERE WE OFFER SERVICES BECAUSE NO ONE CAN DO THEM BETTER THAN US, RATHER THAN BECAUSE NO ONE CAN DO THEM CHEAPER”

Q. And what will it take to achieve that?

A. You asked earlier about why we are not innovators. The truth is, we were mostly renting out our ideas; we were not monetising their innovation, we were renting out the persons themselves. And that will continue to be the case for the immediate future. However, I believe this is not the model that will help us survive in the long run. We have to develop a culture of innovation, and move away from a culture of cost. From a mindset where we deliver something because we are cheaper than the other guy, we have to cultivate a mindset where we deliver something because we do it better than anyone else. Because we deliver value and find innovation in things in a way that nobody else can. This is what has to be done. And we have to develop the skills needed for innovation in a massive way. That is our future. In my case, with Infosys, we are a young company. We don't have the burden of a manufacturing economy; we are a knowledge-oriented economy. We are also a deeply education-oriented culture, so I think if we are able to redirect our energy in these directions—towards innovation, towards acquiring skills of the future—then the sky is the limit. ■

HONING THE LEARNING CURVE

The second edition of the India Today School Summit brought together eminent educationists, who offered a look ahead at the country's schooling system

By Asmita Bakshi

Earlier this month, the Union budget announced nearly Rs 80,000 crore as outlay for the education sector for 2017-18, an impressive 9.9 percentage point jump from the previous financial year. What better time for an intense discussion on education, thought the INDIA TODAY Group as it organised the INDIA TODAY School Summit 2017 at ITC Maurya in New Delhi on February 11.

INDIA TODAY Group Editorial Director Raj Chengappa set the agenda in his welcome address, cautioning that all of India's feats in education would come undone if the challenges of the future were ignored. "With close to 300 million people between the ages of 6 and 17, we have a huge school-going population," said Chengappa, adding that primary school enrolment in the country was 96 per cent and there were over 260 million students in secondary school. As the numbers stand, he said,

STRAIGHT TALK

Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar addresses the summit in New Delhi



RAJWANT RAWAT



“College is a new space. Students are often unable to negotiate their space within it”

Meenakshi Gopinath
Former principal, LSR



“A country’s system will collapse if education is completely privatised”

Gopal Karunakaran
CEO, Shiv Nadar Foundation



“Among the world leaders in education, India ranks 72 out of 73 countries”

G. Viswanathan
Founder, VIT University

India’s achievements in the education sector were laudable, with advances in teaching technology, focus on training of teachers, funding and development of teaching methodologies and, most importantly, a paradigm shift in the form of far greater importance to the liberal arts instead of pushing students into the conventionally popular science and commerce streams.

The education system, though evolving, has hurdles to overcome. With the summit focused on these, Chengappa alluded to a few—the poor quality of education and its cascading effect, acute shortage of competent teachers and poor infrastructure, such as lack of clean toilets and drinking water. India’s expenditure on education is still no match with several economies. The World Bank data for 2012 puts it at 3.8 per cent of the country’s GDP; Brazil spent 5.9 per cent and South Africa 6.4 per cent.

A fitting follow-up to Chengappa’s holistic overview of the education system in India was an hour-long session by Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar. He highlighted both the progress and problems in the system, interspersing these with his own experiences in a municipal school. Javadekar looked back fondly at the time when deteriorating quality wasn’t the talking point about public schools. “All top position-holders in the country today have studied in zila parishads... But we lost out somewhere in the process of expansion,” he said, welcoming the success of states such as Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana in stopping the exodus of students from public schools. To improve communication among teachers and students, Javadekar suggested that guidelines defining learning outcomes be brought under the purview of the Right to Education Act by March 2017 and all textbooks and learning indicators adopted by the states and Union territories be aligned with these outcomes.

In his keynote address, G. Viswanathan, founder and chancellor of VIT University, said: “There are 1.5 million schools in India—most of them are under the government; by 2020, close to 90 per cent students would enrol themselves in private schools.” Viswanathan linked quality of

education to weeding out corruption and red tape, checking absenteeism among both students and teachers and bringing down the catastrophic dropout rate—close to 47 per cent—among students between classes 1 and 10.

The subsequent sessions discussed, among other things, the innovative use of technology to teach the prescribed syllabus as well as life skills.

The session ‘Accelerating Innovation, Technology and Education’, featuring Gavin Dabreo, CEO of MindChampion Learning Systems, an NIIT subsidiary; Lisa Heydlauff, founder of Going to School trust; and Sashwati Banerjee, MD, Sesame Workshop India, was engaging. It elaborated the ideas already in action and the ones in pipeline. Scrappy News Service, a Heydlauff initiative where students focus on problems within their communities, interview people and run an entire news service from scratch, was an eye-opener. Touching upon the resistance faced from teachers when attempting to change the traditional teacher-student set-up with technology, Banerjee joked, “The first thing teachers say is ‘syllabus *khatam karwa do*’ (Get the syllabus completed).”

Meenakshi Gopinath, former principal of Lady Shri Ram College for Women, emphasised on a more dialogic approach to education. “We can fail; we can make mistakes as that is learning, too,” she said. “At the core, we need to break out of the monocultures and sclerosis of the mind in order to look at possibilities and not limits.”

The final session saw a round-up of the event’s discussions. Gopal Karunakaran, CEO, Shiv Nadar Foundation, put forth the importance of education, and therefore the INDIA TODAY School Summit, aptly. “Fundamentally, we are shaped by two things—nature and nurture,” he said. “Schools are often associated with nurturing. Students between the age of three and 18 spend over 60 per cent of their time in school. Therefore, schools are a deep source of nature too, in that they can help recognise the child’s inherent talent and provide opportunities to hone that. That’s what a great school will do.” ■



WORLD | US-CHINA

TRUMP'S CHINA WALL

Rising tensions
between
Trump's America
and Xi's China
present
opportunities
and risks for
India

BY ANANTH KRISHNAN
IN BEIJING

the weeks leading up to Donald Trump's January 20 inauguration, the different departments of China's government began a unique stocktaking exercise. Each was asked to assess the possible consequences of the Trump administration's policies—such as Trump's threat to be “tough on China”—and to come up with countermeasures. For instance, if Trump went ahead with his campaign promise to impose a 45 per cent tariff on Chinese imports, how could Beijing respond?

The government finally concluded that the entire exercise was pointless given Trump's frequently changing pronouncements, which often ended up contradicting one another. “The only certainty now is uncertainty,” said Gao Zhikai, a leading foreign policy expert in Beijing who was once the interpreter to former leader Deng Xiaoping. That was underlined in the first two weeks of the Trump presidency. If “hoping for the best, preparing for the worst” was the mantra Beijing followed till January 20, the focus now shifted to preparation, not hope.

On February 10, Trump finally spoke with China's president, Xi Jinping, but only after having done so with more than a dozen other world leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was a striking reflection of the strained Sino-American relationship. And, besides already being displeased with Trump's tough talk on trade, crucial to his ‘Make America Great Again’ agenda, Beijing was incensed with Trump's administration cosying up to Taiwan. By speaking in his official capacity as President of America to Taiwan's president Tsai Ing-wen, Trump became the first US president to do so since the normalisation of Sino-American ties in 1979, when the US recognised China's ‘One China’ policy.

Xi was apparently reluctant to speak with Trump after he had threatened to review the ‘One

China policy’ and use it as a bargaining chip in trade negotiations. The clear message from China was there would be no call unless Trump publicly endorsed the ‘One China policy’. So, just weeks after threatening to overhaul it, Trump was forced to do a U-turn. He “agreed at the request of President Xi to honour the ‘One China policy’”, the White House said in a readout of the call, with Trump realising that “the art of the deal” in diplomacy was perhaps a little more complicated than in real estate.

Uncharted Waters

These events have only underscored the uncertainty that surrounds relations between the world's two biggest powers. Trump, both as candidate and as president-elect, has pledged a much tougher approach to China, on both trade and security issues. His first week in office, which saw him issuing executive orders to fulfill campaign promises—such as withdrawing from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal and imposing a travel ban on seven Muslim-majority countries—has only deepened perceptions in China that fiery campaign rhetoric could well become policy in the Trump White House.

Seven days into the Trump presidency, the *PLA Daily* went so far as to say that the likelihood of war had become more “real”, as the US indicated it would mount a more robust response to curtail Chinese activities in the South China Sea. “A ‘war within the president's term’ or ‘war breaking out tonight’ are not just slogans, they are becoming a practical reality,” warned the commentary, authored by an official of the PLA's defence mobilisation department.

Many in Beijing, like Gao, were alarmed when Henry Kissinger, the US National Security Advisor under Richard Nixon who is widely respected in China for his role in the normalisation of ties, declared he had told Trump “war is not an option”. “For him to say that,” Gao notes, “someone must have asked him first if it indeed was an option to consider!”

Huang Jing, a leading expert on Chinese foreign policy at the National University of Singapore, says China's “most rational choice for now is to wait and see”. He echoes the sentiment in Beijing that describes Trump as “very immature on international affairs”, and expresses the hope that “no matter how unpredictable” he would not be able to overturn “international systems and institutions established for decades”.

Few people in Beijing or Washington expect relations between the world's two biggest economies to descend into conflict. But just the fact that they are even contemplating such an outcome underlines

the deep uncertainty into which Trump has plunged the relationship. Officials and analysts in Beijing expect greater tensions in ties and a more robust US security policy toward Asia, even if Trump's America withdraws economically from regional trading agreements.

These changes are certain to have significant ramifications for India's security and economic interests in the region. Over the past decade, Beijing has seen its military and economic dominance in Asia expand rapidly. It has emerged as the biggest trading partner for most countries in the region, and built a blue water navy strong enough to change the status quo in the South China Sea. A worried India has begun to more vocally express its concerns on an issue it earlier preferred to avoid.

A New American Posture

Beijing has, in the past few years, built seven artificial islands and set up military infrastructure in the Spratly Islands that could enable it to police navigation across the South China Sea. The US, under Barack Obama, belatedly pushed a "pivot" to Asia to counter China, which ultimately failed to back intent with actions, with once indispensable allies such as the Philippines now, remarkably, seeking China's embrace.

When China, in December, seized an American unmanned underwater vehicle in waters off the Philippines, Trump slammed the move as "unprecedented"; foreign policy advisors close to him have been scathing at the Obama administration's failure to deter Chinese activities. Peter Navarro, a Trump advisor now appointed to head his National Trade Council—whose book *Death by China* leaves little doubt about his views—in an article for *Foreign Policy* suggested that Trump would focus on rebuilding the navy and deepening ties with countries such as Japan, South Korea, India and those who "view Beijing as a bully that must be balanced against". Trump's appointee as Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, told a congressional committee that the US would "send China a clear signal" that island-building had to stop and that its "access to those islands is not going to be allowed". Some interpreted his statement to suggest the US may even consider a blockade against China to deny access to the seven islands. Jeff Smith, director of Asian Security Programs at the American Foreign Policy Council, notes that few experts have advocated such a strategy and given that the remarks were delivered several hours into the hearing in response to a question, "it is safe to assume Secretary Tillerson misspoke or was misinterpreted". A later clarification from the press secretary appeared "to suggest the administration would act to prevent China from seizing additional unoccupied rocks and underwater shoals". "While far less ambitious than a policy of 'blockading'

China," Smith notes, "even this would signal a bold new posture from the United States."

India's Options

Expanding maritime security cooperation with India is "entirely congruent" with the policies Trump and his advisors have espoused, adds Smith, noting that in the past, the greatest resistance had come from Delhi, not Washington. The head of the US Pacific Command, Admiral Harry Harris, said in Delhi in January that the US wanted India to sign two other agreements following October's landmark Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) that provides mutual access to bases. These involve communication interoperability, which Harris said was currently a big obstacle in deepening maritime cooperation, and on geo-spatial mapping.

Beijing is warily watching this growing closeness. "If China or India want to sign up on the bandwagon of Trump against the other country," says Gao, "it will be a lose-lose catastrophe for all three countries. Can you imagine the two largest economies in the world, and the two largest populations in the world, engaging with each other for conflict?"

INDIA NEEDS TO BALANCE AMERICA'S GREATER SECURITY EMBRACE WITH ITS GROWING TRADE WITH CHINA

Contrasting this robust security approach, the Trump administration has signalled its intent to withdraw from the region's trading deals, including the TPP, seen by many countries in the region as a counterweight to China's growing economic dominance. Chinese experts see this as a boon to Beijing, which is likely to now push with

greater urgency the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) that includes India.

Arvind Virmani, chairman, Policy Foundation and formerly chief economic advisor and representative at the IMF, expects RCEP negotiations to be sped up, but says "the key issue is how to deal with a non-market economy like China". India, he adds, should use this moment to accelerate its own trading arrangements, such as BIMSTEC (involving Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association). For India, navigating this new regional landscape means balancing the opportunities offered by a deeper American security embrace with its already sensitive relations and growing trade ties with China. As Trump builds his China wall, uncertainty seems the only certainty. ■

CHORAL
MUSIC
PG 76

PUBLISHING'S
BIG FIGHT-
PG 84

LEISURE

HUMAN ACTS
BY HAN KANG
PG 82

NEO-BOMBAY
CRAZE
PG 86

FASHION

Oh My Gogh!

Indian fashion designer Rahul Mishra was walking the streets of the French capital after midnight last October, when he stumbled upon the city's Nuit Blanche festival—a free dusk-till-dawn carnival of arts and culture, inspired by St Petersburg's 'White Nights'. Still buzzing from his own show at the Paris Fashion Week, he found himself at the Centre Pompidou, modern art's answer to the Louvre, and stepped inside to confront Vincent van Gogh's stunning Sunflowers series. The vibrant, almost psychedelic paintings fired his imagination. He did not make it back to his hotel till 4 am, and even then, his mind reeled with images and ideas for a collection inspired by the great Dutch impressionist and the works of Paul Signac, one of the pioneers of pointillism.

"It looked like paint had been



**RAHUL
MISHRA**

His new collection
is inspired by
Vincent van Gogh's
Sunflowers

BANDEEP SINGH

sculpted over canvas. These were thick brush strokes. I took hundreds of pictures. When you go to museums, there are protocols. Here, you could view the paintings from close quarters," he says.

Now, Mishra is readying the creations inspired by that Paris rendezvous for his next show in the City of Lights in March, daring to emulate not only one of the world's greatest and most recognised paintings, but also fashion legend Yves Saint Laurent—who incorporated Van Gogh's sunflowers on an iconic jacket in 1988. The results promise to be breathtaking.

Mishra, the first Indian to win the International Woolmark Prize, in 2014, is one of only two Indian designers to have held on to a coveted spot at the Paris Fashion Week for six years running, showcasing his collections alongside heavyweights like John Galliano and Hermes. Feted by fashion critic Suzy Menkes for his elegant use of handwork made by Indian artisans, Mishra's work on the sunflower-inspired collection prompted him to begin calling his embroiderers "his 200 Van Goghs". Along with his artisans, Mishra spent months working to recreate

MISHRA HAS HELD ON TO A COVETED SPOT AT THE PARIS FASHION WEEK FOR SIX YEARS RUNNING



the pointillist effect that Van Gogh achieved. To do so, he studied the theory and technique of impressionistic pointillism to understand the mind of the artist. "Inspiration is like a dream. It's like falling in love. The engagement happens and it is like a chain reaction," he says.

It takes Mishra's 200 Van Goghs a full day to make a single sunflower. But the stitching evokes the depth of the Dutch impressionist's thick brushstrokes, thanks to their use of three-dimensional embroidery, which uses raised knots to create textural effects. He borrowed a looping technique from traditional zardozi work, then combed it to give the flowers a velvety texture, using French knots along the edges of the flowers.

One jacket features both a Van Gogh-inspired multi-coloured sun and a boat against a blue horizon, inspired by Paul Signac, a master of landscapes. On it, Mishra strove to capture the complexity of Van Gogh's genius, who is now believed to have suffered from bipolar disorder.

"I want to leave the viewers with certain questions. They need to feel responsible," he says, adding that they should feel "sad that they never thought this could be possible with the kind of embroidery we have in India. It is all about making it mine. Even the sunflowers". ■

—Chinki Sinha

MUSIC

Sing, Muse

They say two heads are better than one. Does the same hold true for different forms of classical music? Neeta Helms would say so

When Neeta Helms came back to India seven years ago, she was delighted to find a growing demand for western classical music. "Because of the wealth of Indian classical music and dance, I guess there's never really been a vacuum," she says.

Helms is the founder and owner of Classic Movements, a concert touring company

for orchestras and choirs that performs all over the world.

After speaking with choral communities in India, Helms realised the country needed choral directors experienced both in classical music and in training choirs. And so, the India Choral Fellowship (ICF) was born. The fellowship seeks to expose people to choral music and bolster existing programmes with teachers and resources.



THEATRE

OUTDOOR DRAMA

Fed up with the artificial formality of auditorium theatre, some of Bengal's leading dramatists are tak-

ing their productions to the masses. "I'm very tired of the cliched structure of theatre. There is no soul, no body. I am trying to come out





The fellowship's first guest conductor is Grammy award-winning choral director Kevin Fox, who has spent the past two weeks training choirs in Delhi. ICF will send three more conductors later this year, with the goal of eventually sending more than 100 conductors and trainers to various cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta, Pune and Bengaluru.

Both Fox and Helms stress

that they are trying to bolster Indian classical music by sharing western voice techniques. "If it stays authentically Indian, that's marvellous," Helms says. But she would love to see a blend of both classical styles.

"This is an opportunity to open some doors," Fox says. "The world could use as much understanding and making music together as possible." ■

—Teresa Mathews

and take theatre to where it belonged: our roots of tradition and culture," says Manish Mitra of theatre group Kasba Arghya. *Urubhangam*, the group's seven-and-a-half hour play based on the *Mahabharata*, moves through five different locales over the course of the production—with the

audience travelling alongside. It begins on the edges of a crematorium, with the background of actual funeral pyres and crowds of bereaved helping create the fraught atmosphere of the Kurukshetra battlefield. As the action moves from the crematorium to the river banks, the forest and other locales, a mixed audience of villagers and the urban elite makes a physical and spiritual journey too. ■

—Romita Datta

1 **All the world's a stage**
A still from a performance of *Urubhangam*

Q & A

Tabla Rasa

Indian tabla player Sandeep Das won a Grammy in the world music category for his collaboration with renowned Chinese-American cellist Yo-Yo Ma, titled 'Sing Me Home'. The ensemble album edged out entries by Celtic Woman, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil and Indian sitarist Anoushka Shankar.

This was your third nomination. Was it third time lucky?

Luck, God's grace and blessings from my gurus—Pt Shiv Kumar Singh and Pt Kishan Maharaj. I come from a family with no musical lineage, so it was a struggle and a long journey—from Bihar to Banaras to Delhi to Boston.



SANDEEP DAS (IN RED)

GETTY IMAGES

How was this album different from other Indian collaborations?

In India, it is more cacophony in the name of fusion. While collaborating, you need to invest in each other to understand each other's music and finer sensibilities.

"I come from a family with no musical lineage, so it was a journey—from Bihar to Banaras to Delhi to Boston"

What is it like to make music in the time of Trump?

Music should be isolated from politics. The objective of music is to give peace and happiness. ■

—with S. Sahaya Ranjit



Post-war Americans

Viet Thanh Nguyen's new collection of short stories paints subtle portraits of the many shades of 'refugee'

The Refugees

by Viet Thanh Nguyen

The title of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author's new collection of short stories, *The Refugees*, is a reminder that America once welcomed those displaced by foreign wars. Its brilliantly drawn characters illustrate how fully those immigrants—mainly Vietnamese-Americans but also Mexican-Americans living in his home state of California—have embraced their new home.

In 'The Other Man', for instance, a refugee fresh from war-torn Vietnam makes his way to San Francisco. There he discovers the freedom to acknowledge his homosexual-ity, along with the complexity

of living "a civil, healthy and correct life"—as his father writes to him from communist Vietnam. Similarly, in 'I'd Love You to Want Me', an aging first generation Vietnamese-American woman wrestles with the meaning of love when senility prompts the French man she married decades before to begin calling her by another woman's name.

In 'The Transplant', a hospital error prompts a Mexican-American gambling addict to search for the man who provided the liver for the transplant that saved his life—by calling all the people named Vu in the telephone directory. Finally, a charismatic seller of 'better than genuine' watches and



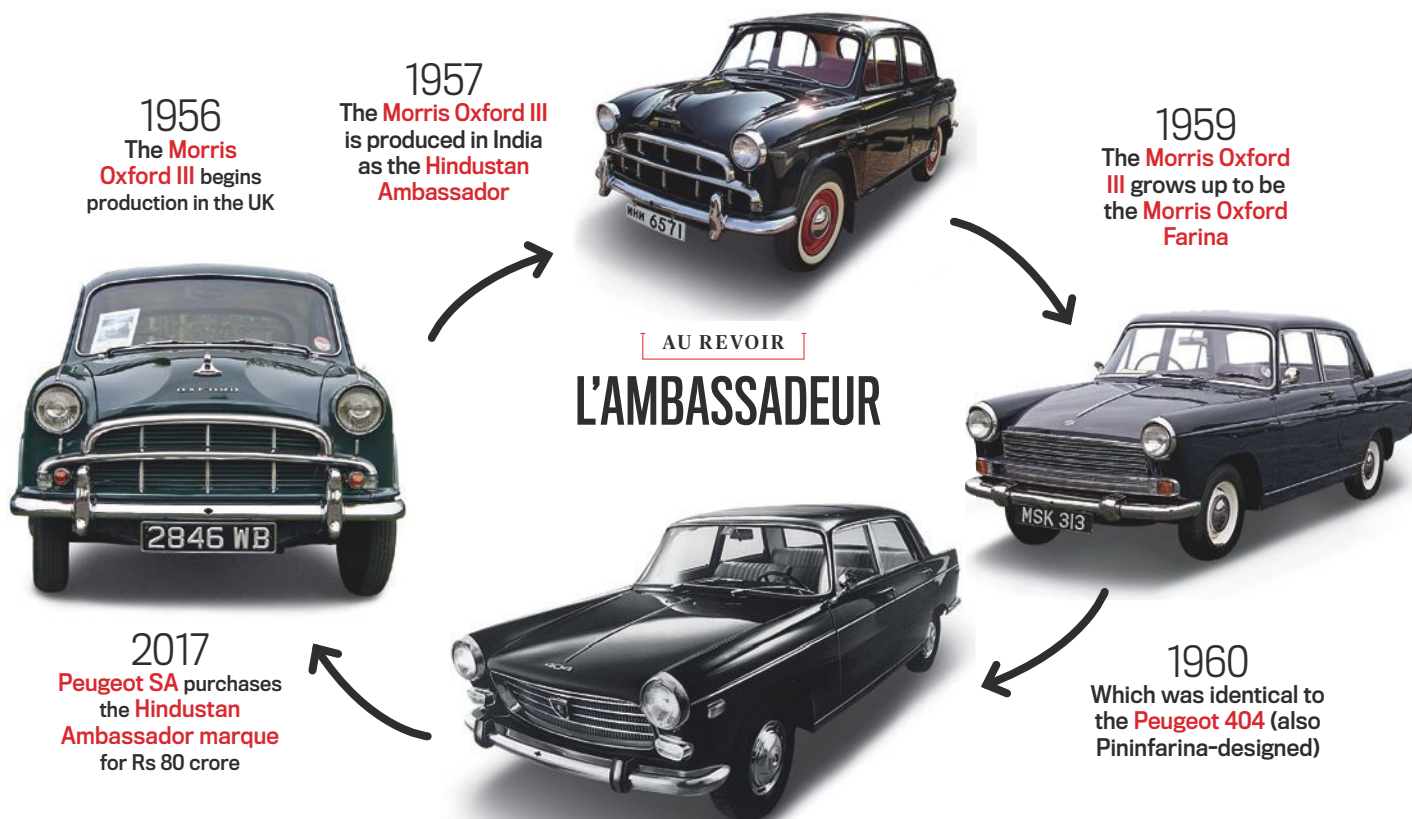
handbags tells him, "I'm the man you're looking for, Mr Arellano." The two men forge an unlikely but life-affirming friendship that is doomed to destruction when the real donor appears, and Arellano learns 'Louis Vu' is not even really Vietnamese.

That subtle joke hints at Nguyen's purpose in this collec-

tion—which eschews the stereotypes that can make what American publishers call 'ethnic' fiction so irritating. When he first learns the donor's name, Nguyen notes that Arellano, who is "afflicted with a... common astigmatism wherein all Asians appeared the same", had "fallen back on his default choice when confronted with [the] perplexing problem of [identifying] an Asian" to decide that Vu must be Chinese. Then, at the big reveal, Louis Vu tells him he was right, but that he'd "never been to China. I can barely speak Chinese. So what does that make me?"

The answer, of course, is American. And human. ■

—Jason Overdorf

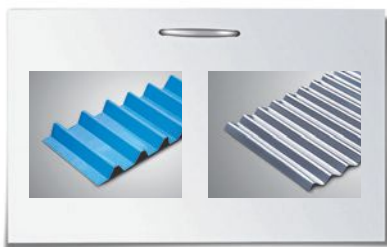


SPOTLESS ROOF

EVERLAST ALUMINIUM ROOF
LOOKS BEAUTIFUL ALWAYS



NETWORK HEL699.16



AVAILABLE IN A VARIETY OF COLOURS

Everlast Aluminium Roofing Sheets come from Hindalco – the world leader in Aluminium rolled products. Made from the best quality virgin aluminium alloys, Everlast Sheets are rust-proof and thus remain spotless and beautiful forever. Everlast Roofing Sheets are also durable, have excellent thermal properties which keep the temperature cooler and repay up to 80%* value on end-of-life resale. With so many benefits, installing an Everlast Aluminium Roof is a smart choice.

Protection for a lifetime.

- RUST-PROOF • CONTROLS TEMPERATURE
- NO MAINTENANCE • GREAT RESALE VALUE

GREEN METAL



IDEAL ROOFING AND CLADDING SHEETS FOR:
INDUSTRIES • WAREHOUSES • FARMS • RAILWAYS • PLANTATIONS • BUILDINGS

*Based on metal value only. May vary with fluctuations in market prices.

HINDALCO
Everlast
Aluminium Roofing & Structurals

Nothing lasts as long as Everlast

ENDLESSLY
RECYCLABLE

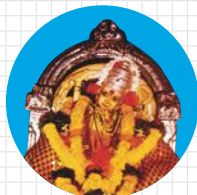
For more information, please call: 1800-103-9494. E-mail: hindalco.everlast@adityabirla.com | www.everlastaluminiumroofing.com

[GLOSSARY]

Everybody's Shivaji

Much remains unknown of the life of the great 17th century warrior king. Even the date of his birth is uncertain—falling either on February 19 or April 6. In either case, on the 390th anniversary of his birth, here's some of what we do know...

HISTORICAL

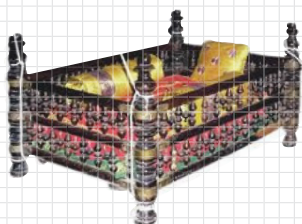


Shivaji was named after local deity Shivaai Devi of Shivneri fort, Pune, and not after Lord Shiva

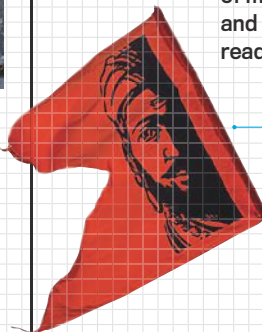
Shivaji died at age 53 as a result of fever, dysentery and blood vomit, which continued for 12 days. After that, he slipped into a coma. Nobody knows why



When was he born? April 6, 1627 or February 19, 1630? Maharashtra goes by the latter



The weight of evidence is in favour of the view that Shivaji was unlettered, like three other heroes of medieval India—Akbar, Hyder Ali and Ranjit Singh. Nobody saw him read or write



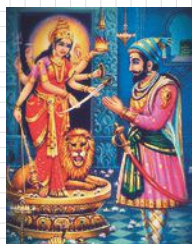
Historian James Laine's book was banned in India in 2003 for suggesting that Shivaji's parents were estranged at the time of his birth

CONTROVERSIAL

Shivaji was said to be short, but tall was he? There is no clarity on this, but estimates range from 4 feet 9 inches to 5 feet 4 inches



What was his origin? Shivaji and his Maratha Bhosale family were descendants of Sisodia Rajputs of Rajasthan, say some. Others link him to the Hoysala Yadavas of Karnataka



Was his Bhavani sword really a divine gift? The weapons identified as his were made of the finest Toledo steel, brought to India by the Portuguese

POLITICAL

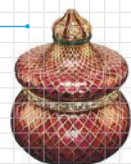
His Brahmin guardian Dadaji Konddev's name was taken off school textbooks in Maharashtra in 2010, after protests by some Maratha groups

Maharashtra politicians talk of retrieving Shivaji's sword from the Royal Collection in London, but it was a gift from his descendants to King Edward VII



Was he poisoned by his ministers for flouting the caste hierarchy in claiming the title of 'Chhatrapati'? Shivaji's eldest son, Sambhaji, had some of them executed for conspiracy

Was he poisoned by his second wife, Soyara Bai? After Shivaji's death in 1680, she had put her 10-year-old son on the throne. She was put to death by Sambhaji



SPECULATIVE



USABLE ART
A view of the
decoration pavilion



ART FAIRS

DESIGNING
THE FUTURE

I often wonder why people do not have vociferous opinions about the architecture of Delhi. Clothes, fashion, film, food and music draw a lot of engagement from all kinds of people, but architecture does not, despite impacting their everyday lives. The city is like an unfinished jigsaw puzzle, where through the centuries, outsiders and conquerors have arrived to mould it in their own image. Even the British tore down stretches of the city after the Revolt of 1857. More recently, the BRT's construction (and demolition) has added to the urban nightmare. Who does not feel a visceral punch in experiencing a fractured city like Delhi?

But there is hope. The design and art fairs being held these days are increasingly popular. I would like to believe that the fairs these past few years have shown that good urban design can improve lives. If this is Dalrymple's 'city of djinns', perhaps it is fitting that the design fairs also appear like genies, once a year, at NSIC in Okhla. To get there, one must negotiate the traffic of Govindpuri, an area that always looks like it's celebrating National Decay Day. Then, rounding the metro flyover, the squalor suddenly stops. You find yourself in a dusty parking lot, with ushers eager to direct you to a vision of the future in a pavilion some distance away. Hopefully, that future will not remain just a vision. ■

**I'd like to
believe the
fairs have
showed good
design can
improve lives**



—Madhu Pandit



BOOKS

Korean
Gothic

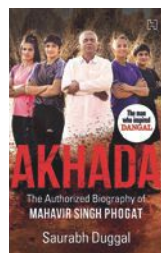
Korean poet and novelist Han Kang has been an esteemed literary figure in her homeland for decades. In 2007, she published a slim tripartite story about a woman who decides, to the mystification and then anger of her husband, to forgo meat because she'd "had a dream". It's a novel of extreme violence, both physical and psychological, but also deep sensual pleasure. In 2010, it became an acclaimed film, and five years later, was translated into English as *The Vegetarian*, winning the Man Booker International prize in 2016. In Han's hands, a woman's ordinary, if sudden, decision to become vegetarian becomes an allegory for refusal, anger, control, subversion, death and desire. The translation by Deborah Smith, a young British woman who admitted to picking Korean on a whim, is both vivid and beautiful.

Human Acts, also translated by Smith, addresses a central event that occupies Han's writerly conscience. In May 1980, in the city of Gwangju, students had demonstrated against Chun Doo-hwan, a general who had seized power in a coup. The rebellion was suppressed and hundreds were tortured or killed. Han writes: "When my gaze fell upon the mutilated face of a young woman, her features slashed through with a bayonet... some tender thing deep inside me broke. Something that, until then, I hadn't even realised was there." ■

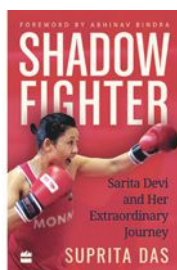
—Shougat Dasgupta

TO BE A CHAMPION

India's sporting revolution has hit the publishing industry. But as a flurry of new sports biographies reveals, most Indian athletes are still just trying to break out of poverty. Most will find themselves stymied by the same nepotism and parochialism that holds back the country's progress in other areas



MAHAVIR SINGH PHOGAT
Fake gets real in Akhada, Saurabh Duggal's authorised biography of the wrestling coach who inspired Dangal. Less polished than Shadow Fighter, it offers similar insight into the problems plaguing Indian sport



SARITA DEVI

Shadow Fighter by journalist Suprita Das delivers the stiffest jab of this crop—providing not only a biography of a champion but also an intriguing primer on sport and the simmering insurgency in Manipur



THE GREAT KHALI

A (relatively) small star on a big stage, the giant WWE grappler Dalip Singh Rana—or The Man Who Became Khali—emerges as an endearing Horatio Alger in this as-told-to autobiography (co-authored by Vinit K. Bansal)

HERITAGE

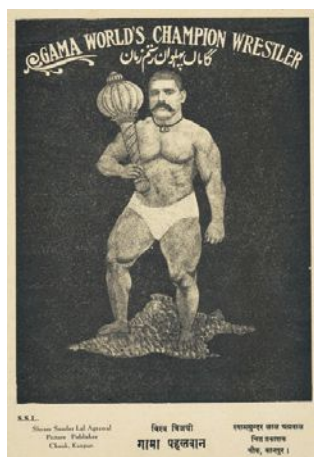
A VILLAGE OF ARTISTS

Though the Cholamandal Artists' Village is no longer a place of bucolic charm, its Bohemian spirit still survives

The Cholamandal Artists' Village, on the outskirts of Chennai, is celebrating its 50th year anniversary with an exhibition of paintings and sculptures from the largely forgotten Madras Movement, begun in the late 1950s. Spearheaded by the late K.C.S. Paniker, who also founded the artists' village, the regional art movement consisted of students from the Madras School of Arts & Crafts, where Paniker was principal, and led to the discovery of "new premises for contemporary Indian art", according to art historian Josef James. Opened February 6 and running through March 20, the exhibition chronicles the 50-year desi Bohemia created in 1966 by artists including K.M. Adimoolam, V. Viswanadhan, C. Dakishnamoorthy and K. Jayapala Paniker. "The idea was to create awareness about the movement and about the village," explains M. Senathipathi, president of the Cholamandal Artists' Village.

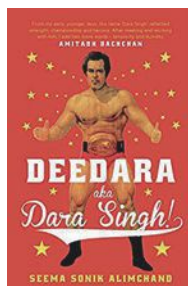
When the village first came up, the artists built their own huts with thatch and bamboo, surviving without electricity and little food. But they were fired by Paniker's exhortation to be open to western art while drawing sustenance from tradition. Today, that rustic appeal has disappeared from the bustling village of concrete houses. The latest addition is the Cholamandal Cultural Centre, with studios and apartments for visiting artists, a gallery of contemporary art, and a gallery that artists can rent. Bohemia still, but with a gentle corporate face. ■

—Madhu Jain



GAMA PEHLWAN

The Great Gama aka Ghulam Muhammad Butt aka Rustam-e-Zamana became 'World Champion' in 1910 after defeating Polish strongman Stanislaus Zbyszko (by default—Zbyszko failed to turn up). One of the first subcontinental celebrities, Gama moved to Pakistan after the Partition and retired in 1952. G.D. Birla is said to have provided him a pension. No one's written a book on him yet, though there have been rumours of a biopic starring John Abraham. And many tourists return from Ladakh scratching their heads over those cautionary road signs about being a Gama in the land of the Lama. Now you know.



DARA SINGH

In Deedara aka Dara Singh, Seema Alimchand treats the scripted theatrics of professional wrestling as genuine sport. But it's the hero's rise from poverty to Bollywood stardom that marks him as a real champion



REMEMBER THE GREATS
The K.C.S. Paniker
Museum of the
Madras Movement



SKI FESTIVAL

IT'S SNOWTIME, FOLKS

This year, **Jammu & Kashmir** kicked off a 15-day **snow festival in Gulmarg** close on the heels of avalanches that killed more than 20 soldiers on both sides of India's disputed border with Pakistan.

Bad timing? Maybe. But despite the avalanches and an uptick in militancy, India's only world-class snow town is safe to ski, says Luke Smithwick—the contracted Snow Safety Officer with the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism in the Gulmarg ski area since 2005. “I issue a daily backcountry avalanche advisory on my personal website: gulmarg-avalanche-advisory.com. The response service is the best it can be here,” says Smithwick. The ski patrol trains daily in avalanche rescue, first aid and backcountry rescue, and Smithwick has a team of expert guides to shepherd country-skiers through the deep powder on the upper mountain. Such safety measures have prevented major incidents since operations began more than a decade ago. Gulmarg has become India's most sought-after skiing destination, thanks to a state-of-the-art gondola and helicopters that ferry elite skiers to untouched powder. With the helicopter service down due to militancy this year, there have been fewer foreign visitors, says outfitter Hilal Ahmed Kolu of Gulmarg Ski.com. But tour operators still hope to match 2015's figure of 5,000 foreign skiers. ■

—Anil Nair



Eating, Mumbai-style

The ‘Bombay-style’ restaurant is dying a slow death in the city of its birth, with stalwarts like Dhobi Talao's Bastani & Co. and Brabourne already gone and others like Kyani and Sassanian barely limping along. But elsewhere around the country, slick faux-Bombay-style diners are booming—giving a new twist to Irani favourites like brun maska and keema pao, along with Mumbai street food classics like dabeli and bhelpuri. Even in London and New York, joints like Dishoom, Talli Joe and Paowalla are taking a bite of the ‘schmaltz-y’ pie.

—Raul Dias



Café Irani Chai, Mumbai

The first new Irani restaurant to open in Mumbai in 50 years, this modest café sits along a tiny lane in Mahim. It's a shiny, new portal into a moth-eaten era, with its glass countertop bearing egg trays and glass jars of bull's eye peppermint candy and Parle G biscuits. The Irani zereshk polow and mutton paya soup are best washed down with a Pallonji brand ginger or masala soda, or, better still, a piping hot (chipped) mug of Bournvita!



Rustom's, Delhi



A smallish Parsi mom-n-pop eatery gone a wee mod. Run by former food writer and bawi, Kainaz Contractor and former hotelier Rahul Dua, Rustom's claims to go beyond the ubiquitous dhansak and salliboti offerings of most so-called Parsi restaurants

Soda Bottle Opener Wala

An early entrant, Soda Bottle Opener Wala (SBOW) has now sprung up in several Indian cities, with the newest being readied, ironically, in the Irani café stronghold of South Mumbai's Colaba neighbourhood.



Gymkhana 91, Mumbai

A place that has an 'Old Boys' Club' feel without being stuffy. Sip a vodka-based Rustom nu soda and snack on the whimsically named Parsi-style Rati Aunty's chutney edupattice or **Byculla's chicken Russian cutlets**



The Bombay Canteen, Mumbai

A real heart beats beneath the Parsi-style terracotta tiles here, thanks to Cardoz's innovative takes on the utchi dabeli bada pao sandwich and **seafood bhelpur**



Dishkiyaon, Mumbai

Here, Chef Clyde Comello takes on classic favourite vada pav and transforms it into a deconstructed vada pav salad, while the beer-bar staple chakna becomes **chanachur garam**, complete with micro greens

SPORT

HOCKEY'S HIGHEST PRIZE

Not long ago, you might have been forgiven for not knowing that anyone in India actually played the sort of hockey that involves skates, a puck and frozen water. But a national championship that is played at 3,500 metres above sea level, in Leh, is already a decade old.

In the final match of this month's championships, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) edged out the local Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC)-Red with a penalty shot, following a scoreless 70-minute game and no result in extra time.

There are other signs of life in the sport as well. With an American coach who was once affiliated with the US National Hockey League's New York Islanders, the underfunded Indian national team—which has an advantage over the Jamaican bobsled squad of *Cool Runnings* (and Winter Olympic) fame, in that India does actually have some ice—has been competing with Asian rivals like Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates since 2009. Some may recall *Speedy Singhs*—a forgettable Hindi film about an ice hockey team with Akshay Kumar. A documentary is also in the works, titled *Fighting on Ice*, telling the stories of India's real-life ice hockey stars. ■

A national ice hockey championship played in Leh is already a decade old

—Jagdish Singh

PLUCKY CHAPS

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police team in action; ITBP won the match on penalties



Q+A

Entrancing Melodies

Anoushka Shankar, musician,
on playing, listening and dancing

Q: Are you doing anything new for your 'Land of Gold' show?

A: More technological responsibility. I have a full pedal set-up, like a guitarist. I retrained to play sitting with my feet down rather than cross-legged.

Q: How does that affect your performance?

A: I can make live loops of my own playing and create myriad sound effects. It really broadens my way of thinking when I play, as it makes my instrument's capabilities less linear and more immersive. I love it.

Q: Top three albums of 2016?

A: These weren't all released in 2016, but: Ibeyi's debut album; 'Carrie and Lowell' by Sufjan Stevens; and the incredible EP collaboration between Nils Frahm and Olafur Arnalds.

Q: Does dancing to Goa trance still have a place in your life?

A: Yes! I found my spirit on the dance floor of trance festivals when growing up. It's so much about dancing freely in response to music.

Q: A typical day at home in London with your husband (Joe Wright)?

A: In winter, I love to stay in, watching movies and cooking. In the summer, we love having people over or getting out to one of the parks.

—with Anees Saigal



Copyright Yuval Hen / DG



IS YOUR HOME LOAN BURNING A HOLE IN YOUR POCKET ?

SIMPLY SWITCH YOUR HOME LOAN TO SBI



0% Processing
fee



No hidden charges,
complete transparency



Higher eligibility and
lower EMIs



Upgrade to your new home
with a Bridge Loan



Loans upto 90%
of property value



Reduced
interest burden

Conditions apply

For more information, call 1800 425 3800/ 1800 11 22 11 (Toll Free) / 080 – 2659 9990

For instant approval visit www.onlineapply.sbi.co.in or download SBI Loans app

Follow us on:      

INDIA TODAY

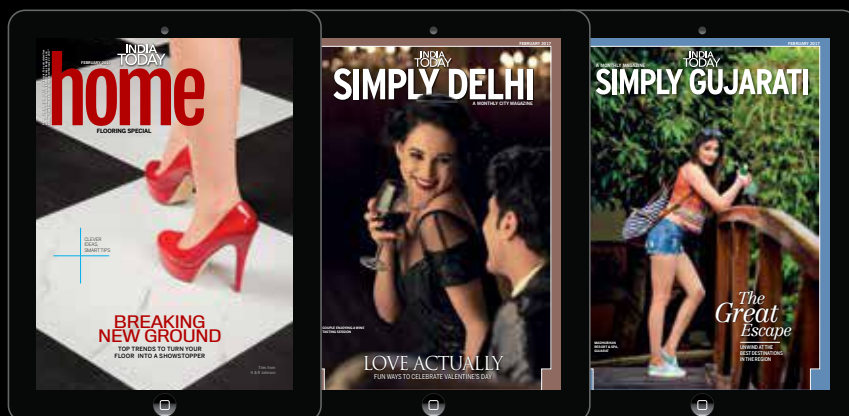


DIGITAL EDITION

THANK YOU FOR READING



PLEASE CONTINUE TO YOUR FREE MAGAZINES



FEBRUARY 2017

INDIA
TODAY

home

FLOORING SPECIAL

CLEVER
IDEAS,
SMART TIPS

BREAKING NEW GROUND

TOP TRENDS TO TURN YOUR
FLOOR INTO A SHOWSTOPPER

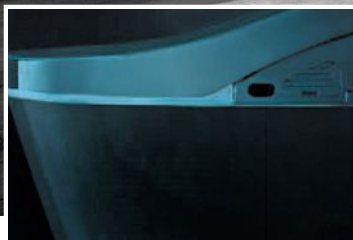
Tiles from
H & R Johnson

FRENCH ELEGANCE FOR YOUR BATHROOMS.

*Introducing the new French Collection
luxury sanitaryware from Somany.*

aCe
High IQ Toilets

*Not just a toilet.
A genius.*



Night light



Remote control



Function indicator

FRENCH COLLECTION
by **SOMANY**

ODETTE | VENETA | DIOR | VIDA | PRADA | NICE | ENZO | RENEE | QUEST



Somany Ceramics Ltd. Marketing Offices: AHMEDABAD: 079-27661103 • NOIDA: 0120-4627900
Visit us: www.somanyceramics.com | E-mail: marketing@somanyceramics.com | Toll Free No.: 1800-103-0004
Mobile Nos.: North Zone: 9268575306 East Zone: 9238422001 West Zone: 9223171882, South Zone: 9282248050

INDIA TODAY home

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Aroon Purie
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Ashish Bagga
GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Raj Chengappa
EDITOR-AT-LARGE: Kaveree Bamzai
GROUP CREATIVE EDITOR: Nilanjan Das
GROUP PHOTO EDITOR: Bandeeep Singh
DEPUTY EDITOR: Prachi Bhuchar
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Ridhi Kale
PHOTO RESEARCHERS: Prabhakar Tiwari
 and Satish Kaushik
ART DIRECTOR: Rajeev Bhargava
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR: Vipin Gupta
PRODUCTION: Harish Aggarwal
 (Chief of Production), Naveen Gupta,
 Vijay Sharma, Prashant Verma

PUBLISHING DIRECTOR:
 Manoj Sharma
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER (IMPACT):
 Anil Fernandes
SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER (IMPACT):
 Jitendra Lad (West)
GENERAL MANAGERS:
 Upendra Singh (Bangalore)
 Velu Balasubramaniam (Chennai)
 Kaushiky Chakraborty (East)

GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
 Vivek Malhotra



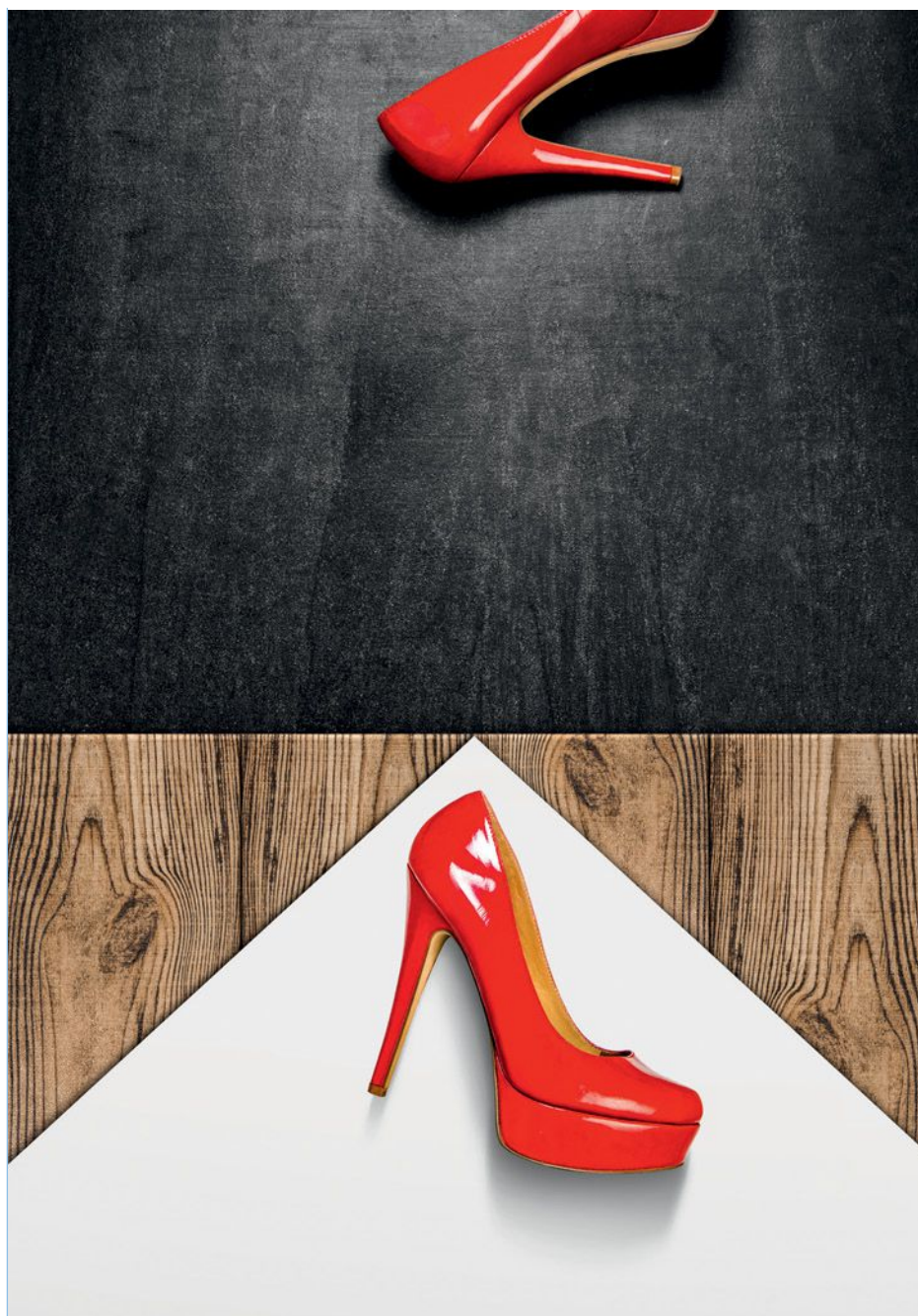
VOL. 12 NUMBER 2; FEBRUARY 2017

Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.

Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited, 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana); A-9, Industrial Complex, Maraimalai Nagar, District Kancheepuram-603209, (Tamil Nadu). Published at K-9, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110001. Editor: Kaveree Bamzai.

● India Today does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH BANDEEP SINGH
 PRODUCTS H&R JOHNSON



Photograph by Bandeeep Singh

6 flooring special

PATH FINDER

From mimicking the look of wood to marble, ceramic tiles are ruling the floor, an expert from H&R Johnson jots down top trends in this space



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY Notion

design | 8

WOOD YOU KNOW

Dark or light, planks or board, engineered or right off the bark, wood remains a favourite

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY Raya Shankwalker Architects



style | 16

MIXED AND MATCHED

Minimal, eclectic and full of colour, three settings by interior designer Neeta Kumar



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY Inhabit

gadgets | 24

GIZMO GAGA

From a coffee maker to an electric blanket, top five tech toys of the month



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY KitchenAid

20 | restoration

A NEW LOOK

Mixing old world charm and modern aesthetics, this 19th century villa in Goa by architect Raya Shankwalker stands out

plus

4 LAUNCHES

26 LAST LOOK

röyale

asianpaints

CROSSROADS
FROM **ROYALE PLAY.**

HANDCRAFTED. JUST AS
TRUE MASTERPIECES ARE.

PLAY
SPECIAL EFFECTS PAINT

BORN
to
DECORATE



ANIMAL ATTRACTION

Walking on the wild side has become easy. Wisma Atria Interiors by Nomita Kohli has introduced an Animal Inspired Furniture Collection. On display are tables, decorative pedestals and cocktail cabinets made using wood with gold, silver, deco walnut and bronze finish. Featured here is a table whose legs have been replaced with an elephant head. **PRICE** on request; **AT** www.wismaatria.in



I Spy

Your guide to the
hottest new stores
and products

Text by RIDHI KALE

▼ DINNER SERVICE

With plates as pretty as these, it feels like a crime to eat off them. The plates in question are part of Address Home's new Mehr Collection. Inspired by the richness of Persian art from Isfahan in the Safavid era, the turquoise and gold dinnerware is crafted from the finest porcelain with a 24 carat real gold decal on it. On offer are dinner plates, quarter plates, portion bowls (katoris), medium bowls, small bowls and round and oval platters.

PRICE ₹36,000; **AT** www.addresshome.com





LITTLE LEAGUE

Small in size, big on style. Freedom Tree has launched the Kids Collection with hand drawn illustrations printed on textiles, dhurries, bed linen and cushions. The collection spills over onto hand-painted bowls and glasses. Sweet pink, mint, aqua and cool green are edged with a smart black and white.

PRICE on request; **AT** www.freedomtree.co.in



SAFE & SOUND

Godrej Locks has launched the Pentabolt Aries, a multi-bolt main door lock. It uses spring less mechanical technology (EVVA technology), which leads to 30 trillion key combinations, making it impossible to duplicate the key.

PRICE ₹11,000 onwards
AT www.godrejlocks.com

FANCY FABRICS

Whether you like the expensive fish eggs or not, RR Decor's latest furnishings collection titled Caviar will certainly steal your heart. It has an eclectic range of designs that capture the spirit of art.

PRICE on request; **AT** www.rrdecor.com



Awarded by Research & Process Evaluators, WRC in Electrical Appliances category.



Elegant
WOOD COVER FRAMES

Gift a luxurious appeal to your house with our nature inspired range in wood, stone, glass, leatherite and metal finishes, combined with a dash of white, graphite grey and carbon black switches and accessories.



KOLORS
make life better



Corp. Office : Cosmo Electro Industries Pvt Ltd, Mumbai - 53

T : (022) 2631 1476 | Toll Free : 1800 221470

SMS : KOLORS to 56161

Branches:

Mumbai : (022) 2205 0705 | Bengaluru : (080) 2220 8806

Kolkata : (033) 2225 2762 | Ghaziabad : (0120) 4248 752

Ernakulam : M : 9995449437 | Patna : (0612) 267 7883

Ranchi : (0651) 2561140 | Chennai : M : 9940099168

Guwahati : (0361) 2233791 / M : 09864423048

W : www.kolorsswitches.com

E : sales@kolorsswitches.com

Follow kolorsswitches on : [f](https://www.facebook.com/kolorsswitches) [You Tube](https://www.youtube.com/kolorsswitches)

Perito floor tiles
from H&R Johnson

ART UNDERFOOT

Floors say a lot about your home. Dinesh Vyas from H&R Johnson, one of the oldest tile manufacturing brands, talks about trends in this space.



DINESH VYAS
Vice President
H&R Johnson
hrjohnsonindia.com

Since H&R Johnson established in India in 1958, we have prided ourselves in staying ahead of the design curve. The brand offers over 20 sizes, nine different levels of tile thickness and 15 surface finishes to suit the functional and aesthetic requirement. H&R Johnson tiles are available under four sub-brands, Johnson Tiles, Johnson Porcelano, Johnson Marbonite and Johnson Endura. The brand therefore has several categories in tiling solutions for residential interiors and exteriors, offices and malls, and industrial and landscaping requirements. It also offers various types of specially tiles for floors needing specific functional attributes like external wall cladding tiles, swimming pool tiles, tough tiles for outdoors as well as various types of tiles for manufacturing setups and commercial spaces, anti static floor tiles, germ free tiles as well as tac tiles for the visually impaired people. Let's take a look at flooring trends for 2017.



Combi Deco Design Concepts lead to mesmerising surface aesthetics and break the monotony

Large sizes in commercial and residential spaces

One of the trends that will dominate is large size tiles in commercial and residential interiors. The sizes 60cm x 120cm and 80cm x 120cm are most preferred as they provide a seamless look to the floors and reduce the number of joints on the floor. There are some options that are larger, but those come with their own limitations related to handling and installation apart from managing a slight bend, which is inherent in ceramics.

Polished double charge slabs

Today polished double charge slabs in matte or rustic finish are in demand. Marble, wood, other natural stone themes dominate the portfolio in varied finishes like highly reflective and soft satin. The international trend of creating beautiful flow in the floor decoration needs such coordinated decor elements.

Natural, pastel shades rule

Natural, real and warm tones are hue inspirations that will make waves this year. More earthy looking colours give the look and feel of nature. It provides freshness with the right amount of warmth.

Cement, wood and Narita stone leading themes

Opt for natural looking stone and wood tiles, which give your home a rustic and a distinctive look. They are also cost effective, since natural stone and wood are expensive and difficult to maintain.

Patterns and textures break the monotony

Standing out is an evergreen trend. The easiest way to do



Bellevue wood and Bellevue wood decor from H&R Johnson give the room a bespoke appeal

this? Use beautiful carpet type geometric patterns to break the monotony of regular patterned floors.

Bright interiors in white

Tiles in white give the illusion of spaciousness and the versatility to match with any kind of decor.

While making a decision on flooring options, one should always remember that not only are tiles extremely durable, they are also easy to install and maintain. Further, an ideal home is one which connects all spaces; so choose a tile theme (colour, size, motif and pattern), which synchronises well with your interiors.

Ash nordic plank
from Junckers has a
beautiful light hue



HOME | FLOORING SPECIAL

TIMBER LAND

Should we keep knocking on wood? Despite the fact that they are not easy to maintain, nothing spells sophistication more than this type of flooring.

By **RIDHI KALE**

There exist over 50 different species of wood to choose from. Homeowners often find themselves confused when selecting from a vast array of woods available in the market. Of course, presence of flaws like knots, wormholes or saw marks decreases the value. Each species has a different ideal hue and degree of grain uniformity, but as a rule of thumb, the fewer the flaws, the more consistent its colour and grain, the more expensive it is. Here's why this flooring never goes out of style.

SOLID HARDWOOD, STILL A FAVOURITE

"The looks, reliability, quality and grain work of a solid wood floor cannot be matched with any other flooring. However, one should ensure that the solid wood floor is processed and the moisture content is between eight per cent and 12 per cent. This can be measured through a moisture meter," says Suresh Kumar Mansukhani, Country Manager, Indian Subcontinent, Junckers, adding, "Moisture level over 12 per cent is harmful as it allows huge expansion and contraction due to climatic conditions resulting in warpage of the flooring."



Herringbone pattern
wooden flooring
from Notion

TRY ENGINEERING IT

"Any flooring which is a combination of two to three types of different woods constructed or joined to form a wood panel is known as engineered flooring. For example, pinewood and wood veneer joined, HDF (high density fibreboard) joined with wood veneer, or plywood with wood Veneer are all engineered flooring," says Mansukhani. But there are a few cons that come with it. "The expansion and contraction in engineered flooring is different in the woods, which are joined together hence at times one can see that the upper crust expands differently as compared to the core material. Also, if the upper crust is very thin it leads to slimming down to the core material, which does not look aesthetically pleasing," says Mansukhani.

TAKE WOOD OUTSIDE

"Wooden flooring in the outdoor and bathroom areas is one of the best options," says Akash Saini, Director, Notion, a laminate and wooden flooring

TAKE CARE

Vacuuming with a rotating brush is abrasive to wood floors.

When using water, remember too much dampness can damage the floor.

Overusing steam cleaning methods removes the wax finish.

Rubber mats or rubber mesh pads dull your floor's shine and may cause discolouration.

Sun exposure can change the colour of wood flooring.

High heels leave scratch marks. Wood floors and sharp objects don't mix.

company. According to Saini, wooden flooring can work well in light moisture bathrooms such as the powder room. "Solid outdoor decking is the standard option, as it is extremely durable, needs less maintenance and capable of supporting the weight. It can be a part of garden landscaping or exterior flooring of swimming pool or decks," he adds. There are a plethora of varieties in solid outdoor decking such as soft line system, U-clip system and easy line.

PRICE ₹500 per sq ft onwards (branded solid wood flooring, thickness of 14mm in beech, oak, ash and maple);

₹350 per sq ft onwards (unbranded products from places like China, Malaysia and Indonesia);

₹200 per sq ft to ₹700 per sq ft (engineered flooring, depends on the thickness of the veneer)

AVAILABLE AT www.notion.net.in and www.junckers.com



READY TO BE FLOORED?

Whether you like traditional patterns or modern geometrics, marble finish or a wooden look, metallic sheen or digital prints, with floor tiles there's an endless sea of possibilities to choose from

By RIDHI KALE



The room looks high on style with digital tiles called Granite Nero from Kajaria

HOME

FLOORING SPECIAL

The ceiling might be the fifth wall in a room, but it is the oft-ignored floor directly below it that truly steals the show. It adds much needed character and depth to an area. From bold, bright colours, funky shapes and mesmerising stripes, to mimicking the look of wood, marble and granite, with tiles there are options galore. A look at the latest in the market from this category.

GO DIGITAL

Gres Tough designer tiles from Kajaria have been crafted by the most imaginative design minds of Spain. With this range your floors can mimic the look of everything from real marble to granite. The digital floor tiles are available in futuristic finishes, which complement every modern decor. The brand's polished tiles come with advance nano technology. The durability of Gres Tough tiles comes with 12 mm thickness, while its brilliant design can be credited to the eight colour digital machine, which brings natural variations and designs to life. The entire series is manufactured with imported glaze and inks and the advanced digital machinery helps to process the high definition prints for the unmatched clarity.

PRICE on request

AVAILABLE AT www.kajariaceramics.com

WOOD YOU LIKE THIS

A big trend in tiles is the wooden look. For this check out Duragres Faux Wood Plank Collection from Somany Ceramics, a range of decorative faux wood tiles that are a replica of wood. Apart from being eco-friendly, they have a host of benefits such as ease of installation, high durability, and incredible resistance against natural wear and tear and low vulnerability against chemicals, which makes them perfect for modern interior designs.

PRICE It starts from ₹100 and goes up to ₹170 per sq ft (available in 196x200 mm, 145x600 mm and 128x800 mm sizes)

AVAILABLE AT www.somanyceramics.com



HOME | **FLOORING SPECIAL**

Various patterned
tile options at the
Bharat Flooring store

Bathroom floor
tiles from NITCO



BE A NATURAL

Celebrating nature, that is what the year 2017 is all about. In flooring, this is done through specially designed tiles that mimic natural elements. In fact, NITCO's Designer Collection offers floor tiles inspired from various elements of nature. Like the Skiffer series that captures the power of surfaces, patterns, colours and textures formed by natural phenomenon (by winds, landslides and volcanic rocks). Then there is the Civitas series, which is inspired by stones from Jerash, a former Greco-Roman city in present-day Jordan.

PRICE ₹160 per sq ft onwards

AVAILABLE AT www.nitcotiles.in

TRADITION ON A TILE

Back to the roots is a popular decorative movement. Taking this a step further is Bharat Floorings Group with their Made in India collection inspired by the

heritage and legacy of India. On offer are, Tribal Gond range from Madhya Pradesh, Jharokha range from Rajasthan, Pashmina range from Kashmir and Modak range from Maharashtra. Each state's speciality has been translated into a bespoke tile design.

PRICE ₹195 per sq ft onwards

AVAILABLE AT www.bharatfloorings.com

SHEEN OF METAL

Metal has been growing as a favourite for flooring for a few years. What began as a simple highlighter tile has spread across the floor. A good example is the Metal.it series from the Emil Group available at Ottimo. Divided into three categories Corten (looks like naturally weathered, rusted iron), Iron (rolled iron fresh from the rolling mill) and Revival (looks like timeworn sheet metal).

PRICE ₹430 per sq ft

AVAILABLE AT www.ottimo.in

WALK ON IT

What's easy on the wallet and the environment, looks classy and is currently trending across the world? Laminate flooring, of course.

By RIDHI KALE

If wooden flooring is too expensive and tiles, too impersonal, then try the middle path, opt for laminate flooring. Developed in Sweden in the 1980s, laminates have come a long way. Today, they offer a textured appearance, so the finish can mimic just about any natural flooring option. No wonder, laminates are very popular right now. Here's all you need to know about them.

WHAT IS IT?

"Laminate flooring is a multi-layer synthetic flooring product. The core layer is comprised of wood chips or sawdust ground into a very fine powder, then impregnated in resin and hot-pressed into flat board," says Shankho Chowdhury, Executive Business Head, Decoratives, CenturyPly. The top layer has an image imprinted paper made to look it like real wood or any other pattern. "Laminate flooring simulates wood with a photographic appliqué layer under a clear protective layer," says Naresh Maheshwari, CEO, Pergo India.

Manor Oak plank
from Pergo
Sensation collection



Laminate flooring
from CenturyPly

—| **A COMPARISON**

Laminates are more economical than hardwood and engineered wood.

Unlike hardwood, it is not mandatory to use a specialised cleaner to clean laminate flooring.

Laminates tend to be more scratch and impact resistant than wooden flooring.

Laminate installation is a breeze compared to the prep, skill and time required to install tiles.

Tiles are harder and colder than laminate, which retains moderate temperature irrespective of the weather.

THE EASY CHOICE

There are several reasons why laminate has become the preferred choice for so many homeowners. “The installation of a laminate floor is one of the easiest, do-it-yourself projects. New innovations in the manufacture of this material, ensure you do not even need to use adhesive. With the exception of carpet, laminate flooring can be installed over almost any existing floor at home. As long as a moisture barrier is in place and water prevention measures are taken, it can also be installed at any grade. This removes the hassle and expense of having to remove old flooring installations before installing new laminate materials,” says Maheshwari. Further, when compared with hardwood and engineered wood, laminate flooring is the more economical and cost effective proposition. “The surfaces of the laminate floorings are finished with a high-quality stain repellent coating which makes the maintenance and cleaning process very easy and convenient. Unlike hardwood, it is

not compulsory to use any specialised cleaner to clean it,” adds Chowdhury. Further, according to Maheshwari, since laminate flooring has a ‘wear layer’ that protects the photographic layer underneath, they are highly durable and long lasting.

STAYING ON TREND

“Since the top visible layer of a laminate flooring plank is an imprinted décor paper, the actual image can be almost anything, but typically laminate floorings are manufactured to simulate the look of wood, cork, bamboo, natural stone, ceramic, or even brick pavers,” says Chowdhury. As per Maheshwari, realistic visuals mimicking traditional, exotic, reclaimed vintage looks are a popular choice with customer's today.

PRICE Starts from ₹100 per sq ft for branded players, while the Chinese products of the same category usually start from ₹70 per sq ft

AVAILABLE AT www.pergo.com and www.centuryply.com



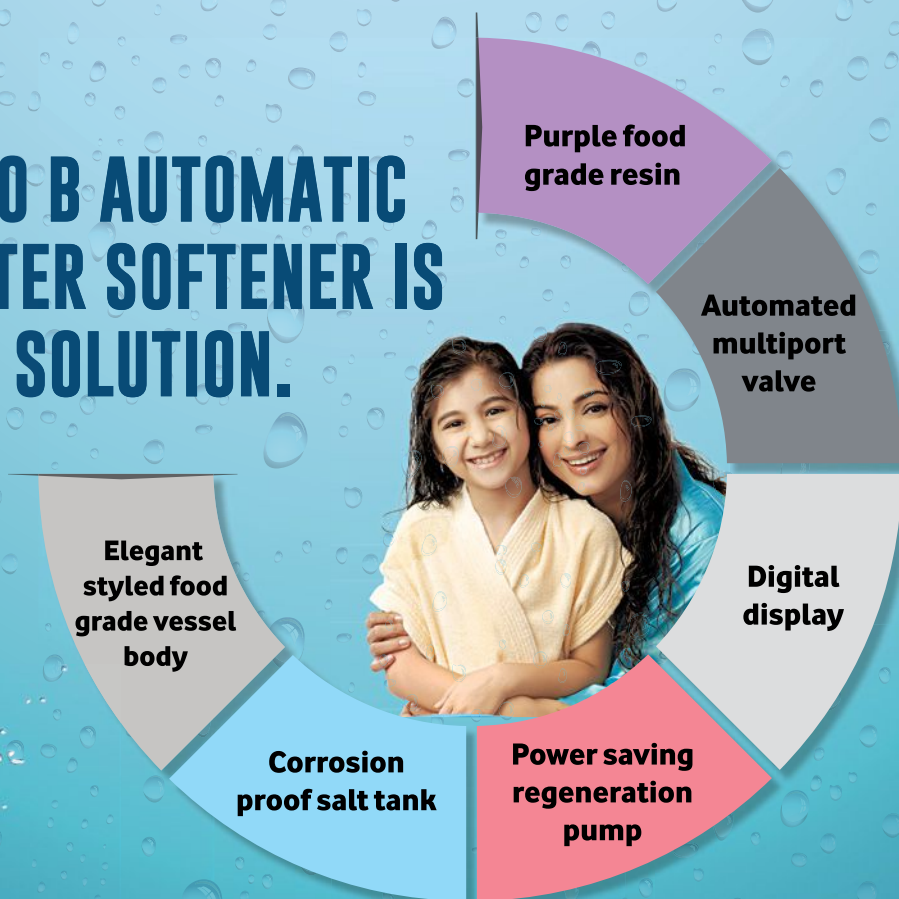
ZERO BTM
PURE WATER SOLUTIONS

Are you worried about?

- ✓ Frequent recharging of a softener
- ✓ Scaling on expensive bathroom fittings
- ✓ Hair loss
- ✓ Fading colours of your favourite garments



ZERO B AUTOMATIC WATER SOFTENER IS THE SOLUTION.



For more information:

Zero B Customer Care No.: 022 2788 1234 / SMS to Zero B 54242 / www.zeroonline.com

Zero B Water Purifier http://twitter.com/ZeroB_India

Refreshing the Planet

ECLECTIC CAN BE ELEGANT

HYDERABAD-BASED INTERIOR DESIGNER NEETA KUMAR USES THE ART OF MIX AND MATCH WITH PRINCIPLES OF MINIMALISM TO CREATE UNIQUE LOOKS

Text by RIDHI KALE



Quartz sofa. All products are from Inhabit (www.inhabit.in), prices on request

LESS IS A LOT MORE IN THE LIVING ROOM

Loud, over the top, filled with bric-a-brac, living spaces do not always have to be made of these. This living room setting shows that minimal but striking furniture, clean straight lines, dollops of colours and inspiration from tribal crafts is all you need to design a beautiful showstopper.



CORNERS ARE MEANT FOR CREATIVITY

Efficiently utilising those awkward areas (be it under the staircase, or an oddly angled corner in the living room), happens to be one of the biggest design conundrums. This setting, addresses just that. The exposed brick wall goes well with the burnt orange side wall, while the simple sofa is brought to life with colourful cushions. Pair them with offbeat pieces like a half-wood-half-tiled coffee table, cage lights, loosely hung cloth, and you have a winner.

Quartz sofa made with reclaimed teak wood; haute coffee table, made in reclaimed teak with ceramic tiles. All products are from Inhabit (www.inhabit.in), prices on request



DINE IN STYLE

Most dining spaces suffer from the malady of sameness, tightly wound in the jaded grip of boredom. If you don't know how to break-away from that just take a tip or two from this set-up. First, make a selection of different seats such as benches, chairs and sofas. Next, use the backdrop wall imaginatively, hanging everything from family photos to interesting articles you like and refurbished wooden pieces. Add potted plants for freshness, and viola you have a stylish dining room.

Haute dining table crafted from reclaimed teak wood; turquoise accent head chair; turquoise dining banquette in cane and teak. All products are from Inhabit (www.inhabit.in), prices on request

Häcker

kitchen. germanMade.

Luxury of German Engineering

...in your home



DELHI MUMBAI BENGALURU KOCHI COIMBATORE CHENNAI HYDERABAD AHMEDABAD LUDHIANA JAIPUR INDORE
9313134488 9322987229 9740999350 9895058285 9500210555 9442081111 9700058285 9879538977 9815048222 9414058718 9425803599

E-mail: info@haecker-kitchens.com

Website: www.haecker-india.com / www.haecker-kuechen.com





HOME | RESTORATION

THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

A 19th century villa on the banks of the Mandovi River in Goa retains its old world charm while adding modern aesthetics, resulting in a spectacular mix of styles



RAYA SHANKHWALKER
Architect
Raya Shankhwalker
Architects, Goa
www.rsagoa.in

Close to Panjim, in the heritage district of Ribander on the banks of the Mandovi River in Goa, stood an old dilapidated Indo-Portuguese house originally built in the early 19th century. The approximately 8,300 sq ft plot was purchased by our client with a desire to convert the heritage structure into a luxury six bedroom riverside residence.

Thus the design brief entailed retaining and restoring as much of the original structure as possible and adding an extension constituting of indoor and outdoor spaces that took advantage of the proximity to the Mandovi River.

THE DESIGN CHALLENGE

Maintaining a balance in the aesthetics between the traditional and the contemporary posed to be an interesting design challenge. Villa Ribander is a home designed to meet the comforts of day-to-day living while providing the luxuries of a weekend home. The 6,900 sq ft villa has an unassuming entrance off the main road through the original structure and it unfolds gradually, increasing in transparency as one moves through the house, to the new

Muted tones with traditional wooden finish ceiling in the living room



Traditional Balinese dining table (above); louvered shutters (below)



wing, closer to the river.

THE REVAMP REPORT

Divided between two levels, the layout of the existing home was maintained. The weak existing walls of the structure were strengthened to withstand seismic, wind and vehicular impact. The south façade of the house facing the road, had traditional smaller openings, thus receiving comparatively less natural light, housing spaces that are used less often. The exterior of the old house has been meticulously restored to its original appeal to maintain the character of the streetscape, involving extensive research on the building style of the period. Rather than emulating the design style of the original villa for the new wing, it follows a contemporary design language so that a degree of lightness and modernity is introduced into the house. The intent was to create an interesting aesthetic with the juxtaposition of new against the old. An interesting feature of the extension is an overhead bridge structure made of metal slats, to allow a view of the water body below, providing direct access from the house to the terrace. The pavilion was designed to be a light semi-open structure with folding glass walls and a vast shading canopy providing seamless views of the river and access to the outdoor spaces and infinity pool. The verandah abutting the dining area serves as a long semi-open space overlooking the tropical garden and the river beyond.

A MODERN TOUCH

The interior design of the house boasts a minimal contemporary style with modern furniture mixed with eclectic found pieces. The neutral colour palette is balanced with the use of terrazzo and wooden flooring. Careful planning and craft have produced a house that has both, the nostalgia of the past, and the practicality of the present.



THE GREAT EASTERN HOME

FINE INTERIORS



THE GREAT EASTERN HOME

BYCULLA: The New Great Eastern Mills 25-29, Dr Ambedkar Road, Near Rani Baug, Byculla, Mumbai 400 027
T. +91 22 2291 0764 / +91 22 2377 0079 M. +91 98691 64813

VIKROLI: Khanna Estate, L.B.S. Marg, Opp. HDFC Bank, Vikhroli (W), Mumbai 400 079
T. +91 22 2577 6262 / +91 22 2577 7272 / +91 22 2577 4300 M. +91 86520 00992

E. info@thegreateasternhome.com www.thegreateasternhome.com (Open all days)

Photographed on location at The Great Eastern Home.

TECH FIVE

Whether you are a gadgets veteran or a gizmo newbie, technology has percolated into all aspects of our life. A closer look at the latest devices for your home.

By RIDHI KALE



SWITCH TO THIS

With GM Modular's i-Fi switches you can control the lights, fans and blinds, turn appliances on or off and monitor their behaviour with a Wi-Fi or 3G/4G connection through the GM i-Fi App, from any part of the world. Other features include setting a timed lighting schedule for different rooms, subtle backlight (making it easy to locate it in the dark) and a function to create ambient scenes as per the mood.

PRICE ₹3,000 to ₹5,000

AT www.gmmodular.com

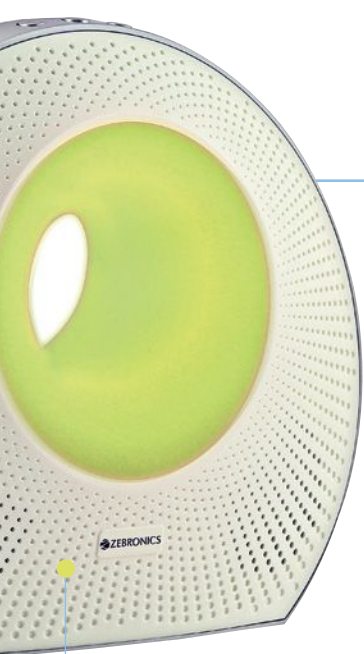
A NEW WAY TO BREW

The Siphon Coffee Brewer from KitchenAid has a brewer constructed from premium glass with stainless steel accents. Its reusable stainless steel filter is easy to clean and eliminates waste, disposable filters create. The strong magnetic interlock system secures the top and bottom carafes together, while a dual-purpose lid sits on top of the unit during brewing and can then be conveniently attached to the carafe for pouring.

PRICE ₹12,990

AT www.kitchenaid.in





DOING DUBLE DUTY

Zebronic has launched Amazer, a portable bluetooth speaker that plays a dual role. It is both a lamp and a speaker. The company has integrated app-based LED lighting (with over one million colour combinations) and music control into the speakers. It also has aux and USB support for any non-bluetooth device.

PRICE ₹3,999

AT www.zebronics.com

BREATHE EASY

Panasonic's latest colourful Air-purifiers, F-PBJ30AAD in orange and F-PXJ30AAD in blue are ideal for city living. They have 3D circulation air flow to get rid of dust and odour from the house. Beneath the colourful skin lies Nanoe technology, which filters out harmful particles, including PM2.5. They also come with a filter replacement indicator, which reminds you to replace it.

PRICE ₹11,995 (orange), ₹16,995 (blue)

AT www.panasonic.com/in



SWEET DREAMS

Beat the chill with Expressions Electric Bed Warmers. All you have to do is spread the warmer under the bed sheet and over the mattress. It comes with three warming settings and is resistive to electrical shocks, excessive power supply and over-heating. It is made from two sheets of fine weave (pre-shrunk polyester and polar fleece cloth) quilted together with bonded polyester fill.

PRICE ₹1,499 to ₹3,499

AT www.expedwarmers.com

smART

ART MEETS STATE-OF-THE-ART



HPL MODULAR SWITCHES.

ELEGANT DESIGN MEETS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY.

- ANTI-SPARK SHIELD & FINGER PROTECTED TERMINALS
- ELEGANT DESIGN
- EASY-TO-USE SNAP FIT MODULES
- TESTED AS PER BIS SPECIFICATION
- LONG-LASTING SILVER NICKEL CONTACT
 - FRONT INSERTION AND REMOVAL
- HIGH TENSILE BRASS SCREWS
- HIGH GRADE ENGINEERING PLASTIC



CHOOSE FROM A RANGE OF OVER 21 COLOURS, TEXTURES AND FINISHES.

Ab roshan
ho khushiyaan

HPL

Modular
Switch

www.hplindia.com

HOME | LAST LOOK

FOLLOW THE PAPER TRAIL



If walls could talk they would share juicy titbits and spill scandalous secrets. While that's not happening anytime soon, the least you can do is make them stand out. That's where British company Clarke & Clarke comes in. Their new non-woven wallpaper range has motifs such as pineapples, harlequin, stripe and trellis in this lively range. Mica and metallic highlights bring an interesting dimension. The collection is available in nine different designs including prints, greenery and animals.

PRICE on request
AT www.maishaa.com

Provides complete protection to your exterior wood from Humidity, Moisture & UV for many more years than you imagined.



- Excellent UV Resistance
- Excellent Moisture Resistance
- Good Scratch Hardness



MRF CORP LIMITED

Regd. & HO: Tarapore Towers, V Floor, 826, Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002.

Ph: 044 - 28521033, 28550297, 28550298 Fax: 044 - 28520912, e-mail: vapocure.ho@mrfmail.com

ZONAL OFFICES: New Delhi: 011- 45458816 / 17 Noida: 0120 - 4118411,

Kolkata: 033 - 24235175 / 141, Mumbai: 022 - 67653539 / 67707226,

Chennai: 044 - 28610022 / 0044 / 0066, Bengaluru: 080 - 23142901 / 43002 / 47981.

For more information visit us at: www.mrfpaints.com

INDIA TODAY

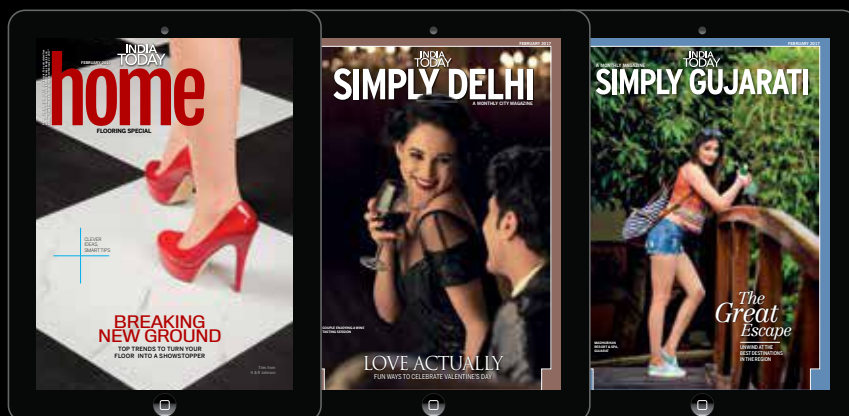


DIGITAL EDITION

THANK YOU FOR READING



PLEASE CONTINUE TO YOUR FREE MAGAZINES



INDIA
TODAY

SIMPLY DELHI

A MONTHLY CITY MAGAZINE



COUPLE ENJOYING A WINE
TASTING SESSION

LOVE ACTUALLY

FUN WAYS TO CELEBRATE VALENTINE'S DAY

Editor-in-Chief
Aroon Purie

Group Chief Executive Officer
Ashish Bagga

Group Editorial Director
Raj Chengappa

Editor-at-Large
Kaveree Bamzai

Group Creative Editor
Nilanjan Das

Group Photo Editor
Bandeep Singh

■
Editorial Team
Mohini Mehrotra, Ursila Ali

Photo Department
Vikram Sharma, Chandradeep Kumar,
M Zhazo, Rajwant Rawat

Photo Researchers
Prabhakar Tiwari, Satish Kaushik

Art Director
Jyoti Singh

Design
Vikas Verma,
Bhoomesh Dutt Sharma

Production
Harish Aggarwal (Chief of Production),
Naveen Gupta, Vijay Sharma,
Prashant Verma

Layout Execution
Ramesh Kumar Gusain,
Pradeep Singh Bhandari

■
Publishing Director
Manoj Sharma
Associate Publisher (Impact)
Anil Fernandes

■
IMPACT TEAM
Senior General Manager:
Jitendra Lad (West)
General Managers:
Upendra Singh (Bangalore);
Velu Balasubramaniam (Chennai)
Kaushiki Chakraborty (East)



COVER STORY

The Love List **s-3**
A curated list of fun things to do this
Valentine's Day

CITY BUZZ

Into the City **s-12**
Two things to look forward to

Cover photo by ©IMAGESBAZAAR

OUR PICK of the month

Sufi Fest March 24 to 26

The much-loved and awaited World Sufi Music Festival—Jahan-e-Khusrau, designed and directed by Muzaffar Ali and held under the aegis of Rumi Foundation—returns after a two-year hiatus to the city's Arab Ki Sarai. The forthcoming festival, co-presented by D.S. Puri Foundation is dedicated to Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, the patron Saint of the Punjab and the Pir of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.
AT Arab Ki Sarai, Humayun's Tomb Monuments
Time 6.30 p.m. onwards



Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things?
Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplydelhi@intoday.com



An open air dinner at
V Resorts Farmstay

SIMPLY **DELHI**

THE LOVE LIST

MAKE YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY TRULY MEMORABLE WITH THIS LIST OF FUN
EXPERIENCES AND TREATS CURATED BY SIMPLY DELHI

■ By **MOHINI MEHROTRA, URSILA ALI AND REWATI RAU**

Any day can be turned into a day of love, they say, but the special charm of Valentine's Day is unmistakably unique. While the clichéd chocolates and flowers routine is done and dusted with, there can be other unique ways to celebrate not just the day of love but the month as well. From an aphrodisiac menu to a customised hot air balloon ride, a romantic open air movie experience to a house concert, SIMPLY DELHI suggests a range of exciting things to do with your loved one this February.

PICTURE PERFECT

V Resorts Farm Stay

Imagine watching a romantic movie with your partner under a star studded sky. If you think that's not possible in Delhi, you couldn't be more wrong. At V Resorts Farm Stay, just nine km from Chattarpur metro station in Village Dera Mandi, you can enjoy a movie screening out in the open, surrounded by lush fruit orchards and water bodies, with just the sound of water and your hearts for company. Check in for a night stay if you plan to club the movie with a late night romantic candle light dinner in the garden.

AT 2 Sheesham Lane, Dera Mandi Retreat, Dera Mandi Link Road, Village Dera Mandi
TEL 01204004800
DETAILS vresorts.in

A STABLE DATE

cherishx.com

Discovering unique experiences in Delhi can be a daunting task. Taking this as a challenge, three friends, Mudit Jaju, Ichchit Agrawal and Mayank Singhania decided to launch CherishX, a website that helps you find unique experience in and around the city at the click of a button. So this V-day, we suggest you try a stable date. All you need to do is choose your preferred location (Vasant Kunj or Gurgaon), date and time, add any customisations you want, such as a cake or flower bouquet, make the payment and you are done. At the venue, you will be greeted by the host and taken to the stable, where you will get acquainted with your horse/pony and spend some time grooming and caring for

the majestic beasts. This is followed by a horse riding session together, and a picnic if you wish them to organise one.

AT Rs 2,200 per couple for horse riding only

DETAILS cherishx.com

ADRENALINE RUSH

Mystery Rooms

An hour locked in with your better half with no escape route sure sounds too romantic to be true. But here's the twist—you're locked in with your partner while trying to unravel a mystery or solve a puzzle. If this sounds like your idea of fun (or romance, if you please), head to Mystery Rooms, the city's first real life escape game. The 'room escape' game grants you one hour to solve a puzzle, find a hidden clue and escape. This might just

THIS V-DAY, WE,
SUGGEST, YOU TRY
A STABLE DATE.
ENJOY A HORSE
RIDING SESSION
TOGETHER,
FOLLOWED BY A
PICNIC.

A stable date
organised by cherishx.com



become a memorable Valentine's Day for you as you race against the clock with the sole motive of getting out of a mysterious room before time kicks you.

PRICE Starts at Rs 1,600

AT B 7/9 Rajouri Garden, Ring Road

FOLLOW THE DRAMA

Crow

What if sitting in Delhi, you too could open a portal to an alternative realm? Crow, a theatre collective marries science fiction with immersive theatre practices to give you a bizarre experience. In an immersive theatre experience, the audience isn't merely a bystander or a passive observer. They are a part of the experience. "If the venue is a house, behind each door, the audience will find a different story being enacted. The audience can then choose to be a voyeur or a participant in the story," says Prashant Prakash, 30, co-founder, Crow. On Valentine's Day, Crow will organise a lunch like no other. Expect the unexpected—murky looking dishes straight out of a fantasy novel, odd lunch mates from other planets, speaking in languages



IN AN IMMERSIVE THEATRE EXPERIENCE **THE AUDIENCE ISN'T MERELY A BYSTANDER OR A PASSIVE OBSERVER. THEY ARE A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE**

you never knew existed.

PRICE Rs 2,500 for the meal

TEL 09821462054

TICKETS insider.in/go/crow

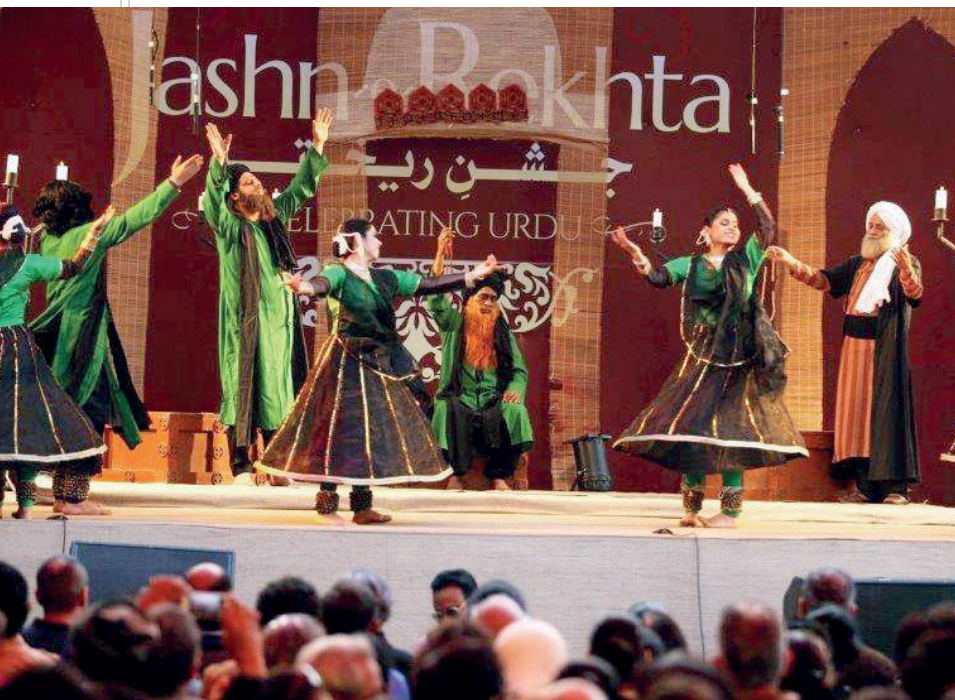
DECODING LOVE'S SYNTAX

Jash-e-Rekhta

If you have ever dabbled in writing love poems for that teenage crush, you will know that Urdu shayari was possibly the best way to express the heady rush of oxytocin

The Floating Market by Crow





A performance at Jashn-e-Rekhta

in words. In case you want to brush up your skills and learn from the masters—Ghalib, Zouk, Mir Taqi Mir or contemporary wordsmiths like Gulzar, John Elia, Wasim Barelvi and many others, head to Jashn-e-Rekhta. The festival, now in its third edition, brings a blend of a hidden side of Urdu through its *mushairas*, baithaks, Dastangoi and literary events. It is the perfect date for those who live and love Urdu in any of its myriad forms.

FROM February 17 to 19

AT IGNCA, 11 Mansingh Road, Near Andhra Bhavan

DETAILS jashnerekhta.org

COCO COMFORTS

All Things

Move over milk bars and chocolate boxes, gifting is all about artisanal chic for millennials these days. For Kuhu Kochar, 26 and Tejasvi Chandela, 27, handcrafted chocolate bars are nothing short of a canvas to express their art. The duo finds joy in the little things that make our everyday life blissful. For Valentine's Day, Chandela recommends a

combination of dark chocolate and wine to up the romance. If you are looking for an indulgent mix, go for the All Things Date Night box.

PRICE Rs 850 for the Date Night box
DETAILS theallthingshop.com

HIGH SPIRITS

Wine tasting at home

If a seven-course dinner with wine sounds passé, how about a personal wine tasting experience within the comfort of your home? And what if we tell you that this experience will also include a personal training session on wine etiquettes and brands? This Valentine's Day, enjoy this unique



HOUSE CONCERT DELHI ORGANISES A MUSIC CONCERT AT YOUR OWN HOUSE WHERE ART- ISTS CAN PERFORM WITHOUT BEING RESTRICTED TO TRADITIONAL RESTAURANTS

experience with your partner. Wi Not curates these experiences for you at your house. All you've to do is book a wine tasting experience with them and they come to your doorstep, armed with wine as well as glasses. "For couples, we have an entire session with Rose, sparkling wines and Prosecco. Our interactive sessions allow you to ask any questions that you have regarding wine," says Gurjit Singh Barry, 36, founder, Wi Not. The session which lasts for 90 minutes will have the expert tasting the wines with you. So, this time, let some fine wines start your month of love.

PRICE Starts at Rs 50,000 including wines

CONTACT gurjit@wi-not.biz

COSMIC INTERVENTION

The Lalit Mangar Observatory

The Lalit Mangar, a little over an hour's drive from the city centre is where you need to head to if you are serious about recreating the perfect date night from the movies. Grab a picnic basket on your way to the observatory, the celestial experience includes not just a starlit sky and cleaner air but also a state-of-art telescope, set up for astronomy enthusiasts. Go ahead and challenge yourself with the number of constellations you can name. At Camp Wild Road, Near Mangar Police Chowki, Gurgaon-Faridabad Road, Haryana
PHONE 01297157777



ROMANCE THE SKY

Sky Waltz

This Valentine's Day, book a customised hot air balloon tour over Neemrana Fort Palace, a 15th century heritage resort, with Sky Waltz, India's first fully licensed and Government-approved commercial hot air balloon operation. With a team consisting of highly experienced commercial pilots from across the world, they will make sure your trip up in the clouds is safe but super exciting. Book in advance if you want to make it extra special for the V-Day, for they will customise your experience with add-ons such as decorated passenger basket, champagne breakfast or toast at a select location of your choice, flower bouquet at lunch or at the landing site or even a banner declaring your love for

your partner.

TEL 9560387222

PRICE On request

DETAILS skywaltz.com/booking-balloon-safari.php

OLD LOVE

masterjikeehaveli.com

If heritage is what makes you both happy, book a customised old Delhi tour with *masterjikeehaveli.com*. Dhruv Gupta, 46, started the tour as a dedication to his late

grandfather, a Sanskrit scholar, Master Ram Kishan Gupta, aka Masterjee. On a customised tour, you can expect a trip to Dariba Kalan, Kinari Bazaar and Spice Market among others, street food tasting sessions, lunch and a complementary special meal for two in a haveli—an old private mansion in the heart of old Delhi.

DETAILS masterjikeehaveli.com
TEL 9810750217

INKED WITH LOVE

Tattoo for couples

Vikas and Mickey Malani, co-founders of BodyCanvas Tattoos are telling couples to ditch the corny name tattoos this season and experiment with the unconventional. People are moving on from the two-dimensional black ink concept and getting 3 D designs,

BOOK A CUSTOMISED
HOT AIR **BALLOON**
TOUR OVER NEEM-
RANA FORT PALACE,
A 15TH CENTURY
HERITAGE RESORT

THE LALIT MANGAR, IS WHERE YOU **NEED TO HEAD IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT RECREATING THE PERFECT DATE NIGHT FROM MOVIES**

watercolour tattoos and traditional emblems like the Mandala inked on their skin. Biker chic has paved way for abstract art forms. For Mickey, "love stays forever but a tattoo stays longer. Get matching half tattoos that complete only when you and your partner are together."

AT 13A Lake Side View, Hauz Khas Village

TEL 09819184454

SOUL SONG

House Concerts

Want to ditch the gigs in restaurants this year? Well, you can get the gig to your house, quite literally. House Concert Delhi organises a music concert in the comfort of your own house where artists can perform original music or arts without bring restricted to traditional restaurants. They get bands across genres including reggae, rock, singer-songwriter, pop, jazz and indie. "This year, we have Thomas Albert a pop singer from Mumbai and, Kalkaji to Konark comprising an Odissi dance performing alongside a mardala player accompanied by a band," says Manu Mathew, 28, founder, House Concerts Delhi.

PRICE No charge, only donations

DETAILS facebook.com/HouseConcertDelhi



An ongoing House Concert

FEAST YOUR SENSES

The Imperial, New Delhi

This Valentine's day, light up the fire in your love life as you indulge in hand-crafted aphrodisiac delicacies at The Imperial, New Delhi. Savour a South-East Asian spread at The Spice Route or embark on a romantic culinary journey at 1911 restaurant and San Gimignano lawns with a luxurious dining experience in beautiful canopies under a star lit sky. Indulge your tastebuds in exotic dishes such as shrimp and romaine salad with grapes and chocolate-coated strawberries at 1911, just to name a few.

AT The Imperial, Janpath Lane, Connaught Place, New Delhi

TEL 23341234

Aphrodisiac menu at The Imperial



TWO FOR THE ROAD

Presidential Wheels

Fancy being chauffeur driven to your favourite romantic destination with your special someone? Presidential Wheels makes this dream come true with their customised vehicles for hire. Sahdev Goil, founder, Presidential Wheels, says, "for couples, we have a fleet of modified Toyota Innova vehicles which boast of many luxurious features." The most popular trips as part of this experience are those to Agra, Damdama Lake or Neemrana. **Cost** Rs 15,000 inclusive of all taxes for the Agra trip

CONTACT presidentialwheels.com

SHAKE AND STIR

Couple cocktail classes

This year, make your cocktails and have them too. Head to Ricks, the urban lounge bar at Taj Mahal Hotel, to explore your creativity along with your special someone as their master mixologist teaches you both the effervescent art of cocktail-making using an array of tipples and innovative ingredients. The cocktail making session for couples includes four cocktails, where each uses a different base—whiskey, vodka, gin and wine.

PRICE Rs 4,500 per couple including four cocktails and handcrafted assorted canapés
CONTACT 66513245

Pandit Vishwa
Mohan Bhatt performs
at the Taalbelia
festival in Mandawa,
Rajasthan



DESERT DISCO

SIMPLY DELHI CELEBRATES A MEDLEY BETWEEN FOLK AND MODERN MUSIC THROUGH THE TAALBELIA MUSIC FESTIVAL.

■ By **URSILA ALI**



Folk dancers
liven up the
performance venue

On a cloudy January afternoon, the shifting sands of Rajasthan, which till now resonated with the folk tunes of the Manganiar and Langa tribes, married contemporary world music and gave us, the enraptured audience, a slice of other-worldly music.

» ACCEPTING DUALITIES

For us, the suave city-dwellers, the culture vulture hipsters, the music buffs who know the music scene inside-out, an indie music festival

means a chance to backpack to an exotic location and spend another weekend in the blissful company of lyrics and rhythms. But Taalbelia, the four-day festival which saw 30 artistes from across genres was anything but another indie fest. A rare glimpse into Rajasthan—a strong connection to its folk traditions, a royal heritage and an unparalleled hospitality, Taalbelia was a sapid mix of art and culture, tradition and modernity—the best of both worlds.

It would be wrong to call it a

When in **Mandawa**

- **Stay** Castle Mandawa, an erstwhile fort and now a heritage hotel or Desert Resort, a laid back retreat in the dunes
- **Eat** Pickled meat, laal maas and daal bati churma—Rajasthani classics
- **Discover** Beautiful 300-year-old frescos in havelis in the city



I The opulent Castle Mandawa

hidden kingdom, but the lesser-known jewel in the crown of the Shekhawati region is Mandawa. Till now the town has hosted many a Bollywood film productions—*PK* (2014), *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015) and *Paheli* (2005) to name a few, as well as tourists who come here on a fresco trails. A music festival was a first here.

» A SPECTRUM OF MUSICALITY

Gaurav Raina aka GRAIN, who was earlier part of electronic fusion group MIDival Punditz and now is a DJ experimenting with contemporary soundscape and lyrical melodies explains why Mandawa was the best place to host the festival. “The town lies on a biker route. The villagers are accustomed to inviting travellers with arms wide open. When you have such hospitality, acceptance to new ideas is easy,” says the music producer. It is because of this acceptance that Bhanwari Devi, a shy ghonghat-clad woman who has an astonishingly large vocal range, was able to perform bhakti songs which in Rajasthan, has been a largely male-dominated realm. Devi’s *Kathey*, made famous by MTV Coke Studio received a resounding applause. If Devi brought an authentic oriental touch, Shillong-based band,

10 ARTISTES YOU SHOULD KNOW

- 1 **Divine** Mumbai’s favourite ghetto rapper
- 2 **GRAIN** India’s newest EDM act
- 3 **Shadow and Light** Hindustani vocals and jazz merge together to create a soulful melody
- 4 **Dhruv Vishwanath** is the champion of the acoustic guitar and a multi instrumentalist
- 5 **Ankur Tiwari & the Ghalat Family** Putting the fun back in Hindi songs
- 6 **Prateek Kuhad** New kid on the Indie folk block
- 7 **Parvaaz** Rock and blues marry Urdu
- 8 **When Chai met Toast** India’s answer to Mumford & Sons
- 9 **Soulmate** A true blues band
- 10 **Sound Avatar** Dubstep done right

Soulmate was giving us the Blues quite literally. Soulmate’s vocalist, Tips Kharbangar, a modern day Janis Joplin, had us engaged throughout the hour-long gig. A festival reveler made an interesting observation, “her pipes are incredible. Her voice is possibly travelling all the way to Delhi right now”. Band member Rudy Wallang let us in on the secret of making great music. “You have

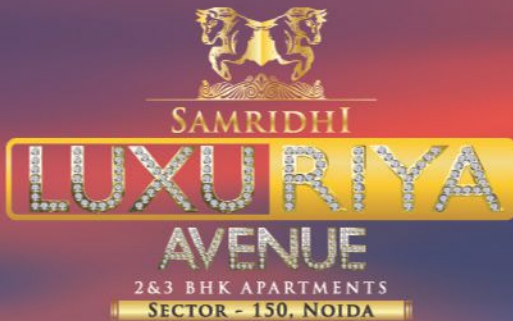
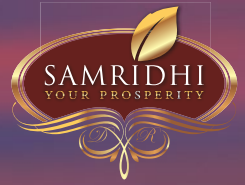
to be emotionally naked to make the Blues. It is complex to make, but easier to receive,” he says.

» RESISTANCE THROUGH BEATS

While there was a melange of rock, electronic, folk and classical, there were two acts that stood out from the rest of the genres. Reggae Rajahs, the eight-year-old Jamaican sound system, also the first of its kind in the country livened up the desert with reggae beats. “One of the big appeals of reggae is that it covers a wide spectrum of issues. We write and sing about freeing one’s mind from what we call the Babylon system (or brutal oppression of the mind), just having a good time or even ganja,” says band member General Zooz. The second was a rap act. Divine, born as Vivian Fernandes and now famous by his stage moniker, has been called a Slumdog or a ghetto rapper. Divine is aware of this classification but does not rebuke it. He is proud of his humble roots (JB Nagar slums), calls himself a “gospel rapper” and was part of the church choir. “I don’t identify with the gangster culture glorified by rappers in the west. You don’t just become a rapper by wearing gold chains and fancy shoes. I rap to represent my reality and where I come from,” says the young artiste.

SPORTS CITY

SEC.150, NOIDA

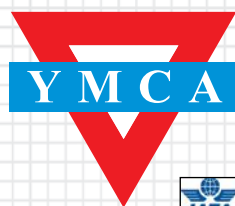


- 70% Open Area with Sports, Health & Entertainment Facilities
- Combination of Low and High Rise Floors
- Located near International Cricket Stadium
- 42 Acres Shaheed Bhagat Singh Park in Close Proximity
- Near Amity & Gautam Buddha University
- Close to Noida Sec - 150 Metro Station of Dwarka-Greater Noida route
- Direct access to Noida Expressway, Yamuna Expressway & DND flyway

SAMRIDHI GROUP

Corporate & Registered Office: 438, Jagriti Enclave, New Delhi -110092
info.samridhi@samridhirealty.com • www.samridhigroup.co.in

Call: +91-9555 99 6996
sms 'SAM' to 56677



NEW DELHI Y.M.C.A INSTITUTE FOR CAREER STUDIES

Room No. 8; 1st Floor;
Education Centre Gate No. 3;
1, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001
(Co-Education Institute)
QUALITY EDUCATION SINCE 1972
ISO 9001 : 2008 CERTIFIED

CHOOSE A COURSE OF YOUR INTEREST

DEVELOPING SKILLS
THROUGH JOB ORIENTED COURSES

**INTRODUCING EXECUTIVE RECRUITER
CERTIFICATE COURSE
CAREER OPPORTUNITIES:
EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT CONSULTANTS,
EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANTS
AND CORPORATES**

**INTERESTED IN CARGO & LOGISTICS?
COURSE ON AIR CARGO
HANDLING, LOGISTICS**

**JOB OPPORTUNITIES: CUSTOM
HOUSE AGENTS, GSA, HANDLING
AGENTS OF AIRLINES, IMPORTERS,
EXPORTERS, FREIGHT FORWARDERS,
E-COMMERCE & E-TAILERS**

**INTERESTED IN TRAVEL, TOURISM
& AIRPORT HANDLING?**

IATA Foundation, Ticketing,
Reservation System, Travel,
Tour & Tourism Courses

**INTERESTED IN HOSPITALITY
& HOTEL SECTOR?**

Courses in Hotel, Catering & Hospitality

**INTERESTED IN FLYING
& SEEING PLACES?**

Air Hostess/Flight Steward Course

**INTERESTED IN FOOD,
HEALTH & LIFE STYLE?**

Nutrition, Sports Nutrition, Dietician
and Health Management Course

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING
FOREIGN LANGUAGES?**

French, Spanish, German, Chinese
& Japanese Language Courses

INTERESTED IN SELF DEVELOPMENT?

General English, Personality
Development Courses

For further details & counselling

Please contact: 23360501,
43644028, 43644025 Between 800
Hrs & 1800 Hrs.

Visit us at : Visit us at :

www.newdelhiymca.org

Email: ics@newdelhiymca.org,

SIMPLY DELHI Buzz



1 ARTY ATTACK → FEBRUARY 1 TO 28

Latitude 28 gallery presents
'G/rove' by world renowned
artists, Krishnaraj Chonat,
Elin Vister and Nobina Gupta.

Against the backdrop of dramatic
ecological shifts that has come
to define the Anthropocene, the
exhibition will attempt to redraw
the social contract between the
human and the non-human compo-
nents of the planet. As the title 'G/
rove' suggests, the show envisages

non-anthropocentric modes of
thinking/being through mythical
and science fictional frames. By
inviting the viewer to rove through
the progressively disenchanted
forest that constitutes the world
in search of myths and utopias,
the exhibition hopes to uncover
the key to appeasing a provoked
Gaia.

At F 208 GF, Lado Sarai
Time 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

2 MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA → ON MARCH 5



One of dance music's
biggest names with
the world's most
recognisable track, *Lean On* to
its name, Major Lazer is all set to
headline this year's Mad Decent
Block Party. Joining Major Lazer
is American producer and DJ,
Dillon Francis, who is as known
for his hit productions as he
is for his uninhibited humour
on social media. The event is
organised and promoted by Oji in
association with Budweiser and
co-sponsored by Channel V.
Tickets insider.in/mdbp17 and
on Paytm. **Price** Rs 2,800



NOOR MAHAL

A FIVE STAR LUXURY HOTEL



Located on Delhi-Lahore (NH-1), 2 hrs drive from New Delhi & Chandigarh, 125 luxuriously appointed rooms and suites, Meeting rooms and nine banquets. Banqueting area of over 40,000 sq .ft . Polo, Bar
Frontier Mail Restaurant, Brown Sugar -The 24 / 7 Coffee Shop,
The 7th Heaven- Spa & fitness center & Swimming Pool.

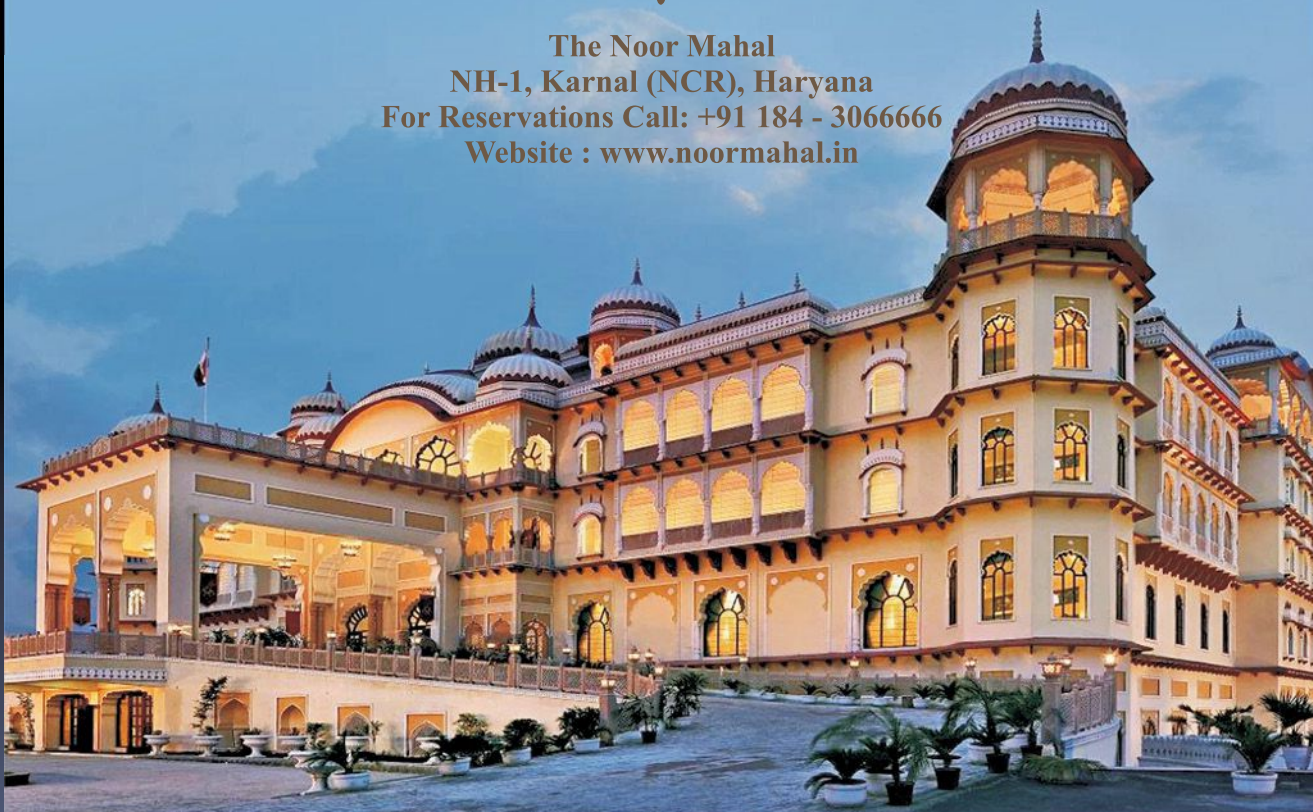


A Perfect Place For MICE :-

- * Destination Weddings, * Conferences, * Weekend Gateways,
- * Product launchings, * Movie Shootings, * Pre-Wedding Photo - Shoots.



The Noor Mahal
NH-1, Karnal (NCR), Haryana
For Reservations Call: +91 184 - 3066666
Website : www.noormahal.in



INDIA TODAY

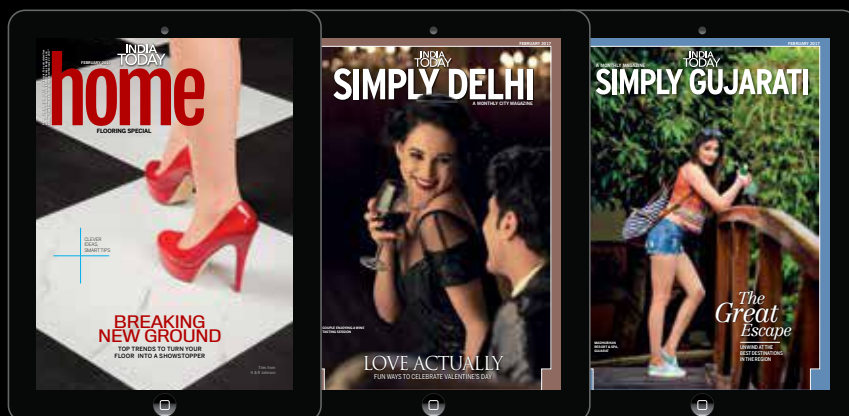


DIGITAL EDITION

THANK YOU FOR READING



PLEASE CONTINUE TO YOUR FREE MAGAZINES



A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

INDIA
TODAY

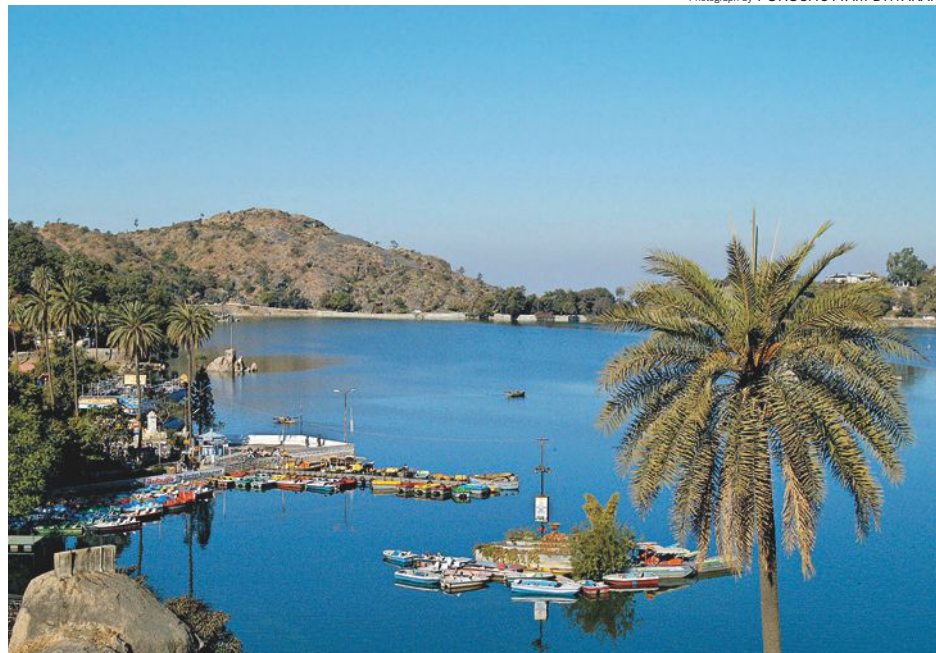
SIMPLY GUJARATI



The Great Escape

MADHUBHAN
RESORT & SPA,
GUJARAT

UNWIND AT THE
BEST DESTINATIONS
IN THE REGION

**Editor-in-Chief**

Aroon Purie

Group Chief Executive Officer

Ashish Bagga

Group Editorial Director

Raj Chengappa

Editor-at-large

Kaveree Bamzai

Group Creative Editor

Nilanjan Das

Group Photo Editor

Bandeep Singh

**Editorial Team**

Mohini Mehrotra, Ursula Ali

Photo Department

Shailesh Raval, Vikram Sharma

Photo Researchers

Prabhakar Tiwari, Shubhrojit Brahma

Art Director

Jyoti Singh

DesignVikas Verma,
Bhoomesh Dutt Sharma**Production**Harish Aggarwal (Chief of Production),
Naveen Gupta, Vijay Sharma,
Prashant Verma**Layout Execution**Ramesh Kumar Gusain
Pradeep Singh Bhandari**Publishing Director**

Manoj Sharma

Associate Publisher (Impact)

Anil Fernandes

**IMPACT TEAM**

Senior General Manager:

Jitendra Lad (West)

General Managers:

Upendra Singh (Bangalore);

Velu Balasubramaniam (Chennai)

Kaushiky Chakraborty (East)

COVER STORY**Pack, Set & Go****s-4**

Find the best getaways in and around the region.

BUZZ**Into the Region****s-12**

Six things to do this Valentine's Day.

Cover photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA; Model VIRALI NAYAK; Location MADHUBAN RESORT & SPA

OUR PICK of the month

Lights, Camera and Action

February 21 onwards



Aspire to be on stage? Learn the nuances of emoting, voice modulation, body language and dialogue delivery at a month-long advanced acting workshop with noted theatre artist Abhinay Banker. The workshop is conducted by the Aarambh Arts Academy.

TEL 7043215353

Want to tell us about an event? A new store? A restaurant? People doing interesting things? Anything newsworthy? Please email us at: simplygujarati@intoday.com



*Personalize each celebration at Hyatt Ahmedabad, an ideal venue
for your celebrations.*

HYATT™
AHMEDABAD

Plot 216, Town Scheme 1
Near Vastrapur lake,
Vastrapur, Ahmedabad 380015
T: +91 79 61601234
F: +91 79 61601235
ahmedabad.hyatt-hotels.hyatt.com

For further information, contact our events team on +91 79 61601234.

*Terms and Conditions apply.

Follow us on    

HYATT name, design and related marks are trademarks of Hyatt Corporation,
© 2017 Hyatt Corporation. All rights reserved

SIMPLY **GUJARATI**



PACK, SET & GO

■ By **ADITI PAI**

FROM PRINCELY SOJOURNS IN HERITAGE MANSIONS TO ADRENALINE-BOOSTING ADVENTURE SPORTS, HERE ARE A VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES FOR A QUICK GETAWAY IN AND AROUND THE REGION



The vibrant
Rannutsav

UNDER THE STARS

RANN OF KUTCH

While the Rannutsav is drawing to a close, the Rann of Kutch continues to be a top pick as a getaway destination especially before the summers set in. Aptly described by the state tourism department as a “symphony of salt and stones cuddled on one side by the sea and the other by desert”, the Rann of Kutch is much more than admiring the white salt flatlands in the moonlight. The few thousand kilometers offer a variety of geographical landscapes and sights—large flocks of flamingoes and migratory birds that visit during

winters, the wild ass sanctuary and pristine white stretch of salt. Go up the watch tower to see the expanse of the Rann or trek up Kalo Dungar to watch the magical sunset.

Getting there 82 km from Bhuj

GO GREEN

RETHAL GREENS

Watch the birds walk along rows of fruit trees or curl up with a book on the lawns—that’s what you can look forward to when you visit Rethal Greens, a lavishly developed holiday destination where you can even buy

plots to build your vacation home. Named after the Gujarati word for sand, Rethal Greens is a sprawling space created out of a sandy expanse of land near the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary by bSafal, real estate developers in Ahmedabad. They have 14 tastefully designed rooms at the resort for holiday makers, a state-of-the-art gymnasium, restaurants, gardens and a host of outdoor activities like a cricket pitch, badminton, basketball and tennis courts and jogging and skating tracks. With the Nalsarovar bird sanctuary just 20 km away, the décor here is obviously inspired by the winged species with bird figurines carved from stone, dotting the landscape. Enjoy the multi cuisine spread and traditional Gujarati delicacies at Song Bird, the tastefully done up restaurant, play a game of cricket or take a dip in the pool at this picturesque resort that is a short drive from Ahmedabad.

Getting there Near Rethal Village, Sanand-Nalsarovar Road, Sanand

GOLFING GLORY

KENSVILLE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Whether you want to tee off or simply unwind amidst an expanse of green, the Kensville Golf and Country Club is the perfect pick for your next getaway. The sprawling 18 hole golf course has a resort with 53 luxurious rooms, recreation activities and restaurants set in a colonial-style structure. Their interestingly named restaurant, The 19th Hole, which overlooks

the golf course offers a multi-cuisine dining experience. With play areas and a recreation centre, there are ample options to keep the children busy while you unwind with a relaxing spa massage at their ayurveda centre. The fully equipped golf academy has a floodlit range, practice putting greens and state-of-the-art tuition aids and professional coaches for those who want to learn a new game. So, turn your next getaway into a golfing session.

Getting there Opposite Shivalik Business Center, Rajpath Club, Bopal Road, Thaltej, Ahmedabad,
Details kensville.co.in

LAP OF LUXURY

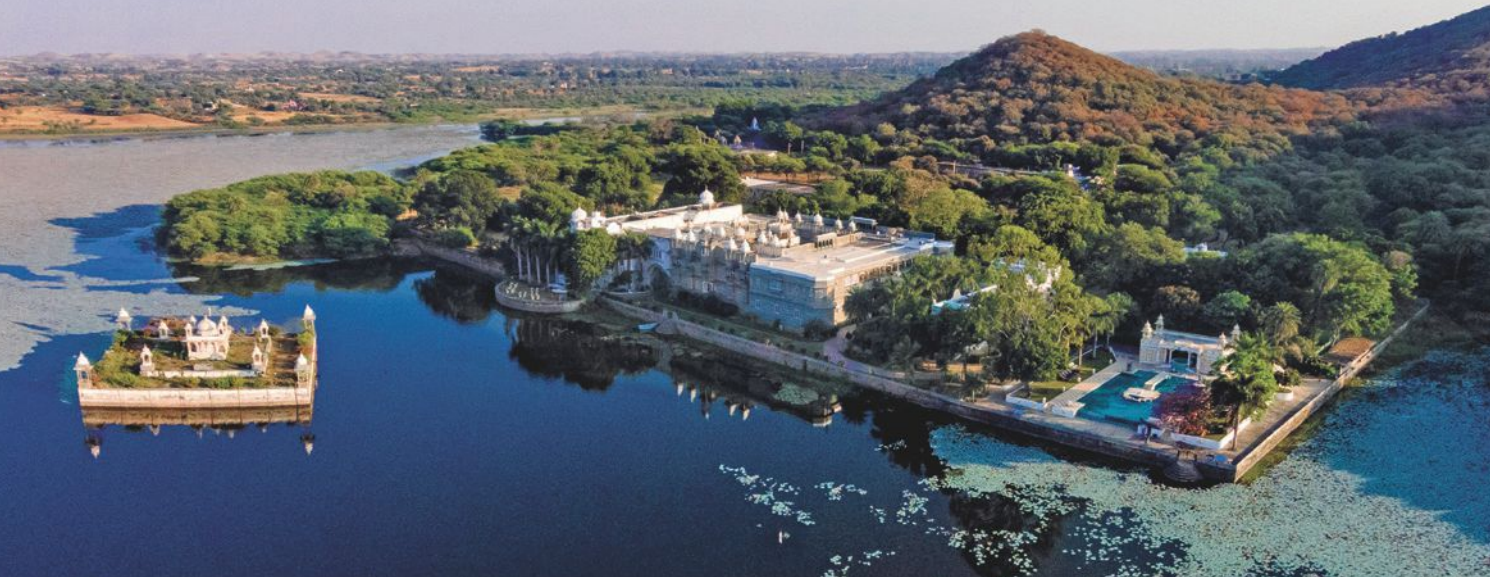
MADHUBHAN RESORT AND SPA

From weddings and lively family vacations to peaceful romantic sojourns, Madhubhan Resort and Spa is on the wishlist of most Gujarat travellers for its lush landscape, luxurious rooms, recreation options and the variety of food that its eight restaurants offer. At an hour's drive from Ahmedabad, the resort lulls you into a holiday mood with its landscaped lawns, water fountains, an expansive swimming pool and happy faces that promptly cater to your needs. The resort has different types of accommodation facilities—from deluxe rooms to a lavish two-bedroom presidential suite, but if you're looking for a touch of Gujarati heritage, they have the Gom cottages and which are inspired by the erstwhile architect of Karamsad, a

Photograph by DANESH JASSAWALA



Golf greens at the
Kensville Golf Academy

A panoramic view of the
Udai Bilas Palace

village in the vicinity and home to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. You're spoilt for choice in food; the resort houses a Mediterranean bistro, a Mexican cuisine café, a juice bar, multi-cuisine restaurant and a bakery. With a spa offering naturopathy therapies, a large swimming pool and several indoor and outdoor games, there's something for everyone.

Price Rooms start at Rs 9,000 for two till March

Getting there Anand-Sojitra Road, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand, 80 km from Ahmedabad

Details madhubhanresortandspa.com

TASTE OF ROYALTY

UDAI BILAS PALACE

Rajasthan's royal destinations continue to woo the luxury seeking Gujarati traveller with their palaces, heritage homes, traditional cuisine and a taste of erstwhile royalty. If you've explored the touristy city favourites—Udaipur, Jaipur and Jodhpur—discover Dungarpur on your next getaway. Not too far from Udaipur, the erstwhile princely state takes you back in time with its old palaces, shrines and heritage structures. A gem here is the 19th century Udai Bilas Palace, now a heritage hotel that's reminiscent of exquisite Rajput architecture with fine murals, miniature paintings and stone carvings on its façade. If history or art is your passion, staying here is a treat because the 23-room palace-turned-hotel has sculptured pillars and panels, ornate balconies, balustrades, bracketed windows, arches and frieze of marble carvings in true

Rajput style. The dining area, Zenana Chowk, has beautiful pebbled walls that add a touch of extravagance. While you're here, explore the Juna Mahal, the ancient shrines in the vicinity or take off on a bird watching trip to the Sitamata Wildlife sanctuary.

Price Starts at Rs 7,900 for two

Getting there Dungarpur is 175 km from Ahmedabad

Details udaibilaspalace.com

REGAL LIVING

RIVERSIDE PALACE, GONDAL

If heritage holidaying is your pick for the season, head to Gondal, a former princely state where the royal palace is now a heritage hotel with four poster beds, old dressers and colonial furniture from the family's heirloom collection. The arts and crafts of the region make an appearance in the décor with antique beadwork, a brass chest from Saurashtra and the family's collection of photographs and Raja Ravi Varma paintings in the atriums. The region is home to several species of birds so get to the rooftop which has a glass walled gallery from where you can see the river or do bird watching in the morning. Visit the museum that has an impressive collection of antique textiles, utensils and handicrafts, royal relics like silver-plated howdah, gold caskets that carried gifts for the Maharajas and horse carriages. The toy collection ranges from vegetable dye hand-painted wooden toys from the 1870s to matchbox cars from 1970s. The erstwhile royal family's love for cars shows in the vintage car

collection where you can see the pre-1910 New Engine and the grand 1935 Mercedes seven-seat saloon. The European touches go beyond the architecture; the menu has delicacies like the Shepherd's Pie, steamed puddings and grilled chicken. But the kitchen also whips up local delicacies from the Kathiawad area, which are definitely a must-try.

Price Rs 7,500 for night for two

Getting there Ashapura Road, Gondal

Tel 2825221950

LEISURE ROUTE

MOUNT ABU

With the summer fast arriving in the plains, it's time for Gujaratis to head to the cooler climes of Mount Abu, a scenic hill station along the Gujarat-Rajasthan border, to beat the heat. A dense green patch in a state known for its plains and desert, Mount Abu has multiple options to make a quick getaway enjoyable. While the charming Nakki Lake is a winner among the tourists, the Dilwara temples are a major draw for history and art lovers with their exquisite carvings in marble. Go boating in the lake, connect with nature with long walks through the woods, shop for handicrafts in the vibrant town bazaar and explore the heritage and boutique hotels. The lazy air of the quaint hill station offers a welcome break from busy city life. Check out Valencia, a boutique hotel perched in the hills.

Getting there 160 km from Ahmedabad

CITY SECRETS

DIVAN'S BUNGALOW

Relive the days of royalty without travelling far out of the city at Divan's Bungalow, a heritage mansion that's run by the Neemrana Hotels. Over 150 years old, it makes you travel back in time with its colonial façade, tower rooms, European-style tiled roofs and a touch of ethnic Gujarat with jharokha balconies. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast in the gardens or join the Ahmedabad heritage walk to rediscover the city's iconic structures like the Jama Masjid or the Sidi Sayed Ki Jali. It's a treat for tourists and even residents who want to take a break from their busy routines to enjoy the 600 year-old heritage of their city.

Price Rs 4,500 onwards

At Raikhad II, M.B. Kadri Marg, Ahmedabad.

Tel 9998953550

SEA AND SUN

MANDVI

If surf and sand are on your mind, drive down to Mandvi, a picturesque seaside destination that's also





Photograph by PURUSHOTTAM DIWAKAR



Photograph by DINESH SHUKLA

The Vijay Vilas Palace in Mandvi (above); Nakki Lake in Mount Abu (left)

home to a luxury tent resort. Walk along the sweeping stretches of sand and enjoy the views of the clear blue waters and the windmills spinning in the distance. An important port and a ship building spot, Mandvi has a beautiful resort—The Beach at Mandvi which stands on a royal estate amidst rustling trees. A highlight of a holiday at the luxury tent resort, which is on the private beach estate of the Maharaos or the former rulers of Kutch, is the barbeque they arrange on the beach. With private verandahs and colonial period furnishings and a restaurant made of bamboo and thatch, the Arabian Sea facing resort is a must-visit when you're at Mandvi. For some wildlife spotting, visit the palace sanctuary that's home to blue bulls, jackals, peacocks, and various birds.

Price Packages start at Rs 14,000 for two nights

Getting there Vijay Vilas Palace Estate, Near Mandvi Airstrip, Bhuj

Details mandvibeach.com

HEAD TO THE HILLS

SAPUTARA

Saputara has all the trappings of a holiday in the hills—a ropeway to a sunset point, a quiet lake and woods that welcome you to take long walks. It is also Gujarat's only hill station. While the quaint town is at its most charming during the monsoon when white clouds and mist cover the mountains lending it a surreal feel, winters are for long walks up Governor's Hill to watch the sunset into the Saputara Lake.

If you're in the mood for adventure, in December, the hill town hosts the paragliding festival where you can glide over the picturesque mountains and get an aerial view of the town. Just before Holi, the local tribal communities display their cultural splendour at



Photograph by DINESH SHUKLA

the Dangs Darbar Festival. If you want a break from the touristy attractions, head to the wildlife sanctuary of Mahal Bardipura forest, about 55km from Saputara, which has rivers and bamboo glades that offer walking and trekking options.

Getting there 133 km from Surat, take the Surat-Waghai Highway

ROMANCE THE WAVES

DIU

An imposing fort from the days of its Portuguese rule, rapidly changing landscapes that range from salt pans to tidal marshlands, clean beaches, old churches and water sports meet at this quaint seaside town that's characterised by rustling palms and Hoka trees. The Portuguese past meets you at every step here—old churches and a fort in the middle of town on this pretty island. The tourist attractions are centred around the Nagoa Beach which has water sports, hotels, shacks and beach restaurants.

The Panikotha-Fortim Do Mar, a ship shaped structure that was believed to have been connected to the land by a sea tunnel, is a popular photo point. Take in the views of the Diu fort by night and make a trip to the shell museum that has more than 2,500 types of shells preserved under a large magnifying glass.

Getting there Nearest railhead is Veraval (90 km)

ADRENALINE HIGH

SCUBA DIVING AT DWARKA

Explore the world that lies under the water with scuba diving sessions at Dwarka. The clear waters off the coast of this ancient city make for a good spot to take the plunge and watch aquatic life—sea weeds, plants and fish swimming around. The Bet Dwarka beach, with its clear sands, is also an ideal spot for surfing. If you're in the mood for sightseeing, visit the ancient Krishna temple and other shrines in the city which is an important pilgrimage and tourist place.

Details planetscubaindia.com

UNDERWATER QUEST

MARINE NATIONAL PARK

See the beautiful coral reefs, meet dolphins springing out of the sea or watch the kingfisher swoop down on the water for its morning catch of fish—if this matches your idea of a holiday, put a trip to the Marine National Park on your next holiday list. Off the Gulf of Kutch, a ferry ride on the sometimes choppy, sometimes calm waters takes you on an exploration of underwater life where you can spot turtles, shrimp, sponge, eels, sea urchin, spoonbills and dugong.

Getting there A ferry ride takes you to Jamnagar
Details gujarattourism.com

Parsoli Motors

+91 9377770088



Sheer
Driving Pleasure



STYLE AND SPACE. REIMAGINED.

DRIVE HOME THE NEW BMW GRAN TURISMO.



ADAPTIVE LED HEADLIGHTS



NAVIGATION PROFESSIONAL



PANORAMA GLASS ROOF



TWIN POWER TURBO
PETROL ENGINE WITH 252 HP

To book a test drive or get more information, log on to www.bmw-parsolimotors.in or contact **Parsoli Motors, Ahmedabad:** Tel: +91 79 29706771 / 2, +91 9377770088, **Surat:** +91 261 2721231 / 2, +91 9377770088, **Rajkot:** +91 281 2703351 / 2, +91 9377770088. Terms and conditions apply. The model, equipment and possible vehicle configurations illustrated in this advertisement may differ from the vehicles supplied in the Indian market.

❧ TWICE AS NICE ❧

Celebrate the month of love with these activities that promise to get you and your partner spending lots of time together

1 FIT AND FAB

Turn your fitness session into a date as you head to the gym together to stay in ship shape. Genesis Fitness Centre has a Valentine's Day offer in which you get free deals for your partner when you enroll for a year-long gym membership.

PRICE Rs 12,990 onwards

AT 202, Shilp Aaron, Sindhu Bhavan Road, Off S.G. Highway, Bodakdev



6 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO



2 SKY HIGH

They say the happy feeling of love makes you fly high. You can experience that, literally in a hot air balloon. Take that someone special in a balloon safari soaring high up to 350 ft above ground in Ahmedabad that offers spectacular views of the heritage city. If you want to add a touch of romance, carry along flowers or a box of chocolate. It happens at the Kankaria Lake

TIME 9 a.m. and 10 p.m.

TEL 07925472444



3 SUGAR AND SPICE

Join a baking class to learn how to make your very own heart-shaped cakes this February at Manju's Art of Cooking where Chef Pradip has sessions on baking. Make breads and cakes or simply enjoy your together time mixing the sugar and spice.

WEB chefpradip.in



4 HAPPY FEET

Match steps with your better half at salsa, bachata and other Latin dance sessions this month at Furor. Unwind with the foot tapping music and spend your evenings picking up dance steps with your partner. Go dancing in this month of love.

AT Furor Ahmedabad

WEB salsaahmedabad.com

5 LOVE ON WHEELS

Boating is passe, turn your date into a fun ride along the pretty Kankaria Lake on segway. Strap on to the machine and ride around the lake and the garden area with your beloved.

AT Gate number 3, Kankaria Lake



6 THE PERFECT POSE

Gift your significant other some tender loving care with yoga sessions at 136.1 Yoga Studio. For the Valentine's week, they have special deals where you can get your partner free when you sign up for a course. Get into perfect shape or put yourself in a happy state of mind with these regular wellness sessions

PRICE on request

WEB 136point1.com

ADVERTORIAL

Why Eating RIGHT is Important?

Food directly affects the way our bodies and minds function in every stage of life. It is the source of energy for all are bodily functions and hence a healthy diet is so important for a well functioning US.



Dr Manish Khaitan

Calories are the unit of measure for stored energy in food. Foods containing an equal amount of calories and nutrients are ideal for a balanced diet and can help provide the body with the fuel it needs to function while avoiding weight gain. A lot of people who want to lose weight try all sorts of things — exercise, calorie restriction, sometimes it works but eventually they gain it back. That's because they're going on a diet — a temporary fix at best. What they need is a lifestyle change, a perspective shift.

The hypothesized 'Set Point Theory' claims that the body maintains a certain level of fat. Exercise and calorific restriction appear critical in altering the set point. This is why if you exercise more, you eat more. It's also why if you restrict calories, your metabolism slows down to compensate.

Food that our bodies don't immediately use for energy gets stored as fat, and we convert this fat back into fuel for when food is scarce. This is a great natural mechanism we are blessed with however with our drive-through restaurants and jam-packed junk food aisles, is wreaking havoc on our health.

If your body is regularly storing body fat then something is wrong with how it metabolizes food. Obesity has to result from a defect in the system that regulates body fat, because a

properly functioning system would not have allowed that degree of fat gain in the first place. If we are gaining weight it might be because we eat too many calories relative to energy expended. But why do we eat too many calories? As the system that should be defending a low fat mass is now defending a high fat mass. Therefore, the solution is not simply to restrict calories, or burn more calories through exercise, but to try to "reset" the system that decides what fat mass to defend. Restricting calories isn't necessarily a good solution because the body will attempt to defend its set point, whether high or low, by increasing hunger and decreasing its metabolic rate. That's why low-calorie diets, and most diets in general, typically fail in the long term. It's miserable to fight hunger every day.

So it is all about a BALANCED diet.

If you're eating plenty of calories and sticking to a nutrient-dense diet, you need not fear weight gain. The glory of thinking this way is that you absolutely never have to count calories! While a healthy weight is a good goal, when it comes to eating right and exercising, it is just another reason. The researchers found that the most successful motivation for sticking to a healthy lifestyle was "feeling better about themselves" for women and "better health" for men.

So EAT HEALTHY, STAY HAPPY!

Dr. Manish Khaitan (Gujarat University Gold medallist) is a practicing gastro surgeon and has been performing advanced laparoscopic gastric & bariatric surgeries in prestigious hospitals of Ahmedabad for more than eight years. Currently he heads Nobesity at Columbia Asia Hospital where they are passionate about fighting against Obesity.

Qualification:

- MBBS from B J Medical College and Civil Hospital.
 - MS (Gen. Surgery from BJ Medical College and Civil Hospital
 - Fellow in Bariatric Surgery from CA, USA and Dr. Kelvin Higa, ALSA
- Fight Obesity ... call Nobesity (89999 49999)**

NEW LAUNCHES

Toys on Call

• TOY MAHAL



Why buy a toy when you can rent it—that's the concept behind the Toy Mahal, an online toy rental service that's been launched by five young entrepreneurs in Ahmedabad. If you're among those who have cupboards overflowing with toys that the kids have outgrown, the new venture will strike a chord. They have thousands of toys and games for children between the age of one month to eight years, with international toy brands like Fisher Price, Mee Mee, Hot Wheels and Lego that you can rent from the comfort of your home. Started by Vipul Jain, 34, Jayprakash Chechani, 33, Vikas Asawa, 32, Gautam Jha, 32 and Rohit Nair, 28, Toy Mahal

has a dedicated repair and maintenance department that services and sterilises and sanitises every toy that is sent out. The innovative online venture—the first of its kind in the state—has a wide range of toys and accessories from walkers and prams for infants to cars, inflatable toys and musical toys for toddlers and dolls, building blocks, puzzles and educational toys for older children. Toy Mahal offers delivery and collection facilities through their various membership plans within Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar and gift-a-membership deals available on their website. **PRICE** Membership plans start at Rs 1,100 **AT** toymahal.in

Sip on Health

• SATVARAS

It's now easy to wake up to a tall glass of fresh cold-pressed juice without struggling with the blender every morning. With almost all major cities having their own fresh juice brands, Ahmedabad now has Satvaras which has launched a collection of fresh vegetable and fruit blends that are believed to detoxify and energise the system. If Balance is loaded with the goodness of wheatgrass and fruits like pineapple and kiwi, the beetroot, mint and ginger in Heart is said to lower blood pressure and boost stamina. Another variant is Power which has cholesterol-lowering ingredients like spinach, cinnamon, grapes and lemon. If you're looking for a delicious dose of quick energy, go for Energy that is loaded with pomegranate guava and grapes. The preservative and sugar-free juices are made fresh



every morning before being dispatched to their clients. The juices are available at the click of a smartphone; with their app you can choose your plan and even schedule the delivery of your juice pack.

AT satvaras.com

IN TOUCH WITH **INDIA TODAY**



The All New India Today App

Stay updated with the latest in politics, sports, lifestyle and more, Anytime, Anywhere.



DOWNLOAD NOW

www.indiatoday.in/apps

*Bridal inspiration
on the go*



HARPER'S BAZAAR BRIDE is available on **ipad, iphone, Android, Kindle, PC and Mac.**

SUBSCRIBE NOW

BAZAAR ^{Harpers} *BRIDE*

